

Strategic Education, Inc.  
Form 10-K  
March 01, 2019  
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UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF  
THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2018

Commission file number: 0-21039

STRATEGIC EDUCATION, INC.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

MARYLAND 52-1975978  
(State or other jurisdiction of (I.R.S. Employer Identification Number)  
incorporation or organization)

2303 Dulles Station Boulevard, Herndon, VA 20171  
(Address of principal executive offices)

REGISTRANT'S TELEPHONE NUMBER INCLUDING AREA CODE: (703) 247-2500

SECURITIES REGISTERED PURSUANT TO SECTION 12(b) OF THE ACT:

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COMMON STOCK, \$.01 PAR VALUE NASDAQ GLOBAL SELECT MARKET  
(Title of class) (Name of each exchange on which registered)

SECURITIES REGISTERED PURSUANT TO SECTION 12(g) OF THE ACT:

NONE

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act:  
Yes No

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act: Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the Registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the Registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the last 90 days. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically every Interactive Data File required to be submitted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (§ 229.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit such files). Yes No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K (Section 229.405 of this chapter) is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of Registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, smaller reporting company, or an emerging growth company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer," "smaller reporting company," and "emerging growth company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer  
Non-accelerated filer Smaller reporting company  
Emerging growth company

If an emerging growth company, indicate by check mark if the registrant has elected not to use the extended transition period for complying with any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 13(a) of the

Exchange Act.

Indicate by check mark whether the Registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Securities Exchange Act). Yes No

The aggregate market value of the voting and non-voting common stock held by non-affiliates (computed by reference to the price at which the common stock was last sold) as of June 29, 2018, the last business day of the Registrant's most recently completed second fiscal quarter, was \$1.3 billion.

The total number of shares of common stock outstanding as of February 1, 2019 was 21,745,913.

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PART I

CAUTIONARY NOTICE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS:

This document and the documents incorporated by reference herein include “forward-looking statements,” within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the “Securities Act”), and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the “Exchange Act”), including, without limitation, the statements about our plans, strategies, and prospects under the headings “Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations” and “Business.” We have typically used the words “expect,” “estimate,” “assume,” “believe,” “anticipate,” “will,” “forecast,” “outlook,” “plan,” “project,” and similar expressions in this document and the documents incorporated by reference herein to identify forward-looking statements. We have based these forward-looking statements on our current views with respect to future events and financial performance. Actual results could differ materially from those projected in the forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements are subject to many risks, uncertainties and assumptions, including, among other things:

- the pace of growth of student enrollment;
- our continued compliance with Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (the “Higher Education Act” or “HEA”), and the regulations thereunder, as well as other federal laws and regulations, regional accreditation standards, and state regulatory requirements;
- rulemaking by the U.S. Department of Education (“Department of Education” or the “Department”) and increased focus by the U.S. Congress on for-profit education institutions;
- competitive factors;
- risks associated with the opening of new campuses;
- risks associated with the offering of new educational programs and adapting to other changes;
- risks related to the timing of regulatory approvals;
- our ability to continue to implement our growth strategy;
- the amount of the costs, fees, expenses, and charges related to our merger with Capella (the “Merger”);

- the risk that the benefits of our merger with Capella, including expected synergies, may not be fully realized or may take longer to realize than expected;
- the risk that our merger with Capella may not advance the combined company's business strategy and growth strategy;
- the risk that the combined company may experience difficulty integrating Strayer's and Capella's employees or operations;
- the potential diversion of our management's attention resulting from our merger with Capella;
- risks associated with the ability of our students to finance their education in a timely manner; and
- general economic and market conditions.

You should not put undue reliance on any forward-looking statements. You should understand that many important factors, including those discussed under the headings "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition

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and Results of Operations” and “Business,” could cause our results to differ materially from those expressed or suggested in any forward-looking statements. Further information about these and other relevant risks and uncertainties may be found in Item 1A (“Risk Factors”) below and elsewhere in this Annual Report on Form 10-K and in our other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“SEC”). We undertake no obligation to update or revise forward-looking statements, except as required by law.

References to “we,” “us,” “our,” the “Corporation,” and the “Company” refer to Strategic Education, Inc., together with our consolidated subsidiaries, unless the context suggests otherwise.

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Item 1. Business

Overview

Strategic Education, Inc. (“Strategic Education,” “SEI,” or the “Company”), a Maryland corporation formerly known as Strayer Education, Inc., is an education services company that seeks to provide the most direct path between learning and employment through campus-based and online post-secondary education offerings, as well as through programs to develop job-ready skills for high-demand markets. The Company conducts its operations primarily through its wholly-owned subsidiaries, Strayer University and Capella University, both accredited post-secondary institutions of higher education. The Company’s operations also include certain non-degree programs, mainly focused on software and application development.

Acquisition of Capella Education Company

On August 1, 2018, we completed our merger with Capella Education Company (“CEC”) pursuant to a merger agreement dated October 29, 2017. The merger solidifies our position as a national leader in education innovation, and provides scale that will enable greater investment in improving student academic and career outcomes while maintaining our focus on affordability. The merger is also expected to create significant cost synergies for us.

Pursuant to the merger, we issued 0.875 shares of our common stock for each issued and outstanding share of CEC common stock. Outstanding equity awards held by CEC employees and certain nonemployee directors of CEC were assumed by us and converted into comparable SEI awards at the exchange ratio. Outstanding equity awards held by CEC nonemployee directors who did not serve as directors of SEI after completion of the merger and awards held by former employees of CEC who left before completion of the merger were settled upon completion of the merger as specified in the merger agreement.

As of December 31, 2018, our segments and wholly-owned subsidiaries consisted of the following:

Strayer University Segment

Strayer University is an institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs in business administration, accounting, information technology, education, health services administration, public administration, and criminal justice at physical campuses, predominantly located in the eastern United States, and



online.

The Jack Welch Management Institute (“JWMI”), a program of Strayer University, offers an executive MBA online and is a Top-25 Princeton Review-ranked online MBA program.

#### Capella University Segment

Capella University is an online post-secondary education company that offers a variety of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs primarily delivered to working adults. Capella University's program offerings span six primary disciplines: public service leadership; nursing and health sciences; psychology; business and technology; counseling and human services; and education.

#### Non-Degree Programs Segment

DevMountain, LLC (“DevMountain”) is a software development school offering Web Development, iOS Development, and UX Design programs in person at DevMountain's classrooms in Provo and Salt Lake City, Utah, Dallas, Texas, and Phoenix, Arizona, and online.

Hackbright Academy, Inc. (“Hackbright”) is a software engineering school for women offering accelerated software development programs, together with placement services and coaching. Hackbright's programs are delivered in person through Hackbright's classrooms in the San Francisco Bay Area.

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The New York Code and Design Academy, Inc. (“NYCDA”) is a New York City-based provider of web and application software development courses. NYCDA is not accredited and does not participate in state or federal student financial aid programs. NYCDA courses have been delivered primarily on-ground to students in partnership with business and education partners seeking to further their employees’ or students’ career in software application development.

Sophia Learning, LLC (“Sophia”) is an innovative learning company which leverages technology to support self-paced learning, including courses eligible for transfer into credit at over 2,000 colleges and universities.

## History

Strategic Education was formed on August 1, 2018 with the merger of Strayer Education, Inc. and CEC. The Company’s primary operating subsidiaries are Strayer University and Capella University.

Founded in 1892, Strayer University is an institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs in business administration, accounting, information technology, education, health services administration, public administration, and criminal justice at 72 physical campuses, predominantly located in the eastern United States, and online. Strayer University also offers an executive MBA online through JWMI, which was acquired in December 2011. Strayer University is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (“Middle States” or “Middle States Commission”), one of the six regional collegiate accrediting agencies recognized by the Department of Education. By offering its programs both online and in physical classrooms, Strayer University provides its working adult students more flexibility and convenience. Strayer University, with its online offerings, attracts students from around the country and throughout the world.

Capella University was founded in 1991 and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, one of the six regional collegiate accrediting agencies recognized by the Department of Education. Capella University offers a variety of doctoral, master’s and bachelor’s programs, primarily for working adults. Capella University focuses on master's and doctoral degrees, with 70% of its learners enrolled in a master’s or doctoral degree program. Its academic offerings are built with competency-based curricula and designed to demonstrate competencies through real-world, authentic assessments delivered in an online format that is both convenient and flexible.

The Company generated net revenue of \$634 million in 2018. For more information regarding our revenues, profits, and financial condition, please refer to “Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations” and our consolidated financial statements included in this Annual Report on Form 10-K.

## Industry Background

The United States market for post-secondary education is large, fragmented, and competitive. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the total number of post-secondary learners enrolled as of the fall of 2016 was 20.2 million, reflecting a 6.3% decrease from record enrollment in the fall of 2010. Approximately 1.4 million of these learners attended proprietary institutions. Controversy about the cost of higher education, under-employment of many college graduates, and persistent negative media coverage have caused some prospective students to question the value proposition of higher education. According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, college enrollments in all higher education sectors declined 1.0% and 1.7% in the fall of 2017 and 2018, respectively. Enrollment at proprietary colleges declined 7.1% and 15.1% in the fall of 2017 and 2018, respectively. The industry is heavily dependent on continued availability of funding for programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (“Title IV programs”), and concerns about potential reductions in such funding also could negatively affect demand for higher education.

Notwithstanding weaker demand dynamics over the past few years, we believe that over time, demand for post-secondary education will increase as a result of demographic, economic, and social trends. The U.S. Census Bureau has reported that approximately 62.5 million adults over the age of 25 in the United States do not have more than a high school education, and approximately 35.5 million adults over the age of 25 have some college experience but have not completed a college degree. Other trends that could positively affect demand for our programs include:

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- increasing demand by employers for certain types of professional and skilled workers;
- growth in the number of high school graduates from 2.8 million in 1999-2000 to an estimated 3.6 million in 2018-2019, according to the National Center for Education Statistics;
- the significant and measurable income premium and enhanced employment prospects attributable to post-secondary education;
- a number of initiatives underway to reduce the cost of a post-secondary education; and
- continued demand from working adults for programs offered by regionally accredited institutions.

## Competition

The post-secondary education market is highly competitive, with no private or public institution holding a significant market share. Strayer University and Capella University (the “Universities”) compete for students and learners primarily with traditional public and private degree-granting accredited colleges and universities, other proprietary degree-granting accredited schools, and alternatives to higher education. In addition, we face competition from various non-traditional, credit-bearing and noncredit-bearing education programs, provided by both proprietary and not-for-profit providers, including massive open online courses offered worldwide without charge by traditional educational institutions and other direct-to-consumer education services. As the proportion of traditional colleges providing alternative learning modalities increases, we will face increasing competition for students from traditional colleges, including colleges with well-established reputations for excellence. As online learning matures as a modality for education delivery across higher education, we believe that the intensity of the competition we face will continue to increase.

We believe the key factors affecting our competitive position include the quality of our programs offered, the quality of other services provided to learners, our reputation among students and in the general marketplace, the cost and perceived value of our offerings, the employment rate and terms of employment for our graduates, the ease of access to our offerings, the quality and reputation of our faculty and other employees, the quality of our campus facilities and online platforms, the time commitment required to complete our programs and obtain a degree, the quality and size of our alumni base, and our relationship with other learning institutions.

## Company Strengths

The Company has a track record of providing practical and convenient education programs and solutions for working adults and employers. Through the merger with Capella Education Company on August 1, 2018 (“the Merger”), the Company retains the individual strengths of its two independently operated universities while creating a combined corporate and shared service platform that enables significant cost synergies and best practice sharing, both of which help us deliver significant benefits to students. We believe the following strengths position us to capitalize on the demand for post-secondary education:

- Focus on Innovation. The Company values innovation and actively invests in the educational experience to improve student success and employment outcomes, while also addressing national challenges including the affordability of higher education and meeting the skill requirements of employers. Capella University’s competency-based learning infrastructure and direct assessment capabilities, and Strayer University’s video, simulation and content capabilities are examples of this drive to transform education delivery and learning by working adults. Through the Merger, both Universities can leverage these transformational capabilities.
- Consistent operating history. Strayer University has been in continuous operation since 1892 and Capella University since 1991, and both have demonstrated an ability to operate consistently and grow profitably. The

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Merger positions the combined Company to continue this track record, with a broader, more diversified product offering, a balanced revenue mix, cost and revenue synergies, and greater scale.

- Practical and diversified programs. We offer programs in practical areas of adult education. In order to keep pace with a changing knowledge-based economy, we constantly strive to meet the evolving needs of our students, learners and their current and prospective employers by regularly refining, updating, and adding to our portfolio of educational programs. The Merger creates a diversified program portfolio that includes Strayer University's programs in business, including the Jack Welch Management Institute, accounting, economics and information technology, and Capella University's competency-based programs in healthcare and counseling, as well as a robust doctoral portfolio. This program diversity will help the Company better meet the educational needs of students in the modern economy.
- Focus on adults pursuing career-relevant degree and non-degree programs. We focus on serving adults who are pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees as well as non-degree certificates and training programs that will help them advance their careers and employment opportunities. We provide high quality student support services such as advising, writing, tutoring and research support; administrative services; library services; financial aid counseling; and career counseling. Increasingly, we are leveraging data and analytics to create personalized experiences for our students and learners, which is reflected in our early cohort persistence improvements and continued high student satisfaction.
- Flexible program offerings. We offer flexible programs that allow students to attend classes and complete coursework during the day, in the evening, and on weekends throughout the calendar year at our on-ground campuses, and at the student or learner's convenience through our comprehensive online program offerings.
- Attractive and convenient campus locations. Strayer University's campuses are located in growing metropolitan areas, mostly in the Mid-Atlantic and Southern regions where there are large populations of adults with demographic characteristics similar to those of our typical students. The campuses are attractive and modern, offering conducive learning environments in convenient locations. Post-merger, our expertise in ground based operations can be leveraged to extend Capella University offerings in new and innovative ways.
- Established brand names and alumni support. Strayer University and Capella University are established brand names in post-secondary adult education. Our students and graduates are effective ambassadors of both brands through their work at companies across corporate America and, along with our growing alumni networks, foster greater brand awareness and additional referral opportunities for new students and learners.

## Company Strategy

Our goal is to be a leading innovator and provider of career-relevant and meaningful education programs that prepare students for advancement in their careers and professional lives. We have identified the following strategic priorities as key to achieving our goal:

- Improve student success — Our success depends on the success of our students. The more we focus on helping our students succeed, the more likely it is that we will succeed. In order to improve student success, we must continue to hire outstanding faculty, produce high quality academic course content, and employ cutting edge technology that enable us to deploy faculty and content in increasingly efficient and effective ways.
- Enhance student experience — Our students are predominately working adults who are furthering their education in order to advance their careers and professional lives. Our students are busy with work and family responsibilities that leave little time for other endeavors. Thus, we make every effort to make all interactions with our students productive, and we are constantly looking for ways to serve them better. This initiative includes leveraging technology, including artificial intelligence and automation, to improve student support in the areas of advising, tutoring, registration, campus and online technology, and administration. We measure

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our performance through student surveys and focus groups as well as through metrics like persistence and continuation.

- Address affordability — Recognizing that affordability is a significant factor in a prospective student’s decision to further his or her education, the Company has implemented various initiatives to make its programs more affordable. For example, through the Graduation Fund, introduced at Strayer University in late 2013, qualifying students enrolled in a bachelor’s degree program are eligible to receive one free course for every three courses successfully completed towards a bachelor’s degree. The free courses earned are redeemable in one’s final academic year. Additionally, Capella University’s FlexPath direct assessment model provides opportunity to drive affordability through the potential for lower tuition costs, reduced time to completion, and increased flexibility. Strayer University and Capella University have also instituted various other tuition reductions and scholarships. We continue to monitor and assess the impact of our affordability initiatives and explore other ways to make our offerings as affordable as possible. We have also begun to deploy more aggressive technology innovations, including artificial intelligence and automation, that enable us to lower our operating costs and thus improve our ability to support lower tuition. Our focus on affordability is further supported by the corporate-level efficiencies that we expect to be achieved through the Merger.
- Establish new platforms for growth — We are constantly looking for new ways to leverage our existing resources and capabilities to grow. The Merger represents a significant opportunity to leverage best-in-class processes and practices to accelerate growth. The Company also launched SEI Ventures in 2018, which is a seed-stage venture fund that will support pioneering education tech start-ups focused on transformational technologies and student success. In addition to providing capital, the venture fund will offer portfolio companies the opportunity to pilot technologies across the Universities and coding boot camps. We also continue to develop new programs and concentrations like Strayer University’s Bachelor of Applied Science in Management, which began instruction in the Winter 2018 term; the MBA in Digital Entrepreneurship, a collaboration with Cheddar, a leading business news outlet that streams live from the floor of the New York Stock Exchange; and additional program offerings under Capella University’s FlexPath direct assessment model.
- Build a high performing culture — In order to be a leading provider of educational services, we must have talented and motivated faculty and employees who are passionate about serving students. We strive to attract the best talent and then develop and retain them. We want to be known as an employer of choice and be a place where one can build a long-term career.

## Strayer University

Strayer University is an institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs in business administration, accounting, information technology, education, health services administration, public administration, and criminal justice at 72 physical campuses, predominantly located in the eastern United States, and online. Strayer University is accredited by the Middle States Commission, one of the six regional collegiate accrediting agencies recognized by the Department. By offering its programs both online and in physical classrooms, Strayer University provides its working adult students more flexibility and convenience.



Curriculum

Strayer University offers business, information technology, and professional curricula to equip students with specialized and practical knowledge and skills for careers in business, industry, and government. Academic leaders regularly review and revise Strayer University's course offerings to improve its educational programs and respond to competitive changes in job markets. Strayer University regularly evaluates new programs and degrees to ensure that it stays current with the needs of students and their employers.

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As of December 31, 2018, Strayer University offers programs in the following areas:

Graduate Programs

- Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) Degree
- Jack Welch Executive Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) Degree
- Master of Education (M.Ed.) Degree
- Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.) Degree
- Master of Science (M.S.) Degree
- Accounting
- Health Services Administration
- Human Resource Management
- Information Assurance
- Information Systems
- Management
- Nursing

Undergraduate Programs

- Bachelor of Science (B.S.) Degree
  - Accounting
  - Criminal Justice
  - Information Systems
  - Information Technology
  - Nursing
- Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.) Degree
  - Accounting
  - Acquisition and Contract Management
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Finance
  - Health Services Administration
  - Hospitality and Tourism Management
  - Human Resource Management
  - Management
  - Marketing
  - Project Management
  - Retail Management
  - Social Media Marketing
  - Joe Gibbs Performance Management
- Bachelor of Applied Science in Management
- Associate in Arts (A.A.) Degree
  - Accounting
  - Acquisitions and Contract Management
  - Business Administration
  - Information Systems
  - Information Technology
  - Marketing
- Diploma Program
- Acquisition and Contract Management

Each undergraduate degree program includes courses in oral and written communication skills as well as mathematics and various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. In addition to degree and diploma programs, Strayer University offers classes to non-degree and non-program students wishing to take courses for personal or professional enrichment.

Although most of its programs are offered at campuses and online, Strayer University adapts its course offerings to the demands of the student population at each location. Strayer University students may enroll in courses at more than one campus and take some or all of their courses online.

Strayer University structures its curricula to allow students to advance sequentially from one learning level to another by applying credits earned in one program toward attainment of a more advanced degree. For example, a student originally pursuing an associate's degree in information systems can extend his or her original educational objective by taking additional courses leading to a bachelor's degree in information systems, and ultimately a master's degree in information systems. This curriculum design provides students a level of competency and a measure of attainment in the event they interrupt their education or choose to work in their field of concentration prior to obtaining their final degree.

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### Online

Strayer University has been offering courses online since 1997. Currently, all students taking classes online do so in the asynchronous format. Students may take all of their courses online or take online courses in combination with classroom-based courses. A student taking classes online has the same admission and financial aid requirements, is subject to substantially the same policies and procedures, and receives the same student services and support as campus-based Strayer University students. Tuition for online courses is the same as campus-based courses.

### Faculty

Strayer University appoints faculty who hold appropriate academic credentials, are dedicated, active professionals in their field, and are enthusiastic and committed to teaching working adults. In accordance with Strayer University's educational mission, Strayer University faculty members focus their efforts on teaching. The normal course load for a full-time faculty member is five courses per quarter for each of three quarters, or 15 courses per academic year. Further, many full-time faculty members participate actively at Strayer University by providing leadership, developing the curriculum, setting academic policy, and serving on assessment committees.

None of its employees are a party to any collective bargaining or similar agreement with Strayer University. Strayer University provides financial support for faculty members seeking to enhance their skills and knowledge through a professional development funding program that reimburses eligible faculty and deans for continuing their education and completing courses, seminars, and various programs that enhance their current credentials and knowledge base to improve their content expertise. Full-time faculty (and all other full-time employees) receive a 100% discount for all Strayer University courses. Strayer University also conducts annual in-house faculty workshops in each discipline. We believe that Strayer University's dedicated and capable faculty is one of the keys to its success.

### Organization of Strayer University

Overall academic and business decisions of Strayer University, including review and approval of the annual financial budget, are directed by its Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees consists of Dr. Charlotte F. Beason, Chairwoman, and currently eight other members. Strayer University's By-Laws prescribe that a majority of members be independent from Strayer University and the Company to assure independent oversight of all academic programs and services. Of the nine members, six are independent. The Boards of the two Universities are independent of each other, and have no overlapping members.

Within the academic, strategic and financial parameters set by the Board of Trustees, Strayer University is managed on a daily basis by the Strayer University President. The President is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the policies established by the Board of Trustees and is supported in this function by senior administrative officers, including the Provost/Chief Academic Officer of Strayer University. The majority of Strayer University's operations are centralized within the President's Office or Strayer University's senior administrative staff offices.

## Outreach

To identify potential students, Strayer University engages in a broad range of activities to inform working adults and their employers about the programs offered. These activities include direct, digital, and social media marketing, marketing to existing students and graduates, print and broadcast advertising, student referrals, and corporate and government outreach activities. Direct response methods (direct, digital, and social media marketing) are used to generate inquiries from potential students. All information relevant to prospective students is published on the website, [www.strayer.edu](http://www.strayer.edu). Strayer University maintains booths and information tables at appropriate conferences and expos, as well as at transfer days at community colleges. Recommendations from our alumni network also maintain and enhance Strayer University's reputation and promote its quality education. Its business-to-business outreach efforts include personal telephone calls, distribution of information through corporate intranets and human resource departments, and on-site information meetings. Strayer University records inquiries in its database and tracks them through to application

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and registration. Additionally, information about new programs is provided to students and alumni to encourage them to return for further education.

Student Profile

The majority of Strayer University students are working adults completing their first college degree to improve their job skills and advance their careers. Of the students enrolled in Strayer University’s programs at the beginning of the 2018 fall quarter, approximately 63% were age 31 or older, and approximately 89% were engaged in part-time study (fewer than three courses each quarter for undergraduate students and fewer than two for graduate students).

In the 2018 fall quarter, Strayer University’s undergraduate students registered for an average of approximately two courses, and graduate students registered for an average of approximately one course.

Strayer University has a very diverse student population. At the beginning of the 2018 fall quarter, approximately 76% of students self-reporting their ethnicity were minorities, and approximately 69% of students were women. Approximately 1% of Strayer University’s students were international, and approximately 1% were active duty military personnel. Strayer University prides itself on making post-secondary education accessible to working adults who were previously unable to take advantage of educational opportunities.

The following is a breakdown of Strayer University students by program level as of the 2018 fall term:

Program	Number of students	Percentage of total students
Bachelor’s	39,526	75%
Master’s	11,300	22%
Associate	1,419	3%
Total Degree	52,245	100%
Diploma	20	*
Graduate Certificate	53	*
Undeclared	129	*
Total Non-Degree	202	*
Total Students	52,447	100%

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\*Represents less than 1%.

Strayer University's business is seasonal and as a result, its quarterly results of operations tend to vary within the year due to student enrollment patterns. Enrollment generally is lowest in the third quarter, or summer term.

#### Student Admissions

Students attending Strayer University's undergraduate programs must possess a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) Certificate. Students attending Strayer University's graduate programs must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and meet certain other requirements. If a student's undergraduate major varies widely from the student's proposed graduate course of study, certain undergraduate prerequisite courses may also be necessary for admission. To maximize undergraduate students' chances for academic success and to give them the support they need, Strayer University evaluates incoming students' proficiency in fundamental English and math prior to the first quarter's registration.

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International students applying for admission must meet the same admission requirements as other students. Those students whose native language is not English must provide evidence that they are able to use the English language with sufficient facility to perform college-level work in an English-speaking institution.

## Tuition and Fees

Strayer University charges tuition by the course. Tuition rates may vary in states with specific regulations governing tuition costs. Each course is 4.5 credit hours. As of January 1, 2019, undergraduate tuition is \$1,465 per course. Undergraduate students who were previously enrolled at Strayer University are charged rates ranging from \$1,465 to \$1,775 per course. As of January 1, 2019, graduate students who were new to Strayer University after January 1, 2015 are charged at a rate of \$2,465 per course, while other graduate students are charged at a rate of \$2,340 per course. For the Jack Welch Management Institute, new students are charged at the rate of \$3,650 per course. For some students who were previously enrolled in the Jack Welch Management Institute, tuition is charged at rates ranging from \$2,580 to \$3,450 per course. Under a variety of different programs and in connection with various corporate and government sponsorship and tuition reimbursement arrangements, Strayer University offers scholarships and tuition discounts to students. One of these programs, the Graduation Fund, offers a student in a bachelor's program an opportunity to earn up to a 25% reduction of the tuition required for a degree. A new undergraduate student, who had no transfer credit, sought to obtain a bachelor's degree in four years, and was eligible for the Graduation Fund would currently pay on average approximately \$11,000 per year in tuition.

## Career Development Services

Although most of Strayer University's students are already employed, Strayer University actively assists its students and alumni with career-related matters. The focus for Career Services at Strayer University is to provide career guidance and resources to assist students and alumni in reaching their educational and professional goals. Services are delivered through various media including online, in person, recorded video, books, periodicals, and by telephone. The services provided include career webinars, recorded seminars, career teleconferences, career advising, and resume review.

## Capella University

Capella University offers a variety of doctoral, master's and bachelor's programs, primarily for working adults. Capella University focuses on master's and doctoral degrees, with 70% of its learners enrolled in a master's or doctoral degree program. Capella University's academic offerings are built with competency-based curricula and are delivered in an online format that is convenient and flexible. Capella University designs its offerings to help working adult learners develop specific competencies they can apply in their workplace. At December 31, 2018, Capella University offered over 2,000 online courses and 53 academic programs with 136 specializations. Capella University is accredited by the



Higher Learning Commission, one of the six regional collegiate accrediting agencies recognized by the Department of Education.

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Curriculum

Capella University’s program offerings cover six markets: public service leadership; nursing and health sciences; psychology; business and technology; counseling and human services; and education. At December 31, 2018, Capella University offered 53 academic programs with 136 specializations within these markets:

Public Service Leadership

Doctor of Philosophy in Criminal Justice  
 Doctor of Philosophy in Emergency Management  
 Doctor of Emergency Management (DEM)  
 Doctor of Public Administration (DPA)  
 Doctor of Social Work (DSW)  
 Master of Science in Criminal Justice

Master of Science in Emergency Management  
 Master of Public Administration (MPA)  
 Master of Social Work (MSW)  
 Master of Social Work - Advanced Standing  
 Bachelor of Science (BS) in Criminal Justice

Nursing and Health Sciences

Doctor of Health Administration (DHA)  
 General Health Administration  
 Health Care Leadership  
 Health Care Quality & Analytics  
 Health Policy and Advocacy  
  
 Doctor of Public Health (DrPH)  
 Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)  
 Master of Health Administration (MHA)  
 General Health Administration (FlexPath option available)  
 Health Care Informatics (FlexPath option available)  
 Health Care Leadership (FlexPath option available)  
 Health Care Operations  
 Master of Public Health (MPH)  
 Bachelor of Science (BS) in Public Health  
 Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) (FlexPath option available)

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)  
 Care Coordination (FlexPath option available)  
 Nursing Education (FlexPath option available)  
 Nursing Information (FlexPath option available)  
 Nursing Leadership and Administration (FlexPath option available)  
 RN-to-MSN Care Coordination (FlexPath option available)  
 RN-to-MSN Nursing Education (FlexPath option available)  
 RN-to-MSN Nursing Informatics (FlexPath option available)  
 RN-to-MSN Nursing Leadership and Administration (FlexPath option available)  
 Bachelor of Science in Health Care Administration  
 Health Information Management (FlexPath option available)  
 Leadership (FlexPath option available)

Psychology

Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology  
 Addiction Psychology  
 Behavior Analysis

Master of Science in Psychology  
 Applied Behavior Analysis  
 Child and Adolescent Development (FlexPath option available)  
 Education Psychology (FlexPath option available)  
 Evaluation, Research, and Management  
 General Psychology (FlexPath option available)

Developmental Psychology  
 Educational Psychology  
 General Psychology  
 Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Doctor of Psychology (PsyD)  
Clinical Psychology  
Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) in School Psychology  
Master of Science in Clinical Psychology  
Applied Research  
Clinical Counseling  
Forensic

Industrial/Organizational Psychology (FlexPath option available)  
Leadership Coaching Psychology  
Sport Psychology (FlexPath option available)  
Bachelor of Science in Psychology  
General Psychology (FlexPath option available)  
Bachelor of Science in Psychology Pre-Counseling

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Business and Technology	Doctor of Philosophy in Information Technology
Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)	General Information Technology
Accounting	Information Assurance and cybersecurity
Business Intelligence	Information Technology Education
Global Operations and Supply Chain Management	Project Management
Human Resource Management	Master of Science in Human Resources Management
Information Technology Management	General Human Resource Management
Leadership	Master of Science in Analytics
Project Management	Master of Science in Information Assurance and Cybersecurity
Strategy and Innovation	Digital Forensics
Doctor of Philosophy in Business Management	Health Care Security
Accounting	Network Defense
General Business Management	Master of Science in Information Technology
Human Resource Management	Analytics
Information Technology Management	Cybersecurity
Leadership	Enterprise Networks and Cloud Computing
Project Management	General Information Technology
Strategy and Innovation	Project Management
Master of Business Administration (MBA)	Bachelor of Science in Business
Self-Designed (FlexPath option available)	Accounting (FlexPath option available)
Health Care Management (FlexPath option available)	Business Administration (FlexPath option available)
Human Resource Management (FlexPath option available)	Finance
Project Management (FlexPath option available)	Health Care Management (FlexPath option available)
Doctor of Information Technology (DIT)	Human Resource Management (FlexPath option available)
General Information Technology	Management and Leadership (FlexPath option available)
Information Assurance and Cybersecurity	Marketing
Information Technology Education	Project Management (FlexPath option available)
Project Management	Bachelor of Science (BS) in Information Technology
Counseling and Human Services	General Information Technology (FlexPath option available)
Doctor of Human Services (DHS)	Health Information Management
Advanced Program Evaluation and Data Analytics	Information Assurance and Cybersecurity (FlexPath option available)
Leadership and Organizational Management	Project Management (FlexPath option available)
	Software Development
	Master of Science in Human Services
	Leadership and Organizational Management
	Program Evaluation and Data Analytics

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Doctor of Philosophy in Human Services  
Multidisciplinary Human Services  
Nonprofit Management and Leadership  
Social and Community Services  
Doctor of Philosophy in Advanced Studies in Human  
Behavior  
General Advanced Studies in Human Behavior  
Doctor of Philosophy in Counselor Education and  
Supervision  
General Counselor Education and Supervision  
Master of Science in Addiction Studies

Social and Community Services  
Master of Science in Marriage and Family Counseling  
General Marriage and Family Counseling  
Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling  
Master of Science in School Counseling

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Education

Doctor of Education (EdD)

Adult Education

Curriculum and Instruction

Educational Leadership and Management

Performance Improvement Leadership

Personalized and Competency-Based

Instruction

Reading and Literacy

Teacher Leader in K-12 Studies

Teacher Leader in Digital Transformation

Education Specialist (EdS)

Curriculum and Instruction

Leadership in Educational Administration

Personalized and Competency-Based

Instruction

Reading and Literacy

Teacher Leader in Digital Transformation

Teacher Leader in K-12 Studies

Master of Science in Higher Education

Adult Education

Higher Education Leadership and Administration

Integrative Studies

Master of Science in Education

Curriculum and Instruction

Early Childhood Education

English Language Learning and Teaching

Instructional Design for Online Learning

K-12 Studies in Education

Leadership in Educational Administration

Reading and Literacy

Special Education Teaching

Training and Performance Improvement

Doctor of Philosophy in Education (PhD)

Curriculum and Instruction

Instructional Design for Online Learning

K-12 Studies in Education

Leadership in Educational Administration

Leadership for Higher Education

Nursing Education

Post-secondary and Adult Education

Professional Studies in Education

Special Education Leadership

Master of Science in Education Innovation and Technology

Competency-Based Instruction

General Educational Technology

Instruction in the 1:1 Environment

Personalized Learning

Professional Growth and Development

Master of Education (MEd) in Teaching and Learning (FlexPath option available)

Capella University's GuidedPath credit hour courses are offered on a quarterly academic schedule, which generally coincides with calendar quarters. Capella University offers new learners in most programs the flexibility to begin the first course in their program of study at the beginning of any month. These learners then enroll in subsequent courses on a regular quarterly course schedule. Depending on the program, learners generally enroll in one to two courses per quarter. Each course has a designated start date, and the majority of courses last for ten weeks.

To meet traditional Capella University best practices, GuidedPath learners typically need to access the online courseroom multiple times each week. However, the courses are developed to be taken asynchronously, so that learners can attend each course as it fits their weekly schedule. GuidedPath learners are required to respond to questions posed by the instructor, as well as comments made by other learners. This format provides for an interactive experience in which each learner is both encouraged and required to be actively engaged. Faculty are also required to have substantive engagement in each course each week. Additional learning activities may include reading, simulations, team projects and/or research papers. Capella University's online format provides a digital record of learner interactions for the course instructor to assess learners' levels of engagement and demonstration of required competencies. The course design also includes assessment of course competencies.

In the FlexPath model, learners' demonstration of competencies is directly assessed by faculty when the learner submits an assessment. FlexPath learners set their own deadlines, demonstrate competencies via authentic assessment, and move

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through courses at their own speed, giving them an opportunity to accelerate or slow down to meet their learning needs and schedule demands.

The primary exception to Capella University's online format is for doctoral learners and for certain master's degree candidates pursuing professional licenses. These learners participate in periodic residencies, year-in-residencies, and supervised practica and internships as a complement to their courses. Residencies typically last from three to 42 days and are required, on average, once per year for learners in applicable programs. The supervised practica and internships vary in length based on the program in which the learner is enrolled.

Capella University also offers certificate programs, which consist of a series of courses focused on a particular area of study, for learners who seek to enhance their skills and knowledge. Online certificate courses can be taken to prepare for a graduate degree program or on a stand-alone basis. The duration of certificate programs ranges from two quarters to approximately two years.

## Faculty

Capella University hires faculty who have teaching and/or practitioner experience in their particular discipline and possess significant and appropriate academic credentials. The faculty consists of full-time academic administrators, faculty chairs, core faculty and part-time faculty. The full-time academic administrators' primary responsibilities are to monitor the quality and relevance of curricula, to recruit and manage teaching faculty, and to maintain standards of accreditation. Faculty chairs supervise the faculty in their respective specializations. Core faculty and part-time faculty teach courses, serve on curriculum or other relevant committees, work on curriculum development in their areas of expertise, and serve as comprehensive exam and dissertation mentors to doctoral learners.

None of Capella University's employees are a party to any collective bargaining or similar agreement with Capella University. Prior to offering a teaching assignment, Capella University provides significant training to new faculty members, including an online development program focused on the Capella University way of effective online teaching, its educational philosophy, teaching expectations and its online platform. In addition, professional development and training is provided for all faculty members on an ongoing basis. To evaluate the performance of faculty members, courseroom activity is regularly monitored and assessments are made with respect to both learner satisfaction with the courseroom experience and learner performance against course outcomes.

## Organization of Capella University



Overall academic and business decisions of Capella University, including review of the annual financial budget, are directed by its Board of Directors. The Board of Directors consists of Dr. Eric Jolly, Chairman, and currently nine other members. Capella University's By-Laws prescribe that a majority of members be independent from Capella University and the Company to assure independent oversight of all academic programs and services. Of the ten members, seven are independent.

Within the academic, strategic and financial parameters set by the Board of Directors, Capella University is managed on a daily basis by the Capella University President. The President is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the policies established by the Board of Directors and is supported in this function by senior administrative officers, including the Chief Academic Officer and Vice President of Academic Affairs of Capella University. The majority of Capella University's operations are centralized within the President's Office or Capella University's senior administrative staff offices.

#### Outreach

Capella University engages in a range of relationship-based marketing activities to build the Capella brand, differentiate it from other educational providers, increase awareness and consideration with prospective learners, generate inquiries for enrollment, and stimulate referrals from current learners and graduates. These marketing activities may include Internet, television, print, radio, email, social media and direct mail advertising campaigns. Other marketing

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activities include supportive outreach to current learners, participation in seminars and trade shows, and development of key marketing relationships with corporate, healthcare, armed forces, government, and educational organizations. Online advertising (display, social, mobile, search and through aggregators) currently generates the largest volume of inquiries from prospective learners.

Student Profile

As of December 31, 2018, Capella University enrollment was 38,409 learners. Of the Capella University learners who responded to the demographic survey, approximately 79% were female, and approximately 50% were people of color. Capella University’s learner population is geographically distributed primarily throughout the United States.

The following summarizes Capella University learners as of December 31, 2018:

Program	Number of learners	Percentage of total learners
Doctoral	8,924	23%
Master's	17,978	47%
Bachelor's	10,364	27%
Other	1,143	3%
Total	38,409	100%

Student Admissions

Capella University’s admission process is designed to offer access to prospective learners who seek the benefits of a post-secondary education while providing feedback to learners regarding their ability to successfully complete their chosen program. Prior to the first course in their program of study, learners are generally required to complete an orientation to online education and a skills assessment, the results of which help develop an understanding of the specific needs and readiness of each individual learner. Learners must successfully complete the first course in their program of study to continue their education.

Learners enrolling in bachelor’s programs must have a high school diploma or a GED and demonstrate competence in writing and logical reasoning during the first course of their program of study. Additionally, applicants to undergraduate programs who do not have transferable credits from an accredited higher education institution are required to pass assessments in writing and reading prior to acceptance into the program. Learners enrolling in graduate programs must have the requisite undergraduate academic degree from an accredited institution and a specified minimum grade point average. In addition to standard admission requirements, Capella University requires applicants to some programs to provide additional application material and information, and/or interview with, and be

approved by faculty.

#### Tuition and Fees

Capella University's overall tuition rates vary by discipline, length of program, and degree level.

Learners in the GuidedPath credit hour programs are charged tuition on a per course or per term basis. Per course prices vary by discipline, number of credit hours, and degree level. Per course prices for bachelor's level GuidedPath credit hour programs ranged from approximately \$1,000 to \$2,400 for both the 2018-2019 academic year (the academic year that began in July 2018) and the 2017-2018 academic year (the academic year that began in July 2017). Per course prices for master's level GuidedPath credit hour programs ranged from approximately \$1,700 to \$3,300 for the 2018-2019 academic year, and from \$1,500 to \$2,800 for the 2017-2018 academic year. Per course prices for doctoral level GuidedPath credit hour programs ranged from approximately \$2,400 to \$4,700 for the 2018-2019 academic year and from \$2,500 to \$4,100 for the 2017-2018 academic year.

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Learners in select doctoral programs are charged tuition at a fixed quarterly amount, regardless of the number of courses for which the learner registers. Quarterly tuition rates ranged from approximately \$4,300 to \$4,900 per quarter for the 2018-2019 academic year and from \$4,300 to \$4,800 per quarter for the 2017-2018 academic year.

Tuition for FlexPath master's and bachelor's programs is priced at a flat, fixed amount for each 12-week subscription period. There is no maximum course load during each subscription period; however, a maximum of two FlexPath courses can be taken at any one time. Tuition for bachelor's level FlexPath programs ranged from \$2,400 to \$3,000 per 12-week subscription period in the 2018-2019 academic year, and from \$2,300 to \$2,700 per 12-week subscription period in the 2017-2018 academic year. Tuition for master's level FlexPath programs ranged from \$2,300 to \$2,700 per 12-week subscription period for the 2018-2019 academic year and from \$2,100 to \$2,500 per 12-week subscription period for the 2017-2018 academic year.

“Other” in the preceding enrollment table primarily includes learners enrolled in certificate programs. Learners in credit hour certificate programs are charged tuition on a per course basis, which varies by discipline and the number of credit hours. Per course prices for certificate programs ranged from approximately \$1,000 to \$4,400 for the 2018-2019 academic year and from \$1,000 to \$4,200 for the 2017-2018 academic year. Tuition for FlexPath certificate programs ranged from \$2,100 to \$2,700 per 12-week subscription period for the 2018-2019 academic year and from \$2,100 to \$2,500 per 12-week subscription period for the 2017-2018 academic year.

Year-over-year tuition increases are specific to the program or specialization and depend on market conditions, program differentiation or changes in operating costs that have an impact on price adjustments of individual programs or specializations. Capella University implemented a weighted average tuition increase of approximately 2% for the 2018-2019 academic year. These program costs will vary by learner based upon the program and specialization selected, the number of courses taken per quarter and the number of transfer credits earned.

Capella University offers scholarships and tuition discounts, under a variety of different programs, to members of the armed forces and in connection with various corporate, healthcare, federal and educational marketing relationships, for example:

- U.S. armed forces relationships and discount program available to all members of the U.S. armed forces, including active duty members, veterans, National Guard members, reservists, civilian employees of the Department of Defense and immediate family members of active duty personnel.
- Corporate, healthcare and federal relationships with more than 500 large and mid-size organizations.
- Educational relationships that encourage graduates of nearly 300 community colleges to enroll in Capella University undergraduate programs and faculty and administrators to enroll in Capella University graduate programs.

As of December 31, 2018, approximately 28% of Capella University learners received a discount in connection with these programs.

Throughout the past several years, Capella University expanded and refined its offering of learner success scholarships under a variety of different programs to promote affordability and encourage learners to remain enrolled. Learners must meet admission requirements and enroll and apply within certain timeframes to receive the scholarships, which are generally awarded over a period of four to eight consecutive quarters. As of December 31, 2018, approximately 18% of Capella University learners were awarded a scholarship.

#### Career Development Services

Career counseling, job search advising, and career management support is provided by staff to all Capella University learners and alumni. Capella University career counselors interact with learners and alumni via email, telephone, and online seminars to assist with career-related activities such as resume development; curriculum vitae and cover letter development; interview preparation; effective job search strategies; and career advancement efforts. The Career Center's online iGuide resources help learners gather occupational information and trends, access job postings,

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and view sample job search documents. Counselors also assist with prospective learners' selection of the Capella University program and specialization that best suits their professional aspirations.

### Non-Degree Programs

The Company's Non-Degree Programs are provided by DevMountain, Hackbright, Sophia and NYCDA. These programs provide workers and their employers with access to courses and trainings focused on software development, general education and other high demand job-ready skills over a shorter time period as compared to the degree programs.

DevMountain is a software development school with locations in Provo and Salt Lake City, Utah; Dallas, Texas; and Phoenix, Arizona. DevMountain's primary offerings are on-site, 12-week immersive programs in Web Development, iOS Development, and UX Design. The programs include instructor-led sessions, guest lectures, presentations and learning activities in the mornings, followed by afternoon labs and group projects. Throughout the program and beyond course hours, learners have access to DevMountain's dedicated student success and employer relations teams as well as instructors and mentors. DevMountain does not participate in Title IV programs.

Hackbright is a San Francisco-based software engineering school for women with a mission to close the gender gap in the high-demand software engineering space. Hackbright's core offering is an on-site, 12-week immersive software development program known as the "Fellowship Program." Learners spend the first half of the program primarily in lecture-based learning combined with labwork, in which learners collaborate in pairs to build their programming knowledge. In the second half of the program, lectures continue, while the labwork gives way to more advanced project-based work, and the program concludes with an intense focus on career planning. Throughout the program, Hackbright supplements the learning experience with field trips to technology companies, exposing learners to various technologies and career possibilities, as well as a series of networking events. Hackbright provides a high level of support and guidance, including assigned mentors who provide the learner with support and technical advice, and an advisor who guides the learner through the program. Hackbright also engages employers through placement agreements, in which Hackbright earns a placement fee in exchange for providing access to, and facilitating the transition of alumnae into employment at companies seeking in-demand, qualified female software engineers. Hackbright does not participate in Title IV programs.

Sophia is an innovative learning company offering a variety of low-cost, self-paced, competency-based online learning courses, which are eligible for transfer into credit at over 2,000 colleges and universities. Sophia does not participate in Title IV programs.

NYCDA is a New York City-based provider of non-degree web and application software development courses. NYCDA does not participate in Title IV programs.

## Employees

As of December 31, 2018, Strategic Education, Inc. had a total of 3,017 full-time employees, including 397 full-time faculty members and 2,620 non-faculty staff. Full-time faculty members teach on average 4-5 courses per quarter. The balance of classes are taught by adjunct faculty who normally teach 1-2 courses per academic quarter. Although we had approximately 3,030 adjunct faculty throughout the year, not all of them teach every quarter. In the 2018 fall quarter, approximately 25% of our courses were taught by full-time faculty. Because we are not research universities, all faculty members are expected to spend their time teaching and advising students. In addition to our faculty, our non-faculty staff, including 141 part-time employees, serve in the areas of information systems, financial aid, recruitment and admissions, student administration, marketing, human resources, corporate accounting, and other administrative functions.

## Strategic Education, Inc. Executive Officers

For a description of Strategic Education, Inc.'s senior management, see the biographical information set forth in Item 10 below.

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### Intellectual Property

In the ordinary course of business, we develop many kinds of intellectual property that are or will be the subject of copyright, trademark, service mark, patent, trade secret, or other protections. Such intellectual property includes, but is not limited to, our courseware materials for classes taught online or other distance-learning means and business know-how and internal processes and procedures developed to respond to the requirements of our operations and various education regulatory agencies. In many instances, our course content is produced for us by faculty and other content experts under work for hire agreements pursuant to which we own the course content in return for a fixed development fee. In certain limited cases, we license course content from third parties on a royalty fee basis.

We also claim rights to certain marks and have obtained or have pending applications in the U.S. and select foreign jurisdictions for registration of the marks, including the marks “STRAYER” and “CAPELLA” for educational services, and certain other distinctive logos, along with various other trademarks, service marks and domain names related to our offerings.

### Regulation

#### Regulatory Environment

As regionally accredited institutions of higher education operating in multiple jurisdictions, Strayer University and Capella University are subject to accreditation rules and varying state licensing and regulatory requirements. In addition, the Higher Education Act and the regulations promulgated thereunder require all higher education institutions that participate in the various Title IV programs, including Strayer University and Capella University, to comply with detailed substantive and reporting requirements and to undergo periodic regulatory scrutiny. The Higher Education Act mandates specific regulatory responsibility for each of the following components of the higher education regulatory triad: (1) the institutional accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education (“Secretary of Education”); (2) state education regulatory bodies; and (3) the federal government through the Department of Education. Our business activities are planned and implemented to achieve compliance with the rules and regulations of the state, regional and federal agencies that regulate our activities. We have established regulatory compliance and management systems and processes under the oversight of our Chief Financial Officer and our General Counsel that are designed to meet the requirements of this regulatory environment. The regulations, standards, and policies of these regulatory agencies are subject to frequent change. NYCDA, Hackbright Academy, and DevMountain are subject to certain state regulatory requirements, but are not accredited and do not participate in Title IV programs.



The November 2016 and November 2018 federal elections brought a new President and Congress, respectively, and we cannot predict the actions that the Administration or new Congress may take or their effect on Strayer University, Capella University, or the Company. Among other things, the new Congress may reauthorize the Higher Education Act and adopt, repeal or amend other legislation affecting higher education institutions. The new Congress or Administration may also delay, block, modify, or eliminate certain Title IV and other regulations applicable to higher education institutions, or the Administration may promulgate new regulations upon culmination of current negotiated rulemaking processes, or otherwise. In addition, the Administration may interpret, apply, and enforce Title IV and other regulations in a manner different from past guidance and practice.

#### Department of Education

To be eligible to participate in Title IV programs, Strayer University and Capella University must comply with specific standards and procedures set forth in the Higher Education Act and the regulations issued thereunder by the Department of Education. An institution must, among other things, be authorized to offer its educational programs by each state in which it is physically located and maintain institutional accreditation by a recognized accrediting agency, as discussed below. The institution also must be certified by the Department of Education to participate in Title IV programs and follow Department of Education rules regarding the awarding and processing of funds issued under Title IV programs. For purposes of Title IV programs, Strayer University and all of its campuses are considered to be single institutions of higher education, such that Department of Education requirements applicable to an institution of higher

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education are generally applied to all of Strayer University's campuses in the aggregate rather than on an individual basis. Capella University is also considered to be a single institution of higher education. On October 11, 2017, the Department and Strayer University executed a new Program Participation Agreement, approving Strayer University's continued participation in Title IV programs with full certification through June 30, 2021. As a result of the August 1, 2018 merger, Capella University experienced a change of ownership, with the Company as its new owner. On January 18, 2019, consistent with standard procedure upon a Title IV institution's change of ownership, the Department and Capella University executed a new Program Participation Agreement, approving Capella's continued participation in Title IV programs with provisional certification through December 31, 2022.

## Accreditation

Accreditation is a system for recognizing educational institutions and programs for integrity, educational quality, faculty, physical resources, administrative capability, and financial stability that signifies that they merit the confidence of the educational community and the public. In the United States, this recognition comes primarily through private voluntary associations of institutions and programs of higher education. These associations establish criteria for accreditation, conduct peer-review evaluations of institutions and programs, and publicly designate those institutions and programs that meet their standards. Accredited institutions or programs are subject to periodic review by accrediting bodies to determine whether such institutions or programs continue to maintain the performance, integrity, and quality required for accreditation. If an institution's or program's performance does not meet its accrediting agency's (or other regulator's) expectations or applicable standards, then its operations may be conditioned, severely constrained, or even curtailed, depending on the severity of the noncompliance.

Accreditation is an important attribute of Strayer University and Capella University. Colleges and universities depend on accreditation to evaluate transferability of credit and applications to graduate schools. Employers rely on the accreditation status of institutions when evaluating a candidate's credentials or considering tuition reimbursement programs. Students rely on accreditation status for assurance that an institution maintains quality educational standards.

In order for institutions to be eligible to participate in federal student financial assistance programs, they must be accredited by an institutional accreditor recognized by the Secretary of Education. The Higher Education Act charges the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity ("NACIQI") with recommending to the Secretary of Education which accrediting or state approval agencies should be recognized as reliable authorities for judging the quality of post-secondary institutions and programs. In June 2017, NACIQI renewed its recognition of Middle States for six months and required Middle States to demonstrate compliance with certain requirements. NACIQI reviewed Middle States at its February 2018 meeting and recommended that the Secretary of Education extend its recognition for five years. NACIQI also reviewed the Higher Learning Commission at its February 2018 meeting and recommended that the Secretary of Education extend its recognition for five years. If an institutional accreditor loses recognition by the Secretary of Education, an institution may be allowed to continue its participation in Title IV programs on a provisional basis for a period not to exceed 18 months to allow the institution to seek accreditation from another recognized accrediting agency. An institution that does not become accredited by another recognized accreditor within 18 months will lose Title IV eligibility.

Strayer University

Strayer University has been institutionally accredited since 1981 by Middle States, a regional accrediting agency recognized by the Secretary of Education. Middle States is the same accrediting agency that accredits such universities as Georgetown University, Columbia University, the University of Maryland, and other degree-granting public and private colleges and universities in its region.

Strayer University went through a period of reaffirmation of accreditation that began in 2015 and lasted through June 2017, when Middle States reaffirmed Strayer University's accreditation. The University's period of accreditation by Middle States extends into 2025. Middle States accredits degree-granting public and private colleges and universities in its region (including Delaware, Washington, D.C., Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), including distance education programs offered by those institutions.

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Beginning in 2013, Middle States undertook a review of its accreditation standards and, in June 2014, approved revised accreditation standards, with subsequent editorial clarifications. The new standards are effective for all institutions that have self-studies due beginning with the 2017-2018 academic year.

In 2016, Middle States provided that reaccreditation for all of its institutions will be for a period of eight years (rather than ten, as previously was the case) and that institutions will be required to submit annual reports on student achievement and financial sustainability. In accordance with Middle States' accreditation standards, every accredited institution will undergo a periodic review at the mid-point between its eight-year evaluations.

All of Strayer University's substantive changes require prior Middle States approval. Such changes include, but are not limited to, certain new educational programs, certain contractual arrangements with other institutions providing a portion of an educational program, establishment or closure of additional locations and branch campuses, and changes in ownership or control.

In 2000, the agencies that accredit higher education institutions in various regions of the United States adopted a Policy Statement on Evaluation of Institutions Operating Interregionally. Under that policy, both the home regional accreditor and the host regional accreditor cooperate to evaluate an institution that delivers education at a physical site in the host accreditor's region. Although the home region is solely responsible for final accreditation actions, as Strayer University opens and operates campuses in regions outside Middle States' region, the host regional accreditors may elect to participate in the accreditation process of such expansion operations.

In addition to institutional accreditation, Strayer University has obtained specialized or programmatic accreditation, or professional recognition, from the following organizations for specific programs: the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs ("ACBSP"), the Society for Human Resource Management ("SHRM"), the National Security Agency's Committee on National Security Systems, and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council ("TEAC"), which was recently consolidated with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education to form the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation ("CAEP"). The baccalaureate degree program in nursing at Strayer University is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education ("CCNE").

### Capella University

Capella University has been institutionally accredited since 1997 by the Higher Learning Commission, a regional accrediting agency recognized by the Secretary of Education. In January 2015, Capella University's accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission was reaffirmed. The reaffirmation enables Capella University to continue to participate in Title IV programs. The next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled to take place in 2022-2023.

The Higher Learning Commission is the same accrediting agency that accredits such universities as Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, the University of Minnesota and other degree-granting public and private colleges and universities in its region.

The Higher Learning Commission is continuously developing new standards and approval processes under which it evaluates programs and institutions. Consistent with that approach, the Higher Learning Commission in August 2016 adopted policy changes which include giving the Commission more discretion to designate institutions to be in "financial distress" or under "government investigation." Receipt of these designations could affect future accreditation status and eligibility for Title IV aid under the Department of Education's new "financial responsibility" triggers. While the Company believes its strong reputation and compliance record will continue to place it in favorable standing under the new policy, there is sufficient breadth and discretion within the policy such that government investigation, litigation, or financial or other circumstances could result in an impact to our business from the application of the policies. In addition, in November 2017, the Higher Learning Commission announced policy changes to become effective September 1, 2019, mandating certain recruitment, admissions and related institutional practices, as well as guidelines for shared services relationships that took effect immediately.

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In addition to institutional accreditation, Capella University has obtained specialized or programmatic accreditation, or professional recognition, for specific programs including from the following organizations: Computing Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (“ABET”); Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (“ACBSP”); Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (“CACREP”); Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (“CAEP”); Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (“COAMFTE”); Council on Social Work Education (“CSWE”); Project Management Institute - Global Accreditation Center for Project Management (“PMI-GAC”); the Society for Human Resource Management (“SHRM”). The BSN, MSN, and DNP degree programs at Capella University are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (“CCNE”).

## Shared Services Agreements

As part of the Merger, Strategic Education, Inc. entered into shared services agreements with both Universities to provide certain services, including but not limited to finance, legal, human resources, information technology, and marketing. The services are governed by Master Services Agreements, which provide, among other things, for oversight of the services by the governing boards of each University. The Company continues to look for additional opportunities to provide shared services to the two Universities, and believes that the agreements meet all regulatory and accreditation standards, including the Higher Learning Commission policy discussed above.

## State Education Licensure

### Licensure of Physical Campuses

The Higher Education Act and certain state laws require Strayer University and Capella University to be legally authorized to provide educational programs in the states in which the Universities are physically located or otherwise have a physical presence as defined by the state. Strayer University is authorized to offer programs by the applicable educational regulatory agencies in all states where Strayer’s physical campuses are located. Strayer University is dependent upon the authorization of each state where Strayer is physically located to allow the University to operate and to grant degrees, diplomas, or certificates to students in those states. Strayer University is subject to extensive regulation in each jurisdiction in which campuses are located, including in 2018: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

Capella University is registered as a private institution with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (“MOHE”) pursuant to Minnesota Statute sections 136A.61-131A.71, as required for most post-secondary private institutions that grant degrees at the associate level or above in Minnesota, and as required by the Higher Education Act to participate in Title IV programs.

Strayer University and Capella University will be subject to similar extensive regulation in those additional states in which we may expand our operations in the future. State laws and regulations affect our operations and may limit our ability to introduce educational programs or establish new campuses.

On October 29, 2010, the Department of Education adopted new regulations, effective July 1, 2011, that set new requirements on states for their authorization of schools for purposes of Title IV eligibility. We believe that every state above in which the Universities are authorized has processes in place that comply with these requirements.

Hackbright Academy is licensed to operate in the State of California by the Bureau for Private Post-secondary Education ("BPPE"). DevMountain is registered as a Post-Secondary Proprietary School with the Utah Department of Commerce, Division of Consumer Protection, and received a Certificate of Approval from the Texas Workforce Commission, Career Schools and Colleges, and has received a conditional license by the Arizona State Board for Private Post-secondary Education.

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Licensure of Online Programs

The increasing popularity and use of the internet and other technology for the delivery of education has led, and may continue to lead, to the adoption of new laws and regulatory practices in the United States or foreign countries or to the interpretation of existing laws and regulations to apply to such services. These new laws and interpretations may relate to issues such as the requirement that online education institutions be licensed as a school in one or more jurisdictions even where they have no physical location. New laws, regulations, or interpretations related to doing business over the internet could increase the Universities' cost of doing business, affect the Universities' ability to increase enrollments and revenues, or otherwise have a material adverse effect on our business.

On December 19, 2016, the Department issued final regulations addressing state authorization of distance education, which were scheduled to become effective on July 1, 2018. These regulations include, among other things, the requirement that an institution offering Title IV-eligible distance education or correspondence courses be authorized by each state in which the institution enrolls students, if such authorization is required by the state. Institutions may obtain such authorization directly from the state or (except in California) through a state authorization reciprocity agreement. A state authorization reciprocity agreement is defined as an agreement between two or more states that authorizes an institution located and legally authorized in a state covered by the agreement to provide post-secondary education through distance education or correspondence courses to students in other states covered by the agreement and does not prohibit a participating state from enforcing its own laws with respect to higher education. The regulations also require institutions to document the state process for resolving complaints from students enrolled in programs offered through distance education or correspondence courses for each state in which such students reside.

In addition, the regulations require an institution to provide public and individualized disclosures to enrolled and prospective students regarding its programs offered solely through distance education or correspondence courses. The public disclosures would include state authorization for the program or course, the process for submitting complaints to relevant states, any adverse actions by a state or accrediting agency related to the distance education program or correspondence course within the past five years, refund policies specific to the state, and applicable licensure or certification requirements for a career that the program prepares a student to enter. An institution must disclose directly to all prospective students if a distance education or correspondence course does not meet the licensure or certification requirements for a state. An institution must disclose to each current and prospective student when an adverse action is taken against a distance education or correspondence program and any determination that a program ceases to meet licensure or certification requirements.

If an institution's distance education program is found not to be in compliance, the institution may lose its ability to award Title IV funds for that distance education program.

On July 3, 2018, the Department announced an additional two-year delay, to July 2020, for implementation of the state authorization rules for distance and correspondence programs. On August 23, 2018, several plaintiffs filed a lawsuit in federal court claiming that the Department's delay of the rules was unlawful under the federal



Administrative Procedure Act, and a federal court has scheduled a hearing to consider the parties' motions for summary judgment on April 11, 2019. We cannot predict the outcome of that litigation. On July 31, 2018, the Department announced its intention to establish a negotiated rulemaking committee to prepare proposed regulations on, among other things, state authorization, to address requirements related to programs offered through distance education or correspondence courses, including disclosures about such programs to enrolled and prospective students and other state authorization issues. Rulemaking began in January 2019 and is set to conclude in April 2019. We cannot predict what related regulations will be proposed or ultimately adopted.

Beginning July 1, 2017, California required out-of-state private post-secondary educational institutions that offer distance education to California residents to register with the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, and Strayer University and Capella University have filed BPPE registration applications and received confirmation of the registration.

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### State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement

Varying state regulations, fees, and paperwork embedded in the many different state approaches to regulation of post-secondary institutions have limited the ability to grow across state lines to offer students high quality choices for education and have hindered national workforce initiatives. As a solution to the ever-growing complexity of the regulatory oversight of institutions of higher learning on a state-by-state basis, the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (“SARA”) has emerged to aid in the advancement of distance education.

SARA is intended to make it easier for students to take online courses offered by post-secondary institutions based in another state, while also facilitating more effective and efficient oversight and monitoring processes nationally for the benefit of states and institutions. On March 6, 2015 and December 2, 2016, respectively, Capella and Strayer Universities became participants in SARA. As participants in SARA, the Universities may offer online courses and other forms of distance education to students in any participating SARA state in which the Universities do not have a physical location or a physical presence as defined by the state without having to seek any new state institutional approval beyond their home states (Minnesota and Washington, D.C., respectively). The Universities’ home states, in turn, will continually monitor the institution’s compliance with SARA standards. With this initiative, the Universities will be able to expand distance education offerings with increased consistency and ease. The only state that does not now participate in SARA is California.

The reciprocity agreement does not affect university operations that constitute a physical presence in a particular state, and the Universities will continue to follow individual state regulations for on-ground campuses and activities. To the extent that such approval is required by state law, the Universities also must obtain approval from each state that is not a SARA member (currently only California) if the Universities seek to enroll students from those states in the Universities’ distance education programs. At this time, SARA does not deal with professional licensing board approval for programs leading to state licensing in fields such as nursing, teacher education, psychology, and the like, and the Universities must seek such approvals on a state-by-state basis, as needed.

### Other Approvals

Strayer University and Capella University are approved by appropriate authorities for the education of active duty military personnel and qualifying family members, veterans and members of the selected reserve and their spouses and dependents, as well as for the rehabilitation of veterans. In addition, Strayer University is authorized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to admit foreign students for study in the United States subject to applicable requirements. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, working with the U.S. Department of State, has implemented a mandatory electronic reporting system for schools that enroll foreign students and exchange visitors. Strayer University is also authorized to participate in state financial aid programs in Pennsylvania, Florida, and Vermont. Capella University is authorized to participate in the Minnesota GI Bill program.

State Professional Licensure

States have specific requirements that an individual must satisfy in order to be licensed as a professional in a specified field. Capella University graduates often seek to obtain professional licensure in their chosen fields following graduation because it will enhance employment opportunities or they are legally required to do so for employment purposes. Their success in obtaining licensure depends on several factors, including each individual's personal and professional qualifications as well as other factors related to the degree or program completed, such as:

- Whether the institution and the program were approved by the state in which the graduate seeks licensure, or by a professional association;
  
- Whether the program from which the learner graduated and the curriculum completed meets all state requirements; and
  
- Whether the institution and/or the specific program is accredited.

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Professional licensure requirements can vary by state and may change over time. Capella University has a team dedicated to professional licensure that works directly with learners. The licensure team develops and maintains extensive resources to inform learners of unique state licensing requirements prior to enrollment and throughout their program. The University's catalog and websites also describe the requirements for obtaining professional licensure, paired with specific disclaimers that reiterate learner responsibility for licensure outcomes.

Capella's licensure team works directly with licensing authorities to try to resolve barriers to licensure for its alumni. The team also assists alumni with exploring alternative options to achieve licensure, including completing additional coursework at Capella or at another institution.

Capella University makes no representation, warranty or guarantee that successful completion of the course of study will result in the learner obtaining the necessary licensure or certification. Compliance with state or professional licensure or certification requirements is the learner's sole responsibility.

## Financing Student Education

Students finance their education at Strayer University and Capella University in a variety of ways, and historically about three quarters of students participated in one or more Title IV programs. Many financial aid programs are designed to assist eligible students whose financial resources are inadequate to meet the cost of education. With these programs, financial aid is awarded on the basis of financial need, generally defined under the Higher Education Act as the difference between the cost of attending a program of study and the amount a student reasonably can be expected to contribute to those expenses. All recipients of federal student financial aid must maintain a satisfactory grade point average ("GPA") and progress in a timely manner toward completion of a program of study.

In addition, many of our working adult students finance their own education or receive full or partial tuition reimbursement from their employers. Congress has enacted several tax credits for students pursuing higher education and has provided for a tax deduction for interest on student loans and exclusions from income of certain tuition reimbursement amounts. Eligible students at Strayer University or Capella University may participate in educational assistance programs administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs ("VA") (and related state agencies), the U.S. Department of Defense ("DOD"), and various private organizations. Eligible students at Strayer University may also participate in educational assistance programs administered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the State of Florida, and the State of Vermont. Some Capella University students may qualify to participate in the Minnesota GI Bill program.

Under the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 (as amended), sometimes referred to as the "New GI Bill," eligible veterans may receive, among other benefits, tuition benefits up to the net cost to the student (after accounting for state and federal aid, scholarships, institutional aid, fee waivers, and similar assistance), subject to a

cap of \$23,672 for non-public domestic institutions for 2018-2019. In addition, eligible students pursuing an educational program solely through distance learning are eligible to receive a housing stipend of \$825 per month, half the amount available to students attending certain classroom-based programs or programs that combine classroom learning and distance learning.

On August 16, 2017, the President signed into law the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, commonly known as the “Forever GI Bill”. The law makes several changes to the administration of VA education benefits. Among other things, for service members who left the military after January 1, 2013, the bill removes the requirement that they use their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits within 15 years after their last 90-day period of active-duty service. The bill also alters the way the VA calculates eligibility for VA education benefits by providing additional benefits to service members with at least 90 days but less than six months of active-duty service. Additionally, the bill will restore VA education benefits to students who were enrolled in schools that closed after January 2015 if their credits did not transfer.

Strayer University and Capella University participate in DOD military tuition assistance programs under a Memoranda of Understanding (“MOU”). Strayer University’s MOU was executed on September 5, 2014. Capella University’s MOU was executed on October 7, 2014. Service members of the United States Armed Forces are eligible to

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receive tuition assistance from their branch of service through the DOD military tuition assistance programs. Under the Memorandum of Understanding, the Universities agree to comply with DOD rules and procedures regarding the receipt of tuition assistance on behalf of active duty military personnel (and qualifying family members) in attendance at the University.

### Title IV Programs

Strayer University and Capella University maintain eligibility for their students to participate in the following Title IV programs:

- Federal Grants. Grants under the Federal Pell Grant program are available to eligible students based on financial need and other factors.
- Campus-Based Programs. The campus-based Title IV programs include the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant program, the Federal Perkins Loan, and the Federal Work-Study Program. Neither Strayer University nor Capella University actively participates in the Federal Perkins Loan program, which expired on September 30, 2017. In addition, Strayer University does not actively participate in the Federal Work-Study Program.
- Federal Direct Student Loans. Under the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program, the Department of Education makes loans directly to students and their parents. Undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need may qualify for a subsidized loan. The federal government pays the interest on a subsidized loan while the student is in school and during any approved periods of deferment, after which the student's obligation to repay the loan begins. Unsubsidized loans are available to students who do not qualify for a subsidized loan or, in some cases, in addition to a subsidized loan. PLUS loans, including Graduate PLUS loans, are unsubsidized loans available in amounts up to the total cost of attendance less any other financial aid.

### Federal Financial Aid Regulation

To be eligible to participate in Title IV programs, Strayer and Capella Universities must comply with specific standards and procedures set forth in the Higher Education Act and the regulations issued thereunder by the Department of Education. As part of those participation standards, the Department of Education determines whether, among other things, the institution meets certain standards of administrative capability and financial responsibility. The institutions must also follow extensive Department of Education rules regarding the awarding and processing of funds issued under Title IV programs. Some of the key provisions regarding institutional eligibility and processing federal financial aid are described below.

## Program Participation Agreement

Each institution participating in Title IV programs must enter into a Program Participation Agreement with the Department of Education. Under the agreement, the institution agrees to follow the Department's rules and regulations governing Title IV programs. On October 11, 2017, the Department and Strayer University executed a new Program Participation Agreement, approving Strayer University's continued participation in Title IV programs with full certification through June 30, 2021. On January 18, 2019, consistent with standard procedure upon a Title IV institution's change of ownership, the Department and Capella University executed a new Program Participation Agreement, approving Capella University's continued participation in Title IV programs with provisional certification through December 31, 2022.

## Provisional Certification

In certain circumstances, the Department of Education may certify an institution's continuing eligibility to participate in Title IV programs on a provisional basis for up to three complete award years (July 1 – June 30) from the date of provisional certification. During the period of provisional certification, the institution must comply with any

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additional conditions included in its program participation agreement, which typically require approval by the Department of Education for establishment of an additional location, increase in the level of academic offering, and addition of any educational program (including degree, non-degree, or short-term training programs) before awarding or disbursing Title IV aid to students enrolled at such a location or in such a program. If the Department of Education determines that a provisionally certified institution is unable to meet its responsibilities under its program participation agreement, it may revoke or further condition the institution's certification to participate in Title IV programs with fewer due process protections for the institution than if it were fully certified. Should the Department of Education revoke eligibility during the provisional period, the institution may request reconsideration and the Secretary of Education's decision whether or not revocation is warranted constitutes final agency action. Strayer University is operating under full certification. Consistent with standard procedure following a change of control, Capella University is operating under provisional certification.

### Administrative Capability

Department of Education regulations specify extensive criteria by which an institution must establish that it has the requisite administrative capability to participate in Title IV programs. To meet the administrative capability standards, an institution, among other things, must: (1) comply with all applicable Title IV program regulations; (2) have cohort default rates below specified levels; (3) have acceptable methods for defining and measuring the satisfactory academic progress of its learners; (4) have various procedures in place for safeguarding federal funds; (5) not be, and not have any principal or affiliate who is, debarred or suspended from federal contracting or engaging in activity that is cause for debarment or suspension; (6) submit in a timely manner all reports and financial statements required by the regulations; and (7) not otherwise appear to lack administrative capability.

If an institution fails to satisfy any of these criteria or any other Department of Education regulation, the Department of Education may:

- Require the repayment of Title IV funds;
- Transfer the institution from the Department of Education's advance system of receiving Title IV program funds to its reimbursement system, under which an institution must disburse its own funds to learners and document the learners' eligibility for Title IV program funds before receiving such funds from the Department of Education;
- Place the institution on provisional certification status; or
- Commence a proceeding to impose a fine or to limit, suspend or terminate the participation of the institution in Title IV programs.



## Financial Responsibility

The Higher Education Act and Department of Education regulations establish extensive standards of financial responsibility that institutions such as Strayer and Capella Universities must satisfy in order to participate in Title IV programs. These standards generally require that an institution provide the services described in its official publications and statements, properly administer Title IV programs in which it participates, and meet all of its financial obligations, including required refunds and any repayments to the Department of Education for debts and liabilities incurred in programs administered by the Department of Education.

Department of Education standards utilize a complex formula to assess financial responsibility. The standards focus on three financial ratios: (1) equity ratio (which measures the institution's capital resources and ability to borrow); (2) primary reserve ratio (which measures the institution's financial viability and liquidity); and (3) net income ratio (which measures the institution's ability to operate at a profit or within its means). An institution's financial ratios must yield a composite score of at least 1.5 for the institution to be deemed financially responsible without alternative measures and further federal oversight. For both of the Universities, the Department evaluates financial responsibility at the parent level, based on review of SEI's financial statements. We have applied the financial responsibility standards to our

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financial statements as of and for the year ended December 31, 2018, and based on our calculated composite score and other relevant factors, we believe we meet the Department of Education's financial responsibility standards.

On November 1, 2016, the Department of Education released a new regulation, which was scheduled to take effect July 1, 2017, which would make significant changes to the financial responsibility criteria. Under the final regulation, an institution may no longer be considered financially responsible if one or more of a list of "triggering events" occurs. The Department of Education would automatically determine that an institution is not financially responsible if, among other things, the institution receives certain warnings from the SEC, fails to file required reports in a timely manner, or has a cohort default rate of 30% or greater for each of the two most recent official calculations. The Department of Education would also determine that an institution is not financially responsible if certain triggering events, such as a lawsuit against the institution, an accrediting agency's requirement that the institution submit a teach-out plan, or potential loss of Title IV eligibility for gainful employment programs, result in the institution's recalculated composite score to be less than 1.0. The Department of Education could also invoke certain "discretionary" triggering events, such as citation by a state agency or accrediting agency for failure to satisfy the agency's standards, to determine that an institution is not financially responsible. The Department announced a series of delays to the implementation of the regulation until July 1, 2019, but following a judge's decision in related litigation, the regulations went into effect as of October 16, 2018. On July 31, 2018, the Department published a notice of proposed rulemaking that, among other things, would amend the Department's financial responsibility provisions in several respects. The proposed rules would identify certain conditions or events that have or may have an adverse material effect on the institution's financial condition, in response to which the Department would or could require that the institution submit some form of financial protection. We cannot predict what regulations ultimately will be adopted.

## Student Loan Defaults

The Department of Education calculates a rate of student defaults (known as a cohort default rate) for each institution with 30 or more borrowers entering repayment in a given federal fiscal year. The Department of Education includes in the cohort all student borrowers at the institution who entered repayment on any Direct or FFEL Program loan during that year. The cohort default rate is the percentage of those borrowers who become subject to their repayment obligation in the relevant federal fiscal year and default by the end of the second federal fiscal year following that fiscal year, resulting in a three-year cohort default rate. Because of the need to collect data on defaults, the Department of Education publishes cohort default rates three years in arrears; for example, in the fall of 2018, the Department of Education issued cohort default rates for federal fiscal year 2015.

The Department of Education may take adverse action against an institution if it has excessive cohort default rates, including the following:

- If an institution's cohort default rate is 30% or more in a given fiscal year, the institution will be required to assemble a "default prevention task force" and submit to the Department of Education a default improvement plan.

- If an institution's cohort default rate exceeds 30% for two consecutive years, the institution will be required to review, revise, and resubmit its default improvement plan.
- If an institution's cohort default rate exceeds 30% for two out of three consecutive years, the Department of Education may subject the institution to provisional certification.
- If an institution's cohort default rate is equal to or greater than 30% for each of the three most recent federal fiscal years for which data are available, the institution will be ineligible to participate in the Direct Loan Program and Federal Pell Grant Program.

An institution generally loses eligibility to participate in Title IV programs if its most recent cohort default rate is greater than 40%. Institutions with a cohort default rate equal to or greater than 15% for any of the three most recent fiscal years for which data are available are subject to a 30-day delayed disbursement period for first-year, first-time

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undergraduate borrowers. Although Strayer University has not had a cohort default rate at or above 15% in any of the three most recent fiscal years, Strayer University voluntarily disburses Direct Loans in this manner.

Strayer University and Capella University's official three-year cohort default rates for 2013, 2014, and 2015, as well as the average official three-year cohort default rates for proprietary institutions nationally, were as follows:

	Strayer University	Capella University	National Average Proprietary Institutions
2015	10.6%	6.5%	15.6%
2014	13.2%	6.9%	15.5%
2013	11.3%	6.5%	15.0%

As part of the Universities' compliance programs related to the cohort default rate, Strayer University and Capella University provide entrance and exit counseling to their students and engage the services of third parties to counsel students once they are in repayment status regarding their repayment obligations.

#### The 90/10 Rule

A requirement of the Higher Education Act, commonly referred to as the 90/10 Rule, applies only to proprietary institutions of higher education, which includes Strayer University and Capella University. Under this rule, a proprietary institution is prohibited from deriving more than 90% of its revenues (as revenues are computed under the Department of Education's methodology) from Title IV funds on a cash accounting basis (except for certain institutional loans) for any fiscal year.

A proprietary institution of higher education that violates the 90/10 Rule for any fiscal year will be placed on provisional certification for up to two fiscal years. Proprietary institutions of higher education that violate the 90/10 Rule for two consecutive fiscal years will become ineligible to participate in Title IV programs for at least two fiscal years and will be required to demonstrate compliance with Title IV eligibility and certification requirements for at least two fiscal years prior to resuming Title IV program participation. In addition, the Department of Education discloses on its website any proprietary institution of higher education that fails to meet the 90/10 requirement, and reports annually to Congress the relevant ratios for each proprietary institution of higher education.

Using the statutory formula, Strayer University derived approximately 76.0% of its cash-basis revenues from Title IV program funds in 2017. Capella University derived approximately 75.5% of its cash-basis revenues from Title IV program funds in 2017. Our computation for 2018 has not yet been finalized and audited; however, we believe we will

remain in compliance with the 90/10 Rule requirement.

The key components of non-Title IV revenue for Strayer University and Capella University are individual student payments, employer tuition reimbursement payments, veterans' education benefits, military tuition assistance, vocational rehabilitation funds, private loans, state grants, and scholarships. In the past, certain members of Congress have proposed to revise the 90/10 Rule to count DOD tuition assistance and veterans' education benefits along with Title IV revenue toward the 90% limit and to reduce the limit to 85% of total revenue. In the context of Higher Education Act reauthorization, other members of Congress recently have proposed legislation that would eliminate the 90/10 Rule. We cannot predict whether or how the recent changes in Administration and Congress will affect the 90/10 Rule.

#### Restrictions on Incentive Compensation

As a part of an institution's program participation agreement with the Department of Education and in accordance with the Higher Education Act and Title IV regulations, the institution may not provide any commission, bonus, or other incentive payment based in any part, directly or indirectly, upon success in securing enrollments or financial aid to any person or entity engaged in any student recruitment, admissions, or financial aid-awarding activity. The rule applies to all employees at an institution who are engaged in or responsible for any student recruitment or admission activity or making decisions regarding the award of financial aid. The Department of Education has interpreted the regulation not to apply to certain high-level employees, including senior managers and executive level employees who are involved only

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in the development of policy and do not engage in individual student contact. Merit-based adjustments to employee compensation may be made if they are not based in any part, directly or indirectly, upon success in securing enrollments or the award of financial aid.

Failure to comply with the incentive payment rule could result in loss of certification to participate in federal student financial aid programs, limitations on participation in the federal student financial aid programs, or financial penalties. In June 2015, the Department of Education announced in a memorandum that it would revise its approach to measuring damages for noncompliance with the incentive payment prohibition. The Department of Education will calculate the amount of institutional liability based on the cost to the Department of the Title IV funds improperly received by the institution, including the cost to the Department of all Title IV funds received by the institution over a period of time if those funds were obtained through implementation of a policy or practice in which students were recruited in violation of the incentive payment prohibition. We believe we are in compliance with the regulation.

## Gainful Employment

Under the Higher Education Act, a proprietary institution offering programs of study other than a baccalaureate degree in liberal arts (for which there is a limited statutory exception) must prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation. On October 31, 2014, the Department of Education published final regulations related to gainful employment. The regulation went into effect on July 1, 2015, with the exception of new disclosure requirements, which generally went into effect January 1, 2017, although some portions of those requirements have now been delayed until July 1, 2019. In addition, in early 2018, the Department convened a new negotiated rulemaking related to gainful employment. On August 14, 2018, the Department published a notice of proposed rulemaking which proposed rescinding the gainful employment regulations and updating the College Scorecard or a similar web-based tool to provide program-level outcomes for all higher education programs at all institutions that participate in the Title IV programs. Public comments were accepted through September 13, 2018, and the Department has indicated it is currently drafting final rules. We cannot predict what new regulations will ultimately be adopted.

The current regulations include two debt-to-earnings measures, consisting of an annual income rate and a discretionary income rate. The annual income rate measures student debt in relation to earnings, and the discretionary income rate measures student debt in relation to discretionary income. A program passes if the program's graduates:

- have an annual income rate ratio that does not exceed 8%; or
- have a discretionary income rate that does not exceed 20%.

In addition, a program that does not pass either of the debt-to-earnings metrics and that has an annual income rate between 8% and 12% or a discretionary income rate between 20% and 30% is considered to be in a warning zone. A program fails if the program's graduates have an annual income rate of 12% or greater and a discretionary income rate of 30% or greater. A program would become Title IV-ineligible for three years if it fails both metrics for two out of three consecutive years or fails to pass at least one metric for four consecutive award years. The regulations provide a means by which an institution may challenge the Department of Education's calculation of any of the debt metrics prior to loss of Title IV eligibility.

If an institution is notified by the Secretary of Education that a program could become ineligible, based on its final rates, for the next award year:

- the institution must provide a warning with respect to the program to students and prospective students indicating, among other things, that students may not be able to use Title IV funds to attend or continue in the program; and
- the institution must not enroll, register, or enter into a financial commitment with a prospective student until a specified time after providing the warning to the prospective student.

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On January 8, 2017, Strayer and Capella Universities received their final 2015 debt-to-earnings measures. None of their programs failed the debt-to-earnings metrics. Two active Strayer University programs, the Associate in Arts in Accounting and Associate in Arts in Business Administration, were “in the zone,” and one active Capella University program, the Masters of Science in Marriage and Family Counseling/Therapy, was “in the zone.” Each of those three programs remains fully eligible unless (1) the program has a combination of zone and failing designations for four consecutive years, in which case it would become Title IV-ineligible in the fifth year; or (2) the program fails the metrics for two out of three consecutive years, in which case the program could become ineligible for the following award year. The Department has not yet released 2016 debt-to-earnings measures, and the Department has announced that because it no longer has a data-sharing agreement with the U.S. Social Security Administration to receive earnings data, the Department is currently unable to calculate the debt-to-earnings measures under the gainful employment regulations.

The current regulation also requires institutions annually to report student- and program-level data to the Department of Education and comply with additional disclosure requirements. Final regulations adopted by the Department of Education, which generally became effective on July 1, 2011, require an institution to use a template designed by the Department of Education to disclose to prospective students, with respect to each gainful employment program, occupations that the program prepares students to enter; total cost of the program; on-time graduation rate; job placement rate, if applicable; and the median loan debt of program completers for the most recently completed award year. The regulation that became effective July 1, 2015 expands upon those existing disclosure requirements, and institutions were required to comply with the new template by July 1, 2017. The Universities timely complied by posting information in the new template. On January 19, 2018, the Department of Education released the most recent version of the disclosure template, which institutions were required to adopt on or before April 6, 2018. On June 30, 2017, the Department of Education announced that it would allow institutions until July 1, 2018 to comply with certain disclosure requirements in the final regulations, including requirements to include a link to the disclosure template in promotional materials and to distribute directly a copy of the disclosure template to prospective students. On June 18, 2018, the Department of Education further delayed these disclosure requirements until July 1, 2019.

In addition, the gainful employment regulation requires institutions to certify, among other things, that each eligible gainful employment program is programmatically accredited if programmatic accreditation is required by a federal governmental entity or a state governmental entity of a state in which it is located or in which the institution is otherwise required to obtain state approval to offer the program in that state. Institutions also must certify that each eligible program satisfies the applicable educational prerequisites for professional licensure or certification requirements in each state in which it is located or is otherwise required to obtain state approval, so that a student who completes the program and seeks employment in that state qualifies to take any licensure or certification exam that is needed for the student to practice or find employment in an occupation that the program prepares students to enter. The Universities have timely made the required certification.

Under the gainful employment regulation, an institution may establish a new program’s Title IV eligibility by updating the list of the institution’s programs maintained by the Department of Education. However, an institution may not update its list of eligible programs to include a failing or zone program that the institution voluntarily discontinued or became ineligible, or a gainful employment program that is substantially similar to such a program, until three years after the loss of eligibility or discontinuance.



The requirements associated with the gainful employment regulations may substantially increase our administrative burdens and could affect our program offerings, student enrollment, persistence, and retention. Further, although the regulations provide opportunities for an institution to correct any potential deficiencies in a program prior to the loss of Title IV eligibility, the continuing eligibility of our academic programs may be affected by factors beyond management's control, such as changes in our graduates' employment and income levels, changes in student borrowing levels, increases in interest rates, and various other factors. Even if we were able to correct any deficiency in the gainful employment metrics in a timely manner, the disclosure requirements associated with a program's failure to meet at least one metric may adversely affect student enrollments in that program and may adversely affect the reputation of our institutions.

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### Return of Federal Funds

Under the Higher Education Act's return-of-funds provision, an institution must return Title IV funds to a Title IV program in a timely manner if a student received funds from that program, but did not earn them due to the student's withdrawal from the institution. In order to determine if funds should be returned, the institution must first determine the amount of Title IV program funds that the student earned. If the student attends the institution, but withdraws during the first 60% of any period of enrollment or payment period, the amount of Title IV program funds that the student earned is equal to a pro rata portion of the funds for which the student would otherwise be eligible. Strayer University and Capella University are required to measure the last day of attendance based on official attendance records, and "attendance" for online classes must include participation in an academically-related activity. The Universities' systems allow for measurement on this basis. If the student withdraws after the 60% point, then the student has earned 100% of the Title IV program funds. The institution must return to the appropriate Title IV programs, in a specified order, the lesser of the unearned Title IV program funds or the institutional charges incurred by the student for the period multiplied by the percentage of unearned Title IV program funds. An institution must return the funds no later than 45 days after the date that the institution determines that a student withdrew.

If the funds are not returned in a timely manner, an institution may be subject to adverse action, including being required to submit an irrevocable letter of credit equal to 25% of the refunds the institution should have made in its most recently completed fiscal year. If late returns of Title IV program funds constitute 5% or more of students sampled in the institution's annual compliance audit for either of its two most recently completed fiscal years, an institution generally must submit such a letter of credit payable to the Secretary of Education.

### Misrepresentation

Under the Higher Education Act, the Department of Education may fine, suspend, or terminate an institution's participation in Title IV programs if it engages in substantial misrepresentation of the nature of its educational program, its financial charges, or the employability of its graduates. The Department's related regulations, which took effect July 1, 2011, set forth the types of activities that constitute misrepresentation and describe the adverse actions that the Department of Education may take if it finds that an institution or a third party that provides educational programs, marketing, advertising, recruiting, or admissions services to the institution engaged in substantial misrepresentation. The rule specifies the types of statements that can subject the institution to liability for misrepresentation, as well as the nature and form of misleading statements. The rule provides that an institution may not describe the eligible institution's participation in Title IV programs in a manner that suggests approval or endorsement of the quality of its educational programs by the Department of Education.

As part of the Department's 2016 promulgation of the Borrower Defenses to Repayment regulation, the Department changed the definition of misrepresentation for Title IV regulations to include any statement that "has the likelihood or tendency to mislead under the circumstances." The newly expanded definition also includes "any statement that omits information in such a way as to make the statement false, erroneous, or misleading." This regulation was published on

November 1, 2016 and was scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2017. The Department announced that it would delay implementation until July 1, 2019, but following a judge's decision in related litigation, the regulations went into effect as of October 16, 2018. On July 31, 2018, the Department published a notice of proposed rulemaking that, among other things, revisits the definition of misrepresentation. We cannot predict what definition of misrepresentation ultimately will be proposed or adopted.

#### Borrower Defenses to Repayment

Pursuant to the Higher Education Act and following negotiated rulemaking, on November 1, 2016, the Department of Education released a final regulation specifying the acts or omissions of an institution that a borrower may assert as a defense to repayment of a loan made under the Direct Loan Program and the consequences of such borrower defenses for borrowers, institutions, and the Secretary of Education. Under the regulation, for Direct Loans disbursed after July 1, 2017, a student borrower may assert a defense to repayment if: (1) the student borrower obtained a state or federal court judgment against the institution; (2) the institution failed to perform on a contract with the student; and/or (3) the institution committed a "substantial misrepresentation" on which the borrower reasonably relied to his or her detriment.

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These defenses are asserted through claims submitted to the Department of Education, and the Department has the authority to issue a final decision. In addition, the regulation permits the Department to grant relief to an individual or group of individuals, including individuals who have not applied to the Department seeking relief. If a defense is successfully raised, the Department has discretion to initiate action to collect from an institution the amount of losses incurred based on the borrower defense. The regulation also amends the rules concerning discharge of federal student loans when a school or campus closes and prohibits pre-dispute arbitration agreements and class action waivers for borrower defense-type claims. On January 19, 2017, the Department of Education issued a final rule with request for comments, updating the hearing procedures for actions to establish liability against an institution of higher education and establishing procedures for recovery proceedings under the borrower defense regulations. Several times between June 2017 and February 2018, the Department of Education announced delays until July 1, 2019 of implementation of certain portions of the final regulations published in November 2016, including those portions of the regulations that establish a new federal standard and a process for determining whether a Direct Loan borrower has a defense to repayment of a Direct Loan based on an act or omission of an institution. However, in October 2018, a judge denied a request to delay implementation of portions of the regulations, and as a result the regulations went into effect as of October 16, 2018 and will remain in effect until such time as any new regulations developed under the current rulemaking process, described below, are effective. We are unable to predict the manner and effect of full implementation of the final regulations published in November 2016, including because their scope is broad and the Department has said it will issue guidance about its plans to implement the regulations while further rulemaking remains in progress.

On June 16, 2017, the Department of Education announced its intent to convene a negotiated rulemaking committee to develop proposed regulations related to borrower defense and to address certain other related matters. The negotiated rulemaking committee held meetings in November 2017, January 2018, and February 2018.

On July 31, 2018, the Department published a notice of proposed rulemaking that, among other things, would establish a new federal standard for evaluating, and a process for adjudicating, borrower defenses to repayment of loans made under the Direct Loan Program on or after July 1, 2019. Under the proposed standard, an individual borrower could assert a defense to repayment based on the institution's statement, act, or omission that is false, misleading, or deceptive. To be eligible for relief, the borrower would be required to demonstrate that the misrepresentation (1) was made with knowledge of its false, misleading, or deceptive nature or with a reckless disregard for the truth, (2) was relied upon by the borrower in making an enrollment decision, and (3) caused the student financial harm. The Department would have discretion to determine the appropriate amount of relief. The proposed regulations would make changes to the Department's eligibility requirements for granting loan discharges to students who had enrolled at institutions or locations that subsequently close. The proposed regulations also would require that institutions that require students to enter into pre-dispute arbitration agreements or class action waivers as a condition of enrollment disclose those requirements in an easily accessible format.

In addition, the proposed regulations would amend the Department's financial responsibility provisions in several respects. The proposed rules would identify certain conditions or events that have or may have an adverse material effect on the institution's financial condition, in response to which the Department would or could require that the institution submit some form of financial protection for the Department. The proposed rules would also update the Department's composite score calculations to reflect recent changes in Financial Accounting Standards Board ("FASB") accounting standards and provide a phase-in process to enable the Department to update its composite score

regulations through additional negotiated rulemaking. The Department accepted public comments on the notice of proposed rulemaking through August 30, 2018. Capella University and Strayer University provided public comments on August 30. The Department did not publish the final rule by November 1, 2018, the date by which the Department's master calendar rule dictates a final regulation must be published to take effect the following July. The Department has indicated it plans to reissue a notice of proposed rulemaking for public comment in 2019. We cannot predict what new regulations will be proposed or ultimately will be adopted.

#### Third-Party Servicers

Department of Education regulations permit an institution to enter into a written contract with a third-party servicer for the administration of any aspect of the institution's participation in Title IV programs. The third-party servicer must, among other obligations, comply with Title IV requirements and be jointly and severally liable with the institution to the

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Secretary of Education for any violation by the servicer of any Title IV provision. An institution must report to the Department of Education new contracts or any significant modifications to contracts with third-party servicers as well as other matters related to third-party servicers. Strayer University and Capella University have written contracts with third-party servicers to perform activities related to Strayer University's and Capella University's participation in Title IV programs. Strayer University also has a contract with Heartland Payment Systems, Inc. for processing stipends due to students. For loan default prevention, Strayer University contracts with i3 Group, LLC and Capella University contracts with ECMC. Strayer University and Capella University believe that their third-party servicer contracts comply with the regulations, and they have reported such contracts to the Department of Education.

## Lender Relationships

As part of an institution's program participation agreement with the Department of Education, the institution must adopt a code of conduct pertaining to student loans. Strayer University and Capella University have a code of conduct that we believe complies with the provisions of the Higher Education Act in all material respects. In addition to the code of conduct requirements that apply to institutions, the Higher Education Act contains provisions that apply to lenders, prohibiting lenders from engaging in certain activities as they interact with institutions.

## Restrictions on Adding Locations and Educational Programs

State requirements and accrediting agency standards can limit or slow the ability of the Universities to establish legally authorized additional locations and programs. Most states require approval before institutions can add new programs, campuses, or teaching locations. Middle States requires its accredited institutions to notify it in advance of implementing new programs or locations, which may require additional approval. At its discretion, Middle States may also conduct site visits to additional locations to evaluate whether accredited institutions that experience rapid growth in the number of additional locations, among other reasons, maintain educational quality. All new Strayer University campus locations require Middle States approval before students are enrolled, and the Higher Education Act requires Middle States to monitor institutions with significant enrollment growth. The Higher Learning Commission, the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, and other state educational regulatory agencies that license or authorize Capella University and its degree programs require institutions to notify them in advance of implementing new programs and, upon notification, may undertake a review of the institution's licensure, authorization or accreditation.

The Higher Education Act requires proprietary institutions of higher education to be in full operation for two years before qualifying to participate in Title IV programs. However, the applicable regulations in many circumstances permit an institution that is already qualified to participate in Title IV programs to establish additional locations that are exempt from the two-year rule. These additional locations generally may qualify immediately for participation in Title IV programs, unless the location was acquired from another institution that has ceased offering educational programs at that location and has Title IV liabilities that it is not repaying in accordance with an agreement to do so, and the acquiring institution does not agree, among other matters, to be responsible for certain liabilities of the acquired institution. The new location must satisfy all other applicable requirements for institutional eligibility,

including approval of the additional location by the relevant state authorizing agency and the institution's accrediting agency. Any Strayer University or Capella University expansion plans assume its continued ability to establish new campuses as additional locations under such applicable regulations and thereby avoid incurring the two-year delay in participation in Title IV programs. The loss of state authorization or accreditation of a university or an existing campus, or the failure of a university or a new campus to obtain state authorization or accreditation, would render the university ineligible to participate in Title IV programs, at least in that state or at that location. Department of Education regulations require institutions to report to the Department of Education a new additional location at which at least 50% of an eligible program will be offered, if the institution wants to disburse Title IV program funds to students enrolled at that location. Under its Program Participation Agreement with the Department of Education, Strayer University must notify the Department of Education of the addition of any such location within ten days of opening, but need not seek prior approval. Under Capella University's provisional certification, the Department of Education must approve any new campus locations, level of academic offerings, and non-degree and degree programs before Capella University may award or disburse Title IV aid to students enrolled at any such location or in any such program. Institutions are responsible for knowing whether they need approval, and institutions that add locations and disburse Title IV program funds without having obtained any necessary approval may be subject to administrative repayments and other sanctions.

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The gainful employment regulation that became effective July 1, 2015, provides that an institution may establish a new program's Title IV eligibility by updating the list of the institution's programs maintained by the Department of Education and thereby making the certification required by the regulation, as described above under "Gainful Employment." However, an institution may not update its list of eligible programs to include a failing or zone program that the institution voluntarily discontinued or became ineligible, or a gainful employment program that is substantially similar to such a program, until three years after the loss of eligibility or discontinuance.

### Credit Hours

The Higher Education Act and regulations use the term "credit hour" to define an eligible program and an academic year and to determine enrollment status and the amount of Title IV program funds an institution may disburse during a payment period. The regulations define the term "credit hour" and require accrediting agencies to review the reliability and accuracy of an institution's credit hour assignments. If an accreditor does not comply with this requirement, its recognition by the Department of Education could be jeopardized. If an accreditor identifies systematic or significant noncompliance in one or more of an institution's programs, the accreditor must notify the Secretary of Education. If the Department of Education determines that an institution is out of compliance with the credit hour definition, the Department of Education could impose liabilities or other sanctions. We believe that both Strayer University and Capella University are in compliance with the credit hour rules.

### Other Regulations Governing Title IV Programs

The Department of Education has enacted a comprehensive set of regulations governing an institution's participation in Title IV programs. If either Strayer University or Capella University were not to continue to comply with these regulations, such noncompliance might affect the operations of the University and its ability to participate in Title IV programs.

### The Clery Act and Title IX

Strayer and Capella Universities must comply with the campus safety and security reporting requirements as well as other requirements in the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (the "Clery Act"). In addition, the Department has interpreted Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX") to categorize sexual violence as a form of prohibited sex discrimination and to require institutions to follow certain disciplinary procedures with respect to such offenses. Failure by the Universities to comply with the Clery Act or Title IX requirements or regulations thereunder could result in action by the Department fining the Universities, or limiting or suspending their participation in Title IV programs, could lead to litigation, and could harm the Universities'



reputations. We believe that the Universities are in compliance with these requirements. On November 29, 2018, the Department of Education published proposed rules related to implementation of Title IX, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs that receive funding from the federal government. The proposed rules would define what constitutes sexual harassment for purposes of Title IX in the administrative enforcement context, would describe what actions trigger an institution's obligation to respond to incidents of alleged sexual harassment, and would specify how an institution must respond to allegations of sexual harassment. The Department of Education accepted public comments through January 30, 2019. We cannot predict what final regulations will be adopted as a result of this rulemaking process.

#### Compliance Reviews

Strayer University and Capella University are subject to announced and unannounced compliance reviews and audits by various external agencies, including the Department of Education, its Office of Inspector General, state licensing agencies, guaranty agencies, and accrediting agencies. The Higher Education Act and Department of Education regulations also require an institution to submit annually to the Secretary of Education a compliance audit of its administration of Title IV programs conducted by an independent certified public accountant in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards and applicable audit guides of the Department of Education's Office of Inspector General ("ED OIG"). For fiscal years beginning after June 30, 2016, the Universities must submit

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such audits that have been conducted in accordance with a revised guide for audits of proprietary schools that was issued by the ED OIG in September 2016. In addition, to enable the Secretary of Education to make a determination of financial responsibility, an institution must submit annually to the Secretary of Education audited financial statements prepared in accordance with Department of Education regulations. For both Universities, financial responsibility is determined at the SEI parent level.

In 2014, the Department of Education conducted four campus-based program reviews of Strayer University locations in three states and the District of Columbia. The reviews covered federal financial aid years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, and two of the reviews also covered compliance with the Clery Act, the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, and regulations related thereto. For three of the program reviews, we received correspondence from the Department closing the program reviews with no further action required by us. For the other program review, the University received a Final Program Review Determination Letter closing the review and identifying a payment of less than \$500 due to the Department of Education based on an underpayment on a return to Title IV calculation. Strayer University remitted payment and received a letter from the Department indicating that no further action was required and that the matter was closed.

Capella University has not had a program review in the last several years.

## Potential Effect of Regulatory Violations

If either Strayer University or Capella University fails to comply with the regulatory standards governing Title IV programs, the Department of Education could impose one or more sanctions, including transferring the University from the advance payment method to the reimbursement or cash monitoring system of payment, seeking to require repayment of certain Title IV funds, requiring the University to post a letter of credit in favor of the Department of Education as a condition for continued Title IV certification, taking emergency action against the University, or referring the matter for criminal prosecution or initiating proceedings to impose a fine or to limit, condition, suspend, or terminate the University's participation in Title IV programs. Although there are no such sanctions currently in force, if such sanctions or proceedings were imposed against Strayer University or Capella University and resulted in a substantial curtailment, or termination, of that University's participation in Title IV programs or resulted in substantial fines or monetary liabilities, the University and the Company could be materially and adversely affected.

If Strayer University or Capella University lost its eligibility to participate in Title IV programs, or if Congress reduced the amount of available federal student financial aid, the University would seek to arrange or provide alternative sources of revenue or financial aid for students. Although the Universities believe that one or more private organizations would be willing to provide financial assistance to students attending the Universities, there is no assurance that this would be the case, and the interest rate and other terms of such student financial aid are unlikely to be as favorable as those for Title IV program funds. The Universities may be required to guarantee all or part of such alternative assistance in a manner that complies with rules governing schools' relationships with lenders or might incur other additional costs in connection with securing alternative sources of financial aid. Accordingly, the loss of

eligibility of Strayer University or Capella University to participate in Title IV programs, or a reduction in the amount of available federal student financial aid, would be expected to have a material adverse effect on Strayer University or Capella University, even if it could arrange or provide alternative sources of revenue or student financial aid.

In addition to the actions that may be brought against us as a result of our participation in Title IV programs, we also may be subject, from time to time, to complaints and lawsuits relating to regulatory compliance brought not only by our regulatory agencies, but also by other government agencies and third parties.

#### Acquisitions of Other Institutions

When a company, partnership or any other entity or individual acquires an institution that is eligible to participate in Title IV programs, that institution undergoes a change of ownership resulting in a change of control as defined by the Department of Education. Upon such a change of control, an institution's eligibility to participate in Title IV programs is generally suspended until it has applied for recertification by the Department of Education as an eligible institution under its new ownership, which requires that the institution also re-establish its state authorization and accreditation. The

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Department of Education may temporarily and provisionally certify an institution seeking approval of a change of ownership under certain circumstances while the Department of Education reviews the institution's application. The time required for the Department of Education to act on such an application may vary substantially. The Department of Education's recertification of an institution following a change of control will be on a provisional basis.

### Change in Ownership Resulting in a Change of Control

Many states and accrediting agencies require institutions of higher education to report or obtain approval of certain changes in ownership or other aspects of institutional status, but the types of and triggers for such reporting or approval vary among states and accrediting agencies. Both Strayer University's accrediting agency, Middle States, and Capella University's accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission, require institutions that they accredit to inform them in advance of any substantive change, including a change that significantly alters the ownership or control of the institution. Examples of substantive changes requiring advance notice to, and approval by, the agency include changes in the legal status, ownership, or form of control of the institution, such as the sale of a proprietary institution. Both agencies must approve a substantive change in advance in order to include the change in the institution's accreditation status. Additionally, both Middle States and the Higher Learning Commission will undertake a site visit to an institution that has undergone a change in ownership or control no later than six months after the change.

Federal agencies also regulate changes in ownership and control. The Higher Education Act provides that an institution that undergoes a change in ownership resulting in a change of control loses its eligibility to participate in Title IV programs and must apply to the Department of Education in order to reestablish such eligibility. An institution is ineligible to receive Title IV program funds during the period from the change of ownership and control until recertification. The Higher Education Act provides that the Department of Education may temporarily, provisionally certify an institution seeking approval of a change of ownership and control based on preliminary review by the Department of Education of a materially complete application received by the Department of Education within ten business days after the transaction. The Department of Education may continue such temporary, provisional certification on a month-to-month basis until it has rendered a final decision on the institution's application. If the Department of Education approves the application after a change in ownership and control, it issues a provisional certification, which extends for a period expiring not later than the end of the third complete award year following the date of provisional certification. The Higher Education Act defines one of the events that would trigger a change in ownership resulting in a change of control as the transfer of the controlling interest of the stock of the institution or its parent corporation. For a publicly traded corporation such as Strategic Education, Inc., the Department of Education regulations define a change of control as occurring when a person or entity acquires ownership and control of a corporation, such that the corporation is required to file a Form 8-K with the SEC publicly disclosing the change of control. The regulations also provide that a change in ownership and control of a publicly traded corporation occurs if a person or entity who is a controlling stockholder of the corporation ceases to be a controlling stockholder. A controlling stockholder is a stockholder who holds, or controls through agreement, at least 25% of the total outstanding voting stock of the corporation and more shares of voting stock than any other stockholder.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, working with the U.S. Department of State, has implemented a mandatory electronic reporting system for schools that enroll foreign students and exchange visitors. Strayer University currently is authorized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to admit foreign students for study in the United States subject to applicable requirements. In certain circumstances, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security may require an institution to obtain approval for a change in ownership and control.

Pursuant to federal law providing benefits for veterans and reservists, some of the programs offered by Strayer University and Capella University are approved by state approving agencies for the enrollment of persons eligible to receive U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs educational benefits. In 2018, Strayer University had such approval in Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Washington, D.C. In 2018, Capella University had such approval in Minnesota, and because all of its programs are online only, this allows it to extend VA education benefits to students in all states and abroad. In certain circumstances, state approving agencies may require an institution to obtain approval for a change in ownership and control.

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If Strayer University or Capella University underwent a change of control that required approval by any state authority, accrediting agency, or any federal agency, and such approval were significantly delayed, limited, or denied, there could be a material adverse effect on the University's ability to offer certain educational programs, award certain degrees, diplomas, or certificates, operate one or more of its locations, admit certain students, or participate in Title IV programs, which in turn, could materially and adversely affect the University's operations. A change that required approval by a state regulatory authority, an accrediting agency, or a federal agency could also delay the University's ability to establish new campuses or educational programs and may have other adverse regulatory effects. Furthermore, the suspension from Title IV programs and the necessity of obtaining regulatory approvals in connection with a change of control could materially limit the University's flexibility in future financing or acquisition transactions.

## Legislative and Regulatory Activity

Congress, from time to time, considers legislation that would make changes in the Higher Education Act and other education-related federal laws. The Department of Education and other federal agencies similarly consider new regulations and regulatory amendments. State legislatures and agencies and accreditors likewise periodically change their laws, regulations, and standards. Such activity may adversely affect enrollment in for-profit educational institutions. Although legislative and regulatory activity in recent years has had a negative impact on the for-profit post-secondary education industry as a whole, we cannot predict the impact of recent, pending, or possible future legislative or regulatory changes, if any, on our long-term business model.

## Congress

Congress historically has reauthorized the Higher Education Act approximately every five to six years. In 2008, Congress reauthorized the HEA through the end of 2013. Congress has held hearings regarding the reauthorization of the HEA and continued to consider new legislation regarding the passage thereof. It is currently unclear when Congress will reauthorize the Higher Education Act. The most recent reauthorized Higher Education Act continued all of the Title IV programs in which we participate, but made many revisions to the requirements governing the Title IV programs, including provisions relating to the relationships between institutions and lenders that make student loans, student loan default rates, and the formula for revenue that institutions are permitted to derive from the Title IV programs. In addition, further rulemaking by the Department of Education may impose additional requirements on institutions that participate in Title IV programs. Committee leadership of both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate began reauthorization hearings in the latter half of 2013, and the current Congress has continued to discuss reauthorization of the HEA. Existing programs and participation requirements are subject to change in this process. Additionally, funding for the student financial assistance programs may be affected during appropriations and budget actions.

## Appropriations

Congress reviews and determines appropriations for Title IV programs on an annual basis. Congress has appropriated funds for the Department of Education through September 30, 2019. From December 22, 2018 to January 25, 2019, Congress and the President reached an impasse over funding for certain other government agencies for federal fiscal year 2019. The so-called “partial government shutdown” affected the Department of Education and Title IV programs to the extent that the Department of Education or students rely on information from affected federal agencies, such as the Internal Revenue Service. The Department of Education has issued guidance to endeavor to reduce adverse consequences for students. A future government shutdown, particularly one that includes the Department of Education or appropriations for Title IV programs, could have a material adverse effect on our operations and financial condition.

An elimination of certain Title IV programs, a reduction in federal funding levels of such programs, material changes in the requirements for participation in such programs, or the substitution of materially different programs could reduce the ability of certain students to finance their education. Such reductions, in turn, could lead to lower enrollments at Strayer University or Capella University or require us to increase our reliance upon alternative sources of student financial aid. Given the significant percentage of our revenues that are derived indirectly from Title IV programs, the loss of, or a significant reduction in, Title IV program funds available to our students could have a material adverse effect on Strayer University, Capella University, and the Company.

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Beginning July 1, 2017, in accordance with the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, institutions that participate in the Title IV programs may award Pell Grant funds for up to 150% of a student's standard scheduled Pell Grant in one award year. This provision, which commonly is referred to as "year-round Pell," is intended to allow students to graduate more quickly and with less debt. To be eligible for the additional Pell Grant funds, a student must be otherwise eligible to receive Pell Grant funds and must be enrolled at least half-time in the payment period for which the student receives additional Pell Grant funds in excess of 100% of the student's standard scheduled award.

### Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau ("CFPB") has pursued enforcement actions against certain proprietary institutions of higher education and has released several reports that directly address issues related to institutions of higher education. In October 2017, the CFPB Student Loan Ombudsman released its annual report analyzing more than 7,700 complaints the CFPB received from private student loan borrowers between September 1, 2016 and August 31, 2017 and more than 2,300 federal student loan financing complaints the CFPB received from federal student loan borrowers. We do not know what steps the CFPB or Congress may take in response to these actions and whether such actions, if any, will have an adverse effect on our business or results of operations.

### U.S. Department of Education

Title IV regulations applicable to the Universities have been subject to frequent revisions, many of which have increased the level of scrutiny to which higher education institutions are subjected and have raised applicable standards. In addition to those regulations discussed above, on October 30, 2015, the Department of Education published final regulations creating a new income-contingent repayment plan and implementing changes to streamline and enhance existing processes for borrowers. The regulations were effective July 1, 2016.

### Current Federal Rulemaking

On July 31, 2018, the Department announced its intention to establish a negotiated rulemaking committee to prepare proposed regulations for the Title IV programs. As described in the July 31 announcement and further detailed in a subsequent announcement on October 15, the Department indicated the proposed topics for negotiation include:

Requirements for accrediting agencies in their oversight of member institutions and programs.



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Criteria used by the Secretary to recognize accrediting agencies, emphasizing criteria that focus on educational quality and deemphasizing those that are anti-competitive.

Simplification of the Department's recognition and review of accrediting agencies.

Clarification of the core oversight responsibilities of each entity in the regulatory triad, including accrediting agencies, states, and the Department, to hold institutions accountable.

Clarification of the permissible arrangements between an institution of higher education and another organization to provide a portion of an education program (34 CFR 668.5).

The roles and responsibilities of institutions and accrediting agencies in the teach-out process (34 CFR 600.32(d) and 602.24).

Elimination of regulations related to programs that have not been funded in many years.

Needed technical changes and corrections to program regulations that have been identified by the Department.

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Regulatory changes required to ensure equitable treatment of brick-and-mortar and distance education programs; enable expansion of direct assessment programs, distance education, and competency-based education; and clarify disclosure and other requirements of state authorization.

Protections to require that accreditors recognize and respect institutional mission, and evaluate an institution's policies and educational programs based on that mission; and to remove barriers to the eligibility of faith-based entities to participate in the Title IV programs.

Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education ("TEACH") Grant requirements and ways to reduce and correct the inadvertent conversion of grants to loans.

The Department also announced its intention to convene three subcommittees: one addressing proposed regulations related to distance learning and educational innovation, one addressing TEACH Grant conversions, and one to make recommendations to the committee regarding revisions to the regulations regarding the eligibility of faith-based entities to participate in the Title IV programs. The distance learning and educational innovation subcommittee will address, among other topics, simplification of state authorization requirements, the definition of "regular and substantive interaction," the definition of the term "credit hour," direct assessment programs and competency-based education, and barriers to innovation in post-secondary education.

In connection with this negotiated rulemaking process, the Department convened three public hearings and accepted written comments through September 14, 2018. Negotiations began in January 2019 and are anticipated to run through April 2019. The Department intends to publish rules to be effective July 2020.

On November 29, 2018, the Department of Education published proposed rules related to implementation of Title IX, which would define what constitutes sexual harassment for purposes of Title IX in the administrative enforcement context, would describe what actions trigger an institution's obligation to respond to incidents of alleged sexual harassment, and would specify how an institution must respond to allegations of sexual harassment. The Department of Education accepted public comments through January 30, 2019. We cannot predict what final regulations will be adopted as a result of this rulemaking process.

## College Affordability and Transparency Lists

The Department of Education publishes on its website lists of the top 5% of institutions, in each of nine categories, with (1) the highest tuition and fees for the most recent academic year, (2) the highest "net price" for the most recent academic year, (3) the largest percentage increase in tuition and fees for the most recent three academic years, and (4) the largest percentage increase in net price for the most recent three academic years. An institution that is placed on a list for high percentage increases in either tuition and fees or in net price must submit a report to the Department of Education explaining the increases and the steps that it intends to take to reduce costs. The Department of Education

will report annually to Congress on these institutions and will publish their reports on its website. The Department of Education also posts lists of the top 10% of institutions in each of the nine categories with lowest tuition and fees or the lowest net price for the most recent academic year. Under the Higher Education Act, net price means average yearly price actually charged to first-time, full-time undergraduate students who receive student aid at a higher education institution after such aid is deducted.

#### College Scorecard

In September 2015, the Department of Education publicly released its “College Scorecard” website. Among other characteristics, the College Scorecard allows users to search for schools based upon programs offered, location, size, tax status, mission, and religious affiliation. In October 2017, the Department of Education announced that its Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System, or IPEDS, would publish for the first time completion data for part-time and non-first-time students, which will provide additional information about institutions’ performance. The Department of Education updates the data available on the College Scorecard on a periodic basis.

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### Executive Order on Military and Veterans Benefits Programs

In April 2012, President Obama issued an Executive Order directing the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, along with other Executive Branch agencies, to implement actions to establish “Principles of Excellence” to apply to educational institutions receiving funding from federal military and veterans educational benefits programs, including benefits programs provided by the Post-9/11 GI Bill and the military tuition assistance program. The Principles of Excellence relate broadly to information regarding tuition and fees, academic quality, marketing, and state authorization requirements. The Principles of Excellence require federal agencies to create a centralized complaint system for students receiving federal military and veterans educational benefits to register complaints that relevant agencies can track and address. On January 30, 2014, the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Education, and Federal Trade Commission (“FTC”), in collaboration with the CFPB and the U.S. Department of Justice, announced a new online student complaint system for service members, veterans, and their families to report negative experiences at education institutions and training programs administering the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Department of Defense tuition assistance programs, and other military-related education benefit programs.

### Additional Information

We maintain a website at [www.strategiceducation.com](http://www.strategiceducation.com). The information on our website is not incorporated by reference in this Annual Report on Form 10-K and our web address is included as an inactive textual reference only. We make available on our website our Annual Report on Form 10-K, Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q, Current Reports on Form 8-K, and amendments to those reports filed or furnished pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Exchange Act as soon as reasonably practicable after we electronically file such material with, or furnish it to, the SEC.

The SEC maintains a website that contains reports, proxy and information statements, and other information regarding issuers that file electronically with the SEC; the website address is [www.sec.gov](http://www.sec.gov).

### Item 1A. Risk Factors

Investing in our common stock involves a high degree of risk. You should carefully consider the following risk factors and all other information contained in this Annual Report on Form 10-K or in the documents incorporated by reference herein before making an investment decision. The occurrence of any of the following risks could materially harm our business, adversely affect the market price of our common stock and could cause you to suffer a partial or complete loss of your investment. Additional risks not presently known to us or that we currently deem immaterial may also materially harm our business and operations. See “Cautionary Notice Regarding Forward-Looking Statements.”

## Risks Related to Extensive Regulation of Our Business

If the Universities fail to comply with the extensive legal and regulatory requirements for higher education institutions, they could face significant monetary or other liabilities and penalties, including loss of access to federal student loans and grants for their students.

As providers of higher education, the Universities are subject to extensive laws and regulation on both the federal and state levels and by accrediting agencies. In particular, the Higher Education Act and related regulations subject Strayer University, Capella University, and all other higher education institutions that participate in the various Title IV programs to significant regulatory scrutiny.

The Higher Education Act mandates specific regulatory responsibilities for each of the following components of the higher education regulatory triad: (1) the federal government through the Department of Education; (2) the accrediting agencies recognized by the Secretary of Education; and (3) state education regulatory bodies.

In addition, other federal agencies such as the CFPB, Federal Trade Commission, and Federal Communications Commission and various state agencies and state attorneys general enforce consumer protection, calling and texting, marketing, privacy and data security, and other laws applicable to post-secondary educational institutions. Findings of

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noncompliance could result in monetary damages, fines, penalties, injunctions, or restrictions or obligations that could have a material adverse effect on our business. Some of these laws also include private rights of action.

The laws, regulations, standards, and policies applicable to our business frequently change, and changes in, or new interpretations of, applicable laws, regulations, standards, or policies could have a material adverse effect on our accreditation, authorization to operate in various states, permissible activities, ability to communicate with prospective students, receipt of funds under Title IV programs, or costs of doing business.

Title IV requirements are enforced by the Department of Education and, in some instances, by private plaintiffs. If the Universities are found not to be in compliance with these laws, regulations, standards, or policies, they could lose access to Title IV program funds, which would have a material adverse effect on the Company.

The Universities' failure to comply with the Department of Education's gainful employment regulations could result in heightened disclosure requirements and loss of Title IV eligibility for noncompliant programs.

To be eligible for Title IV funding, academic programs offered by proprietary institutions of higher education must prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation. On October 31, 2014, the Department of Education published the final regulations on gainful employment, which, with the exception of certain disclosure requirements, generally became effective July 1, 2015. The regulations include two debt-to-earnings measures, consisting of an annual income rate and a discretionary income rate. The annual income rate measures student debt in relation to earnings, and the discretionary income rate measures student debt in relation to discretionary income. A program passes if the program's graduates:

- Have an annual income rate that does not exceed 8%; or
  
- Have a discretionary income rate that does not exceed 20%.

A program that does not pass either of the debt-to-earnings metrics, and that has an annual income rate between 8% and 12% or a discretionary income rate between 20% and 30% is considered to be in a warning zone. A program fails if the program's graduates have an annual income rate of 12% or greater and a discretionary income rate of 30% or greater. A program would become Title IV-ineligible for three years if it failed both metrics for two out of three consecutive years or fails to pass at least one metric for four consecutive award years. The regulations provide a means by which an institution may challenge the Department of Education's calculation of any of the debt metrics prior to loss of its Title IV eligibility.

The requirements associated with the gainful employment regulations may substantially increase our administrative burdens and could affect our program offerings, student enrollment, persistence, and retention. Further, although the regulations provide opportunities for an institution to correct any potential deficiencies in a program prior to the loss of Title IV eligibility, the continuing eligibility of our academic programs will be affected by factors beyond management's control, such as changes in our graduates' employment and income levels, changes in student borrowing levels, increases in interest rates, and various other factors. Even if we were able to correct any deficiency in the gainful employment metrics in a timely manner, the disclosure requirements associated with a program's failure to meet at least one metric may adversely affect student enrollments in that program and the reputation of our institution.

On June 16, 2017, the Department of Education announced that it would convene a negotiated rulemaking committee to develop proposed regulations to revise the gainful employment regulations. The negotiated rulemaking committee convened in December 2017 and early 2018. On August 14, 2018, the Department published a notice of proposed rulemaking, which proposed rescinding the gainful employment regulations and updating the College Scorecard or a similar web-based tool to provide program-level outcomes for all higher education programs at all institutions that participate in the Title IV programs. Public comments were accepted through September 13, 2018, and the Department has indicated it is currently drafting final rules. We cannot predict what regulations will be ultimately adopted.

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Congressional examination of for-profit post-secondary education could lead to legislation or other governmental action that may negatively affect the industry.

Since 2010, Congress has increased its focus on for-profit higher education institutions, including regarding participation in Title IV programs and oversight by the Department of Defense of tuition assistance and by the Department of Veterans Affairs (“VA”) of veterans education benefits for military service members and veterans, respectively, attending for-profit colleges. The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions and other congressional committees have held hearings into, among other things, the proprietary education sector and its participation in Title IV programs, the standards and procedures of accrediting agencies, credit hours and program length, the portion of federal student financial aid going to proprietary institutions, and the receipt of military tuition assistance and veterans education benefits by students enrolled at proprietary institutions. Strayer University and Capella University have cooperated with these inquiries. A number of legislators have variously requested the Government Accountability Office to review and make recommendations regarding, among other things, recruitment practices, educational quality, student outcomes, the sufficiency of integrity safeguards against waste, fraud, and abuse in Title IV programs, and the percentage of proprietary institutions’ revenue coming from Title IV and other federal funding sources.

This activity may result in legislation, further rulemaking affecting participation in Title IV programs, and other governmental actions. In addition, concerns generated by congressional activity may adversely affect enrollment in, and revenues of, for-profit educational institutions. Limitations on the amount of federal student financial aid for which our students are eligible under Title IV could materially and adversely affect our business.

We are dependent on the renewal and maintenance of Title IV programs.

The Higher Education Act is subject to periodic reauthorization. Congress completed the most recent reauthorization through multiple pieces of legislation and may reauthorize the HEA in a piecemeal manner in the future. Additionally, Congress determines the funding level for each Title IV program on an annual basis. Any action by Congress that significantly reduces funding for Title IV programs or the ability of the Universities or their or students to participate in these programs could materially harm our business. A reduction in government funding levels could lead to lower enrollments at our school and require us to arrange for alternative sources of financial aid for our students. Lower student enrollments or our inability to arrange such alternative sources of funding could adversely affect our business.

In addition, the Universities’ ability to conduct their business, including obtaining necessary approvals from the Department of Education, may be affected by staffing levels at the Department and the volume of applications and other requests to the Department. If the Department lacks adequate personnel or the Department’s workload exceeds its capacity, action by the Department on requests by the Universities could be significantly delayed, and such delays could have a material adverse effect on the Universities and our business.



The Universities are subject to compliance reviews, which, if they resulted in a material finding of noncompliance, could affect their ability to participate in Title IV programs.

Because the Universities operate in a highly regulated industry, they are subject to compliance reviews and claims of noncompliance and related lawsuits by government agencies, accrediting agencies, and third parties, including claims brought by third parties on behalf of the federal government. For example, the Department of Education regularly conducts program reviews of educational institutions that are participating in Title IV programs, and the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Education regularly conducts audits and investigations of such institutions. The Department of Education could limit, suspend, or terminate our participation in Title IV programs or impose other penalties such as requiring the Universities to make refunds, pay liabilities, or pay an administrative fine upon a material finding of noncompliance.

In 2014, the Department of Education conducted four campus-based program reviews of Strayer University locations in three states and the District of Columbia. The reviews covered federal financial aid years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, and two of the reviews also covered compliance with the Clery Act, the Drug-Free Schools and

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Communities Act, and regulations related thereto. For three of the program reviews, we received correspondence from the Department of Education closing the program reviews with no further action required by us. For the other program review, the University received a Final Program Review Determination Letter closing the review and identifying a payment of less than \$500 due to the Department of Education based on an underpayment on a return to Title IV calculation. The University remitted payment, and received a letter from the Department on May 26, 2015, indicating that no further action was required and that the matter was closed. Future compliance reviews may not yield similar results and may have a materially negative affect on the Company. Capella University has not undergone a program review in several years.

On October 11, 2017, the Department and Strayer University executed a new Program Participation Agreement, approving Strayer University's continued participation in Title IV programs with full certification through June 30, 2021. On January 18, 2019, consistent with standard procedure upon a Title IV institution's change of ownership, the Department and Capella University executed a new Program Participation Agreement, approving Capella University's continued participation in Title IV programs with provisional certification through December 31, 2022.

If either of the Universities fails to maintain its institutional accreditation or if its institutional accrediting body loses recognition by the Department of Education, the University would lose its ability to participate in Title IV programs.

The loss of Strayer University's accreditation by Middle States or Middle States' loss of recognition by the Department of Education would render Strayer University ineligible to participate in Title IV programs and would have a material adverse effect on our business. Similarly, the loss of Capella University's accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission or the Higher Learning Commission's loss of recognition by the Department of Education would render Capella University ineligible to participate in Title IV programs and would have a material adverse effect on our business. In addition, an adverse action by Middle States or the Higher Learning Commission other than loss of accreditation, such as issuance of a warning, could have a material adverse effect on our business. In October 2018, the Department of Education announced that it would establish a negotiated rulemaking committee to prepare proposed regulations related to, among other topics, the Department's recognition of accrediting agencies and related institutional eligibility issues. The negotiated rulemaking committee convened in January 2019 for the first of several scheduled meetings. We cannot predict what related regulations the Department of Education will propose or ultimately adopt.

The Higher Education Act charges the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity ("NACIQI") with recommending to the Secretary of Education which accrediting or state approval agencies should be recognized as reliable authorities for judging the quality of post-secondary institutions and programs. In June 2017, NACIQI renewed its recognition of Middle States for six months and required Middle States to demonstrate compliance with certain requirements. NACIQI reviewed Middle States at its February 2018 meeting and recommended that the Secretary of Education extend its recognition for five years. NACIQI also reviewed the Higher Learning Commission at its February 2018 meeting and recommended that the Secretary of Education extend its recognition for five years. On September 22, 2016, the Department of Education rescinded its recognition of the Accreditation Council of Independent Colleges and Schools. Increased scrutiny of accreditors by the Secretary of Education in connection with the Department of Education's recognition process may result in increased scrutiny of institutions by accreditors or

have other adverse consequences.

If either of the Universities fails to maintain any of its state authorizations, the University would lose its ability to operate in that state and to participate in Title IV programs there.

Each Strayer University campus is authorized to operate and to grant degrees, diplomas, or certificates by the applicable education agency or agencies of the state where the campus is located. Such state authorization is required for students at the campus to participate in Title IV programs. The loss of state authorization would, among other things, limit Strayer University's ability to operate in that state, render Strayer University ineligible to participate in Title IV programs at least at those state campus locations, and could have a material adverse effect on our business.

Capella University is registered as a private institution with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education ("MOHE"), as required for most post-secondary private institutions that grant degrees at the associate level or above in Minnesota

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and as required by the Higher Education Act to participate in Title IV programs. The loss of state authorization would, among other things, limit Capella University's ability to operate in that state, render Capella University ineligible to participate in Title IV programs, and could have a material adverse effect on our business.

Effective July 1, 2011, Department of Education regulations provide that an institution is considered legally authorized by a state if the state has a process to review and appropriately act on complaints concerning the institution, including enforcing applicable state laws, and the institution complies with any applicable state approval or licensure requirements consistent with the new rules. If a state in which Strayer University or Capella University is located fails to comply in the future with the provisions of the new rule or fails to provide the University with legal authorization, it could limit the University's ability to operate in that state and to participate in Title IV programs at least for students in that state and could have a material adverse effect on our operations.

Strayer University and Capella University participate in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement ("SARA"), which allows the Universities to enroll students in distance education programs in each SARA member state. Each of the Universities applies separately to non-SARA member states (i.e., California) for authorization to enroll students, if such authorization is required by the state. If Strayer University or Capella University failed to comply with the requirements to participate in SARA or state licensing or authorization requirements to provide distance education in a non-SARA state, the University could lose its ability to participate in SARA or may be subject to the loss of state licensure or authorization to provide distance education in that non-SARA state, respectively.

On December 19, 2016, the Department of Education published final regulations addressing, among other issues, state authorization of programs offered through distance education. The final regulations, which were scheduled to be effective July 1, 2018, require an institution offering distance education programs to be authorized by each state in which the institution enrolls students (other than the state(s) in which the institution is physically located), if such authorization is required by the state, in order to award Title IV aid to such students. An institution could obtain such authorization directly from the state or (except in California) through a state authorization reciprocity agreement. Under those rules, if one of the Universities should fail to obtain or maintain required state authorization to provide post-secondary distance education in a specific state in which the institution is not physically located, the institution could lose its ability to provide distance education in that state and to award Title IV aid to online students in that state.

If either of the Universities fails to obtain recertification by the Department of Education when required, the Universities would lose their ability to participate in Title IV programs.

An institution generally must seek recertification from the Department of Education at least every six years and possibly more frequently depending on various factors, such as whether it is provisionally certified. The Department of Education may also review an institution's continued eligibility and certification to participate in Title IV programs, or scope of eligibility and certification, in the event the institution undergoes a change in ownership resulting in a change of control or expands its activities in certain ways, such as the addition of certain types of new programs, or, in

certain cases, changes to the academic credentials that it offers. In certain circumstances, the Department of Education must provisionally certify an institution. The Department of Education may withdraw either University's certification if the Department determines that the University is not fulfilling material requirements for continued participation in Title IV programs. If the Department of Education does not renew, or withdraws either University's certification to participate in Title IV programs, its students would no longer be able to receive Title IV program funds. Such a loss would have a material adverse effect on our business.

Each institution participating in Title IV programs must enter into a Program Participation Agreement with the Department of Education. Under the agreement, the institution agrees to follow the Department of Education's rules and regulations governing Title IV programs. On October 11, 2017, the Department and Strayer University executed a new Program Participation Agreement, approving Strayer University's continued participation in Title IV programs with full certification through June 30, 2021. On January 18, 2019, consistent with standard procedure upon a Title IV institution's change of ownership, the Department and Capella University executed a new Program Participation Agreement, approving Capella University's continued participation in Title IV programs with provisional certification through December 31, 2022.

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A failure to demonstrate financial responsibility or administrative capability may result in the loss of eligibility to participate in Title IV programs.

To be eligible to participate in Title IV programs, Strayer University and Capella University must comply with specific standards and procedures set forth in the Higher Education Act and the regulations issued thereunder by the Department of Education, including, among other things, certain standards of financial responsibility and administrative capability. If one of the Universities fails to demonstrate financial responsibility or maintain administrative capability under the Department of Education's regulations, the University could lose its eligibility to participate in Title IV programs or have that eligibility adversely conditioned. Such developments could have a material adverse effect on our business.

Student loan defaults could result in the loss of eligibility to participate in Title IV programs.

In general, under the Higher Education Act, an educational institution may lose its eligibility to participate in some or all Title IV programs if, for three consecutive federal fiscal years, 30% or more of its students who were required to begin repaying their student loans in the relevant federal fiscal year default on their payment by the end of the second federal fiscal year following that fiscal year. Institutions with a cohort default rate equal to or greater than 15% for any of the three most recent fiscal years for which data are available are subject to a 30-day delayed disbursement period for first-year, first-time borrowers. While its cohort default rate for 2015 was 10.6%, Strayer University voluntarily delays disbursement of Direct Loans in this manner. In addition, an institution may lose its eligibility to participate in some or all Title IV programs if its default rate for a federal fiscal year was greater than 40%.

If we lose eligibility to participate in Title IV programs because of high student loan default rates, it would have a material adverse effect on our business. Strayer University's three-year cohort default rates for federal fiscal years 2013, 2014 and 2015, were 11.3%, 13.2%, and 10.6%, respectively. Capella University's three-year cohort default rates for federal fiscal years 2013, 2014, and 2015 were 6.5%, 6.9%, and 6.5%, respectively. The average official cohort default rates for proprietary institutions nationally were 15.0%, 15.5%, and 15.6% for federal fiscal years 2013, 2014, and 2015, respectively.

Strayer University or Capella University could lose its eligibility to participate in federal student financial aid programs or be provisionally certified with respect to such participation if the percentage of its revenues derived from those programs were too high, or be restricted from enrolling students in certain states if the percentage of the University's revenues from federal or state programs were too high.

A proprietary institution may lose its eligibility to participate in the federal Title IV student financial aid program if it derives more than 90% of its revenues, on a cash basis, from Title IV programs for two consecutive fiscal years. A proprietary institution of higher education that violates the 90/10 Rule for any fiscal year will be placed on provisional

status for up to two fiscal years. Using the formula specified in the Higher Education Act, Strayer University derived approximately 76.0% of its cash-basis revenues from these programs in 2017. Capella University derived approximately 75.5% of its cash-basis revenues from Title IV program funds in 2017. Our Universities' computations for 2018 have not yet been finalized and audited; however, we believe each University will remain in compliance with the 90/10 Rule requirement. Certain members of Congress have proposed to revise the 90/10 Rule to count tuition assistance provided by the Department of Defense and veterans education benefits, along with Title IV revenue, toward the 90% limit and to reduce the limit to 85% of total revenue. Such proposals could make it difficult for the Universities to comply with the 90/10 rule. If one of the Universities were to violate the 90/10 Rule, the loss of eligibility to participate in the federal student financial aid programs would have a material adverse effect on our business. Certain states have also proposed legislation that would prohibit enrollment of their residents based on a state and federal funding threshold that is more restrictive than the federal 90/10 Rule. If such legislation were to be enacted, and the Universities were unable to meet the threshold, loss of eligibility to enroll students in certain states would have a material adverse effect on our business.

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The Universities' failure to comply with the Department of Education's incentive compensation rules could result in sanctions and other liability.

If one of the Universities pays a bonus, commission, or other incentive payment in violation of applicable Department of Education rules or if the Department of Education or other third parties interpret a University's compensation practices as noncompliant, the University could be subject to sanctions or other liability. Such penalties could have a material adverse effect on our business.

The Universities' failure to comply with the Department of Education's misrepresentation rules could result in sanctions and other liability.

The Higher Education Act prohibits an institution that participates in Title IV programs from engaging in "substantial misrepresentation" of the nature of its educational program, its financial charges, or the employability of its graduates. The Department of Education's regulations that took effect July 1, 2011, which are sometimes referred to as the program integrity regulations, interpret this provision to prohibit any statement on those topics made by the institution or a third party that provides educational programs, marketing, advertising, recruiting, or admissions services to the institution that has the likelihood or tendency to confuse. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia held on June 5, 2012, that the term "substantial misrepresentation" could not include true, nondeceitful statements that are merely confusing. Final regulations that, among other changes, expanded the definition of misrepresentation to include "any statement that has the likelihood or tendency to mislead under the circumstances" and "any statement that omits information in such a way as to make the statement false, erroneous, or misleading" were scheduled to take effect July 1, 2017. The Department of Education announced a series of delays to the implementation of the revised regulation until July 1, 2019, but following a judge's decision in related litigation, the revised regulations went into effect as of October 16, 2018.

In the event of substantial misrepresentation, the Department of Education may revoke an institution's program participation agreement, limit the institution's participation in Title IV programs, deny applications from the institution, such as to add new programs or locations, initiate proceedings to fine the institution or limit, suspend, or terminate its eligibility to participate in Title IV programs. If the Department of Education or other third parties interpret statements made by one of the Universities or on the University's behalf to be in violation of the new regulations, the University could be subject to sanctions and other liability, which could have a material adverse effect on our business.

The Universities' failure to comply with the Department of Education's credit hour rule could result in sanctions and other liability.



Effective July 1, 2011, Title IV regulations define the term “credit hour” and require accrediting agencies and state authorization agencies to review the reliability and accuracy of an institution’s credit hour assignments. If an accreditor does not comply with this requirement, its recognition by the Department of Education could be jeopardized. If an accreditor identifies systematic or significant noncompliance in one or more of an institution’s programs, the accreditor must notify the Secretary of Education. If the Department of Education determines that an institution is out of compliance with the credit hour definition, the Department of Education could impose liabilities or other sanctions. Such penalties could have a material adverse effect on our business.

The Universities’ failure to comply with the Clery Act or Title IX could result in sanctions and other liability.

Strayer University and Capella University must comply with the campus safety and security reporting requirements as well as other requirements in the Clery Act, including changes made to the Clery Act by the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013. On October 20, 2014, the Department of Education promulgated final regulations implementing amendments to the Clery Act. In addition, the Department of Education has interpreted Title IX to categorize sexual violence as a form of prohibited sex discrimination and to require institutions to follow certain disciplinary procedures with respect to such offenses. Failure to comply with the Clery Act or Title IX requirements or regulations thereunder could result in action by the Department of Education to require corrective action, fine the University, or limit or suspend its participation in Title IV programs, which could lead to litigation and could harm the University’s reputation.

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The Universities are subject to sanctions if they fail to calculate accurately and make timely payment of refunds of Title IV program funds for students who withdraw before completing their educational program.

The Higher Education Act and Department of Education regulations require the Universities to calculate refunds of unearned Title IV program funds disbursed to students who withdraw from their educational program before completing it. If refunds are not properly calculated or timely paid, the University may be required to post a letter of credit with the Department of Education or be subject to sanctions or other adverse actions by the Department of Education. Such consequences could have a material adverse effect on our business.

Investigations, legislative and regulatory developments, and general credit market conditions related to the student loan industry may result in fewer lenders and loan products and increased regulatory burdens and costs.

The Higher Education Act regulates relationships between lenders to students and post-secondary education institutions. In 2009, the Department of Education promulgated regulations that address these relationships, and state legislators have also passed or may be considering legislation related to relationships between lenders and institutions. In addition, new procedures introduced and recommendations made by the CFPB create uncertainty about whether Congress will impose new burdens on private student lenders. These developments, as well as legislative and regulatory changes, such as those relating to gainful employment and repayment rates, creating uncertainty in the industry and general credit market conditions, may cause some lenders to decide not to provide certain loan products and may impose increased administrative and regulatory costs. Such actions could reduce demand for, and/or availability of private education loans, decrease Strayer University's or Capella University's non-Title IV revenue, and thereby increase Strayer University's or Capella University's 90/10 ratio, and have a material adverse effect on our business.

We rely on one or more third parties for software and services necessary to administer the Universities' participation in Title IV programs and failure of such a third party to provide compliant software and services, or by us in our use of the software, could cause the Universities' to lose eligibility to participate in Title IV programs.

Because each of Strayer University and Capella University is jointly and severally liable to the Department of Education for the actions of third-party Title IV processing software providers, failure of such providers to comply with applicable regulations could have a material adverse effect on Strayer University or Capella University, including loss of eligibility to participate in Title IV programs. If any of the third-party providers discontinue providing software and services to one or both of the Universities, we may not be able to replace them in a timely, cost-efficient, or effective manner, or at all, and the Universities could lose their ability to comply with the requirements of Title IV programs. Such developments could adversely affect our enrollment, revenues, and results of operations.

Our business could be harmed if the Universities experience a disruption in their ability to process student loans under the Federal Direct Loan Program.

Each of Strayer University and Capella University collected the majority of its fiscal year 2018 total consolidated net revenue from receipt of Title IV financial aid program funds, principally from federal student loans under the Federal Direct Loan Program. Any processing disruptions by the Department of Education may affect our students' ability to obtain student loans on a timely basis. If either of the Universities experiences a disruption in its ability to process student loans through the Federal Direct Loan Program, either because of administrative challenges on the part of the University or the inability of the Department of Education to process the volume of direct loans on a timely basis, our business, financial condition, results of operations, and cash flows could be adversely and materially affected.

Our business could be harmed if Congress makes changes to the availability of Title IV funds.

Each of Strayer University and Capella University collected the majority of its fiscal year 2018 total consolidated net revenue from receipt of Title IV financial aid program funds, principally from federal student loans under the Federal Direct Loan Program. Changes in the availability of these funds or a reduction in the amount of funds disbursed may have a material adverse effect on our enrollment, financial condition, results of operations, and cash flows. Congress

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eliminated further federal direct subsidized loans for graduate and professional students as of July 1, 2012. On August 9, 2013, Congress passed legislation that ties interest rates on Title IV loans to the rate paid on U.S. Treasury bonds. Interest rates are set every July 1st for loans taken out from July 1st to June 30th of the following year. In July 2012 Congress reduced eligibility for Pell Grants from 18 semesters to 12 semesters. To date, these changes have not had a material impact on our business, but future changes in the availability of Title IV funds could affect students' ability to fund their education and thus may have a material adverse effect on our enrollment, financial condition, results of operations, and cash flows.

As enforcement of laws related to the accessibility of technology continues to evolve, information technology development costs and compliance risks could increase.

Strayer University's and Capella University's online education programs are made available to students through personal computers and other technological devices. For each of these programs, the curriculum makes use of a combination of graphics, pictures, videos, animations, sounds, and interactive content. Federal agencies, including the Department of Education and the Department of Justice, have considered or are considering how electronic and information technology should be made accessible to persons with disabilities. For example, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or Section 504, prohibits discrimination against a person with a disability by any organization that receives federal financial assistance. The Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), prohibits discrimination based on disability in several areas, including public accommodations. In 2010, the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, which enforces Section 504, together with the Department of Justice, which enforces the ADA, asserted that requiring the use of technology in a classroom environment when such technology is inaccessible to individuals with disabilities violates Section 504, unless those individuals are provided accommodations or modifications that permit them to receive all the educational benefits provided by the technology in an equally effective and integrated manner. If Strayer University or Capella University is found to have violated Section 504, it may be required to modify existing content and functionality of its online classroom or other uses of technology, including through adoption of specific technical standards. As a result of such enforcement action, or as a result of new laws and regulations that require greater accessibility, Strayer University or Capella University may have to modify its online classrooms and other uses of technology to satisfy applicable requirements at potentially substantial cost. As with all nondiscrimination laws that apply to recipients of federal financial assistance, an institution may lose access to certain federal financial assistance if it does not comply with Section 504 requirements. In addition, private parties may file or threaten to file lawsuits alleging failure to comply with laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, such as Section 504 and the ADA, and defending against such actions may require Strayer University or Capella University to incur costs to modify its online classrooms and other uses of technology and costs of litigation.

## Risks Related to Our Business

Our enrollment rate is uncertain, and we may not be able to assess our future enrollments effectively.

Our ability to grow enrollment depends on a number of factors, including macroeconomic factors like unemployment and the resulting lower confidence in job prospects, and many of the regulatory risks discussed above. Our enrollment in 2019 will be affected by legislative uncertainty, regulatory activity, and macroeconomic conditions. It is likely that legislative, regulatory, and economic uncertainties will continue for the foreseeable future, and thus it is difficult to assess our long-term growth prospects. Since 2013, we have selectively closed physical locations of Strayer University to align our resources in keeping with the increasing preference of our current students for online course delivery. Although we plan to invest selectively in new campus facilities, and to pursue other growth opportunities in the future, there can be no assurance as to what our growth rate will be or as to the steps we may need to take to adapt to the changing regulatory, legislative, and economic conditions.

Adding new locations, programs, and services is dependent on our forecast of the demand for those locations, programs, and services and on regulatory approvals.

Adding new locations, programs, and services require us to expend significant resources, including making human capital and financial capital investments, incurring marketing expenses, and reallocating other resources. To open a new location, we are required to obtain appropriate federal, state, and accrediting agency approvals, which may be

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conditioned or delayed in a manner that could significantly affect our growth plans. We cannot assure investors that we will open new locations or add new programs or services in the future.

Our future success depends in part upon our ability to recruit and retain key personnel.

Our success to date has been, and our continuing success will be, substantially dependent upon our ability to attract and retain highly qualified executive officers, faculty, administrators, and other key personnel. If we cease to employ any of these integral personnel or fail to manage a smooth transition to new personnel, our business could suffer.

Our success depends in part on our ability to update and expand the content of existing academic programs and develop new programs in a cost-effective manner and on a timely basis.

Our success depends in part on our ability to update and expand the content of our academic programs, develop new programs in a cost-effective manner, and meet students' needs in a timely manner. Prospective employers of our graduates increasingly demand that their entry-level employees possess appropriate technological and other skills. The update and expansion of our existing programs and the development of new programs may not be received favorably by students, prospective employers, or the online education market. If we cannot respond to changes in industry requirements, our business may be adversely affected. Even if we are able to develop acceptable new programs, we may not be able to introduce these new programs at all, or as quickly as students require, due to regulatory constraints or as quickly as our competitors introduce competing new programs.

Our financial performance depends in part on our ability to continue to increase awareness of the academic programs we offer among working adult students.

Awareness of the academic programs we offer among working adult students is critical to the continued acceptance and growth of our programs. Our inability to increase awareness of the programs we offer through effective marketing and advertising could limit our enrollments and negatively affect our business. The following are some of the factors that could prevent us from successfully marketing our programs:

- the emergence of more successful competitors;
- customer dissatisfaction with our services and programs;
- performance problems with our online systems; and
- our failure to maintain or expand our brand or other factors related to our marketing.

Congressional and other governmental activities could damage the reputation of Strayer University or Capella University and limit our ability to attract and retain students.

In recent years, Congress increased its focus on proprietary educational institutions, including administration of Title IV programs, military tuition assistance, veterans education benefits, and other federal programs. During the prior Administration, the Department of Education indicated to Congress that it intended to increase its regulation of and attention to proprietary educational institutions, and the Government Accountability Office released several reports of investigations into proprietary educational institutions. State Attorneys General have also undertaken extensive investigations of proprietary educational institutions. These and other governmental activities, including new regulations on program integrity and gainful employment, even if resulting in no adverse findings or actions against Strayer University or Capella University, singly or cumulatively could affect public perception of proprietary higher education, damage the reputation of Strayer University or Capella University, and limit our ability to attract and retain students.

We face strong competition in the post-secondary education market.

Post-secondary education in the United States is highly competitive. We compete with traditional public and private two-year and four-year colleges, other for-profit schools, and alternatives to higher education, such as employment and military service. Public colleges may offer programs similar to those of our Universities at a lower tuition level as a result of government subsidies, government and foundation grants, tax-deductible contributions, and other financial sources not available to proprietary institutions. Some of our competitors in both the public and private sectors have

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substantially greater financial and other resources than we do. Congress, the Department of Education, and other agencies have required increasing disclosure of information to consumers. While we believe that our Universities provide valuable education to their students, we may not always accurately predict the drivers of a student or potential students' decisions to choose among the range of educational and other options available to them. This strong competition could adversely affect our business.

The Company relies on exclusive proprietary rights and intellectual property, and competitors may attempt to duplicate our programs and methods.

Third parties may attempt to develop competing programs or duplicate or copy aspects of our curriculum, online library, quality management, and other proprietary content. Any such attempt, if successful, could adversely affect our business. In the ordinary course of business, we develop intellectual property of many kinds that is or will be the subject of copyright, trademark, service mark, patent, trade secret, or other protections. Such intellectual property includes, but is not limited to, courseware materials for classes taught online and on-ground, and business know-how and internal processes and procedures developed to respond to the requirements of its various education regulatory agencies.

Seasonal and other fluctuations in our operating results could adversely affect the trading price of our common stock.

Our business is subject to seasonal fluctuations, which cause our operating results to fluctuate from quarter to quarter. This fluctuation may result in volatility or have an adverse effect on the market price of our common stock. We experience, and expect to continue to experience, seasonal fluctuations in our revenue. Historically, our quarterly revenues and income have been lowest in the third quarter (July through September) because fewer students are enrolled during the summer months. We also incur significant expenses in the third quarter in preparing for our peak enrollment in the fourth quarter (October through December), including investing in online and campus infrastructure necessary to support increased usage. These investments result in fluctuations in our operating results which could result in volatility or have an adverse effect on the market price of our common stock. In addition, the online education market is a rapidly evolving market, and we may not be able to accurately forecast future enrollment growth and revenues.

Regulatory requirements may make it more difficult to acquire us.

A change in ownership resulting in a change of control of Strayer University or Capella University would trigger a requirement for recertification of the University by the Department of Education for purposes of participation in federal student financial aid programs, a review of the University's accreditation by its institutional accrediting agency, and reauthorization of the University by certain state licensing and other regulatory agencies. If we or one of the Universities underwent a change of control that required approval by any state authority, any institutional accrediting



agency, or any federal agency, and any required regulatory approval were significantly delayed, limited, or denied, there could be a material adverse effect on our ability to offer certain educational programs, award certain degrees, diplomas, or certificates, operate one or more of our locations, admit certain students or participate in Title IV programs, which in turn, could have a material adverse effect on our business. These factors may discourage takeover attempts.

Capacity constraints or system disruptions to a University's computer networks could damage the reputation of the institutions and limit our ability to attract and retain students.

The performance and reliability of our Universities' computer networks, especially the online educational platform, is critical to our reputation and ability to attract and retain students. Any system error or failure, or a sudden and significant increase in traffic, could result in the unavailability of the University's computer networks. We cannot assure you that the Universities, including their online educational platforms, will be able to expand their program infrastructure on a timely basis sufficient to meet demand for their programs. The Universities' computer systems and operations could be vulnerable to interruption or malfunction due to events beyond their control, including natural disasters and telecommunications failures. Any interruption to the Universities' computer systems or operations could have a material adverse effect on our ability to attract and retain students.

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The Company's computer networks may be vulnerable to security risks that could disrupt operations and require them to expend significant resources.

The Company's computer networks may be vulnerable to unauthorized access, computer hackers, computer viruses, and other security problems. A user who circumvents security measures could misappropriate proprietary information or cause interruptions or malfunctions in operations. As a result, the Universities may be required to expend significant resources to protect against the threat of these security breaches or to alleviate problems caused by these breaches.

The personal information that the Universities collect is subject to privacy and data security laws and may be vulnerable to breach, theft, or loss that could adversely affect our reputation and operations.

Possession and use of personal information in our operations subject us to risks and costs that could harm our business. The Universities collect, use, and retain large amounts of personal information regarding their students and their families, including social security numbers, tax return information, personal and family financial data, and credit card numbers. We also collect and maintain personal information of our employees in the ordinary course of our business. Some of this personal information is held and managed by certain vendors. Although we use security and business controls to limit access to and use of personal information, a third party may be able to circumvent those security and business controls, potentially resulting in a breach of student or employee privacy. In addition, errors in the storage, use, or transmission of personal information could result in a breach of student or employee privacy. Possession and use of personal information in our operations also subjects us to various U.S. state and federal legislative and regulatory burdens that could, among other things, require notification of data breaches and restrict our use of personal information. The risk of hacking and cyber-attacks has increased, as has the sophistication of such attacks, including email phishing schemes targeting employees to give up their credentials. We cannot assure you that a breach, loss, or theft of personal information will not occur. A breach, theft, or loss of personal information regarding our students and their families or our employees that is held by us or our vendors could have a material adverse effect on our reputation and results of operations and result in liability under U.S. state and federal privacy statutes and legal actions by state authorities and private litigants, any of which could have a material adverse effect on our business. Moreover, certain of our operations may involve the collection of personal information from individuals outside the U.S., which may render us subject to global privacy and data security laws. For example, the European Union General Data Protection Regulation ("GDPR"), which came into effect May 25, 2018, contains a number of requirements that are different from or exceed those in U.S. state and federal privacy and data security laws. The GDPR may apply to certain of our operations. Were it to apply and if we were out of compliance, there is the potential for administrative, civil, or criminal liability with significant monetary penalties as well as reputational harm to the Universities and their employees.

Failure to maintain adequate processes to prevent and detect fraudulent activity related to student online enrollment or financial aid could adversely affect the Universities' operations.

Our online environment is susceptible to an increased risk of fraudulent activity by outside parties with respect to the student online learning platform and student financial aid programs. While we have been able to detect past incidents of fraudulent activity, which have been isolated, and we have increased our internal capabilities to prevent and detect possible fraudulent activity, we cannot be certain that our systems and processes will continue to be adequate with increasingly sophisticated external fraud schemes. The Department of Education requires institutions that participate in Title IV programs to refer to the Office of the Inspector General any credible information related to fraudulent activity. If we do not maintain adequate systems to prevent and deter such fraudulent activity, the Department of Education may find a lack of “administrative capability” and could limit our access to Title IV funding.

Strayer University and Capella University, with their online programs, operate in a highly competitive market with rapid technological changes and they may not compete successfully.

Online education is a highly fragmented and competitive market that is subject to rapid technological change. Competitors vary in size and organization from traditional colleges and universities, many of which have some form of online education programs, to for-profit schools, corporate universities, and software companies providing online education and training software. We expect the online education and training market to be subject to rapid changes in technologies. The Universities’ success will depend on their ability to adapt to these changing technologies.

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Combining SEI and Capella Education Company may be more difficult, costly or time consuming than expected, and the combined company may not realize all of the anticipated benefits of the merger.

The success of the Company will depend on, among other things, our ability to combine the businesses of SEI and CEC in a manner that does not materially disrupt the existing student relationships of either SEI or CEC or adversely affect current revenues and investments in future growth. Additionally, the Company may not be able to successfully achieve the level of cost savings, revenue enhancements and synergies that it expects. If the Company is not able to successfully achieve these objectives, the anticipated benefits of the Merger may not be realized fully or at all or may take longer to realize than expected.

The goodwill and indefinite-lived intangible assets recorded in connection with the Merger could become impaired in the future.

Accounting standards in the United States require that one party to the merger be identified as the acquirer. In accordance with these standards, the Merger was accounted for as an acquisition of CEC common stock by the Company and followed the acquisition method of accounting for business combinations. The Company's assets and liabilities were consolidated with those of CEC on our financial statements. The excess of the purchase price over the fair value of CEC's assets and liabilities were recorded as goodwill.

We will be required to assess goodwill and indefinite-lived intangible assets for impairment at least annually. To the extent goodwill or indefinite-lived intangible assets become impaired, we may be required to incur material charges relating to such impairment. Such a potential impairment charge could have a material impact on future operating results and statements of financial position of the Company.

Item 1B. Unresolved Staff Comments

There are no SEC staff comments on our periodic SEC reports which are unresolved.

Item 2. Properties

Except for five campus facilities which we own, our Strayer University and Capella University campus and administrative facilities are leased. The Company's corporate headquarters is located at 2303 Dulles Station Blvd., Herndon, VA 20171. Our primary location in Minneapolis, also the headquarters for Capella University, is located at 225 South 6th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402. The headquarters and main campus of Strayer University is located at 1133 15th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Our leases generally range from five to ten years with one to two renewal options for extended terms. As of December 31, 2018, Strayer University and Capella University leased 81 campus and administrative facilities consisting of approximately 1.5 million square feet. The facilities that we own consist of approximately 110,000 square feet.

DevMountain occupies a total of approximately 40,300 square feet of office and classroom space in Provo, UT, Salt Lake City, UT, Phoenix, AZ, and Dallas, TX. Additionally, DevMountain recently entered into a short-term sublease for approximately 12,600 square feet of space in Lehi, UT. DevMountain also leases related residential space in these same cities. Hackbright occupies its primary office and classroom space of approximately 9,600 square feet in San Francisco, CA. NYCDA is party to certain real estate leases for small amounts of space, including approximately 5,500 square feet in Manhattan, N.Y. for its corporate offices and classroom space.

As announced in October 2013, we closed 20 Strayer University physical locations, predominantly in the Midwest. We subleased or terminated arrangements on most of this space, and to date, approximately 41,000 square feet remains vacant, with remaining lease obligations ranging from six months to five years. We continuously evaluate various options to address unused facility space including sublets, both short-term and long-term, and lease buyouts. In 2018, we reduced our leased facility footprint by approximately 151,000 square feet, primarily by reducing the size of existing campuses at the time of lease renewal.

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We evaluate current utilization of our facilities and anticipated enrollment to determine facility needs. In 2019, we plan to open six to eight new Strayer University campus locations. The first new Strayer University campuses will open in Mobile, AL and Fort Worth, TX. New Strayer University campuses will incorporate a new smaller cost-efficient design intended to service a student body that values a brick and mortar presence, even while taking an increasing number of their courses online. Additionally, Capella University plans to open two new brick and mortar locations in Atlanta, GA and Orlando, FL in 2019.

For more information regarding our ongoing lease commitments, see Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements below.

Item 3. Legal Proceedings

From time to time, the Company is involved in litigation and other legal proceedings arising out of the ordinary course of its business. There are no material pending legal proceedings, other than routine litigation incidental to the business, to which we are subject or to which our property is subject.

Item 4. Mine Safety Disclosures

Not applicable.

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PART II

Item 5. Market for Registrant’s Common Equity, Related Stockholder Matters and Issuer Purchases of Equity Securities

Our common stock is traded on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol “STRA.” As of February 1, 2019, there were 21,745,913 shares of common stock outstanding, and approximately 78 holders of record.

In 2017, our Board of Directors approved a quarterly dividend payment of \$0.25 per common share. Our Board of Directors approved a quarterly dividend payment of \$0.25 per common share in the first and second quarters of 2018 and a quarterly dividend payment of \$0.50 per common share in the third and fourth quarters of 2018. Whether to declare dividends and the amount of dividends to be paid in the future will be reviewed periodically by our Board of Directors in light of our earnings, cash flow, financial condition, capital needs, investment opportunities, and regulatory considerations. There is no requirement or assurance that common dividends will be paid in the future.

Peer Group Performance Graph

The following performance graph compares the cumulative stockholder return on our common stock since December 31, 2013 with The NASDAQ Stock Market (U.S.) Index and a self-determined peer group consisting of Adtalem Global Education, Inc. (ATGE), American Public Education, Inc. (APEI), Bridgepoint Education, Inc. (BPI), Career Education Corporation (CECO), Chegg, Inc. (CHGG), Grand Canyon Education, Inc. (LOPE), K12 Inc. (LRN), Laureate Education, Inc. (LAUR), and Universal Technical Institute, Inc. (UTI). The peer group no longer includes Apollo Education Group, Inc., Capella Education Company, or Lincoln Educational Services Corporation. DeVry Education Group is still included in the peer group but under its new name Adtalem Global Education, Inc. At present, there is no comparative index for the education industry. This graph is not deemed to be “soliciting material” or to be filed with the SEC or subject to the SEC’s proxy rules or to the liabilities of Section 18 of the Securities Exchange Act, and the graph shall not be deemed to be incorporated by reference into any of our prior or subsequent filings under the Securities Act or the Securities Exchange Act.

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Comparison of 60 Month Cumulative Total Return\*

Among Strategic Education, Inc.

The NASDAQ Stock Market (U.S.) Index and a Peer Group

Name	12/31/13	12/31/14	12/31/15	12/31/16	12/31/17	12/31/18
Strategic Education, Inc.	100	215	174	234	260	329
NASDAQ Stock Market (U.S.)	100	113	120	129	165	159
Peer Group	100	96	67	95	124	149

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\*The comparison assumes \$100 was invested on December 31, 2013 in our common stock, the NASDAQ Stock Market (U.S.) Index, and the peer companies selected by us.

There were no sales by us of unregistered securities during the year ended December 31, 2018.

Stock Repurchase Program

In November 2003, our Board of Directors authorized us to repurchase shares of common stock in open market purchases from time to time at the discretion of our management, depending on market conditions and other corporate considerations. Our Board of Directors amended the program on various dates, increasing the repurchase amount authorized and extending the expiration date. At December 31, 2018, \$70.0 million of our share repurchase authorization was remaining for repurchases through the end of 2019. All of our share repurchases have been effected in compliance with Rule 10b-18 under the Exchange Act. Some repurchases have been made in accordance with a share repurchase plan adopted by us under Rule 10b5-1 under the Exchange Act. Our share repurchase program may be modified, suspended, or terminated at any time by us without notice.



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A summary of our share repurchases since the inception of the plan is as follows:

	Total number of shares repurchased	Average dollar price paid per share	Cost of share repurchases (millions)
2003	32,350	\$ 99.57	\$ 3.2
2004	346,444	106.13	36.8
2005	410,071	92.59	38.0
2006	349,066	100.39	35.0
2007	260,818	146.05	38.1
2008	603,382	180.86	109.1
2009	451,613	177.34	80.1
2010	687,340	168.06	115.5
2011	1,581,444	128.15	202.7
2012	484,841	51.56	25.0
2013	495,085	50.49	25.0
2014	—	—	—
2015	—	—	—
2016	—	—	—
2017	—	—	—
2018	—	—	—
Total	5,702,454	\$ 124.24	\$ 708.5

We did not make any share repurchases in 2014 through 2018.

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## Item 6. Selected Financial Data

The following table sets forth, for the periods and at the dates indicated, selected consolidated financial and operating data. The financial information has been derived from our consolidated financial statements. Our results of operations for the year ended December 31, 2018 include the results of CEC from the merger date, and prior periods do not include the financial results of CEC prior to the merger date. The information set forth below is qualified by reference to and should be read in conjunction with our consolidated financial statements and notes thereto and “Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations” and other information included elsewhere or incorporated by reference in this Annual Report on Form 10-K.

	Year Ended December 31,				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	(Dollar and share amounts in thousands, except per share data)				
<b>Income Statement Data:</b>					
Revenues	\$ 446,041	\$ 434,437	\$ 441,088	\$ 454,851	\$ 634,185
Costs and expenses:					
Instruction and educational support	240,441	234,145	242,099	249,939	340,076
Marketing	66,495	70,084	79,025	82,540	136,979
Admissions advisory	16,661	16,304	17,832	19,004	31,466
General and administration	44,835	44,647	47,873	46,792	57,056
Amortization of intangible assets	—	—	—	—	25,694
Merger costs	—	—	—	11,879	45,745
Fair value adjustments and impairment of intangible assets	(4,138)	(441)			