



## Strategic Plan Report 2017-2018: A Third Year of Progress & Midpoint Reflection

Throughout the strategic planning process, the University community worked together to identify goals that would positively impact student learning and development for a truly transformational experience – one that is Engaged, Integrated, and Global. As our [first-year and second-year progress reports](#) show, we have made significant progress in meeting strategic goals, and in addressing the expectations of our [Strategic Planning Principles](#), foundational goals which construct a strong platform for the University to explore the plan's calls to action in what is a challenging time for private higher education.

The plan outlines a set of ambitious goals which invite all members of the University community to contribute their talents to build a better University, and a better world. As our President, the Rev. Scott R. Pilarz, S.J., remarked in his 2018 inaugural address, "our current strategic plan rightly encourages us to embrace the world...we just as enthusiastically embrace our city and the region of Northeastern Pennsylvania. We are committed to the University remaining an engine of opportunity, a voice for social justice and a hub of cultural, intellectual and spiritual life." We're proud of the contributions our students, our faculty, our staff, alumni and our many partners have made in support of this commitment.

Now, as we reach the mid-point of the Engaged, Integrated, Global plan, we reflect broadly on our progress. This year's report describes selected highlights from the 2017-2018 calendar year - including several projects that have received [Strategic Initiatives \(SI\) Funding](#) - as well as analysis of selected strategic metrics over time. This report is not exhaustive; in addition to the content here, numerous other initiatives have been undertaken to support our strategic planning goals, and contribute to ongoing institutional renewal.

As always, we'd love to hear your own Engaged, Integrated, Global experience. Please take some time to [Share A Story](#) with us.

## **ABOUT STRATEGIC METRICS:**

### INSTITUTIONAL DATA, HIGH IMPACT PRACTICES, AND THE NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

#### **Key Metrics:**

Strategic-level reporting is constructed using a holistic approach that values both quantitative data and qualitative reflections. There are three elements of progress reporting: student outcomes, institutional outcomes, and metrics. Metrics generally fall into three categories: inputs (such as characteristics of students, faculty, and programs); processes and experiences (such as student retention and graduation rate and participation in high impact programs); and outcomes (student knowledge and proficiencies; attainment of desired benchmarks; post-graduate outcomes and success). The following pages highlight selected strategic metrics and other outcomes. Unless otherwise noted, strategic metrics capture data from one academic year<sup>1</sup> to another.

#### **What are HIPs?**

Throughout the strategic plan progress report, we remark on student and faculty participation in several High Impact Practices, or “HIPs.” HIPs are learning activities that are known to have a significant impact on student success, including retention and engagement. The University actively monitors student participation in selected HIPs. One of our strategic metrics tracks the percent of undergraduate students who complete two, or three or more, HIPs before graduation.

#### **What is the NSSE?**

Several strategic metrics are selected from the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#), or NSSE. Developed by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, the NSSE asks undergraduate students questions about their participation in and satisfaction with a variety of curricular and co-curricular activities. The University of Scranton administers the NSSE survey to first-year and senior students annually. See recent NSSE survey results, and results from other student surveys, [here](#).

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<sup>1</sup> As defined through official University fall census reporting. The census generally falls in mid-October of each year.

## ENGAGED

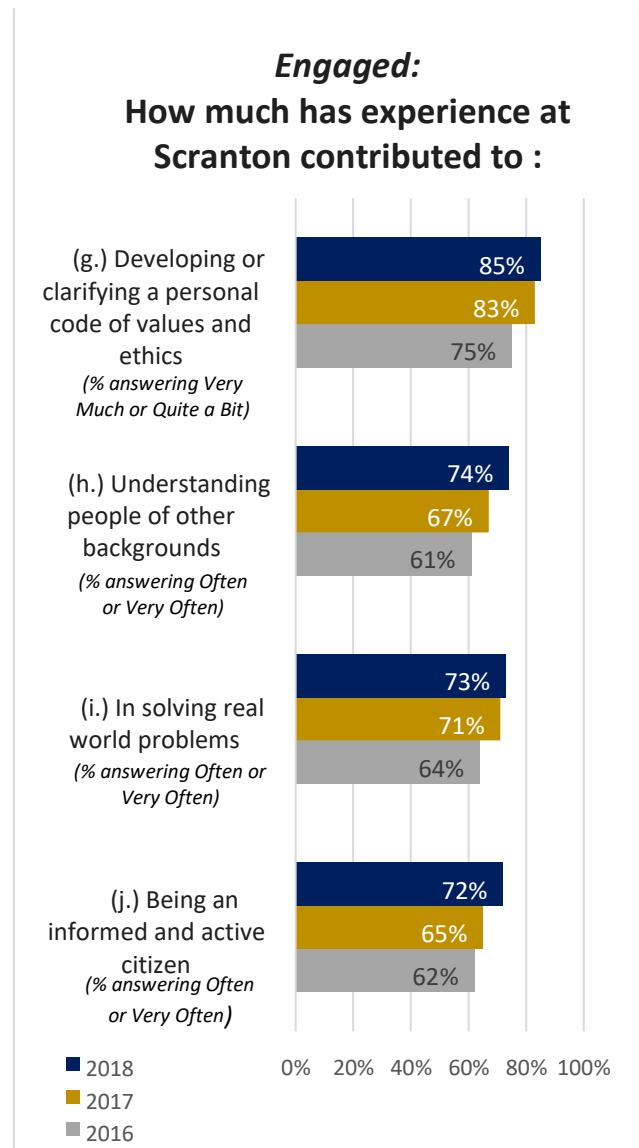
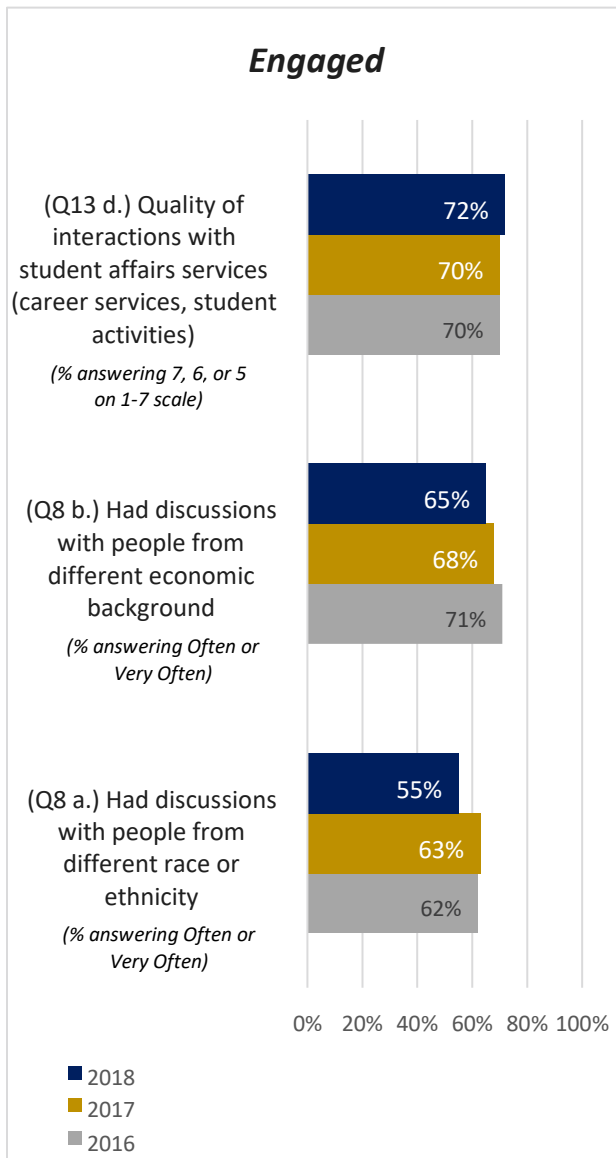
- In 2017-18, the Division of Student Life launched a new four-part Leadership Academy training program, with over 200 students participating in the inaugural year. SI funding provided additional support for the development of a Student Leadership Capstone Program for undergraduate students.
- The University's Office of Community Based Learning, launched in 2017, is a hub for faculty seeking to integrate this high impact practice into the curriculum. Supported by SI funding, a faculty director, multiple campus units, and a campus-wide CBL Board, the [Office](#) launched new faculty development opportunities, including periodic seminars, an annual two-day faculty workshop, and the CBL Faculty Initiatives Fund, in 2018.
- The [Royal Experience Summer Internship Program](#) provided 11 University of Scranton students, selected from a competitive pool, a stipend of up to \$4,000 to support their participation in a meaningful unpaid internship for the summer of 2018. In addition to this program, SI funding has supported the new Scranton Connections program, which engages students with alumni in mentoring activities.
- During the 2017-2018 academic year, 85 students participated in nine domestic service trips, and 107 students participated in 11 international service trips through Campus Ministries' Center for Service and Social Justice and International Service program (ISP). SI Funding has made possible additional financial support to defer rising costs for students wishing to take part in domestic service trips.
- Fifteen members of The University of Scranton's class of 2018 committed to postgraduation long-term service projects.
- From 2016 to 2017, student attendance in Campus Ministries' faith formation programs increased by 40%.
- In 2018, the University opened the new [Kevin P. Quinn, S.J., Athletics Campus](#). A \$14 million dollar, eleven-acre campus will host facilities for several NCAA Division III sports, including soccer, field hockey, and baseball. The new campus includes recreational spaces open to the local community.

## THE AUTISM COLLABORATIVE CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE (ACCE) PARTNERSHIP

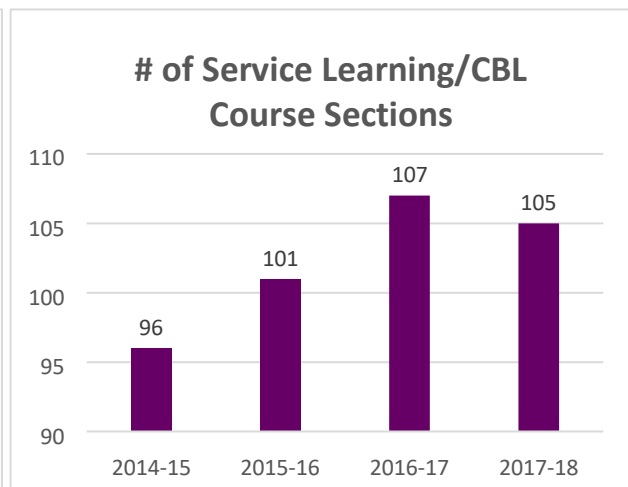
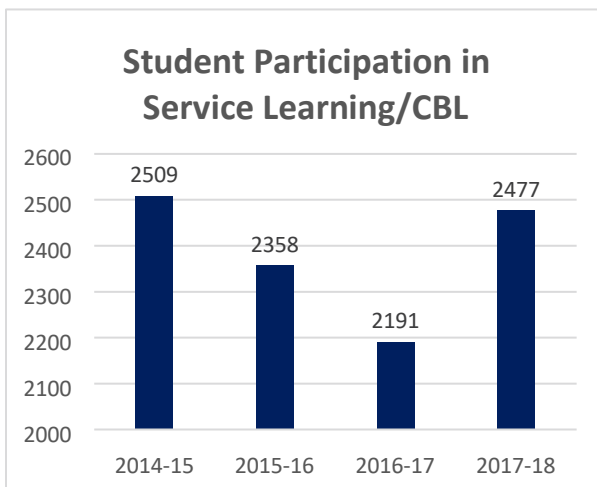
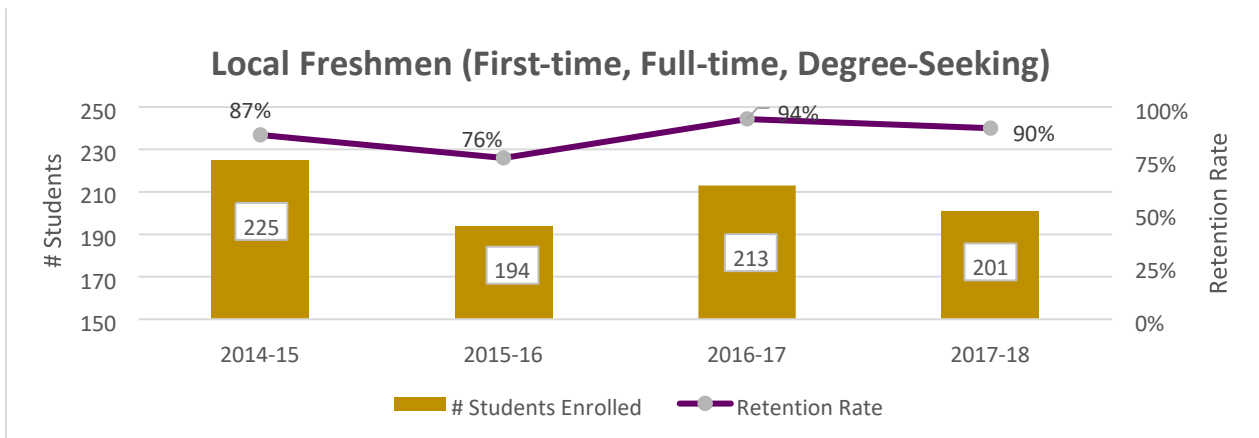
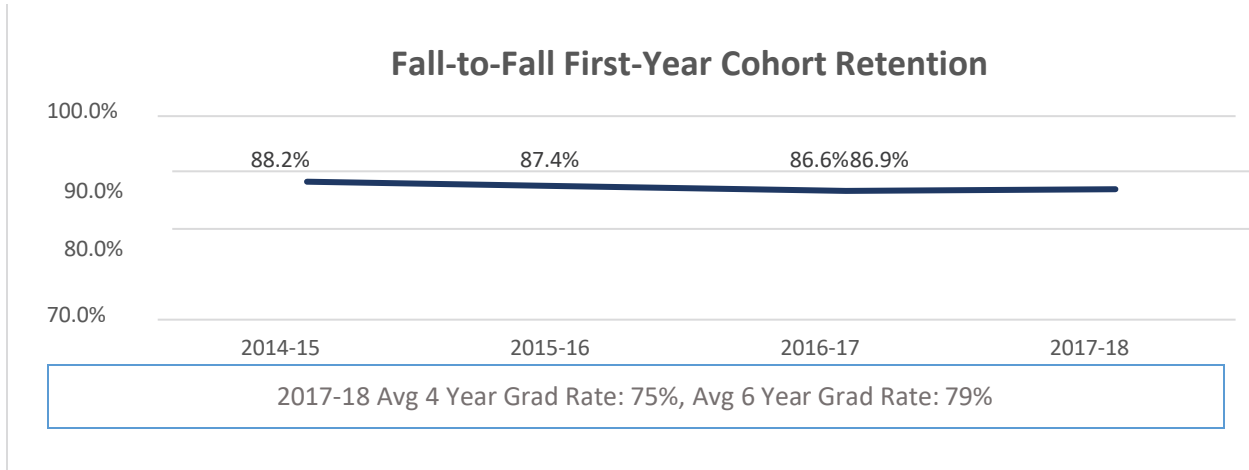
In fall 2018, the University announced a regional partnership to help address service gaps for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families. The new [Autism Collaborative Centers of Excellence](#) program will bring together representatives from health care, education, and philanthropic entities to build a sustainable framework and national model for addressing ASD care. The collaborative will explore initiatives related to early intervention and treatment; access to medical and behavioral health specialists; coordination of therapeutic, educational, vocational, respite, and residential services; and employment opportunities for those with ASD. This innovative initiative engages seven funding collaborators and 11 program partners. The University of Scranton will serve as the Executive Hub for the program.

## Engaged Students: Selected Data from the NSSE

In 2018, 72% of respondents to the spring National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) say that their Scranton experience contributed to their being a more informed and active citizen, a 10% increase from last year's survey. 74% say it contributed to their better understanding people of other backgrounds – also a 10% increase. However, the frequency with which respondents had discussions with people from different economic backgrounds, races or ethnicities has decreased from prior survey administrations:



## SELECTED STRATEGIC METRICS: ENGAGED



## INTEGRATED

- With the support of generous donors and SI Funding, a faculty-led Humanities initiative launched in 2017. This interdisciplinary initiative - exploring the study of culture, history, language, literature, philosophy, religion – coordinates a Humanities Forum, Artist in Residence Program, is a pathway for students to participate in the [Research as a High Impact Practice](#) program.
- SI Funding is also supporting University/Community partnerships to further K-12 STEAM<sup>2</sup> education, with a focus on science enrichment activities in local elementary, middle and high school students. The new Synergistic Activity Program for Science Education ("[SynAPSE](#)") initiative enables University of Scranton research students to conduct learning activities at a local Scranton elementary school.
- Residential learning opportunities ([RLCs](#)) continue to flourish at Scranton. In 2017/2018, 28% of the first-year class (255 students) and 173 upperclass students participated in these programs. In addition to existing programs, Residence Life and the Kania School of Management collaborated to offer the new Scranton Innovative Thought and Entrepreneurship (SITE) RLC, with 68 students taking part in the first year.
- New Signature Programming:
  - Business Honors Program, with 19 students taking part in inaugural cohort
  - [STEM Royal Scholars](#) program, supported by an NSF grant
  - Magis Honors Program in STEM, providing undergraduate students with a more intense, interdisciplinary experience of research in STEM fields
- New Academic Offerings:
  - New majors in Social Media Strategies and Business Communication
  - New major in Physiology
  - New minor in Cinema Studies
  - A new specialization in Global Health
  - A new interdisciplinary concentration in Legal Studies
  - A new advanced certificate in Behavioral Analysis

### DEFINING

#### Residential Learning Communities (RLCs)

Residential Learning Communities provide students with a distinctive experience that allows them to live, learn, and belong in and to a community of diverse peers with common interests and goals.

**LLC:** Living Learning Communities **Who?** First-year students  
**What?** A theme, a shared residence hall and a linked first-year seminar course

**TC:** Themed Communities **Who?** Sophomores, juniors or seniors  
**What?** A theme and a shared residence hall

**Global Exchange TC:** **Who?** Juniors or seniors  
**What?** Domestic and international students live together/ host events related to customs and cultures

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<sup>2</sup> Science, technology, engineering, arts, and math.

- A new affiliation between The University of Scranton and Duquesne University School of Law, through which eligible Scranton students may complete their senior year bachelor's degree requirements during the first year of law school at Duquesne.
- The summer 2017 launch of the Business High School Scholars Program, engaging cohorts of sophomore and junior high school students interested in pursuing a business degree at Scranton. The program offers financial support to participants from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The development of a policy for Academic Freedom for Adjunct Faculty.

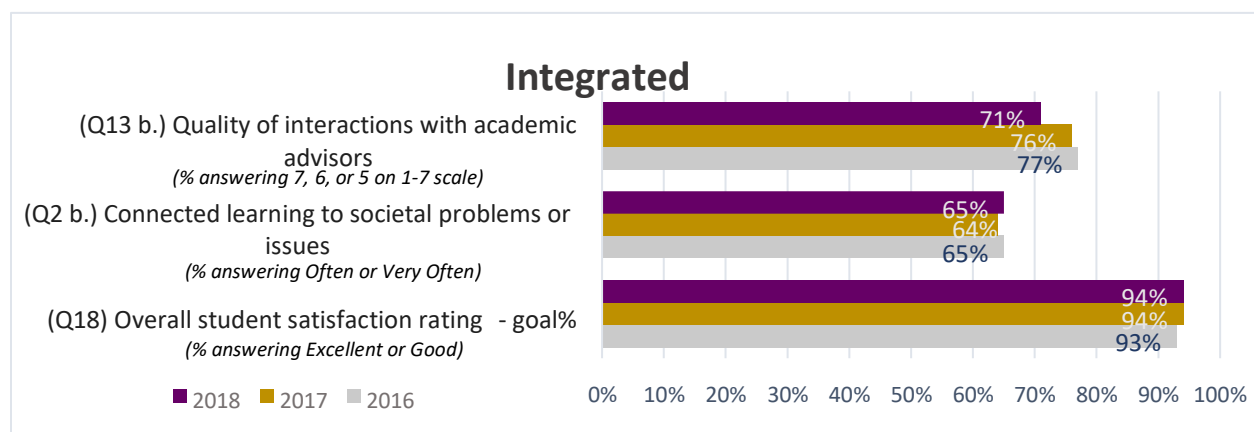
### SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

- In 2017, the University revised its academic development (ADP) program to form the new cohort-based Gonzaga Program, in which students pursue their first 2 semesters with required courses in reading, research, and writing. The Program is named for Saint Aloysius de Gonzaga, S.J., Patron Saint of All Students.
- In 2017, the Provost charged a new Retention Committee to identify ways to enhance student success. Faculty and staff serving on the committee are currently focused on targeting first-generation, undecided students, and developmental program students.

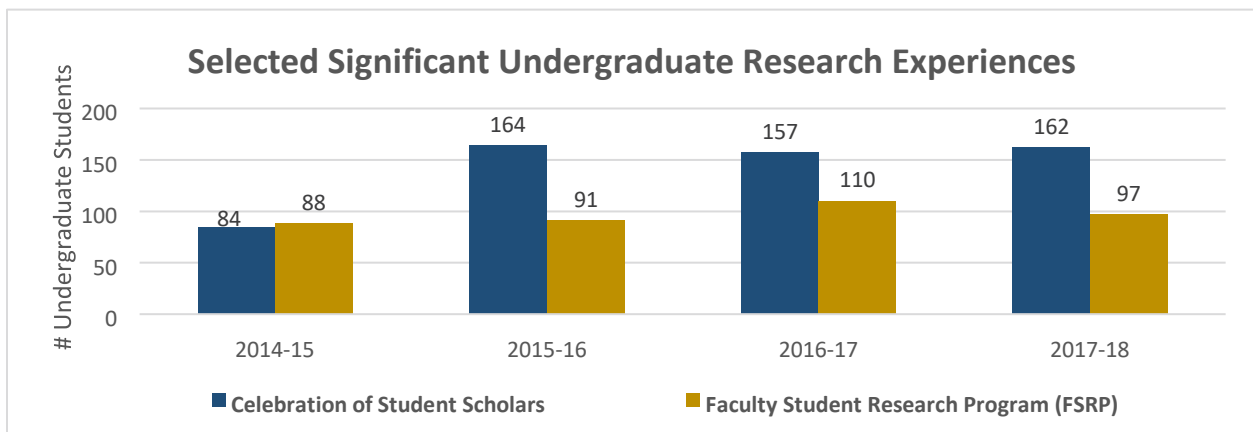
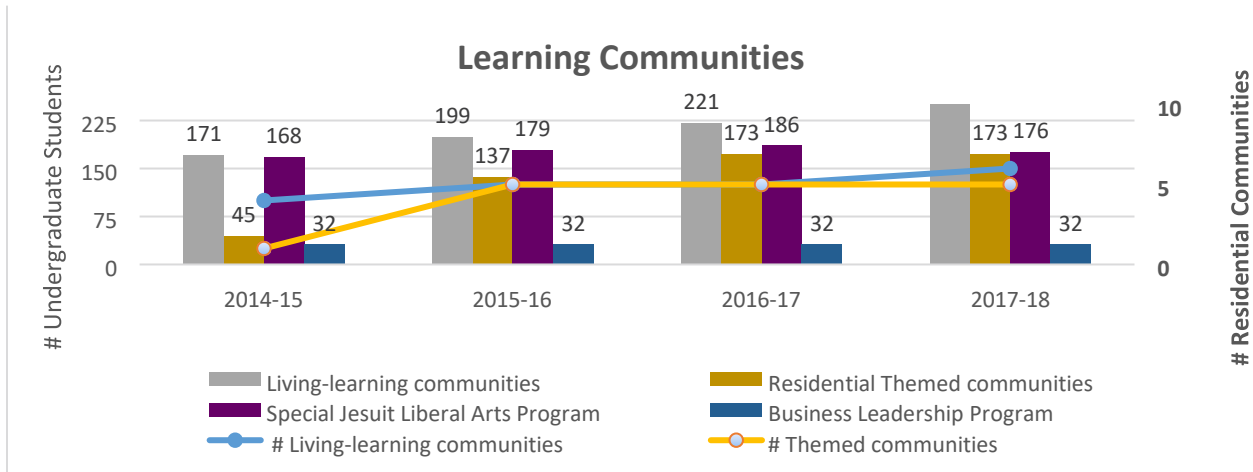
### AN EMPHASIS ON FACULTY/STUDENT RESEARCH

- The University of Scranton biology professor Marc Seid, Ph.D., was awarded \$200,703 from a National Science Foundation (NSF) collaborative research grant which will largely be used to support summer stipends for undergraduate student researchers.
- Meeting a departmental goal to facilitate the completion and presentation of student research as a high impact practice, seventeen current and past Psychology majors coauthored a total of 27 presentations with program faculty in 2017-2018. Faculty also coauthored presentations and publication with 12 students from other majors.
- In conjunction with the Humanities Initiative, the University launched the Undergraduate Awards for Humanistic Inquiry (UAHI) program, which provides support for faculty-mentored student experiences in research and scholarship conducted in the humanities.

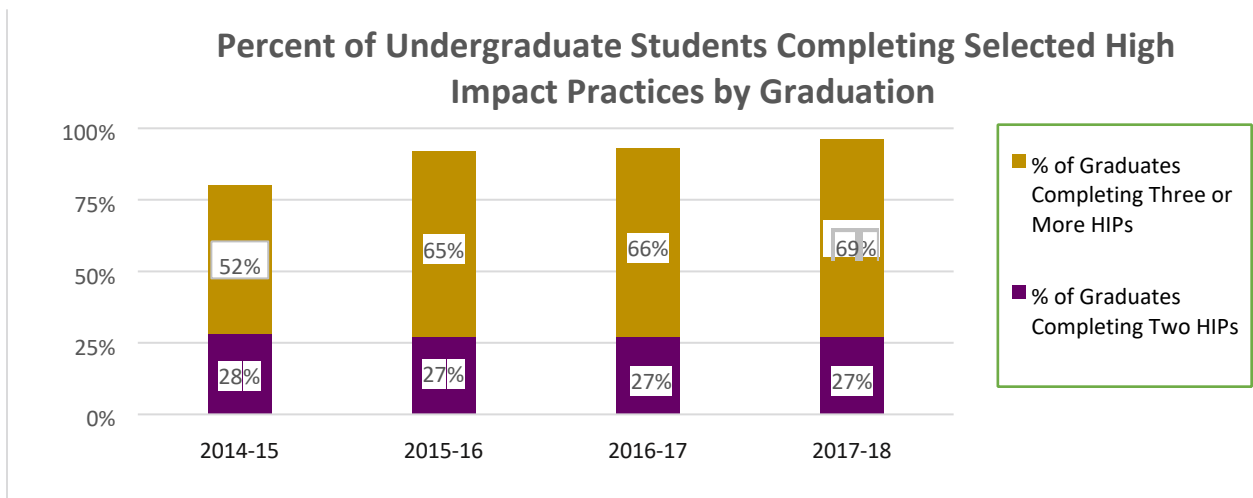
**From the NSSE: Students regularly rate their experience highly**



**SELECTED STRATEGIC METRICS: INTEGRATED**



*Additional research experiences are offered throughout the undergraduate curriculum and through special programs.*





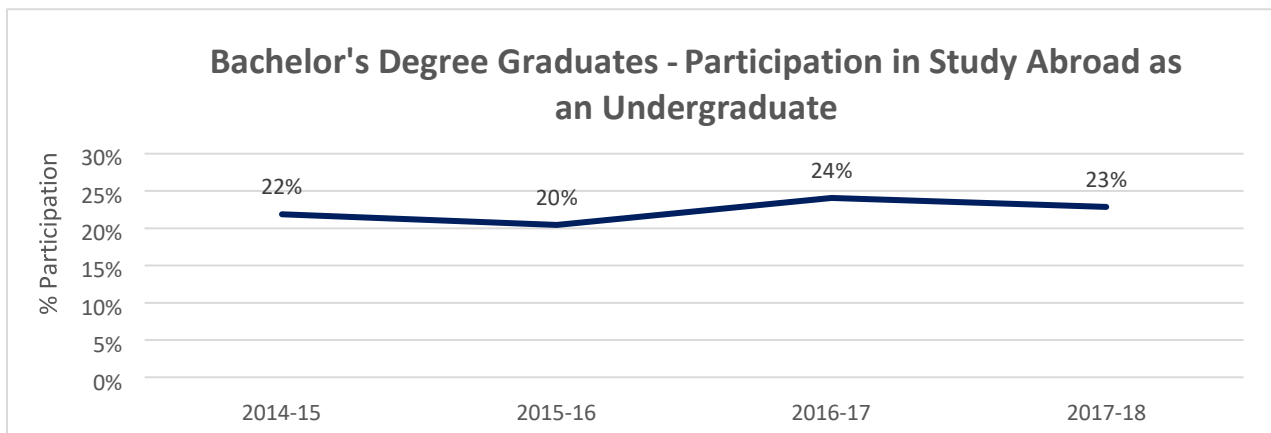
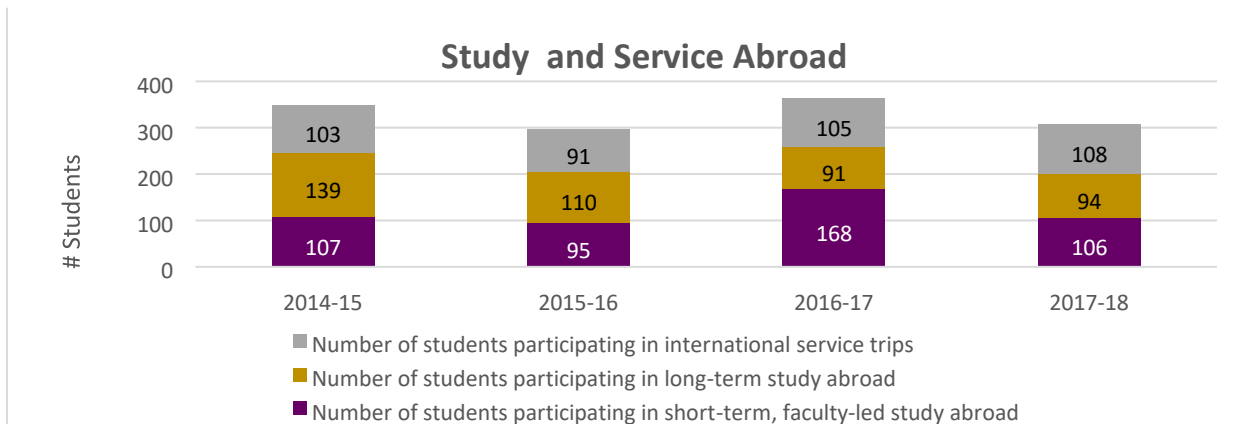
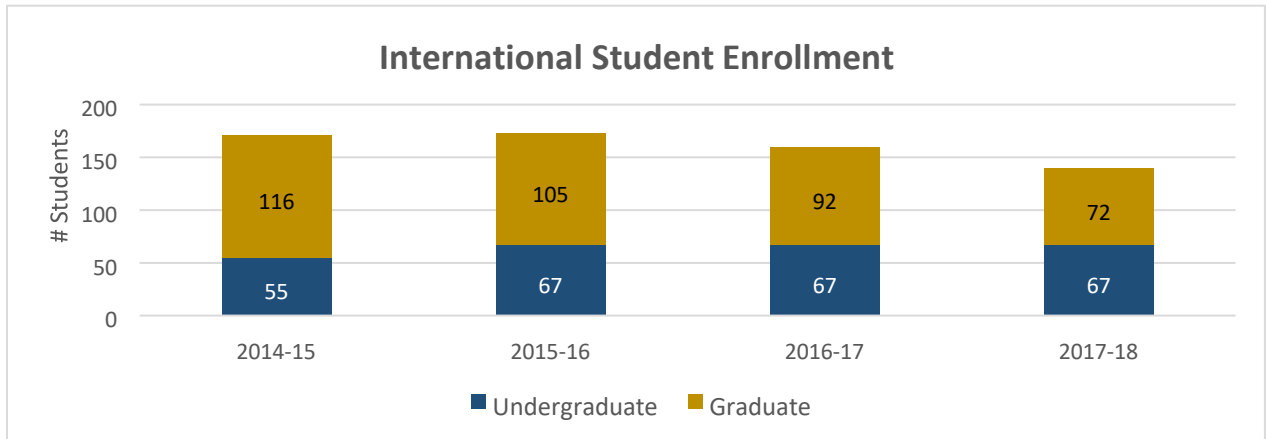
## GLOBAL

- The University has a longstanding tradition of educational and service experiences in the nation of Uganda. Continuing this relationship, SI Funding in 2017-18 supported a cross-disciplinary on-campus conference, the development of international internships, and faculty-led course exploration.
- And, a memorandum of understanding was signed in January to further develop a University of Scranton off campus site in Uganda. Nursing, PT, Health Administration and Theology departments are spearheading the development with the Uganda Nursing School Bwindi.
- Launched in 2017, the University's [Ignatian Global Citizenship Program](#) engages faculty, staff and students in experiential learning and immersion opportunities.
- In July 2018, the University of Scranton joined with presidents and administrators of more than 200 Jesuit institutions and organizations from across the world attended the signing of a charter that established the [International Association of Jesuit Universities](#) (IAJU).
- Also in 2018, the University was selected to join the Magna Charta Universitatum, developed by European Universities in 1988 to protect the fundamental values that are inherent in academic work including teaching and scholarship. Admission recognizes the University of Scranton's commitment to these values and provides avenues to collaborative work with European and other international universities.
- The Ignatian Global Citizen Program seeks to enhance student awareness and provide experiential learning an immersion programs.
- Also supported by SI Funding, the [In Solidarity with Syria](#) Initiative brings faculty, staff, and students together with the refugees in local community through advocacy and educational programming. The initiative has developed a tutoring program for local children; the Refugee Friendship [accompaniment program](#), connecting faculty and staff with area families; and the Global Tastes of Scranton event.

## FACULTY IN GLOBAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP ROLES

- Dr. Yamile Silva, Associate Professor at the Department of World Languages and Cultures and Director, Latin American Studies Program has been named president of the academic International Association of Women's studies in Hispanic Literature and Culture.
- Dr. Daniel West, faculty and chairperson in Health Administration and Human Resources, was elected as the Chair of the Global Accreditation Council with the Commission on Accreditation of Health Management Education.

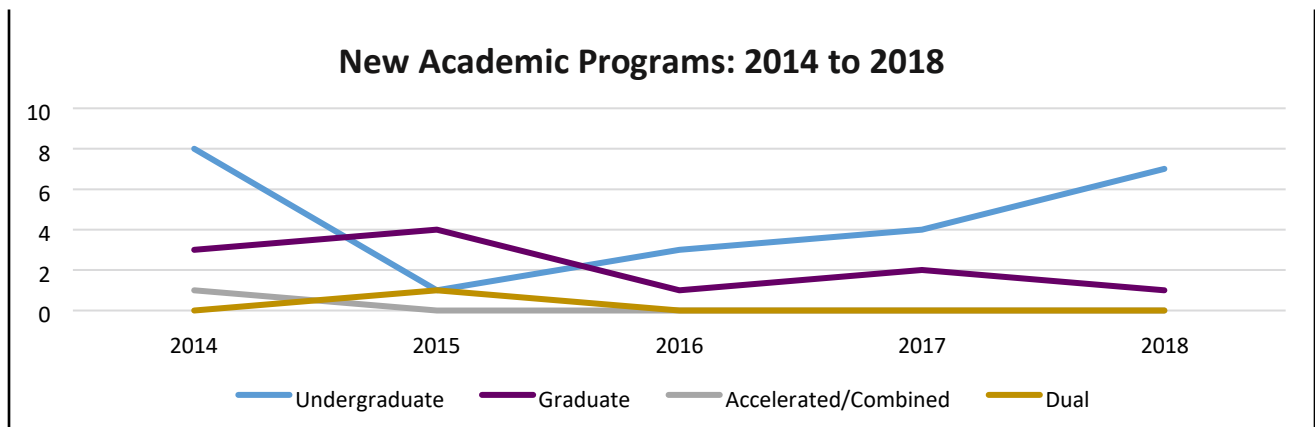
**SELECTED METRICS: GLOBAL**



## SELECTED METRICS OVER TIME: 2014-15 TO 2017-18

120% increase in the number of residential learning communities, reaching 11 total.  
31% increase in the number of undergraduate students participating in selected research experience programs offered through the ORSP.  
21% increase in the total number of international undergraduate students.  
A 3% overall increase in students of color

In addition to the strategic metrics shared within this report, innovation and growth in academic programs is an important part of our strategic plan - since 2014, over thirty new academic offerings have been introduced through the curriculum development process. Although the number of programs in any given year does not by any means paint a full picture of the work in this area, the graph below describes trends in growth, inclusive of new undergraduate and graduate majors, minors, concentrations, and certificates, as well as dual degrees:



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Includes programs approved from Fall 2014 through Spring 2018.

## THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PRINCIPLES IN ACTION: SELECTED INITIATIVES<sup>3</sup>

The planning principles outline priorities for decision making that undergird our strategic planning. The principles guide our approach to creating a strong platform from which we can make our strategic goals a reality.

### AFFORDABILITY

- A stable TFRB increase at below 3% over past three years (national average<sup>4</sup>: 2.3%)
- An average aid package in 2018-19 of \$32,000<sup>5</sup>, an increase of 6% over past three years.
- An average Cohort Default Rate of 2.9% over past three years (national average<sup>6</sup>: 10.8%).

### TRANSFORMING ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

- In 2017, a new Academic and Media Services department was introduced within the Information Technology division to better support academic technology needs. Also in 2017, the IT governance model was revised to assure broader and deeper staff, faculty, and student engagement in IT assessment and decision making.
- In spring 2018, the Office of Institutional Research was restructured to form a new Office of Institutional Reporting and Data Analytics, with a broad charge to enhance institutional data analysis and its use for decision making.
- In summer 2018, the President announced the realignment of Financial Aid from the Finance division to Enrollment Management and External Affairs, creating synergy between Financial Aid, the Office of Admissions, and broader enrollment planning.
- Also in 2018, the President announced the reintroduction of the Vice President for Human Resources position, elevating this important institutional leadership role.
- In fall 2018, the President announced the formation of a new Student Life Division, bringing together several administrative areas to better support student service and development needs.

### ASSURANCE OF LEARNING

- In fall 2018, the Office of Educational Assessment updated the University's Comprehensive Plan for Student Learning Assessment, adjusting strategies and processes to better meet the changing needs of academic and student life assessment.

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<sup>3</sup> A number of initiatives described within the Engaged, Integrated, Global section of this report also address Strategic Planning Principles.

<sup>4</sup> Source: The College Board.

<sup>5</sup> Excluding parent and private loans.

<sup>6</sup> Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid.

<sup>8</sup> As of November 2018.

- The Plan also incorporates refreshed approaches to the assessment of General Education, in accord with the 2018 Interim Framework for General Education, which outlines steps for streamlined and better integrated curriculum development and assessment.
- In 2017, the OEA led the administration of a pilot of the AQUA assessment platform, facilitating the collection and evaluation of assessment across multiple departments, an effort that is already yielding valuable data about student learning.

## COMMUNITY

- The 2016 launch of the Diversity Initiatives Program, funding projects that promote diversity and inclusivity on campus and beyond.
- The University's Employee Wellness Program continues to thrive with approximately 60% of eligible faculty and staff participating each year. In 2018, 360 staff and faculty took part in the annual Employee Wellness Day.
- In May 2017, the University introduced a new staff compensation program, establishing market-competitive grade ranges for staff positions, and updated guidelines for compensation administration.
- Supported through SI Funding, the launch of the 2017 "Bursting our Political Bubbles" initiative, an interdisciplinary effort to cultivate campus and community dialogue, and civic engagement.
- Also supported through SI Funding, the development of SafeZone Training, in 2018 implementing educational opportunities and workshops to all members of our community to support those who identify as LGBTQIA+.

### BY THE NUMBERS

Since 2017-18:

- ❖ Over \$438,000 allocated
- ❖ More than 28 faculty and 17 staff leaders
- ❖ 25 unique projects
- ❖ Two student-led projects
- ❖ Hundreds of partners and participants engaged on our campus, across our region, and beyond

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FUNDING

One of the most tangible reflections of our commitment to our strategic goals has been the dedication of funding for strategic initiatives. These projects span the breadth of our plan's and goals, many having a direct impact on the student experience. To date, projects have included efforts to expand student support and development services and programs, expand local outreach through service and academic partnerships, and exploring ways to expand our global reach. The majority of funded initiatives are interdisciplinary, engaging faculty, staff, and students in collaborative projects.

## CAMPUS PERCEPTIONS OF STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS

As part of our planning process, the opportunity to regularly reflect on progress and identify opportunities to better understand and communicate our progress – as well as prioritize the work that needs to be done – occurs at multiple levels. This includes discussions at the Board of Trustees, the President’s Cabinet, the University Planning Committee, and in the planning, assessment, and continuous improvement activities undertaken within each administrative and academic area. Our integrated [Planning and Institutional Effectiveness model](#) intentionally distributes responsibility for planning across these areas to ensure that all have the opportunity to contribute to the implementation of our collective institutional goals, and creating needed flexibility through each planning cycle.

A more formal assessment of the planning process occurred in the fall of 2017, when the University community was invited to take part in a holistic planning survey. This survey sought to gather perceptions of the plan’s progress, relationship to decision making and resource allocation, and areas to be considered as priorities moving forward. Key findings from this evaluation:

- The majority of respondents are familiar with the University’s Mission and Strategic Plan, and feel they are closely aligned.
- The majority also believe that strategic planning impacts broad decision-making and resource allocation at the University; they were less likely to indicate that planning impacts resource decisions in their college, division, or department.
- Most respondents, over half, also indicated that the majority of the Strategic Planning Principles are guiding planning and decision-making processes to a “great or moderate extent.”
- Over half of respondents believe we are making excellent or good progress on the three themes of the plan —Engaged, Integrated, Global —however, about one quarter of respondents indicated they “don’t know” about progress on each of these themes.
- In thinking about the plan’s specific goals, respondents feel that we have made the most progress on topics like student service and community-based learning experiences, student leadership development, assessment, assurance of student learning, and experiential learning opportunities.
- Less progress is perceived related to goals including affordability for students and their families, globalization in teaching and learning, and cross-disciplinary learning opportunities.

## THE ROLE OF OTHER SELF-ASSESSMENT PRIORITIES

Many of these same themes emerged as priorities within our 2018-19 Middle States Self-Study. For instance, our self-study identifies supporting global education and service

initiatives described in the Strategic Plan as an ongoing opportunity for growth, in addition to important goals including developing:

- Strategies to address current and future student support needs, both within student life and academic areas, including those related to diversity and inclusion (Engaged, Integrated, Global)
- Strategies to streamline curriculum and student learning assessment processes, including for general education (Integrated)
- Strategies to better integrate and support adjunct faculty (Integrated)

Still others relate directly to the [Strategic Planning Principles](#), and their emphasis on improving decision making and engagement in University life:

- Strategies to improve communication and understanding of roles and responsibilities related to resource discussions and decisions; policy development and promulgation; data and information related to planning and improvement; committee service and constituency representation;
- Strategies for improved self-assessment for those groups involved in University governance, and better and more consistent reporting of the outcomes of governance activities.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT THE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: [PLANNING@SCRANTON.EDU](mailto:PLANNING@SCRANTON.EDU)**

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