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## Criterion Three

*Cotley College is accomplishing its educational  
and other purposes.*

Cotley College's educational and other purposes are set forth by the student-centered goals that accompany the mission and are accomplished through the programs and services that the College provides for its students. The small size of the campus, combined with goals focused on student development, create an atmosphere that allows the academic and student life programs to integrate in a unique way. Liberal arts education is not simply the responsibility of the academic program at Cotley; several of the goals are achieved through programs in other sectors of the College. The following chapters will demonstrate that Cotley accomplishes its educational and other purposes by beginning with an analysis of the academic program, successful transfer, and academic services in Chapter 10. The importance of effective teaching is discussed in Chapter 11. The student services and programs that support achievement of the personal skill enhancement goals are presented in Chapter 12. Chapters 13 and 14 discuss and analyze the development of the College's assessment program and its results.

## Academic Program

The self-study process has reiterated a tension between the dual roles expressed in Cottey's mission statement--to provide women with a liberal arts education and to promote their successful transfer to programs beyond the associate's degree. This duality was earlier identified in conversations prompted by the 1997 effort to recast Cottey's mission and goals, as well as in "The Arts That Liberate," a paper written by a faculty committee and published in 1990. (See Appendix 10-A for a copy of the paper.) Chapter 10 discusses and analyzes how Cottey's academic program combines the liberal arts and successful transfer, as well as program review and academic services provided for students.

Faculty on the Liberal Arts Committee were concerned that requiring too large a complement of specific courses designed to give the student a background in the liberal arts could be in conflict with the objective of taking courses required for successful transfer, especially within a two-year time frame. This is an important factor impacting Cottey's academic program. Since Cottey is a two-year school focused on enabling students to transfer and complete a four-year degree, the College's students are just beginning progress toward their educational goals with the expectation that they will be completed at another institution. Chapter 10 examines this issue through discussion of the core curriculum revision and degree addition in 1994,

program review, services that encourage student academic success, and the successful transfer of Cottey students.

The goals accompanying Cottey's mission reflect the endeavor to integrate a liberal arts education with a successful transfer curriculum. The overarching statements organize Cottey's goals into groups and express aspirations for student progress in three areas--intellectual ability, content knowledge, and personal skills. The intellectual ability goals focus on cognitive experiences that should occur across the curriculum, all of which are endorsed in "The Arts That Liberate." The second group of goals, related to the enhancement of a store of knowledge, reflects the organization of Cottey's curriculum and the structure of its distribution requirements across the four divisions. The divisional taxonomy is described in the table below. (A narrative description of the divisions is available in the Resource Room.) Transfer needs are primarily tied to the second set of goals. The third group, goals related to enhancing personal skills, is in place to promote the achievement of the liberal arts objective of becoming a self-fulfilling and socially contributing person.

**Table 10.1 - Divisional Taxonomy**

<b>Fine Arts</b>	<b>Humanities</b>	<b>Science/ Mathematics</b>	<b>Social Science</b>
Art Art History Dance Music Speech Theatre	English French German Journalism Philosophy Religion Spanish	Astronomy Biology Chemistry Computer Science Mathematics Physics	Anthropology Business Economics History Physical Education Political Science Psychology Sociology

The two-part mission of providing a liberal arts education and facilitating successful transfer cannot be easily separated within the statement of goals. Not every course, department, or division will work toward every

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goal; however, the statements taken as a whole articulate what the College seeks for its students. Cottey's academic program is organized to achieve these goals.

### **Core Curriculum Revision and Degree Addition**

Guided in part by "The Arts That Liberate," the Academic Committee reviewed the core and degree distribution requirements during 1992-94. The review was also in response to comments on annual surveys by the registrar and suggestions from alumnae. (The Transfer Concerns compiled from the surveys are available in the Resource Room.)

The Academic Committee conducted research on the general education expectations and degree requirements of 51 institutions, including a list of colleges developed for comparison purposes, the existing top ten transfer schools, and those institutions with whom Cottey have articulation/transfer agreements. The committee considered Cottey graduates' prospective majors and career goals as well as the transfer problems they were encountering. The evaluation and diagnosis was that Cottey's then extant degree structure and requirements did not ensure that Cottey graduates were as well prepared to transfer as they should be.

At that time graduation requirements included three basic skills and a system of almost free elective distribution requirements in each of the four divisions--fine arts, humanities, science and mathematics, and social science. In order to be more rigorous, provide direction to students, and still allow students to explore various interests, a core curriculum was established.

The core curriculum (pp. 9-11 of the Catalog) sets forth the basic college-level skills Cottey requires of its students, and also recognizes the importance of the liberal arts through the distribution requirements in the four divisions. A student may use the remaining elective hours to focus on either enhanced study of the liberal arts or meeting the expectations of her transfer institution in a prospective major, or both. In addition, the College added the

Associate in Science degree to allow for diverse intellectual and career interests.

### **Liberal Arts Education**

The success of the College in imparting its students with a liberal arts education is evaluated by the College's assessment program. Chapter 14 of this report is a goal-by-goal chronicle of the achievement of the College's goals. Presented here is evidence from surveys of alumnae and students that ask them to rate how well the mission and each of the goals was achieved with respect to their education.

**Table 10.2 - Mean Responses From Student Mission and Goals Survey**

<b>Mission and Goals Survey Item</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Mission	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.3
Process and use information and ideas logically, critically, and perceptively	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.0
Synthesize information and ideas	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.9
Recognize the connections among fields of knowledge	4.3	4.0	4.0	4.1
Express themselves creatively in intellectual or aesthetic endeavors	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.1
Use quantitative reasoning and analysis	4.4	4.0	4.0	3.9
Communicate clearly and effectively in English	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.1
Literature and the fine arts	4.4	4.3	4.1	3.8
The history of civilizations, ideas, beliefs, and values	4.2	4.1	3.9	3.6
Human behavior and social interaction	4.3	4.4	4.1	4.2
The natural sciences and scientific progress	4.5	4.3	4.0	4.0
Ethical and social issues	4.1	4.1	3.9	3.9
The international and intercultural character of the global society	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.8
Participate in programs contributing to physical fitness and personal health	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.8
Experience growth in essential technological expertise	4.1	3.6	3.6	3.3
Participate in opportunities for leadership development and active involvement in issues important to them	4.4	4.3	4.2	3.8
Live, work, and study in a nationally and internationally diverse residential environment	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.4

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Cottey consistently achieves its mission and goals with respect to the education of students enrolled as the table on the previous page illustrates. The table summarizes the mean responses to the Cottey Student Mission and Goals Survey from 1999-2002. This survey was administered to first-year students on Assessment Day in 1999, 2000, and 2001. The response rates were 75 percent, 27 percent, and 79 percent respectively. In 2002, both first- and second-year students responded to the survey with response rates of 83 percent and 90 percent respectively.

Alumnae are asked to evaluate the mission and each of the goals with respect to how well they were achieved during their time at Cottey on the Academic Program Questionnaire. The responses were collected in the summer of 2001 from alumnae who graduated from Cottey between 1991 and 1998. The survey had a 31 percent response rate. Alumnae responses indicate that the achievement of the goal related to technological expertise is considerably lower than any other. This is possibly attributed to the significant increase in the use of technology in the past decade. The table on the next page summarizes the responses. The first two items in the table are discussed in the next section. (More information on the Academic Program Questionnaire is available in the Resource Room.)

**Table 10.3 - Mean Responses From Academic Program Questionnaire**

<b>Questionnaire Item</b>	<b>Average</b>
Prepared for transfer	4.5
Cottey's academic program more or less rigorous	3.9
Process and use information and ideas logically, critically, and perceptively	4.2
Synthesize information and ideas	4.2
Recognize the connections among fields of knowledge	4.0
Express themselves creatively in intellectual or aesthetic endeavors	4.3
Use quantitative reasoning and analysis	3.9
Communicate clearly and effectively in English	4.3
Literature and the fine arts	4.3
The history of civilizations, ideas, beliefs, and values	4.1
Human behavior and social interaction	4.3
The natural sciences and scientific progress	4.0
Ethical and social issues	4.1
The international and intercultural character of the global society	3.9
Participate in programs contributing to physical fitness and personal health	3.8
Experience growth in essential technological expertise	3.1
Participate in opportunities for leadership development and active involvement in issues important to them	4.1
Live, work, and study in a nationally and internationally diverse residential environment	4.4

### **Successful Transfer**

The fulfillment of Cottey's commitment to prepare its graduates for transfer to programs beyond the associate's degree is demonstrated by the degree completion rate and successful transfer rates. Transfer is often facilitated if a student has earned an associate's degree.

The College's average graduation rate calculation for the annual IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey (based on 1996, 1997, and 1998 cohorts) is 72 percent. When compared with a variety of other two-year colleges across the

country, Cottey's graduation rates are excellent. Following is a table that illustrates the graduation rates of Cottey and 13 other two-year colleges.

**Table 10.4 - Comparison of Graduation Rates**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Rate</b>
Cottey College	71.2
Ancilla College (Indiana)	24.2
Clinton Junior College (South Carolina)	63.6
Crowder College** (Missouri)	46.7
Fort Scott Comm. College** (Kansas)	32
Harcum College (Pennsylvania)	53.4
Holy Cross College (Indiana)	27.1
Louisburg College (North Carolina)	30.2
Manor College (Pennsylvania)	43.6
Maria College of Albany (New York)	20.8
Marymount College (California)	32.7
Metropolitan Comm. Colleges** (Missouri)	12.2
Spartanburg Methodist College (South Carolina)	63.6
Young Harris College (Georgia)	43.8

\* Cohort graduation rate GR2000S from IPEDS Peer Analysis System; entering cohort for two-year 1997

\*\* Public

Although graduation rates are important, more critical for Cottey is the transfer rate. Even though some students do not earn a degree after two years at Cottey, they are still able to transfer successfully to another institution to pursue a bachelor's degree.

The Office of Academic Records (registrar) has conducted an annual survey of graduates every year since 1975. The survey seeks information from the most recent graduating class to identify transfer institutions, majors, transfer difficulties, and the number of credits transferred. The survey is usually mailed in the fall, and follow-up enrollment verifications are conducted by the Academic Records office for non-respondents. (See Appendix 10-B for a sample survey and the top transfer institutions 1990-95 and 1996-2000 as determined by survey responses and follow-up enrollment

verification.) Cottey's transfer rate is consistently high, and students transfer to a variety of institutions across the country. The following table summarizes information from the survey.

**Table 10.5 - Summary of Annual Survey of Graduates**

Year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998*	1999	2000
Transfer Rate	93%	95%	98%	98%	98%	97%	97%	96%
Number of Institutions	71	70	72	79	68	60	77	65
Number of States	36	27	31	35	34	29	30	26

\*includes only responses from graduates; all other years include responses and enrollment verification of those not responding

To facilitate transfer, Cottey has articulation/transfer agreements with 18 colleges and universities in the U.S. These agreements are coordinated by the registrar and designed to facilitate student transfer to these schools. (See Appendix 10-C for a list of institutions with articulation/transfer agreements.)

Since Cottey expects students to transfer and to earn a baccalaureate degree, assisting students with the selection of a major and a transfer institution is vital. Resources and services committed to assisting students in the selection of a transfer institution, as well as those related to considering career options, are coordinated in the Academic Assistance Center (AAC) by the transfer/career planning coordinator. A student can assess her strengths, abilities, values, goals, and areas of interest through one-on-one counseling, workshops, and by using the AAC library. This library offers the following: college and university catalogs from every state and several countries; books on choosing a major, a college, an occupation; books on résumé writing, scholarships, internships; college videos; and SigiPlus and Choices career assessment software packages.

The procedure for proposing courses at Cottey requires evidence that a course is transferable and congruent with other offerings in the department. In

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addition, the transfer/career planning coordinator and the registrar monitor transfer concerns and difficulties reported by students. The Academic Program Questionnaire also asks about transfer experiences. In reviewing the information from all three sources, no recurring transfer issue emerges as a significant problem. Transfer problems reported by Cottey students result from a variety of sources, including: change of major or career goal, low grades in courses, too many credits in one area, credits over the maximum allowed for transfer, and freshman/sophomore level courses required for a degree that were not available at Cottey.

The results of the Academic Program Questionnaire indicate that 87 percent of the respondents had received their bachelor's degree. Eighty-nine percent responded that they felt prepared to enter their major at their transfer institution. Asked to rate Cottey as more or less rigorous than their transfer institution, the mean was 3.97 on a five-point Likert scale with one indicating Cottey was less rigorous and five indicating Cottey was more rigorous. The mean for how well a student felt prepared for transfer was 4.5. (See Appendix 10-D for a list of transfer institutions from the Academic Program Questionnaire.)

### **Program Review**

While program review is not a measure of student academic achievement, it is helpful in monitoring the appropriateness of the curriculum for a liberal arts education and for transfer.

The Faculty Handbook mandates a systematic evaluation of programs on a periodic (every five years) basis (Section Six, I.). In 1993-94, the VPAA published formal guidelines for departmental and disciplinary self-studies for program review, as well as a schedule for the 1994 spring semester that called for a review by one program from each division. Three programs (dance, foreign languages, and biology) submitted the required data to the respective division chairs, who forwarded the information to the VPAA. The fourth

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program (computer science) collected some preliminary data. The VPAA felt that the guidelines had generated far more information than could be meaningfully analyzed by the Academic Committee, and he placed the process on hold until the guidelines could be improved. At the same time, he directed the faculty to turn its attention to developing an assessment program.

As formalized program review efforts were about to resume in 1998, focus was again redirected by the VPAA, this time to the fields of study project undertaken at the request of the board of trustees. During 1995-96 and again from 1999-2002, informal program reviews were undertaken to develop priorities for hiring faculty. In 1998-99, in concert with the fields of study project, task forces also studied environmental science and communications.

Two programs--music and English--did comprehensively review the curriculum of their programs. The music program is separately accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and completed a self-study for that organization in 2000. The English program comprehensively revised its approach to composition in 1996-97, based on current theories of composition study, and revised its literature program in 2000-01 due to changes in requirements at transfer institutions. Other programs have altered course offerings, primarily due to changes in faculty with different interests and competencies.

A specialized program review process was initiated in fall 2002 for the First-Year Experience course that was placed on a two-year moratorium in order to allow for further analysis and study of additional models. This course, taught experimentally 1997-2002, was designed to reinforce the academic skills necessary for college success, assist students in making the transition from high school to college, and inform them of available resources. It also included the history of Cottey and aspirations of Virginia Alice Cottey. It was taught as a mandatory, one-credit course. The moratorium was put in

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place after extensive review by the Academic Committee and discussion by the Student Academic Committee.

In 2002-03, a systematic plan for the resumption of the periodic and cyclical review of the academic programs was initiated by the new VPAA and the members of the Academic Committee. Each program has submitted a brief (1-3 pages) self-evaluation identifying its strengths and weaknesses (Faculty Handbook, Section Six, I.). The self-evaluations were focused on a set of questions developed by the committee. (See Appendix 10-E for a copy of the questions.) In early February 2003, the Academic Committee reviewed all of the program worksheets and summarized the strengths and concerns that emerged. (A notebook on program review is available in the Resource Room.)

Next steps in this process include work by the VPAA and the Academic Committee to generate appropriate guidelines as called for by the process outlined in the Faculty Handbook and the development of a timetable for a regularized five-year review cycle. In addition, the program review process will seek to integrate data generated by assessment activities. As part of this process, faculty are asked to specify on their syllabi the College goals that are furthered by individual classes.

### **Academic Services for Students**

Cottey has no remedial or developmental academic programs other than the Intermediate Algebra course. The College's policy is to admit only students who have the test scores and educational backgrounds that indicate they will succeed. Believing that academic success at Cottey is crucial for successful transfer, the faculty and staff are dedicated to assisting students with academic difficulty. Course instructors, academic advisors and the academic early warning system inform students in academic difficulty of the services available to them, although the responsibility for seeking help rests with the student.

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## **Academic Advising**

The academic advising process is the foundation of the College's commitment to student academic success. Cottey uses a faculty-based advising model. Only full-time faculty serve as academic advisors after they have completed a year of teaching at the College and attended a training workshop with the advisement coordinator. The program is coordinated by a faculty member who receives release time and uses faculty development funds for specialized preparation in academic advising.

A student is initially matched with an advisor according to her academic interest area. Considerable attention is paid to suitable pairings for incoming students, based on the students' expressed interests and educational needs.

The academic advisor's responsibilities include: maintaining a complete and accurate record for each advisee; articulating the graduation requirements; disseminating information about academic policies, requirements and procedures; referring advisees to the resources available to students experiencing academic difficulty; and assisting the student in identifying career and transfer institution opportunities. Because the advisor plays such an important role in a student's academic life at Cottey, the student may change advisors at any time after consultation with the advisement coordinator and the prospective advisor.

The Advising Committee is actively involved in determining the policies and procedures that make this program effective. The committee consists of one faculty member from each division, the advisement coordinator, and the transfer/career planning coordinator. The committee oversees the development and distribution of the Academic Advising Manual and sets the agenda for the yearly advising workshop. (A copy of the Advising Manual is available in the Resource Room.) To assist faculty, the committee created a registration checklist; however, these forms are not used

by all faculty members. Currently, the committee is considering implementation of an advisor evaluation.

The committee conducted a survey of students in 1998-99, using a form of its own design, and an alumnae evaluation of the advising program in 2001. (A copy of the analysis of both surveys is available in the Resource Room.) Academic advisors received the highest rating from both students and alumnae. The responses reflect that the academic advisors were accessible, prepared for meetings, and knowledgeable about graduation requirements. Areas of concern were also the same for both students and alumnae, indicating dissatisfaction with guidance in three areas: choosing a transfer institution, career counseling, and learning skills. The programs in these three areas are coordinated by the Academic Assistance Center, and efforts to educate students of their availability were increased.

The data collected by the SOS also indicates student satisfaction with the advising program.

**Table 10.6 - Student Satisfaction With Academic Advising**

<b>Student Opinion Survey Item</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>Avg.</b>
II.1. Academic advising services	4.18	4.19	4.05	4.16	4.15
III 9. Availability of your advisor	4.11	4.27	4.18	4.19	4.19
III 10. Value of the information provided by your advisor	4.02	4.02	3.90	3.98	3.98

### **Academic Early Warning**

If a student is experiencing academic difficulty, Cottey's academic early warning system alerts the student, her advisor, and other staff as appropriate. This system is coordinated through the Academic Records office. At any time during the semester, faculty may send a concern notice to a student. In addition, the mid-term down grade notice is used to notify students that their grade in a course is a C- or lower. The VPAA sends a

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special warning if a student receives three or more concern or mid-term down notices.

If a student receives a special warning from the VPAA at mid-term, she is required to meet with each instructor, her advisor, and either the advisement coordinator (first-year students) or the transfer/career planning coordinator (second-year students) to secure their advice and signatures. First-year students who receive the special warning also meet with the advisement coordinator to complete an academic self-assessment and develop a plan to improve academic performance. If any student, regardless of her class year, does not complete the process, a hold is placed on her registration until she does.

Students in academic difficulty are encouraged to take the non-credit course Strategies for Academic Success. Enrollment is not limited to those students, and many academically successful students also take the course. Each student completes the Learning and Study Skills Inventory (LASSI), which measures ten essential areas needed for success in college. The topics in the course are determined by LASSI results and student interest.

Other resources available to students experiencing academic difficulty include individual learning skills assistance through videotapes, tutorial software, and supplemental textbooks from various disciplines, a peer-tutoring program, a student-staffed writing center, and assistance with spoken and written English for international students. The following table illustrates student satisfaction with these services as indicated by data collected by the SOS.

**Table 10.7 - Student Satisfaction With Academic Services**

<b>Student Opinion Survey Item</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>Avg.</b>
II 3. Career planning services	4.04	4.04	3.78	4.13	4.00
II 9. College-sponsored tutorial services	3.80	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.95
III 19. Academic probation and suspension policies	3.61	3.83	3.61	3.92	3.74

