

Assurance Argument

University of Akron

12/22/2016

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Argument

The mission of The University of Akron (UA) is clearly articulated in the Ohio Revised Code, chapter 3359-20-01, "Institutional mission and goals, affirmative action statement," which states "The University of Akron, a publicly assisted metropolitan institution, strives to develop enlightened members of society. It offers comprehensive programs of instruction from associate through doctoral levels; pursues a vigorous agenda of research in the arts, sciences, and professions; and provides service to the community. The university pursues excellence in undergraduate education and distinction in selected areas of graduate instruction, inquiry, and creative activity."

The formal mission statement, mission, and goals embodied in this rule have not been altered significantly for at least twenty years. As explained below in section 1.B, the interpretation of this mission has evolved over the years through a series of strategic plans intended to address the changing climate in higher education. The latest strategic plan, Vision 2020: Towards 150 Years of Distinction & a New Gold Standard of University Performance, was adopted in 2012. Shortly after assuming the duties as President in 2014, Scott Scarborough began the process of updating the University's strategic plan to better address the challenges and opportunities that have emerged since Vision 2020 was conceived. That process led to considerable discussion and debate among University stakeholders and was put on hold after the installation of the interim President in July 2016, when it became clear that there was a need to immediately address the fiscal impacts of an ongoing enrollment decline before engaging in mission-related discussions.

A new process to update that University strategic plan now needs to be put in place, an activity that will involve all stakeholders of the institution in Spring 2017. The outcomes that emerge upon the completion of this process will inform how and if the University mission statement needs to be revised and this will be followed by formal adoption through our governance processes.

The University's programs include more than three hundred undergraduate and graduate programs. With a vigorous agenda of teaching, research and service in the arts, sciences, and professions, the University is well positioned with a variety of comprehensive programs that benefit the region and beyond. The University of Akron recently received external acknowledgments of some of its

academic programs which exemplify our mission, including but not limited to:

- UA has the No. 2 Counseling Psychology Ph.D. program in the U.S. based on passage rates on the Examination for Proficiency in Professional Psychology.
- Only two percent of business schools worldwide have dual AACSB accreditation in business and accounting and UA's College of Business Administration is one of them.
- The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) has ranked the undergraduate secondary teacher preparation program at UA in the top 14 percent nationally.
- The College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering is home to the world's largest polymer academic program and greatest concentration of polymer expertise — helping to establish Northeast Ohio as an advanced functional materials hub that competes on the world stage in the development and commercialization of materials for many industries.
- The UA Industrial/Organizational Psychology program has been ranked among the nation's top ten by many different ranking systems for over twenty years.
- UA's College of Engineering student design teams consistently rank highly in national and international competitions.
- Students graduating from UA's School of Law and taking the bar exam perform very well vs. peer institutions in the State, and "Above the Law" magazine ranked Akron's Law School #50 in the nation for 2015.

Evidence of the focus on service to the community and positively impacting the region, UA has an active UA Solutions – Advanced Professional Development and Training Center that includes noncredit and certification courses and a wide variety of online courses for career development, certification, personal enrichment, and recertification credits. Customized on-site training for employees is also available. Hundreds of classroom and online training sessions are presented each semester and many offerings are approved by professional, national and state organizations for certificate and license recertification. Other areas of community involvement are described in the argument for Core Component 1D.

The Akron Experience is a distinctive approach of combining academic and experiential learning that helps students understand the combined power of culture and knowledge to advance society and the economy. An integral part of that initiative is the Division of Student Success, an umbrella administrative unit comprised of divisions that engage all students in educational, academic support programming and activities to meet student developmental needs throughout their college experience.

Many more departments, initiatives, and events are in place to promote student success, including the Center for Academic Advising and Student Success, Office of Accessibility, Counseling and Testing Center, Learning Communities, New Student Orientation, The Office of the University Registrar, Tutoring Services, and ZipAssist. In addition, several offices support student affairs, including Residence Life and Housing, Off-Campus Living, Student Conduct and Community Standards, Student Life, Student Recreation and Wellness, and Student Health Services. As described further in Section 1C, Inclusive Excellence is an integral part of the Akron Experience and includes Academic Achievement Programs including Educational Talent Search (ETS), Strive Toward Excellence Program (STEP), Upward Bound Classic (UB), Upward Bound Math/Science (UBMS), and a Pre-Engineering Program (PREP).

Through curricular, co-curricular, and experiential learning, students will become “citizens of the world” who are prepared by their Akron Experience to understand and address societal needs. Recently, the EX[L] Experiential Learning Center for Entrepreneurship and Civic Engagement was established with a core mission of promoting Experiential Learning for University of Akron students. This core mission has two distinct foci: Academic Civic Engagement and Entrepreneurship. Its primary goals are: (1) to support, expand, and create new, credit-bearing, experiential learning programs and opportunities for all UA students and (2) to build the Center outward into the community as the primary interface between the university campus and business and non-profit partners that surround it.

This initiative supplements many other programs with significant experiential learning components, such as:

- College of Engineering Co-ops
- School of Law
- School of Sport Science and Wellness Education
- Department of Engineering and Science Technology
- The Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics
- College of Business Administration - Leadership Experience Project
- School of Nursing
- Creative Writing (NEOMFA)
- School of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology

Overall, measurement of success of the above includes improved job placement/graduate school rates, retention, persistence and graduation rates, student satisfaction and engagement scores, increased diversity and participation of students in global programs and service learning experiences, as the evidence links for the above indicate.

The University’s enrollment profile flows from the mission of the institution, which is defined as a metropolitan university serving the community, region and beyond. Students enter the University across a spectrum of academic preparation, from associate degrees to baccalaureate degrees of varying competitiveness, to world-ranked graduate programs. Certificates are also offered for a variety of areas to enrich academic degrees or provide assistance to workforce development skills. Many of UA’s students attend part-time and/or are adults. The adult student population is expected to continue to grow based on local demographics, and the University has emphasized flexibility as it expands support services, evening and weekend courses, veteran services, and online courses and programs. A significant recent gift from The Bernard Osher Foundation supports UA's Adult Focus program.

With the goal of achieving transparent and inclusive involvement in setting planning and budgeting priorities consistent with the broad-based mission of the University, the University Council has been instituted over recent years. In August 2016, the Board of Trustees formally approved the University Council Bylaws. The Council is the representative and legislative body of the University that deliberates and makes recommendations to the President on matters such as strategic planning, university policy, and other substantive issues that pertain to the strategic direction and operation of the University. The Budget and Finance Committee of the University Council is responsible for studying, monitoring and making recommendations to University Council on the development of all university budget, finance and purchasing policies and resource allocations in collaboration with staff, contract professionals and faculty in appropriate departments. Membership on all University Council committees include representatives from all constituencies within the University, including representatives of the Faculty Senate.

During the 2014-15 Academic Year, the fiscal problems required budget reductions and these reductions fell heaviest in the non-academic areas so as to minimize the impact on the academic programs and the quality of services delivered. In a July 2016 address to the University, Interim President Matthew Wilson described the current financial difficulties, identified five priority areas, and invited all members of the university community to offer their ideas on how best to address our challenges.

This input was used by the "tiger team" in summer 2016 in preparing its Recommendations & Reports, which were then forwarded by the Interim President to the various governing bodies (Faculty Senate, University Council, Council of Deans, etc.) to consider and enact these recommendations, where feasible. At the same time the accounting firm of Ernst & Young was engaged – at no cost to UA – to work with the Administration, the University Council Budget and Finance Committee, and other groups across campus to conduct an independent assessment of our financial situation and help the entire campus community develop a common understanding of the impact it has on our budget. Ernst & Young was expected to complete its report before the end of the Fall 2016 semester, which occurred on November 21, 2016. Beyond this, aggressive efforts to identify cost savings and broaden and diversify revenue sources are necessary to ensure fiscal viability and allow strategic investment in innovative opportunities. A stronger financial portfolio will increase affordability for students. An example of a recent cost-saving move is the privatization of dining services in 2015.

Sources

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- 1_Student Health Services home page The University of Akron_p2
- 1A_3359-20-01 Mission Statement
- 1A1_Business School Rankings-Accreditation
- 1A1_The Story of The Akron Experience
- 1A1_Academic Achievement Programs
- 1A1_Adult Focus Program
- 1A1_Advanced Professional Development and Training Center
- 1A1_Akron Law - Listed in top 50 Law Schools
- 1A1_Bernard Osher Foundation Gift for Adult Focus program
- 1A1_Center for Academic Advising and Student Success
- 1A1_College of Engineering Cooperative Education
- 1A1_Counseling and Testing Center
- 1A1_Creative Writing
- 1A1_Educational Talent Search
- 1A1_Engineering and Science Technology
- 1A1_Experiential Learning at Akron Law
- 1A1_Flexible Programs that fit your Schedule
- 1A1_Industrial-Organizational Psychology

- 1A1_Leadership Experience Project
- 1A1_Learning Communities
- 1A1_New Student Orientation
- 1A1_Off-campus Housing
- 1A1_Office of Accessibility
- 1A1_Office of the University Registrar
- 1A1_Part-time Enrollment
- 1A1_PhD in Counseling Psychology - Top PhD PsyD Programs Online CounselingPsycholPp2
- 1A1_Pre-Engineering Program
- 1A1_Ray C. Bliss Internship Program
- 1A1_Residence Life and Housing
- 1A1_School of Nursing
- 1A1_Sport Science and Wellness Education
- 1A1_Strive Toward Excellence Program
- 1A1_Student Conduct and Community Standards
- 1A1_Student Life
- 1A1_Student Recreation and Wellness
- 1A1_Teacher Prep Review 2014
- 1A1_Tutoring Services
- 1A1_Upward Bound Classic
- 1A1_Upward Bound Math and Science
- 1A1_Zip Assist
- 1A2_Budget and Finance Committee
- 1A2_Ernst & Young Report
- 1A2_President Address to the University -July 2016
- 1A2_Privatization of Dining Services
- 1A2University Council
- 1D1_EXL Center
- 5B2_Tiger Team formed - June 6
- 5B2_Tiger Team Recommendations and Report

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Argument

The Board of Trustee rule regarding UA's mission is available via the UA website. The mission is expanded upon and clarified by our policies and procedures found in other rules and documents. Until recently, the campus regarded our last comprehensive strategic plan, Vision 2020, as an aspirational expression of the Board rule which was never fully implemented.

In July 2014, the University hired Scott Scarborough as the sixteenth President of the University of Akron. President Scarborough directed the attention of campus toward the formulation of strategic plans for individual units, which were to be combined into strategic plans for larger units, such as Colleges, through mediation and revision performed by administrators of those units. He proposed a ground-up strategic planning process. A collection of strategic plans were brought together by 2016, but as the process unfolded, dissatisfaction grew, especially among faculty and chairs, with the transparency and effectiveness of the process.

In the spring of 2015, President Scarborough convened a multi-part "Vision 2020 Summit" in Infocision Stadium. Individuals were invited from shared governance bodies such as the Faculty Senate, University Council, and student government; from the administration and academic support units; and from the community. The purpose of the Summit was to determine whether or not the University's current strategic plan needed to be revised or discarded and replaced. On February 13 and February 27, President Scarborough presented hour-long slide shows describing the current financial and political context for regional public universities and for UA in particular. Building on details of this argument, President Scarborough outlined his vision for the future of the University as what would come to be known as "Ohio's Polytechnic University." Small groups and question-and-answer sessions were also focused on this proposed new direction for the University's future. The consensus of the Summit was yes, this strategic plan needed to be replaced or at least significantly revised. President Scarborough built on this response in messages describing the need for a "polytechnic" repositioning.

However, this repositioning did not gain internal and external traction, but instead received significant pushback from a majority of stakeholders. Given the failure of "Ohio's Polytechnic University" to generate regional pride, national praise, and enrollment growth over the 2015-2016 academic year, UA has abandoned it. Dr. Scarborough stepped down from the Presidency on May 31, 2016 and the duties of his office were assumed by Dr. Ramsier until Mr. Wilson was appointed Interim President on July 11, 2016 (and then President on October 19, 2016). Once the University finds solutions to our

immediate financial problems associated with a recent declines in enrollment, we will revisit UA's mission and create an inclusive, iterative process through which the University can renew its sense of focus through strategic planning that is adapted to the challenging higher-education environment of our region.

While the strategic plans developed by Colleges under President Scarborough's direction do not necessarily have full buy-in from the faculty and staff, they are nonetheless current. In the past few months, President Wilson held town hall meetings with each college, and then the vice presidential units as well. The focus was open sharing and communication, especially about our enrollment and financial challenges, but themes emerged for new initiatives. Expanding UA's international efforts and regaining our prior pre-eminence in the region for our "Evening College" are two specific examples of where we are heading as an institution. Recruitment and retention/persistence are also very high priorities, as well as rethinking our undergraduate and graduate student scholarship models.

This ongoing dialogue articulates the University's priority of ensuring student success. We continue to provide students a distinctive approach to teaching and learning, emphasizing critical thinking and communication skills that foster life-long learning and also developing their ability to apply newly acquired knowledge to solve practical problems. Students are given opportunities to understand and demonstrate creative problem solving, become involved in entrepreneurship, and learn what it means to serve the community. Excellence in teaching is also part of the discussion as faculty are urged to develop students' capacity to realize their potential and prosper as citizens of an increasingly diverse and multicultural world. This is embodied in our new General Education program which is discussed in detail in Criterion 4.

It is our goal that the University experience will reflect a global and multicultural mindset. For students to succeed in a global marketplace, they must understand and appreciate cultural, racial and ethnic differences that contribute to an increasingly complex and interconnected world. In this context, we will be expanding international learning opportunities and exchanges for students and faculty so that acquired knowledge can advance human wellbeing on a global scale. The University promotes innovative teaching and learning of world languages and cultures across a variety of disciplines and fosters intellectual and cultural interactions on campus and abroad. Learning resources and opportunities will also be enhanced through the expansion of digital capabilities, and efforts to develop offerings in new areas.

In the application of research and economic development, common themes include interdisciplinary programs and curricula and collaboration among scholars, teachers, researchers and students. The synergy created by bringing together the disciplinary approaches in liberal arts, health care, social sciences, and science and technology will create innovative solutions to the broader issues of community, government, business and nonprofit entities. The University has a broad-based "tool chest" of expertise to fuel an economic engine that enhances the vitality of the region, nation and world. Faculty are encouraged to work with the community to create new opportunities for research excellence with greater relevance to regional solutions and industrial/business collaboration.

Our academic programs are clearly outlined in the undergraduate and graduate bulletins, and on individual unit websites. Our rules on undergraduate and graduate admissions help to shape the student body that we serve. Realizing that UA is the only university in Ohio that offers numerous associate's degrees on its main campus, and that we have a graduate-only research focused college (i.e. the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering), our scope of offerings and student body profile are very broad.

Sources

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- 1B1_Messages describing the need for a polytechnic reposition
- 1B1_Vision_2020
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- 1B2_biomimicry research areas and faculty The University of Akron
- 1B2_International JD program School of Law The University of Akron
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- 1B3_GRADBulletin2015-16
- 1B3_Graduate Admission Requirements
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- General Education Assessment Plan_p33

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Argument

The University of Akron incorporates the concept of inclusive excellence which creates a framework for excellence that reflects diversity at its core while linking the quality of the educational experience. The University's attention to diversity is addressed at prominent administrative levels, including the current search for a new Chief Diversity Officer (CDO, our former CDO left UA recently for a post at Clemson).

The Affirmative Action Policy states "that there shall be no unlawful discrimination against any individual in employment or in its programs or activities at The University of Akron because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, disability, military status, or status as a veteran. The University of Akron prohibits sexual harassment of any form in all aspects of employment and in its programs and activities and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual and racial or ethnic orientation in employment and admissions." All new employees are required to attend sexual harassment training to ensure a mutual understanding of the key issues.

The University of Akron reviews and publishes its policies, goals and timetables annually. Additionally, its equal employment opportunity statement is prominent on the website. EEO also provides training for members of search committees.

The Akron Experience encapsulates the University's comprehensive approach to undergraduate education, an education of the whole student in terms of General Education, experiential learning, co-curricular activities, and academic majors. Inclusive Excellence is an essential component of The Akron Experience. It takes a campus and a community to create an environment conducive to Inclusive Excellence. At The University of Akron, we are developing a multi-level approach for inclusion and engagement that will lead to enhanced student success. We are raising the bar beyond traditional practices that will foster a culture of high expectations for all students - including those historically underserved.

Inclusive Excellence, the active, intentional and ongoing engagement with diversity, involves both curricular and co-curricular activities and directly supports the University's mission and vision by increasing awareness of self, enhancing empathy for others, and achieving greater understanding of the complex ways in which individuals interact and collaborate within communities and institutions. The goals for Inclusive Excellence proclaim that The University of Akron is a "university that succeeds by including and not excluding." Within The Akron Experience, multiple pathways to success provide each student with a transformative experience that creates citizens of the world, engaged in their communities, while at the same time producing a robust creative environment for faculty and staff. The Inclusive Excellence website contains multiple links to diversity related internal and external programs, a strategic road map, and other resources for students, faculty, staff, and

community members.

The Office of Inclusion and Equity at the University of Akron is committed to developing programs in partnership with the community, students, faculty, and staff that foster inclusive excellence. The greater University of Akron community also held the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Activities Fair and Concert. This fair, hosted by the Multicultural Center, combines fun and learning activities for area children of all ages; more than twenty-five student and community organizations teach them the importance of education, civic responsibility, respect for differences, and non-violence.

The Office of Talent Development and Human Resources is committed to inclusive excellence. Its primary administrator sits on a University Council committee which is "responsible for studying, monitoring and making recommendations on the development of all university policies and practices relating to inclusive excellence and to the wellbeing of employees of the university, subject to existing contractual agreements, in collaboration with staff, contract professionals and faculty in appropriate departments (issues of wellbeing would include but are not limited to fringe benefits, insurance, employee performance, recreation and wellness and other aspects of working conditions)." Minutes of this committee's meetings are publicly available (<http://www.uakron.edu/uc/committees/talent-development-and-human-resources.dot>).

As part of its diversity initiative, the University of Akron has helped sponsor student and faculty events that engage the community like China Week, sponsored by the university's Confucius Institute that explores China's culture, politics, and history. Another opportunity for campus engagement is Rethinking Race: Black, White, and Beyond, a two-week event for students, staff, and faculty to provide programming for the community of Northeast Ohio that explores important topics and viewpoints of diversity. The University of Akron in partnership with the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission and the Ohio Commission for Hispanic and Latino Affairs held the Ohio Latino Education Summit for the first time at The University of Akron in 2015. The Summit was geared specifically toward equipping educators, counselors, administrators, and community leaders with the tools they need to best serve Ohio's Latino students. Practical training through the presentation of best practices as well as keynote presentations from leading national experts in Latino educational achievement were highlights of the Summit.

The Summit was followed by the Latino American Symposium for Education and Research that continued the discussion on how to better serve the burgeoning Latino/Hispanic population in Northeast Ohio. During Women's History Month, the University of Akron has also sponsored a panel discussion called "Women Trailblazers," a program that features distinguished, diverse female leaders that have achieved remarkable success in their respective fields. The University of Akron's commitment to engaging the community on diversity issues has been recognized by the Insight into Diversity magazine with the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity award in 2013, 2014, and 2015.

The University's Diversity Council supports and guides the Office of Inclusion & Equity's efforts to advance inclusive excellence principles across campus and in the community, as described in the Strategic Diversity Roadmap. The Council's subcommittees are constructed to focus on University climate; improving student recruitment, retention, and graduation; diverse faculty hiring; diverse staff hiring; business outreach and supplier diversity; and community outreach.

The following is a listing of campus-wide programs and resources which demonstrate our ongoing commitment to diversity:

The Office of Multicultural Development provides support to historically under-represented students

as they adapt to life as a college student. There is an emphasis on preparing students to live and excel in a global society through academic support services and social-cultural programming offered. The office offers academic advising that is both proactive and multimodal, Peer Mentoring Services which provide an additional means of support for students, ADVANCE new student orientation which helps students to acclimate to the university through a two-day orientation experience, and the PASSAGE and African American Male Learning Communities which help students to establish strong connections with their peers and professors through classroom and out-of-class experiences.

The PASSAGE Learning Community is a learning community for first-year students of color in which the curriculum is designed to meet general education requirements, regardless of academic track or major. The PASSAGE Learning Community consists of two structured experiences, PASSAGE 1 and PASSAGE 2. PASSAGE 1 is for the soft science and liberal arts majors (psychology, sociology, communications, business, education, political science or exploratory). PASSAGE 2 has been designed for the hard-science majors (engineering, biology, chemistry and nursing). Benefits of both learning communities include connection to on-campus activities and events, access to the Office of Multicultural Development advising program, small class sizes, leadership opportunities, simplified first-year class registration, and a structured study-table program.

Peer Mentoring Services, which is housed in The University of Akron's Office of Multicultural Development, strives to increase retention, completion, and overall success rates of current first-year undergraduate students and those students who have been traditionally underrepresented in higher education. It is our mission to foster a sense of affirmative belonging for the first-year students we serve, to help them create meaningful campus connections, to nurture and support academic achievement, and to increase their chances of matriculation from first year to graduation. Through establishing measureable outcomes, we are able to determine the impact that Peer Mentoring Services has on our students' success. Using information on program enrollment, academic progress to degree, fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall retention rates, and overall student satisfaction, we observe that those who participate in the program feel connected and supported, and are more likely to have higher cumulative grade point averages and persistence rates compared to first-year students who do not participate in the program. In addition, qualitative data obtained from student satisfaction surveys shows us that students who participate in the program feel that there are a number of benefits to participating in the program (i.e., help with the adjustment to college life, helpful advice, a greater sense of direction with academics and getting involved on campus, great discussions, friendly support and encouragement, higher levels of comfort on campus, information on how to focus during the first year, opportunities to network and make friends, motivation to get better grades and achieve more academically, etc.).

Since 2007, students, faculty, and staff have come together to plan a series of events known as Rethinking Race: Black, White and Beyond. This ongoing and proactive work in understanding race relations (including racial and ethnic conflicts) and improving upon the racial climate on our campus has grown into a model program demonstrating global best practices in diversity education. Rethinking Race Week is held annually on campus in February. The committee is currently immersed in planning for the February 2017 event.

The LGBTU Equality Committee provides administrative infrastructure supporting diversity and inclusive excellence, collaborating with LGBT student groups such as LGBTUA, The University of Akron's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender union organization. LGBTUA includes students, faculty, allies and alumni. The goal of the organization is to provide an educational environment in which students can freely assemble for support and participate in networking and campus/community advocacy related to LGBT issues. LGBTUA strives to develop educational programs and social events that work toward eliminating myths, misconceptions, and stereotypes that are oppressive while

supporting University policies guaranteeing equal rights without discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Black Male Summit is a community-based event that attracts over 1,300 registrants with the assistance of campus and community partners. In April 2017, UA will celebrate its 10th annual Black Male Summit, during which nationally renowned speakers, educational leaders, practitioners, and students will explore the critical issues impacting black males in higher education. While this conference has become a premier national event focused on the success of African American male students, the 2017 event will place a special emphasis on students from the Akron, Cleveland, and Canton school districts. We launched the Black Male Summit Academy in October 2016, during which two hundred students from the aforementioned school districts participated, and we have planned subsequent tutoring and mentoring activities to sustain the initiative. In addition, Diversity week is an annual week of events sponsored by a collection of campus affinity groups, where each activity is an enriching event that teaches, trains, or increases students' knowledge of how to be more culturally competent.

Comprehensive psychological services are offered at no charge to currently enrolled students at the Counseling & Testing Center. A culturally diverse staff of licensed psychologists and doctoral trainees provide psychological counseling and psychotherapy, career counseling, testing services, outreach, and consultation to the University community. The Counseling Center College Survival Kit consists of numerous workshops that provide academic performance advice, wellness education and discussion of issues such as cultural diversity. In addition, coursework and experiences designed to help students better prevent, resolve or reduce the harms associated with the conflicts in their lives are available to all students through the Center for Conflict Management.

The mission of the Military Services Center (MSC) is to provide comprehensive enrollment and referral services for military personnel and their families. Military Advanced Education & Transition (MAE&T) awarded The University of Akron the designation of a Top School in its 2016 MAE&T Guide to Colleges & Universities, which measures best practices in military and veteran education. Our veterans, military service members, and their families receive a number of services to support their educational pursuits. The University waives the application fee for all veterans and currently serving military personnel and assists with the processing of paperwork and certifying of forms in order for veteran students to receive their college benefits. MSC staff also advise students and potential students on the available programs they may qualify for. The Peer Advisor for Veterans Education (PAVE) network enables current students to partner with new students and help them adjust to college life.

The Pan African Center for Community Studies provides information to support and stimulate student research. It also is designed to connect the University to the community, making the Center a resource for those who are interested in Akron's African American past. Services offered include a variety of lectures and programs which promote student development and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the African Diaspora, with special emphasis on the African American experience. The Center includes the Pan African Studies Program, which is an academic program that provides a general understanding of how Africans have shaped every region where they have migrated.

Upward Bound Math and Science is a federally funded TRiO program which prepares 9th- to 12th-grade students in targeted Akron Public Schools for postsecondary education. This program is believed to be the only pre-college polymer program in the country. Focusing on polymer science, the program has two interrelated components: a six-week summer

residential program and an academic year follow-up program.

The Office of International Programs will soon be undergoing major restructuring as UA looks to expand its efforts in recruiting international students under President Wilson's leadership. Currently, the International Programming office devotes their time to the support of international students, aiding them in their integration on campus through a welcoming orientation, intentional programs, international learning communities, and support of life issues that affect their learning, retention, and ultimately their success as a student. Support for international students is also provided by the English Language Institute, which offers high-quality instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL).

The University of Akron also offers ongoing study abroad programs with university exchange partners. Whether immersing themselves in the language and culture in Spain or France, participating in experiential learning through teaching English in South Korea, volunteering in Haiti, or leading a student led program in Italy, students have many opportunities. These opportunities allow students to learn and grow while abroad, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the global economy and develop skills and awareness necessary to work in international environments with diverse cultures.

The Confucius Institute is part of an international network, supported by the Chinese Ministry of Education, dedicated to enhancing the understanding of Chinese language and culture around the world. The Confucius Institute promotes the expansion of Chinese language instruction through a range of educational and outreach activities for students, teachers, businesses, and community members on our campus and in our communities. The Confucius Institute is a cooperative project of The University of Akron, the National Office of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, Chinese Ministry of Education, and Henan University in Kaifeng.

The Institute for Life-Span Development and Gerontology was established in 1976 and has offered an undergraduate certificate since 1977 and a graduate certificate since 1978. Certificates have been received with degrees from twenty-two different majors. Since 2007, The University of Akron and Kent State University have had a joint Graduate Certificate in Gerontology. In addition there is a Graduate M.A./Ph.D. in Psychology of Adult Development and Aging joint program with Cleveland State University as well as a Specialization in Industrial Gerontological Psychology that is associated with the Industrial/Organizational M.A./Ph.D. Graduate Program. The Institute was part of the NIDRR Center on Aging and Developmental Disabilities for many years. Institute Fellows have held major leadership roles in the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, the American Psychological Association, the Gerontological Society of America, the American Society on Aging and Sigma Phi Omega-National Professional and Honor Society on Aging. Fellows serve or served on multiple editorial boards of major journals and have well recognized scholarly activities. The Institute is part of the Northeast Ohio Consortium in Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology with Kent State University, Youngstown State University, and Northeast Ohio Medical University.

Sources

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- 1C_Affirmative Action Policy and Program
- 1C_Akron Experience
- 1C_Black Male Summit
- 1C_Center for Conflict Management

- 1C_China Week
- 1C_Confucius Institute Welcome
- 1C_Counseling and Testing Center
- 1C_Counseling Center College Survival Kit
- 1C_Diversity Council advances Inclusive Excellence Principles (2)
- 1C_Diversity Week
- 1C_Framework for Inclusive Excellence_Roadmap
- 1C_Inclusive Excellence
- 1C_Inclusive Excellence - About Us
- 1C_Institute for Life-Span Development and Gerontology
- 1C_Latin American Symposium on Education and Research
- 1C_Learning Communities PASSAGE Learning Community
- 1C_LGBTUA
- 1C_Military Services Center
- 1C_Multicultural Center(2)
- 1C_New Black Male Summit Academy Launches at UA
- 1C_Office of International Programs
- 1C_Office of International Programs Programming
- 1C_Office of Multicultural Development
- 1C_Ohio Latino Education Summit
- 1C_Pan African Center for Community Studies
- 1C_Peer Advisor for Veterans Education
- 1C_Peer Mentoring Services
- 1C_Rethinking Race Black, White and Beyond
- 1C_Study Abroad
- 1C_Talent Development and Human Resources Standing Committee Responsibilities
- 1C_UA honored for military-friendly services
- 1C_Upward Bound Math Science
- 1C_Women Trailblazers
- 1C2_2013 HEED Award Recipients INSIGHT Into Diversity INSIGHT Into Diversity
- 1C2_2014 HEED Award Recipients INSIGHT Into Diversity INSIGHT Into Diversity
- 1C2_2015 HEED Award Recipients INSIGHT Into Diversity INSIGHT Into Diversity
- 1C2_Counseling Psychotherapy The University of Akron
- 1C2_English Language Institute The University of Akron
- 1C2_LGBTU Equality Committee

1.D - Core Component 1.D

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

The University of Akron's mission statement clearly focuses on the public good: the University "provides service to the community" through participation by students, faculty, and staff, and by student life programs, academic programs, institutes, and centers. The Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement Recognition that the University received in 2015 demonstrates UA's commitment to the public good. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching selected UA as one of 240 U.S. colleges and universities for this distinction, and UA is the only Northeast Ohio public university to have earned both the Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships classifications for Community Engagement. The sixty-five page application and grid showing fifteen representative partnerships provides numerous specific examples of UA's commitment to serving the public.

Students are the reason the University exists, and they, along with Student Life, are key components of the University's engagement with the public good. Students, faculty, and staff members participate in many volunteer initiatives that impact the local community and beyond. While many programs and opportunities for service exist, such as Alternative Spring Break and Meal Packaging Events, one program, Make a Difference Day, is representative of the volunteer spirit that runs throughout our student life programming.

Make a Difference Day is a national day of helping others in which University of Akron students and staff participate. The 2016 school year marked the 12th year the University participated in the annual service day. Over the past eleven years volunteers have logged more than 25,000 hours of service to local nonprofits. The Akron Beacon Journal covered this year's Make a Difference Day and estimated that about one thousand students and staff participated in volunteer opportunities which served the local community.

The University of Akron is bound closely to the greater Akron community geographically, which means that the physical space and location foster great interaction with the broader Akron community, enriching the intellectual, social and cultural experiences for students, faculty, staff and community members. Several of our academic programs, such as Law and Education, take advantage of this and find numerous ways to interact with the community.

The UA Law School offers a number of clinics that provide access to justice for disadvantaged groups. Faculty, staff, and students participate in these clinics and provide free services to community members who would not otherwise be able to afford legal services. These clinics include:

- Immigration Clinic: Under a professor's supervision, students work in teams of two to provide direct representation for an individual in removal proceedings seeking asylum while detained in the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
- Civil Litigation Clinic: Students assist low income clients who are experiencing housing problems with oversight by a professor
- Reentry Clinic: Professors and students assist low-income clients whose criminal convictions prevent them from getting jobs or housing
- Health Law and Policy Clinic: Under the supervision of a local attorney, students assist clients who are referred to Legal Aid's medical-legal partnership—the Health, Education, Advocacy and Law (HEAL) Project—from its medical partners at The University of Akron Nursing Center for Community Health, Akron Children's Hospital, and Summa Women's Health Center.
- Domestic Relations Clinic: Students assist clients with family law matters, including child support, dissolutions, civil protection orders, modification of the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities, uncontested divorce and some limited exposure to contested divorces, with supervision by a local attorney.

The Law School also has two clinics that serve the community by offering low-cost services to entrepreneurs and small businesses:

- Trademark Clinic: Students assist businesses and individuals in protecting their trademark rights under the supervision of a licensed trademark attorney.
- Seed Clinic: Professors and students provide low-cost legal and business assistance, including business planning, operating agreements, employment law questions, contract/lease issues, entity selection, non-disclosure agreements and non-profit assistance.

The LeBron James Family Foundation College of Education is deeply committed to community engagement and involvement and has successful partnerships with area K-12 schools. Students participate in professional field and mentoring activities that are designed to give them experience in working with children (and families) at various grade levels with tasks that include, but are not limited to, tutoring support, homework help, and instruction in the classroom setting. The College also offers numerous workshops to provide graduate credit and professional development to licensed teachers, and houses several specialized Centers which provide educational services to the university community and the surrounding area, including: the Center for Literacy; the Center for Child Development; and Ohio STEM Learning Network – Akron Hub.

The College also maintains long-standing partnerships with Northeast Ohio educational and counseling facilities. These partnerships allow us to offer high-quality, innovative classroom experiences for our students and include partnerships with Akron Public Schools/National Inventor's Hall of Fame STEM Middle School; Choose Ohio First Scholarship Program: STEM; NE Ohio ACHIEVE TESOL Training; FIRST Lego League; and Community Connectors Mentoring Program (Barberton High School).

The University of Akron Research Foundation (UARF) is a non-profit corporation created to bridge gaps between industry and the University and facilitate the transfer of technology to private companies. Research at the University seeks to increase relevant knowledge for its stakeholders, including students, industries, governments, and educational institutions. The University sees its research as a driver for finding meaningful solutions to advance the region. UARF also offers Entrepreneur and Startup Support Services to enhance the growth of new companies to benefit the region.

The University of Akron Press supports the creation of high-quality scholarship about the history of our region. Recent works include a 500-page biography of Akron's long-time mayor, Don Plusquellic. The Akron Beacon Journal ran a series of excerpts, and the book was received by the community as "a guide to the code of Akronites" for the extent to which it explained the political history of downtown Akron over the last twenty-five years. The University of Akron Press also partners with mission-aligned community organizations such as Akron Roundtable, which created and distributed more than five hundred copies of an 87-page book on its forty-year history with the assistance of the Press.

The Nursing Center for Community Health is a nurse-led, patient-centered entity which provides care to the University as well as underserved and vulnerable populations in the local community, thereby providing nursing and inter-professional practice opportunities for students and faculty. The Nursing Center opened in 1979 and was one of the first nurse-managed clinics in the United States. Through longstanding community partnerships, this inter-professional clinic is a learning environment for undergraduate and graduate students from varied disciplines (nursing, nutrition, social work, sport science, pharmacy, medicine and law). In addition to time in our clinic, students work alongside advanced practice nurses in other clinical settings such as public health, community mental health centers, homeless shelters and urban housing complexes across the community.

The Audiology and Speech Center provides a full range of clinical speech, language and hearing services for children and adults in the Greater Akron-Canton area, the University community, and across Northeast Ohio. The Center is the training arm of the School of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. Clinical services are provided by graduate students in training, supervised by licensed speech-language pathologists and audiologists.

The Akron Regional Inter-professional Area Health Education Center (ARI-AHEC), established in 2010 through the federally funded AHEC program and the AmeriCorps Vista Volunteer Program, focuses on facilitating and supporting inter-professional education and practical experiences. These funded programs align well with our formation of an inter-professional College of Health Professions (CHP) to promote high quality, affordable and accessible care for underserved and vulnerable community populations.

The EXL Center focuses on Academic Civic Engagement and Entrepreneurship. Its primary goals are: (1) to support, expand, and create new, credit-bearing, experiential learning programs and opportunities for all UA students and (2) to build the Center outward into the community as the primary interface between the university campus and the business and non-profit partners that surround it. Achieving these two goals will create a sustainable resource for our students, our faculty, our partners, and our extended community. The EXL Center includes classes such as Skills for Community Engagement, which focuses on skills to empower individuals to act productively within their communities by becoming more centered and self-aware through mindfulness, better at connecting with others through active listening skills, and more adept at advocating for change.

Career Services helps connect employers in our community with students from The University of Akron through career fairs, on-campus interview sessions, "Zip Talks," "Employer Office Hours," Etiquette Dinners, and other networking events. The Career Center provides career advising and programming while developing valuable relationships with employers and campus partners to provide students with ample opportunities for experiential learning and career development and placement.

The Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics often interacts with the public through conducting polls of the public, speaking at public events, and providing political education events for the public. One

such recent event was Informed Citizen Akron which focused specifically on the 2016 election. Our aim was to create a narrative for the election that focused on the issues that matter most to Akron and Ohio residents. This is one example of the many project that the Bliss Institute participates in which promote the public good.

The University's Sixty-Plus Program allows Ohio residents age 60 and older with the opportunity to audit credit classes on a space-available basis. Sixty-Plus students are exempt from payment of all tuition and general service fees. Students are, however, expected to pay for any books, lab fees, and parking (if needed). Auditing allows students to attend classes, but college credit is not awarded.

A key component of the University's goals is to ensure student success. The institution's educational responsibilities are founded in commitment to the success of each student as evidenced by persistence, graduation, and the quality of programs offered by faculty and staff to prepare students to be critical thinkers as they move through their programs of study and transition from academia to the workforce or graduate school. In addition to our investments in the delivery of academic programs, as evidenced by our commitment to faculty hiring and compensation discussed in other parts of this self-study, we offer the following to further demonstrate our use of financial and human resources for the education of our students.

Strategies to foster student success are multifaceted and include early intervention strategies, support services via advising, financial assistance and scholarships, and academic and social support. Excellent academic programs and faculty who assist students achieve their individual goals will be highlighted to illustrate the institution's educational commitment to students from admission to graduation to employment.

Student success recommendations from previous task force initiatives have been incorporated into The Akron Experience. The University promotes diversity and creates targeted learning pathways to provide a remarkable University experience—The Akron Experience—for each student. Programs are designed and modified keeping in mind traditional-aged as well as working adult and veteran students. Deliberate programming to meet student needs includes e-learning and other methodologies. Success initiatives center on programs, advising and connection to resources.

New and on-going initiatives are intended to limit the time spent in degree programs to reduce the cost burden to students/families. In October 2012, the University began to market thirty baccalaureate degrees which can be completed in three years. Also, the University collaborates with school systems within our service area to provide the opportunity for students to take college courses through the College Credit Plus program. The UA program is the largest among the state-assisted universities in Ohio. In addition, Inclusive Pathways includes the implementation of a phased reduction in the number of students who require substantial developmental work. Partnerships with area community colleges have been created to enable the early success of these students and also improve their transition to the University to complete a bachelor's degree.

Student retention is a priority at the University. Nearly 73 percent of UA students from the 2015 cohort continued from their first year of study into the second year. That figure represents a 5.9% increase in retention rate as compared to four years ago for first-time, full-time bachelor's degree-seeking students on Akron's campus. Retention and persistence can be adversely affected by economic factors, making financial aid and scholarships very important to our student body. UA offers numerous awards annually to undergraduates through different types of programs, and graduate student assistantships are also available.

Orientation and first-year programming are cornerstone components of helping students assimilate to

University life and thrive in their academic careers. New Student Orientation features a two-part process for incoming students along with additional first-year programming initiatives such as UA's annual Week of Welcome, Akron Adventures, UA's Common Reading Program, and Unlock Akron.

MAP-Works, Making Achievement Possible, is a comprehensive student retention and success program designed for first- and second-year students. An on-line survey is used to identify student issues that require immediate support and intervention as well as to alert campus professionals of poor performance on exams, assignments, and projects; poor attendance; and personal problems. Feedback from the instrument provides students with personalized success tips and resources. Based on survey findings, initiatives to impact specific populations of students through Residence Life and Housing and Off-Campus Services were instituted. For example, for students who scored low on social integration, or reported homesickness causing distress factors, the professional live-in staff set up meetings with these students to discuss the issues.

Some of the ongoing initiatives that illustrate the University's commitment to students and educational responsibilities include required new student orientation for traditional-aged, adult, and transfer students; an opening convocation for new students in the fall implemented this academic year; a common reading program with a First-Year Lecture; professional advisors who work with students until they transfer to the University's degree-granting colleges; an extensive Learning Communities program; and a number of courses that help students transition to the University or to a degree program. UA Adult Focus assists undergraduate students age twenty-five years and older with appropriate educational and career choices and the Majors Mosaic program highlights various programs in which students can earn majors, minors and certificates.

Student academic support includes a variety of tutoring programs. Student persistence is embodied in the ability to engage students in a holistic university experience. This entails creating a student-friendly environment with easy access to advising for undergraduate and international students; academic and social programs including club sports, student organizations, and career services; registration, transcript, and tuition information; recreation and wellness, health services and accessibility services; and campus mobility including an aesthetic environment that is safe and bridges the University with the city of Akron.

For core component 1D, subcomponent 1, above, we have listed many units, partnerships, health and legal clinics, ongoing community initiatives, and recurring community-engagement events which reflect our commitment to the public good. These same examples illustrate the extent to which The University of Akron responds to the needs of regional constituencies, as our mission and capacity allow.

Community educational needs are also addressed via certificate and customized workforce development and continuing education course offerings. For example, the LEAN Certificate Program is designed to bring about rapid, planned, controlled, and measured step-change improvements to the performance of an organization through an overhaul of the value stream to reduce costs and increase profits and customer satisfaction. In addition, exam preparation courses for certification from various organizations, and continuing education with diverse courses for lifelong learning, are delivered at the University. UA students attend sponsored Career Fairs attended by employers from across the region and the UA Career Center, a one-stop shop for everything career related, to launch their careers.

Another example of the extent to which UA responds to the needs of our region is our Corrosion

Engineering program, which was created in response to the needs of local industry as well as our national infrastructure. The University's engagement with regional industry is also recognized and supported by major gifts such as \$1.25M from the Fred A. Lennon Charitable Trust for engineering scholarships and the renovation of existing space into a technology-rich Swagelok Career Center featuring interview rooms and a conference room to accommodate company recruitment and career-building workshops.

Finally, we have external advisory boards for many of our colleges, departments, and degree programs. These groups provide valuable insight to our faculty and academic administrators in the development and updating of curricular offerings, and involve our external constituents in a substantive manner in defining the learning outcomes and skill sets that our students need to master before graduation. These are another mechanism through which we include our communities of interest in shared decision making and respond to the needs of the future employers of our graduates.

Sources

- 1_The Audiology and Speech Center The University of Akron_p15
- 1A1_Adult Focus Program
- 1A1_Learning Communities
- 1A1_Tutoring Services
- 1A1_Zip Assist
- 1C_Akron Experience
- 1D1_College of Health Professions
- 1D1_EXL Center
- 1D1_‘The Indomitable Don Plusquellic’_JEDD
- 1D1_A guide to the code of Akronites
- 1D1_Akron-Region Interprofessional Area Health Education Center
- 1D1_an 87-page book on its forty-year history
- 1D1_Career Services
- 1D1_Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement Recognition
- 1D1_Center for Child Development
- 1D1_Center for Literacy
- 1D1_Choose Ohio First STEM Scholarship Program
- 1D1_College of Education Centers
- 1D1_Community Connectors Mentoring Program (Barberton High School)
- 1D1_Entrepreneurs and Startup Support Services
- 1D1_FIRST Lego League
- 1D1_grid showing fifteen representative partnerships
- 1D1_Informed Citizen Akron
- 1D1_Make A Difference Day
- 1D1_NE Ohio ACHIEVE TESOL Training
- 1D1_Nursing Center for Community Health
- 1D1_Offers A Number of Clinics
- 1D1_Ohio STEM Learning Network-Akron Hub
- 1D1_Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics
- 1D1_Research
- 1D1_Sixty-Plus Program

- 1D1_Student Life
- 1D1_The LeBron James Family Foundation College of Education
- 1D1_UA Press
- 1D1_UA students, staff fan out across Akron for Make a Difference Day - Local - Ohi
- 1D1_University of Akron Research Foundation (UARF)
- 1D2_A New Model for Student Achievement
- 1D2_Academic Advising
- 1D2_Akron Adventures
- 1D2_Career Services
- 1D2_Club Sports
- 1D2_College Credit Plus
- 1D2_Common Reading Program
- 1D2_Earn a Bachelor's Degree in Three Years
- 1D2_Financial Aid Services
- 1D2_Graduate Student Assistantships
- 1D2_MAP-WORKS
- 1D2_New Student Orientation Home page The University of Akron
- 1D2_Office of Accessibility
- 1D2_Parking and Transportation Services
- 1D2_Scholarship Programs
- 1D2_Student Health Services
- 1D2_Student Organizations
- 1D2_Student Recreation and Wellness Services
- 1D2_Student Success and Retention Committee
- 1D2_Unlock Akron
- 1D2_Week of Welcome
- 1D3_1.25M from the Fred A. Lennon Charitable Trust
- 1D3_Career Fairs
- 1D3_the Lean Certificat Program
- 1D3_UA Career Center
- The Akron Roundtable Bringing the World to Akron for Forty Years by David Liebe_p15

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

The University of Akron believes that it has provided sufficient evidence that it meets all of the Core Components of Criterion 1. Our mission has withstood the test of time, to-date, but as a campus we recognize that we must move forward to meet the new challenges of today's economic and higher education landscape. We will do this together as we collectively shape the future of the institution.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Argument

The institution operates with integrity by operating fairly and ethically and making relevant information available to its various constituencies. Rules, regulations, and policies are readily accessible via the University website on BOT, President, Deans, and staff/contract professionals. These are regularly reviewed and updated by the Office of General Counsel to assure their accuracy. Examples of AAUP contractual matters relating specifically to faculty, include those relating to hiring Article 11, faculty grievance procedures Article 12, and retention/tenure/promotion (RTP) guidelines Article 13. Many other University rules relating to governance by the Board of Trustees and others within the institution are posted on our websites and easily obtainable for transparency, shared governance, and integrity of operations.

The institution operates with integrity in its academic functions by establishing and following fair and ethical processes designed to assure such an outcome. This is done primarily under the authority delegated to the Office of Academic Affairs in shared leadership with the faculty senate.

The institution operates with integrity in its financial dealings, with all expenditures being governed ultimately by the Board of Trustees, which engages in an annual budgeting process (audited financials); providing for officers of finance and administration with delegated authority; requirements in place for mandatory bidding for contracts over certain threshold amounts; limited signature authority beyond certain routine purchasing of supplies, and departments of purchasing as well as contract compliance via the Office of Research Activity and Internal Audit that monitor adherence to the institution's mandated practices.

Sources

- 2A_3359-2-01.1 (1)_Deans
- 2A_3359-22-01 (3)_Contract Professionals
- 2A_Article 11_Initial Hire
- 2A_Faculty Senate Bylaws
- 2A_Internal Audit The University of Akron
- 2A_Purchasing_Contract Compliance
- 2A1_Article 12
- 2A1_Article 13

- 2B_Audited Financials
- 2B_Bid requirement
- 2C_ORC 3359-01
- 2C2_3359-01-05

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Argument

In an effort to be as consistent and transparent as possible to all concerned, oversight of the university website falls under the marketing and communications administrative area. The admissions website contains extensive information on application processes and procedures and transfer equivalency guides are posted. Information about tuition, fees, housing costs and meal plan options is also readily available as is the net price calculator and scholarship information.

On July 27, 2015, following discussions with the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE, i.e. the Chancellor's office), the University Board of Trustees rescinded an increase in fees for upper-division programs that had been included in its Fiscal Year 2016 budget, adopted at its June 10, 2015 Board meeting. That budget included a significant reduction in expenditures as well as numerous fee increases, including the upper-division program fee, which the University believed it had the right to charge since it did not affect all students and was therefore not a "general" fee (the State announced that tuition and general fees would be frozen at all Ohio universities in the biennial State budget). However, ODHE did not concur with UA's interpretation on this fee issue, and the University publicly communicated its plans to rescind this fee.

In March 2016, the University also took action to refund students an increase in the facilities fee that had been included in the University's operating budget for the Fiscal Year 2016. The facilities fee is used to help retire the debt incurred for the construction of certain student facilities. A routine review by ODHE determined that the facilities fee was also a "general fee" and therefore subject to the fee cap. The University communicated this information to all students and to the public and news media, and returned the funds. The loss of revenue due to refunding these two fee increases has further strained UA's finances in the face of continued enrollment declines.

The University of Akron Policy Concerning Privacy and Release of Student Education Records is contained in University Rule 3359-11-08 and explains the rights of students with respect to records maintained by the university and outlines the university's procedures to comply with requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA").

University Rule 3359-11-08, additional FERPA information and data on student graduation rates is also available on our website. Additional important notices, policies and information include:

- It's a matter of sexual respect: Think about it
- University's sexual harassment policy
- Copyright policy
- Sexual misconduct protocol
- Crime prevention information

With respect to other examples of consistency and transparency, The University of Akron Viewbook gives an overview of offerings from a marketing perspective, with details publicly available for all undergraduate, graduate and Law curricula.

As detailed below, The University of Akron is a public university and part of The University System of Ohio. It is governed by a Board of Trustees whose members are appointed by the Governor of the State of Ohio, subject to the advice and consent of the Ohio Senate. UA displays its accreditation relationship with the Higher Learning Commission on its website, including links to all recent reports and action letters which is not necessarily the case at other institutions but demonstrates our dedication to transparency. UA also presents the other accreditations its colleges and programs have earned to the public.

Sources

- 2B_Admissions
- 2B_College Board Calculator
- 2B_finaid_scholarship_programs
- 2B_List of undergraduate majors and minors
- 2B_Mark of Affiliation Verification HLC Institutions
- 2B_Ohio Higher Ed
- 2B_School of Law Curriculum The University of Akron
- 2B_Statement from President Scarborough about upper division program fees UA News
- 2B_Transfer students
- 2B_Tuition and fee information The University of Akron
- 2B_tuition-and-fee
- 2B_UA to provide students with return of facilities fee increase UA News
- 2B_Viewbook
- 2B_Zipmail fee refund
- 2C_Article 10
- 2C_BOT
- 2C3_3359-01-01
- 2C4_Gradbulletin
- 2E3_3359-11-08_policies and procedures for student records
- 2E3_3359-11-13_sexual harassment
- 2E3_copyright compliance
- 2E3_crime-prevent
- 2E3_sexual misconduct protocol
- 2E3_sexual respect
- 2E3_student graduation rates
- 3A1_AccreditationbyCollegeandSchool_09162016
- Tuition and Fees _ The University of Akron

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

The University's Board of Trustees (9 voting members and 2 non-voting student members) are appointed by the Governor of Ohio with the advice and consent of the State Senate, in accordance with O.R.C. 3359.01. According to state law embodied in O.R.C. 3345.021, the board has full power and authority on all matters relative to the administration of the University of Akron, which includes the authority to delegate administrative authority to the President and other administrative personnel. In order to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and assure its integrity and to enhance its ability to act autonomously in a more effective manner, the University broadens its base of talents, resources, and experience by including among its members two additional individuals who are non-voting Advisory Trustees. Further articulation of the high level expectations for the board relevant to its autonomy in decision-making for the best interest of the institution and assurance of integrity (apart from the specifics further detailed in the specific subcomponents below) are found in the Board of Trustees Resolution 6-9-12 (Board Statement of Mission, Values and Expectations) as well as in Article 10 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the Board of Trustees and the Akron-AAUP. State law, along with provisions of the CBA, reflect the ability of the governing board to act as it deems necessary on a broad range of issues, including in the delegation of authority to others within the institution.

The Board of Trustees has and follows rules that provide for both regular and special meetings so that the Board can deliberate and make decisions with respect to matters of importance to the institution. In order to obtain, process, and share information in an efficient and effective manner, the Board of Trustees has by rule established standing committees, and has also provided for both special and advisory committees. The Board regularly engages in self-assessment to determine what enhancement of the Board's work might be possible. The vast amount of information provided to the Board and/or gathered by its members for its deliberations can be seen in the Board books put together for each regular meeting, and are also indicated by the typically extensive minutes from each meeting, which reflect the high level of attention given by the Board to prioritization of those concerns most directly affecting the preservation and enhancement of the institution. These materials are all available publicly on the Board of Trustees website.

The Board of Trustees, in particular consideration of the fact that the University of Akron is a state institution, takes care to comply with state open meeting law. Furthermore, Board meetings are

broadcast live on the Board of Trustees' website, which is open access. The Board sends notices of its meetings out to a wide array of constituencies, including media outlets. Additionally, the Board has in place procedures for routine receipt of and response to communications with the Board as well as requests to address the Board, whether those are from the University's internal or external constituents. As indicated above, the Board also seeks out and incorporates the interests of other constituencies through the inclusion of advisory trustees. In terms of internal constituencies more specifically, the Board expects a close working relationship between the President and Provost with the faculty via the Faculty Senate. In addition, the recently adopted bylaws of the University Council provide wider shared governance involving open lines of communication, discussion and recommendations from numerous campus constituency groups.

Members of the Board of Trustees receive no compensation for their service beyond reimbursement for their expenses. Board members are required to annually complete forms submitted to the Ohio Ethics Commission regarding their personal financial statements in order to determine conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest. As indicated in the Board Statement of Mission, Values and Expectations, all members are required to conform to state ethics law in terms of disclosing potential or actual ethical conflicts or personal or business relationships with staff or faculty or vendors. Board members' compliance can be seen not only in their regular filing of these forms, but in their occasional recusal from matters before the Board as reflected in the minutes. Board members, along with those from the office of General Counsel who work closely with the Board, receive training regularly through the annual meetings of the Association of Governing Boards and Board Professionals.

The Board of Trustees has delegated substantial managerial authority to the President of the University as executive head of the colleges and administrative units. Similarly, the Board has delegated certain day-to-day management authority to those in the Office of Academic Affairs, and has indicated by rule that the organization of instruction shall be such that authority is delegated to the faculty for oversight of academic matters. The Board has delegated certain rule-making authority to the faculty senate on admission, government, management, and control of students, courses of study, granting of degrees and certificates, etc., to meet University objectives, subject to Board approval. The day-to-day management of budget and personnel matters has been delegated to the full-time administration of the University as well. Article 10 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Board and the Akron-AAUP indicates a similarly stated and mutually agreed upon understanding of the delegation of authority.

Sources

- 2C_Article 10
- 2C_BOT

2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

University of Akron faculty actively practice and facilitate freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth. These values are exercised in their personal scholarly endeavors, contact with students in their teaching and learning activities, and interactions with fellow colleagues. This commitment is supported through the collective bargaining agreement between the University and the American Association of University Professors, effective from July 2015 to December 2020, detailed in Article 9, Section 5:

A. Members of the bargaining unit, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, shall recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and state the truth as they see it. To this end bargaining unit faculty shall devote their energies to developing and improving their scholarly competence. They have an obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. They shall practice intellectual honesty. Although bargaining unit faculty may follow subsidiary interests, these interests must never seriously hamper or compromise their freedom of inquiry.

B. As teachers, bargaining unit faculty shall encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They shall hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Bargaining unit faculty shall demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Members of the bargaining unit shall make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They shall avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They shall acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from students. They shall protect students' academic freedom.

C. As colleagues, bargaining unit faculty have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Members of the bargaining unit shall not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They shall respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas bargaining unit faculty shall show due respect for the opinions of others. Bargaining unit faculty shall acknowledge academic debts and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues.

These obligations are reiterated in the Civility Clause in Article 5, Section 4 of the faculty contract, which stresses that “free inquiry” should be mutually observed and upheld by the academic community of bargaining unit faculty and administrators.

In addition to devotion to these mutual commitments by the bargaining unit faculty and the UA administration, students share the responsibility of fostering freedom of expression and pursuit of truth. Effective February 1, 2015 and certified by Secretary of the Board of Trustees, the Preamble of the Student Rights and Responsibilities details the expected commitment. This document specifies that students maintain a respectful learning environment in which their rights and those of others are

protected:

(1) The university of Akron exists for the discovery, preservation, transmission and enlargement of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of the intellect, character and personality of students, and the enhancement of the general well-being of society.

(2) Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. These freedoms depend upon appropriate opportunities and conditions in the classroom, on the campus and in the larger community. All members of the university community share the right and responsibility to secure and to respect general conditions conducive to enjoyment of these freedoms which are inalienable.

(3) As members of the academic community, students in exercising their freedom have the responsibility of preserving the freedom of others and working for the good of the entire community. The following statement of student rights and responsibilities provides for standards of academic freedom which are essential to any community of scholars.

Students may exercise responsible freedom of speech and expression through participating in the student run newspaper (The Buchtelite) (<http://buchtelite.com/>), radio station (WZIP) (<http://www.wzip.fm/>), and television station (ZTV) (<https://ztv.uakron.edu/>). The student newspaper is a registered student organization and enjoys the protections afforded by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Subject to the limits of those protections, it cannot be censored or controlled by the University or any of its employees. The radio and television stations are not student organizations of the University, but are administrative services of the University associated with an academic department, The School of Communication. WZIP and ZTV do not receive the same protection by law that the First Amendment provides to The Buchtelite.

Students are free to express their perspectives through participation in governance in Undergraduate Student Government and Graduate Student Government as well as having representation on the Faculty Senate, the University Council, and the Board of Trustees. Students are also free to participate in more than 300 student organizations and may create their own organization, as long as they do not violate the Code of Student Conduct or discriminate in terms of gender, age, or race. A process is in place for those who would like to create a new group. Each group must recommit to its constitution annually, and the constitution is reviewed by Student Life for compliance. All incoming students are connected to OrgSync where students note their own interests and are then linked with student organizations which best align.

Sources

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- 2D_Graduate Student Government
- 2D_University Council
- 2D_USG
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- Search for Student Organizations The University of Akron_p25

2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

The Vice Provost for Research (VPR) oversees the integrity of the use of human subjects in research through an Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB), the operation of which is mandated and certified by the federal government. The Office of the VPR also provides administrative support for the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) to provide for the ethical and humane treatment of animals in research.

Under the auspices of the Senior Vice President and Provost, the radiation safety committee ensures compliance with applicable laws and relations regarding the use of radiation producing instruments and materials on campus. The Office of Capital Planning and Facilities Management oversees the Department of Environmental and Occupational Safety and Health which coordinates other activities to assure safety in research, such as the control of hazardous materials and waste.

The Office of Research Administration (ORA) facilitates faculty proposal preparation, proposal submission, and award acceptance. The ORA oversees and ensures compliance for sponsored projects, balancing the University's rules with sponsor and federal regulations in the submission, acceptance and expenditure of awards. The ORA was created through a merger of the pre- and post-award units. A presentation on the merger was given at the March 5, 2012 BOT Strategic Issues Committee. The Committee determined that the decision to enact a merger would be best made by University administration. The formal merger occurred in June 2012 after BOT adoption of University rules officially creating an Office of Research Administration.

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training is mandated by an NSF ruling that became effective January 4, 2010. The University must certify that an RCR program is in place for students and postdoctoral fellows with every NSF proposal submission. To meet this requirement, the University has subscribed to the online RCR training program provided by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). Additionally, to comply with NSF award conditions, principal investigators are responsible for assuring that students and postdoctoral fellows have taken and passed CITI training. CITI completion can be verified through printouts or at the CITI site. The ORA periodically checks the CITI site to verify completion of training.

All faculty, students and contract professionals participating in research involving human or animal subjects must complete the CITI training prior to IRB or IACUC review. Recipients of NIH/NSF funding (e.g. awardees, fellowships, etc.) must also complete an instructional program addressing the responsible and ethical conduct in research. All students participating in research involving human subjects are supervised by faculty advisors. UA recognizes that integrity in research begins with individual faculty. All employees complete the Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment form

annually. In addition, all researchers with PHS/NIH grants and cooperative agreements complied with the 2015-2016 Financial Conflict of Interest regulations.

The University has a Conduct and Ethics Policy regarding employee ownership of companies that are engaged in commercializing their inventions. This was approved by the UA Board of Trustees, signaling the determination that the best interests of The University of Akron will be served if employees who create new technology are afforded the opportunity to hold personal financial interests in companies engaged in commercializing their inventions. Employee participation with outside companies in technology development activities facilitates the University's goal of making its research available for use in the private marketplace and provides researchers an incentive to develop inventions with commercial applications. The opportunity to participate in commercialization activities is also essential to the University's efforts to attract and retain highly qualified researchers in certain fields.

The procedures and guidelines set forth in this policy include a Conflict of Interest Management Plan that is intended to enable the University to realize the benefits of such entrepreneurial activities. It also protects the integrity of the research and educational mission and complies with University policies and with applicable federal and state laws. The University has a policy on Research Misconduct describing the process by which allegations of falsification, fabrication, or plagiarism against an employee are handled. A procedure is in place with the Office of the Vice Provost for Research to manage allegations of research misconduct. The procedure conforms to federal policies on misconduct.

Assuring appropriate incentives for the development and marketing of intellectual property was the major driving force behind the creation of the Office of Technology Transfer (OTT) within the University and UARF as a separate non-profit corporation outside the University in 2001. Until 2000, the State of Ohio prohibited individual researchers from having a property interest in the intellectual creations that they developed with University support or during University employment. Following a change in Ohio state law, control of the economic incentive of the research process now resides with the University through the introduction of a policy that permits faculty to be part of a company based on their University creations. The three-sided relationship among faculty researchers, research funding agencies and the University as an agent of the State of Ohio has always been tested by disagreements about property rights: faculty want to publish, grantors want to retain ownership and confidentiality if not secrecy, and the University wants flexibility to exploit ideas to the fullest and to recoup its and the State's investment in facilities and in people, for both economic and educational reasons. Further complicating the relationship are State mandated limits of liability and indemnification.

OTT and UARF seek to assure faculty incentives, maintain the integrity of research in the educational process and resolve the limitations imposed by confusion over property rights. To assist in these matters, UARF was contracted to manage the University's private sector sponsored research and commercialization of its intellectual property. Good progress and open communication in these areas enable students and faculty researchers to use their results in establishing a public record of accomplishment, and funding agencies to realize profits from the endeavors that they commissioned. Hence, the University can recoup its subsidy of the research process for future generations of students and can share with individual investigators profits to be made from the applications of discoveries. Article 19: Intellectual Property of the UA/Akron-AAUP collective bargaining agreement documents these procedures.

Another example of ethical conduct in research is the Active Research Methods Project's affiliated faculty and departments (in Arts and Sciences, Health, and the College of Education) work closely

with UA's Offices of Research Services to teach students about ethical research practices. Faculty tasked with teaching research methods for the study of human behavior came together from a range of disciplines. UA faculty constructed a Core Concepts Skills Chart shared across classes, which emphasizes attention to ethics broadly and IRB issues specifically.

University of Akron Libraries' faculty and staff support students' freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in learning as made explicit through the mission, vision, and value statements of the University of Akron Libraries' Strategic Plan 2016-2017.

The mission of the library is "to provide state-of-the-art access to broad and diverse scholarly resources and innovative technologies to empower users to evaluate their information needs, identify and access reliable sources, and successfully transform information into knowledge." The libraries' vision statement affirms UAL "as essential to the educational process and student success," while the value statement reflects such priorities as commitment to open intellectual inquiry, knowledge sharing, teaching, collaboration, excellent client service, and the development of our faculty and staff. To further these aims, the libraries developed an Acceptable Behavior Policy so the educational rights of an individual student are not infringed upon by another individual's behavior.

The University of Akron enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity through University Rule 3359-41-01, "Code of Student Conduct of the University of Akron."

The Code of Student Conduct states "The disciplinary power of the university is inherent in its responsibility to protect its educational purposes and processes through the setting of standards of conduct and scholarship for its students and through the regulation of the use of its facilities." The Code of Student Conduct clearly defines academic misconduct and outlines the academic misconduct procedure. Enforcement of the policy is shared between the faculty and The Department of Student Conduct and Community Standards (SCCS), which is committed to advancing the following values:

- Integrity
- Accountability
- Respect
- Advocacy
- Learning
- Personal Growth

As a community, "[w]e share an expectation to uphold the following principles of culture as part of our responsibility to promote a civil climate for learning on our campus:

Intellectual Culture

Culture of Diversity

Caring Culture

Culture of Civility

Responsible Culture"

Instructors are expected to clearly state appropriate and inappropriate academic conduct in their course syllabi, typically statements about the avoidance of plagiarism and cheating. During the class, student misconduct is to be addressed by the instructor and/or referred to SCCS.

SCCS is given the authority and responsibility to develop and enforce standards of conduct for our campus community. These standards of conduct were jointly developed by faculty, staff, and students. In fall 2010, SCCS instituted an electronic referral system that allows any University or surrounding community member to immediately refer a student for a violation of the standards of conduct. SCCS fosters a climate conducive to student learning and personal development.

Since fall 2012, SCCS has presented more than 40 educational programs attended by more than 22,000 students, faculty, and staff. In addition, there is an educational focus when students are referred to SCCS. Once the student is referred, a SCCS team member meets with the student for a conversation, gains the student's perspective, walks through the perspective of the complainant, and discusses consequences of the behavior for the individuals involved. The overall student referral process is not intended to be primarily punitive, but rather a learning experience for the student. Each interaction with a student is tailored to the type of behavior referred, as is the educational and behavioral outcome or consequence. This approach to dealing with student misconduct seems to be working with recidivism rate of only 4.33%. Additional information is provided in the Academic Misconduct Policy in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Graduate Bulletin, and on the Student Conduct and Community Standards webpage.

The School of Law also has a specific Student Disciplinary Code for law students, which is enforced at the School of Law through the Academic and Disciplinary Committee, comprised of faculty and student representatives.

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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

The University of Akron has demonstrated, through sufficient evidence, that it meets all of the Core Components of Criterion 2. We have robust policies and processes in place to ensure integrity, and follow them. In the particular instances of differences of opinion between The University and the Chancellor's office with respect to fees, we corrected the misunderstanding via public announcements and rectified the situation – which stand as clear examples of institutional integrity.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

The University of Akron has long provided quality higher education degree programs that support the people and economy of Northeast Ohio. The University offers more than 300 undergraduate and graduate programs, some of which are recognized for their excellence. To make sure that the programs maintain their quality, the University uses both internal and external review mechanisms. These on-going reviews support the University's efforts to provide students with the education and training needed to meet the challenges of today's world.

The University of Akron, a member of the University System of Ohio, enjoys a long tradition of providing both diverse and appropriate higher education programs. Programs in the Arts, Business, Education, Engineering, Health Professions, and Law receive accreditation through outside agencies. To maintain external accreditation, these programs undergo periodic review to ensure that course offerings and faculty credentials continue to meet agency standards. As programs and colleges with external accreditation prepare for their reviews, ongoing self-studies document that appropriate learning goals are aligned to specific programs. These efforts are described in detail in the specific accreditation documents in the Federal Compliance Report, Appendix W.

As mandated by the Ohio Board of Regents' Chancellor's Council on Graduate Study (CCGS), doctoral program reviews are informed by the key features and elements outlined in the Council of Graduate Schools 2011 publication, Assessment and Review of Graduate Programs, and must include a review of each element listed among CCGS "quality standards." These quality standards are found in the CCGS document Guidelines and Procedures for Review and Approval of Graduate Degree Programs.

The University has established an on-going curriculum review process for new or altered courses/programs, including those proposed for change in mode of delivery. Guidelines are included to help ensure that proposals are prepared properly for approval, and that they adhere to requirements for ensuring student proficiencies. Faculty members control these decisions with final approval via the Faculty Senate. In the case of new or significantly modified degree programs, the

Board of Trustees and the Chancellor's office must also approve the proposals.

The University assures the integrity of its online courses by requiring a detailed curriculum review before a course is offered online and by developing its faculty to teach such courses effectively. A team of specialists support faculty with design and development. The University of Akron is one of four institutions in the University System of Ohio that formed the Ohio Quality Matters Consortium (61 participating institutions in Ohio). At UA, we have 25 peer reviewers/master reviewers. Several faculty across the campus have participated in training, including for example, 96 faculty members who have completed the Applying the Quality Matters Rubric. A total of 39 online courses have been recognized by Quality Matters, with additional courses in the review process.

The University of Akron, upon receipt of the Higher Learning Commission's March 2013 site visit report, immediately took steps to address the issues raised concerning the ongoing assessment of student learning. An assessment committee was designated to oversee this effort under the guidance of a newly hired special assistant in the Office of Academic Affairs (SAOAA), now the interim director of assessment. The committee developed a template, website, workshops and videos to help faculty develop appropriate and assessable student learning outcomes for each program. Learning outcomes and complementary assessment plans, including rubrics, for undergraduate programs were undertaken first followed by the graduate programs. Colleges that are accredited through professional accrediting organizations already had undergraduate assessment plans including learning outcomes in place. Most graduate programs did not.

Each program (undergraduate and graduate) submitted its assessment plan to its assessment committee liaison by the end of November 2013. At that point, the liaisons provided constructive feedback concerning the learning outcomes and the rubrics associated with them. All assessment plans were reviewed to determine whether the learning outcomes were different between undergraduate and graduate programs. Department assessment committees were asked to incorporate that feedback and resubmit the plan. For some programs, this feedback loop took several iterations until a workable plan was developed. A SharePoint site was opened to allow for the sharing of plans among committee members. Chairs and directors were encouraged to consider these plans as living documents that could and should be changed/modified as needed. Chairs were informed via meetings and email on the progress within their units. Curriculum changes made at the department level, whether mandated by professional accrediting bodies or through assessment activities, have resulted in the updating of student learning outcomes and their associated assessment plans. All current academic program assessment plans are available in section 4.B.2.

Assessment of student learning plans are now being developed for certificate programs. Each college was asked to submit a plan for at least one certificate program by September 28, 2016. Once these are reviewed by the interim director and assessment committee to ascertain a differentiation from undergraduate/graduate programs, a timeline will be developed to complete plans for the remaining certificate programs, post-baccalaureate and post-graduate programs.

The University offers courses in multiple formats: traditional, web-enhanced, and online synchronous/asynchronous. The curricular content and mode of delivery for every course must complete a rigorous internal curriculum review process and be approved by the Faculty Senate and in some cases by the Board of Trustees. Programs and courses offered at all other locations meet the same standards as those presented on main campus. Faculty teaching at additional locations are hired via standard processes at the departmental, college, and Provost's levels and must have the same academic credentials regardless of location or mode of delivery. Departments are responsible for ensuring curricular consistency for courses taught at additional locations. In addition, the University Assessment Committee began checking for consistency in course learning outcomes across section,

modality and site in Spring 2016, and continues to do so. UA has no contractual arrangements, and all of our consortial programs are joint with other Ohio universities which are also accredited by HLC.

Sources

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Argument

Intellectual inquiry and broad learning are cornerstones to The University of Akron's approach to its academic programs at all levels. From the General Education requirements through graduation, courses and co-curricular experiences are designed to encourage students to develop the skills and strategies needed to succeed in a global workforce. Faculty members actively mentor both graduate and undergraduate students and encourage them to engage in research.

The current General Education Program at The University of Akron offers a selection of courses designed to provide students with the strong foundation needed to pursue their individual educational goals. Students pursuing a baccalaureate degree must complete the General Education Program, which consists of 41 credits distributed among eight categories. Students are advised to select General Education courses in conjunction with courses needed for their major during their first few years of study. Students should complete their English, Mathematics, and Speech requirements during the first 45 credit hours. All students are responsible for meeting prerequisites for the necessary courses listed in the General Education Program. Associates programs require a minimum of 18 general education credits. For students enrolled in the University's Honors College, the general education experience is modified to an Honors Distribution. The new General Education program that is to launch in Fall 2017 is described in more detail below.

On May 1, 2014, the Faculty Senate approved new General Education Learning Outcomes & Implementation Plan. As defined in the General Education Learning Outcomes & Implementation Plan, "General Education provides a common intellectual experience for all university students. It is designed to give students a breadth and depth of knowledge and skills across the disciplines of social science, science, arts, [and] humanities. It is designed to impart valuable skills such as oral and written communication, information literacy, and critical thinking, as well as an understanding of responsible citizenship including such areas as human diversity, economic literacy, personal health,

and societal and environmental sustainability. General Education is the foundation of all our degree programs at The University of Akron” (p. 2). This new general education program is required for students entering the university in Fall 2017. The primary learning outcomes for this revised general education program are:

- Communication skills and information literacy
- Critical thinking and complex reasoning skills
- Knowledge of the fine arts, humanities, natural sciences and social sciences
- Responsible citizenship in an interconnected world

Students will demonstrate their mastery of these learning outcomes by taking courses that are classified as Academic Foundation, Disciplinary Areas, and “tagged” courses. As outlined in the document, “The Academic Foundation incorporates broad skills that are essential to success in a baccalaureate program. These are specified in our Learning Outcomes 1 and 2. The Disciplinary Areas represent the broad knowledge that is essential to a liberally educated individual and this knowledge is specified in our Learning Outcome 3. The Tags represent knowledge and skills required of responsible citizens and they are specified in Learning Outcomes 2 and 4. Critical thinking, knowledge of US and global diversity, and the ability to apply an interdisciplinary perspective to the study of a particular social issue may be acquired via general coursework or major-specific coursework, but regardless of source are essential to the 21st century citizen”. At its December 1, 2016 meeting, the Faculty Senate approved the initial list of courses that constitute the basis of the new General Education Program effective Fall 2017, and received information on related assessment activities.

Learning outcomes associated with collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments are “achieved not with freestanding course requirements as is the case for the Academic Foundation and Disciplinary Areas, but through courses taken to fulfill a General Education Disciplinary Area, 8 requirements of a student’s major or minor, elective coursework, or through experiential learning such as study abroad. These are the Tags, and students are required to obtain at some point in their academic career four “tagged” courses to meet: 1) the critical thinking/reasoning learning outcomes identified in Learning Outcome 2; 2) the US/domestic diversity learning outcomes identified in Learning Outcome 4; 3) the global diversity learning outcomes identified in Learning Outcome 4; 4) the complex systems affecting social issues learning outcomes identified in Learning Outcome 4”

Recognition and incorporation of human and cultural diversity is achieved via Learning Outcome 4: Responsible citizenship in an interconnected world. Courses that meet the criteria for fulfilling this are still being identified. Once identified they will appear on the Revised General Education Program list and thus be easily identified by advisors and students.

Ongoing contributions to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge are central to the professional requirements of University tenure-track faculty members. The University’s retention, tenure, and promotion (RTP) guidelines, which are developed by faculty at the unit level, establish the standards of scholarly and creative productivity for faculty members appropriate to discipline and level of degree granted for each academic department. The guidelines and criteria differ for each department and school depending on their distinctive missions and area of focus. All include the basic categories teaching, research, service, and professional conduct. The Office of Academic Affairs maintains a current collection of RTP guidelines on their webpage: Scholarship and creative work by faculty are also part of the annual peer review process for merit raises.

Faculty working with undergraduates support and facilitate research projects reflective of the wide variety of programs available to students. For example, students in the Honors College complete an honors research project, engineers complete a senior project, and students in the fine and performing arts hold recitals and exhibits. Honors College students have been publishing theses in the university's institutional repository, branded IdeaExchange@Uakron (see <http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/>), since late 2014. Over 390 honors theses have been uploaded, and have subsequently been downloaded over 59,000 times in the past year.

Another example is the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering's competitive summer research experience for undergraduate (REU) students. Students participate in an 11-week summer internship, investigating a fundamental question within the broad disciplines of polymer science and polymer engineering including chemistry, physics, characterization, and biomaterials. Each week, interns participate in research activities, a career development activity, and discussions outlining their research progress. They also visit regional companies and a national laboratory. This year the summer culminated with an oral or poster presentation of each intern's research results at the 13th annual Northeast Ohio Undergraduate Research Symposium, hosted by the college.

Service learning and experiential learning projects are currently encouraged and supported by the new Center for Experiential Learning, or EX[L]. EX[L]'s goal is to enable students to emerge as civically engaged, skilled and adaptable leaders, ready to take on real-world challenges. Example projects which predate EX[L], but which the center still encourages include the forensic archaeology 'pig dig' project where students excavate a theoretical crime scene, the Replay for Kids project where women in engineering adapt children's toys for kids with disabilities, and a modern languages study abroad program for the Advanced Spanish for the Health Professions Certificate. Video information about current faculty-driven projects such as "Unclasses" on Consequences of Caring, Reinventing Place, and Skills for Community Engagement can be found on the EX[L] website.

Faculty members working with graduate students must meet requirements established by the University for graduate faculty status. The criteria, outlined in the by-laws for graduate faculty, include on-going contributions to advancement of disciplinary knowledge and creative work. Decisions for graduate faculty status involve input from academic departments, colleges, and the Graduate School to ensure that faculty members working with graduate students meet necessary disciplinary standards. The criteria are more stringent for those faculty members who advise students on doctoral dissertations.

The University maintains a strong culture of faculty mentoring of both graduate and undergraduate students in research and creative projects. Graduate students across disciplines engage in faculty-supported thesis and dissertation research, participate in grant-funded research, and are encouraged to present and publish their findings. Graduate theses and dissertations are collected and made available as open access materials via the OhioLINK Electronic Theses and Dissertation Center. 2,747 electronic theses and dissertations have been uploaded into the system since it was instituted in 2001.

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Argument

The University has multiple controls in place to ensure that the faculty and staff who directly serve students provide quality programming at all levels. Faculty members must demonstrate consistent quality in the classroom and current qualifications in their discipline to be considered for merit increase, promotion, and tenure. Part-time faculty are also assessed regularly on the quality of their classroom instruction. Student services staff undergo regular performance reviews as well to assure that they are meeting performance standards. To help all faculty and staff members maintain consistently high quality, the University provides multiple on-going resources for both faculty and staff development.

Instructors are required to meet the appropriate credentialing criteria established by each academic unit. Hiring processes are in place to verify the credentials of faculty hires. In accredited programs, credentialing criteria are also informed by the standards of the outside accrediting agencies. The hiring of full-time faculty is covered in [Article 11 of the AAUP collective bargaining agreement](#), and that of part-time faculty by [rule 3359-20-06.1](#). All hiring actions require approval of the Office of Academic Affairs, recommendation of the President, and final approval by the Board of Trustees before becoming official.

Credentialing of graduate faculty highlights the level of expertise expected of faculty at The University of Akron. The bylaws of the graduate faculty explicitly outline the education and levels of research needed to qualify as an instructor and advisor to graduate students at the 36 master's and doctoral level. The [Graduate Faculty By-laws](#) require that "Candidates must possess a terminal degree appropriate to their fields" and each department has criteria on file that must be met for renewal of graduate faculty status every five years.

Professional development is central to these regular evaluations and is included in RTP guidelines for the University. Faculty in programs with external accreditation must meet the mandates set by their

accrediting agencies, including staying current in their discipline. The University offers professional development or faculty improvement leave to provide faculty with opportunities to widen their professional activity and strengthen their areas of expertise. Any full-time faculty member with at least seven years of teaching service at The University of Akron may be granted professional development leave for a period of not more than one academic year to engage in further education, research, or activity approved by the Board of Trustees. These leaves are available to any full-time faculty member. The University offers a variety of campus resources to faculty (both full- and part-time) and staff for professional development. Instructional Services, for example, Instructional Services offers UA instructors access to the expert and experienced staff in Audio Visual Services, Computer Based Assessment and Evaluation, Distance Learning Services and Design and Development Services. Staff supports the effective utilization of technology in teaching and learning. Instructors are the content experts and Instructional Services assists with technology tools and best practices in the delivery of that content.

At the time of this writing the University currently has 582 tenured/tenure track faculty, 231 full-time non-tenure-track faculty, 56 full-time visiting faculty, and 33 administrators with faculty rank. The percentage of semester credit hours taught by these faculty is approximately 63%, with the remainder taught by part-time faculty and graduate assistants. Our IPEDS ratio of students to faculty is 19:1, based on a current undergraduate student headcount of approximately 19,000. Data on staffing and enrollment at UA over time indicate an increased reliance on part-time and full-time non-tenure-track faculty, and an overall decline in staff across student support areas. Due to the decrease in full-time, tenure-track faculty in some academic units, some faculty may be pressed to fulfill their classroom and non-classroom roles. The challenges faced by the institution in terms of enrollment and finances will make reversing these trends in the next few years extremely difficult.

With respect to non-faculty staffing, each department or unit defines the necessary credentials for each position in collaboration with Talent Development and Human Resources at the University. Position specifications are kept on file in TDHR that identify the required and preferred qualifications for each. TDHR is directly involved throughout the search process. They evaluate candidates' credentials for both part-time and full-time positions to ensure that minimum qualifications have been met. This process is clearly articulated in the classification services portion of their website. On-campus professional development, sponsored through ITS, TDHR, and Software Training Services, is available to all University employees. Staff members in academic departments and service units may also be granted leave time for professional development opportunities, including training seminars related to the staff member's job responsibilities. Staff members undergo an annual performance review with their immediate supervisor. At this time, staff members articulate successful accomplishment of job duties, identify future professional development opportunities (internal and external), and identify future goals.

All instructors, including those teaching at satellite campuses and in high schools, have either a terminal degree in the field, or a master's degree with at least 18 graduate credits in the discipline. Any deviations from this are documented by a review of the individuals' "tested experience" in compliance with the HLC assumed practices. As of 2016, 80.1% of the full time teaching faculty have terminal degrees in their fields; 72.3% being doctorates. [link to vitaes: <https://works.bepress.com/experts/university-of-akron/>]

Faculty members working with graduate students must meet requirements established by the University for graduate faculty status. The criteria, outlined in the by-laws for graduate faculty, include on-going contributions to advancement of disciplinary knowledge and creative work. Decisions for graduate faculty status involve input from academic departments, colleges, and the Graduate School to ensure that faculty members working with graduate students meet necessary

disciplinary standards. The criteria are more stringent for those faculty members who advise students on doctoral dissertations.

End of term student evaluations of each course/instructor are used each semester. These are used for consideration of renewal or promotion of part-time faculty per the relevant rule, and for retention/promotion of tenure-track and non-tenure-track full-time faculty per Article 13 and Article 29 of the collective bargaining agreement, respectively. These evaluations contribute to the framework each academic unit uses to create discipline-specific criteria for evaluating faculty performance. The criteria all contain the following four categories: Teaching; Research; Service and Professional Conduct. Each academic unit also uses merit review guidelines annually to assess faculty performance based on teaching, research, and service. These guidelines, unique to each department and school, reflect the distinctive missions and areas of focus of each program and are approved by the department, college and OAA. These guidelines not only determine annual merit-based salary increases, but also ensure that all faculty members continue to meet performance standards.

As mentioned previously, professional development is central to these regular evaluations and is included in RTP guidelines for the University. Faculty in programs with external accreditation must meet the mandates set by their accrediting agencies, including staying current in their discipline. The University offers professional development or faculty improvement leave to provide faculty with opportunities to widen their professional activity and strengthen their areas of expertise. Any full-time faculty member with at least seven years of teaching service at The University of Akron may be granted professional leave for a period of not more than one academic year to engage in further education, research, or activity approved by the Board of Trustees. These leaves are available to any full-time faculty member holding the title of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, professor or distinguished professor.

The Office of Research Administration also offers development opportunities to faculty, with an emphasis on research activity, as described in more detail under Criterion 2. They provide, for example, The University of Akron is affiliated with the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) managed by Miami University to provide researcher training. This on-line training is a customized program for UA researchers and is required for faculty and staff who serve on or interact with the Institutional Research Board (Human Subjects Research), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (Animal Subjects Research), Responsible Conduct of Research, and Financial Conflict of Interest.

Instructors provide office hours so that they can work with students outside the classroom. Posted office hours are mandatory at the University, but the number of hours required varies across academic units. According to the Board of Trustees rule 3359-20-04, office hours shall be reasonable in quantity, time of day, and campus location; hours shall be posted near the instructor's office and listed with the appropriate secretary; provision shall be made for special appointments wherever hardship or difficulty arises; and that scheduled office hours shall be observed. Academic departments, under the supervision of their chairs and directors, are expected to determine office hours that will provide students with optimal access to their instructors. Part-time faculty must also maintain regular office hours or another method of allowing students in their classes to meet with them.

Each department or unit defines the necessary credentials for each position in collaboration with TDHR at the University. The classification process ensures that position specifications are kept on file in TDHR that identify the required and preferred qualifications for each. The process is defined by university rules 3359-25-06 and 3359-25-07. Several offices are guided by national standards and accreditation requirements. For example, the Counseling and Testing Center staff qualifications are governed by the American Psychological Association, the International Association of Counseling

Services and the National College Testing Association.

Staff members undergo an annual performance review with their immediate supervisor by university rule and process as outlined. At this time, staff members articulate successful accomplishment of job duties, identify future professional development opportunities, and identify future goals.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Argument

The University has organized many of our student support services under the division of Student Success. In addition to providing monthly metrics, units within the division track participation and assess programs and services and outline those outcomes in annual reports.

Academic support services begin with students' first interactions with the University through New Student Orientation and Academic Advising. The University provides services to address the needs of specific student populations (e.g., Office of Multicultural Development, Transfer Student Services, Accessibility, and Counseling). Evidence indicates the importance of support services provided to students via accommodations in the Office of Accessibility, demand for counseling intervention and testing services in the Counseling and Testing Center, and utilization of tutoring services through the Center for Academic Support.

As the university is committed and dedicated to the success of its students, it recognizes the importance of addressing the holistic needs of students as they transition to college. A centralized Office of New Student Orientation (NSO) guides new undergraduate students from matriculation through their first semester on campus. NSO's standard orientation program is designed to accomplish specific, consistent learning outcomes for all incoming students. In addition, NSO offers customized orientation programming designed for specific populations, such as military and veterans, adults, transfer students, post-secondary students, and minority students. As part of every NSO program, students meet with an academic advisor.

The advisor determines appropriate placement for each student using available assessment tools and prior college and university coursework. The advisor pays special attention to the student's abilities in writing, mathematics, and reading comprehension. This ensures that students are adequately prepared for the courses they select for enrollment. Academic advisors focus on information found in the following assessment tools, complying with the placement policy recommendations from the Ohio Board of Regents:

1. ACT/SAT

2. Placement tests

3. Advanced Placement

4. Prior post-secondary and/or transfer coursework

The commitment to student achievement has been demonstrated through the Inclusive Pathways for Success Model. The Inclusive Pathways approach addresses college preparedness on the basis of several academic indicators, and identifies students according to their preparedness levels: College-ready, Emergent and Preparatory. Identifying students at one of these three preparedness levels helps us to better focus on the persistence of our entire student body with a differentiated approach to academic achievement. This approach establishes a better foundation to prepare all students for successful academic careers. Through it, we support their ultimate goal, graduation.

Once students begin their academic careers at the University, they have access to a wide variety of resources that provide learning support and preparatory instruction. The programs range from the specialized remedial courses offered through Developmental Programs, to face-to-face Math/Writing labs and on-line tutoring available to all students enrolled at the University, to the research and learning resources and services available through the University Libraries. In addition, first-year students can take the Akron Experience course to strengthen their academic skills. Students registered with the Office of Accessibility receive reasonable accommodations based on their specific needs to help them achieve academic success.

The University of Akron offers a broad range of majors and programs. Faculty and professional advisors are available to assist students in making good choices. The advisor helps students become familiar with the variety of programs and options offered, as well as assists with appropriate course selection. The number and type of courses are planned carefully during the first year. Advisors make sure students have taken all the necessary prerequisites (specified in the Undergraduate Bulletin) for each course, and provide adequate information about each course.

Also, Academic Advising tries to assist students in their growth and development by constructing meaningful educational plans which are compatible with their life goals. It is a continuous and consistent process which is built upon the basis of frequent, accumulated personal contacts between advisor and advisee. Therefore, it is encouraged that students choose their courses wisely each semester in consultation with their academic advisor to enhance student success. Thus, academic advising fosters the development of the whole student who is a self-directed, motivated, responsible decision-maker and encourages the successful completion of degree requirements and timely graduation.

The University supports an intrusive advising model that involves and motivates students to seek help when needed. Both professional advisors and faculty advisors work with students at the University. Advising is decentralized, with each degree-granting college responsible for assisting its own students. Every undergraduate student at Akron is assigned to either a professional or faculty advisor, depending on which college is currently working with the student and how far the student has progressed toward degree completion. First-year students who are admitted directly to a degree-granting college may have a faculty advisor, a college-specific professional advisor, or both. For the many students who come through more general portals, professional generalist advisors provide academic counseling. However, specialized advisors are available to help specific University populations, e.g., adult students and military/veterans. Graduate students are predominantly advised by the faculty in their specific academic program.

Academic advisors currently utilize Educational Advisory Board (EAB) analytics software as a tool to identify the need for individual outreach to a student. Use of the software in the academic advising community averages 54 unique users per day. GradesFirst is a student support software system also utilized as a retention tool. Two of its primary functions are advising documentation and progress reporting. The progress reporting system includes student grades, attendance, and comments from instructors for students on academic probation. Information on each student is available via reports, or through uploaded information onto the student record in GradesFirst. In aggregate, our recent progress report intervention yielded a 50% response rate among faculty, with 28% of grades submitted being identified as at-risk for the Fall 2016 semester. The total number of unique students marked as at-risk was 1,237, and efforts to improve their success is on-going.

In light of EAB's expectation that all existing clients will transition to their next generation Student Success Collaborative Campus (SSCC) platform, UA's Student Success Steering Team sponsored a pilot program to determine the extent to which the new product will meet the future retention analytics needs of the University. In October 2016, the academic colleges and advising units identified 68 individuals to participate in SSCC pilot program. All of the pilot program participants explored the SSCC testing environment, and the Student Success Steering Team collected varying degrees of feedback. Pilot participants were asked to critically evaluate SSCC functionalities with a focus on efficient workflow, student interaction and analytics. All feedback provided by the participants was considered when the Student Success Steering Team made its recommendations to senior leadership regarding the future of EAB retention tools at The University of Akron on December 15, 2016. These recommendations include investing in a multi-year subscription to GradesFirst, not continuing with SSCC, and investing in data analytics personnel. The administration intends to implement these recommendations.

Resources are in place across campus to enable the success of our students. For example, Information Technology Services (ITS), in combination with units in each college, manages and maintains the technological infrastructure on campus. ITS provides 132 kiosks in multiple buildings that enable students to check email or access university services quickly and easily, and maintains seven computer labs with 129 machines. In addition, ITS supports 59 labs with 904 workstations in buildings throughout the campus. Mobile laptop carts for classroom use are available (16 carts/637 laptops) in multiple buildings. Faculty and students have access to a wide array of software, some through site licenses and some through a virtual computing lab. Individual colleges and programs provide students with specialized hardware and software appropriate to their discipline. Wired or wireless Internet access is available in all instructional facilities and in all campus housing.

Colleges and departments provide specialized facilities to meet specific instructional needs (e.g., the Learning Resource Center in Mary Gladwin Hall for Nursing students, the Gary L. and Karen S. Taylor Institute for Direct Marketing in the Polsky Building for College of Business Administration students, and the Exercise Physiology/Human Performance Lab for Sports Science and Wellness Education students in the InfoCision Stadium). Another example is the Drs. Nicholas and Dorothy Cummings Center for the History of Psychology, which is a unique facility that cares for, provides access to, and interprets the historical record of psychology and related human sciences. The Center, a member of the Smithsonian Institution Affiliations Program, includes a museum of psychology that highlights artifacts, documents, films, and photographs from the history of the human sciences. It is also home to the Archives of the History of American Psychology, comprised of a vast collection of artifacts, media, and documents, including the personal papers of many important psychologists.

University Libraries serves the main campus from three locations: Bierce Library, the Science & Technology Library in the Auburn Science & Engineering Center, and Archival Services in the Polsky Building. Bierce Library and the Science & Technology Library employ a Learning Commons

model in their main public areas, and have several learning studios and technology-enhanced group study rooms available. Over 200 Dell laptops, MacBooks, and iPads, as well as other multi-media production equipment are available for checkout in the University Libraries for use by currently enrolled students. Bierce Library has been developing a MakerSpace since 2012. This service includes MakerBot Replicator 5th Generation 3D Printer which uses a bioplastic filament made from renewable resources. The MakerSpace also includes a MakerBot Digitizer 3D desktop scanner and a Sense 3D Handheld Scanner. The Digitizer can turn everyday objects into 3D models while the Sense Handheld scanner can scan large objects and create models for printing, such as people, chairs, and desks. A new One Button video recording studio and a craft room have recently been completed and will be formally launched for student use in Spring 2017. Administratively separate library units serve the School of Law and Wayne College.

The University is a member of OhioLINK, Ohio's statewide consortium of 89 academic libraries. OhioLINK's mission to "create a competitive advantage for Ohio's higher education community by cooperatively and cost-effectively acquiring, providing access to, and preserving an expanding array of print and digital scholarly resources in order to advance teaching, learning, research, and the growth of Ohio's knowledge-based economy" significantly extends the scope and types of materials available to students and researchers at the University of Akron. Member libraries realize substantial savings through collaborative expenditures on resource acquisition and a statewide infrastructure for expedited interlibrary borrowing.

Information literacy is included in the new General Education Learning Outcomes, to go into effect in 2017. Learning outcome 1 states that students will demonstrate foundational competency in written communication, oral communication and information literacy University Libraries' information literacy (IL) program supports the institutional mission and goals of The University of Akron by fostering learners' reflective discovery of information; developing their knowledge about the production and value of information; expanding their skills to create new knowledge; and using information ethically in their professional, academic, and personal communities.

University Libraries provides instruction in information literacy for students throughout their academic careers. The General Education Speech courses (Introduction to Public Speaking and Effective Oral Communication) have LibGuides specifically developed by the library for their speech assignments, and the University Libraries Instruction Coordinator has collaborated with many of the instructors. As students continue their studies, they and the faculty providing instruction have ready access to subject specialist librarians. Subject specialist librarians visit and teach face-to-face classes, embed services into classes on the learning management system, and prepare online guides for specific courses.

University Libraries, however, continues to strengthen its instruction in information literacy. As part of its strategic plan and action plan, the library has developed a comprehensive program of information literacy instruction based on Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) standards. In the upcoming year the program is moving toward use of the new ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, which is "based on a cluster of interconnected core concepts, with flexible options for implementation, rather than on a set of standards or learning outcomes, or any prescriptive enumeration of skills. At the heart of this Framework are conceptual understandings that organize many other concepts and ideas about information, research, and scholarship into a coherent whole."

University Libraries has been involved in assessment as part of the Assessment in Action project. This program is funded at the national level and "supports the design, implementation and evaluation of a program to strengthen the competencies of librarians in campus leadership and data-informed

advocacy”. University Libraries will continue to draw upon experience with the AiA project and will remain involved in assessment within the university, particularly as the new General Education curriculum revisions go into effect and as the library’s instruction program makes progress in its adoptions of the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy. Collections and resources for University Libraries are purchased and maintained to support learning, teaching, and research at The University of Akron.

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3.E - Core Component 3.E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Argument

The university details its co-curricular priorities through its mission foundation "Create a learning environment with emphasis on a full collegiate experience for each student, leading to opportunities for cognitive, social, and personal development".

In support of these goals, the University offers a wide range of co-curricular engagement opportunities and learning experiences including those focused on civic engagement, service learning, and community service. Campus Programs through Student Life offered 424 programs with 51,414 participants last academic year, exceeding prior years. Since 2012, student organizations have grown from 239 serving 10,484 to 346 organizations serving 13,470. Membership in fraternity and sorority life has increased from fall 2012 to fall 2015 from 805 to 886 students, increasing its percentage of undergraduates from 3.6 to 4.6%. In 2015-2016, the residence halls offered 2,620 programs with 27,093 attendees.

In addition, units like Student Recreation and Wellness Services (SRWS) provide programs and events to meet a variety of interests. For example, during Fall/Spring 2016 SRWS offered 17 nationally recognized certification courses, including some from the American Red Cross, National Swimming Pool Federation, Aerobics and Fitness Association of America, National Exercise Trainers Association, and American Canoe Association which provided lifesaving and instructional skills to students, faculty/staff, and community members. They also provide professional work experience and opportunities to students who receive certifications and work in the fields of health, wellness, and recreation. SRWS is a National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Silver Award Recipient for the Women's Fitness Week program titled Women's Fitness Week; Yes-It Was Necessary! This comprehensive, six-day program for women took place during Women's History Month and included multiple dimensions of wellness and programs. Finally, Outdoor Adventure received the 2015 Gold Award for Outdoor Adventure Adaptive Paddle Program.

The University of Akron's Interfraternity Council (IFC), Panhellenic Council (PHC), and National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) received national award recognition from the Association of Fraternal Leadership and Values (AFLV). IFC was awarded excellence in all eight award categories for Division II (6-12 member chapters) and was the division winner, receiving the Division II Jellison Award. PHC was awarded excellence in seven of the eight award categories for Division I (4-6 member chapters) also winning their division, receiving the Sutherland Award. This is a first in University history for both governing councils.

The eight award categories for all councils include: Council Management, Academic Achievement, Leadership and Educational Development, Membership Recruitment, Public Relations, Philanthropy

and Community Service, Risk Reduction and Management, and Self-Governance and Judicial Affairs. In addition to AFLV, PHC was selected as a recipient of the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) College Panhellenic Achievement Award. This award recognizes the success of The University of Akron's Panhellenic Council (PHC) for upholding the values and ideals of NPC in the areas of recruitment, Panhellenic structure, communication with the assigned NPC area advisor, judicial procedures, Panhellenic programming, academics, and Panhellenic community impact and relations. The University of Akron's PHC was one of 43 groups to be recognized with this honor out of the 672 councils nationwide.

Learning-centered experiences have a variety of learning outcomes identified and measured, whereas engagement-related programs are meant to ensure a student's connection and/or commitment to the institution and create sense of belonging. As one example of the use of assessment for program improvement in a student support services area, The Department of Residence Life and Housing (RLH) has administered the Resident Assessment, a survey developed by the Association of College and University Housing Officers International (ACUHO-I) and the Educational Benchmarking Institute (EBI), from 2002 to the present. The tool analyzes 16 factors and combined factors for overall resident satisfaction, overall resident learning, and overall program effectiveness and allows the University to measure its effectiveness relative to selected benchmark institutions.

Overall and across time, results indicate that Residence Life and Housing demonstrated consistently strong performance with regard to student satisfaction with the hall student staff, the sense of community built on our floors, and with the personal interactions students gain from their residential experience. Since 2009, RLH has made improvements in relation to student satisfaction with the room assignment and change process and with student satisfaction when it comes to facilities. A significant challenge emerged with regard to campus dining satisfaction impacting the overall resident experience. Recommendations were made to Dining Services to improve the student experience and as a result a new dining service was contracted (i.e. Aramark) by the university to enhance student satisfaction in dining and residence. Data is forthcoming on its impact.

Similarly, Student Recreation and Wellness Services monitors its overall impact on student satisfaction and the student experience. Outcomes measured against national performance benchmarks as established by the NASPA Campus Recreation and Wellness Impact Data. Two (2) questions were related directly to the Student Recreation and Wellness Center's impact on recruitment and retention with responses showing SRWS facilities having statistically significant higher response for both questions: In deciding to attend The University of Akron, how important were the rec facilities? (2,582 responses); In deciding to continue at this college, how important are rec facilities? (2,571 responses). Satisfaction responses exceeded those of national benchmark peers.

The university has maintained a strong focus in community engagement of its students. These efforts were recognized in 2008 and again in 2015 when the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching awarded The University of Akron a Community Engagement Classification in Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships. This classification recognized the nature and extent of community engagement and community service opportunities available for students. These items are cataloged and form the basis for the award.

In 2012, the Department of Student Life established ServeAkron to focus and reinforce student service and engagement in the community. Since its creation the area has seen steady growth in program offerings, attendance and service dedicated to the local community. On average, student attendance at programs has continued to increase each semester in addition to the number of hours that students are dedicating hands-on service to the community. Recently, the area saw a 20.9% increase in student service dedicated to the community and a 13.4% increase in attendance at

programs and service projects as compared to the prior year.

In addition to Carnegie Recognition, several student focused programs received national recognition.

In April 2014, UA was one of 10 national honorees, and the only college, to receive \$10,000 from the Newman's Own Foundation for the community service projects organized for Make A Difference Day -- 2014 America's largest day of volunteering. UA's gift was donated in the University's name to the United Way of Summit County's Annual Campaign. Finally, the Department of Student Life received the Outstanding Service Project of the Year Award from the Association of College Unions International at the organization's conference in March 2016.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

The University of Akron has provided sufficient evidence that it meets all of the Core Components of Criterion 3. Our quality faculty and staff provide many support services and engagement opportunities for students to enable their success. The at-risk nature of a significant fraction of our student body provides on-going challenges as we strive to increase student retention, persistence and graduation, as discussed further in Criterion 4 below.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Argument

The University of Akron has a process of regular program review that adheres to the mandate by the Ohio Board of Regents' Chancellor's Council or Graduate Schools to review all graduate programs every eight years. The University's process during the last review cycle was driven by the administration, and was used to make decisions regarding the efficacy of undergraduate and graduate programs. An analysis of the results led to the elimination and/or inactivation of several programs. The last set of program reviews under the old model was completed in [AY 12-13](#).

Currently the program review process is a faculty-driven model intentionally delegated to the UA Graduate Council by the administration in the interest of improved shared governance, which will begin reviews in spring 2017. The Graduate Council presented its plan to the Council of Deans after review by the provost. Deans were asked to nominate two individuals from each college, one with an undergraduate teaching emphasis and one with a graduate teaching emphasis. The deans were asked to make suggestions to the five-year cycle timetable if there were ways that it could work better for their colleges. This input led to a new process that includes undergraduate program review and inclusion of materials reflecting units' work in the area of assessment of student learning (previously

not specifically included in the process).

A new five-year review cycle has been identified as well as a timeline for the review process itself. Departments will be given 6 weeks to complete their reports. These reports will be submitted to the appropriate dean for review and comment. External reviewers will be part of the doctoral program reviews. All review documents will be submitted to the Program Assessment Committee for review and then forwarded to the provost. The results of this formative review process will be used for departmental strategic planning.

Student work appears on a UA transcript because it was taken at UA or because it was transferred to UA from another regionally accredited institution. For work taken at UA, faculty bear the responsibility for evaluating student work and assigning grades. Grading practices are specified in Board rule 3359-20-05.1.

When work is transferred to UA, it is evaluated in the Registrar's office for posting on the transcript. Board rule 3359-60-03.1 details the criteria for accepting transfer work from another institution for transfer students as well as for transient work taken elsewhere by a current UA student. Of importance is that a grade of D- or higher must be earned at an accredited institution and that the grade point values of the course may be considered for admission purposes (for transfer students) but are not recorded as part of students' UA grade point average. Transient work is capped at 18 credits and may not be taken in the last semester. Colleges and programs also retain the right to determine how unarticulated work is applied to a student's degree program. Board rule 3359-60-02 specifies that official transcripts are required for admission of transfer students and international students. It details how those transcripts are evaluated in the admissions process. Such transcripts are also required to post transient work.

UA participates in the state of Ohio's Ohio Transfer Module, Transfer Assurance Guides, Career-Technical Assurance Guides and Military Transfer Assurance Guides that set out formal articulations for selected courses on a statewide basis. UA relies on the faculty panel evaluations that serve as the foundation for these guides in awarding transfer credit for these courses when they are brought to UA from other Ohio institutions.

Experiential learning may be awarded credit via CLEP, Credit by Exam or Bypass Credit. The processes for these awards are specified in Board rule 3359-60-03.1. The scores used to evaluate this work is set by faculty in the discipline and posted in the Undergraduate Bulletin Along with information about additional alternative credit options (e.g., Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, etc.). Finally, Board rule 3359-20-05.1 offers further information about grading work undertaken using the credit by exam option.

Policies regarding credit transfer are set forth in Board rules 3359-60-02, 3359-60-03.1 and are printed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins. We only accept credits from regionally accredited institutions, as well as some that are based on ACE or CLEP standards. Only the credit is counted toward a degree at UA, the GPA is not transferred.

Courses are proposed for entry into the UA course catalog and existing courses are altered or deleted via the institution's Curriculum Proposal System (CPS). These curricular actions are taken only after successful navigation of all levels of the system. Board rule 3359-2-02 states "The functions of the faculty of a college shall be to prepare and recommend to the faculty senate curricula and courses for the college, changes in departmental or school organization, requirements for admission to and graduation from the college, and candidates for degrees and certificates. The faculty shall encourage the improvement of teaching and scholarship." This clearly identifies the faculty of the University as

responsible for the curriculum and its development, and disciplinary faculty are the starting point for all the CPS entries.

The curriculum proposal process is specified in Board rule 3359-20-05.2 and this process reflects the manner in which the CPS was designed. Course listings in the current Undergraduate Bulletin specify course descriptions and prerequisites and these are published only after final approval via the CPS.

Expectations for student learning are listed on syllabi and these syllabi are collected and held in academic units. Board rule 3359-20-04 specifies the responsibilities of faculty to inform students in advance of the goals and methods of courses and the syllabus is a prime mechanism by which to accomplish this goal. Course outcomes and rigor are monitored via course and program assessment processes and these are described and documented in Criterion 4B.

Board rule 3359-20-05.3 specifies the university's commitment to supporting necessary learning resources. The hiring process for regular faculty is the initial mechanism for identifying faculty qualifications and it is specified in Article 11 of the current AAUP contract. The RTP process is the ongoing mechanism for faculty review and is specified in Article 13. Qualifications for part-time faculty are detailed in Board rule 3359-20-06.1. Board rule 3359-24-01 specifies credentials for graduate faculty membership and Board rule 3359-20-03.10 specifies appointment and reappointment procedures for faculty in the School of Law.

There is a clearly defined process for dual credit arrangements with high schools. High school teachers seeking approval to teach dual credit courses via the State's College Credit Plus (CCP) program are considered only after their school system has a signed memorandum of understanding in place. That MOU explicitly delineates that dual enrollment courses must use UA syllabi, assessments and assignments. Standards and procedures for approving high school teachers as part-time faculty also are specified in the MOU and in a formal application, and approvals of these are by the department or school in which the course is taught. Standards for approving these teachers for CCP parallel those used within the department or school for approving other part-time faculty.

Once faculty are approved, syllabi, textbooks, and assignment and exam information are provided by the department or school in which the course is taught. The CCP faculty are provided, and may be required to participate in, professional development activity to ensure the quality of their instruction. The dual credit classroom is observed at least once in the initial year of appointment and at least once in alternating years thereafter. Formal feedback is shared with the instructor, UA CCP staff, and may be shared with the high school's administrator.

The University holds 26 academic program and discipline accreditations. All programs also hold the Ohio Department of Higher Education's approval, including all teacher licensure/credentialing programs. A listing of the accrediting bodies and a calendar of accreditation reviews is maintained on the Office of Academic Affairs website. All accreditation reviews are initiated by the faculty in the respective programs, reviewed by the College, and forwarded to OAA for final review. Once all internal reviews are successfully completed, required accreditation self-studies are sent to the appropriate accreditation agency. Colleges are responsible for costs involved in program accreditation. A complete list of the programs covered by accreditation is presented in this document.

The University evaluates the success of its graduates via a graduation survey. This activity is mandated by Board Rule 3359-2-01. The rule identifies the senior vice president and provost and chief operating officer as the person who must "Establish implementation procedures and oversee the collection and reporting of student and academic program- related data...for internal academic assessment and planning purposes and/or for external public accountability initiatives, including but

not limited to graduation, alumni, and employer satisfaction surveys.” The university-wide method to accomplish this goal is our First Destination Survey. The details of the survey are in the [FD Codebook document](#). The survey collects information on employment, salary, pursuit of graduate or professional education, and types of experiential learning while at the University. The latter question is especially appropriate because of the University’s commitment to promoting experiential learning among its students. Survey questions also address the relation of the student’s degree to his/her employment and graduates’ satisfaction with their educational preparation at the University.

The survey generates data that are reported at the institutional level (e.g., [UA Career Outcomes 2014 & 2015](#)), college level (e.g., [Career Outcomes by College](#)), and program level (e.g., [CAST Spring 2015 Placement](#), [Placement Data BCAS Spring 2015](#)). Colleges or programs wishing to delve more deeply into the data on their graduates can obtain data files from Institutional Research so as to examine trends in employment or further education or experiential learning for specific programs over time.

In addition to the university-wide graduation survey, individual academic programs, especially those subject to accreditation, collect data on their graduates (e.g., [BIT 2016 Graduation Surveys](#)). These surveys are designed by the programs to gather data specific to their purposes and are handled within the academic unit.

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Argument

The University is required to include an embedded monitoring report on assessment within this assurance argument for our February 2017 comprehensive evaluation visit. Due to the nature of the accelerated emphasis on assessment across the campus over the past two years, we include a summary of major activities below as part of this report.

As mentioned previously and partially repeated here, the University of Akron, upon receipt of the Higher Learning Commission's March 2013 site visit report, immediately took steps to address the issues raised concerning the ongoing assessment of student learning. An assessment committee consisting of faculty and administrators from the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences (BCAS) was appointed in spring and summer of 2013. A committee chair was appointed and a special assistant in the Office of Academic Affairs (SAOAA) was hired to facilitate student learning assessment efforts throughout all the colleges. Initially, the committee emphasis was placed on the BCAS since the majority of the university's programs needing assessment plans were housed in this college. At the same time, the Summit College (now College of Applied Science and Technology) assessment committee was reconstituted to begin/continue its work on developing/implementing assessment plans for the associate and baccalaureate programs housed in that college.

The BCAS assessment committee began regular monthly meetings in September 2013. Each member of the committee was assigned certain departments/programs to support through the process of developing program learning outcomes, assessment plans, rubrics and action plans. Committee members developed templates to provide direction to the departments as they developed their plans.

All assessment plans had to include student learning outcomes, methods of assessment, timeline for assessment, and a dissemination process to help assure the use of data collected. The templates were distributed to all department chairs in BCAS in late September 2013. Presentations on the process were made to BCAS chairs and faculty in subsequent weeks.

As each BCAS department developed program-level student learning assessment plans, an informal program audit was undertaken. This provided an opportunity for departments to correctly characterize offerings as active majors, and/or concentrations and to formally inactivate programs that were no longer available for enrollment. Meetings were held with the Director of Institutional Research to discuss program coding issues in order to clarify the actual programs offered at the university. Other university constituencies were kept in the loop regarding these issues including the Board of

Trustees. The Executive Dean of the BCAS made a presentation to the Board of Trustees in October 2013, to apprise them of the progress made and plans moving forward. Another progress update was given to the Board on October 6, 2014. The Office of Academic Affairs added a web page: "Office of Academic Affairs: Priorities and Initiatives/Student Learning Assessment" to serve as a vehicle for information on the process.

Each program (undergraduate and graduate) submitted its assessment plan to its liaison by the end of November 2013. At that point, the liaisons provided constructive feedback. Department assessment committees were asked to incorporate that feedback, if appropriate. For some programs, this feedback loop took several iterations until a workable plan was developed. A SharePoint site was opened to allow for the sharing of plans among committee members. Chairs and directors were encouraged to consider these plans as living documents that could and should be changed/modified as needed. Chairs were informed via meetings and email on the progress within their units ([spreadsheet example](#)).

During fall 2013, the SAOAA facilitated the above activities and developed a [University Assessment Plan](#) that was submitted to the Provost in October 2013. This plan addressed the need to implement a process and put in place an infrastructure that provided for a continuous improvement culture around the assessment of student learning. Areas such as faculty professional development and support, resources, organization, etc. were addressed.

After concentrated focus on BCAS resulted in workable assessment plans for each of its programs, the other colleges were brought into the process. The faculty chair of the assessment committee along with the SAOAA made a presentation to the Council of Deans and Provost on the plan to include all colleges in the university's assessment process. A presentation was also made to a gathering of deans, associate deans and faculty.

Many of the programs in colleges other than BCAS are accredited by professional organizations, and most of these had assessment plans in place. When this was the case, units were asked to submit them to the SAOAA to verify that all the needed elements of the assessment plan described above were present. Many of these colleges had no assessment plans for their graduate programs, since many accrediting agencies do not accredit graduate programs and thus they needed to be developed.

Deans were asked to submit, by the end of the fall semester, a name from each college (faculty or academic administrator) to serve on the assessment committee that had previously only had members from the BCAS. Assessment plan and rubric templates, developed by the BCAS assessment committee, were distributed to all colleges to guide development of plans.

January 2014 was used to set the stage for the spring's activities. A meeting was held with the newly appointed members of the [university assessment committee](#). Committee members were briefed on the activities undertaken during fall 2013 and the timeline for spring was developed. Committee members' questions and concerns were answered as they related to the interaction between the professional accreditation process and the university's assessment process. During spring 2014, all programs were asked to begin, if they had not already done so, collecting the data that they had specified in their assessment plans.

Communication was sent from the Provost to all deans reiterating the importance of the assessment process to the success of University of Akron students. This was followed by a memo from the assessment committee offering its continued help. A FAQ overview was sent to the chairs in BCAS addressing issues that had arisen about data collection. Review of the assessment information provided through program accreditation reports began with feedback from the SAOAA. An updated

template was distributed mid-semester to all programs in BCAS in hopes of focusing their attention on data collection. Updates were provided to BCAS associate deans by the end of March. A workshop, Assessment 101, was offered by members of the assessment committee for all interested faculty. An overview of the assessment process was included along with a substantial amount of time devoted to specific questions on data collection.

During summer 2014 a variety of working sessions for faculty and chairs were developed by the director of the Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) with input from the chairs of the university assessment committee. These workshops were designed to facilitate the collection and meaningful use of data. These workshops were interactive as they provided time for attendees to work on their specific assessment projects with feedback from the workshop facilitators and other attendees. These working sessions were repeated at various times throughout the semester to accommodate teaching schedules of faculty and to respond to the particular needs of those assessing student work/results at the appropriate point in the assessment cycle. New faculty and teaching assistants are introduced to their role in the ongoing student learning assessment process during orientation sessions in the fall.

Due to difficulty in using the SharePoint site (where assessment plans and reports are stored) to generate reports on the data submitted for each academic program, the assessment committee formed a subcommittee that began its investigation into the use of assessment management software. The subcommittee submitted its recommendations to the Provost's Office in Fall 2015, but funding this part of the assessment project has been put on hold due to the institution's financial challenges.

The annual report template was developed by the assessment committee and distributed to all colleges in April 2014. Progress reports were made to all deans indicating whether workable assessment plans were on file for all programs in their respective colleges. The deadline for submission of the annual reports is September 15 for the previous academic year. Examples of Annual reports are highlighted in section 4.B.2. All assessment plans, annual reports and critiques are available in the Office of the Interim Director of Assessment.

The HLC Focused Visit that occurred on February 15-16, 2015 focused on the issues of assessment of student learning and shared governance. The reviewers commended the institution on the "significant amount of progress in the area of assessment of student learning..." and recommended that the University address the following to perpetuate its momentum in the area of the assessment of student learning:

- Permanent leadership, infrastructure and resources to sustain assessment efforts;
- Ongoing faculty training to improve quality of assessment plans; and
- Develop concrete detailed assessment plan for General Education.

Since the 2015 HLC Focused Visit, the University Akron has continued to strive to improve the processes used to assess student learning, use the data gathered to improve students' learning experiences and in so doing address the recommendations made.

Due to the financial issues currently faced by the University, infrastructure support is an issue throughout all divisions. However, the assessment committee was given authorization to develop the position description and carry out the search for an associate provost for assessment. A search committee was constituted with members from academic affairs and student success. The search began in January 2016. Twenty-two applications were received and two candidates interviewed via electronic medium. Neither candidate was found acceptable based on the posted job description. After consultation with the provost, the search was cancelled. After re-evaluation of the University's needs and resources, it was determined that a director of assessment would be the best way to

proceed.

Currently the SAOAA who had been overseeing the academic assessment efforts is the interim director of assessment. A senior faculty member with experience and significant interest in assessment of student learning has been identified to assume the position as director on July 1, 2017. The interim director is working closely with the faculty member to enhance her/his knowledge around “best practices”. The Provost’s Office has provided funding for the incoming director to attend various assessment conferences (e.g. IUPUI Assessment Institute and HLC annual conference) this academic year.

The University Assessment Committee operates under the direction of the Provost (Office of Academic Affairs) and includes representation from all colleges. The committee meets monthly with the interim director functioning as its chair. Going forward, a means to formally liaison with the Student Success Division needs to be incorporated. The University Assessment Committee continues to build upon the momentum recognized by the Focused Visit team to heighten and maintain a culture of assessment that does not rely on the “accreditation stick”. The activities engaged in by the committee were meant to help faculty understand the importance of assessment of student learning for what it can offer both faculty and students – knowledge.

Improving the quality of the assessment reports was determined to be primary in helping faculty see the usefulness of the process. The Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) was shuttered in fall 2015 due to lay-offs, leaving the bulk of “faculty training” to the SAOAA (now interim director) and the University Assessment Committee. Assessment coordinators were identified in all colleges (program, unit, division and/or college). Discussions were held concerning the goals of the assessment process. Assessment Committee members facilitated the discussions in most instances. College and unit meetings were also held with the SAOAA (e.g. CAST, Law).

Understanding the role of individual courses in the assessment of learning outcomes at the program level appeared to be a stumbling block to faculty engagement. Curriculum mapping and development of consistent course learning outcomes (syllabi stored in college offices) were used to address the issue showing faculty how their courses were involved in the assessment process. This led to a discussion of collection and use of data.

Once faculty saw the connection as to how this information could be useful to them, more faculty became actively engaged. Committee members, during spring 2016 and fall 2016, verified course syllabi for consistency in student learning outcomes across section, sites and modalities. To continue this inclusive approach, assessment of student learning plans are now being developed for certificate programs. Each college was asked to submit a plan for at least one such program by September 28, 2016. Once these are reviewed by the interim director and assessment committee, a timeline will be developed to complete plans for the remaining certificates.

Detailed feedback on submitted assessment reports were given to assessment/program coordinators in AY14-15 and AY15-16 with an expectation that data utilization and “closing-the-loop” were part of the process. The reports reviewed in fall 2016 show significant improvement in the analysis of data and its use to address concerns that appeared in the analysis of the data. Some programs are now able to report an analysis of changes made and their impact on student learning. A large number of documents have been created by the process described above. Currently documents are housed electronically either at the unit level or in the office of the interim director.

The revised General Education program, which will be implemented in Fall 2017, defines its requirements by measurable learning outcomes. The curriculum approval process requires courses to 1) demonstrate how general education learning outcomes are met, and 2) designate a student learning artifact for assessment. In the Report of the Commission-Mandated Focused Visit, February 16-17, 2015, the site visit team praised the institution for “building the foundation for integrating assessment into the general education curriculum.” They noted “solid assessment practice” at the conceptual level but concluded that “there needs to be significant attention given to practical details” of implementation. In addition, “resources need to be devoted to providing leadership and expertise to ensure successful collection and use of assessment data to inform improvement of the general education curriculum.”

In December 2015, the Provost appointed Dr. Janet Bean, Associate Professor of English, to serve as Coordinator of General Education. This position was created to “ensure the successful functioning and integrity of the General Education program and oversee its assessment process.” The position has a clear job description and timeline for deliverables and a direct reporting line to the Provost.

The General Education Assessment Plan was developed to operationalize the conceptual framework outlined in the General Education Revision Committee’s Final Report. The plan addresses the particular needs of our institution and the challenges of assessing a complex system. Our general education courses are taught at multiple locations (main campus, Wayne College, four regional locations, and numerous high schools) through multiple delivery modes (traditional, hybrid, distance-learning, and online) by faculty who have competing demands on their time. The assessment plan is designed to:

- Ensure consistency of curriculum across various instructional environments.
- Provide opportunities for faculty from various units to come together to discuss common goals, assess student work, and identify areas that need improvement.
- Require action at the unit level that improves curriculum and student learning.

The plan establishes procedures for assessment and course renewal, and defines the responsibilities of each party involved: departments/programs, the General Education Coordinator, and the General Education Advisory Committee.

As the site visit team noted in their 2015 report, our institution needed to find “a manageable way to collect data” and “develop infrastructure or capitalize on existing infrastructure to use these data in a meaningful way.” Several decisions cleared the way for a workable plan: we assess courses once every four years; we collect data on a random sample of enrolled students; and we use a low-tech data collection method (hard copies in manila folders). The central mechanism for assessment is an annual event called General Education Assessment Days, which are held the week after Spring semester exams. At this event, faculty assess learning artifacts and discuss student performance. Departments and programs use the results of the university-wide assessment to create action plans that can be implemented at the unit level. The course renewal process requires department/programs to report on how they used assessment results to improve teaching and student learning.

The Office of Academic Affairs provides administrative and financial support for General Education assessment activities. Funding was provided for the Spring 2016 General Education Assessment Days, and requests for ongoing funding have been made.

The process used by each college to develop/review assessment plans and report results was determined by the faculty in programs that do not have their own professional accreditations (professionally accredited programs). The assessment committee provided general

guidelines(elements that had to be included). The faculty members in each college/department/program, as appropriate,were able to develop the continuous improvement plan that fit their disciplinary needs (when to assess, howto assess, howto disseminate results, etc.). It is expected that the results of analysis of the direct and indirect assessment data will not only inform curricular and other programmatic changes, but also will be part of program review and the resource allocation planning processes at the college and university level on an on-going basis. Assessment Reports for 2016 can be viewed by using the link embedded in the appropriate college title below.

College of Arts and Sciences

Arts and Sciences Programs A-F

Arts and Sciences Programs G-Z

As stated previously, each member of the assessment committee serves as a liaison to specific programs in particular colleges. The liaisons, along with their department contacts (chair,program director, faculty), determined the process to be used in moving the planning and implementation phases forward. The guiding principle used to frame these processes was: focus on continuous improvement that included an ongoing feedback loop. The five liaisons assigned to the BCAS served as resources for the departments. It was left to the discretion of each department as to how they developed the structure for the assessment process.

The documents required to support these processes were submitted according to a timeline developed by the assessment committee in coordination with the Dean and Provost. Initial plans were developed and reviewed in fall 2013.Data collection for ¼ of the outcomes or degrees began in spring 2014.

Initial data were analyzed in fall 2014 with assessment reports based on the data due by September 25, 2014. Annual reporting continues each fall and review and feedback on these reports is ongoing.

College of Business Administration

The College of Business Administration (CBA) has an ongoing effort to measure student learning outcomes. It continues to refine and update its processes. A few of the highlights of the process are listed below:

- In October 2013,an assessment retreat was held to review previous activities and refresh the learning goals and committee structure. Each goal category has an interdisciplinary committee, some with representation from administration or college institutes and centers that manages, measures and makes recommendations regarding objectives.
- Current undergraduate learning goal categories are:
 - IntegratedBusiness Knowledge (represented bythe Core Curriculum committee)
 - Analytical QuantitativeReasoning
 - Globalization
 - Business Communication (written and oral)
 - Decision Making
 - Professional Development (includingleadership)
- A separate committee was constituted to derive and managegoals and objectives for thegraduate MBA program.
- Major Field Tests from ETS were used for assessing undergraduate and graduate business knowledge.
- The Analytical Quantitative Reasoning committee worked with the faculty in the Department of Management to assess and respond to student accomplishments as they follow the course

sequence.

- The Business Communication committee collected an initial assessment of writing in the Accounting Principles I class as a reaction paper to an in-class speaker. Later assessments of writing are collected in Business Strategy.
- Samples of oral presentations were scored independently by the College Communication Business Practitioner in Business Strategy.
- The Globalization committee voted to add items from the Test of Cultural Literacy to the Major Field Test in Business.

College of Education

The College of Education has an Office of Assessment and Accreditation that oversees activities for all programs in the college. The mission of the office is to support the programs of the College of Education and the work of the College's faculty and staff by delivering accurate, useful, and timely data and information by providing quality database and reporting solutions; by assisting with and collaborating on assessment efforts; and by efficiently coordinating accreditation and licensure activities. The director of this office serves on the university assessment committee. The college applied for accreditation by the Council of Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP) and as a result all programs were reviewed for any needed revisions to meet accreditation requirements. Admissions to several programs were suspended in the spring 2014 semester by Faculty Senate action.

College of Engineering

All undergraduate programs in the College of Engineering adhere to the requirements of ABET regarding the evaluation of program objectives and student learning outcomes. The assessment process has been in place for several ABET cycles and rigorously implemented. This process utilizes multiple tools including individual course assessments, standardized exams, and different surveys. The data generated from this process are continuously used to maintain the focus of the instructional activities and improve the delivery and impact of the curriculum content. In addition, the assessment process provides all constituencies (current students, alumni, employers, faculty and staff, advisory council) input into refining student outcomes and program educational objectives.

The assessment committee liaison met with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies to discuss and formulate a strategy to develop graduate program assessment plans. All chairs were asked by the associate dean to identify learning outcomes for each graduate program. The chairs in turn asked the Graduate Policy Committees (GPC) to coordinate a response to the associate dean's request. The assessment committee liaison met informally with several colleagues in the college GPC committees to share expectations and information. Each GPC, with faculty input, assembled a list of programs in their respective departments, identified learning outcomes for each, and identified core courses for all the programs. All faculty reviewed and discussed the response prepared by the GPC. The discussion continued after the HLC Focused Visit (February 2015). Assessment plans for all graduate programs were completed by the conclusion of spring 2015. Data collection began with a defined cycle of review, analysis and reporting.

College of Health Professions

This college includes programs in Nursing, Social Work, Speech-Language Pathology and Allied Health Technology. The majority of the programs, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, are accredited by a professional agency and adhere to their standards for assessment of student learning (See 4A5). Since the HLC Focused Visit the College of Nursing and the School of Speech-Language

Pathology and Audiology programs have been reaccredited by their respective accrediting bodies with no concerns.

School of Law

In the spring of 2013, several faculty members met with the interim dean and an associate provost to discuss the collection of assessment data, the reporting for the law school, and the planning of a faculty meeting devoted to the topic of assessment. Two years ago, the Law School established an assessment committee to develop assessment goals. The law school faculty also attended a retreat on assessment in March 2015. Last fall, the assessment committee helped coordinate the project of having individual faculty members identify learning outcomes for their courses and the specific assessment methods designed to measure the effectiveness of the courses in achieving those outcomes. A special session was held for the law school faculty on drafting course learning outcomes. Over the past several months, the law school has been collecting the syllabi with the learning outcomes stated and storing them on a SharePoint site. The faculty continues to review bar passage rates and other data essential to understanding law student performance and updates the law school's assessment plans accordingly.

College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering

During AY13-14, the College focused on hiring anew dean. In spring 2014, the university assessment committee liaison met with both department chairs (polymer science and polymer engineering) to discuss the department's assessment efforts. Constructive suggestions were made and changes to the curriculum were implemented as discussed in the results section below.

College of Applied Science and Technology

The Assessment Committee for the former Summit College was reconstituted in fall 2013. The assessment committee liaison was selected to chair the college's committee. The committee has representatives from every department in the college. Programs that are accredited by an outside agency were identified. These included most of the programs in Allied Health (now in the College of Health Professions), Engineering Technology, and Business Technology, as well as many in Public Service. The committee then focused on those programs that did not have assessment plans. Assessment committees from each department met and developed plans. These plans were reviewed by the committee chair and SAOAA. Several plans needed revision and the assessment committee liaison worked with department assessment coordinators to answer questions and complete the plans. Data collection and analysis began in Fall 2014 and is ongoing.

General Education

The General Education Program completed the first year of its four-year assessment cycle in May 2016, with a focus on Writing. The results of this assessment can be found in the General Education Assessment Report: Writing. We are currently collecting learning artifacts for our second-year assessment focus, Speaking and Quantitative Reasoning. General Education Assessment Days were held on May 18-19, 2016 to assess student performance on general education learning outcomes for writing. Twenty faculty from the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Applied Science and Technology, Wayne College, and University Libraries met to assess course syllabi and 253 student writing portfolios. The results of portfolio assessment show widespread implementation of the new general education requirements which are being phased in, with more than 90% of portfolios containing an information literacy artifact.

Faculty assessed how well student portfolios met eight writing and information literacy learning outcomes. The competency benchmark was set at 70% of students meeting expectations for a given learning outcome. This benchmark was met on two learning outcomes:

- Most students were able to locate and select sources relevant for their writing purposes, and they sought out sources that showed diverse perspectives on their topic.
- Most students wrote papers that demonstrated an understanding of purpose, context, and audience.

Students performed less well on outcomes that required critical evaluation and effective integration of sources. Fewer than half of students met expectations for 1) evaluating the credibility and authority of sources in their annotated bibliographies, and 2) using sources responsibly, ethically, and effectively in their papers.

The syllabi assessment also revealed areas of strength and weakness. While 85% of syllabi listed learning outcomes, fewer than half provided information about the amount of writing required in the course. Only one third of the syllabi demonstrated the course meets the Ohio Board of Regents requirements of 20 pages or 5000 words. The results of the assessment point to a need for action in several areas:

- Writing faculty need to emphasize critical evaluation of sources. The annotated bibliography is a new required course element, so writing program leaders should provide their faculty with resources and models for improving instruction in this area.
- Students need more practice in using sources critically, effectively, and ethically.
- Expectations for courses should be consistently conveyed on syllabi. Writing program leaders should ensure all faculty understand curricular expectation and include essential information on syllabi.

Other university initiatives related to the assessment of student learning continue. These include, but are not limited to:

- Information Literacy Assessment
- Computer Based Assessment and Evaluation (COMPASS and Computer Literacy)
- NSSE
- Program Review
- Assessment of academic advising

Examples of using the data to inform decision making and closing the loop regarding student learning are cited below by college.

Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences

The Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences is divided into four divisions: Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences. The majority of the programs in the college are not accredited by an external agency and did not have a mature assessment process in place in fall 2013. All programs developed and submitted assessment plans during fall 2013 and began collection of data in spring 2014. In a very short time, programs have refined assessment plans, developed data collection

regiments and processes by which to make sure of the data analyzed. Based on implementation experience, several programs found that their assessment process needed to be changed. Examples of these ongoing efforts are highlighted below.

Arts

- Dance faculty in both the BA and BFA programs felt that rubrics needed to be changed to allow for the separation of criteria that needed to be scored individually.
- Based on exam results, Music decided it needed to revise its Introduction to Theory course along with developing a more consistent rubric for jury assessment.
- In order to strengthen student work for Standard 4 (Design Process) in Interior Design, the sequence of coursework was revised to position the Design Studio I and II earlier in the curriculum to allow the students more time for development of design skills. Additionally, new assignments were introduced into the Design Theory class.
- Art approved inclusion of a Foundation Review process for BA majors and a Foundation Portfolio review for art education majors in response to a need for providing additional evidence, beyond state licensure, that students are competent in foundational practice.

Humanities

- The English department implemented a very complex assessment plan at all levels involving a large number of faculty (see Composition Assessment). In doing so, the analysis of the MA Composition data revealed a mismatch between stated learning outcomes and what was actually taught and valued. New learning outcomes were developed and mapped to required coursework.
- A team approach to assessing student papers was introduced in Philosophy. This was a learning experience for faculty who realized that the rubric for assessing papers needed to be shared with students.

Natural Sciences

- Assessment of the Biology program pointed to some flaws in the Principles of Biology curriculum. To address the deficiencies, the curriculum in the lab was modified to place a stronger emphasis on data interpretation, statistical applications, and displaying the information correctly. Data analyzed in fall 2016 still showed a problem so at least two new labs are being designed to increase students' exposure to these concepts.
- Geology faculty are addressing a knowledge deficiency based on data gathered by making Mineral Sciences a required course as opposed to Silicates.
- In order to better assess a particular outcome, Chemistry faculty determined that more activities in the Biochemistry lab need to be included in the assessment plan.

Social Sciences

- The Criminology faculty determined that a more comprehensive assessment measure needs to be included and an exit interview will be added for all graduating students in fall 2016 and spring 2017.
- Assessment methodology for the capstone course in the MPA program will be changed and data collected for two years to assess the impact of the change.
- Psychology faculty gathered data to try and identify ways to enhance student appreciation of ethical standards of research. Although the pilot data would suggest a reasonable understanding by students responding, the qualitative assessment indicates that students could benefit from a

more thorough understanding of the relationship between mandated guidelines for ethical treatment of human (and animal) participants/subjects and ongoing research efforts in the field of Psychology.

College of Business Administration

Programs in the College of Business Administration are accredited by AACSB. The assessment plans in the college are based on the Assurance of Learning assessment process mandated by AACSB. The undergraduate program uses the ETS Major Field test on an ongoing basis to assess nine academic indicators.

Faculty use results to identify areas of weakness across the curriculum in relation to student learning. They make suggestions of other assessment projects that can be utilized to assess these weaknesses. Faculty may also write additional questions that can be included in future ETS Major Field Tests. Real World 101 was incorporated in accounting classes in Spring 2015 as an assessment project to evaluate student writing skills. Changes to structure, assignments, and curricula were made in 6500:304 and 305 to address areas of weakness.

College of Education

All programs in the College of Education were reviewed to align with the standards of a new accrediting body (CAEP). The Ph.D and Ed.D programs suspended admissions for curricular revisions. Changes to the programs are ongoing and include:

- Core courses in Early Childhood Education now include information on diversity and exceptional learners.
- Course changes were made in Special Education based on tests scores which indicated that students were deficient in instruction and assessment.
- Curriculum changes are planned to address deficiencies found in the student teaching experience.

College of Engineering

The undergraduate programs in the College of Engineering are accredited by ABET and have a robust assessment program in place. ABET does not accredit graduate programs. Therefore, the College worked during AY13-14 to put new assessment plans in place. Data collection for those programs began in AY14-15. Rubrics for theses and dissertations have been in place for an extended period.

- Faculty in the Electrical Engineering (MS) program found communication deficiencies as students graduated. Discussions are underway to determine means to address this in core courses.
- To enhance the assessment effort, the Engineering (PhD) faculty plan to introduce a student effectiveness program survey at time of graduation.

Due to its robust assessment plans of undergraduate learning, the various programs in the College have been able to develop a cycle of continuous improvement based on the ABET review cycle. Some of the results of those assessments include:

- Chemical Engineering added more hands-on problem solving, leadership development opportunities and formalized project management within the curriculum.
- Computer Engineering established trigger points for each student outcome that indicates faculty

discussion and decision-making is needed.

- Based on three-year trend data, Corrosion Engineering faculty reviewed the assessment instruments used and the data collected in preparation for the ABET visit in 2016.
- Electrical Engineering found low grades in SO9 (a-e) and determined that they might be unavoidable owing to the difficulty of integrating the associated material in the curriculum. In addition, the Design Project was reviewed for coverage and it was deemed reasonable.

College of Health Professions

The number of programs housed in the College of Health Professions increased dramatically in AY13-14 due to a restructuring. All undergraduate programs and some graduate programs in the College are associated with professional accrediting agencies. All programs are in good standing with their accreditors. Each program has an assessment plan based on the requirements/standards of the professional agency with which it is associated.

- Based on tracking feedback, Athletic Training changed clinical sites in order to enhance students' experiences.
- An assessment committee was formed at the master's level in Coaching.
- Health Education added a mandatory requirement for passing a health related fitness test near program completion as a post test.
- A new assessment plan for the Marriage and Family Counseling PhD program will be developed during AY16-17 to meet new accreditation standards.
- The MSW program is adding new assessment activities to meet standards to be approved as a stand alone program (UA mutually agreed to a separation from the joint program with Cleveland State University).
- Faculty in the MA-Speech Language Pathology program engaged in a curriculum mapping exercise that led them to include a concentration/certificate program in literacy development and knowledge skills associated with therapeutic use of augmentative and assistive communication technologies.

School of Law

The School of Law adheres to the American Bar Association's new standards when developing and implementing its assessment plan. A new assessment committee has been formed and discussions are ongoing. Beginning in 2012, the Law School faculty began to consider certain curricular changes designed to strengthen students' knowledge and understanding of statutory law (legislative process and statutory analysis) and administrative law, among other items. In 2013, the faculty agreed to add a first-year required Legislation-and-Regulation course in the 2014-2015 year. This course was taught for the first time in Spring 2015. Due to the nature of the Ohio Bar Exam (extensively essay), it was decided to increase credit hours for upper-level drafting courses from one to two credit hours. This academic year (2016-2017) the law faculty is considering a proposal drafted by the law school assessment committee regarding formal procedures for annual review of academic programs.

College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering

The College offers graduate programs in Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering. After reviewing results of written comprehensive exams, consideration is being given to the use of oral exams in the Master's program in Polymer Science. A new core curriculum and qualifying exam procedure was implemented for the Ph.D. in Polymer Engineering. Polymer Engineering dissertation committee members identified a lack of depth in fundamental knowledge and recommended assessment strategies giving special emphasis to the findings of the Ph.D. oral qualifying exams.

College of Applied Science and Technology

The College currently awards associate and baccalaureate degrees, and many of the programs are in the beginning stages of their assessment efforts. AY13-14 was used to develop assessment plans and to begin collecting base-line data. Some programs, such as Surveying and Mapping, that had student learning outcomes from previous initiatives, changed them based on changes in the discipline and employment opportunities. After a review of its data, Electronic Engineering Technology faculty noticed that a larger than desired number of students were not completing project assignments on-time. Bi-weekly meetings with students will be introduced in spring 2017 to try and address the issue.

Other examples of progress in assessment in this college are:

- Faculty in the Electronic Engineering Technology program determined that the assessment tool being used was not adequately assessing the intended learning outcomes. A new tool is being tested this academic year.
- Mechanical Engineering Technology faculty are currently developing a pre/post test as a new assessment indicator.
- Surveying and Mapping faculty analyzed the results from the Fundamentals of Surveying Exam and found that University of Akron students were weakest in the area of “professional communication.” The surveying project analysis will be added as an assessment indicator to monitor students’ progress in this area.

General Education

The General Education Assessment on Writing resulted in actions at both the university level and the unit level:

- A faculty learning community on “Improving Student Performance in General Education Writing Courses” was created to foster innovative teaching and support best practices. Twelve faculty are participating in this professional development community, which meets monthly this academic year. In May, faculty will present teaching projects designed to improve student learning in first-year composition courses.
- Leaders of writing programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Applied Science and Technology, and Wayne College communicated expectations for curriculum to faculty at pre-semester meetings and checked Fall 2016 syllabi to ensure required elements were in place.
- In the College of Arts and Sciences, the Director of Composition instructed faculty to introduce critical reading and source-based writing skills earlier in the two-semester composition sequence. A follow-up assessment will be done at the program level to determine if students are making improvement in general education writing learning outcomes.
- English faculty in the College of Science and Applied Technology decided to align its degree program learning outcomes and artifacts with general education writing learning outcomes and artifacts. This change is intended to promote stronger emphasis on writing outcomes and improved student performance.
- The Director of Adjunct Faculty at Wayne College is building stronger relationships with dual-credit instructors in high schools by encouraging attendance at the pre-semester faculty meetings and conducting classroom observations.

The processes and methodologies employed in the assessment of student learning reflect best practice standards. The University employs a continuous improvement model that focuses on closing-the-loop. During the past three years, the University has made significant strides in this area. Data

collection is robust, in the majority of programs, and analysis of the data and its implications for student learning involves program and department faculty at the appropriate levels (graduate/undergraduate). Program assessment coordinators interact with faculty on an ongoing basis to help ensure the quality of the assessment process and to maintain the momentum of the process. Program faculty engage in discussion, documented and described in the annual report, regarding the need for curricular/course/program revisions based on the data. (See Minutes and Annual Report) Some programs are now able to assess the changes made based on the data analysis. As shown in the annual assessment reports, many programs discuss the data with other stakeholders (employers, advisory boards, placement site mentors, professional accreditors, etc.) to obtain valuable insight on how they can help provide a better learning experience for students.

General Education Assessment requires widespread faculty involvement. In the 2015-2016 assessment of writing, sixty-eight faculty members submitted student artifacts. Twenty faculty participated in General Education Assessment Days, including tenured and tenure-track faculty, non-tenure track faculty, adjunct faculty, and dual-credit faculty from three colleges and University Libraries. The results of the writing assessment and plans for improvement were shared widely in Fall 2016 program meetings, which were attended by 45 faculty from the College of Arts and Sciences, 15 faculty from Wayne College, and three faculty from the College of Applied Science and Technology. Twelve faculty members are participating in a faculty learning community devoted to the improvement of student performance in general education writing courses.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

A new retention plan, adopted by the UA Board of Trustees on June 16, 2016 contains retention and completion goals appropriate to the institution's mission. Strategies to obtain these goals and metrics by which to measure success are also included in the plan. Negative publicity during AY15-16 has added to the necessity of strong outreach and retention activities. In his first few months as President, Mr. Wilson is helping to bring the success of the University of Akron's students to the attention of the public and help restore the University's reputation with its stakeholders.

The University collects and analyzes data and information relevant to student retention and completion rates and activities implemented to improve these rates. The primary role of the Office of Institutional Research is to collect and analyze university-wide data and provide assistance to units as needed. Data collected and analyzed by OIR includes but is not limited to:

- Degree data
- Retention and Completion statistics
- Persistence statistics
- Undergraduate Admissions data
- IPEDS data

Other sources of information include:

- First Destination Survey – distributed at graduation and followed up six months later. The survey is conducted each semester and collects data on graduate job outcomes, graduate school enrollment, participation in experiential learning experiences, as well as questions about how well the University prepared students for the workforce, graduate school, etc.
- NSSE
- ETS Proficiency Profile
- Center for Academic Advisement and Student Success

Recognizing the importance of student success, the University analyzes various types of data and information gathered (as noted in 4.C.2) and works to improve students' experiences based on the analyses. Improving retention and completion rates is a part of the university-wide focus on student success. A retention summit was held In November 2013 where Dr. Vincent Tinto helped faculty and staff integrate best practices into an attainable retention and completion plan. A student success steering committee was convened and several student success initiatives were undertaken including:

- Moving from advising to coaching
- Save Our Semester (SOS) and Register NOW
- Getting' Classy Registration
- Finish in Time (FIT)
- The Akron Experience: University 101
- Help-A-Zip
- Risk Management System (EAB).

The colleges and vice presidential units identified "retention champions" to work closely with the Student Success Steering Team.

One key indicator of student success is academic preparedness. To increase persistence, the University introduced The Inclusive Pathways approach (begun in AY12-13 and rolled out over a 3-year period) which identifies students according to their preparedness levels: College-ready, Emergent and Preparatory. Initiatives to support the needs of these students are ongoing as is assessment of the program's success.

To build on the importance of student preparedness in retention and completion, and its commitment to the local community, the University partnered with Akron Public Schools in 2007 to pioneer the Akron Early College High School (AECBS) . AECBS has achieved a 90% associate degree attainment at the time of high school graduation and was recognized in 2013 as a National Blue Ribbon School. The University also partners with Akron Public Schools to provide the Innovation Generation Scholarship (IGS) and has many MOUs with school systems as part of the College Credit Plus Program (previously Postsecondary Enrollment Option Program). Between Fall 2013 and Fall 2016, 33%, 34%, 37% and 28% of CCP students respectively, matriculated to the University of Akron. Student from the LeBron James Family Foundation School of Education participate in the Community Connectors Mentoring Grants program awarded by the State of Ohio to provide role models who could motivate at risk students and help them develop the skills needed to succeed. Other programs focusing on at risk-students include:

- Black Male Summit Academy (launched fall 2016)
- Black Male Summit (launched 2006)
- LeBron James Family Foundation and University of Akron Scholarship program

Success during a student's first year on campus is vital to increasing the University's retention and completion numbers. Significant resources have been invested to help students be successful during their first year. The Akron Experience focuses on the success of each student and begins before the student arrives on campus (www.uakron.edu/akron-experience/). It encompasses new student orientation, the Akron Experience: University 101 course, tutoring, learning communities, etc. (www.uakron.edu/retention/progress.dot) The Akron Experience: University 101 course was designed with consistent learning outcomes focused on assisting new students in the move from high school or work to the college environment. Additional first year programming includes Week of Welcome, Akron Adventures, and Unlock Akron.

Student interventions are an important best practice. Most advising units have required meetings for freshmen students. For example, the College of Applied Science and Technology (CAST) has a mandatory appointment system for students during the first three semesters and they developed an academic advising syllabus. GradesFirst Progress Reporting and Interim Grades have been initiated in all colleges and the Center for Academic Advisement and Student Success (see Academic Advising Interventions). Interim Progress rosters are also required for all developmental, and 100- and 200-level regular session courses and are viewable to students in “My Akron.” Advisors are also notified if a student receives an “unsatisfactory” progress report from any of his/her instructors, and intervention ensues.

Other support provided to first year students include learning communities such as the Emerging Leaders program, peer mentors and Learning Assistants. The fall to fall retention rate for students receiving peer mentoring services from the Office of Multicultural Development showed an increase from 64.7% in AY13-14 to 70.2% in AY15-16. Other intervention strategies such as “Academic Encouragers” and “Success Coaches” were implemented. However, analysis of the impact led the University to abandon both programs, with emphasis now being placed on more advising and faculty-student interaction. The University also recognizes that the intervention process must continue beyond the first year to retain students and help them reach graduation.

Numerous resources and programs are available to help students move toward completion. Finish in Time (FIT) is one such program. The initial campaign, launched in spring 2013, yielded an increase in the number of first-time, full-time main campus students taking 15 credit hours (increasing from 45% in fall 2013 to 56% for fall 2016). The university changed its baccalaureate degree minimum requirement from 128 hours to 120 hours; in response, academic units have lowered most program credit hour elective requirements. The revised General Education program also decreased and redistributed requirements. Advising intervention opportunities were increased for students beyond the first year. Advisors have gone into residence halls and classrooms and have set up tables in the Student Union and Recreation and Wellness Center to assist students. Other outreach activities focus on attendance issues recognized by faculty and “Help-A-Zip” referral programs, through which 250 students were referred and contacted during AY15-16.

The barrier to completion can be financial. A retention and completion grant program began in spring 2013. These grants are typically small and are awarded to students with outstanding financial need who are Pell-eligible, have exhausted all other financial aid options and are highly likely to persist and graduate. Since the program’s inception, 379 students have received retention grants totaling over \$475,000. 73% of grant recipients are persisting or have graduated.

Recognizing the need to help students in their professional development as another important factor in completion, several academic areas and Student Success initiated living/learning communities and professional activities to help students reach their goals. The College of Engineering supports the Women in Engineering Learning Community. The College of Business Administration (CBA) has a professional development program (EDGE-Exploring Degree Goals and Experience) designed to allow CBA students to track their participation in events and experiences that lead to career readiness and allowing them to graduate with CBA EDGE Honors. The University opened the EX[L] Center in 2015 with the expressed goal of increasing the number of experiential learning opportunities for students across all academic programs.

The attempt to increase retention and completion rates are based on numerous activities and initiatives as noted above. It is difficult to disaggregate the impact of individual initiatives to prove causality. However, the University has focused directly on how to increase its retention and completion rates

and has seen success in these areas notwithstanding the backlash experienced from events during the AY15-16. Nearly 73% of University of Akron students in fall 2015 continued on after their first year of study as compared to 66% in 2012.

Pathway retention statistics also demonstrate improvement for some categories of students, but not across the board:

Pathway Cohort Year

2011 2012 2013 2014 2015

Direct 81.7% 83.3% 82.4% 83.7% 82.2%

College Ready 68.1% 64.7% 75.3% 71.7% 72.4%

Emergent 56.4% 53.8% 63.7% 58.4% 54.3%

Preparatory 53.0% 54.5% 57.1% 60.0% 50.0%

Non-Traditional 45.2% 34.5% 30.3% 50.0% 61.8%

Overall 67.0% 66.4% 73.9% 74.2% 72.9%

Note that the number of students in each Pathway differs annually, giving rise to some of the large fluctuations in these retention data.

The 6-year Graduation Rate for first-Time Full-Time Bachelor Degree-Seeking Akron Campus Cohorts has increased +4.4 percentage points from 35.5% for the 2004 cohort to 39.9% for the 2009 cohort. The Center for Academic Advisement and Student Success continuously track college ready retention rates, number and type of advising sessions (AY13-14: 10,392; AY15-16: 17,198), intercollege transfers, number of students registered for the following semester and dismissal and probation rates.

The University of Akron's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. The Office of Institutional Research maintains the official data for the University and "assists and supports institutional decision-making, budget and facilities planning, environment management, policy formation and assessment by providing analyses that transform data into useful information." Besides creating its own data sets and analyses, IR uses the IPEDS reporting system that is available online.

Other systems are used to manage data. MapWorks, an enterprise-wide early intervention system was used until recently. Due to the University's attention to risk factors that affect persistence and completion, a new system, the Student Success Collaboratives Technology platform (Education Advisory Board) was adopted in spring 2014 with a full campus launch planned for fall 2015. In order to provide faculty and staff an opportunity to see the potential of the management platform to assist in the student success efforts, members of the Student Success Steering Committee presented information specific to the University. Due to circumstances at the University, implementation was slowed and training sessions began in fall 2016, and we have yet to see significant impact of having these tools available. (See Training Agenda) GradesFirst is another software product used to provide communication tools for advisors to develop relationships with their students. The system is FERPA compliant as are all data management systems in use at the University. In addition, a system is under construction that will process intercollege transfers electronically after grades are posted with notification to all parties and with all changes being made automatically.

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

The evidence provided for each Core Component of Criterion Four provides evidence of substantial faculty involvement in the launching, implementation and continuously improving campus-wide assessment of student learning program, one that had been lacking at UA (as noted by continued HLC monitoring in the past). The responsiveness of the faculty to this call for action has been excellent, the plan is well established and data are being collected, analyzed and acted upon (closing-the-loop). Using these data to generate curricular and pedagogical changes where deficiencies are noted is now part of our on-going and formalized process of continuous improvement. Most recently, the analysis of student learning and use of these data is included in the program review process. The University of Akron has provided initial resources to develop and implement a thriving culture of assessment on the campus. In order to continue the exemplary progress made, resources need to be designated for a well-integrated assessment process. Given UA's current financial constraints, assessment needs to be prioritized and built into strategic initiatives as the university moves forward.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Argument

UA's fiscal, human and physical resources have prioritized the support of academic programs. Since 2012, the University has supported hiring tenure track faculty with competitive salaries and start-up funding, non-tenure track faculty to enhance the teaching mission, and increased salary raise pools. There have been major initiatives to renovate and modernize physical facilities. While there has been a focus on enrollment, several stressors have negatively impacted the actual enrollment in Fall 2016. To improve the quality of education and with an aim to increase enrollment and retention, several full-time non-tenure track teaching positions have been approved. Future enrollment planning, including staffing levels, and control of general fund expenditures for auxiliaries and research, are part of our newly developed integrated planning and budgeting process.

The data on general fund revenues, expenditures, and their changes over the past 10 years (FY 2007-2016) as developed by the Finance and Administration Division are found on the University Council website. General fund revenues experienced net moderate increases over the ten-year period from FY 2007 to FY 2016. The recent enrollment trends are evident in the revenue experience and will negatively impact the state appropriations over the next few years. The need to increase enrollment and retention is clearly identified as the state has limited the ability to increase tuition rates and it is anticipated this will continue. In recognition of this need, as well as others, the administration formed the tiger team during the Presidential transition in Summer 2016. This group, comprised of campus and community stakeholders, formed a subcommittee with the specific goal to recommend avenues for generating new and increased revenues. The recommendations of this group can be found in their report.

The expenditure data, which is presented at the functional level, confirms a commitment to the

academic function of the institution. Instructional expenditures, which include instructional (faculty) compensation and direct classroom expenditures, reflect a 21% increase over the ten year period, compared to the 6% increase in institutional support expenditures. The commitment to student recruitment, enrollment and retention is evident in the 114% increase in scholarships and other student aid. The enrollment management team has created several new scholarship programs to attract various student populations. As a result of the tiger team recommendations, substantial investments were made in the current year in support of admissions and recruiting.

Significant efforts have been made over the past few years to further educate the campus community about fiscal activity at the departmental level. This can be seen in the development and introduction of departmental income statements as a way to reconcile the institutional costs across units. Moving forward, awareness of institutional costs and acceptance of the process by which these costs are apportioned to the units is critical.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, the University's debt service payments totaled \$35.1 million and were serviced by the General Fund (26%) and the Auxiliary Funds (74%) in the amounts of \$9.1 million and \$26 million, respectively.

The University's debt portfolio is fixed-rate in nature. During fiscal year ended June 30, 2016, the University executed on two re-financings:

- \$10.5 million and
- \$93.9 million

Both re-financings resulted in future debt service savings to the University overtime including \$7.2 million which will be realized during fiscal year ended June 30, 2017.

During the ten-year period, the transfers-out for debt service, auxiliary support and other reflect considerable growth. Two significant drivers are the football stadium facility (FY 2011) and the energy performance contract (FY 2015). The "other" category of transfers out was impacted by the resolution of the internal debt obligation associated with the Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP) explained below. The general fund transfers out are summarized in a report found on the UC website.

The University offered several Early Retirement Incentive Programs (ERIPs) in the 1990's, which created a liability of nearly \$30 million. The University took advantage of its healthy cash balance in 2001 and paid off the outstanding ERIP liability of roughly \$26 million to the state retirement systems. The plan to recover the cash balance was not carried out, therefore budgetary spending authority exceeded resources. Indirectly, savings from the ERIP had accumulated in the departmental carry-over balances. A process was developed along with the Deans and Vice Presidents for determining how to reconcile the ERIP payment from available carry-over balances and the ERIP obligation was fully discharged during FY 2016.

It is important to prioritize the above expenses in a manner necessary to support and enhance our programs, especially in the current fiscal climate. The leadership challenges over the past two years, the enrollment stress in Fall 2016, and the increase in collectively-negotiated salary pools have created a shortfall of \$30 million for the current fiscal year (FY 2017). A number of options are being used to balance the budget including the use of reserves (@ \$18 million), and hiring restrictions/operating expense reductions (@ \$5 million). A one-time debt refinancing was also utilized to offset about \$7 million. Historically, and going forward, cost containment and resource realignment strategies have helped to preserve support for the academic priorities of the University.

The "New Landscape for Learning" was our campus building program that invested in the upgrade of

our physical plant and the addition of student amenities. Facilities were added to support students, including increases in campus housing to 2,888 beds in 2016. We added a new Student Union and Student Recreation & Wellness Center, Athletics facilities, extensive green spaces, and renovated or constructed numerous other buildings. We also added/expanded services to support students, including Veterans' Services, Advising, Commuter/Off-Campus Students Services, Transfer Student Services, a Career Center and new IT infrastructure and support. These investments constitute a large part of our annual debt service payments.

The upgrade of our physical plant included increases in classrooms and teaching laboratories. The number of classrooms is currently 254, occupying 221,199 square feet, and we have 230 teaching laboratories spanning 220,084 square feet. Unfortunately, due primarily to enrollment declines, classroom utilization is down to 47.3% (State target is 70%) and teaching lab utilization is only 25.7% (vs. the State target of 50%). Deferred maintenance also remains an issue, with a current estimate of \$308 million, however the University is not unique with respect to such challenges.

Managing and maintaining a comprehensive campus technological infrastructure is the responsibility of Information Technology Services (ITS) in combination with appropriate units in each college. ITS maintains the centralized technology infrastructure that supports the University's academic, research, and administrative efforts.

ITS also provides leadership in identifying, recommending, and implementing new and technologies (eBooks, lecture capture, CRM, SaaS, advanced wireless, data warehousing/predictive analytics, etc.). Individual colleges provide students with specialized hardware and software as appropriate for the disciplines taught in the college, for example the School of Music, Polymer Science, Business Administration, Sports Science and Wellness Education, and the School of Nursing. High-speed wired and wireless Internet access is available in all instructional facilities and in all campus housing, and over 60% of the classrooms have projection and advanced audio systems.

Recent progress in ITS include: replacing obsolete network hardware to increase availability and performance; increasing Internet and Internet2 bandwidth; replacing outdated wireless access points and increasing coverage; upgrading outdated edge network, and replacement of low functioning cabling. We are also working to provide anywhere access to high end modeling, design, and computational applications and to expand our computer repair locations to better serve students, faculty, and staff. We also deployed Office 365 to allow students to collaborate and share academic work with faculty, fellow students and staff. The service includes Office Online (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and OneNote), 1TB of OneDrive storage, Yammer, and SharePoint sites for all users.

Since the University is a public institution, there is no super ordinate entity. UA continues to carry a relatively high debt service, due primarily to the "New Landscape for Learning" initiative. Most of the debt is backed by restricted revenue sources (i.e. fees) within auxiliary operations. The repayment sources for General Receipts Bonds (GRB) Debt Service, which has all been issued at a fixed rate, is 22% general fund, 61% auxiliary, 14% facility fee, and 3% capital component. This debt service was refinanced for one-time savings of \$7 million to stabilize the FY 2016 budget.

The university is making strong strides to better collaborate with the regional community, especially after the recent two years of different leadership. Attributed in part to recent actions by President Wilson, scholarship giving through the first three months of the fiscal year totals \$1.98 million, a 50 percent increase over the same period last fiscal year. This includes both endowed and non-endowed scholarships accounts, as well as the newly launched Making a Difference and Moving Forward scholarship campaign. Cash and pledges are up 19 percent over the first three months, and annual-

fund giving (telemarketing, direct mail and e-giving) is up 39 percent compared to the same timeframe of the previous fiscal year.

The University is able to successfully execute its vision and strategies through the efforts of a well-educated workforce. A majority of our staff members have received either post-secondary technical or college-level training. The employment category designated as contract professionals includes full-time or part-time non-teaching professional personnel. The minimum requirement for this employment category is a baccalaureate degree (3359-22-01). In addition, many contract professionals hold masters degrees (58%) and some hold doctorate degrees (11%). Staff employees at The University of Akron can be either Classified or Unclassified. Both categories have University rules that define minimum qualifications for each job title. Both the Unclassified plan (3359-25-07) and the Classified plan (3359-25-06) state that the University shall establish, modify, or repeal, by rule, a job classification plan for all positions, offices, and employments in the unclassified civil service and classified civil service, respectively. Job specifications include minimum qualifications and requirements.

The academic preparation of our workforce is supplemented by ongoing professional development during their years of service at the University. In addition to on-the-job training and courses offered by the University free of charge to all employees, faculty and contract professionals attend and/or present their work at state, regional, national and international seminars and conferences. Many of our staff employees earn technical certifications that allow them to work on certain types of equipment (computers & lab) or professional certifications that enhance their skill set or are required for them to perform their job (e.g. Health & Safety and the skilled trades). All faculty and staff also benefit from a generous tuition remission plan, for themselves and their dependents.

The University has processes in place for monitoring expenses. The University has a rule that requires quarterly financial and investment reports to the Board of Trustees. The financial report includes an analysis of current year actual spending versus projected spending based on the approved budget. This report includes auxiliary funds as well as restricted and capital expenditures. The investment report provides quarterly updates on investment balances and rates of return for both operating funds and endowments. In addition, staff evaluate budget activity every month and update the Finance & Administration Committee and the Board of Trustees on the status at most meetings that fall in between quarterly reports.

The process is fairly traditional in that it is incremental. The current year budget is the base for the coming year. Increases and reductions generally are determined based on projected revenues for the coming year. Unfortunately, in the current economic environment reductions have been more common than increases. However, within this environment academic units have been treated as a higher priority than support units. To the degree academic units have experienced reductions, such reductions have been considerably less than those in support units, and have come primarily through normal attrition. The budget process includes significant dialogue with each college and division as the budget is being developed. To the degree there have been reductions, the Deans and Vice Presidents have the opportunity to explain the ramifications of those reductions and are given considerable discretion to determine where best to make adjustments. Funding has been added to support the most critical needs and strategic initiatives.

To further understand the situation of budget planning, it is necessary to note that in the past ten years, six individuals have held the CFO position, four regular appointments and two interim appointments. The budget process has changed over time in response to varying leadership initiatives in the OAA

and Finance and Administration as well as the current budget climate.

The University's budget development process is now in transition. The University Council (UC) Budget and Finance Committee is a fairly new constituency to this process. The committee was created in early 2012. It had some input into development of the FY2013 budget, but its role is still evolving. The present CFO has made significant steps towards developing an effective budget process. At the request of the new University Council's Finance and Budget Committee, he prepared a ten year detailed review of the finances of the university and used it to make a presentation to the university community. This is an excellent basis for building a future budget process with a substantive role for the UC Finance and Budget Committee.

Most recently, the group has agreed to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of a budget system that recognizes unit-level performance and continues in a learning phase. These recent developments indicate a developing strength in transparent, broad-based budget planning. There are several constituencies and groups that are also involved in the development of the budget process, including the Vice Presidents, Deans, UC Budget and Finance Committee and the Integrated Financial Planning Group. How their role will be integrated with that of the University Council Finance and Budget Committee is yet to be determined.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Argument

Since the 2015 HLC Focused visit, UA has made progress in shared governance on campus. In addition to ratifying five union contracts through 2020, the principal improvement was finalizing bylaws for the University Council (UC) by the UA Board of Trustees (BOT). The UC and its standing committees are now in operation as the principal institution of shared governance on the campus, including representatives from most constituency groups.

For the last two years, the BOT supported a number of new initiatives recommended by then President Scott Scarborough. Many of these initiatives were unsuccessful, due in large part to the lack of consultation with campus constituencies. Alerted to these problems by the existing shared governance bodies and other stakeholders, the BOT made adjustments in this approach, culminating in the resignation of President Scarborough and the appointment of President Matthew Wilson. The BOT's engagement in shared governance continues to evolve.

Strategic planning and budgeting processes are areas that need further strengthening, including within regard to shared governance; this challenge is recognized across the campus and improvements discussed in response to Criteria 5.C are under active discussion and consideration.

The BOT agendas and minutes reveal appropriate exercising of its oversight roles, including finance and academics, as well as fulfilling the Board's legal and fiduciary responsibilities. Trustees are informed regarding specific laws and University rules affecting the governance of the University, including Ohio's ethics laws and all other relevant provisions of its revised code as part of their initial orientation to the Board. Further, the Board Secretary also serves, among other roles, as the institution's General Counsel, an Assistant Attorney General of the State of Ohio and Chief Ethics Officer of The University. In those representative capacities, he is an officer of the state and The University. By having a Board Secretary who serves those multiple roles, the Board has immediate access to resources and the independent advice and counsel necessary to help enable them to recognize, consider and analyze risks and opportunities appropriately and to apply regulatory and statutory requirements to both the issue at hand and the process for decision-making. The BOT continues to follow procedures established in 2011 that improved its operations. These changes included a streamlined committee structure, regularly scheduled committee meetings, substantive presentations of relevant information, and a greater focus on strategic issues pertaining to the

university's core mission and finances.

In August 2016, the BOT gave final and official approval to the University Council (UC) and its bylaws. The development of the UC began in 2008 and it began functioning in November 2011. Over the next several years, the UC, BOT and others proposed, reviewed, and revised the UC bylaws. Even in the absence of approved bylaws several aspects of shared governance were practiced through sustained interactions between the administration and UC committees.

Board Rule 3359 10-01 established the UC as the primary institution of shared governance. It defined shared governance as: "The university council will operate under the principle of consultative decision-making whereby the opinion and advice of the university council membership are sought, but decision-making authority remains with the board of trustees and its appointed agent, the university president. Thus, the university council will function in a manner consistent with information sharing and discussion rather than joint decision-making. The university council provides open lines of communication and informs university administration on matters of planning, policy, and programs that are pertinent to the fulfillment of the university's mission. University council recommendations shall be referred to the president, as provided for in these bylaws. The faculty senate remains the sole body which proposes curricular and academic changes to the board through the president."

In exercising shared governance, the UC is: "the representative and legislative body of the university that deliberates and makes recommendations to the president on matters such as strategic planning, university policy, and other substantive matters that pertain to the strategic direction, and operations of the university..." Furthermore, the UC is to contribute to "ensuring that university policy is based on sound principles of shared governance, sound reasoning and adequate information."

The UC's 27 voting members are broadly representative of the campus community, including faculty senate, deans, vice-presidents, department chairs/school directors, contract professional advisory committee (CPAC), staff employee advisory committee (SEAC), graduate student government (GSG) and undergraduate student government (USG). The same groups are represented on the UC's eight standing committees. The UC executive committee is "responsible for agenda-setting and coordination of the work of university council to facilitate deliberation, communication and action."

The UC standing committees are:

(a) Student engagement and success committee; (b) Information technology committee; (c) Budget and finance committee; (d) Physical environment committee; (e) Communications committee; (f) Recreation and wellness committee; (g) Talent development and human resources committee; and (h) Institutional advancement committee. During the fall of 2016, the UC and its standing committee were functioning and all set goals for the next year. A few of the recent activities made possible by involvement of the UC that have/will positively affect the University as a whole are: the budgeting process discussed above; facility usage/space allocation decisions; the forthcoming tobacco free campus initiative; and the retention and completion plan.

The University is required to include an embedded monitoring report on shared governance within this assurance argument for our February 2017 comprehensive evaluation visit. Due to the nature of the issues facing the campus over the past two years, we include a summary of major governance-related events below as part of this required report.

In the Comprehensive Evaluation Report on the University of Akron dated April 10, 2013, the site

visit team noted that “The university continues to make progress on governance and administrative structures and processes and consultation on academic matters,” but that “There continues to be a need for attention to the role of shared governance groups in planning, particularly with respect to administrative and budget/fiscal operations”. More specifically, the Focused Visit Report described three key structures in shared governance: Akron-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement, Faculty Senate, and University Council.

A key area of concern was the development of the University Council (UC), planning for which had begun in 2008. The site visit team recommended a focus visit in the spring of 2015 to evaluate the UC and other aspects of shared governance. In 2013, the UC proposed University Council By-laws for consideration by the Board of Trustees. The Focused Visit Report dated March 17, 2015 noted that although UA had taken active steps to improve shared governance, the arrival of a new president made an evaluation of progress in shared governance premature. It recommended another focused visit in the spring of 2017.

Scott L. Scarborough became the sixteenth president of the University of Akron on July 1, 2014 (UA Chief’s New Rules). He quickly implemented a series of top-down budgeting and planning efforts (Scarborough First-year Timeline). First, Scarborough proposed a “strategic direction” document to each of all the degree-granting colleges and sought reactions from the college leadership. After revisions, the faculty of each college was asked to approve the document (College Strategic Plan Summary). Second, Scarborough asked the president of the Faculty Senate, the president of AAUP, and a representative of department chairs on the University Council Budget and Finance Committee to join him and the university budget director in a six-month reviewing the institution’s finances (President BOT Report June 2015). Third, Scarborough convened special meetings with representatives of key constituencies on and off campus to review UA’s strategic plan, Vision 2020 (President BOT Report February 2015).

In June 2015, the Board of Trustees approved Scarborough’s initial plans for the institution. The centerpiece was a rebranding the university as “Ohio’s Polytechnic University,” supported by a proposed three-year budget (New Budget). The new budget included eliminating 215 administrative positions and the allocation of \$10.8 million for strategic initiatives (U. of Akron Will Cut 215 Jobs). Among the new initiatives were an online general education program (Stirring Fear and Hope), a center for data science (Center for Data Science), and hiring of “success coaches” (President BOT Report June 2015). As part of the budget plan, Scarborough froze all carry-over funds, a dramatic change in the operation of the university. Two examples are particularly relevant to shared governance and the topic of faculty research: start-up funds committed to faculty and indirect cost funds that result from outside research grants.

Overall, Scarborough's plans were very unpopular in the community and on campus. The lack of appropriate faculty input was a major factor: the president was unable to build support for these initiatives and major flaws were not addressed or corrected (UA President meets with Faculty Senate). The faculty reacted to the inadequacies of the new top-down budgeting and planning efforts by voicing its opinion through established campus channels.

An initial indication of faculty opinion was a September 2015 survey by Akron-AAUP that found some 80% of the faculty disagreed with the statement that “shared governance is working well” on campus and also lacked confidence in university’s strategic planning and budgeting process; similar results obtained in a spring 2016 faculty survey.

On November 5, 2015 a motion passed in Faculty Senate to form an ad hoc committee to consider a vote of no confidence in President Scarborough (FSMin2015-11).

On December 7, 2015, Dr. Terrence MacTaggart, Senior Fellow, Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, and Mr. Brent Schrader, Assistant Director, Association of Government Boards of Universities and Colleges, visited campus and met with various governance groups with regard to the University Council Bylaws ([UC timeline](#)).

On February 4, 2016, the Faculty Senate voted no confidence in President Scarborough and asked him to meet with the Senate to discuss issues of concern ([FSMin2016-02](#)).

Also on February 4, the department chairs and school directors sent a letter to the UA Board of Trustees recommending a change in leadership due to the damage to scholarship due to the President's policies ([Chairs and School Directors – letter to BOT 20160204](#)).

On February 27, 2016, 15 present and emeritus Distinguished Professors sent a letter to the UA Board of Trustees asking for a meeting to discuss “rebuilding the University of Akron by seeking input from throughout the campus and community” ([Distinguished UA Professors](#)).

On April 14, 2016, the University Council sent a [letter to President Scarborough and UA Board of Trustee Chair Jonathan Pavloff](#) regarding the AGB consultant’s recommendation on the University Council Bylaws.

On May 5, 2016, the Faculty Senate voted to censure President Scarborough for the lack of response to the February 4 vote of no confidence ([FSMin2016-05](#)).

On May 11, 2016, Akron-AAUP and the UA Board of Trustees agreed to contracts covering the period July 1, 2015 through December 31, 2020 after lengthy negotiations, to bring more stability in our faculty ranks. The new contracts established a new mechanism for shared governance--the Labor-Management Bargaining Unit Composition Policy Committee--to discuss the composition of the bargaining unit between tenure and non-tenure track faculty and other long-term structural issues that are not the purview of the Faculty Senate or the University Council. So far the work of the new committee has been productive.

On April 13, 2016 and May 31, 2016 respectively, the BOT ratified union contracts with the Communication Workers of America (CWA) and Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) to provide increased stability in our workforce.

On May 16, 2016, President Scarborough appeared before the Faculty Senate to address the vote of no confidence ([FSMin2016-05](#)).

On May 19, UA formally announces the dropping of "Ohio's Polytechnic University" branding campaign, and on May 26, the success coaches contract was not renewed, both major Scarborough initiatives ([The Buchtelite](#)).

On May 26, the Department Chairs and School Directors approve a "get well plan" for the university ([Chairs and School Directors – UA Get Well Plan 20160526](#)).

On May 31, 2016, the UA Board of Trustees accepted President Scarborough's resignation; Interim Provost Ramsier assumes the duties of president without change in title ([UA Chief's Resignation](#)).

On June 6, 2016, Interim Provost Ramsier announced the formation of a "tiger team" -- a group of faculty, staff, students and administrators to "develop actionable plans to assist in numerous efforts, including enrollment, University governance and finance" ([tiger team formed](#)). He also engaged Ernst

& Young, from which a team of experts worked to provide an independent analysis of the financial state of the institution.

On June 16, 2016, UA Board of Trustees invited representatives of the Faculty Senate, University Council, chairs and directors, Akron-AAUP, and college deans to meet and discuss the selection of interim president.

On June 20, 2016, the tiger team began meeting and formed five subcommittees: enrollment, communication, cost savings, new revenue generation, and shared governance (tiger team starts).

After interviewing four internal candidates recommended by campus constituencies, the UA Board of Trustees named UA Law School Dean Matthew Wilson Interim President on July 11, 2016 (UA in the Wake of Scarborough's Exit).

On August 16, 2016, the UA Board of Trustees approved the University Council Bylaws (Board Book for August 16). This action completed the establishment of the University Council.

The tiger team met throughout the summer of 2016, solicited input from the campus community, and issued a set of recommendations to President Wilson in August 2016 (tiger team recommendations). Some of these recommendations have been implemented, whereas others have not to-date (e.g., How the trustees can repair relationships at UA; What the UA Trustees don't get).

On September 7 and 8, 2016 the AAUP Chief Negotiator and the Interim Senior Vice President and Provost offered joint information and question and answer sessions regarding the revised AAUP Article 13, Retention, Tenure, and Promotion and on September 14 and 15, 2016, on Article 18, Professional Development Leave. Recordings of these sessions are available on the Provost's website under the Governance tab: <http://www.uakron.edu/provost/>.

On October 19, 2016, the UA Board of Trustees invited representatives of the Akron-AAUP, University Council and Faculty Senate to meet with them to orally discuss the BOT's intent to remove the interim titles from Matt Wilson and Rex Ramsier, an action that the BOT subsequently took. The Akron-AAUP was first notified of this pending action on October 14th, with the Faculty Senate and UC invited on October 16th. A faculty survey done by Akron-AAUP indicated that more than 80% of respondents thought that shared governance required searches for both positions (Akron-AAUP – survey on interim titles). Both University Council and the Chairs & School Directors, through University Council representatives, conveyed in writing their concerns regarding the process used in removing the interim titles (Chairs and Directors email to UCEC 20161019, UCEC October 19 BOT letter). The BOT maintains that the enrollment and financial challenges facing the institution called for swift action to stabilize the senior leadership team. Neither President Wilson nor Provost Ramsier received an increase in compensation or other “perks” when the interim titles were removed.

On November 21, 2016, the Ernst & Young report initiated in June 2016 and a plan to address our financial/enrollment challenges was released. The effort that led to this report was supported financially by an anonymous donor, with the intent to have the entire campus and community understand the reality of our finances as described by an independent and credible source, and to therefore buy-in to a plan to address the situation by establishing new initiatives and making tough decisions to improve the University's situation going forward.

At its December 7, 2016 meeting, the BOT passed a resolution to end the Gen Ed Core pilot program. This action followed an analysis of student performance data in these courses vs. those offered in different modalities, and was consistent with a previous recommendation by the Faculty Senate to the administration to end the pilot early. In addition, a contract was entered into with Ernst & Young to

help the University implement a transformation plan to address our financial challenges.

The Board of Trustees has delegated the setting of academic requirements and policies to the Faculty Senate, Graduate Council and the faculty of the colleges. In addition, many policy matters have come before the Faculty Senate in recent years via one of its standing committees, the Academic Policies Committee. These bodies are inclusive and transparent, and permit dialogue and engagement of many campus constituencies. The APC process in particular has been very effective for many years, and is one of the continuing highlights of shared governance at UA.

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Argument

In recent years, the colleges have engaged in strategic discussions, prioritization and investments. Some successful outcomes of this process include new facilities and academic initiatives such as the Leadership Institute, Corrosion Center, Center for Dance and Choreography, and Center for Biomimicry. In addition, the University has embarked on new satellite/partnership programs, professional master's degrees, a Saturday MBA, etc. Other successful outcomes in the last five years include an increased focus on student success and retention, and the recruitment of Honors students. Several University programs such as Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Counseling Psychology, Polymer Science, Chemical Engineering, Undergraduate Business and MBA, and Law have received national recognition. To enhance campus life for our students, the University invested in new residence halls. In addition, there has been recent development of private housing around campus.

More recently, significant progress in shared governance concerning planning and budgeting has been made. The UC Budget and Finance Committee has been better engaged with the Chief Financial Officer in the budget review/development process. In Summer 2016, the CFO accepted almost all the suggestions offered by the Budget and Finance Committee to address the budget challenges in Fall 2016, even though the BOT had not approved the UC Bylaws. The BOT approval of the University Council Bylaws formally clarified the roles of the stakeholders (administration, academic leadership, faculty, staff, contract professionals and students) in the planning process. After several deliberations, this committee has determined that the most effective role for this group is to serve as a three to five-year strategic planning team. To accomplish this objective, the committee aims to discuss all aspects of the university budget. <https://www.uakron.edu/uc/committees/budget-and-finance.dot>

The short-term objectives for the UC Budget and Finance Committee are:

- Embed the budget-process in the long-term planning and align the outcomes with the institution's mission.
- Ensure that the process is executed in a timely, efficient and predictable manner.
- Ensure that all constituencies are appropriately engaged in the process beyond their representation in the committee.
- Assure that the budget decisions are connected to revenue consistent with academic quality and aligned with the three-year strategic direction of the institution.

The University Physical Environment Committee has also been very active since the creation of University Council, and is dedicated to strategically planning the use of UA's facilities. It has met monthly to review campus projects that include change of space assignments, campus renovation and new construction projects, issues of classroom quality, parking and campus safety. Most recently it has been involved in reviewing the Capital Planning Budget and beginning in September 2016 has an official formal role in the space allocation approval process. The committee makes recommendations to University Council with votes taken to approve or not approve recommendations that are then sent to the President. The committee has presented a formal process for reviewing new projects that has been approved by the University Council. The Committee, for example, has played a role in evaluating potential plans to move the Science Library and took an active role in encouraging faculty involvement in the design of the renovation of Zook Hall for the College of Education and in monitoring the planning and current renovation/construction of the Law School. The main focus of this committee is to see that there is appropriate consideration of academic planning coming together with campus planning and facilities management.

The proposed planning and budget process, and the new program review cycle, both discussed previously in this assurance argument, require that assessment be considered by units annually. As our culture of assessment continues to grow, these are the mechanisms through which planning and budgeting shall be directly influenced by the results of assessment. Accountability and continuous improvement are key to the future success of UA as we move forward to stabilize our enrollment and finances, invest in key strategic areas, and grow our revenue streams and impact on the community.

The perspectives of internal constituencies are well represented through the Faculty Senate, the Graduate Council, the University Council, the Council of Deans, the Caucus of Department Chairs and School Directors, and the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Governments. In addition, many departments and colleges across campus have active advisory councils drawn from professionals in local businesses and the community. Notable examples include our College of Business Administration, College of Engineering, and College of Applied Science and Technology. Many employees also serve on boards and advisory groups at local, regional and national levels, and these involvements inform and enhance our academic offerings.

Everyone with a stake in the future of UA is involved in our planning, as evidenced by the numerous town hall meetings held by President Wilson in the past few months. In addition, as noted in his November 21, 2016 communication which accompanied the release of the Ernst & Young report, "... The plan we have developed to meet our challenges can best be summarized as Stabilize-Invest-Grow. We can further stabilize our institution with a variety of initiatives, including a voluntary buy-out program to reduce personnel expenses, enhanced retention and recruitment initiatives (international focus and enhanced evening/weekend/online offerings), increased fundraising efforts, remodeling of our scholarship system, updating of our graduate assistantship program, and enhancements to the efficiency of our systems and processes. There is much to digest, and our initiatives still need to be fleshed out. We will continue discussions with University governance groups, other segments of the UA family, and community."

The University is responding to changing allocations from the State. For example, the subvention (or State Share of Instruction, SSI) model has changed from a focus on enrollment to a focus on course completion and degree attainment based on series of cost allocation models. During Summer 2016, the Provost's office formed an interdisciplinary SSI working group to better understand the nuances and at-risk factors that make up the SSI distributions – this information is being used to project our subsidy over the next few years in conjunction with the work of Ernst & Young on the transformation plan. We are making a more concerted effort to project the enrollment trends and develop contingency plans for resource allocation. Current efforts are also underway to secure additional funds for

scholarships (most of our “scholarships” are actually tuition discounts, at the present time).

Other changes at the State level also impact the University’s finances and operations. For example, the State froze tuition and fees during this biennial budget (and will likely do so for the next), and this needs to be considered as we plan ahead. Whereas the CCP program is good for high school age students and their families – college credits while in high school at no cost to them – universities receive very little revenue (as low as \$40 per credit hour) for the effort it takes to deliver these courses. These students, if they then matriculate to UA (about 1/3 do so at present), should have a higher chance of graduating on time since they have already earned some college credit, and the University should see the associated revenue in the future.

Thus, instead of receiving full tuition and fees for introductory freshmen-level courses (an input or enrollment based mode of operation), we need to focus on retention and completion so that we receive the SSI when these students graduate (the funding formula is weighted 50% on degree completion – an output). Changes such as these at the State level mean that UA needs to change its mode of operation, and provide staffing and support to improve our student persistence and graduation rates. UA recently raised the level of compensation of our non-bargaining unit advising personnel, as well as for the bargaining unit faculty as a means to this end, as we feel that advisors and faculty have the greatest impact on student retention and progress to degree.

As part of our plan to address our enrollment/financial challenges, there is a new focus to enhance international partnerships, recruitment and campus globalization. This initiative plays off of the strengths of President Wilson, who has significant experience overseas, but also to the interests and motivations of many of our faculty. The University also plans to return to its historical commitment to non-traditional and older adult students, including an expansion of our evening and weekend offerings. The latter is very timely, as it has recently been announced that Stark State College (SSC), a community college located in North Canton, Ohio, has received support from the State of Ohio and local government officials to build a new campus very close to the UA main campus. Whereas some see this situation as leading to increased competition for UA to attract students from the Akron/Summit County area, others see it as an opportunity for cooperation, collaboration and mutual benefit for both institutions - and as positive for the citizens of our region. In actuality, it is probably a combination of all of the above, but nevertheless a reality that needs to be built into our planning processes. During Summer 2016, Interim Provost Ramsier reached out to Stark State to begin discussions of opportunities to collaborate via 2+2, 3+1 and other possible options. This outreach included a visit to the SSC main campus by all of our deans, to meet their counterparts and begin curricular mapping and other strategic activities.

Sources

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5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Argument

On the academic side, evidence of performance is found in several ways. First of all, numerous programs pass rigorous discipline-specific accreditation processes and the units maintain documents to support these efforts. In addition, we now have a campus-wide assessment plan as discussed in Criterion 4 above that is part of our continuous improvement process. The School of Law has seen a significant turnaround in its ability to attract students, all traceable to the changes made in organization and operations. Whereas our classroom and teaching laboratory utilization has dropped recently (due primarily to building new facilities but now having fewer students), we have seen an increase in the percentage of student credit hours taught by full-time faculty and the retention rates of some categories of students as shown previously.

On the non-academic side, we have improved our performance in many ways, as summarized in a recent efficiency report submitted to ODHE. A very large (@ \$60 million) energy efficiency project is just nearing completion, which should pay for itself over time by savings on utilities. This effort involved replacing numerous fixtures with new high efficiency options, including lighting, toilets, and all of the chemical fume hoods on campus (a large 24/7 operational expense if not properly monitored/controlled). Finally, the recent agreement with Aramark has improved our dining services from a food quality standpoint as well as fiscally for the University. These are a few examples of substantial initiatives for continuous improvement. Our plan going forward with the assistance of Ernst & Young will result in savings and efficiencies as well, primarily in the areas of contracts and purchasing.

The BOT initiated a change in leadership in Summer 2016 to better address the University's needs and future directions, as delineated in the timeline provided under Core Component 5.B above. This is a very good example of an institution that learns from its mistakes and makes the necessary corrections. The formation of the tiger team and the engagement of Ernst & Young during the transition period were initial steps to regain trust amongst various UA stakeholders – an effort that has significantly expanded under the tireless leadership of President Wilson. The facilities planning and budgeting processes now formally involve the UC, which will continue to leverage institutional expertise and experiences for improved planning and operations. Many colleges are now also actively using institutional research and enrollment management data to guide decisions on academic planning, staffing and to improve student retention. This work is being accelerated through the efforts of Ernst & Young.

In recent years, UA has become much more reliant on the use of data to inform decision making and planning. Our enrollment projections for budgeting purposes have been very accurate, and we track our financial performance using KPMG and Ohio Senate Bill 6 (SB6) metrics. We recognize that the KPMG metrics are part of the financial indicator review process at HLC, and there is a concerted

effort underway to ensure that fiscal decisions stabilize or improve these metrics without compromising the mission of the University. The Ernst & Young report validates that, although difficult at the time, decisions made in the past two years to control expenses have had a stabilizing effect on our overall finances and cash reserves. However, the report also indicates that a change in the mode of operation of the University is needed in order to stabilize and prosper. This calls out for a revisiting of our mission and focus as an institution, as discussed under Criterion 1.

Sources

- 3A1_AccreditationbyCollegeandSchool_09162016
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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Summary

The University of Akron has demonstrated that, in the face of tumultuous times, it has the ability to understand and communicate the issues at hand, to formulate a forward-looking plan to resolve the issues, and to implement that plan and monitor progress to success. We have, therefore, supplied sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the institution meets Criterion 5, without concerns.

Sources

There are no sources.