



**BENTLEY**  
UNIVERSITY

# Institutional Self-Study Report

Submitted to New England Commission of Higher Education

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2022



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## INTRODUCTION TO THE SELF-STUDY

As the world and the campus community began adapting to the myriad challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, Bentley University launched its comprehensive NECHE self-study. During this turbulent time, the institution turned inward, using its [Core Values](#) to guide its actions and decision making. Bentley adjusted grading policies, started an emergency fund for students, and developed rigorous, ongoing safety protocols. These values also drove the self-study process; in particular, the values of caring, collaboration, honesty, and learning have served as main tenets of this work.

The value of caring was first displayed by Andy Aylesworth, chair of the Faculty Senate and Marketing, and Rick Oches, dean of arts and sciences, who agreed to co-chair the self-study process, along with Erin Kelley, associate dean of assurance of learning and accreditation.

Andy and Rick were the first-choice candidates to co-chair this effort. Though they were impossibly busy leading faculty, staff, and students through Bentley's most challenging time, they agreed readily to serve the university in this capacity. We were fortunate they were willing to take on this role in the self-study process since they have intimate knowledge of Bentley's faculty, curricula systems, and structure of shared governance. In this capacity, Andy and Rick have modeled the ethic of care for the campus community and its future.

The university's core value of impact set the tone in planning the self-study approach. From the earliest discussions, it was clear that our self-study process and product would be intentional, thoughtful, and outcomes driven. The specific goals of the process were two-fold:

1. to facilitate a process inclusive of the entire campus; and,
2. to lead the process in the spirit of continuous improvement rather than with a focus on compliance.

Throughout the process, various campus constituencies provided their input and expertise. The core self-study team represented divisions across the university. The community as a whole were provided updates other opportunities for involvement. The co-chairs shared consistently, indicating this was not a "gotcha" process; the purpose of NECHE and the review team was to help Bentley be the best institution it can be. This messaging, reinforced by Dr. Pat O'Brien in her virtual campus visit, contributed to a sense of positivity and engagement across the teams addressing each standard.

Collaboration was crucial in recruiting a strong core team to help lead the self-study process. To ensure that all standards were thoroughly addressed, one or two community members, serving as "leads," represented each standard. In recruiting individuals to take on this responsibility, multiple factors were considered, including expertise related to the standard, deep knowledge of the Bentley community, a willingness to bring forward multiple viewpoints, and a critical eye toward improvement—a direct reflection of the self-study's two goals. Fortunately, community members' willingness to collaborate led to the following individuals agreeing to serve as standard leads:

- Sean Kerrigan—Mission and Purpose
- Kelly Giardullo—Planning and Evaluation
- Judy Malone and Bill Wiggins—Organization and Governance
- Chris Beneke and Alina Chircu—The Academic Program

- Jessica Kenerson and Mario Silva-Rosa—Students
- Mystica Alexander and Lucy Kimball—Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship
- Nancy Antunes and Kristen Jadul—Institutional Resources
- Erin Kelley—Educational Effectiveness
- Rebecca Burstein, Jeff Moriarty, and Lindsay Rauch—Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure
- Kyle McGuire—Project Data Lead

These dedicated individuals provided invaluable insight during this process. In addition to the work completed by the standard leads, many leads sought the support other community members to participate in the self-study review and writing process. Also, in our first community message, additional community members volunteered to participate in this process in various capacities. A full list of the NECHE self-study team can be found [here](#).

Further, the broader Bentley community engaged in the self-study process through a “road show” session held with key faculty, staff, and student groups; through university-wide messages; and by providing feedback on the draft report. A public notification of an upcoming evaluation visit, along with the opportunity for public comment, was published on our [institutional accreditation](#) page in February 2022.

The core values of honesty and learning shaped the NECHE self-study writing process. Before drafting began, we first had a virtual visit from Dr. O’Brien to fully prepare our standard leads, project co-chairs, and provost for the process. During this visit, candidness and a focus improvement were consistently emphasized. The teams engaged in their work with a clear understanding that they were supporting and contributing to a comprehensive opportunity to reflect on our institution, resources, and processes.

Similarly, we learned from NECHE along the way, with the co-chairs and data lead attending the self-study workshops, the data first workshop, and NECHE annual meetings. As an institution, we took opportunities to celebrate our successes during this time which included accomplishments such as managing the ever-changing realities of COVID-19, welcoming a new president, and maintaining focus on our mission and strategy. However, the self-study also enabled us to consider improvements to begin in advance of our comprehensive review visit. Examples of areas of growth and development which the self-study helped us identify included transfer-credit policies and practices, new curriculum design and implementation, as well as focused efforts in diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. Completing a comprehensive self-study during a pandemic was not an easy task, but it was a uniquely valuable one.

Finally, the university’s mission served as a broad lens through which the community viewed and engaged in the self-study process. Each standard is discussed in this report with the mission as the foundation. We are extremely proud of the work we do and the students we serve. We look forward to learning more from the comprehensive review team about how the university can continue to improve in supporting the success of its students, the effectiveness of the institution overall, and the achievement of its mission:

*Bentley University changes the world with a transformative business education, integrated with arts and sciences, that inspires and prepares ethical leaders who will confront the challenges of today and shape the opportunities of tomorrow.*

## INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Bentley University is a business university with an international reputation for excellence in undergraduate and graduate education as well as research. Historically, the university evolved steadily from a 2-year, certificate-granting institution, to a degree-granting business college, to an internationally recognized business university. The last 10 years have seen changes in the institution as dramatic as any in its history. At the same time, Bentley has steadfastly safeguarded the core values that have sustained it over its century-long existence.

### **From Proprietary School to World-Class Business University**

The Bentley School of Accounting and Finance was founded in 1917 as a proprietary school in Boston. In 1948, Bentley was incorporated as a nonprofit institution; it became Bentley College in 1961 and then Bentley University in 2008. With its move in 1968 to its current location in Waltham, Massachusetts, Bentley began its transformation from an urban commuter school to a residential, suburban, regional business college. Under President Gregory Adamian (1970–1991), Bentley established a graduate school, expanded the undergraduate curriculum, built new academic, administrative, and student-life facilities, required undergraduates to have laptops, and founded the Center for Business Ethics, one of the first such centers in the United States and an initiative that established Bentley’s profile in this emergent field. President Joseph Cronin (1991–1997) laid the foundation for the university’s international focus, launched the service-learning program, and furthered Bentley’s focus on ethics and social responsibility. Under President Joseph G. Morone (1997–2005), Bentley evolved from a regional business college to a nationally and internationally recognized business university. Bentley integrated technology into the curriculum; created of a suite of technology-focused teaching, learning, and research centers; and attracted leading scholars to the faculty, thus positioning itself as “the Business School for the Information Age.” In 2006, the institution expanded support for research and doctoral programs in business and accountancy. This stage of Bentley’s transformation culminated in the successful petition to change its legal status from a college to a university in 2008.

In 2007, Gloria Larson became Bentley’s seventh president. Her leadership informed the strategic plan—“Achieving the Business University 2009–2013”—which reaffirmed Bentley’s core strengths, including the fusion of arts and science with business, a focus on ethics and socially responsible enterprise, and the integration of information and communication technology into the curriculum. The plan also emphasized building an international reputation in research. In 2011, Bentley established a Center for Women in Business, one of President Larson’s key priorities, which was named in her honor following her retirement. The center’s goal is to become the preeminent source of applied research and programming to help women realize their full potential at all career stages while working with the business community to successfully harness that potential. The university also added several arts and sciences majors, which provide rich, distinctive opportunities for arts and science education within the context of a business university.

In addition to Bentley’s growing academic and research initiatives, numerous advancements were made across the campus since our last self-study. Aggressively pursuing green initiatives on campus, Bentley established the Office of Sustainability to lead the university in its efforts to become carbon-neutral by 2030. In 2016, Bloomberg ranked Bentley as a top-10 business school in the United States, and the Princeton Review ranked Bentley’s Career Services program as number one in the nation. Over the course of the 2016–2017 academic year, Bentley celebrated its

centennial with a variety of programs that commemorated the university’s history, fostered pride, enhanced the profile of university, and strengthened its relationship within the community. Highlights included 14 alumni celebration events around the globe, the ringing of the NASDAQ closing bell, staff community-service projects, and museum exhibitions showcasing Bentley’s rich history. In 2017, Bentley opened the doors of its newly renovated Jennison Hall, providing a state-of-the-art teaching environment featuring collaborative, multi-disciplinary science labs, dedicated research space, collaborative and flexible classrooms, and a new home for the academic services department, among other facilities upgrades. One year later, the university opened the Bentley Arena, the new home of the NCAA Division I hockey team and a location for career fairs, high-profile speakers, alumni events, and concerts. The arena is the first standalone ice arena in the United States to receive LEED Platinum certification and the first LEED-certified building on campus. In 2019, Bentley concluded its implementation of Workday as its new cloud-based enterprise management system, consolidating financial, payroll/human resources, and student information systems in one place, and representing a significant upgrade from previous systems.

## **Reinventing Business Education**

Under President Alison Davis-Blake’s leadership beginning in 2018, a new strategic planning process was launched to move Bentley to the next level of excellence in business education. The process provided opportunities for faculty, staff, students, alumni, corporate partners, trustees, donors, and all members of the community to shape Bentley’s future. A detailed review of the strategic planning process is outlined in [Standard 2](#).

The strategic planning process was guided by the university’s understanding of a range of emerging external forces, with the goal of proactively and strategically addressing these challenges and opportunities. First, Bentley competes regionally in a crowded business school market comprising some of the nation’s leading institutions. Bentley also competes nationally and internationally to recruit students. Moreover, disruptive technologies have enabled a growing number of credential-based online learning platforms such as Coursera, EdX, and LinkedIn. Taken together, Bentley faces a complex competitive environment—with more entrants likely in the future.

Second, student demographics are shifting. Nationally, the projected total number of U.S. public and private high school graduates will decrease through 2030. This well-publicized “[demographic cliff](#)” will have disproportionate impacts on schools in the Northeast. Between 2019 and 2025, [the expected number of high school graduates](#) in the Midwest and Northeast will continue to decline, while numbers in the South and West are projected to increase. [A recent study](#) by the American Council on Education found that 57.4% of incoming students tended to enroll within 50 miles of their permanent home. Moreover, the projected demographic mix of high school graduates will change significantly. Between 2014 and 2025, the number of White public-school graduates is projected to decrease by about 14% in the Northeast, while the number of historically underrepresented graduates is expected to increase by 29%. In addition, Hispanic/Latino graduates will account for 70% or more of the increase in historically underrepresented graduates across all regions. These changes will continue to shape Bentley’s recruitment and enrollment management strategies into the future.

Third, student needs are evolving. As Generation Z enters higher education, they bring new values and learning styles to the experience. Many have already engaged with online and on-demand learning resources and question the value of a one-size-fits-all educational model.

Fourth, graduate education faces continuing headwinds. The landscape of the graduate student recruitment market is intensely competitive as a result of declining graduate student enrollments and the acceleration of product life cycles for specific degrees.

These four preceding trends led to Bentley establishing a new mission statement and set of core values in 2019 to give the university a competitive advantage.

To date, the university has made significant progress in its strategic positioning, despite pandemic-related challenges. For example, Bentley launched a core curriculum redesign process in 2018, led by a series of five Undergraduate Curriculum Task Forces charged with designing an innovative, flexible, and experiential undergraduate core curriculum. The [new curriculum](#) was approved by the faculty in spring 2021 and is set to launch in fall 2022. It will offer increased student flexibility, an integrated focus on inclusive excellence, and changes to the foundational structure of the curriculum—by creating five new student learning goals and 15 student learning outcomes. In 2018, the Division of Student Affairs developed a competency-based approach to co-curricular engagement which aligns with the university’s five learning goals. In 2019, Bentley established the Badavas Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning. The center partners with stakeholders to support educational experiments, connect teaching and learning assets in new ways, and help launch pedagogically based strategic initiatives.

Another example is Bentley’s work around strengthening existing corporate relationships and exploring other mutually beneficial opportunities and multifaceted partnerships. These long-term, revenue-generating strategies help the university reduce its tuition dependency and create opportunities to enhance the student experience and faculty research.

In initiating work toward creating distinctive centers of research and practice excellence, the provost led a 2019 retreat for deans, department chairs, and selected faculty and staff to evaluate and classify the university’s centers, institutes, experiential learning communities, and learning labs. The aims of this process of rationalization and prioritization were to produce a more coherent structure and to ensure that investments and strategic efforts are closely aligned with Bentley’s mission.

Bentley has also centered on revising its graduate programs to become more market-focused and less degree-centric, serving a larger population of adult learners, including those who may not desire traditional graduate degrees. In 2016, prompted by concerns about downward trends in graduate enrollments at Bentley and large numbers of international students in some MS programs, two members of the Board of Trustees chaired a Graduate School Task Force to review the graduate portfolio and make recommendations to realign it with market demands. Throughout the 2018–2019 academic year, the deans and provost reviewed the recommendations from the task force and undertook a portfolio review of programs. The goal was to develop a plan to strengthen market differentiation of a subset of the existing specialized master’s programs, advance lifelong mastery through stackable degree and non-degree programs, and expand the BS-MS portfolio beyond the current 3+1 program in finance. Additional steps to implement the revised graduate portfolio include sharpening each program’s value proposition, updating curricula, improving marketing and enrollment efforts, and expanding Bentley’s online capabilities.

## **“Be a Force”**

As part of Bentley’s 2019 strategic planning, another call to action emerged: “Unite Behind a Strong Brand.” The University Marketing and Communications Council (UMCC) was established in early 2019 and charged with stewarding the Bentley brand. This cross-functional body included members of the faculty as well as staff from every division on campus. The UMCC received input from multiple campus workshops and presentations, the strategic planning process, Bentley’s new university mission and values, existing Bentley market research, and leading Generation Z research to formulate a plan to refresh and roll out a new brand platform. This new platform—“Be a Force”—was announced in April 2020. Since opening its doors over a century ago, a Bentley education has instilled in graduates the importance of being business leaders for positive change, no matter the industry. “Be a Force,” along with the messaging, personality, and vision that back it up, build on that tradition and will continue to distinguish the Bentley experience.

## **Mitigating the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The pandemic presented financial, operational, and pedagogical challenges that the university successfully overcame, drawing on its collaborative and innovative problem-solving culture. In March 2020, during spring break—a period of rapid viral spread across the United States—the President’s Cabinet announced that the university would delay the continuation of the spring semester until March 23, when classes would move to online learning through April 3, 2020. Due to evolving state and federal guidelines, Bentley later adopted online learning for all undergraduate and graduate courses for the remainder of the semester to allow students to continue their coursework and plan with greater certainty for the remainder of the term. The university also transitioned to remote work for the majority of faculty and staff and implemented a variety of restrictions on gatherings, facility use, and campus dining for the remainder of the spring term. Commencement activities were postponed and held virtually in summer 2020, though an in-person graduation for this class was held at Fenway Park in May 2021.

In April 2020, to mitigate the impact of the partial-semester room and board refund as well as to prepare for further revenue softness due to the pandemic, the President’s Cabinet asked all divisions to eliminate all non-essential expenditures, deferred approximately \$6 million in capital expenditures, restricted the hiring of new faculty and staff to essential positions only, extended restrictions on non-essential business travel, and eliminated regular annual salary merit increases for that year. In June, Bentley also reduced its retirement plan contributions from 10% to 5% and offered a voluntary early-retirement benefit to eligible faculty and staff to prevent significant layoff and furlough actions. These measures placed the university on a strong financial footing early on from which to address the continued challenges of the pandemic. To support faculty, the Bentley Teaching and Learning Council and Badavas Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning trained and communicated with the faculty through Bentley’s “Keep Teaching” initiative, aimed at sustaining Bentley’s commitment to academic innovation and excellence. To support students, the institution transitioned existing resources to a virtual format and developed new student resources in the areas of health, counseling, academic services, and social connections. Bentley’s admissions programming and career services activities at the end of the 2019–2020 academic year were made virtual with great success.

In June 2020, President Alison Davis-Blake resigned from her position. At that time, Board Chair Paul Condrin stepped in as the interim president and served in this capacity throughout the 2020–2021 academic year.

In preparation for the fall 2020 semester, Bentley’s Return-to-Campus Task Force (RTCTF) began meeting on May 26, 2020 and was formally chartered on June 23, 2020. The purpose of the RTCTF was to ensure that Bentley intentionally and collaboratively sustained an operational on-campus experience for staff, faculty, and students. The task force, consisting of a steering committee made up of executive sponsors and project managers, as well as of workgroup chairs, comprised over 60 faculty and staff members who met regularly during the pandemic to share information, discuss recommendations, and ensure the effective coordination of various lines of effort. In summer 2020, the task force released the “Back to Bentley” strategy for a resumption of the university’s educational mission in the fall term, including hybrid learning and reduced occupancy in the residence halls. The task force also entered into agreement with the Broad Institute for large-scale screening testing of students, faculty, and staff who would be accessing campus. In October, the task force announced plans related to the spring academic term, including the elimination of the traditional spring break. In March 2021, in response to an increase in COVID-19 cases and contacts as evidenced by the screening test program, Bentley utilized mitigation efforts targeted toward specific high-risk populations of students rather than implementing enhanced restrictions that would limit the on-campus movement of the entire student population. Later that month, the task force asked residential students to recommit to the on-campus experience and offered a prorated refund to those who wanted to opt out. In total, 1,969 residential students re-committed to the safety policies that had already existed in the Housing Contract, while 58 students opted out of housing and received a prorated refund for room and board. In May 2021, in preparation for the 2021–2022 academic year, the task force communicated a vaccination requirement for all members of the community for the 2021–2022 academic year. Overall, the efforts of the RTCTF were critical to sustaining Bentley’s educational mission through remote and hybrid learning, on-campus experiences, and robust mitigation efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Supporting Racial Justice**

Bentley’s Racial Justice Task Force was created in June 2020 in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests stemming from the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. The task force was charged with creating recommendations for the university to implement around creating a more equitable, anti-racist campus. More than 100 faculty, staff, current students, and alumni gathered online for the task force’s first meeting, which was led by Bentley’s provost and first chief diversity and inclusion officer—a new cabinet-level role for advancing institutional efforts toward diversity, inclusion, and equity. The work of the task force focused on three major areas:

- “Restoration and Education,” allowing space to acknowledge and process the impact of the current racial trauma in society, and to educate oneself and the community in preparation for the work to come;
- “Listening and Contextualizing,” engaging in active and shared inquiry into the sources of inequality on campus through listening sessions with communities most impacted by racial inequality, as well as quantitative data gathering across all divisions;

- “Framing for the Future,” developing mechanisms to sustain the commitment to addressing racial inequality by identifying key areas for investment, developing a scorecard to monitor progress, and creating a toolkit to equip community members with a framework for equity-based decision making.

To ensure the effectiveness of the task force, the co-chairs announced the formation of a 15-member core team and four smaller committees—Assessment, Communications, Community Engagement, and Racial Equity Tool Kit—tasked with engaging the broader community. In tandem with these efforts, the President’s Cabinet announced in August 2020 a set of [18 racial justice initiatives](#) spanning all divisions of the university. Additionally, the Board of Trustees created a new standing committee of the board to focus holistically on issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Through participation in the RJTC, community-wide programs to reflect and learn together, and initiatives launched by the Division of Student Affairs, students have been central to the development and implementation of Bentley’s new racial justice efforts. The university will sustain this commitment into the future.

### **Bentley’s Ninth President**

On June 1, 2021, Dr. E. LaBrent Chrite began his tenure as Bentley University’s ninth president. Previously, Dr. Chrite had served most recently as the president of Bethune-Cookman University (2019–2021) and dean of the Daniels College of Business at the University of Denver (2014–2019). Dr. Chrite’s belief that business can be a powerful force for solving the problems that plague humanity, in addition to his extensive experience leading institutions to maximize shared governance, fiscal integrity, institutional efficiency, and strategic results, will serve Bentley well in the years ahead.

### **Bentley 2030**

In fall 2021, President Chrite announced that the university would launch a new strategic positioning process: “Bentley 2030.” Over the 2021–2022 academic year, Bentley will implement a strategic positioning process to define the university’s next chapter. The process will be informed by the “Reinventing Business Education: A Future of Leadership” plan that the Bentley community built in 2018, but it will also consider the institution’s place as a transformative business university in the current moment. Higher education is evolving, and the disruptions and competitive challenges in the marketplace afford new opportunities to more effectively serve students.

## STANDARD 1: MISSION AND PURPOSE

### Description

In 1917, Harry Bentley gathered 30 students in Boston's Back Bay in hopes of educating the next generation of accountants. In the more than 100 years since then, Bentley University's mission has grown and evolved, leading the institution to a new campus and toward an expanded sense of purpose.

Since its last NECHE comprehensive review, the university has twice transitioned to new leadership, withstood a global pandemic, and engaged with a national reckoning on diversity and inclusion. Through it all, Bentley's mission and core values have helped the campus focus on what matters most: maintaining a community in which everyone can be their authentic self, embracing a distinctive, innovative curriculum that explores the intersection of business and the arts and sciences, and producing graduates with the skills, experience, and daring needed to change the world.

### Appraisal

Dr. Alison Davis-Blake became University president on July 1, 2018. That fall, she launched a strategic planning process with the goal of developing a new strategic plan that would move Bentley to the next level of excellence in business education. This fully inclusive process lasted more than eight months, providing opportunities for faculty, staff, students, alumni, corporate partners, and all members of the community to shape Bentley's future. This included workshops in which hundreds of faculty, staff, students, trustees, donors, [Global Alumni Board members](#), alumni, and corporate recruiters brainstormed and identified key success factors for Bentley moving forward. In April 2019, President Davis-Blake shared an update on the strategic plan during two open sessions, as well as at Faculty Senate and at the Bentley Staff Advisory Council. The final draft plan was presented at a General Faculty meeting and a general staff meeting.

In addition to a set of strategic assets distinguishing Bentley from its competitors, and goals and metrics for developing these assets, this strategic plan included a clear and aspirational university mission statement and a set of core values that will guide the institution in its efforts to achieve and sustain that mission.

To develop a new mission statement reflecting Bentley's identity and values as the university began its second century, President Davis-Blake convened a cross-university group of faculty and staff to review the university's previous mission statement. Incorporating this feedback, the University Marketing and Communications Council drafted a new mission statement, which was previewed at two open forums in April and May 2019 and revised further based on comments received. The final statement reads as follows:

*Bentley University changes the world with a transformative business education, integrated with arts and sciences, that inspires and prepares ethical leaders who will confront the challenges of today and shape the opportunities of tomorrow.*

Furthermore, to help frame the strategic plan under a common set of values, a working group of staff and faculty conducted a survey of community members, garnering 230 responses, and held

two open focus groups and a community forum to incorporate that feedback into a revised set of Bentley core values:

- **Caring:** The campus community practices understanding, compassion, and kindness. We recognize the whole person and their well-being, and we think beyond ourselves and our immediate goals to consider the impact our actions have on other people.
- **Collaboration:** We welcome new perspectives as we work with others toward a common goal. We seek out opportunities for partnership and teamwork, readily sharing our knowledge and expertise with others.
- **Diversity:** We are all different, and that makes our community stronger. We embrace and seek to understand those with different beliefs, backgrounds, and life experiences. We celebrate those differences as opportunities to learn and grow. We protect and affirm the right of all people to be themselves.
- **Honesty:** We act with honesty and integrity in our academic, personal, and professional affairs. We are dedicated to ethical and transparent behavior, and we hold ourselves accountable for our words and actions.
- **Impact:** We recognize our potential to make a difference. We use the power of business and innovation to positively impact individuals, organizations, and the communities we serve at home and abroad.
- **Learning:** We are here to learn and develop. We are passionate about knowledge and want to continue learning throughout our lives. We are eager and willing to try new experiences and ways of thinking. We appreciate that much of our learning will occur by interacting with others, inside and outside the classroom.
- **Respect:** We treat others as they would like to be treated. We recognize the inherent dignity and worth of all members of our community and strive to better understand and appreciate everyone. We are committed to keeping our community free of vandalism, hate speech, violence, and harassment.

Bentley's commitment to its renewed mission and values was tested within a year, as the spread of COVID-19 in early 2020 forced the closure of campus and a re-examination of how the university operated in nearly every way. The core values played a crucial role in the university's response, casting students' needs, challenges, and well-being in a new light. Bentley hired a dedicated director of emergency management to oversee its response to the pandemic, including the development of testing protocols and a path toward a return to in-person learning. The academic calendar shifted to a trimester structure for 2020–2021, giving students additional flexibility to plan their own personalized academic schedules. Financial resources were committed for the purpose of adapting classrooms and learning models to allow for global remote access. Additionally, a Student Hardship Fund was established to ensure that every Bentley student can focus on their education, even when facing unexpected duress. This fund is supported by donations from alumni, trustees, faculty, staff, parents, friends, and even other students dedicated to helping every Falcon reach the end of their academic journey, regardless of financial challenge. More than \$200,000 has been raised since the onset of COVID-19 to assist over 200 Bentley students.

In June 2020, President Davis-Blake resigned, whereupon Board of Trustees Chair J. Paul Condrin, III (Class of 1983) stepped in as interim president and a search process for Bentley's next president began.

Also, that summer, student groups brought issues of diversity and inclusion to the forefront. The Board of Trustees and cabinet immediately renewed Bentley's commitment to racial justice and began a sometimes difficult conversation about systematic racism and inequality. A Racial Justice Task Force was formed, comprising 114 faculty, staff, and alumni. For 9 months, the task force listened and learned, producing an [extensive assessment](#) of Bentley's culture and offering recommendations for creating a more equitable, anti-racist campus. In addition, Bentley's first chief diversity and inclusion officer was hired, and the trustees created a new standing committee of the board on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I), designed to hold the university community accountable, from the top, for the strategic direction around DE&I.

### Projection

In March 2021, Dr. E. LaBrent Chrite, was named Bentley's ninth president. When President Chrite began his tenure in June, he reviewed Bentley's mission, core values, and 2019 strategic plan, many parts of which had already been implemented. Following this review and listening sessions with trustees, faculty, and staff, President Chrite announced the launch of an updated strategic positioning process in September 2021, based heavily on the current mission and core values.

This [strategic positioning process](#) will rely on the thoughtful participation and engagement of students, faculty, staff, trustees, and alumni to position Bentley for continued success. The process will focus on four strategic priorities:

- student experience;
- culture and values;
- resource stewardship, revenue growth, and diversification; and,
- positioning and partnerships.

For each of these priority areas, a designated committee has begun an ideation process to further define the strategy. A steering committee led by President Chrite oversees these committees.

The new strategic plan is scheduled to launch in summer/fall 2022.

## **STANDARD 2: PLANNING AND EVALUATION**

Bentley University's strategic planning process is dynamic, oriented toward continuous review and regularly discussed with key stakeholders. Driven by the president and the cabinet, and informed by the Office of Business Intelligence, 5-year institutional strategic plans are developed using an iterative, participative, institution-wide process. Beyond providing broad strategic vision, high-level strategic plans inform ongoing divisional strategies and tactics. They also set the context for determining resource needs and allocations, and for a consistent resource focus in times of constraint. Annual adjustments to the 5-year strategy are based on experience and emerging opportunities and challenges. A rolling 5-year financial plan is maintained and presented to the Board of Trustees, together with the annual budget, every February. Prior to being submitted to the trustees, the long-term plans are reviewed and adjusted with the support and engagement of departments and divisions throughout the institution.

### **Planning**

#### **Description**

Bentley has engaged in a series of strategic planning and positioning processes since 2018. These processes began in the fall of 2018 when the cabinet undertook a thorough analysis of the prior strategic plan, reflecting on successes and modifications that responded to evolving market dynamics. The goal of this analysis was to identify how Bentley can move to the next level of excellence in business education. The strategic plan included workshops in which hundreds of faculty, staff, students, trustees, donors, Alumni Board members, alumni, and corporate recruiters brainstormed and identified key success factors for Bentley's future.

Beginning in the fall of 2021, the next phase of this process began with the strategic positioning process: [Bentley 2030](#). This process is informed by the “Reinventing Business Education: A Future of Leadership” plan that the community came together to build in 2018; it also asks the community to consider its place as a transformative business university in the current moment. As noted earlier, this process focuses on four strategic priorities:

- student experience;
- culture and values;
- resource stewardship, revenue growth, and diversification; and,
- positioning and partnerships.

Community-wide engagement is yet again a priority of the strategic positioning process. The steering committee as well as the committees focused on these four priority areas comprise faculty, staff, students, and trustees. Community engagement sessions will be held throughout the 2021–2022 academic year to ensure that all voices are heard during the entire process.

### **Appraisal**

Bentley relies on its Office of Business Intelligence for analyses of internal data and market dynamics. Its work is periodically supported by other Bentley entities, and the research conducted assists decision makers across the campus in better planning and meaningful evaluation. The office conducts institutional and environmental “scans” to understand the changing landscape of higher education and the university’s place in the market. By analyzing and disseminating reliable

information, the office promotes and informs strategic thinking, data-driven decision making, and policy formation. The office also collects and submits data for such ranking publications as *U.S. News & World Report*, *Financial Times*, and *BusinessWeek*.

Information in the common dataset, the competitor set, and our internal and external fact books enable the university to benchmark and monitor its performance against similar and aspirant institutions. These datasets are informed and supplemented by information sourced through Bentley's membership in national and international organizations (e.g., the [Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business](#)) and through various additional surveys that inform institutional planning, marketing, and recruitment strategies. For example, the university's enrollment model captures current and past enrollment patterns, and projects future enrollments, retention, and graduation rates. The model informs revenue projections for tuition, fees, and other sources of enrollment-related revenues. Bentley's graduate and undergraduate [placement profiles](#) allow the institution to track employment rates and post-graduation plans. Our College Board Admitted Student Questionnaire (ASQ), administered to both enrolling and non-enrolling admitted freshmen, enables the university to study student perceptions of chosen institution and facilitates competitor and overlap comparisons. Bentley also participates in several national surveys that collect student characteristics and expectations and measure student engagement and satisfaction over time.

Research informs and drives planning at Bentley and provides data for evaluation of performance against the plan. For instance, results from quantitative research conducted by [EAB](#) on how participants externally and internally viewed Bentley have been used widely to identify ways to best position the university in the market and to inform the strategic planning process. Academic and administrative units also use the results to plan future actions related to admission practices, curriculum development, student life, and the evolution of Bentley's teacher-scholar model. In addition, planning has been informed by the evaluations received as part of the 5-year AACSB maintenance of accreditation visit that led to 5-year re-accreditation.

With a full academic leadership team structure—provost, deans, and associate deans—now in place, the administration is well positioned to achieve comprehensive alignment among the various academic units, other divisions, and the broader institutional plan. In prior years, imperfect alignment, along with occasional conflict, between academic and administrative divisions created two issues that have since been resolved. First, the climate of higher education has been changing since Bentley's earlier strategic plans were established, and no one could have prepared the university for the looming pandemic or the eruptive shifts in higher education that followed. It is particularly clear that there will be fewer “traditional” undergraduate and master’s students in the future, and those with interest will come from more diverse backgrounds and locations. One can also assume that the trend of transferring seamlessly in and out of colleges will continue as higher education becomes more accessible and past barriers continue to break down. Students’ needs and expectations are changing, requiring more personalization, flexibility, and support systems. Moreover, students tend to be more socially responsible. Indeed, higher education and society have shifted drastically since Bentley’s last strategic plan, and the new 5-year model will be more adaptive to students’ needs and will provide the industry with the more collaborative and technically proficient students it desires.

## **Projection**

- President Chrite will continue to lead the strategic positioning process through its phases of refinement (spring 2022) and launch (summer 2022).
- The president, the President's Cabinet, and the Board of Trustees will monitor divisional accomplishments against the strategic plan and evaluate the planning process. University-wide goals and objectives will be reviewed annually and adjusted if needed after the plan launches in 2022. The institution will use a variety of tools to evaluate its progress and effectiveness.
- Senior leaders in Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management will continue their collaboration to remove barriers to transferability at Bentley to ensure long-term success in recruiting and retaining transfer students. A transfer friendliness group was launched in summer 2021, and will continue these efforts throughout the implementation of the new curriculum in Fall 2022.

## **Evaluation**

### **Description**

Planning entities at Bentley meet regularly throughout the academic year to review progress and monitor resource usage against the plan. The President's Cabinet meets yearly to review the implementation of new initiatives and to make necessary adjustments to long-range strategic and financial plans. Since the university is highly dependent on tuition and student fees, this process is iterative with the Enrollment Management Leadership and Finance teams to establish a collaborative projection. Included in this meeting is the February Board of Trustees meeting, when past strategic and financial performance against the plan is reviewed and operating priorities for the upcoming year are established. These two meetings are central to preparing the budget presentation for the Board of Trustees.

Strategic planning at the divisional level aligns with Bentley's institutional strategic planning process. For example, Academic Affairs leadership meets regularly to review progress against the strategic plan and to adjust accordingly for the year ahead. The Provost's Council, which consists of department chairs, academic leadership, and center directors, meets monthly, and department chairs in Arts & Sciences and Business meet biweekly. All department chairs meet jointly once a month to discuss implementation and larger strategic issues. Additional meetings are held, and task forces are formed as necessary to work on specific initiatives, which, over the last 2 years, have included: (1) reviewing the undergraduate curriculum program; (2) implementing a new diversity and inclusion strategy; (3) reviewing the graduate program portfolio; and (4) reviewing shared governance arrangements. Although other divisions follow somewhat different planning processes, all divisional planning is informed by and closely aligned with the institutional strategic plan.

The Division of Student Affairs, for example, recently implemented a systematic and comprehensive assessment of its programs that will be guided by Bentley's strategic plan. Most recently, Student Affairs announced four frameworks on which it will focus for years to come—Bentley Nest, BentleyPlus, racial justice, and the COVID-19 response—all of which are designed to deliver an innovative and transformative experience for students. In addition, the staff ensures that divisional initiatives continue to extend learning outside the classroom and create connections for every undergraduate student.

Bentley's educational program portfolio has evolved based on market needs and faculty expertise. All new undergraduate programs and major curricular changes require a careful iterative review by the Curriculum Policy Committee (CPC), the Curriculum Implementation Committee (CIC), the Faculty Senate, and the General Faculty. Current procedures provide significant guidance for developing and reviewing programs in the context of the strategic plan. Assurance of learning methods and outcomes are used to determine if curricular changes are needed. In all programs, learning goals and objectives are examined and evaluated according to their effectiveness in achieving discipline-based objectives, overall program learning objectives, and alignment with mission.

At the master's level, the Graduate Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Council manage the program portfolio. Reporting to the council, the curriculum committee is specifically charged with "tak[ing] a strategic view of the entire Graduate School curriculum, suggesting areas of development, revision, or discontinuation" ([Faculty Manual](#)). The Faculty Senate and the General Faculty must approve new and major changes to undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs.

## **Appraisal**

Each year, every academic department is asked to reflect on its mission, values, and curricular contributions relative to the university's strategic plan. Thus, like planning, curriculum review is a continual process, keeping departments alert for areas that need strengthening or change. Gap analyses ensure that departments update, delete, and/or refocus courses and programs to better reflect changes in the external environment as well as modifications in the strategic plan. Utilizing assurance of learning outcomes, departments focus on knowledge, skills, and attitudes that keep student learning at the forefront.

To ensure that the undergraduate core curriculum continues to align with the university's strategy and goals, a workstream within the current curriculum task force has developed a plan to ensure ongoing curriculum review. This plan is being socialized with the university during the 2021–2022 academic year, and implementation will begin in 2023.

Data provided by the Office of Business Intelligence have played a critical role in helping academic and administrative units make sound strategic and tactical decisions. For example, research revealing student dissatisfaction with registration led to changes that expedited the process and made it more collaborative.

A university-wide concern that has emerged relating to planning is the difficulty of accessing and understanding available data. To promote further data transparency and clarity, a Data Governance Working Group was established in the summer of 2021 following an external review. This working group consists of faculty and staff from all divisions, and one of its initial charges is to develop a data dictionary for the university. This group is co-chaired by staff in Business Intelligence and Information Technology.

## **Projection**

- Business Intelligence will review how departments/divisions use its datasets, with research refined to better fit the needs of these units. The office will also develop a plan to enhance recognition and awareness of the resources available for use by Bentley's academic and administrative units.

- Business Intelligence will develop a plan to extend its scope and structure to align work with other offices, including Marketing & Communications and Human Resources (HR). The plan will include an analysis of needed resources.
- The Data Governance Working Group, which began convening in summer 2021, is working to establish a data dictionary for the university, identify data needs not currently met, and improve data transparency.

## STANDARD 3: ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

### Description

#### **Governing Board: Board of Trustees**

Bentley University is a charitable corporation pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 180. The university's [by-laws](#) provide for a governing board, stipulating that the "activities and affairs of the University and the care and disposition of funds shall be by a Board of no more than 35." As such, the Board of Trustees is the university's legal governing authority; no other body is involved with Bentley's oversight or governance. Currently the board consists of [23 members](#), including Bentley's president, who serves ex officio on the board and on all committees. Aside from the president, all of the trustees are independent. The chair of the board is J. Paul Condrin, III (Class of 1983), and the vice chair is David L. Giunta (Class of 1987).

Bentley's activities and affairs, including the care and disposition of property and funds, are governed and directed by the Board of Trustees. The powers of the board include, but are not limited to, the following: appointment and removal of the president and other officers and administrative officials; approval of new degrees and honorary degrees; establishment of the annual budget, including changes in tuition and fees; authorization of the construction of new buildings and major renovations; authorization of the sale or purchase of land and major equipment; promotion of fundraising; and the authorization of debt to be incurred. The board is also involved in the strategic planning process along with the administration and faculty. The board is responsible for hiring and evaluating the university's president, although the [most recent search](#) process also included faculty, staff, and students.

Much of the board's work takes place in committees, which meet before or at the time of the full board meetings in October, February, and May, and additionally as necessary. The committees then report to the full board for discussion and action on any recommendations. The board has 11 standing committees and one subcommittee, and board members are expected to serve on two or three committees. Each committee, with the exception of the Executive Committee, has a charter setting out its mission, membership structure, authority, and responsibilities. The charters are reviewed annually and approved by the full board. The 11 standing committees are as follows: Executive, Academic Affairs, Administration and Finance, Audit, Compensation and Benefits, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Enrollment, Investment, Student Affairs, Trustee Affairs and Governance, and University Advancement. The IT/Cyber Security Committee is a subcommittee of the Audit Committee.

#### **Internal Governance**

##### ***The President's Cabinet***

The President's Cabinet includes 12 individuals, as presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: President's Cabinet**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Individual</b>
President	E. LaBrent Chrite
Provost and VP for Academic Affairs	Donna Maria Blancero
VP and Chief Human Resources Officer	George Cangiano
VP for Enrollment Management	Carolina Figueroa
VP for University Advancement	<i>Vacant</i>
VP and Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer	Maureen Forrester
VP for Marketing and Communications	Chris Joyce
Chief of Staff and Executive Director of Sustainability	Amanda King
VP and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer	Katie Lampley
VP/General Counsel and Secretary of the Corporation	Judy Malone
VP for Student Affairs and Dean of Students	J. Andrew Shepardson
VP and Chief Information Officer	Elizabeth Hess

The cabinet meets weekly to develop and sustain the university's strategic plan, to manage the university's daily operations, and to ensure that strategic directives are implemented effectively within and across divisions. Divisional budgets are developed during the year and reviewed by the cabinet before being presented to the Board of Trustees for approval at its February meeting. During the early days of the pandemic, the cabinet held daily calls as the university pivoted toward remote classes. By the summer of 2020, the cabinet met three times a week to update issues and continue planning for summer and fall operations. The cabinet received reports from Geoffrey Bartlett, director of Emergency Management Services, who met regularly with state and local officials to obtain the latest information on the pandemic.

### ***Academic Leadership Team***

Academic activities are managed under the authority of the provost and largely administered through the Provost's Council. Academic operations are conducted in a unified manner rather than through disparate faculties and separate schools. The Provost's Council meets monthly and includes the associate provosts, deans, associate deans, department chairs, senate chair, center directors, associate dean of accreditation, finance director, research council chair, teaching council chair, and the director of the library. Individuals outside of Academic Affairs are often invited to attend the meetings, depending upon matters under discussion. The Provost's Council provides input on Bentley's academic vision, mission, and strategy.

In addition to the members of the Senior Academic Leadership team presented in Table 2, the Arts and Sciences dean and the Business dean are responsible for eight and nine academic departments, respectively. The Office of the Provost also includes additional staff focused on administration and planning, strategic projects, academic affairs finance, international education, and assessment and accreditation.

**Table 2: Senior Academic Leadership Team**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Individual</b>
Provost and VP for Academic Affairs	Donna Maria Blancero
Associate Provost for Research and Faculty	Mystica Alexander
Associate Provost, Undergraduate Education	Catherina Carlson
Dean of Business	William J. Read
Dean of Arts and Sciences	Rick Oches

### ***Faculty Governance***

The Faculty Senate, the primary governing body of the faculty, includes 31 members—29 voting and two nonvoting student members. The senate represents the General Faculty in all matters of faculty governance except those that concern changes in the governance structure itself, changes in the rules governing promotion and tenure, and major curricular changes, all of which must be submitted to the General Faculty. The full Faculty Manual is available [here](#).

The Faculty Senate is responsible to the General Faculty and reports its agenda, activities, and actions on a timely basis through notices and at General Faculty meetings. It acts on its decisions and those of the General Faculty through appropriate governance channels and has the following specific duties and authority:

- to represent the faculty in all matters of concern to the faculty;
- to bring before the General Faculty for final resolution issues that concern changes in the fundamental structure of the governance system, changes in procedures relating to promotion and tenure, and Category I curricular changes;
- to recommend to the president and/or trustees, on behalf of the faculty, changes in policy, procedure, practices, organizational structure, or other matters of concern to the faculty;
- to call for and act on the reports of standing committees of the faculty and other committees of the faculty;
- to adjudicate the concerns of standing and other committees as to charge, procedures, and jurisdiction;
- to appoint faculty members to non-elective committees, administrative committees, and other groups that seek faculty representation;
- to establish standing committees, subcommittees, ad hoc committees, and task forces as necessary;
- to approve changes to the Faculty Manual, except where such changes are the prerogative of the General Faculty, and to report changes to the provost and vice president for academic affairs and president and to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees; and,
- to serve as a hearing body in cases of faculty grievances where no other grievance procedure exists.

In addition to the Faculty Senate, Bentley's faculty carry out the mission of the university through Joint Chairs Committee meetings, the Research Council, and the Teaching and Learning Council. More information on these groups is found in [Standard 7](#).

## **Student Governance**

### ***The Student Government Association***

The Student Government Association (SGA) is the governing body for Bentley's undergraduate students. Its mission is to represent student opinion, advance student inquiries, and provide students with leadership opportunities. The SGA works closely with the faculty, university administration, and other student organizations to improve the academic and co-curricular student experience. Recent examples of these collaborative efforts include, but are not limited to:

- active participation and membership in each stage of the new curriculum development task forces;
- partnership with Bentley Dining in the facilitation of the Food Service Advisory Board, which provides feedback and recommendations to enhance the student dining experience;
- support and advocacy for the international student experience through active partnership with the International Students Association;
- a recent presentation to the Faculty Senate about student mental health and student needs relative to balancing curricular and co-curricular work; and,
- the passage of a bill supporting more public/student art on campus as a means of better representing the talent and diverse identities of those within the Bentley community.

The SGA is composed of a president, executive vice president, and an executive for internal affairs. Chairperson roles exist for each committee within the organization: Academic Affairs; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Information Technology; Marketing and Communication; Food Service Advisor Board; Student Affairs; Organization Management; and Sustainability. The SGA also includes up to 35 additional elected student senators and a staff advisor.

### ***The Graduate Student Association***

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is the governing body for graduate students and works closely with members of the faculty, university administration, and other student organizations to promote personal and professional growth, to influence Graduate School policies that enrich the graduate school experience socially, academically, and professionally, and to unify students in their commitment to building relationships that establish a strong network in the business world. The GSA is composed of a president, senior vice president, treasurer, and vice presidents of diversity, communications, inter-university relations, alumni relations, related graduate organizations, and technology.

The SGA and GSA work collaboratively with faculty and administration by serving on several committees such as the Board of Trustees, Graduate Council, Racial Justice Task Force, University Calendar Committee, Faculty Senate, and University Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.

### [\*\*Appraisal\*\*](#)

### **Governing Board**

### ***Shared Governance***

As a form of shared governance, faculty members elected by General Faculty participate on the following trustee committees: Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Student Affairs. Other forms of shared governance include faculty participation in significant events and issues

important to the entire community such as the search for the new president. Further, faculty are an integral part of the strategic positioning process launched by the new president and have representation on each of the four committees included in that process.

Shared governance at Bentley brings together trustees, administration, and faculty for the purpose of sharing information and supporting decisions made by the respective parties. For example, as part of the ongoing undergraduate curriculum revision process, faculty task forces solicited input from the faculty, members of academic administration, students and Board of Trustee members. This process has worked very smoothly and has helped produce a curriculum revision proposal that was approved by more than two thirds of the faculty in April 2021.

On the other hand, the Bentley Arena, constructed in 2018, highlights where shared governance might have worked better. The decision to build the arena was driven mostly by the Board of Trustees, with minimal faculty input. Although the Board has the authority to approve these kinds of capital decisions, some members of faculty leadership believed the decision-making process should have been carried out in a more collaborative manner. After the decision was made, faculty, administration, and board members discussed the process that followed, and all parties agreed to work more collaboratively in the future.

The senate chair meets biweekly with the provost; together they explore additional ways the faculty, administration, and trustees might work together to achieve the goals of the institution. The senate chair also meets monthly with the president, which has promoted further communication and collaboration.

### ***Oversight, Assessment, and Continuous Improvement***

The Trustee Affairs and Governance Committee oversees the process of board self-assessment. The most recent self-assessment was conducted at the end of 2019 by the board chair, who reported the findings of that survey to the board in executive session. The Trustee Affairs and Governance Committee also sources and vets potential trustees to ensure that the board continues to have the skills, experience, and diversity of background necessary to appropriately guide the university. Potential trustees are interviewed by several members of the Trustee Affairs Committee and other members of the board. Appropriate background information is sought and considered before a candidate is recommended to the full board.

In 2020, the board adopted a “[Statement of Criteria for Board Membership](#)” that guides the committee in its consideration of potential members of the board. These criteria include: professional and community qualifications such as demonstrated leadership; reputation and values consistent with Bentley’s values; and willingness to devote the time and energy necessary to be an effective and engaged board member.

In 2019, the board adopted term limits for trustees. In order to phase in the term limits, the by-laws provide that trustees elected prior to 2019 are limited to five consecutive 3-year terms. Trustees elected after 2019 are limited to four consecutive 3-year terms. At the same time, the board committed to increasing its diversity and is making progress in meeting that commitment. In 2017, the board included two trustees of color and five women trustees. Today, there are six trustees of color and nine women serving on the board.

All new trustees sign the “[Statement of Commitment and Responsibilities](#)” when they join the board. This statement details their obligations as trustees, including their support of the educational mission and obligation to be familiar with Bentley’s by-laws, core values, and organizational structure, as well as current issues in higher education. The statement also details responsibilities related to financial oversight, governance, philanthropy, identification of new board members, and stewardship of the university’s resources. New trustees are given an orientation on higher education generally through a program provided by the Association of Governing Boards. Additionally, new trustees meet with the vice presidents who staff the standing committees of the board to give them an overview of the work of their respective committee as well as the General Counsel to discuss broadly the work of the board. All trustees are asked to participate in the training on “Advancing Board Effectiveness Through Financial Oversight and Governance Best Practices” provided through the Boston Consortium.

Board assessment is a continuous process. At least annually, the Trustee Affairs Committee receives a report detailing individual trustee participation in full board meetings.

### ***Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic***

Although the core aspects of Bentley’s strategy have not changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the university responded quickly to the dramatic circumstances it faced starting in the spring of 2020. Wherever possible, changes have been made to meet immediate circumstances and to align with Bentley’s longer-term aspirations, anticipating post-COVID-19 changes in the higher education landscape.

### ***Immediate Responses to the Pandemic***

The pandemic required a rapid response from the university. As such, some decisions were made on an emergency basis, without the shared governance processes that Bentley so values. For example, in April 2020, Bentley announced that, in response to the pandemic emergency, it would move to a trimester system. While the faculty were not consulted on this decision—but, of course, would have been in normal times—most understood that the emergency necessitated quick action. Following the initial response, faculty voiced their concerns about this change in schedule, and this decision was rescinded for the long-term (a discounted trimester was implemented in Summer 2021), exemplifying shared governance in action. Other emergency actions (e.g., converting classrooms to allow for hybrid modality and allowing faculty to choose their modality; concerns about community safety as the university returns to an on-campus model) continue to be reviewed as the pandemic progresses, with faculty providing feedback on all decisions. For more information on the steps taken by Bentley in the spring of 2020, please review the update letter sent to [NECHE in May 2020](#).

## **Internal Governance**

### ***Leadership Changes***

During the period between the university's last reaccreditation process and the one at hand, there have been several leadership changes:

- Gloria Cordes Larson served as Bentley's president from 2007–2018.
- Alison Davis-Blake succeeded Gloria Cordes Larson as president on July 1, 2018. Dr. Davis-Blake resigned from Bentley in June 2020.
- J. Paul Condrin III, assumed the role of interim president upon Dr. Davis-Blake's departure. Mr. Condrin continued to serve as chair of the Board of Trustee concurrent with his service as interim president.

In the fall of 2020, Bentley launched the search for its ninth president. Board Chair Paul Condrin appointed Nick Stavropoulos (Class of 1979) to chair the search. The search committee comprised trustees, faculty, staff, and students. Specifically, there were six trustees, four faculty members (including both tenured and non-tenured faculty), two staff members, two students, and the chair of the Global Alumni Board. The university engaged Isaacson Miller, a firm with deep experience identifying successful university presidents, to lead the search. At the outset of the process, there were several opportunities for the community to give input on the qualities and characteristics the next president should possess. Additionally, members of the community were encouraged to offer names of potential candidates. After a robust and comprehensive interview process, the search committee made their recommendation to the Board of Trustees for candidates to consider. The final candidates were presented to the board, and E. LaBrent Chrite was selected as the next president. His deep experience in business education at several institutions, coupled with his global business experience and his successful track record in building innovative programs, were critical factors in his appointment.

Mr. Condrin relinquished the role of interim president in June 2021, as Dr. E. LaBrent (Brent) Chrite began his tenure as Bentley's ninth president. Mr. Condrin remains the chair of the Board of Trustees.

### ***Quality Assurance***

At the institutional level, quality is monitored against a comprehensive set of [key performance indicators](#) and [risk management dashboards](#) that span Academic Affairs, Advancement, Enrollment Management, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Marketing & Communication, and Student Affairs. Additional means of assuring quality of faculty, research, curriculum, and students include rigorous admission and faculty hiring procedures, yearly faculty evaluations, committees of the Faculty Senate, including Academic Standards and Curriculum Implementation Committees, the Graduate Council (master's programs), the PhD Council, student evaluation of teaching, student satisfaction surveys, and surveys of graduate and undergraduate students 3 years after graduation to determine the relevance of their education to their personal and professional lives.

Governance of academic programs is shared between faculty and academic administration. Programs are regularly reviewed for relevance, rigor, and opportunities for improvement by the deans, department chairs, and graduate program directors. These reviews of the undergraduate core, the undergraduate majors, and the graduate degrees include analysis of strategic issues in the

competitive environment, observations from the job-search experience of that year's graduating cohort, curricular insights derived from assurance of learning and plans for future continuous improvement. These regular reviews frequently prompt incremental curricular modifications and, as necessary, more substantial revisions and adjustments to programs offered by the university. Bentley has a comprehensive [assurance of learning system](#) for all of its programs which is led by faculty and supported by the associate dean of assurance of learning & accreditation and the academic deans' offices.

Stakeholder engagement in Bentley's quality assurance occurs at multiple levels. Student involvement in quality assurance and decision making extends throughout the university. For instance, students are represented on the Faculty Senate, the Academic Integrity Council, the Honors Council, and on the committee of the Bentley Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Center. With respect to ad hoc committees, students are represented on each of the current undergraduate curriculum revision task forces, contributed directly to the development of the 2019 strategic plan, and served on the search committee for Bentley's ninth president. Alumni and corporate partners serve as members of numerous department, center, and program advisory boards.

### ***Undergraduate Curriculum Revision Process***

The core curriculum revision itself is described in [Standard 4](#). While the new curriculum is the purview of the faculty, its development was collaborative and incorporated input from the entire community, providing another example of how shared governance works at Bentley. From its inception in 2018, the curriculum revision process involved faculty task forces that were given specific tasks (e.g., the development of learning goals, student learning outcomes, and specific core structures). At each stage, input from trustees, administration, students, alumni, and employers played key roles in the outcomes, which were then discussed by the community as a whole and ultimately voted on (and passed) by the faculty. Now, as we work to implement the revised core in the fall of 2022, a faculty group is identifying and addressing potential hurdles, with the assistance of the entire community. Specifically, an input group consisting of faculty task force members, senators, the provost and academic deans, and key staff members (e.g., associate provost of academic services) meets monthly (more often as needed) to discuss key issues that arise.

### ***Racial Justice Task Force***

Bentley University is committed to becoming an anti-racist community. In support of that commitment, the university has [developed goals and programs](#) to transform Bentley's culture into one that fully embraces inclusive excellence, ensures equity for every member of the community, and celebrates our differences. Bentley created a [Racial Justice Task Force](#) comprising over 100 students, alumni, faculty, and staff volunteers to help guide the campus through the emotional response to the increase in activism following the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, and to identify opportunities for systemic changes.

The Racial Justice Task Force shared the results of Bentley's collective change process, including a list of the cultural barriers preventing change, recommendations for operationalizing systemic changes, and the resources to help guide the university community toward racial justice and equity.

Three main deliverables emerged from the work of the task force: [the Discovery Document](#), [the Racial Equity Tool Kit](#), and [the Inclusive Excellence Dashboard](#), all of which will support Bentley's efforts to make lasting systemic improvements.

In addition to the work of the task force, the President's Cabinet introduced an initial set of [18 strategic initiatives](#) to guide the university's next steps on racial justice. Furthermore, the Faculty Senate spent time in eight of their 14 meetings in the 2020–2021 academic year discussing topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, including racial justice.

### Projection

- President Chrite will lead faculty, trustees, administrators, and students through a shared strategic positioning process. The ideation phase of this process began in the fall of 2021, and the spring of 2022 will focus on confirmation and refinement. In the fall of 2022, the implementation of the plan will begin.
- President Chrite will also work closely with faculty, cabinet members, and the board to ensure that a collaborative and well-rounded provost search is launched in the spring of 2022, as Donna Maria Blancero has announced she will step down in June 2022.
- President Chrite will continue to evaluate shared governance at the institution throughout the 2021–2022 academic year by meeting with academic departments, attending Faculty Senate, and speaking with other key stakeholders.
- President Chrite will adjust the composition of the President's Cabinet to include the dean of arts and sciences as well as the dean of business. While these deans will still report to the provost, they will participate in cabinet meetings beginning in the fall of 2022. Beyond this, there are no other anticipated changes to the cabinet.

## **STANDARD 4: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

Bentley seeks to educate creative, ethical, and socially responsible leaders who are prepared to contribute immediately to the organizations in which they work, to the long-term vitality of those organizations, and to the well-being of their communities. Bentley undergraduates receive a solid grounding in the foundations of business and the liberal arts. Professional and technical development is balanced with a general education in the humanities, social sciences, and STEM fields. Bentley currently offers 28 undergraduate degree programs, an Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, six Master of Science (MS) programs, and two PhD programs.

[The Bentley University Faculty Manual](#) places the ultimate responsibility for the program portfolio with the provost and the deans of business and arts and sciences. Under Bentley's shared governance system, new programs may originate with either administration or faculty, but the faculty develops and approves programs and courses before their introduction.

[Bentley's portfolio](#) of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs is consistent with the institution's strategy and areas of thought leadership, and it has been developed in accordance with faculty expertise and interest as well as market need. Routine program reviews and learning assessments help ensure the quality of the curricula, their alignment with the university's mission, higher education trends and student needs, and the availability of qualified faculty resources and other required resources to sustain each program. New programs are introduced only after a careful iterative review by faculty governance. Bentley aims to offer programs that respond to the needs of domestic and international business and society, and to discontinue programs, majors, or concentrations that do not. This standard discusses the undergraduate degree programs, the graduate degree programs, integrity in the awarding of academic credit, and assessment of student learning.

### [Description](#)

#### **Assuring Academic Quality**

Bentley has a SaaS/Cloud-first approach to technology resources which allows students to access key resources from anywhere in the world; therefore, the university depends on information technology resources outside of its direct control. To mitigate risks and ensure a high level of access, all contracts for these resources go through the Procurement Office and are reviewed by the information security officer, with final approval from General Counsel. This review ensures high level of service level agreements. Additionally, the review by the information security officer is specifically for data security and privacy. The university requires every vendor to attest to the security and privacy controls for their systems by reviewing the SAE SOC 2 Type II report and filling out the EDUCAUSE Higher Education Community Vendor Assessment Tool (HECVAT) report. For resources containing sensitive data, the university requires vendors to sign the Data Security Rider. Additionally, Bentley provides resources to students who might have trouble accessing specific types of resources through virtual environments or applications. Both faculty and students are given instructions and support for accessing these resources through the IT support offices including [Client Services](#) or [Academic Technology](#).

## **Undergraduate Degree Programs**

Undergraduates can earn a Bachelor of Science degree in one of 17 majors (including three in the arts and sciences) or a Bachelor of Arts degree in one of 11 majors. Table 4.2 in the DFF lists the number of graduates from each of these programs. Currently, Bentley offers two optional second majors, the business studies major for BA students and the liberal studies major for BS students. These are not intended to be independent majors; rather, they complement the primary major. Students also may declare a four-course minor from among 35 options.

Bentley's formal oversight process for undergraduate academic programs is built around a committee structure that includes members elected by the General Faculty. Curricular changes with strategic implications are reviewed first by the Curriculum Policy Committee (CPC), which considers the proposals in the broad context of the university's mission and provides guidance to the authors of proposals. When a proposal is fully developed, the Curriculum Implementation Committee (CIC) reviews its details, votes on the proposal, and sends its recommendation to the Faculty Senate. CIC evaluates courses and programs to ensure that they are rigorous and coherent and afford students the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in a specific disciplinary or clearly articulated interdisciplinary area. It also ensures that courses are developed with appropriate contact hours and workload relative to the credits awarded. The Faculty Senate, considering input from CIC and CPC, also discusses and votes on all course and program proposals. For programmatic changes, General Faculty approval is required.

All undergraduate majors and minors are associated with a specific department or combination of departments (except for the cross-disciplinary business studies major, business studies minor, and liberal studies major). Instructors receive student feedback (SETs) for every course section they teach through an online system.

### ***Honors Program***

Since its establishment in 2000, [the Honors Program](#) has proven effective in attracting high-achieving applicants and offering these top students an interactive, multidisciplinary, and rigorous academic experience. The program enrolls approximately 10% to 15% of each incoming class. At any given time, the total honors cohort is between 340 and 380 students.

Honors students are required to take nine Honors courses, including up to three in their major. Students must also complete a 3-credit capstone experience that entails designing and completing an original research or creative project. Although most of these capstone courses are completed individually under faculty supervision, the Honors Program also offers a community-based research capstone option, in which a faculty member leads a group of students in consulting projects. Honors students present their capstone projects at a spring undergraduate conference.

Following the guidelines set by the National Collegiate Honors Council, the Honors Faculty Council conducted a self-study of the program in 2018, surveying current students and faculty. Since then, the director of the Honors Program has implemented changes suggested as part of that review, including a more structured first-year experience; a clearly defined vision and explicit student learning outcomes; a complete overhaul of the Student Honors Council; and an official charge for the Faculty Honors Council, which ensures program accountability and provides regular advice and feedback to the director.

### ***Service-Learning***

The Bentley Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Center (BSLCE) and its many successful programs are central to Bentley's mission. The center promotes academic learning through community-partnered service projects that students engage with via dozens of embedded and 4<sup>th</sup>-credit courses across the university's disciplines. The program encompasses service projects that meet identified community needs and academic assignments that promote greater student understanding of the relevant academic course material, social and civic responsibility, and personal growth. Projects undertaken include direct interpersonal assistance, organizational resource development, and partner-sponsored research. Approximately 850 students and 80 faculty members work with 50 community partners in 70 service-learning programs annually.

### ***Study Abroad and International Programs***

In support of Bentley's goal to prepare its students for the global workplace, the Cronin Office of International Education manages international partnerships and experiential learning programs that offer academic and co-curricular opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. The international education portfolio consists of exchange, study abroad, internships, service-learning, and virtual global learning. Strong undergraduate participation in international programs has led to Bentley's consistent recognition by the [Institute of International Education](#) as a leading institution for undergraduate study-abroad participation and for mid-length (semester) duration in study abroad.

Partnerships with universities abroad bring exchange students to further diversify the international student body, provide faculty with opportunities to develop research, teaching, or administrative interests, and host visiting scholars. Bentley faculty lead intensive study-abroad courses during the summer, spring, and winter breaks, and courses that include embedded travel components, usually during spring break. This year saw the return of internal abroad experiences for the first time since winter 2019/2020. 206 students enrolled in semester-long abroad experiences, and 84 students have enrolled in faculty-led abroad courses. Understandably, semester-long experiences are down due to travel restrictions and the ongoing pandemic, but our faculty-led courses are on par with the last year uninterrupted by COVID-19 (AY18-19).

### ***General Education***

In the spring of 2021, Bentley's faculty adopted a new undergraduate curriculum that maintains the university's longstanding commitment to integrating the arts and sciences and business, while also opening space for students to explore areas about which they have a passion or professional interest. The proposal was created by a series of faculty-led task forces using an iterative and inclusive process that incorporated extensive faculty, staff, recruiter, and student feedback, as well as research on national employment trends.

For decades, Bentley's core curriculum has been divided into two components: liberal arts (called the [General Education Core](#), or Gen Ed) and business (called the [General Business Core](#), or GBs). While recognizing the critical role played by disciplinary research and teaching, the proposed new core represents a first step toward bridging longstanding divisions. It aims to engage students with the Bentley core curriculum via a more coherent design, framed by student learning rather than siloed offerings.

Bentley last revised its entire core curriculum in 1996 (the GB core was revised in 2009). The intervening years have seen significant industry and technology changes that have altered the needs of graduates. At the same time, Bentley's market position has improved, allowing the university to attract students who might otherwise attend highly selective liberal arts colleges and comprehensive universities.

Bentley faculty approved the [core student learning goals and objectives](#) in December 2018 and May 2019, respectively. Faculty task forces dedicated to curriculum reform consulted Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) best practices on general education reform and defined student learning goals and objectives. The five learning goals adopted by the faculty are as follows:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of sustainability, ethics, and social and organizational responsibility.
2. Apply a set of future-focused skills.
3. Expand cultural and diversity competencies.
4. Communicate and collaborate in different settings.
5. Exhibit curiosity and critical analysis.

The learning goals were then broken down into 15 student learning objectives (SLOs), which are shared across the university (i.e., no longer partitioned into Gen Ed and GB areas). The latest task force used these SLOs to design the new core, organizing a structure around shared learning objectives rather than disciplinary boundaries. The new core includes four focal areas:

- Focal Area 1: Foundations. Students acquire the essentials of a university education, including communication, mathematics, first-year seminar, and IT.
- Focal Area 2: Context and Perspectives from the Arts and Science. Students diversify their education across an innovative set of six domains within arts and sciences by taking one course in each context and perspective area.
- Focal Area 3: The Business Environment. Students explore the environment in which businesses operate, including law, economics, society, and strategy.
- Focal Area 4: Business Dynamics. Students gain skills essential to what happens inside a business, including accounting, finance, and organizational behavior.

Recognizing the critical importance of communication skills, the general education requirements currently include a 6-credit sequence in expository writing; these requirements are revised in the new curriculum to include one foundational course focused on critical reading and writing and another dedicated to multimodal communication. Effective communication skills will continue to be stressed through six credits in courses that are designated as communication-intensive, at least one of which must be in the student's major.

The university is planning a fall 2022 rollout for new students. Students already enrolled will complete requirements in the current catalogue.

### ***The Major or Concentration***

[All majors](#) require a minimum of eight courses, with the interdisciplinary majors—corporate finance and accounting, economics-finance, and information systems audit and control—requiring up to 10 courses.

Bentley offers business majors in accountancy, business economics, computer information systems, corporate finance and accounting, creative industries, economics-finance, finance, information design and corporate communications, information systems audit and control, management, marketing, professional sales, and quantitative economics. Roughly 95% of students major in a business field. Currently, all business majors complete the general education curriculum, the entire General Business Core, and the specialized coursework required for their major. In the new curriculum, business majors will complete the unified core, including strategic management and business processes and systems, which are not required for arts and sciences majors.

In the arts and sciences, Bentley offers BS majors in actuarial science, data analytics, and mathematical sciences, and BA majors in diversity, equity, and inclusion, English, health studies, history, international affairs, language, culture, and business, liberal arts, media and culture, philosophy, public policy, Spanish studies, and sustainability science. Enrollments in arts and sciences majors are small compared to business majors. Currently, all arts and sciences majors complete the general education curriculum, the business studies minor, and the specialized coursework required for their major. In the new curriculum, arts and sciences majors will complete the unified core, including Business and Society, which is not required for business majors.

Students can select [from 37 minors](#), including thematic and interdepartmental minors as well as those more disciplinary-based. All 17 departments offer at least one minor. In the new curriculum, students will also be able to complete a business administration major by taking four to five foundational business courses beyond the required core for their primary major (the total added number depends on whether they couple it with a business or arts and sciences major). Business administration majors must also complete a conventional major in accountancy, finance, international affairs, etc.

## **Graduate Degree Programs**

Bentley offers a Master of Business Administration with multiple delivery modalities, six Master of Science programs, two PhD programs, many graduate certificates in fields spanning accounting, finance, analytics, and technology, as well as several options for dual degrees and accelerated graduate study for undergraduate students.

All graduate programs have a designated academic program director (a full-time faculty member) who reports to the dean of business and the senior associate dean for graduate programs, and who oversees curriculum oversight, program analysis, assurance of learning, and student advising, among other responsibilities. The Graduate Council and the Graduate Curriculum Committee manage the curriculum and academic policies for the master's-level program portfolio, while the PhD Council manages doctoral programs. The Faculty Senate and the General Faculty must approve new and major changes to master's programs. The MS and MBA programs are reviewed yearly, with a more in-depth review conducted every five-years. [Sample reports](#) are provided in the workroom.

### ***Master of Business Administration Program***

The MBA degree is designed to meet the diverse needs of today's business professionals. It offers multiple modalities (hybrid—a choice of in-person or synchronous online attendance, asynchronously online) and completion options (part-time, full-time), as well as customized

content for employer-specific cohorts. The [MBA requirements are the same across all these program options](#). The full-time MBA option is designed for domestic and international students interested in taking courses full-time for 16–24 months, depending on prior business experience. Most of these students have less than 3 years of work experience. The part-time MBA option is designed for students who hold full-time positions with local organizations. All classes are offered in the evening in a hybrid modality, which allows two attendance options—in-person or synchronously online—for any of the class meetings. The online MBA option is designed for students interested in completing the program at their own pace, from 18 months to several years. All classes are offered asynchronously online or in accelerated formats combining asynchronous and synchronous/in-person learning. The most recent addition to the MBA portfolio is the Bentley MBA at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, a customized, cohort-based MBA designed for employees and launched in January 2021. Classes are offered synchronously and asynchronously online, and in-person learning is also planned. The program can be completed in just over 2 years.

### ***Master of Science Programs***

Bentley offers MS programs in accountancy, accounting analytics, business analytics, finance (plus an optional financial analytics track), human factors in information design, and taxation. These degrees provide in-depth knowledge of the theory and tools critical to each discipline while also allowing students to explore how their specialty relates to other functional areas within an organization. Each program requires students to complete at least 10 courses (30 credits) to earn an MS degree and consists of pre-program foundational courses (which can be waived based on prior experience), core courses, and elective courses.

### ***Certificates, Dual Degrees, and Accelerated Graduate Study Options***

Bentley offers a variety of flexible, stackable, online Graduate Certificates for students interested in reskilling and upskilling in areas such as management and leadership, analytics and technology, and finance and accounting. The credits earned from these certificates can be applied toward a future graduate degree at Bentley.

Bentley graduate students can further enhance their competitive advantage in the marketplace by earning an MBA and MS dual degree by sharing up to four courses between the MBA and MS programs to further expand their skillset and obtain two graduate business degrees in less time.

Bentley also offers several accelerated graduate study options for its undergraduate students. Advanced Standing programs in business and finance allow high-achieving Bentley undergraduate students to begin their MBA and MS in Finance, respectively, while completing their undergraduate degree requirements, and share up to four courses between the undergraduate and graduate degrees. In addition, a blended-term option is available to all Bentley undergraduate students with high academic standing to allow them to take graduate courses in addition to their undergraduate courses and apply these courses to a Bentley master's degree.

### ***PhD Programs***

Bentley's PhD programs in accountancy and business prepare students for academic careers by equipping them with the research skills necessary to become productive scholars and, notably, the pedagogical skills to be outstanding classroom teachers. Students receive a thorough grounding in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, take a workshop-style course in pedagogical

techniques, and shadow an experienced instructor before teaching on their own. The program in business is a generalist program supporting students in a range of subjects, including analytics, management, management information systems, and marketing. The program in accountancy exposes students to each of the key areas in accounting and allows them to specialize in a particular discipline.

## **Transfer Credit**

There are [clearly stated policies](#) regarding credit for undergraduate courses taken at other institutions. Students may bring in a maximum of 61 credits in transfer and/or alternative sources of credit. Only two courses in transfer or alternative credit may be applied to the major. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions Transfer administers credit evaluation. Comparability to Bentley courses is determined by department chairs (or their designee) or by the transfer credit coordinator following guidelines provided by the department chairs. The associate director for Transfer Admissions works closely with area community colleges and high school/college partnerships to review their curricula and provide updated information about changes in Bentley's course content. The Cronin Office of International Education fully reviews programs attended by students studying abroad, and they are also evaluated by department chairs to ensure comparability to Bentley courses. Partner universities and affiliate programs are vetted by the Cronin Office of International Education and an international education advisory committee and approved after careful consideration of a program's credentials and reputation. The office conducts ongoing evaluation of approved programs through student evaluations, faculty and staff feedback, and periodic site visits. Once students matriculate, up to 10% of their remaining credits may be taken at other institutions following clearly defined policies. The Office of Academic Services determines course-away transferability, following guidelines provided by the Transfer Credit Office and department chairs. Undergraduate students may earn up to 30 credits through the following: advanced standing through advanced placement (AP), international baccalaureate (IB), and college courses completed while in high school.

Bentley is currently reviewing and revising its transfer credit policies and practices to ensure a streamlined process for students, faculty, and staff, and to ensure equity between transfer admissions and the course-away processes.

For graduate programs, all courses above the foundation level must be completed at Bentley in order to preserve the integrity of the degree. Exceptions to this requirement are made in rare circumstances for a maximum of two courses at the end of the graduate program.

## **Integrity in the Awarding of Academic Credit**

Bentley has a thorough system of policies and procedures in place to maintain integrity in the awarding of academic credit. The Academic Standards Committee ensures that academic credits awarded meet Bentley standards for undergraduate education. The committee, described in the [Faculty Manual](#), which comprises elected faculty members and ex-officio representatives from administrative offices, recommends policies in such areas as graduation requirements, probation, academic warnings, GPA requirements, attendance requirements, examination policies and practices, grading systems, and the evaluation of student performance. The committee also evaluates existing academic policies and procedures and proposes new policies to the Faculty Senate. Recently, it evaluated Bentley's attendance policy. Student performance is frequently tied

to attendance. As Academic Services has reported, students who join a class late or miss multiple classes during the semester often struggle to catch up. The Academic Standards Committee proposed [an attendance policy](#) specifying that, with few exceptions, a student must attend class no later than the first class of the second week of the semester. This policy was then expanded to define conditions under which a student could be removed from a class due to multiple consecutive absences during a semester.

The Graduate Council, which includes department chairs from all departments with courses in the Graduate School, oversees academic standards for the graduate programs in collaboration with Graduate Student Academic Advising and Engagement and the dean of business. The PhD Council performs the same role for the doctoral programs. The undergraduate Curriculum Implementation Committee, the Graduate Curriculum Committee, and the PhD Council review courses to ensure that they are designed with appropriate contact hours and workloads relative to the credits awarded. An Academic Calendar Committee arranges the semester schedule so classes meet for the appropriate number of contact hours. In addition, faculty members are regularly reminded of academic policies, and department chairs monitor compliance.

As discussed in [Standard 9](#), Bentley has a well-defined [academic integrity system](#) to help ensure that students receiving credit for courses are actually doing their own work. Students and faculty play an integral role in the academic integrity system. The shift to remote learning and assessment this past academic year (2020–2021) posed several challenges in the academic integrity area. Incident reports received by the Office of Academic Integrity were double the previous year's total and were well above totals from recent years as well. Most of the increase seems to have resulted from the temptations presented by remote exams.

To better maintain student compliance with academic integrity rules and generally improve learning, faculty members were encouraged by both the Teaching and Learning Council and the Office of Academic Integrity to develop forms of assessment that were open-book and required higher order thinking. Many faculty successfully adopted such approaches; however, in some disciplines (e.g.; math), this was difficult or impossible to do. To protect privacy and maintain a more equitable environment for students, Bentley has steered away from the use of proctoring services or invasive monitoring technologies unless necessary.

For each student, the Registrar's Office maintains an online degree audit summary (DAS), an updated document tracking a student's academic progress. To ensure that undergraduate students are successfully completing degree requirements, the undergraduate Academic Performance Committee meets each semester to review undergraduate students in academic difficulty. Responses include written warnings with information about available resources, restricted course load, minimum term GPA requirement, regular meetings with an academic advisor, academic suspension (with or without ability to appeal), and dismissal from the university. This procedure, including a definition of academic difficulty, is outlined in the [undergraduate catalogue](#). A similar process is followed in the Graduate School with the help of the Graduate Academic Performance Committee (whose members include the director of Graduate Student and Academic Services, faculty selected by the Graduate Council, and a representative of the Office of the Registrar), as described in the [graduate catalogue](#).

Courses offered in newer modalities (synchronously or asynchronously online) or for specific off-campus student cohorts (such as the Bentley MBA at BIDMC) are designed to be equivalent with traditional courses regarding content coverage, reflection and analysis opportunities, knowledge

and competency acquisition, and overall learning goals and objectives attainment. The university offers instructional design support as well as [additional training](#) for faculty adapting traditional courses to other modalities or student cohorts. Students taking such courses have access to and support in using the necessary learning resources, including, for instance, remote access to university library resources, online career services and academic advising appointments and events, online office hours with course instructors, and online tutoring sessions. Courses and programs offered for credit online or off campus are subject to the same academic standards as those offered on campus. Similarly, for-credit certificates consist of regular Bentley for-credit courses (in any modality) and thus meet the Bentley academic standards.

The university employs technological and pedagogical means to authenticate online student identity and to verify that the student registered for a course section is the same student who completes the course and receives credit. All students access online courses by using their unique credentials (i.e., network ID and password) that are assigned from their student records in the enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, Workday. Additionally, all students are required to use multi-factor authentication to access all systems. Furthermore, the university monitors for unusual login activity on student accounts and have automated controls to prevent or contain improper access to help ensure the privacy of the student and their data. Bentley also maintains a [public privacy statement](#) and a [privacy policy for constituents](#), and has a Data Privacy Committee charged with pursuing privacy initiatives for the university.

Bentley's degree names and structures follow practices common to U.S. institutions of higher education. Policies related to the awarding of academic credit and the requirements for degree completion are clearly stated in the undergraduate and graduate course catalogues.

## **Assuring Academic Quality**

Faculty manage assessment of student learning, with administrative support provided by the associate dean of assurance of learning, as well as a team of assessment and instructional design experts. Bentley has learning outcomes at both the institutional and program levels. Each department has a dedicated assurance of learning coordinator, who works with the associate dean to ensure that learning outcomes are assessed regularly (at least twice every 5 years) and that meaningful improvements to curriculum and pedagogy are made to maximize student learning.

### [Appraisal](#)

## **Assuring Academic Quality**

A continuing strength of Bentley's undergraduate programs is the comprehensive review they receive before introduction. New programs are subject to multiple levels of evaluation, with faculty actively involved at all stages of the process. Since its creation in 2010, the Curriculum Policy Committee has served as a forum for discussing curriculum questions with strategic implications. Because CPC's function has only been advisory, it has been a challenge to clarify its role in the program approval process and to ensure coordination with the implementation committee. This is being addressed as part of implementing the new curriculum.

Although undergraduate programs have benefitted from exciting curricular innovations and thorough review before introduction of new curricula, it has been challenging to ensure that courses and programs continue to meet their intended goals. For example, it became clear that the

Introductory Accounting and Finance course sequence, while innovative and unique to Bentley, was not meeting overarching curricular goals and even created a barrier to success for some students. Thus, one of the charges given to Curriculum Task Force 5.0 was to propose a formal and regular review process for the entire core structure. Under the plan developed by the task force, CPC will regularly measure the curriculum against broader disciplinary trends, employer expectations, demographic changes, teaching and learning technologies, accreditation requirements, staffing needs, and undergraduate recruitment, retention, and satisfaction rates. The full proposed process can be found [here](#).

## **Undergraduate Degree Programs**

Bentley's new curriculum builds on a long tradition of the university integrating business and the arts and sciences. The curriculum is meant to inspire, rather than mandate, innovation, creating space for students to pursue additional majors and minors, and opportunities for interested faculty to create them. An early example of this occurred in the spring semester when, as passage of the new curriculum neared, Sociology and Law & Taxation faculty spearheaded an effort to establish a new interdisciplinary diversity, equity, and inclusion major that includes courses in several departments across arts and sciences and business, including law, literature, philosophy, and sociology. The success of the relatively young data analytics and creative industry majors bodes well for the faculty's ability to craft liberal arts-infused majors and minors that are compelling for business-leaning students.

## **General Education**

Flexibility was another major goal of curricular reform. To increase student choice, core requirements in both business and the arts and sciences were trimmed. Going forward, students will have many new opportunities to pair arts and sciences majors and minors with either other arts and sciences majors or business majors. For many years, Bentley students had expressed strong interest in double majors. Until now, the size of Bentley's core, together with the relatively large size of its majors (8–10 courses), made such pairings structurally impossible. Instead, students were permitted to complete a multidisciplinary liberal studies major (LSM). While the LSM attracted as many as 700 students after its introduction in 2007, enrollment has fallen to about 250, while expressed demand for “true” double majors has increased.

The curriculum reform effort created flexibility by converting Bentley's longstanding, departmentally restricted arts and sciences requirements into context and perspective areas (power and institutions, diversity and difference, globalization, science and sustainability, and culture, change, and behavior) that will more explicitly identify the competencies cultivated in each course. All students will need to take at least one 100-level math course, along with Business Statistics. However, Calculus I and II are no longer mandated. The internal consensus accorded with national educational research, suggesting that calculus is not essential for most graduates and that it raises unnecessary barriers for students who attended high school lacking this type of math preparation.

Cutting requirements in both the business and general education core was a difficult task. Faculty expressed legitimate concerns about the consequences for both liberal arts and business education. There is a risk that some proportion of students will graduate from Bentley with a narrower educational experience and less exposure to the arts and sciences in particular. Nonetheless, 19 courses will still be required for business majors and 18 for arts and sciences majors, ensuring that

all students meet the student learning objectives and are adequately prepared for a diverse array of careers. To ensure exposure to the liberal arts, students will take nine courses distributed across the study of the humanities, the natural and mathematical sciences, and the social sciences. Bentley undergraduates will also take a minimum of 5 additional arts and sciences courses of their choosing.

### **Transfer Credit**

As another key feature, the new curriculum will be more welcoming to transfer students. Currently, students who wish to transfer into Bentley face several obstacles, some of which are policy-related, while others are the product of the innovative and integrated business core that the university adopted in 2010. By combining Financial Accounting, Managerial Accounting, and Introduction to Finance in two courses, and Marketing and Operations in one, the current core inadvertently poses significant obstacles for potential transfer students. The new curriculum separates those courses. Financial Accounting and Introduction to Finance will be required courses for all students. Performance Measurement (formerly Managerial Accounting) will be a requirement for business administration majors, as well as a prerequisite for majors such as accountancy. Marketing and Operations Management will also be distinct courses, each part of the business administration major.

In addition to curricular changes in this area, a transfer policy group, comprising faculty, staff, and administrators, was launched in the summer of 2021 to ensure that Bentley's practices and policies create the best possible degree pathway for transfer students. This group developed a set of "[Guiding Principles for Transfer Friendliness](#)" which was adopted by the curriculum task force.

### **The Major or Concentration**

Another novel feature of the new curriculum is the business administration major. Students who elect to go beyond the required business core courses and take three to five additional courses—Business and Society, Macroeconomics, Marketing, Performance Management, Operations and Supply Chain Management—will have completed the major (the requirements will be somewhat different for arts and sciences majors). The availability of this path should ensure that students who wish to take a more conventional path through Bentley will have a clear and coherent roadmap for doing so. Business administration majors will also need to complete a primary 8- to 10-course major in either business or arts and sciences.

### **Graduate Degree Programs**

Traditionally, Bentley has offered an attractive and diverse portfolio of graduate programs, several of which have enjoyed a strong position in many major rankings and lists. In 2021, the MS in Finance was ranked by the *Financial Times* as third among all U.S. programs and 54<sup>th</sup> among the top programs in the world. In 2020, the MS in Human Factors in Information Design was ranked as a top academic program by *UX Magazine* and seventh by Top 50 Best Value, while the MS in Business Analytics was ranked eleventh by Top 50 Best Value and, in 2018, among the top 50 analytics programs worldwide by QS World University Rankings. The *Princeton Review* named the Bentley Graduate School of Business among the Best Online MBA Programs in 2021, and in 2022, the *U.S. News & World Report* recently rank the Bentley part-time MBA program among the top 100 in the United States.

However, during the last several years, the university experienced downward trends in graduate enrollments, although enrollment numbers have stabilized recently. As a result, Bentley has undertaken a series of revisions to its graduate programs to better align them with market needs. These revisions have been informed by the findings of a 2016-2017 Graduate School Task Force chaired by two members of the Board of Trustees and assisted by consultants from Parthenon (Ernst & Young). The task force recommendations resulted in a plan to streamline the program portfolio, strengthen market differentiation of a subset of the specialized master's programs, advance lifelong mastery through stackable degree and non-degree programs, expand the advanced-standing opportunities for undergraduate students, sharpen each program's value proposition, update curricula, improve marketing and enrollment efforts, and expand Bentley's online capabilities. As a result, several struggling programs have been eliminated due to low enrollments and lack of financial viability: the cohort-based Bentley MBA and the MS in Financial Planning (eliminated in 2018), and the MS in Digital Innovation (formerly MS in Information Technology; eliminated in 2020). In addition, the MS in Marketing Analytics was combined with the MS in Business Analytics, becoming one of its focus areas, in 2020. These decisions were accompanied by the development of appropriate teach-out plans to ensure remaining students can complete their degrees as planned.

The observed decrease in graduate student enrollment has been a result of the challenges affecting the graduate business applicant pool in the United States, including a loss of international students due to visa restrictions and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of Bentley's focus on hybrid teaching in all graduate courses, the delivery of graduate education at the university has not been significantly impacted by the pandemic, as instructors were able to quickly pivot to synchronous online delivery in the spring of 2020. However, the pandemic has made it even more challenging to attract both domestic and international graduate students, who, in addition to being impacted by the ongoing health concerns and travel restrictions, have also become more price-sensitive. Total enrollment fell from 1,229 students in the fall of 2017 to 1,051 students in the fall of 2020, and is expected to be slightly over 1,100 in the fall of 2021. This is consistent with the GMAC's *Application Trends Survey Reports* indicating that many U.S. programs saw declines during this period. While MBA program enrollment has grown and several other programs have experienced relatively stable or slightly growing enrollments (MS in Finance, MS in Human Factors in Information Design), other programs have experienced significant declines (MS in Accountancy, MS in Taxation) or swings (MS in Business Analytics). In addition, the MS in Accounting Analytics has struggled to attract a significant enough number of students to become sustainable. However, the graduate enrollment numbers have stayed relatively stable from 2019–2021, and the number of total registrations in graduate courses grew slightly in the fall of 2021 compared to the fall of 2019. In addition, graduate school revenue increased in 2021 thanks in part to several initiatives.

The university has enhanced existing programs and introduced several innovative graduate programs. The advanced standing in finance program has seen continuing and significant growth, from 42 students graduating with both an undergraduate degree and a graduate MS in Finance degree in 2020 to 65 students graduating in 2021, and 74 and 94 students expected to graduate in 2022 and 2023, respectively. Building on the success of this program, a new advanced-standing program in business was created in 2020 to allow accelerated MBA study for students from any Bentley undergraduate major; the new program has already attracted over 80 students who are in the process of completing their undergraduate degree and then continuing with the MBA. Both

advanced-standing programs have proven very attractive for undergraduate students interested in accelerating their graduate studies and reducing the cost of their graduate degree and have a significant positive impact on revenue and minimal costs to implement and deliver. A customized health care-focused MBA program designed for Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) was launched in January 2021 and currently enrolls 27 students. An expansion to the Beth Israel Lahey Health network and a second cohort of up to 35 students is planned for January 2022. Additionally, the university launched several three-course, for-credit certificates, which have provided a modest enrollment increase (up to 10 additional students) each term.

The university has also started several program enhancements and revisions to increase their value proposition for prospective students. New MBA elective options are being created in areas such as sustainability and health care, and more asynchronous online electives have been developed. The Accountancy Department, in consultation with the dean and senior associate dean of graduate programs, has started an analysis of the structure and curriculum of the MS in Accountancy and the MS in Accounting Analytics programs, and the resulting revision proposal is being submitted for governance committees' review in the fall of 2021.

To enhance graduate student job prospects, the Graduate Career Development Office offers a 6-week non-credit Career Development Intensive course (CDI-501) for part- and full-time graduate students led by Gallup Strengths Trained and/or Certified Graduate Career Coaches and taught synchronously and asynchronously. This course helps graduate students develop their career toolkit, including developing self-awareness of their individual strengths, developing a graduate-level resume, and enhancing their LinkedIn profiles to stand out to recruiters. Professional development workshops offered through the Graduate Career Development Office include Salary Negotiations, Virtual Interviewing Best Practices, Case Interview Preparation, and Professional Presence. Given the large international student population, additional customized workshops include Career Options After OPT and more through collaboration with the Center for International Students and Scholars (CISS). The largest career-related events the office offers includes an annual Graduate School Career Fair attracting more than 30 recruiters to meet with graduate students, and a large networking event known as Career Conversations bringing over 130 graduate students to network with alumni every year.

The PhD programs' curricula were recently reviewed. As a result of this review, Bentley initiated structural and curricular changes to the programs. These responded to a clear need to increase disciplinary depth, to add to quantitative and qualitative methods, and to enhance teaching quality. Key changes instituted included moving the ethics and CSR seminar to an elective course for accountancy PhD students to create space for an additional disciplinary seminar; creating a quantitative pre-matriculation boot camp in response to generally weak performance in certain courses; and requiring a faculty shadow program, developed to actively engage PhD students in an undergraduate course they will teach the following semester.

### **Integrity in the Awarding of Academic Credit**

All courses and academic policies are published in the undergraduate and graduate catalogues. Course schedules are published in Workday each term. Course scheduling for each academic term provides sufficient time for students to make progress on their degree, based on a comprehensive analysis of continuing and new student degree requirements, historical course demand information, and specific program needs. The Office of the Registrar and the Offices of Undergraduate and

Graduate Academic Services, working together with department chairs, manage registrations and waitlists and assist students to ensure graduation within the expected program length. When needed, additional course sections are added to accommodate waitlists. This has been a challenging process as a result of changes to Workday and will be an area of improvement moving forward.

The undergraduate and graduate catalogues are reviewed and updated annually. All curriculum and policy changes made during an academic year are reflected in the next year's catalogs. A least-harm/most-benefit policy is employed when changing the curriculum. As such, continuing students may work toward their original degree based on the same requirements, with course substitutions allowed as necessary and appropriate. Recently, stakeholders from across the university met regularly to discuss the impacts of the curriculum transition to students entering in the fall of 2022 as transfer students; after weighing multiple options, they determined that the least harm would be for these students to enter the new curriculum.

### [Projection](#)

Bentley's academic programs are robust and innovative, reflecting the university's strengths in combining business education with arts and sciences, and providing students with both critical-thinking and practical skills for successful, rewarding careers. Areas for future improvement include the following:

- In Academic Year (AY) 2021–2022, the university will undertake a strategic positioning process that will focus on identifying sources for revenue growth and diversification, including through academic program innovation. The president, cabinet, and members of the strategic positioning committees will engage with the entire Bentley community as part of this process.
- In AY 2021–2022, graduate program directors will undertake comprehensive 5-year program reviews that will include both internal data analysis and external evaluation of strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the administration will evaluate all programs for financial viability and strategic fit. The results of these analyses will inform decisions regarding further program changes or elimination.
- In AY 2021–2022, the Accountancy Department, in collaboration with the dean of business and the senior associate dean of business for graduate programs, will submit a proposal to combine the MS in Accountancy and the MS in Accounting Analytics into a new analytics-and technology-focused MS in Accounting degree that will prepare students for the newest opportunities and challenges within the evolving accounting and other financial information professions.
- In AY 2022–2023, the new undergraduate core curriculum will be implemented by faculty and academic administration.
- Over the next several academic years, the senior associate dean of business for graduate programs and the MBA program director will work with the relevant academic departments and governance committees to create, approve, and deliver new MBA electives and concentrations in various modalities.
- Over the next several academic years, the senior associate dean of business for graduate programs, the director of graduate admissions, and Graduate Academic Advising and Engagement will work with program directors and department chairs to review and refresh the portfolio of for-credit graduate certificates and create plans and policies for alignment with and stackability into graduate programs.

- In AY 2021–2022, the PhD program director and the PhD Council will explore the creation of a revenue-generating executive track for the PhD in Business program.
- Over the next several academic years, the associate provost for undergraduate education and the director of graduate academic advising and engagement will work with deans and associate deans to review and update academic policies in support of newly identified strategic initiatives.
- In AY 2021–2022, the Registrar’s Office, the associate provost for undergraduate education, the director of graduate academic advising and engagement, and the associate deans, as well as other stakeholders, will work to further improve the scheduling and registration processes for undergraduate and graduate courses.

## **STANDARD 5: STUDENTS**

Bentley achieves its mission through a comprehensive approach that centers learning inside and outside the classroom. This is done in service to the students, [who in the fall of 2021](#) included 3,937 undergraduate students and 847 graduate students. As the world evolves, the university's programs and services continue to develop and grow to create a transformational student experience.

### [Admissions](#)

#### **Description**

##### *Undergraduate*

In 2021, Bentley received a record-breaking number of applications, 9,308, for the Class of 2025. Undergraduate applications rose 13% over the prior year, representing the largest pool in Bentley's history.

Bentley also adopted a test-optional approach as a result of COVID-19. However, for those who submitted test scores, the SAT score mean was 1320, and the ACT composite score was 29. Twenty-three percent were admitted through the early-decision programs, while 77% were admitted through the regular decision program. The class represents 29 different U.S. states and 49 different countries. Details on the class profile can be found on the Admissions [website](#).

Each applicant's file is reviewed not only for academic quality and potential, but also for non-academic characteristics and attributes. Students are required to submit an application, secondary school transcript, including senior performance or GED score report, letters of recommendation, an essay, a list of extracurricular activities, standardized test scores, if applicable, and English proficiency exam results for non-native English speakers. More formal information on Bentley's admissions policies and procedures is accessible on the Admissions [website](#).

The Office of Financial Assistance (OFA) provides information on aid application processes and materials, as well as information detailing the various sources of aid and the requirements for receiving and maintaining eligibility. OFA follows a guiding document ([Need Analysis Manual](#)) to ensure that the file review process applies consistently to all. Student award notification letters include detailed information about expected direct (billed) and indirect (estimated) costs specific to the enrollment period as well as general eligibility requirements. Also provided is an estimated out-of-pocket cost to the student after scholarship and/or grant aid is applied, estimated costs for books and personal expenses, and a link to additional financing options. Students can access financial aid information on the Financial Assistance [website](#).

##### *Graduate School*

In the Graduate School, a candidate's expected contribution and capacity for personal development are evaluated through a holistic review of transcripts, standardized tests (i.e., GMAT or GRE), resume, letters of recommendation, essays, and in some cases, interview. The university requests English language assessment scores for international applicants, but waivers may be submitted if the student demonstrates sufficient language proficiency.

Financial assistance includes both merit-based aid awarded to eligible domestic and international applicants and need-based aid awarded to domestic applicants through a separate application and FASFA process. Tuition rates and other costs of attendance as well as average merit awards are published on the Graduate Admissions [website](#).

Domestic students seeking federal loan and/or need-based grant assistance are required to file a FAFSA and an institutional aid application. Bentley follows federal guidelines, and information about the application process and the policies for receiving and maintaining aid eligibility are published on the Financial Assistance [website](#).

### ***PhD***

Bentley's doctoral programs in accountancy and in business select students who have demonstrated high academic achievement as measured by GPA and standardized exam scores. Students must also have research interests that align with doctoral faculty's research expertise. Relevant work or research experience is also considered as part of the admissions process.

Bentley recruits potential doctoral students through multiple channels. In common with other doctoral programs, Bentley utilizes the GMAT (GMAC) and GRE (ETS) databases to market its programs and identify potential applicants; the PhD director and Bentley faculty also conduct outreach at conferences. In addition, the university participates actively in the [PhD Project](#) to recruit applicants from underrepresented populations. As a member of Doc Net, a consortium of business doctoral programs which shares best practices and aims to increase applicant pools, Bentley participates in a number of recruiting events.

Applications include a personal statement, a research interest essay, and letters of recommendation. The PhD Council, the governing body of the doctoral program, makes final admissions decisions. The annual recruiting model yields a cohort of six to eight students per year. The admissions process in 2020 yielded a strong class, with 71 applicants, an 11% acceptance rate, and a 75% yield rate (eight offers, six acceptances). The average GMAT score of the new cohort was 718, and 17% (one of six) of the new cohort are international students.

All students accepted into the doctoral program receive a scholarship that covers their tuition fees for each academic year, provided they remain in good academic standing. In addition to tuition, accepted students receive stipends for living expenses of about \$35,000 per year. Students receiving stipends are expected to serve as research assistants for 10–15 hours a week during Years 1 and 2. They teach one course per semester in their third, fourth, and fifth years.

## **Appraisal**

### ***Undergraduate***

The Office of Undergraduate Admission (UGA) and the Office of Financial Assistance (OFA) work closely together to coordinate the admission and aiding of incoming first year and transfer students. In addition, the OFA provides financial aid services to continuing undergraduates and graduate students and plays a key role in the retention of students.

- UGA supports the new [First Generation Presidential Fellows](#) program by recruiting and selecting students for this small cohort of students. For the past two years, Bentley has enrolled a cohort of 14-15 first generation students who have great leadership experience and/or potential. These students receive gift funding equal to the full cost of attendance for four years. Throughout the four years, the fellows work closely with a dedicated faculty advisor and engage in many opportunities to develop academically, professionally, and personally.
- The admission staff adjusted its holistic application review process to accommodate a test-optional policy. The current focus is mainly on strength of curriculum and grades earned. SAT and/or ACT scores are not required. If test scores are submitted, they are only used to strengthen a student's application.
- UGA expanded and enhanced its virtual “visit” offerings, yield events, and reading process to address travel restrictions related to the pandemic as well as limitations and disruptions to standardized testing options.
- Admission staff identified new schools with high underrepresented student populations to visit in each territory manager's region. Staff was also tasked with making connections with community-based organizations (CBOs) in their territory.
- Recent work in the area of transfer admission has eliminated or improved some of the processes that were hindering the recruitment and enrollment of transfer students. In particular, a tool was implemented to allow potential transfer students to explore how many of their courses would transfer to Bentley. In addition, system improvements were made to the process of preparing transfer credit evaluations and degree requirement summaries.
- In 2018, Enrollment Management adopted a financial aid leveraging model to optimize the use of financial aid to meet enrollment goals. For both non-need-based scholarships and need-based grants, the econometric model predicts enrollment based on the level of gift aid awarded. This approach enables enrollment management leadership to test scenarios and predict enrollments more accurately while maximizing net tuition revenue.
- Enrollment management is implementing the BentleyFirst program for fall 2022 first-year students, aimed at Massachusetts first generation students with family incomes up to \$125,000. The program offers a scholarship equal to the difference between the tuition at Bentley and the state flagship public institution to promote the affordability of a private institution.
- OFA implemented a process that allows low-income students to waive out of the requirement to submit the CSS PROFILE form, making the aid application process more streamlined and less stressful for these families.
- As part of the econometric modeling, the financial aid packaging structure meets a higher percentage of financial need with gift aid for underrepresented students of color, recognizing that these families often don't have additional resources to cover unmet need. There are also additional grants offered to assist low-income first-year students with the

purchase of a laptop. The financial aid staff focuses counseling efforts on underrepresented students by proactively reaching out to assist with application completion and offering convenient one-on-one consultations.

### ***Graduate School***

Since the last self-study, enrollment in Bentley's MBA and MS programs has shifted from largely international (a high of 54% in 2016) to largely domestic (66% in 2019, pre-pandemic), with more students from underrepresented populations. Application volume and enrollment had been declining in response to a strong economy with low unemployment, particularly in Bentley's primary regional market. MBA enrollment declined by 35% from 2012 to 2017. Based on competitive analysis and internal review, the 1-year MBA was discontinued in 2018 in favor of an accelerated online MBA, and all MBA formats (full-time, part-time, and online) were aligned in 2019 with a standard set of curriculum requirements. This restructuring, supported by both broad and targeted marketing efforts, has spurred substantial growth in the university's MBA pipeline. Application volume for fall entry in the MBA (all formats) increased 85% from 2017 to 2021. The acceptance rate dropped from 90% to 70% in that time while maintaining a 55% yield rate (+/- 5%) to support gradual annual enrollment growth; new MBA enrollment increased from 150 in 2017 to approximately 175 in 2021.

The Graduate School has increased the percentage of underrepresented races and geographic origins among domestic students while maintaining quality, as demonstrated through performance and career outcomes. In 2012, 40% of incoming students were international, 17% of domestic students came from out of state (8% from outside New England), and only 7% of domestic students identified their ethnicity as non-White. In 2020, 23% of incoming students were international, while the domestic makeup was 27% out-of-state (15% from outside New England), with 26% non-White.

Perhaps the most impactful change in practice to alleviate barriers while maintaining quality was the phased implementation of GMAT/GRE waivers, starting in 2017 with the part-time MBA and fully implemented across all programs in 2019. The waiver guidelines were developed in consultation with faculty and informed by internal data and external research, with program-specific variations. For example, the analytics-based master's programs continue to rely more heavily on test scores and/or recent academic performance in quantitative courses as evidence of applicant readiness, while the MBA relies more heavily on relevant work experience and/or overall academic performance in a recent program. Bentley annually assesses the validity of admission standards, including GMAT score, GPA, and years of experience through an evaluation of student performance in foundation and core courses for each program.

### ***PhD***

Since its first student intake in 2006, the doctoral program has enrolled 97 doctoral students (31 in accountancy and 66 in business) and awarded 60 PhDs (21 in accountancy and 39 in business). Of the 97 students initially enrolled in the program, 14 left before completing their doctoral degree due to a mix of personal, professional, and/or academic reasons. Of those 14, four were able to graduate instead with an MS in Business Research to reflect the 2 years of coursework they

completed prior to not moving forward with the doctoral degree. Within the current PhD student body, there is an equal number of male and female students, with 4% of the population identifying as gender non-conforming. The international and domestic makeup of the current student body is 57% domestic and 43% international, with international students coming from China, Korea, Lebanon, Russia, and Turkey.

## **Projection**

### *Undergraduate*

As the University works toward the completion of a new strategic plan, The Offices of Undergraduate Admission and Financial Assistance will align its current and new initiatives with the plan. However, due to the changing demographics, there are already several areas of focus for the near future.

- The BentleyFirst program (mentioned above) is a pilot program. Enrollment Management teams will assess the results and determine the feasibility of expanding the plan to offer it to students outside of Massachusetts in order to strengthen our pipeline and enrollment of first-generation students, particularly those from outside of the Northeast where the demographic declines are not as pronounced as in the Northeast.
- The pandemic and the disruption of the availability of standardized tests hastened a movement to a test-optional environment for most schools in the U.S. Currently Bentley is test-optional for fall 2021 and 2022. Nationwide, the validity and usefulness of standardized testing is in question, especially as it relates to barriers for first generation students and students of color. Enrollment Management teams will assess the results of our first class under the test-optional policy (fall 2021) in the spring of 2022 and discussing the use of standardized tests going forward. One factor that will be part of the discussion is the recently-announced all digital SAT and whether the new testing process will eliminate or reduce barriers for under-served students.
- Plans are already underway to restructure the need-based financial aid program to provide “level grant funding” that will be guaranteed for all four undergraduate years (with caveats for some cases where there are extreme changes to financial need). This will allow families at all income levels, but particularly those who are cost-sensitive, to make a four-year financial plan to pay for college with no surprises.
- Identify opportunities for pathway programs through guaranteed admission partnerships with high schools and community colleges. The transfer population is one source of prospective students that can help combat the enrollment cliff and they will be a primary focus. Work has already begun with the creation two agreements with charter high schools in the Northeast that enroll large cohorts of first-generation students. With the new transfer-friendly undergraduate curriculum, there are now greater opportunities to create articulation agreements with community colleges. One FTE in Undergraduate Admission will be focused on identifying and creating these partnerships.

- Our male to female ratio continues to be an area of focus as we try to achieve a more balanced proportion from the current 60/40. The Office of Admissions is purchasing more names of females through our student search process and have been able to increase our female application pool, but it is a challenge to enroll those who are admitted. The Women's Leadership Program is an attractive draw for these students because of the program itself but also the accompanying \$10,000 annual award. Since the program has a capacity limit mainly due to funding, many of our admitted females are only interested in Bentley if it comes with an invitation to the WLP. This is definitely an area for growth if additional funding can be identified. Also under consideration is expanding the program to include incoming transfer students and new spring term students who are currently not eligible.
- Retention of our current students is essential to maintain our projected enrollment levels during the approaching demographic downturn. The University has started the process of coordinating the retention efforts of several key departments, and using data to identify processes that need improvement and/or students who need intervention and support.

### ***Graduate School***

The Graduate School strives to maintain racial, ethnic, gender, and geographic diversity among enrolled students. This diversity has long been a hallmark of the Bentley MBA, recently ranked #12 in [Bloomberg's first Diversity Index](#) for business schools. Potential recruitment activities are evaluated and prioritized in the context of diversity goals, including:

- Build Bentley's [recognition as a leader](#) for women in business. The university's graduate programs, including the full-time MBA, have boasted more than 50% female enrollment for over a decade compared to the national average for full-time MBA programs of just 39% in 2020 (up from 33% in 2013). Graduate Admission conducts targeted recruitment efforts at women's colleges and professional events, such as the annual Massachusetts Conference for Women in Business, and intentionally promotes university stories and programming that focuses on women in business.
- Strengthen international enrollment to approximately 33% of total new enrollment each year, with no more than 33% of international enrollment attributed to any single country. From 2012-2018, China represented more than 75% of new international enrollment each year, with the remainder from around 20 other countries. Concerted efforts were launched in 2018 to diversify international enrollment by expanding recruitment in South and Central America and developing new markets in Central Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Collaborative programming with EdUSA prior to the pandemic placed us in strong position to continue virtual programming with EdUSA offices in our target markets as well as more remote areas. Long-standing relationships with Fulbright and American Councils for International Education have also helped to attract talented students from developing countries. In Fall 2021, despite steep obstacles to international enrollment on a global scale, China and India each made up less than 30% of new international enrollment with a total of 30 countries represented. Targeted efforts will continue in these markets as we resume international travel, with goals to further develop our alumni contacts in those regions and

our relationships with feeder schools, such as the University of Kathmandu where we have recruited successful alumni and have hosted information sessions that attract many prospective students.

- Increase racial diversity to approximately 33% of new domestic enrollment. After two years of virtual programming through the pandemic, we look forward to renewing in-person events, which are much important to this demographic. Plans are in place to expand our “Discover Bentley” fly-in program that encourages minority undergraduate students, particularly from minority-serving institutions (MSI), to explore Bentley’s graduate programs. Expansion includes reformatting the program, previously delivered as 3-day program each fall, to include a combination of in-person and virtual events accessible to a wider audience as well as forming new relationships with MSIs in our target markets. We also maintain long-standing partnerships with minority-focused professional organizations, including National Black MBA Association, Prospanica, National Association of Black Accountants and National Society of Black Engineers, whose members are eligible for our Dean’s Leadership scholarship that provides 50-100% tuition remission. For Fall 2022, Bentley has secured and matched corporate funding through Deloitte’s MADE program and other pending agreements to provide full scholarships to underrepresented students pursuing our Master’s in Accounting. Graduate Admission is working closely with our faculty and university advancement staff to secure additional scholarship support that helps us build the pipeline of professionals in heavily underrepresented industries like accounting.
- Increase enrollment from beyond the New England region to 33% of new domestic enrollment, building on Bentley’s 20-year history of flexible, hybrid, and online programming as well as attracting more students to the campus

## [Student Services and Co-Curricular Experiences](#)

### **Description**

#### **Undergraduate**

Bentley continues to assess its efforts to achieve a transformative undergraduate student-learning experience. Since the last self-study, the most notable new undergraduate initiatives moving the university closer to this reality are described throughout this section and are listed here:

- an emphasis on supporting first-generation students through an institutional first-generation student success committee as well as the new FirstGen Presidential Fellows Program;
- the creation of the BentleyPlus program, providing students with an intentional approach to co-curricular learning through the selection and development of competencies;
- a commitment to gathering equity and inclusion feedback through the implementation of a student consultant group;
- the development of annual racial justice action plans created by every department in the Division of Student Affairs;
- a model that promotes 24-hour support of student mental health by creating on-demand videos and marketing a partnership with Protocall for clinical guidance;

- a pivot from a model emphasizing Title IX to one focusing on the broader cultural challenges around gender-based harassment and discrimination;
- a supplemental online orientation module that makes information more accessible to international students and those who cannot participate in the in-person program; and,
- a new athletics strategic plan to directly connect the student-athlete experience to institutional efforts.

The vice president for student affairs/dean of students serves as the senior leader overseeing the undergraduate student experience outside the classroom and reports directly to the president. There are 172 staff members in the Division of Student Affairs, which comprises Athletics; the Center for International Students and Scholars; Care, Conduct, and Title IX; Gender and Sexuality Student Programs; Health, Counseling, and Wellness; the Multicultural Center; New Student Programs; the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs; the Residential Center; Spiritual Life; Student Programs and Engagement; and University Police.

### ***Student Educational Success***

Upon matriculation, students receive pre-term virtual onboarding and engagement opportunities that allow them to connect with the community prior to orientation from the Division of Student Affairs. Bentley believes, philosophically, that students are better able to learn and access resources if they feel a sense of connection to each other, staff, and faculty. For this reason, the university emphasizes community building as a foundational component of student learning.

In 2017, the [Bentley Beginnings Online Orientation](#) program was launched, allowing incoming students to learn about the resources, services, and opportunities available at Bentley. The week before the start of the fall term, the university also offers in-person opportunities for specific student cohorts such as racially marginalized students, international students, exchange students, and transfer students, which is then followed up with an in-person program for all new students.

The first-year seminar program is a mandatory 1-credit course co-taught by a faculty member and a sophomore, junior, or senior student. The seminar utilizes classroom discussions, informational sessions, and readings that focus on issues relevant to academic success at Bentley. Each faculty member also serves as the academic advisor for the students in that class for their first year.

As a student progresses beyond their first year, the Office of Academic Services works with each student to maximize their Bentley experience by creating personalized education plans, which help them achieve their academic goals throughout their time on campus. In addition, specific populations, such as racially marginalized students, international students, and student-athletes, are assigned a secondary advisor from specialized departments to guide them on their specific needs.

Bentley has also implemented systems and structures that flag a student who may need additional support. Over the past year, academic advisors and other campus partners have used the Education Advisory Board Navigate system to document challenges students face in a centralized space. For the past 5 years, the university has also utilized a multidisciplinary [care team](#) that assesses and responds to reports of concerning student behavior. This comprehensive interdepartmental approach to student support has allowed Bentley to integrate software technology with a caring community response to maintaining a safe environment for student learning.

When students need clinical expertise for physical or mental health challenges that pose barriers to achieving their educational goals, the university relies on the Center for Health, Counseling, and Wellness. In the last 5 years, the Health Center has become one of four university health centers in Massachusetts to achieve accreditation by Accreditation Association of Ambulatory Health Care. The most recent data available from the American College Health Association indicate that 92% of students are *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their Bentley Health Center visit.

The Counseling Center has been accredited for the last 27 years through the International Association of Counseling Centers. In addition to in-person counseling visits and group therapy, the center has created a robust [YouTube channel](#) that tackles issues such as stress management, mindfulness, negative thinking, and negotiating boundaries in relationships through short videos that allow students to go at their own pace. While in-person therapy is done during normal business hours, last year Bentley instituted Protocall, a service that provides after-hours care by clinicians through teletherapy.

Personalized advising and individualized student support approaches are critical factors in the educational success of Bentley's students, with co-curricular programming complementing those efforts. [BentleyPlus](#) is a new initiative that has been in development for the last 2 years and provides students with tools and resources to intentionally select co-curricular experiences that maximize their learning and growth. The program is rooted in AAC&U and National Association of Colleges and Employers competencies to ensure that learning is connected in and out of the classroom, and to what future employers are looking for in a changing workplace.

In addition, the [Bentley Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Center](#) enhances student learning through academically connected service and co-curricular programs. The BSLCE engages over 1,000 students each academic year in intensive, 20-hour-plus service opportunities at 60 community partner sites and works with over 100 faculty across disciplines, who offer embedded and 4<sup>th</sup>-credit academic service-learning opportunities through their courses.

All the opportunities offered to undergraduate students are accessible to the residential and commuter populations. While most of the experiences are geared toward a traditional-aged population, Bentley has begun examining programs and support services to understand how to be more inclusive of adult learners who may be starting their undergraduate studies later or returning after some time away.

### ***Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion***

The [Racial Justice Task Force](#) was created in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020. The task force was charged with creating recommendations for Bentley to create a more equitable, anti-racist campus. Students played a vital role in this task force, including serving on the steering committee. Opportunities to improve the student experience at Bentley are found in the outcomes of the RJTF's work: [Discovery Document](#), a [Racial Equity Toolkit](#), and [Inclusive Excellence Dashboard](#).

During the 2020–2021 academic year, faculty and staff in Academic Affairs worked to create a [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 3-year strategic plan](#). This plan, refined with input from students and faculty, launched in July 2021. It outlines three goal areas, and 33 strategic priorities. One of the goal areas focuses specifically on the student learning experience, and seven priority areas will be addressed over the next 3 years.

In addition, each department in the Division of Student Affairs created a Racial Justice Action Plan detailing how it will advocate for racial justice and contribute to anti-racist efforts. The plans' progress is tracked and available on the Bentley [website](#). In total, there were 214 actions outlined by departments in the division, with 59% being completed, 27% in progress, and 14% incomplete as of August 2021. The objectives for each department will be refreshed annually.

The [FirstGen Presidential Fellows](#) program is a leadership development opportunity for incoming first-generation students. Through this program, students apply both classroom learning and campus involvement, creating a plan to enact meaningful community change. The program's offerings have a particular focus on developing leadership skills, namely self-awareness, problem solving, communication, and collaboration.

To support first-generation students who are not part of the FirstGen Presidential Fellows program, staff and faculty lead the First-Generation Student Support Committee to create a community of academic and social support. This group engages first-generation students by ensuring they are aware of and have access to campus resources, providing opportunities to meet other first-generation students, creating a sense of belonging and inclusivity through community building, and equipping students with tools to confidently achieve their potential at Bentley.

The [Women's Leadership Program](#) (WLP) enables women to develop skills and strategies for self-advocacy and leadership advancement. The WLP is a 4-year, selective co-curricular program for undergraduate students who identify as female. Each year of the program, WLP leaders participate in program workshops and events that build awareness and foster confidence. The program also offers a significant annual financial award of \$10,000 per year applied toward tuition at Bentley—totaling \$40,000 during the 4-year undergraduate experience.

The [Student Equity and Inclusion Consultant Group](#) works with the departments, committees, and staff within the Division of Student Affairs to provide insight, feedback, and recommendations on efforts around equity and justice. The group is composed of 10 students who have a desire to help Bentley become a more equitable and just community by providing input and perspective on changes that will directly impact the student experience.

Bentley has 14 recognized cultural student organizations, along with the Identity and Advocacy Student Council, which comprising leadership from these organizations. Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) has also embedded racial justice in its leadership training. Students in the FSL community began a Social Justice Working Group in the summer of 2020 which will continue as a part of FSL's new strategic plan. Each chapter has at least one member on the working group to ensure it is representative and a community-wide commitment.

### ***Student Leadership and Co-Curricular Opportunities***

There are six governing student organizations that sponsor an election process. While the Student Government Association is the overarching representative organization for the student body, it is supported by five other governing organizations specializing in different aspects of campus life. These include the Allocations and Internal Audit group, which is responsible for the student activity fee, the Student-Athlete Advisory Council, Greek Activities Council, Panhellenic Council, and the Residence Hall Association. This year, the Bentley Coalition was formed, a compilation of leaders each of the class cabinets and student government. This group meets weekly, and this

has represented a student-driven approach to breaking down barriers and creating better communication between organizations and Bentley staff.

There are 115 official student organizations with over 600 leadership positions available. To integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion into leadership roles, Bentley has developed training based in the Social Action, Leadership, and Transformation (SALT) model. The [SALT model](#) was developed through a collaboration of the National Center for Institutional Diversity at the University of Michigan and the National Institute for Transformation and Equity at Indiana University to explore the role that individual leaders play in creating a more just society. This training is required for student leaders and student employees and provides a consistent foundation for racial justice which includes outcomes in critical consciousness, commitment to justice, equity in purpose, value in collective action, controversy with courage, and coalescence.

In the last full year on campus prior to the pandemic, there were 120 programs sponsored by student organizations, with a total attendance of 22,053 community members. The programs offered are both co-curricular (promoting learning) and extracurricular (promoting peer-to-peer connection) and are categorized in six main areas: academically focused, arts and recreation, club sports, student engagement, fraternity and sorority life, and identity and advocacy. Data collected annually have demonstrated that nine out of 10 undergraduate students belong to at least one student organization, one in three students has indicated they are highly engaged in their organization, and one in 10 holds a leadership position.

### ***Athletics***

The Bentley Athletics program comprises 23 varsity sports offering a competitive experience for over 573 student-athletes. All the teams compete at the Division II level in the Northeast 10 Conference, except for the Division I men's ice hockey program, which competes in the Atlantic Hockey Conference.

In the fall of 2019, Bentley embarked on a strategic planning process to ensure that the Athletics program is aligned with the overall goals of the institution. A Strategic Planning Leadership Team (SPLT) comprising senior campus administrators and two trustees was assembled to provide foundational, guiding components of the plan. The SPLT created a two-phase strategic planning process defined by setting the vision and creating the strategy. Over the next 5 months, over 40 members of the community formed cross-divisional working groups to develop a 5-year (2020–2025) strategic plan for Bentley Athletics. The five focus areas of the plan are organizational leadership, competitive success, student-athlete experience, community engagement and brand, and fiscal management and sustainability. The new [athletics strategic plan](#) was approved on July 1, 2020.

Last year, there were 81 student-athletes on the College Sports Information Directors of America's Academic All-America Team. Also, 47% of Bentley's athletes made the dean's list or president's list, and the average cumulative GPA of student-athletes was 3.20. The university continuously outperforms other U.S. schools in academic success rate, scoring a 99% compared to the 76% average in Division II and 93% average in the Northeast 10 Conference.

In addition to NCAA athletics, Bentley supports eight intramural team sports, in which 1,412 individual students participated last year, and 12 club sports with 175 participants.

### ***Student Community Standards and Accountability***

Community standards are guided by the Bentley Core Values and reinforced in detail through the [Student Handbook](#), which is published on the university's website and emailed to students every semester. New undergraduate students are required to complete online modules on alcohol and other drug use and abuse, sexual assault prevention, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Bentley's conduct system holds students accountable for its community standards. The conduct process is outlined on the university's [website](#). Bentley has built strong partnerships between the conduct office, the Residential Center, University Police, Athletics, and Fraternity and Sorority Life to build trust within specific populations and with the Waltham community more broadly. The leaders of each of these departments meet weekly.

The Residential Center responds to most conduct-related incidents. In 2021, the staff responded to over 520 hours of duty-related calls through the on-call system. The number of duty-related hours spent responding to calls in 2021 was similar to the last three years. While Bentley had fewer students on campus last year due to the pandemic, the needs of students on campus were greater given increased interactions and concerns with public health. The Residential Center on-call structure partners closely with University Police; their response process ensures that a Residential Center staff member and a member of University Police respond to conduct-related calls. As part of the Division of Student Affairs, University Police officers are part of divisional racial justice education and action planning. They also attend bias training and de-escalation training and have created strong relationships with the BIPOC community through programs like Bridging the Gap and Know Your Rights.

Another process holding students accountable is Bentley's gender-based harassment and discrimination policy, as defined and supported by the U.S. Department of Education. [This policy](#) provides an overview of important definitions, methods of reporting an incident, and prohibited conduct on campus, as well as two different adjudication processes through which alleged violations will be processed: The Title IX adjudication process and the gender-based harassment and discrimination adjudication process. This policy and the accompanying appendices supplement the Student Handbook. While the university continues to ensure that its Title IX processes are aligned with governmental regulations, Bentley is also making a concerted effort to separate the Title IX adjudication process from gender-based harassment and discrimination more broadly. The university has convened a group of staff and faculty to better understand the problem and strategize how to better navigate a balance between compliance (Title IX) and care (providing support to and advocating for survivors).

Bentley understands that students may want to report an incident but not go through the formal conduct system. The [Bias Incident Response team](#) exemplifies a process that allows students to report an incident, connects them to appropriate resources, and allows the institution to respond in situations that may impact the overall campus culture around diversity and inclusion. To better understand the impact and efficacy of this group, and to promote transparency, a [semesterly report](#) is now published.

### ***Graduate School***

Dedicated professional staff within the Bentley Graduate School of Business provide specific graduate-level resources and support. Due to the diversity of the graduate student population,

including degree program, full-/part-time status, international visa type, and where they are in their career journey, the staff provides personalized support. In addition, graduate students have access to many resources and services provided by the Division of Student Affairs.

Graduate Academic Advising and Engagement is housed in Academic Affairs. Incoming graduate students receive access to an [Online New Graduate Student Guide](#), which offers a comprehensive overview of the offices and services available to graduate students. Graduate students are also invited to an orientation program prior to the start of classes which gives them an opportunity to learn about research tools, academic policies, and career resources. Students have dedicated time to meet with other graduate students in their degree program and with their program director.

Each graduate academic advisor is trained to advise graduate students for all the programs, and this team also coordinates course-specific tutors for graduate-level courses as well as organizational coaches available for graduate students who need additional support. Doctoral students are advised by and receive career placement support from the director of the PhD program and individually by their dissertation supervisor and committees.

In addition to academic advising, Graduate Academic Advising and Engagement offers programs designed to develop a sense of community among graduate students and to promote personal and professional development. In the summer of 2022, Bentley began GradEngage, a monthly programming series focusing on academic success strategies. Most of the community-building efforts come from the Graduate Student Association and the 12 other graduate student organizations. The GSA has a representative on both the Faculty Senate and Graduate Council who formulates academic policies, monitors adherence to standards, and advises the dean on new programs and initiatives.

## **Appraisal**

### *Undergraduate*

The Business Intelligence and Enrollment Systems office conducts studies of students, faculty, and staff using both internal and external data sources to advance institutional self-study. Bentley participates consistently in the following national surveys: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Education Advisory Board Climate Survey (gender-based harassment and discrimination), Climate Survey (focusing on the experiences of racially marginalized students), and the American College Health Assessment (ACHA). All students—full-time, part-time, online, and in-person—are asked to participate in these surveys. The gathered survey data are reviewed by leadership in the Division of Student Affairs and then shared more broadly with all 190 staff members. The data are easily accessible in a divisional Microsoft Teams site and referred to throughout the year as programs are developed or revised.

An example of a change implemented from these surveys came from the ACHA data. While the ACHA survey consistently demonstrates a high level of satisfaction from students, there had been comments indicating they wanted to extend the overall hours of service from Health, Counseling, and Wellness. With this information, Bentley partnered with [Protocall](#) to ensure that students had access to mental health care any time, day or night. While the pandemic has limited the breadth of services offered by clinical health staff, with more time focused on COVID-19, the university has extended the work that nurse practitioners are doing to provide coverage nights and weekends for acute illness.

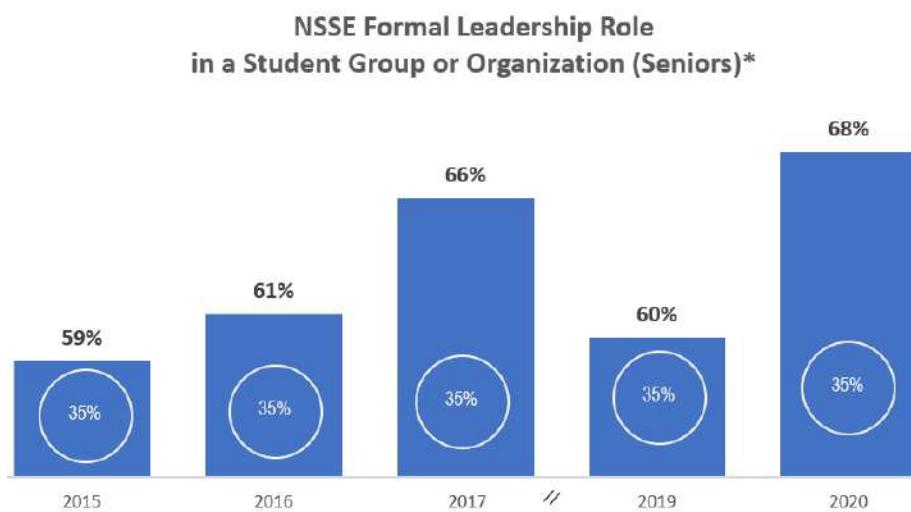
Additionally, the annual climate survey found that 76% of international students, LGBTQ+ students, and students with disabilities were aware of services and programs, while only 67% of women were. Staff have invested more time creating a narrative around the services offered and have often tailored the delivery of the information by student demographic. For example, marketing information for BentleyPlus were translated into five languages to ensure clarity and access. In addition, a resource sheet was placed in every residence hall room, outlining services available for gender-based harassment and discrimination support.

Based on year-over-year assessment efforts, Bentley develops a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) that relate directly to the co-curricular student experience. These KPIs, outlined in the following sections, are managed by the vice president for student affairs and are reported to the Board of Trustees three times per year.

#### ***Formal Leadership Role in a Student Group or Organization (NSSE)***

Bentley uses this KPI as a metric for deep, meaningful engagement with the university community as well as leadership development in line with the strategic plan and mission statement. Since 2015, Bentley has consistently had a higher percentage of students in a formal leadership role than the national average (see Figure 1 below).

**Figure 1: NSSE Formal Leadership Role**



This supports internal data indicating that students expect more opportunities to engage in structured co-curricular organizations and roles. From 2019 to 2020, Bentley recognized 22 new student organizations, each of which had an accompanying executive board that would allow for leadership positions. While Fraternity and Sorority Life is not a specific KPI, it is often a population the university looks to for trend data. The FSL membership grew from 12% to 20% during that same period, and 84% of FSL members are now involved in another co-curricular experience or leadership position at Bentley outside of their chapter.

The university has seen greater investment in the Bentley community from FSL members since accountability standards were introduced in 2018. Multiple years of recent data have demonstrated

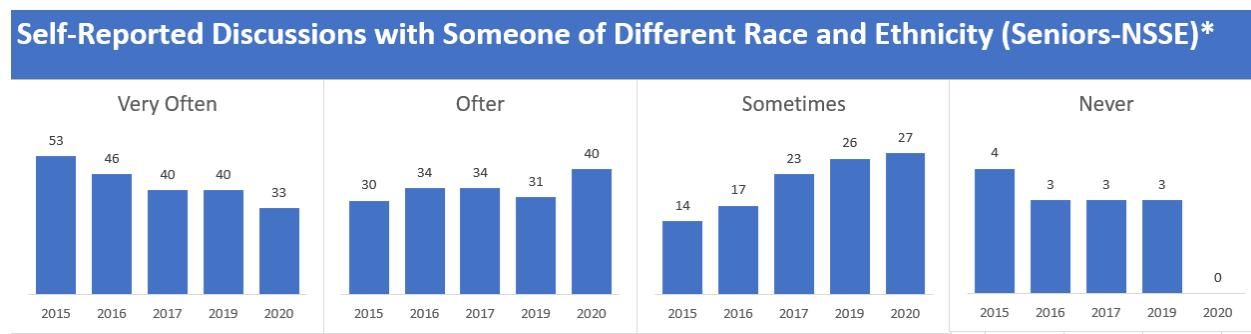
a 98%–100% retention rate among students affiliated with a fraternity/sorority in their first year at Bentley, compared to 91%–94% of non-affiliated students.

This, in part, can be attributed to the focus that has been placed on FSL members through our [Community Standards Program](#). These clear expectations provide a framework for chapter success and promote transparency as Bentley posts a [Standards Report Card](#) on its website for students, their families, and other community members to read. This model has gained national attention. In December 2020, the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors awarded Bentley the [Outstanding Change Initiative Award](#), a national award recognizing the Fraternity and Sorority Life [Strategic Plan](#) and FSL's accomplishments since 2018.

### ***Self-Reported Discussions With Someone of a Different Race or Ethnicity (NSSE)***

Since 2015, Bentley has used this KPI as a marker for a campus that promotes diverse interactions aligned with the university's core value of diversity. The indicator looks specifically 4<sup>th</sup>-year students (see figure 2). Over the last 5 years, there has been a distinct decrease in respondents who answered *very often* versus *often* in the NSSE survey. When *very often* and *often* are combined, the range is more consistent.

**Figure 2: NSSE Self-Reported Discussions**



This KPI was further examined this year and determined not to be a viable metric for identifying campus culture around diversity. As a predominantly White institution (PWI), this at-a-glance metric does not accurately represent who is having diverse interactions. While the existing KPI may demonstrate success in offering students opportunities for diverse interactions, it is not a successful indicator of our main goal of ensuring that every student feels they are able to be authentically themselves and has a sense of belonging. A better indicator of that goal comes from NSSE as well. Responses to the statement "I feel valued by this institution" can also be broken down by race and ethnicity. In 2020, 77.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. When broken down by racial demographics, it was found that 74.5% of White students, 85.7% of Asian students, 80% of Black or African American students, 78.8% of Latinx students, and 71.4% of multiracial students agreed or strongly agreed. International students reported the highest percentage at 90%.

### ***Percent of First-Year Residential Students by Cohort (Internal)***

Bentley is committed to a residential experience that builds community and extends learning beyond the classroom. To that end, the university aims to retain a high number of students who choose to live on campus. Since 2010, Bentley has remained consistent regarding the first-year residential cohort, with an average of 93% in Year 2, 90% in Year 3, and 87% in Year 4. The last full year on campus (2019) represented a downward trend in Year 3 by 2% and in Year 4 by 1%; however, this was projected, as housing options in Waltham have increased and rent prices have decreased in the last 2 years. Notably, the decrease in the Cohort 2020 numbers reflects the campus de-densification process because of COVID-19. See figure 3.

**Figure 3: Percent of First Year Residential Students**

% of First Year Residential Students by Cohort*				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Cohort 2010	98%	95%	90%	87%
Cohort 2011	98%	95%	92%	89%
Cohort 2012	98%	95%	90%	88%
Cohort 2013	97%	92%	90%	87%
Cohort 2014	98%	94%	90%	88%
Cohort 2015	98%	92%	89%	87%
Cohort 2016	98%	91%	88%	86%
Cohort 2017	99%	93%	88%	35%
Cohort 2018	98%	93%	39%	
Cohort 2019	97%	56%		
Cohort 2020	71%			

The residential program comprises 30 buildings, over 40 lounge spaces, [eight defined living and learning communities](#), and 3,400 students, or approximately 80% of Bentley's total undergraduate student population. The priority of the residential education program is to encourage Bentley students to become active organizational leaders engaged in their residential community. In the last year, the 113 Housing and Residence Life team members, who include 98 resident assistants, were responsible for over 500 programs and 14,000 resident interactions.

### **Projection**

#### *Undergraduate*

#### *Racial Justice*

Student Affairs at Bentley will continue its efforts to engage the community in becoming an anti-racist campus. These efforts will be led by the New Students Program team, charged with ensuring that all new students attend orientation sessions focused on identity and social justice (work beginning in AY2021-2022).

The Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs and a cross-divisional committee will also oversee the implementation of advanced racial justice trainings for all student leaders and student employees.

In addition, the university will emphasize representation and training for staff within the Division of Student Affairs to promote an inclusive environment for students. Over the next several academic years, the division will build on the following documents created over the past year and located in the Microsoft Teams site, which is accessible to all staff in student affairs:

- [Student Affairs Hiring Standards](#)
- [Student Affairs Onboarding Materials](#)
- [Mandatory Trainings and Workshops](#)

#### *Wellness and Prevention*

A new associate dean of health, wellness and counseling was appointed in spring 2022. Beginning this semester, she will assess and work with staff to develop a new strategy for wellness and prevention efforts at Bentley.

#### ***Graduate and Professional Schools***

In light of Bentley's history of providing students with a place-based residential experience—and since the majority of students are undergraduates—many of the decisions made at the university are from an undergraduate viewpoint. Though Bentley does include the Graduate Student Association in some decisions, there are opportunities for improvement. Beginning in AY2021-2022, the new director of graduate advising, as well as the assistant director of graduate programs and engagement, will lead efforts to amplify graduate student voices and roles on campus.

## STANDARD 6: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP

### Description

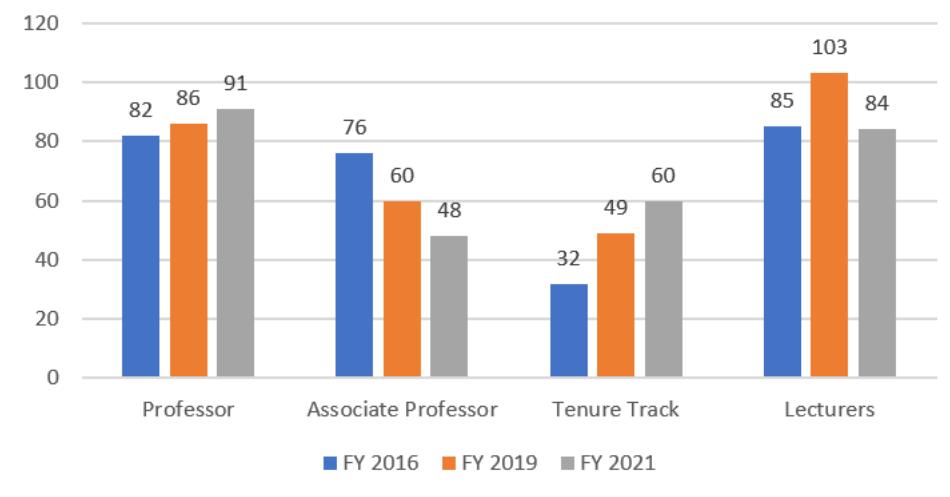
The Bentley University faculty, as teacher-scholars, value excellence in the classroom as well as impactful scholarship that not only disseminates new knowledge, but also is used to develop and refresh courses and programs to ensure that Bentley students are best prepared to meet the changing needs and expectations of the marketplace.

### Faculty Composition and Qualifications

Bentley relies on a mix of full- and part-time faculty. In AY 2020–2021, Bentley employed 276 full-time faculty at the ranks of professor (86), associate professor (49), assistant professor (58), senior lecturer (55), and lecturer (28). There were also 166 adjunct faculty teaching in the fall of 2021. The representation of women and underrepresented groups in the full-time faculty has increased slightly since the last visit. Of the full-time faculty, 56.7% are male and 43.3% are female. This represents a 4% increase in female full-time faculty since 2013. The representation of ALANA faculty has seen an approximately 7% increase since 2013, with 21.8% of full-time faculty identifying as ALANA.

Figure 4 below presents a comparison of the composition of the Bentley faculty over three representative years from 2016–2021. Notably, the percentage of tenure-track faculty grew from 12% to just over 21% during that period. There was a corresponding decline in the percentage of associate professors from 28% to 17%.

**Figure 4: Faculty Composition**



The strength of faculty qualifications supports Bentley's teaching and scholarly mission. Approximately 81% of full-time faculty and 98% of tenured and tenure-track faculty hold doctoral degrees, and the remainder hold master's degrees. In addition, a small number of faculty hold a professional license in their field.

Looking at the trends of Bentley's full-time faculty composition since 2018, the percentage of tenured and tenure-track faculty is consistently close to 70% of the full-time faculty, with the remaining 30% being lecturers and senior lecturers. Also notable, full-time faculty taught approximately 70% of the undergraduate courses during this 3-year period. In AY 2020–2021, 38% of the faculty mix were adjunct faculty who taught 33% of the courses. This represents an increase from AY 2012–2013, when adjunct faculty taught 29.48% of student credit hours. The strengths of the adjunct faculty system are manifold, with experience being the key element to their success. Adjunct faculty members also hold master's or doctoral qualifications and bring to Bentley a variety of credentials and experiences. Adjunct faculty who are active/retired practitioners in their respective fields bring extensive knowledge and professional experiences into the classroom. This diverse adjunct expertise enables the institution to offer not only the required courses, but also additional courses that would not ordinarily be scheduled. To support these valuable members of the community, the Adjunct Faculty Professional Development Fund was established in 2016 to support activities and resources that contribute to adjunct faculty members' teaching, creative or scholarly research, and development.

Faculty are assigned to courses with their credentials (degree plus professional experience) in mind. Master's programs are covered by faculty with doctoral degrees or individuals who have master's degrees coupled with requisite corporate experience in the field. Only faculty with doctoral degrees are responsible for the education of Bentley's doctoral students.

For tenured and tenure-track faculty, Bentley has a system of profiles designed to allow faculty to balance research, teaching, and service responsibilities in a way that reflects their interests, talents, and career stage, as well as the needs of the institution. The four profiles are: scholarly (emphasis on research), teaching (emphasis on teaching and pedagogical research), service (faculty holding institutional service roles such as department chair or associate dean), and standard (equal balance across teaching, service, and research).

The profile system allows an individual, in consultation with their chair, to designate an emphasis while still requiring activity in all three areas. Since the time of the last assessment, there has been a slight shift toward the scholarly and service profiles. In 2012, 58% of full-time faculty members were on a scholarly profile, 15% were on a service profile, 19% were on a standard profile, and 8% were on a teaching profile. In AY 2020–2021, 68% of faculty were on a scholarly profile, 3% were on a teaching profile, 20% were on service profile, and 9% were on a standard profile. Lecturers are not on the profile system, and their primary role is teaching with service expectations. (See the [Faculty Manual](#), Section 5.7 for more information on the faculty profile system.)

Bentley adjuncts are represented by the Service Workers International Union (SEIU) with respect to their wages and working conditions. All adjuncts, except those in Finance, Accounting, and Law, Taxation, and Financial Planning, are required to join the union and pay dues or to pay an equivalent agency fee.

Other types of academic staff who support the academic mission of the university include:

1. The Academic Technology Center (ATC) with a staff of 14 professionals having qualifications ranging from bachelor's to doctoral degrees in research, instructional technology, and related fields. The ATC provides consulting and support to faculty on the use of technology to enhance student learning experience and scholarly activities.

2. The library, which relies on 18 full-time staff members. Eight librarians support 20 academic areas, teach, provide research assistance, acquire resources, and manage the collection.
3. The Office of Academic Services has a staff of five professionals (the director of undergraduate academic advising, three senior academic advisors, and one academic advisor) and supports faculty, staff, and students by interpreting and implementing college academic curricula, policies, and procedures.
4. The Registrar's Office has a staff of 10 professionals. For much of AY 2020–2021, the university was without a registrar, and the office staff made significant efforts to ensure that operations continued as uninterrupted as possible.

## **Faculty Evaluation and Compensation**

Evaluation of full-time faculty is performed annually. Full-time faculty members prepare an annual activity report detailing accomplishments in teaching, scholarship, service, and professional development. Faculty annual review materials require evidence of teaching effectiveness, including the results of online student course evaluations that are completed by students each semester. Departments also request syllabi, sample teaching materials, and reflective statements. Full-time faculty members receive an annual written evaluation from their department chair based on this annual activity report and other information, including copies of publications, syllabi, and class materials. These written evaluations and annual activity reports are the basis for discussions among the department chair, the dean, and the provost about annual merit increases, teaching load, and profile. An additional level of evaluation occurs for those individuals with a trustee or named professorship (16 named/endowed gifts and eight trustee). This review is completed by the provost and/or appropriate dean in consultation with department chairs. In addition, at the end of their contractually specified term, a review of achievements is done for each named/trustee professor by a special committee of the provost, associate provost for research and faculty, and both deans.

The evaluation of tenure-track faculty is similar to that of other full-time faculty but includes added layers of evaluation to ensure that tenure-track faculty receive appropriate feedback from their department during the years prior to applying for tenure. Each year, tenure-track faculty are assigned a principal evaluator and a secondary evaluator. These evaluators each visit one class per academic year and prepare written feedback for the instructor. In addition to the chair's annual evaluation, tenure-track faculty receive an annual review prepared collaboratively by all the tenured faculty in the department.

No later than August 20, after their 5<sup>th</sup> year of full-time service at the university, tenure-track candidates submit an application to be considered for tenure and promotion. (In recognition of the significant impacts of the pandemic on faculty work, all current tenure-track faculty were offered a 1-year tenure clock extension.) Materials are submitted electronically using the learning management system. Based on these materials and on external letters, the tenured members of the department submit a written tenure recommendation to the university-wide Promotion and Tenure Committee. The committee reviews the candidate's package and departmental review before reaching its decision. The committee then gives its recommendation to the provost and the dean of arts and sciences or dean of business, as appropriate. The dean and the provost reach their own joint decision. If this decision concurs with that of the committee, the common recommendation is forwarded to the president, who then submits it to the Board of Trustees, whose decision is final. If the dean and provost do not agree with the Promotion and Tenure Committee, they meet to try

to reach agreement. If they are unable to do so, the president adjudicates the case. The process for promotion from associate to full professor resembles that for tenure and promotion, with a few exceptions. External letters are not required for promotion to full consideration, although in practice most candidates do include external letters. The full tenure and promotion process is outlined in Bentley's [Faculty Manual](#), Section 5.

Each year, finances permitting, annual salary increases are made from a merit pool that is set aside by the Board of Trustees and awarded through a process of consultation between the provost, dean, and department chairs. In addition to annual merit raises, market-rate adjustments are also made in cases where a faculty member's salary is below the appropriate market range according to salary data collected by Human Resources.

## **Recruitment and Annual Contracts**

Faculty recruitment at Bentley is designed to ensure that those hired to join the faculty have the background, academic preparation, and experiences that will help meet the changing needs of the university. In July 2021, Bentley added the new position of associate dean of diversity, equity, and inclusion to its landscape. This associate dean plays a significant role in recruitment efforts.

When a department is given permission to hire a new faculty member, the department chair or the search committee chair shares the job posting with HR and holds an in-take meeting to review the recruitment process. DE&I efforts are embedded throughout the recruitment process. The job posting is run through a gender decoder to identify any gender biases in the language and is then entered in the Workday system for formal approval. All faculty positions are referenced against comparable compensation data and provided with a recommended recruitment range by the compensation manager. Once positions are approved, they are posted on the Bentley website and other advertisement venues, such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC), Higher Ed Jobs, LinkedIn, major academic conferences, and listservs.

Concurrently, a search committee is established by the hiring department. All search committee members must participate in an implicit bias training before they take part in the search. The training is conducted by HR and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office. The search committee screens vitas, interviews candidates, decides on a short list, arranges campus visits (currently Zoom-only visits), gathers evaluations from faculty members in the department, and ranks candidates to receive an offer approved by the dean and provost. With the permission of the dean, the department chair extends the offer, and HR manages the onboarding of the new faculty member. All offers of employment are contingent upon a satisfactory background check, which includes a criminal offender (CORI), sexual offender (SORI), education and employment checks, and professional references.

Full-time lecturers are generally hired using the same process unless an immediate departmental need (e.g., an unexpected departure) demands an accelerated process approved by the provost, deans, and HR.

Adjunct faculty positions are advertised on the Bentley website and, if needed, in local media. Hiring of adjunct faculty is generally done by the department chair or assistant to the department chair working with HR to advertise, screen, and select adjunct faculty with approval of the appropriate dean and the associate provost for research and faculty.

Tenured and tenure-track faculty receive an annual notification of employment via Workday. This contract notification states explicitly the nature and term of employment, including certain compensation components, teaching load, and other responsibilities. Beginning in AY 2021–2022, Bentley has moved to a staggered 2-year contract period for the senior lecturer population. Half of the senior lecturers received a 2-year contract effective July 2021, and the second half of the senior lecturers will receive a 2-year contract effective July 2022. Adjunct contracts are issued for the semester in which the adjunct is teaching and indicate courses to be taught and compensation. Adjunct faculty can teach up to two courses each semester. The scope and conditions of employment are detailed in these contracts.

## **Teaching and Advising**

Regardless of their chosen profile, all Bentley faculty members are expected to be excellent teachers. The faculty review processes in the annual review and tenure and promotion are primary mechanisms for ensuring that the instructional content and methods at Bentley meet accepted academic and professional standards. To ensure optimal student-instructor interaction and learning outcomes, the ratio of full-time faculty to students is 11:1 at the undergraduate level and 10:1 at the graduate level. In the doctoral program, there are 22 faculty engaged with 27 students. The average undergraduate class size is 26.

When multiple sections of the same course are offered, they all share common learning goals and objectives, and some departments utilize common assignments and exams in multi-section undergraduate courses. Courses with multiple sections, such as foundational courses in the business and liberal arts cores, have a designated course coordinator to help provide consistency in learning outcomes, rigor, and policies across the sections. Regular concerted efforts by faculty teaching the multi-section course help ensure that course learning goals and objectives are met by all sections even though instructors bring a wide variety of teaching styles to the classroom. In all these instances, overall consistency is emphasized while also providing faculty course instructors with autonomy to apply their personal expertise in the content and delivery of the course. In addition, as described in standards 4 and 8, Assurance of learning assessments in multi-section courses help maintain consistency in achieving learning outcomes.

Various supports are in place to aid in instructors' professional growth and help them create engaging and inclusive learning environments for their students. Since the time of Bentley's last self-assessment, the Bentley Learning and Teaching Council (BLTC) was created with the mission of promoting excellence and innovation in teaching and learning. The council, which consists of 10 faculty members and is led by the two Wilder Professors, develops programs that value and encourage effective teaching. It assists faculty in fulfilling their potential as "teacher-scholars" by (a) engaging the Bentley community in conversations about what constitutes effective teaching and enhances graduate and undergraduate learning, (b) disseminating pedagogical research, (c) supporting faculty at all stages of their career in enhancing their teaching, and (d) developing programs designed to improve teaching and foster a productive learning environment. For example, the BLTC has led faculty discussions on "How to Build an Inclusive Classroom" and "Cultural Diversity." In 2019, the BLTC sponsored its first teaching colloquium, a half-day event consisting of informative discussion sessions, a teaching innovation poster session, and presentations. For example, in 2021 the BLTC offered a program titled "Teaching Distracted Students" which featured guest speaker James Lange, director of the D'Amour Center for Teaching Excellence at Assumption University.

The Badavas Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning was launched in 2019 as a forward-thinking center dedicated to supporting the growth of new educational approaches and strategic initiatives. As an internal resource and catalyst for faculty and staff seeking to enhance student learning and develop innovative experiences for all types of learners, the center provides consulting and training in evidence-based pedagogies, project management, and design support. The center plays an external role as well, connecting Bentley with emerging trends in higher education and highlighting faculty contributions to national conversations.

In 2020, Bentley launched the Teaching & Learning Resilience and Digital Innovation Initiative to help instructors adapt to remote and hybrid teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. This initiative was driven by a collaboration between the Badavas Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning and the BLTC. The combined effort will continue to drive digital strategies that support innovative pedagogies and technology-rich teaching to prepare faculty and position Bentley for a future of virtual teaching and learning. Centralized repositories were established for faculty. The long-term vision of the initiative is to keep faculty at the cutting edge of the future of virtual learning. Advanced technologies and innovative teaching methods, such as virtual- and augmented-reality programming, will advance student learning experiences and set up students for success in a technology-driven business world.

Teaching excellence and innovation are recognized annually by the Adamian Awards for Teaching Excellence and Lifetime Teaching Excellence, and by Innovation in Teaching Awards. (A description of recent recipients can be found in the Workroom.)

Bentley faculty are the primary drivers of curricular innovation and work to ensure that the university is meeting the demands of future employers to best position students for entry into the marketplace. For example, Bentley introduced several new majors to the undergraduate curriculum including those focus on [Diversity, equity, and inclusion](#), [Professional sales](#), [Creative industries](#) and [Data analytics](#).

At the graduate level, Bentley launched 10 new three-course certificate programs in 2020 in response to the rapidly changing global economy and the needs of the modern workforce. These programs take less than 1 year to complete and equip students with real-world skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

Approximately 35 full-time faculty members per year serve as formal advisors to first-year undergraduates. Although advising is primarily managed by the Office of Academic Services, the supplementary advisory role of faculty involvement contributes significantly to student development and helps students shape their personal and academic goals. Outstanding faculty advisors are recognized annually by the Cronin Award for Academic Advising. At the master's level, faculty program directors advise students on course choices. Faculty supervisors work closely with the doctoral students and oversee their progress.

## **Diversity and Inclusion**

Diversity is critical to Bentley's mission of educating creative, ethical, and socially responsible organizational leaders. The university believes that diversity fuels excellence and that the best ideas are discovered when people from different backgrounds who have lived different realities and overcome different challenges work together to expand their authentic perspectives. All Bentley students are required to satisfy a diversity-intensive requirement by selecting a course

from the list of approved diversity courses. At the same time, students can also pursue the LSM concentration in diversity in society which exposes them to a broad range of topics and disciplines, all of which are united by a concern regarding diversity and equality. In addition, Bentley has made inclusive excellence one of the major priorities informing its vision for the future. In 2020, the Academic Affairs Committee launched a series of inclusive teaching and research resources, including a webpage with more than 40 inclusive pedagogical strategies and an inclusive pedagogy workshop with over 120 faculty participants. [The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan for Academic Affairs](#) was rolled out during the summer of 2021, and in that same year, Bentley introduced the new diversity, equity and inclusion major, discussed more fully in the appraisal section.

## **Academic Freedom**

Bentley protects and fosters academic freedom for all faculty members as described in section 6.1 of the [Faculty Manual](#).

## **Scholarly Activities**

Integral to Bentley's mission of creating and disseminating impactful knowledge within and across business and the arts and sciences are management systems and resources for supporting this mission and incentivizing and rewarding research. Since its last NECHE self-assessment report in 2013, the university has continually maintained a strategically focused research mission that builds on established intellectual strengths and bridges the gap between research, practice, and the classroom—all while recognizing and rewarding diversity in faculty interests and expertise. The university's core research mission is predicated on its faculty being recognized nationally and internationally for advancing the frontiers of knowledge through impactful disciplinary and transdisciplinary research.

Since the last NECHE accreditation, Bentley has strengthened existing strategies and developed new ones in support of this mission. For example, significant efforts were made to establish and support transdisciplinary research. In 2013, the Bentley Research Council (BRC) hosted its first Research Colloquium, which convened a range of faculty from both business and arts and sciences. In addition, the BRC was given a budget to make grants in support of faculty research. The university established and supported transdisciplinary research networks (known within Bentley as “[thought leadership networks](#)”) to capitalize and expand on Bentley’s strengths and encourage fusion. There was a significant increase in the efforts of the Offices of Sponsored Programs and Foundational Relations to support faculty in their development and submission of proposals for grants and contracts to governmental agencies and foundations. Continued efforts were made to facilitate student research and collaborations with faculty, and to provide support for student research assistantships, research showcases, research fellowships, conference travel, and external scholars and speakers.

The university supports and recognizes achievements in scholarship through various faculty awards and prizes, including the Bentley University Scholar of the Year Award, Outstanding Scholarly Contributions Awards, and the Mee Family Prize. (See Workroom for descriptions of recent recipients.) Bentley offers competitive salaries and benefits for scholarly-active faculty, including support for summer research, reduced teaching loads, national and international travel, specific technology requirements, access to academy resources and databases, research stipends,

named professorships, and avenues for engagement with colleagues from area schools and other top nation and international universities, and with corporate partners.

Bentley's faculty management system is structured to encourage scholarly activity. Workloads are discussed between the chairs and faculty at annual reviews. This annual evaluation process incorporates both the monitoring and evaluation of scholarship. The annual activity report described earlier includes a description of scholarly activity for the year (incorporating any metrics of impact such as journal quality, academic citations, media citations, policy impact, etc.) Department chairs then meet with the deans to evaluate the quality and productivity of each individual faculty member's scholarship. In concert with the deans, the provost then reviews the annual reports of all faculty and makes final determination regarding annual merit pay increases, teaching load, and faculty profiles.

To facilitate the recording and tracking of scholarly activity in all its forms, Bentley employs Faculty Success, an online commercial-research tracking platform utilized to connect Bentley scholars with similar research interests. Renewed emphasis has also been placed on improving and enhancing the portion of the university website dedicated to [research at Bentley](#).

## Appraisal

### Faculty Composition and Qualifications

Bentley's transition from a largely regional college to a nationally recognized university, increasingly populated by faculty holding terminal degrees with a heavy research orientation, necessitated the use of more lecturers and adjunct faculty to provide course coverage. In the 2013 self-assessment, the university expressed a desire to establish targets for the appropriate proportion of lecturers and adjuncts compared to tenured and tenure-track faculty. The average percentage of lecturers at comparable institutions hovers at the 30% mark, with some schools closer to 20%; at present, Bentley meets this 30% target. Given that lecturers typically teach a 4-4 load, they teach a large proportion of students. Recently, in response to concerns raised by lecturers about whether they are appropriately valued by the university, some changes were made to their employment conditions. For example, circumstances permitting, lecturers will now be given 2-year contracts (as described earlier) rather than an annual contract. An additional third category of lecturer will be created to open more opportunities for career advancement for senior lecturers.

When planning course coverage by adjunct faculty, decision makers are mindful of and seek to stay within the guidelines suggested by [the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business](#) which indicate that full-time faculty members should deliver at least 75% of the school's teaching across the accredited division and at least 60% of the teaching within its discipline.

As explained previously, the profile system recognizes that faculty members may want to emphasize teaching, research, and service differently depending on career stage and strengths. Yet, the mix also generates challenges, particularly related to who is doing the bulk of teaching and service and how that teaching and service are valued. Ten years ago, Bentley faculty extensively considered changing the profile system but ultimately decided to maintain the current system. Bentley has worked hard over the past decade to emphasize the continuing value of teaching, even as the institution has increased its emphasis on research. For example, the university established the campus-wide Bentley Learning and Teaching Council to complement the preexisting Research Council. The university Promotion and Tenure Committee has now had multiple years of

considering promotion cases for faculty on a variety of profiles. Successful promotion cases for faculty on multiple profiles has increased confidence that all profiles are appropriately valued by the university.

## Resources

The Academic Technology Center (ATC) supports faculty around the use of technology to enhance student learning experiences and scholarly activities. The ATC also runs monthly workshops for faculty on the use of innovative and emerging technologies in teaching and research. Recent topics include Introduction to R, web scraping with Python, and accessing and analyzing social media data. In addition, the ATC keeps abreast of emerging and cutting-edge technologies and assists faculty in using those tools in teaching and research. For example, an ATC statistician recently attended a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) conference and became a resident expert on QCA methods. During the shift to remote teaching and learning forced by the pandemic, the ATC consulted with and trained faculty on the use of a variety of remote and hybrid learning technologies and provided training and ongoing support on hybrid classrooms, Zoom, Blackboard, and Turnitin. The center also added tools to support electronic assessments and online exams, including Padlet, Flipgrid, Gradescope, and Annoto.

The increased complexity and need for flexibility in multi-modal instruction, accelerated by the pandemic, necessitated the formation of a dedicated instructional design team. Formed in 2021, the team sits in Academic Affairs and consists of three instructional designers and a multimedia course developer. The team focuses on providing faculty the pedagogical tools and knowledge necessary to continue the spirit of teaching excellence that has shaped the institution's history. The team members will support Bentley faculty in designing and assessing courses to maximize student learning through their expertise in learning experience design, assessing learning objectives, inclusive pedagogies, multimedia course elements, and online course development.

The focus of the library has changed considerably over the past 10 years. Librarians have moved from being professionals who only advise on where to find information to being partners in research, teaching, and learning. Library staff members work with non-library campus partners to fulfill some of the needs in areas of higher education librarianship. On average, Bentley's librarians teach 215 classes and workshops each academic year. For example, in MK 342: Advertising, librarians, using proprietary databases such as Claritas 360, Demographics Now, and eMarketer, taught students how to access and use consumer demographic and marketing information to measure consumer demand and evaluate locations and markets, and to use this information to effectively communicate to customers. A course-specific MK342 library research guide was created for this class. To prepare Honors students enrolled in GB112: Tools and Concepts in Accounting and Finance for successful completion of their project, librarians provided students with guidance on how to access specific journals and periodicals (e.g., *Journal of Accountancy*, the *Wall Street Journal*) and databases (e.g., IFRS, FASB Codification) and to review citation resources. Librarians created five online library tutorials for viewing the information presented in the workshop. In addition, embedded librarianship goes beyond one-time teaching to participating in the teaching process with faculty and students. Being an embedded librarian means being part of a collaborative instructional team and staying on top of their embedded areas' current research. An example of embedded librarianship at Bentley occurs in two Corporate Immersion (MK411 and MK735) classes. Since 2017, Senior Reference Librarian Lisa Curtin has worked with marketing professors to develop a more integrated approach to learning marketing research and to

teaching undergraduate and graduate students how to find, analyze, and present their research findings. A scholarly digital repository, [Scholars @ Bentley](#), is managed by several library professionals from various library departments, including the library director and the university archivist.

The Office of Academic Services staff participate in a wide array of on- and off-campus professional development opportunities, such as Bentley's Ally Workshop, Bentley Brave, Implicit Bias in the Hiring Process, Students in Transition Conference, and the Unconscious Bias in Academic Performance Review training. The Office of Academic Services works with students throughout their academic career to create an individualized education plan that will help them attain all the goals they have set for themselves. The professional staff are proud allies of students with disabilities and the LGBTQ, international, and ALANA communities.

### **Compensation and Evaluation**

Bentley pays competitive wages to attract and retain qualified candidates. Open positions go through Human Resources for the relevant CUPA/AACSB comparisons to set the salary. Salaries of current faculty are reviewed on an annual basis.

The Faculty Evaluation Procedures Committee continues to analyze the use of SETs to evaluate teaching. In particular, the committee has discussed the relatively low response rate of the SETs as well as concerns about racial and gender bias raised in the relevant literature on evaluation of teaching in higher education. Given these concerns, the committee has made presentations to the Faculty Senate and the Joint Chairs Committee to provide guidance around interpreting and using SETs. In addition, the committee is focusing on how SETs can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and help them create a more comfortable and inclusive classroom environment.

### **Recruitment**

The goal of Bentley's recruiting process is to attract the best-qualified faculty based on institutional strategic needs. Diversity is critical to the university's mission of educating creative, ethical, and socially responsible organizational leaders. These institutional values are rooted in a belief that appreciating diversity means working in an environment that embraces diversity of opinion and that is free from hostility and intolerance. Recruitment of a diverse faculty is a critical piece of this. The importance of this goal is illustrated by several features of the current recruitment process and through new hiring initiatives.

Recent diversity, equity, and inclusion recruitment initiatives include a Faculty Cluster Hiring Program. The Faculty Cluster Hiring Program involves prioritizing and investing in the hiring of multiple positions across disciplines, rather than hiring faculty members one by one in specific subfields. This increases the likelihood of a diverse pool of candidates, identifies synergistic connections among candidates, and, by recruiting faculty cohorts together, fosters collaboration and a shared experience. At present, Bentley is engaged in its first cluster hire efforts, in which eight departments (English and Media Studies, Global Studies, History, Law and Taxation, Management, Natural and Applied Sciences, Philosophy, and Sociology) have each designated a tenure-track position as a cluster hire. This effort is being overseen by the associate dean of DE&I, working in conjunction with the deans and department chairs.

Human Resources trains department chairs, administrative assistants, and search committees on best practices in effective faculty recruitment. Efforts to achieve ethnic, gender, demographic, and intellectual diversity are supported by HR, the deans and provost, and the president's assistant for equal opportunity. Special efforts are made to ensure that positions are disseminated among demographically diverse groups, using targeted advertising through channels such as the PhD Project (focused on increasing the diversity of Business School faculty) or the Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science. Before the review of applications, HR provides an equal employment opportunity (EEO) breakdown of the pool.

### **Faculty Teaching and Scholarly Appraisal**

The purpose of the teacher-scholar model is to ensure that students are exposed to faculty with currency in their fields of expertise, thereby better preparing them to meet the changing needs of the marketplace and to thrive in a complex, rapidly changing global society. Bentley's tenured and tenured-track faculty exemplify this teacher-scholar model, giving great attention to impactful research that informs practice. For example, a recent study of accounting researchers at Brigham Young University revealed that of the top 50 accounting programs in the United States, Bentley is ranked seventh in research that impacts accounting practice or influences regulatory policy. Just as faculty members' academic writing informs their work in the classroom, so too does engagement in teaching lend new insights to their scholarship. Over the last 5 years, Bentley faculty's pedagogically related work included nine new and 15 revised textbooks, 10 new and one revised chapter in textbooks, 33 published case studies, and three other publications of teaching materials.

Bentley faculty value and demonstrate the importance of collaboration with students, setting an interactive tone for pursuing and sharing knowledge. Their role as advisors is an invaluable contribution to students' Honors and LSM capstone projects, the Valente Center's sponsored undergraduate research, as well as academic competitions such as the Moot Court Program, the Fed Challenge, and the Intercollegiate Sales Competition. A Bentley undergraduate won second place in the [2018 national sales competition](#). [Bentley's 2020-2021 Moot Court Program](#) was ranked fourth nationally in a competition held in the fall of 2020. In response to the pandemic's impact on student internship opportunities, in the summer of 2020, the Provost's Office partnered with Career Services to provide students with volunteer summer research opportunities. The ability to work with a faculty member on research, whether helping with data collection, using Excel, etc., allows students to develop critical skills they can share on their resume and with future employers. Bentley faculty have responded generously to this call to assist students, providing summer research opportunities for 93 students. Given student interest in such research opportunities, this program was continued in the summer of 2021, with 42 students working across 31 projects for 29 faculty members.

The Bentley Research Council was reconstituted in 2012 with a significantly expanded mandate aimed at promoting disciplinary and transdisciplinary research excellence and innovation and enhancing Bentley's scholarly reputation nationally and internationally. The BRC facilitates and guides conversations within the Bentley community regarding research quality and impact, while directly coordinating activities for showcasing faculty research and allocating internal funding for research proposals. For instance, the BRC has organized and sponsored the Annual Research Colloquium for several years, followed by a Research Showcase that gives Bentley faculty and doctoral students the opportunity to present their scholarship in a forum designed to encourage

transdisciplinary thinking and fusion. In 2019, the BRC hosted a colloquium with the theme “Social Justice and Inequality,” at which 26 faculty representing 12 departments presented their research. Despite pandemic restrictions, the BRC successfully hosted an [online Research Colloquium](#) in the spring of 2021 titled “Confronting the Pandemic with Research: Bentley University’s Contribution.” The conference, which had 165 attendees, included the work of 28 scholars from nine departments. The BRC also coordinates the allocation of internal funding for research grant proposals, specifically encouraging cross-disciplinary research proposals and applications that seek external funding.

Supplementing the funding available for research projects through the BRC, Bentley further provides funding for research-related activities through the Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) which supports faculty development when these activities cannot be supported by departmental budgets. Typical activities supported by FAC grants include attending conferences/workshops, expenses related to conducting research, hiring work-study students or graduate assistants, applications to seek external funding, book/database purchases, professional transcription services, etc. Faculty might also receive funding for their research through summer grants. Some of these grants are contractual (e.g., those for tenure-track faculty or named/trustee professors). Finances permitting, a limited number of summer grants of up to \$10,000 are made available through a competitive process. During the most recent 5-year period, the amount expended on BRC grants, FAC grants, and summer grants each year averaged \$1,680,779. In addition, each department is allocated \$2,280 per full-time faculty member to support faculty travel to national and international conferences, workshops, and seminars for presenting their research. Faculty can also be reimbursed for professional memberships; in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, the amount spent for this purpose was \$31,713.

Complementing these internal funding mechanisms for supporting faculty scholarly activities, Bentley’s Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) provides leadership and administrative support to the Bentley research community in the development and submission of grant proposals for external funding from government agencies and private foundations, respectively. The OSP also works closely with the Office of Corporate Relations, which is responsible for proposals to corporations and assists faculty with access to companies for qualitative and quantitative research. In support of its commitment to expanding external research funding, since January 2018, Bentley has retained the services of McCallister and Quinn, a federal grant consulting firm, to help develop an effective strategy for seeking external grant and foundation funding. The external research funding that Bentley has received is more diversified and encompasses nonprofit foundations and corporations in addition to the typical federal funding received in past years. Funded projects include health care-related research on topics such as Alzheimer’s disease, COVID-19 risk management, mental health studies, the role of NIH in drug development, and homelessness. Some recent examples of grant-funded research include:

- In September 2021, Betsy Stoner, assistant professor in natural and applied sciences, was awarded a grant in the amount of \$676,239 from the Bio-Oceanography division of the National Science Foundation. The award provides funding for Betsy to study coastal seagrass beds and how they are impacted and shaped by major storms. Betsy has conducted extensive research on seagrass beds in the Bahamas with colleagues from Florida International University and the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium. Bentley is the lead institution and will issue sub-awards to these two collaborating institutions.

- In August 2020, Professor Monica Garfield (CIS) and Professor Sandeep Purao (IPM) received an NSF award of \$140,421 for their proposal to the Smart and Connected Communities program. Their planning proposal, entitled “Improving Service Delivery for the Homeless with Analytics and Process Modeling: Community Engagement and Capacity Building,” will establish the technical and community infrastructure needed to develop an integrative project aimed at reducing long-term homelessness and minimizing recidivism, with Pine Street Inn as the key community partner.

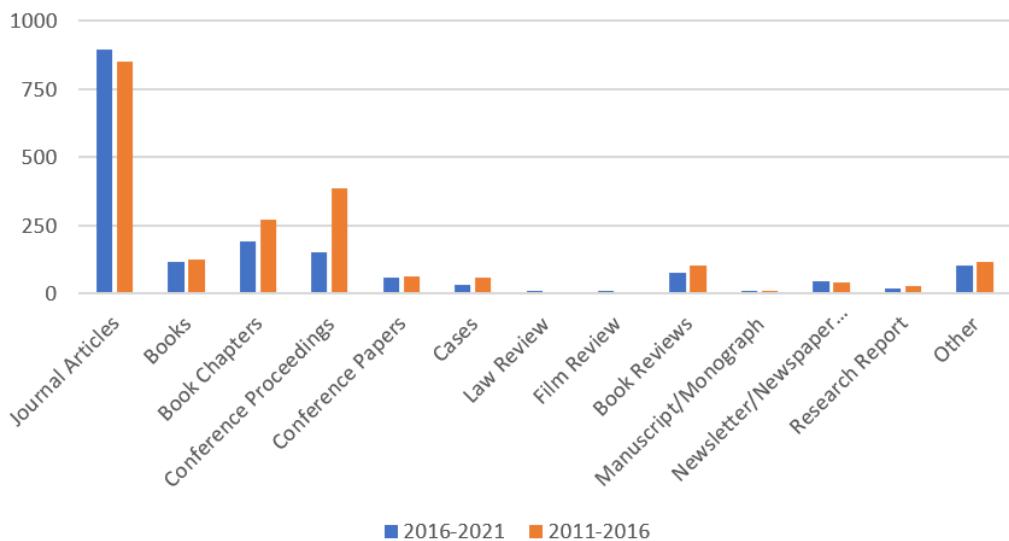
The BRC, working in collaboration with the provost, allocated \$830,000 over 2015–2019 to fund pilot proposals and provide seed funding for faculty groups, with the goal of establishing thought leadership networks (TLN). The TLNs (one focusing on information technologies and big data, the other focusing on health care) were envisioned to be intellectually rigorous research collectives that would bring scholars from Bentley into new and ongoing collaboration across disciplinary, organizational, institutional, and/or international boundaries, centered on a common research interest and building upon Bentley’s strengths across several different areas. Over time, the [Health TLN](#) achieved self-sustainability, currently comprising more than 60 faculty and staff across 24 offices, centers, departments. The Health TLN builds on the Bentley’s strengths as a business university to advance impactful, multidisciplinary research in health and health care. The Health TLN has been a highly successful investment and research endeavor, with affiliated faculty publishing approximately 375 health-related papers and securing \$660,000 in external funding, through the support of the network since its formation 6 years ago.

Faculty and doctoral students have access to state-of-the-art research databases available through the Academic Technology Center, which further supports faculty’s technology needs by, for instance, tailoring high-speed computing clusters for faculty working with big data.

The success of Bentley’s core research strategy is exemplified in the portfolio of research produced by its faculty and the numerous collaborations between faculty and doctoral students and joint research projects with master’s students. It is also not uncommon for graduate assistants to coauthor papers with faculty, thereby becoming fully involved in projects and benefitting from their outputs. Doctoral students routinely publish jointly with their supervisors, other Bentley faculty, and coauthors from prestigious universities. For example, within the last year, Accountancy Professor Rani Hoitash has co-authored work with doctoral students and alumni, resulting in three A\* publications and one A publication. Such activities help form strong and diverse dissertation committees while enhancing international collaborations and publications involving both faculty and doctoral students. Moreover, Bentley values and supports research spanning the continuum of knowledge creation and a range of typologies, from scholarly publications and contributions aimed at the academic community, to professionally relevant, practice-oriented publications and activities, to pedagogical scholarship that informs and enhances teaching and the student learning experience.

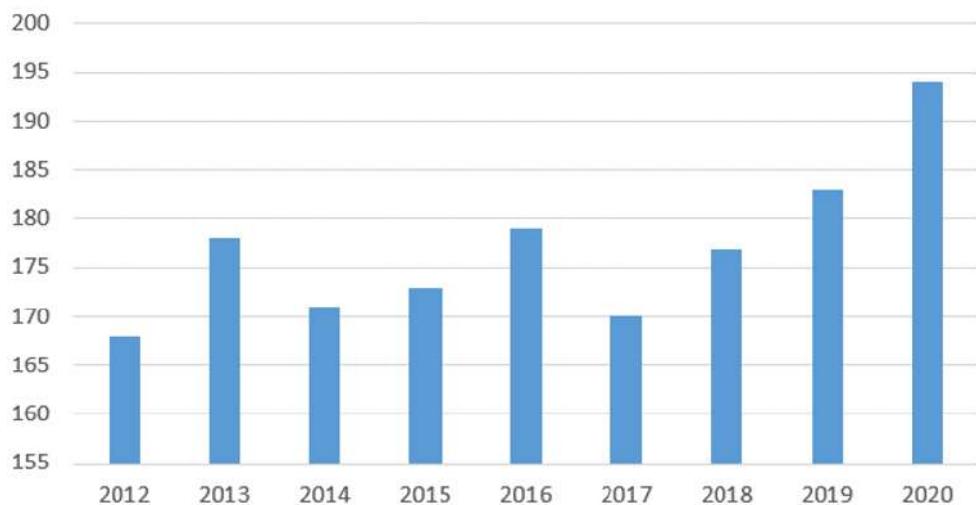
As seen in Figure 6 below, over the past 5 years, Bentley faculty have produced 1,748 intellectual contributions. Notably, scholarship engagement is not limited to a small cluster of faculty. Rather, over 68% of tenured and tenure-track faculty members have produced at least one item of research output over this period; approximately 46% have produced four or more; and 25% of the faculty have produced 10 or more research contributions.

**Figure 6: Scholarly Output**



While the number of journal articles increased (see Figure 7) during the 5-year period from May 1, 2016, to May 1, 2021, as compared to the number produced between May 1, 2011, and May 1, 2016, the overall number of published works decreased (from 2,053 to 1,748). This decrease is largely due to a decline in the number of conference proceeding publications.; this may also be a pandemic-related consequence since conference opportunities themselves were significantly reduced between 2019 and 2020.

**Figure 7: Journal Publications**



Commensurate with the high level of research output are its impact and quality. Bentley faculty published in top academic journals in various disciplines and have achieved national and international prominence for the quality of their research and thought leadership, especially in the

areas of accounting and information systems. Their work is widely cited not only academically, but also in a variety of media outlets (e.g., the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, *TIME*, the *Boston Globe*, *Forbes*, the *Economist*, NBC, FOX, CNBC, CBS, and National Public Radio), attesting to the quality of the research and its broader impact (see Workroom for examples). Research produced by Bentley faculty has also [played a role in shaping public policy](#), being featured in various congressional testimonies and policy reports. Finally, several Bentley faculty hold positions as board members, associate and senior editors of prestigious journals, regularly chair conferences or conference tracks, and contribute overall to enhancing Bentley's research reputation nationally and internationally.

Bentley faculty are also highly engaged in research focusing on important and timely ethical topics. Founded in 1976, the Hoffman Center for Business Ethics (HCBE) is one of the world's oldest centers dedicated to the study and practice of business ethics. The HCBE hosts [major events](#) for the Bentley community, [research seminars for faculty](#), and trainings for [professors](#) and [practitioners](#). During this past academic year, the HCBE successfully pivoted to online offerings for their various events. In recent years, HCBE's past speakers have included presidents of local businesses, such as Taza Chocolate and Trillium Brewing, and CEOs of leading corporations such as Coca-Cola, S.C. Johnson & Sons, and TIAA-CREF. The HCBE is supported in its work by an advisory board of [24 experts](#) in the field of ethics and compliance and eight distinguished [faculty fellows](#). Their programs have attracted generous financial support from Raytheon Technologies, Verizon Communications, and the State Street Foundation. The Sullivan Scholarships, the HCBE's [student internship program](#), provides financial support and training for eight ALANA students per year.

Bentley University is a member of Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), an initiative of the UN Global Compact. As part of this membership, the HCBE produces a [PRME](#) report every 2 years. This report includes a listing of all research concerning ethical issues, spanning technologies, managerial, and humanities disciplines, and touching on important practical organizational and policy problems.

In conclusion, Bentley faculty's emphasis on research that is both theoretical and practical has resulted in findings and insights that can be readily used in the classroom for teaching purposes, in the form of teaching cases and discussions and conversation with industry experts (i.e., guest speakers). In this way, Bentley capitalizes on high-level research to engage students in timely research topics with practical implications.

### Projection

- Develop a departmental audit process for the institutionalization of diversity, equity, and inclusion within academic affairs. This will allow us to create comprehensive listing of our strengths and expertise, and to understand where our blind spots and areas of improvement exist. This will be led by the associate dean of diversity, equity and inclusion and department chairs. This initiative will launch in summer 2022.
- Continue to develop the Inclusive Teaching Initiative with the purpose of fostering equitable learning environments. The associate dean of assurance of learning, instructional designers and faculty experts will develop these engagement opportunities for faculty in spring 2022 for a fall 2022 implementation.

- Continue and increase internal funding to support faculty scholarship. The focus will be on supporting faculty in their grant-writing applications to expand external funding of research and also to increase support to faculty who pursue research concerning ethical problems. Commencing Fall 2022, this effort will be led by Senior Academic Administration, Bentley Research Council, Office of Sponsored Programs.
- Revisit the faculty profile system and criteria utilized concerning evaluation, workload, and appropriate balance of teaching, scholarship, and service. This will begin AY21-22 and go through end of AY22-23. It will be led by Senior Academic Administration, Faculty Senate, Department Chairs, and Faculty.
- Further enhance the Teaching & Learning Environment to define our current capabilities and identify opportunities for growth to meet the coming needs of our new, forward-looking curriculum more clearly. This initiative began in AY2021-2022 and is led by Academic Administration, Director of Badavas Center; Wilder Professors, Associate Dean of Assurance of Learning and Accreditation.

## STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

### Human Resources

#### Description

The work of the Human Resources team supports the university's mission by providing services and programs that attract, develop, engage and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce. Human Resources is committed to supporting faculty, administrative staff, retirees, and prospective employees by providing professional service and strategic solutions for HR matters. Bentley's [core values](#) and [positive cultural principles](#) guide interactions with the whole Bentley community.

The HR team employs 14 full-time staff members who support approximately 1,140 full-time and part-time faculty, staff (557 full-time and 51 part-time staff as of November 1, 2021), and adjuncts at Bentley. Core HR services are aligned with the business needs of the university and include recruitment and selection; compensation and benefits administration; performance management; learning and development; employee relations; strategic workforce planning; HR information systems; development and management of employment policies; and compliance with state and federal employment laws and regulations.

One of the most important HR services is hiring a highly qualified and diverse workforce to work toward achieving the Bentley's mission. Human Resources partners with faculty and staff across the university in the recruitment process to understand business needs and required skills, select a knowledgeable interview team, build a diverse and qualified candidate pool, and create an unbiased selection process. Prior to the start of the recruitment process, a recruitment salary range is recommended based on market benchmarks from survey data as well as internal benchmarks to ensure market-competitive, equitable offers are made. All offers are stated clearly in writing in an offer letter, which also outlines terms of employment and compensation.

The performance management system promotes goal setting and regular, ongoing performance conversations between managers and employees. Annual goal-setting includes developing individual goals, developmental goals focused on professional growth, and at least one inclusive excellence goal focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The performance management system integrates with the annual merit process, and salary increases are awarded based on individual performance as well as an analysis of market-based salary ranges.

Human Resources, in partnership with general counsel, is responsible for developing and maintaining employment policies and practices. All employees are required to agree to key employment policies during the onboarding process and to complete [mandatory online sexual harassment training](#). All employment policies are on a [central HR](#) webpage, accessible to all employees, and are evaluated at least annually and updated as necessary. Where appropriate, policies provide instructions around the grievance process.

## Appraisal

Human Resources designed a robust recruitment process with the goal of increasing the quality and diversity of hires. Several sourcing strategies employed over the last few years help develop a qualified and diverse pool of candidates, including gender-neutral decoders for postings, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) postings, and industry-specific postings on sites that promote diversity. Members of all search committees for faculty and staff positions with managerial responsibility are required to attend implicit bias training, and Bentley's Instagram/LinkedIn career pages have been revamped to focus on promoting diversity. Key interventions have been added at strategic points of the process to ensure an inclusive process. Managers focus on conducting a deliberate search, removing any barriers that may impact access, developing a diverse candidate pool, and implementing a thoughtful and inclusive process that results in the best possible hire. Managers also take more responsibility in participating in the process themselves, reaching out to their networks and professional organizations and partnering with HR collaboratively. This represents a cultural shift and has increased the overall diversity of candidate pools and hires, as evidenced by the [data](#). Human Resources continues to measure the progress of these strategies by analyzing metrics on an ongoing basis. Bentley's HR Information System, Workday, provides the platform for recruiting, employee data, employee/manager self-service functionality, reporting, and HR analytics. A sample of key HR analytics can be found [here](#).

Bentley's total reward strategy is critical to attracting and retaining employees and includes features such as benefits, compensation, professional development, and engagement opportunities, as well as continued investment in positive organizational culture. Bentley offers a comprehensive and competitive benefits and wellness package that is reviewed annually by a Benefits Governance Committee. Each year, benefits are reviewed in relation to peer schools and trends in the market, and recommendations are made for plan changes and enhancements. Compensation is based on a merit and market philosophy. Merit is based on individual performance, and market position is determined using relevant market survey data. Positions are evaluated annually relative to comparable benchmarks and are measured using "comparatios," which is an analysis of salary in relation to the midpoint of the market range. Salary grades are indexed every other year based on movement in the market. Merit increases are assessed annually, market adjustments are given when warranted based on market pay information, and promotions are awarded in recognition of performance, increased responsibility, and growth opportunities. Human Resources has taken many steps over the last 5 years to ensure market-competitive pay and internal equity, including:

- working with Mercer, a compensation consultant, to evaluate pay and salary ranges in 2016, resulting in a \$1.5 million investment in market adjustments to faculty and staff positions over a 2-year period;
- working with Jackson Lewis (a law firm) in 2018 to conduct a gender pay equity study for the university which found no systemic pay-equity issues; and,
- working with Jackson Lewis to conduct another pay-equity study in 2021 which broadened the scope to include gender and race; this is currently in process, but initial findings are favorable.

The performance management system, [Conversations About Performance \(CAP\)](#), was rolled out in the spring of 2017 and is the platform for evaluating performance and tying performance (merit) to the compensation system. The program has gained traction over the years, and in 2021, Bentley

saw an engagement rate of over 70% of faculty and staff. In addition, HR introduced two other programs to recognize performance: a spot bonus program and a peer recognition program. Both programs reward performance in the moment, recognize over-and-above contributions and exemplary effort, and are effective recognition tools that supplement the CAP program. These programs are widely utilized and are the direct result of an employee engagement survey conducted in 2017.

The HR Learning/Development and Engagement Strategies team has built and delivered many programs that embody and support Bentley's cultural principles. In 2019, the first annual [learning conference](#) for faculty and staff was held, focusing on professional development, inclusive excellence, and positive leadership/culture. The team also holds regular forums to bring managers together to discuss relevant management topics as part of management development.

The partnership with the DE&I Office is an HR priority. The two offices work closely on many programs and initiatives, namely the implicit bias training, programming for our Black and Brown community, integrating an inclusive excellence goal in the CAP process, and strategic DE&I planning. Many of these initiatives were launched in 2020 as part of HR's commitment to anti-racism at Bentley.

Additionally, over the last year, HR has focused on supporting the Bentley community and keeping the workforce engaged throughout the pandemic, with the goal of enhancing engagement and retention. This included reinforcing and staying the course with the university's positive leadership principles/culture, creating a parenting network/support group, and virtual wellness and benefit programming, to name a few.

## **Projection**

As Bentley plans for the next 5 to 10 years, HR will continue to focus on delivering core services that build, engage, develop, and retain a qualified and diverse workforce in support of the university's mission and that align with the work of the strategic positioning committees. The pandemic has shaped the way Bentley looks at its workforce, and HR will work with the university to assess workforce expectations as it plans for the return to a more normal academic year. As that takes shape, HR will focus on workplace flexibility, positive cultural programming, HR analytics, and inclusive excellence. It will also assess the effectiveness and success of these programs by continuing to administer community pulse surveys, analyze turnover, and conduct exit/stay interviews to gather data.

## [Financial Resources](#)

### **Description**

Bentley has a long history of strong financial stability, including uninterrupted operating surpluses and growth in reserves. In December 2017, Moody's Investor Services upgraded Bentley's credit rating from A3 to A2, citing the university's "sound financial management as well as flexible expense structure and a proven track record of increasing flexible reserves from retained surpluses through disciplined financial and capital planning." The rating was affirmed in the most recent Moody's review in August 2021. Moody's noted "very good growth in financial reserves over the past five years, with strong student demand supporting growth of flexible reserves and investment in facilities. The university's credit profile also benefits from its solid market niche focusing on

business education, which results in high job placement rates and good return on investment for students.... Excellent financial policy has consistently led to strong operating performance."

Three committees of the Board of Trustees oversee the university's finances. The Administration and Finance Committee, working collaboratively with finance leadership, oversees the annual budget, long-range financial and capital plans, and debt strategy. The Audit Committee oversees the independent auditor, internal audits, tax and regulatory filings, and the enterprise risk management effort. The Investment Committee, which comprises trustees and experienced professionals with diverse backgrounds in finance and investments, formulates the investment policies that mandate how the endowment is managed, including asset allocation ranges and targets. The endowment is managed by the Investment Committee along with the professional investment advisors, Cambridge Associates. As fiduciaries, the committee meets regularly to review manager performance, asset allocations, investment transactions, and balances.

The annual operating and capital budgets and long-range financial plan are developed in close collaboration with the President's Cabinet, the vice president of finance and administration, and the Office for Planning and Budgeting. Since Bentley is more than 90% dependent on tuition and student fees, the annual budget process begins with assessment of the enrollment, tuition increases, and financial aid projections developed in conjunction with the vice president for enrollment management. The Administration and Finance Committee, along with the Enrollment Committee of the Board of Trustees, meets to review the recommendation for tuition and fee increases, which are ultimately approved by the board's Executive Committee. From the projected revenue, the institution must undertake the challenging task of budgeting expenses to meet the current needs of the institution, identifying resources to invest in strategic goals, and maintaining operating surpluses to ensure long-term, sustainable financial health.

The university develops a comprehensive annual budget and 5-year long-range plan with full depreciation that mirrors its GAAP financial statements, a capital plan, and cash flow projections. These documents are presented to the Administration and Finance Committee and, upon the committee's approval, submitted to the full Board of Trustees for approval.

Three times per year, a forecast and analysis are developed and presented to the Administration and Finance Committee, with projections for the fiscal year compared to the budget. This forecast is developed from data gathered from across the university, with cost center managers required to provide explanations for variances from the approved budget. A projected cash flow statement is developed to monitor liquidity and cash resources.

Bentley's [financial statements](#) are audited by KPMG. The auditors, along with the administration, [present the results](#) to the Audit Committee. In the most recent fiscal year, ending on June 30, 2021, KPMG issued to the committee an [unqualified opinion](#) that did not report any internal-control weaknesses.

In FY 2018, the university replaced its 27-year-old Banner financial system with Workday Financials, a modern, cloud-based system. The objectives of the implementation included streamlining and simplifying financial business processes; creating and approving expense authorizations, reimbursement requests, and purchase requisitions online; and introducing a flexible financial data model (FDM) that supports enhanced financial reporting, analysis, monitoring, and budget preparation using real-time financial data. In FY 2020, the final phase of

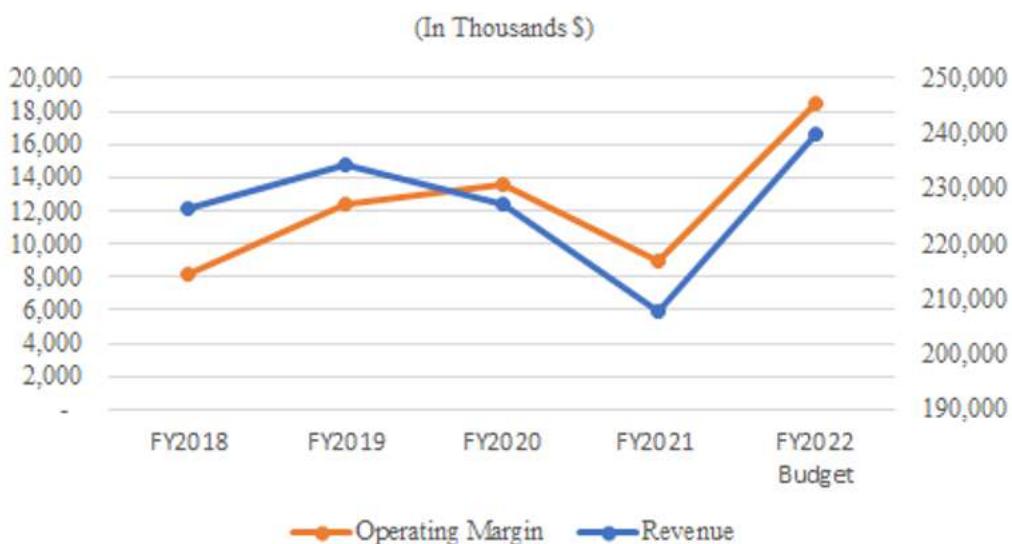
the ERP replacement project was complete with the implementation of Workday Student, which modernized the billing, payments, and recording of student charges.

In addition to the external audits, Bentley uses a shared resource through the Boston Consortium of Higher Education to [conduct internal audits](#). The Boston Consortium internal auditors conduct four to six audits per year and report their findings, if any, to the Audit Committee. In FY 2021, it was determined that the consortium did not have sufficient audit resources to effectively conduct IT audits. Bentley then contracted with Baker-Tilly to conduct an IT risk assessment toward the creation of a [multi-year audit plan](#) to ensure appropriate controls and safeguards are maintained over the university's systems and data.

## Appraisal

Since its last accreditation, Bentley has experienced consistently strong revenue growth and operating margins, see figure 8. Before the impact of COVID-19 in FY 2020, the average revenue growth from FY 2013 to FY 2019 was 3.4%, which exceeded the target of 3%. During this time, Bentley's average operating margin was 5%, which exceeded the target of 3.25%.

**Figure 8: Operating Revenue and Margin**



As expected, the university's operating revenue and surplus have been significantly impacted by COVID-19. In addition, Bentley implemented some temporary changes to its academic calendar which have resulted in changes in how revenue and related operating margins are reported.

The impact of COVID-19 on Bentley's revenue began in March 2020 with the campus closure, which led to room-and-board credits (net of financial aid adjustments) of nearly \$8.6 million. Since Bentley is a predominantly place-based institution, many ongoing expenses were reduced because of limited campus operations. This, along with administrative actions taken in light of financial insecurities, led to an operating margin of \$13.5 million, or 6%, for the FY2020 even with the revenue decline over FY 2019.

In light of the financial and operational uncertainties, the university took multiple actions in May 2020 to protect the university's liquidity and financial sustainability. The University offered a voluntary early retirement program (VERP) for staff. Forty-four participants took advantage of the offer representing a base salary of \$3.5 million. To ensure some long-term financial benefits were gained from this action, the President's Cabinet implemented a workforce planning effort that reviewed all open positions including those vacated through the VERP. This planning effort was led by the President's office, Human Resources and Finance leadership. The University also reduced its 403b contribution from 10% to 5% beginning in August 2020. The full contribution was restored in July 2021.

In May 2020, the administration, with the approval of the Board of Trustees, implemented a trimester academic calendar for the 2020–2021 academic year and offered undergraduate students the possibility of taking free courses in the summer trimester if they enrolled full-time during the traditional academic year. The objective of the offer was to entice new students who may have been hesitant to enroll due to the uncertainty of the pandemic and to persuade continuing students to maintain their enrollment even if much of the semester needed to be remote. The nearly full offerings in the summer trimester would allow students to stay on track even if they were not able to continue full-time under challenging circumstances. Students who were registered full-time were able to benefit from the one-time offer of free courses. This decision had a significant impact on the FY 2021 financial results and will continue to impact the revenue and operating margin for 3 years.

For FY2021, Bentley maintained a relatively strong undergraduate enrollment. Fall 2020 enrollment was 4,029, only approximately 4% below fall 2019 enrollment. The implementation of a full-year academic calendar with a trimester schedule resulted in an unusual adjustment to our financial statements. For classes offered after June 30 (the fiscal year-end), the university was required to defer the revenue, resulting in \$8 million of net revenue being deferred until FY 2022. This had a direct impact on revenue growth and operating margin as depicted in figure 8. This revenue will be recognized in FY 2022, most likely yielding unusual revenue and margin results in the financial statements for that year. An additional impact was that students' ability to take a large number of courses, often for free, in summer 2021 will allow them to graduate earlier than anticipated and will have a negative impact on enrollment and revenue in FY 2022–FY 2024 as students are able to accelerate their degree completion.

The largest overall revenue impact in FY2021 was the large reduction in room and board revenue as a result of fewer students able and wanting to live on campus (approximately 2,000 versus typical residence occupancy of 3,500) and a shorter on-campus fall semester with full campus closure prior to Thanksgiving. The room and board revenue for FY2021 was \$31.6 million, as compared to FY2019, our last full year of on-campus activities, of \$52 million. In addition, Bentley experienced other revenue declines due to the inability to offer meetings and conferences, camps and other events on campus.

Despite the very challenging impact on our operating revenue, Bentley recorded a \$9 million operating surplus in FY2021. Again, the combination of the administration's actions to reduce expenses and the natural reduction of costs for limited campus operations allowed Bentley to maintain its long streak of positive operating margins. Salary and benefits declined by \$10.8 million year-over-year due to salary savings primarily from savings due to the voluntary early retirement program and the reduction of the 403b contribution. Significant operating expenses

were incurred to support the students during COVID including over \$3.2 million in testing costs. Even with these additional costs, operating expenses were \$2.1M less than prior year due to limited on campus expenditures and management's cost savings measures.

### ***Financial Reporting***

To ensure that Bentley meets its goal of long-term financial health and of providing reasonable assurance that no debt covenants will be broken, or unwanted bond downgrades received, the Administration and Finance division adopted several key performance indicators (KPIs) for planning, monitoring, and reporting. These strategic indicators are tracked for trends, benchmarked against medians and competitors, and projected for the long-range financial plan. In addition to the [financial KPIs](#), Management and the Audit and Administration and Finance Committees monitor the NECHE financial screen and Department of Education's composite score.

Five KPIs are measured against Bentley targets and Moody's medians on an annual basis, including spendable cash and investments to debt and operating expenses, annual debt service coverage, and age of plant. For FY2021, Bentley was well above its targets for spendable cash due to strong cash balances and significant investment growth. The spendable cash to debt target is 1.5x while the actual measurement on June 30, 2021, was over 2.5x. The 3-year average operating margin has been well above the target of 4% and above the Moody's A-rated medians—and growing for the previous 4 years. The age of plant, a rough indicator of deferred maintenance, trended in the wrong direction in FY 2020 and FY 2021 as a result of reducing capital spending, considering liquidity concerns during the uncertainty of COVID-19. As of FY 2022, Bentley has returned to its traditional level of capital spending to maintain and enhance the campus, which will bring this KPI back to the target. The remaining two KPIs are for annual undergraduate and graduate tuition revenue growth which cannot be easily measured against competitors so are therefore measured against the target of 3%. The university met the target for undergraduate through FY 2020, while FY2021 experienced a decline, as described earlier. Graduate revenue has experienced strong fluctuations year-over-year and will be a major subject of the strategic positioning work to expand revenue streams.

### ***Investments and Endowment Spending***

As of June 30, 2021, Bentley's investments were valued at \$371 million, as compared to \$272 million on June 30, 2020. The increase was the result of a 39.5% one-year investment return of \$107 million. Looking at performance over the past 5 years, a combination of investment returns and gifts have allowed the endowment to grow by \$99 million while providing \$59 million in spending to support Bentley programs and students. The endowment contains hundreds of individual funds with various purposes and restrictions that are combined in an investment pool and tracked with unit accounting similar to a mutual fund. Approximately 40% of Bentley's endowment represents true endowment, which are gifts restricted by donors to provide permanent funding for specific purposes. The remaining 60% is board-designated and accumulated net gains, which are funds the board has chosen to invest and treat as endowment.

The endowment is diversified into various investment strategies aimed at reducing portfolio risk and volatility, but also generating the desired total long-term return while providing adequate liquidity. The endowment spending rate is approved annually by the trustees and seeks to achieve these long- and short-term objectives. Spending is budgeted at no more than 5% of a 12-quarter moving average of the fund's market value. Based on the endowment's beginning fiscal year

balance, the effective spending rate was 4.7% for FY 2021. The difference between total return and spending is added to or subtracted from the pool to maintain purchasing power in perpetuity.

### ***Debt and Line of Credit***

As of June 30, 2021, the university had \$159 million of debt outstanding. This represents an increase of \$23 million as compared with the \$136 million of outstanding debt as of FY 2013, due primarily to new debt issued in FY 2016 which was utilized for a complete overhaul and modernization of Jennison Hall, an 85,000-square-foot classroom building. During this same time, property, plant and equipment (PP&E) increased by over \$50 million.

On August 24, 2021, Bentley sold \$93.5 million of bonds (\$113.5 million of proceeds, including premium) through the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency. The Series 2021 bonds closed on September 1, 2021, and proceeds will be used to refinance the Series 2013A and 2013B bonds, pay the termination cost of associated swap agreements, and pay for costs of issuance. Prior to this transaction, Bentley's debt portfolio consisted of two fixed-rate and two variable-rate bonds. The two variable-rate instruments, issued in 2013, were matched by five swap derivatives that synthetically fix the interest rate. In addition to the risk inherent in the swap derivatives, the private placement bonds had bullet payments and additional debt covenants. Three of our swaps had collateral thresholds, and one bond required a \$5 million deposit. The bond refinancing allowed the university to terminate the swap agreements, refinance the debt to remove the additional covenant, smooth the debt service payments, and release the \$7 million of cash being held as collateral. This transaction had several quantitative and qualitative benefits to the university. There are currently no plans for further debt.

The university has a committed line of credit with a bank for a maximum amount of \$25 million. Due to the financial uncertainty brought on by COVID-19, the university borrowed the full line, which was paid back in March 2021. Borrowing rates on this line of credit are at 1-month LIBOR plus 35 basis points. The line expires in January 2023.

### ***Fundraising and Development***

Since July 1, 2015, Bentley has raised approximately \$80 million in gifts, pledges, bequests, and bequest intentions through the silent phase of the capital campaign. These gifts have supported a range of capital projects, contributed to the university's endowment, and provided current use operating support. A capital campaign update, as reported to the Advancement Committee of the Board of Trustees is [here](#). The progress of the Campaign was hampered by the presidential transition and the pandemic.

Bentley's gift acceptance policy outlines policies and procedures for accepting and stewarding gifts in accordance with donor intent. The policy was updated and approved at the October 2020 Board of Trustees meeting. The president and trustees have identified as a top priority increasing annual philanthropic support to a consistent level between \$10 and \$15 million over the next 3 to 5 years.

### ***Enterprise Risk Management***

In FY 2021, the university relaunched its Enterprise Risk Management program. The initiative began with a series of meetings with members of the President's Cabinet to identify Bentley's

most pressing risks. These identified risks are being built out into a dashboard through the [development of risk statements](#), assessment of the impact, and likelihood of each risk, documenting the control that may minimize the risk and identifying and assessing potential gaps. The objectives of the administration are to sustain the university's competitive advantage, solidify its integrity and reputation, respond effectively when a significant event occurs, and avoid financial surprises. The university continues to expand its ERM program.

## Projections

University Advancement continues to fundraise for the Be a Force: The Campaign for Bentley University. Building on a successful advance-gifts phase, in which \$80 million was raised from alumni, families, friends, corporations, and foundation, the division expects to achieve the campaign's \$100 million goal by December 31, 2023.

The FY2022 budget projects a very strong operating margin in excess of \$20 million. This record margin is resulting from the deferral of approximately \$8 million due to the trimester, as previously described, and the final Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) distribution. More detail of the budget is found [here](#).

Bentley recognizes the financial challenges it faces as a 90% tuition-dependent university with material impending demographic changes. The university is entering these anticipated enrollment declines with a very strong financial position, including solid unrestricted reserves, limited deferred maintenance, and a history of conservative budgeting. That said, Bentley realizes that its current financial structure is not sustainable in the long-term and that it must respond in a timely and strategic way. In Fall 2021, the university began a strategic planning engagement with Huron Consulting Group which will drive the next 10 years for Bentley and ensure the alignment of resources with this strategic direction.

This project will have five primary work streams aimed at ensuring that Bentley remains the preeminent institution it is today. Two of the efforts will have a major impact on the university's financial profile, focusing on revenue diversification and strategic alignment of resources. Through data analysis, benchmarking, and discussions, this strategic positioning committee will identify opportunities for consideration, including organizational redesign, business process improvement, shared service/scaled operations, and other foundational strategies for increasing efficiency.

On the capital side of planning, the university is focused on maintaining its campus, which necessitates funding approximately equal to depreciation each year. Bentley plans to prioritize this spending, ensuring the campus remains vibrant and attractive to students. Areas of additional investment will emerge from this planning work and be prioritized accordingly. Current reserves and anticipated growing cash position will enable the university to invest strategically and in the relative near term as these needs emerge.

## Information, Physical, and Technological Resources

### The Library

#### Description

The mission of the [Bentley Library](#) is to support and enrich the university's academic research and educational curriculum goals by serving as a gateway to information, providing access to quality resources, and improving institutional outcomes through the teaching of information literacy. The library endeavors to ensure access to a continually expanding depth and breadth of knowledge and information through the integration of print and electronic resources, collection development, resource sharing, and student and faculty support.

Bentley Library is committed to supporting the university's business and liberal arts education focus. The library provides a foundation for learning and scholarship through its investment in online collections, integrated instruction classes, targeted services, and state-of-the-art collaborative study spaces. The librarian's cultivation of relationships with faculty and the administration, and the continuous monitoring of the needs of a diverse student body have helped Bentley succeed in its mission to support and enrich its academic endeavors.

The library supports the university through continual investment in print and online resources. The business collection is a major asset for the university and includes more than 90 unique databases used in business industries globally. In addition, the library has over 200 databases, more than 400,000 eBooks, and 100,000 streaming films. It also subscribes to accounting, economics, and tax databases that support student research and professional skills development.

The library also includes an historical accounting collection of 207 print items, dating back to the early 1900s. This collection includes early accounting textbooks on bookkeeping, auditing theory, and early corporate finance and accounting practices. Many of the earliest texts were written by the university's founder, Harry C. Bentley (1877–1967).

In addition to its historical accounting collection, the library also houses the Bentley University Archives, which include Harry C. Bentley's papers and artifacts, student publications, university documents, photographs, audiovisual materials, and memorabilia. The recently established position of archivist has been invaluable to the library and the institution, extending expertise beyond archives to work with the Centennial Committee, the Marketing and Communication Department, the Center for Alumni, Parents, and Friends, and other administrative departments and academic centers to highlight Bentley's history and offer outreach to the community. The result is excitement around the history of Bentley's business education—and business history itself. With the addition of an archivist, alumni now feel that their contributions to the archives have a carefully curated home and place in Bentley's history.

#### Appraisal

The library is fortunate to have a staff of expert librarians dedicated to ensuring that students, faculty, and staff receive relevant, relatable reference service and who are indispensable as co-collaborators in teaching. The library boasts an integrated information literacy program in undergraduate and graduate business courses which provides opportunities for deeper relationships with the students and faculty. Librarians co-teach with faculty, align resources to the parameters

of an assignment and the needs of corporate business partners, and lead class discussions on databases and resources focused exclusively on current business problems. Information literacy is foundational to the library's mission.

In the summer of 2021, Bentley Library collaborated with Professor Danielle Hartigan and the Health Teaching and Learning Network to write and submit a grant to the Northeast Network of the National Library of Medicine (NNLM) in support of a health information literacy initiative. They received funding to begin the project in September 2021. The library director, as the principal investigator, worked with Dr. Hartigan to develop an intergenerational, project that supported NNLM's mission by improving online health information literacy in professional librarians, students, and older adult populations. Focusing on the National Library of Medicine resources, librarians:

- taught students how to access and evaluate reliable health information;
- presented to older adults at the Waltham Council on Aging Center on how to find reliable health information and communicate effectively with their health care professionals;
- curated and publicized publicly available consumer health resources in the newly created [Consumer Health Information Library Research Guide](#); and
- taught students how to develop an online video tutorial for older adults in the community on using and evaluating quality health resources, and communicating about their health needs with their doctors; this video will be published on [Bentley Library's YouTube channel](#) and on the Consumer Health Information Library Research Guide
- using the [eHealth Literacy Scale](#), students and older adults measured their understanding of what constitutes quality health resources, the difference between government health and commercial health websites, ability to access consumer health information for their own needs and feel more comfortable when speaking to their doctors or health care providers about health information.

Examples of outreach to students to assess the level of engagement with library services and participation in information literacy skills development include participation in the 2016 Association of College and Research Libraries [Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success program](#), Bentley Library's biennial 14 Days to Have Your Say Survey, and the 2019–2020 Library Student Engagement Survey. All three efforts to understand the library's value to student learning and engagement have resulted in expansion or continuation of services.

[The 14-Days to Have Your Say Survey](#) has been administered in 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2019. It is designed to allow Bentley community members to express their thoughts and opinions about the library's services, collections, facility, and programs and to gather helpful feedback as the university continually looks for ways to improve the library. Many enhancements have been made because of these surveys, including the most recent improvements requested by students.

- Early check-ins for study rooms: Students requested the ability to use a group study room in advance of their reservation. The reservation system was tweaked to allow for early check-ins when no one was occupying the room.
- Lighting upgrades: Students complained that it was too dark in the library after the sun set. In collaboration with Facilities Management, the Office of Sustainability, and a lighting specialist, the library upgraded the lighting throughout the building.

- Scanners and copiers: Students asked for free copiers and scanners. The library purchased two scanners for their use. A copier is provided free of charge to all library users and is available in the lower-level printing room.

All previous surveys and reports may be found on the Library's [\*In the Know\* blog](#).

The [2019–2020 Student Survey](#) was designed and administered to determine if students' communication preferences and interests in library programs and services had changed between their first and third years in college. The survey was administered from October 2–18, 2019, during the first year of the Class of 2023, and repeated from January 29–February 14, 2020, with the Class of 2021 (in the spring of their third year). Overall, students in both classes approved of the library's outreach and communication efforts. An average from both surveys showed that 80% were either *extremely satisfied* or *somewhat satisfied* with library communication. First-year students indicated a desire for more email communications from the library and increased frequency and engagement on social media.

To support faculty and graduate student research, Bentley Library applied to become and was accepted as a member of the Boston Library Consortium (BLC) in 2018. This prestigious higher education library consortium expands opportunities for faculty and graduate students to access academic resources with 18 other libraries across New England. Membership in the BLC also provides an opportunity for library staff to engage in local professional development events and expand knowledge and skills to implement best academic library practices. Resource sharing is core to BLC's and Bentley Library's mission and purpose.

Within Bentley, factors point to the need for a strong infrastructure for digital asset management, preservation, and delivery to support faculty and student research, as well as provide a portal to a broad array of locally created material. In 2018, Bentley Library launched [Scholars@Bentley](#), a digital archive that collects and preserves the intellectual output of Bentley faculty and students. To date, there are nearly 250 papers published in Scholars @ Bentley, with over 14,500 downloads worldwide. This service of the Bentley Library provides open, worldwide access to these materials and promotes Bentley scholarship, teaching, and learning.

## Projection

The shift from print to electronic resources in academic libraries continues to accelerate, stressing the need for an integrated library system (ILS) that reframes the library's workflows and combines the management of all library materials, print and digital. In 2021–2022, Bentley Library will migrate from an ILS to a library services platform (LSP) to create an end-to-end management of print, electronic resources, and digital collections. The library will migrate to ExLibris Alma/Primo beginning in early 2022.

To support a student body that wants more self-service models and virtual alternatives, the library is looking at ways to support their needs. During the pandemic, Bentley Library purchased a second self-checkout station to streamline circulation and follow distancing protocols. Student are already able to book a study room through the library's webpage, but the library is looking into a new web-based room reservation system so students can book a group study room through an app on their phone. This new system will be in place by the spring of 2022.

The library's webpage has not been updated in over 10 years. The Library Web Team has spent the last 2 years examining other academic library webpages, studying best practices around accessibility, and creating mock-ups in anticipation of updating its webpage. Working with staff from academic technology and Marketing and Communication, the library will address the web content and will launch its redesign in the spring of 2022.

The Bentley Library Racial Justice Initiative (LRJI) team was formed in the summer of 2020 to identify and address instances of racial injustice within the library, curate the work of the Racial Justice Initiative, and provide resources that further the work, foundational to all libraries, of centering the voices and experiences of Black, Indigenous, and people of color. In the fall of 2021, the LRJI team will create a student advisory group to help the library with its programming around racism/antiracism and accessibility issues. Plans for further collaboration are being discussed with the Valente Center for Arts and Sciences and other Black activism groups on campus.

## **Physical Resources and Environmental Sustainability**

### **Description**

The Bentley campus includes 48 buildings encompassing over 2.2 million gross square feet. Since the university's last comprehensive review, Bentley has completed construction of the Morison Hall expansion project, Student Center expansion project, a major renovation to Jennison Hall, and a new multipurpose arena.

The campus has three districts: the main campus includes upper and lower campuses; South Campus is located immediately south of Beaver Street; and North Campus is located just over one-half mile north of the main campus. The main campus features the oldest buildings, primarily academic and administrative, that frame a series of traditional quadrangles around the library on the upper campus. Residential and student life buildings extend down a hillside from the lower campus and across Beaver Street, with the Dana Athletic Center and the athletic fields on the South Campus. The North Campus comprises almost 20 acres and includes four student residences.

During the period 2014 through 2018, Bentley undertook two major building expansions, major classroom building renovation, and the construction of the new multipurpose arena. Jennison Hall, one of Bentley's largest classroom buildings, was completely renovated. This building includes tiered and flat classrooms, [collaboratory-style classrooms](#), faculty offices, the Office of Academic Services, and five lab-style classrooms.

Bentley is proud of its reputation for well-maintained facilities. Ongoing space planning and evaluation of physical resources identifies investments that should be made to support academic needs and student engagement. With the impact of the global pandemic, Bentley quickly pivoted to upgrade all 55 classroom and seminar spaces into state-of-the-art hybrid teaching spaces.

### **Appraisal**

#### ***Maintenance and Campus Planning***

[Facilities Management](#) has a long-standing collaboration with Sightlines, Inc., an independent facilities consulting firm. Sightlines uses a proven, Building Portfolio Solutions approach to outlining deferred maintenance needs. The process starts with a comprehensive identification of facilities' needs. With this foundation of information, Sightlines works with the university to integrate these needs with institutional goals and develops an investment plan that fits the

institution's objectives. This clearly defined process helps guide Facilities in identifying, selecting, approving, and executing capital project investments. Sightlines differentiates repairs from modernization and alteration projects to ensure an accurate capture of deferred maintenance. Sightlines then aligns investments to complement campus programmatic goals.

Facilities continues to use the Sightlines Building Portfolio Solutions information when developing their capital plan. This information aligns investments to complement campus programmatic goals. The Capital Planning and Construction team evaluates the deferred maintenance report, along with the overall construction plan, to determine the landscape of projects over the next 5 capital years. The 2017 building portfolio assessment totaled \$142 million.

Each summer, excluding 2020 due to COVID-19, Facilities has been able to address projects listed in the assessment and make reductions to the overall deferred maintenance dollar amount. From FY 2017–FY 2020, the total has been reduced by \$19 million, bringing the remaining total to \$122 million. As the planning process started in the fall, the deferred maintenance projects were reviewed and, where applicable, the prioritized projects were rolled into capital projects for the next fiscal year.

### ***Commitment to Environmental Sustainability***

Bentley University is a signatory to the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), which recognizes that higher education institutions have a unique societal role as both community role models and hubs of research and innovation. Signatory institutions are committed to achieving carbon neutrality on their campuses. As of the writing of this report, the university has achieved its second greenhouse gas reduction target of 70% by 2020. The reduction was achieved through campus-wide energy efficiency efforts (gaining a 25% reduction in campus energy use since 2011), the installation of onsite solar and the purchase of wind energy via renewable energy certificates.

The university's [Office of Sustainability](#) leads the university's sustainability efforts with a mission to "mobilize sustainable leadership in business by educating students on the business imperative of the 'triple-bottom line'—considering the social and environmental impacts of business decisions along with the economic results." By modeling sustainable organizational operations and providing students with experiential learning opportunities, the Office of Sustainability aims to both set an example for sustainable business practices and prepare students for work in today's business world.

As part of this work, the Office of Sustainability explores, discusses and educates the campus community on the intersectionality of social justice, racial justice and climate justice. Collaboration and enthusiasm among students, faculty and staff alike ensures that Bentley's sustainability efforts are not simply actions of a small group of administrators, but the accomplishments of the entire community.

### **Projection**

Bentley embarked on a focused master plan just before the disruption of COVID-19. Due to the financial uncertainty of the pandemic, the master plan was put on hold. Wide-ranging capital projects continue with deferred maintenance projects, minor renovations, and residence hall upgrades. The annual funding allows Facilities to continue with the upkeep of the campus annual

stewardship. This stewardship investment ensures that buildings perform properly and reach their useful life. A renewed planning effort will take place over the next 2 years.

An updated Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (to be announced in Spring 2022) will guide the university toward its 2030 carbon-neutrality goal. Over the next 3–5 years the university will tackle campus decarbonization projects like investing in renewable energy, exploring building electrification, installing electric vehicle charging stations, and increasing options for non-car commuting to and from campus. Bentley is exploring the adoption of the Zero Waste International Alliance's Zero Waste Hierarchy as a means to accelerate waste minimization efforts on campus. This work will be complemented by an increase in the breadth and depth of curricular and extracurricular sustainability.

## **Technological Resources**

### **Description**

The mission of [Bentley's Information Technology \(IT\)](#) is to engage and empower the Bentley community with technology solutions that enable and enhance the university's educational mission by creating extensive and seamless access to information, providing essential tools for supporting teaching, learning and research, and collaborating through governance to deliver initiatives that position Bentley to meet current and future needs.

Information Technology is committed to supporting all areas of the university but focuses strongly on supporting its educational mission. At its core, IT is driven by the need to modernize administrative systems, enhance collaboration tools, mature Bentley's cybersecurity program, improve classroom technology, support faculty research, build resiliency into infrastructure, and continue to train staff to support the IT needs of the future.

### **Appraisal**

The role of IT in supporting academic affairs is to provide the tools and resources needed to collect, manage, analyze, visualize, and publish data. This is critical to enabling the emergence of new academic research. Research faculty are increasingly engaged in research projects that require industry-specific insight, complex data manipulation, analysis including web scraping, and machine learning techniques. In response, IT designed and delivered new faculty workshops on topics such as Introduction to R, web scraping with Python, and accessing and analyzing social media data.

One example of IT's support for faculty research is the Bentley Stringency Index, a model that estimates state compliance and mitigation strategies for combating COVID-19. IT worked closely with a faculty member to support survey methods for data collection, advanced web-scraping techniques, analysis that utilized Bentley's research computing environment, and creation of a dynamic web portal dashboard. The portal is designed to attract global attention to Bentley's COVID-19 simulation model, invite visitors to learn about other ongoing Bentley research, and enable researchers worldwide to download data derived from the Bentley Index to conduct their own investigations.

IT has further developed infrastructure, capabilities, and expertise to support data science initiatives in research and teaching. Support for research computing has increased significantly as faculty conduct research with data-intensive projects in Accounting, Economics, Finance,

Mathematics, Marketing and Natural and Applied Sciences. IT provides tools and assistance to faculty who need big data processing systems, high-performance computing, and high-speed data storage, all of which help accelerate research projects involving data analysis and simulations. Both in-house and cloud-based research computing resources support research efforts, and in the spring of 2021, IT piloted a proof-of-concept aimed at understanding how a potential move of Bentley's high-performance computing hardware to the Microsoft Azure Cloud environment affects performance and costs. To support expanding access to information resources, IT has added and supported additional research technology tools and platforms to the technology portfolio for faculty to use for their research initiatives. The portfolio now includes research databases and platforms such as Meltwater, CALCBENCH, and Thomson Reuters.

In response to the pandemic and the need to shift to hybrid classrooms, the university embarked on a major classroom technology renovation project. The university now has 69 classrooms capable of delivering hybrid courses using laser projectors, auto-tracking video cameras, digital interactive boards (SmartBoards), and advanced microphone technologies. To better support the faculty and students who use these classrooms, IT installed new network-based A/V controls that enable IT to remotely monitor and troubleshoot equipment. The hybrid classrooms have enabled Bentley to deliver 407 hybrid courses over the course of the pandemic.

To enrich scholarly activities and student learning, instructional technology tools and platforms have been added to the portfolio for enhancing engagement, interactions, and accessibility. IT also added tools to support electronic assessments and online exams, including Padlet, Flipgrid, Gradescope, Ally, Annoto, Qwickly, and Respondus. IT also improved accessibility to Bentley's digital content, and the university now complies with digital accessibility standards (WCAG 2.0 AA) in areas such as public videos, websites, and course documents. IT continues to partner with faculty to explore and assess emerging technologies and platforms that provide transformational learning experiences through various modalities, including the use of virtual reality in teaching, learning, and research.

IT continues to focus its initiatives on evolving technology in support of teaching, learning, research, student services, and administration as Bentley continues to develop agility in responding to the more recent IT challenges of health and safety, data privacy, improved accessibility, and, put simply, remote *everything*. The strategy has proved successful as IT has simplified support, improved security, greatly increased its agility, decreased infrastructure costs, and made great progress in retiring on-premises infrastructure. IT continues to develop new cloud-based services to support classroom teaching, learning, and research.

Efforts over the past 2 years include categorizing data, developing protection standards, conducting annual contract reviews for all SaaS agreements handling sensitive university data, conducting third-party contract reviews wherever data are hosted or shared externally, and updating critical policies relating to data and privacy. IT has consolidated assets within ServiceNow and continues to grow capabilities around linking assets with services and mitigating risk. The university's use of Microsoft's single sign-on identity services, coupled with other Office365 services have offered greater visibility into unusual or improbable travel or log ins. Once such issues are identified, IT has protocols in place to alert the IT team and the user, and take actions to secure the account up to and including suspension of the credentials.

IT continues to use a managed security service for around-the-clock proactive monitoring and management of malicious activities. The IT team runs and reviews vulnerability scans weekly

across the Azure and on-premises environments to identify risks and/or software that requires updates. IT also continues its annual risk assessment process and recently converted to the Educause risk registry to identify the most critical and likely risks and associated mitigations.

Recently, IT launched the Security and Privacy Committee to review current protections and privacy policies and to address needs in this area moving forward. The data governance work group was launched in May 2021 and is tasked with identifying data owners, developing a data dictionary, and defining the roles and responsibilities for managing data through the life cycle.

In June 2018, IT moved disaster recovery (DR) to the Azure cloud and closed Bentley's second on-premises data center. IT recently established a second regional site within Azure for the cloud DR and will begin regular testing in FY 2022. Over the last 3 years, IT has continued building resiliency into the campus network by deploying a ring-type topology. IT also enhanced internet connectivity via Internet 2, which offers multiple paths and connections to critical vendors (e.g. Microsoft). As production services moved into Azure, IT established a direct network connection to the Azure data center, with geographic redundancy and failover capabilities.

## **Projection**

- Information Technology will collaborate with departments on campus to build a data model and implement solutions for measuring student outcomes, understanding diverse learning style needs, and detecting early signs of reduced performance.
- Academic Technology will evaluate several LMS platforms and partner with Academic Affairs to determine whether the university should upgrade to Blackboard Ultra or transition to Canvas or D2L Brightspace. Evaluation year: AY 2021–2022.
- The Data Governance Work Group will be launched and tasked with identifying data owners, developing a data dictionary, and defining roles and responsibilities for managing data through the life cycle.
- Information Technology will continue moving forward with the “SaaS first” strategy, migrate remaining on-premises legacy applications to SaaS and the Azure cloud data center, and plan to complete IT’s efforts in FY 2022.
- Information technology will launch a multi-year program to improve data reliability, data quality, and data access. The success of this program will serve as foundational support for enterprise reporting and strategic university decision making. Program work streams include establishing a shared data governance framework and practice and replacing the legacy enterprise reporting environment with streamlined architecture and tools. This effort is led by the University CIO, newly appointed in Fall 2021.

## **STANDARD 8: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

Student success at Bentley has been observed, defined, and assessed in myriad ways. The undergraduate student [retention, 4- and 6-year graduation rates](#), and career outcomes have been among the best in the region and nation. Additionally, Bentley has regularly engaged in ongoing learning outcomes assessment, the National Survey of Student Engagement, and ongoing review of co-curricular student experiences.

Bentley is driven toward continual improvement, and in the last 2 years, Bentley has made great progress in furthering its understanding of its institutional effectiveness.

### **Description**

At Bentley, educational effectiveness is monitored and assessed by two departments. The Business Intelligence team is responsible, along with the Registrar's Office, for submitting the university's persistence and graduation information to the National Clearing House. This team also administers career outcomes surveys, which reveal data about students' job and graduate school placement rates. Business Intelligence maintains Bentley's [University Factbook](#), where these data are updated annually, and oversees participation in the NSSE. This survey yields important information about how Bentley students experience the university, with an emphasis on their coursework and experiences with faculty.

[Assurance of Learning](#) is a newer department at Bentley. Launched fully in 2021, this team works with faculty to appropriately map student learning outcomes to curriculum at the program and institutional levels. It also ensures that these programs are assessed regularly by faculty to invoke meaningful improvements in Bentley's academic offerings. This team is staffed by professionals with backgrounds in educational leadership, curriculum development, and instructional design. In addition to the professional staff encompassing the team, in the fall of 2021, the university launched an Assurance of Learning Advisory Board, consisting of students and faculty, to continue improvement efforts in this area. One of the goals of this group is to recommend and implement methods of engaging in equity-minded assessment practices. Prior to the formation of the Assurance of Learning team, Bentley employed a decentralized approach to assessment whereby individual departments maintained their own assessment records and calendars.

Additionally, the university has launched an [Inclusive Excellence Dashboard](#) as part of the efforts of the Racial Justice Task Force, established in the summer of 2020. This interactive dashboard provides both static and longitudinal data that capture both the demographic makeup of the community and other measures that represent elements of inclusive excellence like climate, education, and institutional support. As Bentley works to implement both a strategic plan for inclusive excellence and equity goals, it will continue adding to this dashboard.

### **Appraisal**

#### **Persistence, Completion, and Career Outcomes**

The Business Intelligence office provides an [annual consumer information disclosure](#) that is easily accessible on Bentley's website. This disclosure shows that the fall 2019 undergraduate first-year cohort retention rate is 92%. It also shows that 4- and 6-year graduation rates disaggregated by both gender and ethnicity. This report demonstrates that Bentley's overall 4-year graduation rate

is 84% and that the 6-year graduation rate is 90%. These rates are commendable, indicating that, overall, Bentley students are successful in navigating the university.

When these rates are disaggregated by ethnicity, more variation among student populations is evident. This variation is most notable in 4-year graduation rates: 45% of Black students completed their degree in that timeframe, while 83% of Asian students and 89% of White students graduated in that same period. The gaps in degree completion close slightly in the 6-year graduation rates (74% of Black students, 90% of Asian students, and 92% of White students, respectively). These completion rate gaps are unacceptable, and this variation is one of the reasons why Bentley's new strategic planning efforts will focus on the student experience as well as assessing and understanding the university's culture and climate. These areas will continue to be tracked and reported by the Inclusive Excellence Dashboard to enhance transparency in this area for the Bentley community.

In 2020, the university's [undergraduate career profile](#) indicated that 84% of undergraduate students were employed within 6 months of graduation, 14% were attending graduate school full-time, and just 2% were still seeking employment. This 98% job and graduate school completion rate has led to the university's career services being ranked first by the *Princeton Review* and as the #1 Regional University in the North by *U.S. News & World Report*. The median salary of Bentley graduates in 2020 was \$62,000, and the average salary was \$61,793. Featured positions of the Class of 2020 as well as the size of the employers can also be found in the [undergraduate career profile](#).

The university's graduate student persistence rates have been between 80% and 88% over the last 3 years. Additionally, the master's programs have seen graduation rates improve from 69% 3 years ago to over 80% for each of the last 3 years. The average time to degree for master's students is 2 years. In FY 2020, 100% of doctoral students returned for their second year.

Graduate student job placement information is reported annually to AACSB as part of Bentley's specialized business accreditation in their [BSQ Employment Report](#). As noted in the report, in 2020–2021, most MBA students were either not seeking employment as they are already employed or continuing their education or had not provided employment information. Out of the 25 who did report they were seeking employment, 16 reported accepting employment by graduation, and another four had accepted employment within 6 months of graduating. The mean base salary for MBA graduates was \$96,265, and the median salary was \$78,500.

This same report also provides information on Bentley's specialized master's programs and doctoral programs. In 2020–2021, 159 specialized master's students reported seeking employment. By graduation, 102 had accepted employment and, within 6 months of graduating, the remaining 57 had accepted employment. The mean base salary was \$69,440, and the median base salary was \$65,000.

While the university's doctoral programs are small, they have seen great success in student persistence, graduation, and completion. Since its first student intake in 2006, the doctoral program has enrolled 97 students (31 in accountancy and 66 in business) and awarded 60 PhDs (21 in accountancy and 39 in business). Of the 97 students initially enrolled in the program, 14 have left before completing their doctoral degree due to a mix of personal, professional, and/or academic reasons. Of those 14, four were able to graduate instead with an MS in Business Research to reflect the 2 years of coursework they completed prior to not moving forward with the doctoral degree.

Additionally, in 2020–2021, five students graduated from the doctoral programs, all of whom went on to accept positions by the time they graduated from Bentley.

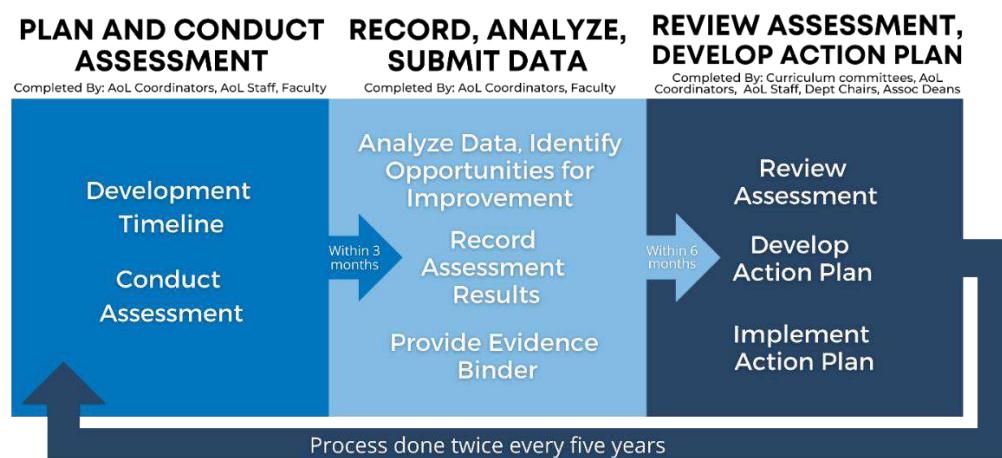
These data provide tangible evidence that Bentley students at all levels are well-prepared for employment as a result of their Bentley education. Furthermore, Bentley graduates at all levels go on to well-paying work; as a result, the university's most current cohort loan default rate is 2.1%, well below the [national default rate](#) of 7.3%.

## Assurance of Learning

Bentley refers to its assessment of curricular student learning as assurance of learning. Our Assurance of Learning system maintains responsibility for ensuring that the university meets its stated [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) student learning outcomes, found on the [website](#).

As stated earlier, Bentley has recently invested in developing an Assurance of Learning team to support faculty in assessing curricular learning. Figure 9 illustrates this process.

**Figure 9: Assurance of Learning at Bentley**



Bentley conducts assessment at three levels. First, the institution-wide assessment encompasses the undergraduate core curriculum, which currently consists of general business courses and general education courses. Each general education course is assigned an assurance of learning coordinator by their department. General education courses have five learning goals with 18 associated student learning outcomes. These outcomes are assessed throughout the distribution requirements, utilizing a variety of methods within the courses. General business courses are overseen by a faculty director for these coordinated courses. For the general business core, there are five learning goals with 13 associated student learning outcomes, which are assessed in seven of the nine general business courses required for undergraduate students.

Some highlights from recent core curriculum assessment include:

General Education:

- In the most recent assessment of the Information Technology 101 course (2018), students met or exceeded the internal benchmark for all criteria combined at a rate of 94% (the internal benchmark is 80%).
- The Global Studies department is responsible for assessing learning outcomes, including those related to understanding diverse political and economic systems within and across societies. In the most recent assessment, Bentley exceeded its benchmark goal. Over 88% of the students sampled met or exceeded expectations. Students performed exceptionally well across all four evaluative criteria and were particularly adept at identifying political variation and integrating comparative evidence, a welcome finding given that both skills are central to Learning Outcome 1.2. Furthermore, all students met or exceeded the overall benchmark goal of 70%.
- The writing sequence has been of significant interest and refinement in terms of curricular improvements as a result of assessment activities. Learning Goal 2 and three of its associated learning outcomes are assessed as part of Bentley's writing courses. The assessment found that two out of the three SLOs did not meet the internal benchmark: create a substantial thesis (57%) and integrate relevant evidence and arguments from sources into their own writing (75%). One exceeded the internal benchmark: use rhetorical strategies appropriate to audience and purpose (83%). To better understand these results, the faculty coordinator hosted a workshop with faculty to discuss them. Ultimately, they found that there was some confusion regarding defining terms. However, they also found that through their norming session they maintained high standards and expectations for student writing by utilizing a rigorous criterion for assessment. The group also determined that maintain greater consistency across sections of these courses, a SharePoint site would be created to disseminate model syllabi and assignments.

General Business:

- For the business processes, functions, and strategies outcome, the first assessment of the 5-year cycle did not meet the assessment's internal benchmark. After reviewing these results, faculty determined that students were not adequately prepared to identify, analyze, and evaluate business processes prior to the assessment. Faculty agreed to include more in-class exercises to support student learning. As a result, the second assessment results improved, exceeding the performance threshold.
- Learning Outcome 2.3, focused on information synthesis, also initially did not meet the internal benchmark, with 77.4% of students performing above the expected level. In reviewing the process and data, the course coordinator and reviewers agreed that issues stemmed from the understanding of the rubric used. Faculty then worked to revise the rubric and train the reviewers. Results improved to 79% of students performing above expected levels, but this was still 1% short of the internal benchmark; thus, the faculty have continued to refine the curriculum and student assignments prior to the next assessment cycle.
- A key learning outcome for Bentley focuses on working in teams, and is assessed in two team-based courses by using a student assessment of team performance. The assessment found that students reported that their teams were working effectively. The data from these

surveys allowed the faculty to compare teamwork effectiveness across two different courses and implement comprehensive program-level changes. To strengthen students' teamwork skills, faculty implemented student portfolios in four of the nine general business courses and added teamwork plans and meeting worksheets for all student meetings.

The second assessment tier is at the program level, entailing Bentley's undergraduate students, MBA and specialty master's programs, and PhD programs for graduate students. Each major is assigned an assurance of learning coordinator by the respective department, and each graduate program has a faculty director who oversees the assessment of student learning.

The following are some program-level assessment highlights. See [here](#) for sample program assessment summary reports.

## Majors

- Accountancy: Student learning is assessed for Learning Goal 1: "identify the relevant authoritative guidance needed to address a business case or situation." In the spring and fall of 2017, Bentley did not meet the internal benchmarks for this goal. Thus, the director of the ACELAB, in consultation with the faculty coordinator of financial accounting, developed self-paced videos and tutorials informing students how and where to access research resources and how to research accounting pronouncements therein. In the spring of 2018, this learning goal was tested again and passed with a score of 80%.
- Actuarial science: One of the learning outcomes for this program is "students will be able to pass at least one of the first two preliminary actuarial examinations: Exam P (probability), and/or Exam FM (Financial Mathematics). The Spring 2020 graduates of this major took both actuarial exams; 71% of graduates passed Exam P, 82% passed Exam FM, and 71% of students passed both. Though the outcome was met (over 80% passed one exam), these students took these exams at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic which may have impacted the pass rate for Exam P.
- Computer information sciences: 100% of students met or exceeded expectations for the four student learning outcomes associated with Learning Goal 3: "graduates understand the nature, structure and creation of computer software that translates organizational policy into business operations."
- Management: In the most recent assessment of Learning Goal 3 ("exhibit managerial and interpersonal competence"), faculty found, via two common assignments, that 89% of students either met or exceeded expectations for the learning outcome related to empathy and active listening. They were slightly below the internal benchmark of 80% for the second learning outcome in this area, which focuses on effectively providing feedback (78% of students met or exceeded expectations). Faculty identified opportunities to clarify expectations and guidelines for the assignment, which was newly developed this year and has since been fully incorporated into the course.
- Mathematical sciences: Learning Goal 2 for this program is "students will demonstrate competency in concepts and techniques of linear algebra." In the spring of 2021, Bentley exceeded its internal benchmark, with 90% of students answering the designated homework problems correctly in their first through third attempts.
- Media and culture: Learning Goal 1, "to be critical analysts of media texts and practices," and Goal 2, "to be conversant in the terminology of a media-related field," were both assigned by a common term paper. In the last assessment, 83% of students performed at or

above the benchmark. As media production students, they demonstrated a particular understanding of the production decisions that led to the final version of the films or television shows released to the public.

## **Master's Programs**

- MBA: Learning Outcome 2.3, “develop informed conclusions and recommendations,” did not meet the internal benchmark in the 2014 assessment cycle (76.3% of students met or exceeded expectations). Thus, the faculty teaching the course in which this outcome was assessed worked on improving students’ ability to make informed/feasible conclusions and recommendations. This work resulted in significant improvement in the assessment results for the spring of 2017, with 100% of students meeting or exceeding expectations.
- MS in Business Analytics: The spring 2017 assessment results for Learning Outcome 1.3, “choice of appropriate time series model,” passed the internal threshold, with 83% of students meeting or exceeding expectations. However, the spring 2019 assessment showed a decreased in performance, with only 76% of students meeting or exceeding expectations. To address this decrease, faculty introduced a key concept—stationary status in a time series mode—earlier in the course. They also discussed this concept from different angles during class lectures and reinforce it through in-class activities and homework.
- MS in Finance: This program was most recently assessed in the fall of 2017 and the spring of 2018. Out of 41 assessments, 29 passed the internal benchmark. While many of the assessments met this benchmark, several opportunities for improvement in curriculum and pedagogy were identified, including a discussion between the department chair and instructors about developing common expectations and pedagogical approaches across sections of FI 623.
- MS in Human Factors and Information Design: This program has 15 total assessments and was assessed most recently in the spring of 2019. Eleven out of 15 assessments passed the internal threshold (85%), and those that did not pass were very close to this benchmark. An example of an improvement made due to these assessments included an increased focus on industry collaborations as authentic projects involving industry clients versus simulated situations resulted in increased student performance.

## **PhD Programs**

Assurance of learning for the PhD programs is an individualized process due to the programs’ small cohort sizes. Progress on each learning goal is monitored by the PhD director and the PhD Council. Assessment practices are designed and carried out by the Curriculum & Assessment Subcommittee, chaired by the PhD director, and includes three faculty members selected from the PhD Council. Every August, PhD students provide the program with a self-assessment report providing a review of the previous academic year, a plan for the next year, job search plans, a current working paper, and an updated CV. A copy of this report is given to the students’ faculty advisors. Annual reviews now also include individual meetings with the PhD director to convey feedback and ensure ongoing progress toward degree completion. Unlike other assessment processes, satisfactory progress on learning goals is a requirement for degree attainment, ensuring that 100% of graduates satisfy the internal benchmark for performance. Assessment occurs at three main points at which student learning is subject to substantial scrutiny: comprehensive examinations, the dissertation proposal, and the final dissertation defense.

The third level of assessment is conducted in individual courses. While Bentley does not centrally collect data at this level for reporting purposes, the Assurance of Learning team provides [resources and support](#) to faculty to ensure that their course-level learning outcomes are well-written and that their assignments and assessments align with each course's learning goals and outcomes. For new courses, the Curriculum Implementation Committee (on which the associate dean serves as an ex officio member) oversees this process.

The Assurance of Learning team, comprised of instructional designers, ensures consistency across all modalities. Course-level outcomes in asynchronous, online courses are well written and articulated to students and aligned with program learning outcomes. The team also ensures that the overall educational quality of these courses meet the university's internal standards based upon the [Quality Matters](#) rubrics.

### **Assurance of Learning and the New Undergraduate Core**

As described previously, the faculty voted in the spring of 2021 to implement a new core curriculum. Prior to approving this new curriculum, faculty had voted to approve new student learning outcomes to ensure an agile and relevant core for undergraduate students. Since the summer of 2021, the Assurance of Learning team has worked closely with the Curriculum Task Force to [map](#) student learning outcomes to the core curriculum in a meaningful way, focusing particularly on areas where learning outcomes are introduced, reinforced, and mastered in the curriculum. As new courses are developed and existing courses are redesigned, assessment practices and activities are being built into the curriculum from the beginning. This upcoming core curriculum implementation has also spurred many departments to reevaluate the curriculum for their majors (e.g., Accountancy and Information Design and Corporate Communications). The Assurance of Learning team also supports the re-design of program-level learning goals and outcomes for these departments and helps map new learning outcomes to the update curricula.

### **Additional Forms of Learning Assessment**

Bentley's co-curricular experiences provide students an opportunity to complement and enhance their class-based learning. For example, the Bentley Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Center utilizes a Faculty Advisory Committee to develop guidelines for all embedded and 4<sup>th</sup> credit-option service-learning courses. Embedded course guidelines require:

- the service project to advance course objectives, address real community needs, and entail meaningful student interaction with the community partner;
- the project to help develop students' awareness of the communities outside Bentley and to build Bentley's relationships with the communities served;
- a syllabus explaining the scope and objectives of the community project and how students' work will be evaluated;
- the course to provide structured opportunities for students to analyze the service experience, connect it to the subject matter of the course, and consider the project in the broader context of civic engagement and social responsibility; and
- the instructor to meet with the community partner in the course planning stages, when appropriate, to establish goals, timelines, project assessment, and closure activities.

Student Affairs at Bentley has also provided students with a new avenue for assessing their co-curricular learning experiences via the [BentleyPlus](#) program. In this program, students and staff

advisors will review their growth and development through participation in various activities to earn certificates in up to 11 competency areas.

The Cronin Office of International Education works closely with faculty and students participating in long- and short-term study-abroad trips. One of the markers of effectiveness in these programs which the office tracks is post-graduate international student mobility opportunities. In the last 5-year period, Bentley has seen one student named a Fulbright scholar, and three students have joined the Peace Corps.

### **Insights from the National Survey of Student Engagement**

The NSSE annually collects information at hundreds of 4-year colleges and universities about first-year and senior students' participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. The results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college. For examples, findings have indicated that 82% of fourth-year students noted that Bentley had contributed either *quite a bit* or *very much* to their skills in speaking clearly and effectively. Similarly, fourth-year students responded that Bentley had contributed either *quite a bit* or *very much* to their acquisition of job- or work-related knowledge and skills. Full NSSE data can be found [here](#).

### **Projection**

- The current undergraduate core curriculum, general education, and general business courses will be assessed during AY 2021–2022 by faculty with support from the assurance of learning team. This will be the last time these courses will be assessed, as the new core curriculum will be launched in the fall of 2022.
- Beginning in Fall 2022, the Assurance of Learning Advisory Board will explore and implement opportunities to implement more equity-based assessment practices.
- During AY 2021–2022, the university's project advisory board will pursue a business case to implement third-party software (e.g., Watermark's Planning & Self-Study) to streamline assessment reporting and recording.
- Bentley will implement a new learning management system, likely in the fall of 2022. The Assurance of Learning team will support this implementation and will seek to utilize the LMS to capture assessment of student learning data.
- In the spring of 2022, all graduate programs will begin the next 5-year assessment cycle.

## **STANDARD 9: INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE**

Integrity is built into Bentley's mission. The university strives to create "ethical leaders who will confront the challenges of today and shape the opportunities of tomorrow." This commitment to integrity does not end with students; Bentley is committed to acting with integrity in all aspects of the institution and in all interactions with stakeholders.

The university regularly assesses and updates the programs, policies, and procedures that enable Bentley to fulfill this commitment—and includes students, faculty, staff, trustees, and external stakeholders in these efforts. The institution is publicly committed to doing the right thing and has created policies and procedures to ensure that it does.

### **Integrity**

#### **Description**

The [Academic Integrity System](#) (AIS) is a core element of Bentley's commitment to integrity on campus. Developed jointly by faculty, administration, and students, the AIS establishes and regulates standards of academic integrity. The academic integrity coordinator oversees and facilitates the system and provides educational outreach to students and faculty. The Academic Integrity Council reviews the state of academic integrity in the Bentley community; advises the director of academic integrity on the process and procedures of the AIS; and recommends revisions as appropriate. Many instances of alleged breaches of academic integrity are resolved between faculty and chairs; when they are not, in the most serious cases, it is the council's responsibility to determine if there has been a violation and what, if any, sanction should be imposed. Bentley's academic integrity policy, revised in 2015, for undergraduate and graduate students is available on the university's [Academic Integrity webpage](#).

There are several innovative centers showcasing Bentley's commitment to ethics and social responsibility, including the [Hoffman Center for Business Ethics](#), the [Bentley Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Center](#), the [Center for Women and Business](#), the [Valente Center for Arts and Sciences](#), and a wide array of other programs and initiatives. Bentley sponsors conferences, seminars, and enrichment activities dedicated to promoting responsible, ethical behavior. These include the Center for Business Ethics' [Executive Lectureship](#) and its [Verizon Visiting Professorship in Business Ethics](#), the [Global Business Ethics Symposium](#) and [Faculty Development Business Ethics Teaching Workshop](#) sponsored by the State Street Foundation, and Bentley's role as a signatory on the United Nations Global Compact Principles for [Responsible Management Education Initiative \(PRME\)](#). These events are supported by the institution and are conducted in accordance with the highest ideals of integrity and academic freedom.

Bentley faculty enjoy complete freedom to research topics of their choosing, using methods they deem appropriate. When humans are subjects in research, Bentley is committed to assuring their safe and ethical treatment. Federal and university regulations stipulate that all faculty, staff, and student research projects involving human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#), established in 2004. The IRB has been granted federal-wide assurance by the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). The university follows the

principles outlined in the Belmont Report, emphasizing respect for persons, beneficence, and justice in the treatment of participants in research projects.

Bentley expects the entire campus community to adhere to the highest ethical standards of conduct and integrity. The Division of Student Affairs requires all incoming students to sign and abide by the policies and procedures in the [Student Handbook](#). They also commit to Bentley's core values: caring, collaboration, diversity, honesty, impact, learning, and respect. Title IX protects all Bentley students, and all students are expected to review Bentley's [Title IX documents](#). Select groups, based on their organizational roles, sign anti-hazing agreements.

Bentley employees are expected to abide by its [code of ethics](#), which is overseen by the university's general counsel Officer, and a university-wide ethics committee. This code specifies Bentley policies regarding conflicts of interest, confidential information, intellectual property, and more. Faculty and staff are also required to complete [harassment prevention training](#) by completing an online course developed by United Educators, a higher education risk management group that Bentley has used for other compliance activities. Periodic management training and employee awareness programs continue to communicate Bentley's commitment to a harassment-free workplace.

Bentley is committed to fairness, equity, and respect in all its interactions with stakeholders. Human Resources helps translate this commitment into action. University policies regarding discrimination, development, employee relations, safety, status and pay, among others, are clearly articulated and [easily accessible on the Employment Policies and Practices webpage](#).

## Appraisal

Bentley's [EEO and non-discrimination policy](#), updated in 2015, affirms the institution's commitment to not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ethnicity, or veteran or disability status. To ensure equitable pay, each year Bentley participates in a variety of compensation salary surveys that focus on several benchmark staff positions and full-time faculty roles. Once in 2018 and again in 2021, Bentley conducted a pay equity study to remedy significant pay disparities related to gender and race/ethnicity. Employee dignity is promoted by a policy regarding [workplace harassment and bullying](#), which was updated in 2018.

Bentley provides employee growth and learning and offers a variety of learning opportunities for employees on a [dedicated page of the Human Resources website](#). The new employee management system, [Conversations About Performance \(CAP\)](#) implemented in 2016, takes a development view of employee performance. Employees and managers jointly develop goals and work toward their fulfillment, specifying skills that must be learned along the way. Bentley's commitment to fair dealing extends to its prospective students as well. Like most organizations, Bentley collects information about visitors to its website. It follows standard privacy protocols and [publicizes information collected](#) and how it is used.

Campus community members have multiple channels for reporting breaches of policy and procedure. When procedures for addressing alleged ethical violations are covered in Bentley policies, such as the [Procedures for Resolution of Harassment and Discrimination Complaints](#) and the [Faculty and Staff Grievance Procedures](#) and those found in the [Faculty Manual](#), those procedures are followed. Beyond this, community members have other avenues to make reports.

For breaches of the code of ethics, Bentley offers a formal [complaint procedure](#) that encourages employees to come forward with harassment complaints and an investigative strategy that protects the privacy interests of both the alleged victim and the accused offender. As another means of raising awareness of social and ethical responsibility on campus, [EthicsPoint](#), an industry leader in providing web-based solutions for managing governance, risk, and compliance, was introduced in the fall of 2005 as the platform through which the Bentley ethics helpline is hosted. Alleged ethical violations, whether raised through the ethics helpline or other sources, are taken seriously and investigated by the appropriate bodies of the university.

[Bentley's Conduct System](#) serves and educates the Bentley community by assuring that the university is a safe, pleasant, and stimulating environment conducive to academic and personal development. The conduct system's goals, anchored in the educational mission of the university, are designed to educate students, hold them accountable and responsible for their actions, maintain the welfare of the campus community, foster a sense of community and mutual respect across campus, and help students develop alternatives to inappropriate behavior.

To this end, Bentley's [ombuds](#) serves as a confidential, impartial advisor and resource to staff, faculty, and students in resolving formal and informal grievances. Sensitive academic or workplace conflicts may cover a range of both individual and generic issues, including sexual harassment, perceived discrimination on any basis, and general personality conflicts.

Bentley's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion has a long history. Out of its [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#), Bentley runs a series of diversity-related workshops and retreats, including (dis)ability awareness workshops, and ally workshops, introducing participants to becoming an ally around sexual identity issues. New faculty and staff positions are advertised to diverse groups, and applicants from these groups are encouraged to apply. Search committees for all faculty positions, and for all staff positions managing staff and/or programmatic areas, undergo implicit bias training.

One of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion's hallmark initiatives is [Bentley Brave](#), a series of events and programs providing meaningful opportunities in the campus community for education, conversation, and reflection on topics like race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, ability, and socioeconomic status. These small groups of 8–10 meet monthly over the course of one semester to share personal experiences and learn from others on topics taken from current events, campus programming, or other materials of interest to members of the group. A facilitator is assigned to each group and is responsible for creating a confidential and supportive atmosphere to encourage full participation.

Since the social unrest in the summer of 2020, Bentley has strengthened its commitment to diversity and inclusion. In support of that commitment, the university has developed goals and programs to transform the culture of Bentley into one that fully embraces and celebrates its differences. Bentley has created a [Racial Justice Task Force](#) comprising over 100 student, alumni, faculty and staff volunteers to identify opportunities for change on campus. In addition to the work of the task force, the President's Cabinet introduced an initial set of [18 strategic initiatives](#) to guide the university's next steps on racial justice. These initiatives include expanding training about bias in hiring, establishing an Alumni of Color Advisory Group, and improving the diversity of university suppliers. Bentley has coupled these initiatives with new staff, creating the position of chief diversity and inclusion officer and a new associate dean of diversity and inclusion.

To further the university's growth in this area, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion has launched two important initiatives, the [Bentley Equity Experience](#) and the [Inclusive Excellence Learning and Development model](#). These initiatives were born out of the racial justice task force and will be launched and assessed beginning in the 2021-2022 academic year.

As a signatory institution, Bentley has been committed to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education from its earliest days. The university will continue this relationship in the coming years not only through education but also through research. Faculty are passionate about research in ethics and social responsibility, pursuing projects in their own disciplines and as part of cross-disciplinary teams. A partial list of research publications can be found in the latest [PRME report](#), located on the [resources](#) page of the Hoffman Center for Business Ethics website. Bentley remains committed to PRME for the foreseeable future.

## Projection

- The Office of Diversity and Inclusion will oversee the dissemination of the results of the Bentley Equity Experience survey, which was deployed to the community during the fall 2021 semester. These results will be shared widely with the campus to inform the creation of specific measurable systemic changes. Data will be disaggregated, to the extent possible, by specific demographic groups to uncover patterns and themes. Data will also be analyzed by division and department to inform the creation of specific action plans focused on the unique contributions of these areas to the culture.
- The Office of Diversity and Inclusion will continue to provide faculty and staff development opportunities through the Inclusive Excellence Learning and Development model. All new employees will be encouraged to complete the Bentley Baseline program within their first two years of employment. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion will also partner with all divisions to ensure specialized training and development opportunities are aligned with this model (for example, the Academic Affairs Inclusive Pedagogy training framework launching in Fall 2022).
- Academic Affairs will oversee the assessment processes of the new curriculum focused on the areas Values, Ethics, and Society as well as Race, Gender, and Inequality. This will begin following the implementation of the new curriculum in Fall 2022.

## Transparency

### Description

Bentley University is incorporated as a [nonprofit charitable corporation](#) pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L., Chapter 80, and is authorized by the Board of Higher Education to grant degrees pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 69, Section 30. The university observes all applicable state and federal regulations. Bentley complies with the standards, policies, and requirements of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. It oversees the involvement of its trustees with corporations or other entities with which it does business. These regulations are outlined in a detailed [conflict of interest policy](#), and all trustees, officers and senior managers are required to complete a conflict of interest form each year, with the information gathered reported to the Audit Committee by the general counsel.

A centralized Marketing and Communications division assures consistent digital and print messaging to all audiences across campus. All printed materials targeted to an external audience

are written or reviewed by the content team for accuracy and agreement. The Strategic Communications Office coordinates all press information and media relations. The staff routes inquiries to the individual or department best suited to address the requests. A standard description of Bentley appears in all externally distributed publications. A shorter version may appear on invitations and postcards or be available via URL or QR code.

## Appraisal

Marketing and Communications has followed a very public and transparent process to [update the Bentley University brand](#) in mid-2020. Due to the pandemic, the rollout of new materials was slow and controlled. The team launched a brand [microsite](#) with resources and FAQs for the Bentley community. A departmental “logo lockup” generator was built by the development team and has been accessed more than 500 times since launch, allowing a level of branding self-service not previously available.

Enrollment Marketing (part of Marketing and Communications) manages the undergraduate and graduate enrollment sections of the site in partnership with the division of Enrollment Management. The navigation was updated in 2019, and the team continues to test features and add content as needed without any need for development support. The team has been adding QR codes to direct marketing and digital materials to drive interested students directly to resources onsite and have also embedded many Slate forms into the site, ensuring a seamless and secure transfer of data from inquiry to application to acceptance. A live-chat feature also allows prospective students or parents to ask admissions staff questions during extended business hours.

- Within the enrollment sections of the site are subsections on “why Bentley,” how to visit, how to apply, tuition and financial aid, special programs, and student life.
- Prospective families can easily search by persona (e.g., first-year, transfer, international, women, first-generation, parents, counselors) or browse by academic area of interest.
- There is a persistent menu throughout this section of the site that allows quick access to functions like inquire, apply, visit, and ask questions.
- Printed materials and digital communications have consistent branding and messaging with what is on the site. The Enrollment Marketing team is responsible for creating, updating, and archiving content that is sent to prospective families.
- Metrics on current students and alumni are regularly updated, and sources are listed and linked. For example, any national rankings or placement rate highlighted has the source below it, and more detail is one click away.

## Projection

- Whenever possible, the marketing teams solicit feedback (formal and informal) on enrollment marketing materials to ensure that Bentley continuously improves its collateral. However, this is not always possible with production schedules. Due to the pandemic, plans to test different materials were put on hold. The university plans to execute more A/B tests on messaging, cadence, and personalization in 2022.
- Currently, there is not a clear process for making general inquiries to Bentley. There is a phone number in the footer of the website, which also lists Bentley’s social channels, but there is no generic email set up. While most inquiries are directed to specific departments (e.g., prospects contact Enrollment, alumni contact Alumni Relations, media contact PR),

the university will evaluate incoming inquiries to social media accounts to determine if this is sufficient or if it needs to establish an email, chat, or other feature. (Currently, Enrollment uses chat on the pages of its site.)

- The homepage is currently designed and organized similarly to “interior” pages. This makes it challenging to surface links to important information for prospective students. The Marketing and Communications team has begun to redesign and recode the homepage to create a more engaging experience for visitors while still allowing quick access to key links. The team has accessed research data on how prospective students and parents use websites to aid their college search.

## Public Disclosure

### Description

[Bentley's website](#) is the primary vehicle for offering comprehensive information to prospective students, employees, corporate partners, the news media, and alumni. While the university was already moving toward increasing and improving its digital presence and communication, the pandemic pushed Bentley to migrate print to digital even faster. Visitors to the site will find a virtual campus tour; facts about Bentley and information on undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs; student life; specialized learning centers; athletics; admission processes; financial assistance; news and events; conference facilities; career opportunities; and employee benefits. The institutional [mission and vision statements](#) are readily available online, as is the [strategic plan](#). In 2020, the university added a robust [COVID information center](#) with the latest health and safety guidelines, dashboards, and the return-to-campus plans.

Bentley's alumni magazine is published and distributed three times a year in print and [online forms](#), and serves as the primary vehicle for promoting the university among Bentley's key external audiences of alumni, parents, donors, friends, and corporate and financial partners, as well as in the broader academic community. This builds pride and creates affiliation among these groups to generate support for the institution.

The footer of the home page lists all of Bentley's social media channels, each of which supports direct messaging capabilities. These channels are monitored by our social media manager/content team who respond as appropriate. Enrollment sections have quick access tools for user inquiries. Nearly every department, center, or academic page lists its own contact information, including email, phone, and social channels.

### Appraisal

Bentley University employs various forms of media to disclose information about itself to the public and university community. The Marketing and Communications division communicates to prospective students, current students, current families, alumni, corporate partners, and other interested audiences with complete, accurate and clear information.

- Prospective students and their families can find specifics about curriculum, programs, faculty, costs, student life, and policies in both print publications and online via the [university website](#), and through interpersonal interaction with admissions staff. General information is also distributed to add value to the higher education selection process, such as helpful material on financing higher education and on living and studying in the Boston

area. In 2019, the Enrollment team launched a [podcast](#) with 11 episodes on several of these topics. Additionally, the team published associated [tip sheets](#). During the pandemic, additional videos and virtual events were created to replace some of the lost interpersonal connections and in-person visits. In 2021, the team added more content and resources for first-generation students. Prospective students can request additional information about Bentley and apply online.

- For current students, details on grading and assessments, student discipline, and complaints/appeals can be found in the [Student Handbook](#) as well as the [Student Catalogue](#), both of which are updated annually and reposted.
- Current students, along with other members of the community, use the Bentley website for information on all aspects of the university. In addition, they can access important services such as registering for classes, viewing class lists, and printing out W-2s through the internal academic and administrative web-based functions found within the [MyBentley portal](#). [Human Resources policies](#), including Bentley's non-discrimination policy, are readily accessible on the website. The HR section of the website is continuously updated with information on job postings, benefits, and compliance with local, state, and federal employment laws.
- Details on the size and characteristics of the student body and the campus setting can be found in dozens of print and web publications produced by the [Enrollment](#) and [Alumni](#) teams.
- Listings of the administrative officers and the governing board are posted on the [About section](#) of the website. This section also includes details on Bentley's leadership, mission and values, diversity and inclusion, and the strategic plan. Several years of the university's audited [financial statements](#) are available online through the [Financial Operations](#) office. Bentley also provides all information related to the safety and security of the campus community in the annual printed and web-posted [Campus Security and Fire Safety Report](#), which is in the [Public Safety](#) section of the site.

In 2019, Bentley completed an exhaustive overhaul of its website, making information easier to find via browsing and search tools. The Development team conducted several focus groups and interviews with content owners (university faculty and staff who manage pages within bentley.edu) as well as users (faculty, staff, prospective families, current families, and alumni) to understand pain points, preferences, and opportunities. Additionally, the team wanted to move the site to a newer technology platform (Drupal 8), which offers improved navigation tools, content blocks (or “components”) as well improvements in meeting ADA web standards.

- Old content was removed or updated, and each section of the site was assigned to a “power user” who not only has the skills to edit and update pages, but also is a subject-matter expert in their section. These power users are trained and managed by the Digital Marketing team to ensure that the quality of content and design remains consistent.
- Persistent navigation added to the site now allows users to quickly navigate to key sections and, during application season, apply and visit quick links.
- Faculty listings by name, research interest, and department can now be found on a revamped [faculty microsite](#).
- In 2020, the Digital Marketing team invested in several tools to improve site usability. The first is Site improve software, which continually scans the Bentley website for broken links, misspellings, and readability/ADA compliance issues.

- Bentley also upgraded the internal search engine on bentley.edu to improve accuracy of results and to more quickly re-index new pages as they are added to the site.
- In late 2021, the team upgraded the site again, this time to Drupal 9.

## **Projection**

- Our hybrid site management model (centralized but with power users throughout the university) has pros and cons. Not all power users have the same technical skills or design sense. Some do not have the full subject-matter expertise they have been asked to cover (e.g., all departments within Student Affairs). The university has begun offering both design and content "consulting" to teams across campus who need help creating or updating pages. Bentley plans to continue offering this help and to roll out "brand ambassador" training, including a module on creating content for the web.
- Bentley does not have adequate resources or processes to proactively audit all pages/content on the site for accuracy. For example, when a faculty member leaves, there is no automated process for removing their name and image from the site. There is also no tool to ensure that news or blog sections are updated regularly, raising the risk of publishing outdated content. Together, the development and marketing teams are researching whether software like Site Improve can be used to audit the site and automate some updates. Additionally, Bentley will continue to train and remind power users of their responsibilities to keep content updated. The university is also considering a ticketing system tied to IT and HR to notify appropriate departments of faculty or staff departures.
- Finding specific documents and resources within the site can be challenging. Old content often still comes up in external searches. Each power user can organize their content as they see fit, often mimicking previous pages or printed materials. This is another area where power user and brand ambassador training will be deployed to help mitigate these issues. Additionally, the Development team has begun investing in improvements to internal search functionality.



# BENTLEY UNIVERSITY

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BENTLEY UNIVERSITY is more than just one of the nation's top business schools. It is a lifelong-learning community that creates successful leaders who make business a force for positive change. With a combination of business and the arts and sciences and a flexible, personalized approach to education, Bentley provides students with critical thinking and practical skills that prepare them to lead successful, rewarding careers. Founded in 1917, the university enrolls 4,200 undergraduate and 1,000 graduate and PhD students and is set on 163 acres in Waltham, Massachusetts, 10 miles west of Boston. For more information, visit [bentley.edu](http://bentley.edu).