

University of Akron

HLC ID 1599

STANDARD PATHWAY: Mid-Cycle Review

Visit Date: 2/13/2017

Dr. Matthew Wilson
President

Mary Vanis
HLC Liaison

Wesley Tschetter
Review Team Chair

Judy Colwell
Federal Compliance Reviewer

Bret Danilowicz
Team Member

Claudia Douglass
Team Member

Effie Kritikos
Team Member

Denise Mallett
Team Member

Scott Olson
Team Member

Elizabeth Towell
Team Member

Context and Nature of Review

Visit Date

2/13/2017

Mid-Cycle Reviews include:

- The Year 4 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Biennial Review for Applying institutions

Reaffirmation Reviews include:

- The Year 10 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Review for Initial Candidacy for Applying institutions
- The Review for Initial Accreditation for Applying institutions
- The Year 4 Review for Standard Pathway institutions that are in their first accreditation cycle after attaining initial accreditation

Scope of Review

- Mid-Cycle Review
- Federal Compliance
- On-site Visit

There are no forms assigned.

Institutional Context

The University of Akron is a public research university with a broad offering of undergraduate and graduate programs. It was founded in 1870 as Buchtel College, thus it has served the region for 147 years. The campus is located in the Akron, Ohio, metro area. The institution serves a vital component in the economic vitality to the region's economy by serving 23,000 students with 300 associate, bachelors, masters and doctorate and law degree programs with accreditations by 26 professional agencies.

An eleven person Board of Trustees, including two non-voting student trustees, are appointed by the Governor of Ohio. Trustees serve one nine-year term. The Board appointed President Mathew Wilson on an interim basis in July 2016 and on a permanent basis in November 2016. Since 2000, the University of Akron has invested in 22 new buildings, acquired additional property and made many additions and renovations to its facilities.

The State of Ohio appropriation to the institution is in large part based on institutional performance in numbers of graduates and course completions, which has significantly changed the admissions and resource base. Enrollments have decreased from approximately 30,000 students to 23,000 students. Declining financial resources continue to be a challenge.

Interactions with Constituencies

University of Akron: HLC Site Team meetings were conducted with the following persons and groups.

Senior leadership such as Vice Presidents were present at two or more meetings, depending on the subject area. Meetings were held by the team chair with President Matthew Wilson and Senior Vice President & Provost Rex Ramsier. President Wilson and Dr. Ramsier attended several other sessions. The Ohio Department of Higher Education was represented by Associate Vice Chancellor Dr. Stephanie McCann who attended various meetings including the opening and concluding sessions.

By position:

- President
- Senior Vice President and Provost
- Vice President and General Counsel & Secretary, Board of Trustees
- Vice President for Finance & Administration & CFO
- Chief of Staff, Presidents Office
- Associate Vice President, Chief Communications and Marketing Officer
- Director of Athletics
- Chief Audit Executive
- Associate Vice President, Enrollment Management
- Director, Government Relations
- Vice President Development
- College Academic Deans, Associate Deans, Vice Chancellor and Vice Provost (over 20 in various sessions)—Includes Dean of Wayne College
- Board of Trustees Budget Committee (seven) followed by the Board of Trustees (nine). Attending one or both were the Board of Trustees Chair and Vice Chair, the Academic Committee Chair, student non-voting Trustees and Advisory Trustee.
- Consulting Firm Ernst and Young—three consultants to U of Akron
- Academic Advisors, College Program Specialists and Advisors, and Assistants in several different sessions
- Senior Associate Director, Transfer and Adult Enrollment Center
- Assistant Director, Adult Focus
- Director and Associate Director, Veteran/Military Student Program
- General Education Committee (four)
- Director and Associate Director Financial Aid and Bursar (three)
- University Director of Assessment and Accreditation and various college assessment officers, including Wayne College representative
- Writing Committees for all five Criteria in separate sessions by Criteria (15 in the five sessions)
- Graduate Council (ten)
- Faculty Senate
- University Council (UC)—including chair and representatives of Contract Professional Committee (CPAC) and Staff Employee Advisory Committee (SEAC). A separate meeting with the UC Budget and Finance Committee (nine) including faculty and administrative representatives.
- Contract Professional Advisory Committee (16)
- Staff Employee Advisory Committee (six)
- Representatives from three of the five collective bargaining (Union) groups including AAUP
- Co-Deans--Law School (search process under way)
- University Communications and Marketing staff (six)
- Representatives of Flexible Learning Opportunities (seven)
- Assistant, Associate and Directors of Student Recreation, Wellness and Health Services programs
- Students attended several sessions appropriate to the topic and setting such as two Trustee members
- Faculty attended many sessions where they are committee member

Wayne College Campus

- Budget Manager and Facilities Manager
- Assistant Dean - Student Success
- Chair of Faculty Committee
- Director of Instruction

Additional Documents

- "University of Akron Strategic Planning and Budgeting Processes: Proposed Enhancements" (adopted by University Council 2/7/2017)
- Ernst and Young "Statement of Work #2"
- Ernst and Young "University of Akron Discussion Document November 21, 2016"
- Photos and Biographies of the U Akron Board of Trustees
- Graduate School Strategic Plan March 28, 2016
- Institutional Review Board (IRB) Manual
- Faculty Senate Chronicle for February 4, 2016
- Minutes of the University of Akron Faculty Senate February 4, 2016
- University of Akron Student Rights and Responsibilities Code:
(<https://www.uakron.edu/dotAsset/1344514.pdf>)
- University of Akron Institutional Review Board Manual
http://www.uakron.edu/research/ora/docs/IRB_ApplicantManual_May%202016.pdf.

Additional sites visited-

- http://www.chronicle.com/interactives/ncaa-subsidies-main#id=details_200800
- <http://www.uakron.edu/hr/benefits/policies/>
- <http://www.akronaaup.org/contract/Contract2/Articles/Article15.pdf>
- <https://www.uakron.edu/ir/>
- <http://www.uakron.edu/hr/benefits/education-benefit/>
- <http://www.uakron.edu/bot/>
- <http://www.uakron.edu/hr/jobs.dot>
- <http://www.uakron.edu/uc/>

Wayne College

- Ruffalo Noel Levitz 'Strategic Planning Overview'
- Student Satisfaction Inventory
- Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)-2015 Key Findings

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.)

Rating

Met

Evidence

The mission of the University of Akron (UA) has evolved over the years through a series of strategic plans designed to address the changing climate in higher education. The process then and now understands the necessity for inclusion of all university stakeholders. The materials, website as well as conversations with the president, provost, other University employees, students, and Board members indicate the mission is widely understood and accepted.

The latest strategic plan, *Vision 2020: Towards 150 Years of Distinction & a New Gold Standard of University Performance*, was adopted in 2012. The planning for a new strategic plan began but was put on hold after the installation of the interim President in July 2016. There are pressing budgetary matters that must be addressed but there appears to be a consensus from many members of the University, that there needs to be a clear path and plan to ensure efforts and decisions are aligned with the collective body. Spring 2017 has been identified as the beginning of the strategic planning reinstatement.

UA supports their mission of staying commitment to teaching, research and service in the arts, sciences, and professions with several examples of programs that exemplify their mission and excellence. Two of those examples include the "Above the Law" magazine top #50 ranking of Akron's Law School and being ranked among the nation's top ten Industrial/Organizational Psychology programs for over twenty years.

UA's student support services play an instrumental role in the forward progress of its students and demonstrating its mission "to develop enlightened members of society". The *Akron Experience* brings together the resources of the University and its community and business partners to create a personalized path for each student, from the first day on campus through a lifetime of achievement.

This program offers 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. The Akron Experience coupled with initiatives and events that are in place promotes student success in Residence Life and Housing, Student Life, Academic Achievement Programs and similar programs.

The enrollment profile is consistent with its mission, which is defined as a metropolitan university serving the community, region and beyond. The Enrollment Management team shared that they are expecting the adult student population to continue to grow. The University has emphasized flexibility as it adjusts to the needs of students with expanded support services, evening and weekend courses, veteran services and online courses and programs. In addition to the anticipated growth in the adult population, students as a whole, who often represent the community in which the University of Akron presides, enter the University across a spectrum of academic preparation, from assistance to workforce development skills, to associate degrees to baccalaureate degrees of varying competitiveness, to world-ranked graduate programs.

UA has provided sufficient examples and measures of inclusion and transparency in their written policies and practices, including the role of the University Council, which makes recommendation to the President on matters such as strategic planning, university policy, and other substantive issues. The Budget and Finance Committee studies, monitors and makes recommendations to the University Council on the development of university budget, finance and purchasing policies and resources allocations in collaboration with staff, contract professionals and faculty in appropriate department.

Based on the above evidence, Core Component 1.A has been met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Evidence

The University of Akron's (UA) mission is clearly articulated publicly through the website as well as policies and procedures found in other rules and documents. The current mission has not been significantly altered in the last twenty years. There has been references made about the "never fully implemented" strategic plan, Vision 2020. Being that the strategic plan has to be a catalyst in realizing the mission of the institution, this is an area that the University may consider monitoring or addressing because members of the campus community shared an interest in have a clear and obtainable plan.

UA has stated that its priority is to ensure student success. The University has demonstrated that students are provided 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. The faculty, staff and Student Affairs team supported the examples provided in the documents and additional material that was provided. The University has also expressed interest in providing a more global and multicultural mindset. UA believes this can be achieved by exposing their students to international learning opportunities, teaching and learning of world languages and cultures across a variety of disciplines and fostering intellectual and cultural interactions on campus and abroad. In the campus interviews many believe the campus is on pace to realize many of these examples in the coming years. The University's efforts are applauded for what appears to be an ambitious set of goals. Currently the multicultural mindset initiative is not fully realized.

UA mission identifies its scope and intended constituents "...pursues excellence in undergraduate education and distinction in selected areas of graduate instruction, inquiry, and creative activity." The mission statement is supported by the university's application of research and economic development, interdisciplinary programs and curricula and collaboration among scholars, teachers, researchers and students. The admissions requirements for undergraduate and graduate students has helped shape the student body that they serve, as well as their academic programs being clearly outlined in the

undergraduate and graduate bulletins, and on individual unit websites.

Based on the above evidence, Core Component 1.B. has been met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Evidence

The University of Akron (UA) understands their relationship between its mission and the diversity of society. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society by incorporating the concept of inclusive excellence. At UA, inclusive excellence is demonstrated by the university's intentional efforts to create a framework for excellence that reflects diversity at its core while linking the quality of the educational experience. The University's Chief Diversity Officer, who was recently hired and joining the team in the coming weeks, holds a prominent administrative level position at the institution.

The University stands by and enforces its Affirmative Action Policy, which rejects any unlawful discrimination against any individual in employment or in its programs or activities. The University of Akron prohibits sexual harassment of any form and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual and racial or ethnic orientation in employment and admissions.

UA's commitment to diversity is evidenced in their many programs and initiatives that demonstrate the embodiment of diversity while welcoming the inclusion of all UA students to learn, grow and appreciate each other. Their activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves. The *Akron Experience* and *Inclusive Excellence* philosophy encapsulates the University's comprehensive approach to building a holistic environment of education. The framework of this philosophy allows for the University's appreciation of the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Activities Fair and Concert; China Week; *Rethinking Race: Black, White, and Beyond* (a two-week event); Ohio Latino Education Summit; Latino American Symposium for Education and Research; Women Trailblazers and alike.

The Office of Talent Development and Human Resources along with campus-wide programs and resources, such as The Office of Multicultural Development; PASSAGE Learning Community; Peer Mentoring Services; LGBTQ Equality Committee; The Black Male Summit; The Counseling & Testing Center; Military Service Center; The Pan African Center for Community Studies; The Office of International Programs; study abroad programs; The Confucius Institute and alike, demonstrates the University of Akron's ongoing commitment to diversity.

Based on the above evidence, core component 1.C has been met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Evidence

The University of Akron (UA) has committed to its mission to develop enlightened members of society by being the catalyst in students participating in internships, public service projects and volunteerism. Although some of the activities fulfill academic requirements to enhance their professional skills and experience, the majority of the community-based involvement is due to a strong commitment, by students and faculty, to service 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 faculty, staff and the Student Affairs team have assisted in coordinating many of the initiatives for students. Faculty and staff themselves, along with the students, are also personally involved in community outreach programs, such as the 12th annual Make a Difference Day, the seven Law Clinics which include the Immigration Clinic and Domestic Relations Clinic; Center for Literacy; Ohio STEM Learning Network; the Nursing Center or Community Health; Career Services; Informed Citizen Akron and alike.

UA's commitment to educational responsibility and ensuring student success is founded in its commitment to the success of each student as evidenced by persistence, graduation, the quality of programs offered by faculty and staff and the retention of nearly 73 percent (up 5.9% compared to four years ago) of UA students from the 2015 cohort continued from their first year of study into the second year. The institution is preparing its students to be critical thinkers as they move through their programs of study and transition from academia to the workforce or graduate school. The conversation had with University team members confirmed that these efforts are being supported by the University which continues to develop multifaceted strategies that foster student success which include: early intervention strategies, support services via advising, financial assistance and scholarships, and academic and social support.

UA's commitment to education and engagement include their ability to respond to the needs of regional constituencies. This has been demonstrated via certificate and customized workforce development and continuing education course offerings. An example is the LEAN Certificate Program. This program is designed to bring about rapid, planned, controlled, and measured change improvements 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.

The institution also includes and relies on external advisory boards for many of the colleges, departments, and degree programs. These groups provide valuable insight to the faculty and academic administrators in the development and updating of curricular offerings. One community supporter shared that she has hired several student interns and continues to be impressed with the skills and academic preparation of UA students. This community supporter has also committed to naming a scholarship and providing two years of funding (with the support of other community business partnerships) for the salary of a visiting professor to support and continue to build a pipeline of talent coming out of UA.

Based on the above evidence, core component 1.D has been met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Evidence

The University of Akron (UA) has demonstrated that the mission is clear and articulated publicly. UA has supported their mission of staying committed to teaching, research and service in the arts, sciences, and professions with several examples of programs that exemplify their mission and excellence. UA is committed to mission and the diversity of society. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society by incorporating the concept of inclusive excellence. Inclusive excellence creates a framework for excellence that reflects diversity at its core while linking the quality of the educational experience. The University stands by and enforces its Affirmative Action Policy and prohibits sexual harassment of any form and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual and racial or ethnic orientation in employment and admissions. The University has committed to its mission to develop enlightened members of society by being the catalyst for students participating in internships, public service projects and volunteerism. UA's commitment to education and engagement include their ability to respond to the needs of regional constituencies. This has been demonstrated via certificate and customized workforce development and continuing education course offerings. The institution also includes and relies on external advisory boards for many of the colleges, departments, and degree programs. These groups provide valuable insight to the faculty and academic administrators in the development and updating of curricular offering.

Based on the evidence documented in each of the core components, the University of Akron has met Criterion 1.

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.

Rating

Met

Evidence

There is abundant evidence that the university acts with integrity in terms of its academic, personnel practices, and financial functions as revealed through its structures and processes, which are well documented on its website and in printed materials. The Board of Trustees at the University of Akron consists of eleven members who are appointed by the Governor of Ohio. Two members of the Board are ex-officio and are current students at the University. The other members serve staggered nine years terms. The Board appoints the President of the University, makes other appointment determinations, determines compensation, grants degrees, formulates University policies and procedures, sets tuition and fee rates and provides budgetary oversight. The Board of Trustees has oversight for all financial expenditures at the University of Akron and engages in a robust annual budgeting process. Policies are in place for mandatory bidding for contracts over certain amounts and limits on individual purchasing authority. The Office of Research Activity monitors contract compliance with University of Akron's ethical research standards.

Policies and procedures at the University are well documented and available on the institution's web site. This includes regulations with respect to the Board of Trustees, the President, Deans of the degree-granting colleges & schools and staff/contract professionals. These documents were all updated in 2015.

The University has an elected Faculty Senate which handles internal curricular and co-curricular affairs. The Faculty Senate meets at least four times a semester. Their responsibilities include determining student admission policies and approved courses of study, subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees. The Faculty Senate also manages University-wide committees and communication with the University President and Provost. The University of Akron faculty are covered by an AAUP bargaining agreement which provides clear and transparent guidance on contractual matters relating to hiring, grievance procedures and tenure and promotion.

A formal process is in place for both student and employee misconduct. For students, there is an online referral form as part of the Maxient reporting system. Students have the option of an appeal if

they disagree with a conduct decision, in which case they may present their position to a five-person panel of faculty and students. Employees are given extensive training on ethics and conduct issues through the Office of General Counsel. There are processes in place to detect and report misconduct by employees, and two specific instances were cited which resulted in appropriate discipline. The university also has a well-developed process for handling Title IX complaints. Students making a complaint can immediately be moved to new course sections or dorm rooms if they wish, prior to an investigation being undertaken. The rights of the complainant and the rights of the accused both factor into the process. The standard used by the university is "more likely than not", the evidentiary standard commonly used in higher education institutions in sexual assault cases and a standard entirely appropriate for the University of Akron.

Transparency on financial matters was also evident. In order to give the university community confidence that financial data was being reported transparently and accurately, the university engaged Ernst and Young to do a financial analysis. This process was supported through a donor gift. The process is ongoing and currently involves mapping financial options for a balanced budget. The Ernst and Young recommendations and analysis are available to the public on the University of Akron website. In addition, the university's audited financial statements are publically available on the website. The university has guidelines governing contracts and purchases to ensure public accountability. Purchase or contracts valued more than \$50,000 are required to follow a public RFP process, and all such transactions are reported regularly to the Board. Purchases over \$500,000 require Board approval. Because Board meetings are generally public, these actions are accountable to the public.

It should be noted that GASB-68 affected the CFI score of the University of Akron. In a post-GASB-68 era, their CFI score calculates at a level below 0, if GASB-68 is excluded, the score is above 1. The FY16 CFI for the University of Akron is well within the normal range for the last 5 years. Therefore, what may appear as a precipitous drop in their CFI score is primarily due to a change in the accounting standards regarding Ohio's pension program.

Based on this evidence, Core Component 2.A. is met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Evidence

There is sufficient evidence on websites, in printed materials, and in the experiences described by students, employees, Board members, and community members to ensure that the University of Akron accurately represents itself to the public. Information is available and up to date on the University of Akron web site concerning admissions, costs, available scholarships, degree programs, and transfer equivalency.

Student scholarships have performance requirements, and the university is forthright about them, though it is difficult for a student to regain a scholarship once it has been forfeited due to the student's failure to meet those academic requirements. In response to this, the university is implementing a "guaranteed scholarship" program for Fall of 2017 whereby a student may keep his or her scholarship solely by being in good academic standing.

There is also evidence that the university presents itself clearly and completely to students in terms of the fees that it charges, or when it has not done so, that it takes corrective action. The Institution recently rescinded a new fee that had been charged for upper division coursework that had been included in the FY2016 budget due to changes in state funding and after discussion with the Ohio Department of Higher Education regarding alternate means to maintain a balanced budget. The University publicly communicated its plans to rescind this fee.

On another occasion when the university did not accurately inform students about the cost of attendance, the misstep was quickly discovered and corrected. To be specific, in 2015 the president at the time quietly implemented a \$50 student fee without using the normal consultation processes. Students learned of this fee when they saw it on their tuition bills. Faculty and staff members joined the students in expressing concern about and opposition to this fee, and worked with the Office of the Ohio Chancellor to prevent implementation of the fee. The fee was never implemented. This is evidence that the culture and tradition of the University of Akron expect and demand transparency in communicating the cost of attendance to students.

The University properly displays its relationship with the Higher Learning Commission and the Ohio Department of Higher Education. University-wide and discipline accreditation, as well as the review timeline for each program, are posted on the University web site.

Based on this evidence, Core Component 2.B. is met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Evidence

There is sufficient evidence that the University of Akron's Board of Trustees acts independently and in the best interests of the students and employees of the university. The evidence can be found in state statutes that guarantee such independence, but also in materials and structures in place at the university and in the experiences described by committees involved in shared governance and by the Board itself. For example, there is clear evidence that the University of Akron's Board of Trustees is chartered appropriately so as to ensure compliance with Criterion 2.C. Ohio State Statutes O.R.C. 3359.01 and O.R.C. 3345.021 give the Board of Trustees of the University of Akron authority to act autonomously and in the best interest of the institution. O.R.C. 3359.01 stipulates that Board members will not receive compensation other than expense reimbursement, so as to prevent conflicts of interest. O.R.C. 3345.021 states that the Board "shall have full power and authority on all matters relative to the administration of such college or university," thereby assuring its autonomy. Minutes of the Board meetings and financial records of Board activities provides evidence that University of Akron is adhering to these statutes.

Team members reviewed materials from Board of Trustees meetings at the University of Akron web site and the team met with a majority of the Board at a lunch meeting during their visit. It is clear that the Board focuses on priorities to preserve and enhance the institution. The website, which is dedicated to the Akron Board of Trustees, also includes links to Board subcommittee assignments, bylaws and legislative authority, and university rules. Regular Board meetings while in public session can be observed through live streaming video. The eleven member Board meets five to six times a year. The Board formulates university policy, rules, and regulations, but under its general supervision it delegates administrative authority relating to the implementation of any such policy, rule, or regulation to the President or to other administrative and faculty personnel as appropriate.

The Board, the University Council, and senior members of university leadership clearly understand the roles and interdependence among these groups, but the role of the Board is not widely understood

among all constituent groups. Efforts are underway to provide better communication between the Board and the campus. After a 12-year gap in direct conversations between the Board and members of the university community, the Board has recently begun consulting with the Faculty Senate and University Council in a process called "Information Sessions."

These "Information Sessions" are uniformly regarded as a step in the right direction by leaders of the faculty, staff, and administration, but there is concern among some members of the university community that these will not become institutionalized and may only have been an attempt to demonstrate progress to the HLC, not a sincere change in how the Board interacts with the campus. This will require further attention of the Board and university leadership. Generally speaking, members of the university community would like more interaction with the Board, which could take a number of forms at the Board's discretion.

The Strategic Issues subcommittee of the Board considers and makes recommendations to the Board concerning the organization of the Board and the individual involvement and fiduciary and legal role of trustees; the bylaws regarding the operation of the Board and its committees; the board's operation and matters related to Board and trustee assessment, trustee selection and trustee orientation; the expectation of trustees' comportment within the board and with the President and internal and external constituencies; the avoidance of conflict of interest or commitment or the appearance of same; Board size, composition and organization; calendaring of university events for the Board, its committees and individual trustees (including commencement); trustee roles and learning and professional development for trustees; a community business collaboration policy; and other matters assigned by the Board or the Chair of the board.

Based on this evidence, Core Component 2.C. is met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

There is sufficient evidence that the University of Akron ensures freedom of expression for its employees and students, both in terms of the systems and structures the university has in place and in the experiences described by members of the university community. Included in the AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement, bargaining unit faculty at the University of Akron are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties. The principles of academic freedom and freedom of inquiry shall be interpreted to include freedom of expression in both traditional print and newly emerging electronic formats such as the creation of digital images, web sites, or home pages. Bargaining unit faculty are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter that has no relation to their subject.

In conversation with faculty and student the team saw no evidence that there were restrictions on freedom of expression or the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. Specific examples where freedom of expression was preserved include the ability of the Faculty Senate to express a Vote of No Confidence in former University of Akron leadership, as evidenced by the minutes of Faculty Senate meeting from February 2016. These minutes also reveal a healthy amount of debate and discussion without fear of retaliation. The university does not confine freedom of expression to limited "Free Speech Zones," and during the team's visits a healthy amount of student club activity and expression were evident in and around the Student Center.

There is evidence that students at the University of Akron have safeguards in place to assure their freedom of expression. These rights are codified in policy. For example, the preamble to the Student Rights and Responsibilities Code states: "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."

One example of freedom of expression in action has been the student newspaper, The Buchtelite, which historically has experienced no editorial interference from the university administration, and which covered the difficult times of former leadership without interference. Unfortunately, according to its December 8, 2016 edition, the student newspaper is on indefinite hiatus; the primary reasons given in the article are that the students who had been leading the paper were either graduating or doing a study-abroad experience, and that the newspaper had struggled to find a permanent faculty advisor.

Members of the Graduate Council and University Council uniformly reported that they experience freedom of expression. It was reported by these groups that there had been, at times in the past, fear of retaliation for expressing concerns, but it was reported by both groups that these concerns no longer apply.

Based on this evidence, core component 2.D. is met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Evidence

There is sufficient evidence that in terms of research, student conduct, and employee conduct, the University of Akron satisfies Core Component 2.E. The Vice Provost for Research oversees the integrity of ethical research and scholarly practice at the University. The Office of Research Administration oversees and ensures compliance for sponsored projects at the institution. In 2001 the university adopted a policy allowing employees who create new technology to hold personal financial interests in companies engaging in commercializing their inventions following a change in Ohio state law.

The University enforces policies on academic honesty and Integrity through the Code of Student Conduct. The Department of Student Conduct and Community Standards provides the following civility statement, "The University of Akron is an educational community of diverse peoples, processes and programs. While all of us have our individual backgrounds, outlooks, values and styles, we all share certain principles of personal responsibility, mutual respect and common decency."

Students are given frequent and abundant training on how to avoid plagiarism and other aspects of academic conduct, including "information literacy" sessions held by the Library. Composition courses teach ethical uses of source material. Syllabi across the university contain a standard statement about plagiarism and academic misconduct. Many courses make use of technology such as "Turn It In" to safeguard against plagiarism.

The Code of Student Conduct, which was revised in 2015, clearly defines "cheating" and "plagiarism" among other concepts. It describes in detail the process that will be used to investigate cheating and plagiarism, including the rights and responsibilities of students and others during that process. It describes the process for appealing decisions.

Employees are also held to standards of conduct. The University of Akron has an Institutional Review Board designed to ensure ethical treatment of human and animal subjects. A Manual to guide researchers in IRB expectations and processes is publically available at the University of Akron website. The AAUP Faculty collective bargaining agreement has guidelines governing academic misconduct and the processes used to address it. One example is a recent disagreement in the

Department of English, where faculty members disagreed about the intellectual property ownership of a specific collaborative work. This was adjudicated and resolved using the university's processes.

Based on this evidence, Core Component 2.E. is met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Evidence

There is abundant evidence that Criterion 2 is met. The university acts with integrity in terms of its academic, personnel practices, and financial functions as revealed through its structures and processes, which are well documented on its website and in printed materials. The University of Akron's websites, printed materials, and lived experiences as described by students, employees, Board members, and community members demonstrate that the university ensures that it accurately represents itself to the public. Ample documentary and anecdotal evidence exists to demonstrate that the University of Akron's Board of Trustees acts independently and in the best interests of the students and employees of the university. There is sufficient evidence that the University of Akron ensures freedom of expression for its employees and students, both in terms of the systems and structures the university has in place and in the experiences described by members of the university community. In terms of research, student conduct, and employee conduct, the University of Akron conducts itself within HLC expectations, as evidenced by policies, procedures, and the testimony of constituent groups. Therefore, Criterion 2 is met.

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).

Rating

Met

Evidence

The University of Akron (UA), a member of the University System of Ohio, offers more than 300 undergraduate and graduate programs. UA offers programs in the Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering, Health Professions, Law, which receive accreditation through external agencies. These particular programs undergo periodic review to ensure that course offerings and faculty credentials continue to meet agency standards. Furthermore, 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."

Program student learning outcomes have been developed that set the direction and purpose for teaching and learning activities, and the benchmarks for accountability at the program level. Accreditation reports for a variety of disciplines also confirmed professional standards were met, which also tap into discipline-specific student learning outcomes. The accreditation process also ensures that programs are appropriate for their respective level of study.

A review of syllabi, program requirements, the university catalog, and interviews with faculty indicate that course and program requirements are current and appropriate for their respective level (e.g., undergraduate, graduate) of study. UA utilizes an on-going curriculum review process for new or modified courses and/or programs. Procedures are in place to ensure that proposal preparation is appropriate for approval of student proficiencies. Faculty members approve proposals in the Faculty Senate. When degree programs are new or have significant modifications faculty must seek approval from the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor's office.

The UA reviews curricular proposals for change in delivery mode. UA assures the quality of online courses by reviewing curriculum and courses by a team of specialists that support faculty with design and development (25 master reviewers). UA participates with other institutions in the University System of Ohio that formed the Ohio Quality Matters Consortium (61 participating institutions in Ohio). Ninety-six UA faculty members have completed Applying the Quality Matters Rubric. So far, a total of 39 online courses have been recognized by Quality Matters, with additional courses in the review process.

Program quality is consistent across locations per multi-location interview information. UA has no contractual arrangements, and all consortial programs are joint with other Ohio universities, which are also accredited by the HLC.

Based on the above evidence, Core Component 3.A. is met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Evidence

General education coursework, discipline-specific courses and co-curricular experiences are designed to prepare students for success and “to achieve their goals through dynamic opportunities.” Faculty members mentor graduate and undergraduate students and encourage them to be involved in research and creative activities. Students pursuing a baccalaureate degree are required to complete the General Education program, which is comprised of 41 credit hours and consists of courses that are rigorous and consistent in nature with standards of good practice for intellectual inquiry and broad learning. Students choose courses in eight categories to provide a balanced introduction to all academic areas and provide the basis for future study. General Education course work must be completed by the first few years of study. Students must meet prerequisites needed for those General Education program courses. Honors College students complete a general education sequence that is modified (less rigid with more electives). Eighteen general education credits are needed for Associates programs. The breadth and depth of the general education learning goals are appropriate and supportive of the institution's mission in creating “opportunities for cognitive, social, and personal development.”

Faculty members are currently identifying courses that meet the criteria. On May 1, 2014, the Faculty Senate approved a new General Education Learning Outcomes & Implementation Plan. This plan was designed to include “skills across the disciplines of social sciences, sciences, arts [and] humanities; and includes the following learning outcomes:

- communication skills and information literacy;

- critical thinking and complex reasoning skills;
- knowledge of the fine arts, humanities, natural sciences and social sciences; and
- responsible citizenship in an interconnected world.

The new General Education program was approved by the Faculty Senate in December of 2016 and is planned to start in Fall 2017.

Human and cultural diversity is targeted by Learning Outcome 4, which is “responsible citizenship in an interconnected world.” Student survey data revealed negative comments around diversity, specifically comments around race, disabilities and LGBTQ issues arose. For example, a student commented, “Focus more on minority student satisfaction, lack of attention will lead to loss of diversity on campus. I know this as I am a student leader for minority groups, who have discussed taking their education and funds elsewhere.” On-campus interviews confirmed that an Office of Multicultural Development exists, whereas LGBTQ does not have a formal office. A Chief Diversity Officer has been hired and will be starting in the coming weeks. An Office of Accessibility staff member reported that office staff persons provide technology and support services for students who require accommodations. On-campus interviews revealed that an informal support system comprised of faculty, administration and staff members is in place for individuals seeking support.

Scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge are a focus of professional and contractual requirements (RTP guidelines) of University tenure-track faculty members. Faculty members are evaluated annually regarding teaching, research, service, and professional conduct. Their colleagues, chair, dean and provost according to the collective bargaining agreement evaluate them during years four and six. Each department creates its own guidelines, which are approved by the provost. In addition, their colleagues, chair and dean evaluate their work annually internally to their college. Scholarship and creative work by faculty are also part of the annual peer review process for merit raises.

Faculty offer undergraduates support and facilitate research projects across a variety of programs. 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. Over 390 honors theses have been uploaded into the university’s institutional repository since late 2014. The College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering’s 11-week summer competitive research experience for undergraduate (REU) students includes a fundamental research question within the broad disciplines of polymer science and polymer engineering. Interns 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 encouraged and supported by the new Center for Experiential Learning, or EX[L]. 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 in Advanced Spanish for the Health Professions Certificate.

Faculty members working with graduate students must meet required criteria established by the University for graduate faculty status. By-laws for graduate faculty include on-going contributions to advancement of disciplinary knowledge and creative work. Academic departments, colleges, and the Graduate School decide graduate faculty status. The criteria are even more demanding for faculty members advising students on doctoral dissertations. Graduate students 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.

Based on this evidence, Core Component 3.B. is met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Evidence

The number of faculty, the teaching load for each, and the student-to-faculty ratio appear to be conducive to teaching and learning and for involvement in other activities that promote quality teaching and learning. Faculty must demonstrate quality and current qualifications in their discipline to be considered for merit increase, promotion, tenure and retention. Part-time faculty are also assessed regularly on the quality of their classroom instruction. Student services staff experience regular performance reviews to ensure that they are meeting performance standards. While the Teaching and Learning Center has been closed, the UA provides resources for both faculty and staff development through other venues.

Hiring policies ensure verification of faculty credentials and all hiring actions require approval of the Office of Academic Affairs, recommendation of the President, and final approval by the Board of Trustees. In accredited programs, credentialing criteria are also informed by the standards of the outside accrediting agencies. 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 every five years of graduate faculty status.

UA offers professional development or faculty improvement leave to provide faculty the opportunity to strengthen their areas of expertise. Any full-time faculty member with at least seven years of teaching employment at UA 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. UA provides a variety of campus resource options to faculty (both full- and part-time) and staff for professional development. 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.

UA employs 582 tenured/tenure-track faculty, 231 full-time non-tenure-track faculty, 56 full-time visiting faculty, and 33 administrators with faculty rank. Tenure/tenure-track faculty members teach approximately 63% of the total semester credit hours, with the remainder taught by part-time faculty and graduate assistants. The 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 reveal an increase in part-time and full-time non-tenure-track faculty over time, and an overall decline in staff across student support areas. Each department or unit defines the necessary credentials for each non-tenure-track faculty position in collaboration with Talent Development and Human Resources at the University (TDHR). TDHR evaluates candidates' credentials for both part-time and full-time positions to ensure that minimum qualifications have been met.

UA employees are offered on-campus professional development sponsored through Information Technology Services (ITS), TDHR, and Software Training Services. In addition, staff members in academic departments and service units may also be granted leave time for professional development activities. Staff members have annual performance reviews. 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.

The Office of Research Administration also offers development opportunities to faculty, with an emphasis on research activity. 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.

Based on this evidence, Core Component 3.C is met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Evidence

The university understands its students and responds with a range of support services to assist students in achieving their potential as college students. The team confirmed that a variety of student support services are available. While student survey results indicated some dissatisfaction with advising, in-person student interviews showed high satisfaction with advisement. UA has organized many student support services under the Division of Student Success, which performs ongoing formative assessment and results are noted in annual reports.

UA provides support services to various student populations (e.g., Office of Multicultural Development, Transfer Student Services, Office of Accessibility, Counseling and Testing Center, and Counseling). Tutoring services are also provided through the Center of Academic Support.

A centralized Office of New Student Orientation (NSO) guides new undergraduate students from matriculation through their first semester on campus. NSO offers a standardized orientation, in addition to a customized orientation programming designed for specific populations, such as active military and veterans, adults, transfer students, post-secondary students, and minority students. Students first meet with an academic advisor during orientation. The advisor determines appropriate placement and coursework for each student based on ACT/SAT, placement tests, Advanced Placement and prior coursework.

Current UA students have access to specialized remedial courses offered through Developmental Programs, face-to-face Math/Writing labs, and on-line tutoring. The first year experience, Akron Experience, course is also available to students. Students registered with the Office of Accessibility receive reasonable accommodations based on their specific needs.

Faculty and professional advisors assist students to plan and choose appropriate courses, including

prerequisites. UA supports an intrusive advising model. Every undergraduate student at UA 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. Academic advisors utilize Educational Advisory Board (EAB) analytics software as a tool to identify the need for individual outreach to a student. GradesFirst is a student support software system also utilized as a retention tool for progress reporting.

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. Portable computer and multi-media production equipment are available for checkout in the University Libraries for use by currently enrolled students. Bierce Library has been developing a scanner service involving objects/3D models. Also planned for Spring 2017 is a new One Button video recording studio and a craft room. The School of Law and Wayne College have administratively separate library units.

UA is a member of OhioLINK, Ohio's statewide consortium of 89 academic libraries. Information literacy is included in the new General Education Learning Outcomes. University Libraries' information literacy program supports the institutional mission and goals of the University of Akron and Learning Outcome 1 (communication and literacy). LibGuides are provided in general education speech courses and faculty members collaborate with subject specialist librarians. University Libraries has also developed a comprehensive program of information literacy instruction based on Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) standards. University Libraries has been involved in assessment as part of the nationally funded, Assessment in Action project, where data driven library competencies are a focal point.

Library Services also supports students in their understanding regarding plagiarism to guide students' effective use of informational sources by dedicating a webpage specifically on the topic, "Plagiarism: Avoiding Plagiarism." UA has a Student Conduct Policy (Student Referral Form, Academic Misconduct Notification Form, students contacted by Department of Student Conduct and Community Standards and University Hearing Board Student Application) regarding Academic Integrity. Conversations with library faculty confirmed that Information Technology Services (ITS) manages and maintains the technological infrastructure on campus, including kiosks, computer labs, and mobile laptop carts. In addition, faculty and students have access to a variety of software packages and 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.

Based on this evidence, Core Component 3.D. is met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Evidence

UA offers a wide range of co-curricular engagement opportunities and learning experiences including those focused on civic engagement, service learning, and community service. Student participation in co-curricular activities has increased. Student Life offered 424 programs with 51,414 participants. Student organizations have grown to 346 serving 13,470, and membership in Greek life to 886 students. In 2015-2016, residence halls offered 2,620 programs to 27,093 attendees.

In addition, Student Recreation and Wellness Services (SRWS) provide numerous programs and events. For example, they 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. The SRWS 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! Also, Outdoor Adventure received the 2015 Gold Award for Outdoor Adventure Adaptive Paddle Program.

University of Akron's Interfraternity Council (IFC), Panhellenic Council (PHC), and National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) received national 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. In addition to AFLV, PHC was selected as a recipient of the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) College Panhellenic Achievement Award.

In an effort to use of assessment for program improvement in a student support services area, the Department of Residence Life and Housing (RLH) 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 assessment tool analyzes 16 factors and combined factors for overall resident satisfaction, overall resident learning, and overall program effectiveness and allows UA to measure its effectiveness relative to selected

benchmark institutions.

Results reveal 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. Dining change recommendations were made to Dining Services and a new dining service was contracted. 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. Responses showed SRWS facilities had statistically significant higher response for questions relating to attending and continuing in UA related to recreation facilities. 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. In 2012, the Department of Student Life established Serve Akron to focus and reinforce student service and engagement in the community. 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. In addition, 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.

Based on this evidence, Core Component 3.E. is met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Evidence

The University uses both internal and external review to provide students with the education and training needed to succeed. Student learning outcomes have been developed for all programs and set the direction and purpose for teaching and learning activities, and the benchmarks for accountability at the university level. A review of syllabi, program requirements, the university bulletin, and interviews with faculty indicate that course and program requirements are current and appropriate for their respective level (e.g., undergraduate, graduate) of study.

General education coursework, discipline specific courses and co-curricular experiences are designed to prepare students for success. Human and cultural diversity is targeted by Learning Outcome 4, which is “responsible citizenship in an interconnected world.” Courses that meet the criteria for fulfilling this outcome are currently being identified. Scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge are a focus of professional and contractual requirements (RTP guidelines) of University tenure-track faculty members. Faculty offer undergraduate and graduate students support and facilitate research projects across a variety of programs.

The number of faculty members, the teaching load, and the student-to-faculty ratio appear to be conducive to teaching and learning, and for involvement in other activities that promote quality teaching and learning, including assessment. Faculty members must demonstrate quality and current qualifications in their discipline to be considered for merit increase, promotion, tenure and retention. Part-time faculty members are also assessed regularly on the quality of their classroom instruction. Student services staff experience regular performance reviews to ensure that they are meeting performance standards. UA provides resources for both faculty and staff development.

The university understands its students and responds with a range of support services to assist students in achieving their potential as college students. The team confirmed that a variety of student support services are available to various student populations. Faculty and professional advisors assist students to plan and choose appropriate courses. University Libraries serves the main campus from three locations and have onsite, portable and electronic information and research resources for students, faculty and staff.

UA offers a wide range of co-curricular engagement opportunities and learning experiences including those focused on civic engagement, service learning, and community service. 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. The university has maintained a strong focus in community engagement of its students.

Based on this evidence, Criterion 3 is met.

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).

Rating

Met With Concerns

Evidence

The University of Akron (UA) has planned an academic program review process for both graduate and undergraduate programs. Graduate programs will be reviewed according to the Ohio Board of Regents' Chancellor's Council on Graduate Schools every 7 years and undergraduate programs will be reviewed on a published cycle every 5 years. Although review of the first programs is scheduled for Spring 2017, from discussions with the Assessment Committee the process has not begun. To meet state requirements, graduate programs have undergone program review in the past and specialized accreditation provides an external review of those programs. Future commission review should include a substantive review of UA's program review documents to ensure that all programs and all modalities of delivery are reviewed and that action plans are developed for program

improvement. An interim report demonstrating the program review of undergraduate programs without specialized accreditation is required.

UA has a Credit by Transfer and/or Examination policy that is published in the bulletin and on its website. Credits are accepted from accredited institutions and are transcribed with a grade of D- or higher. A comprehensive Transfer Module Grid shows transfer to other Ohio Universities and Colleges. CLEP and other advanced standing credit is only accepted from accredited Ohio universities and colleges; CLEP or other advanced standing credit from non-Ohio accredited universities and colleges must be justified with additional original documentation. Credit is also accepted for prior learning and, after ACE evaluation, for military training. The institution has fully described in its bulletin and on its website how it accepts credit from foreign institutions and how it requires verification of credit and degrees earned from foreign institutions.

The institution maintains and exercises authority over prerequisites for its courses, rigor of courses, and the curriculum through policies stated in Board rule 3359-2-02 Organization of Instruction. Although this rule gives final authority to the Provost, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee provided assurance that the faculty has full control over the curriculum. Board rule 3359-20-05.1 clearly delineates the process for curricular changes including the levels of approval.

All syllabi are maintained by the department office. Expectations for student learning are set by the individual faculty member and therefore, content and rigor may vary from section to section or location to location. UA is encouraged to develop a process for the approval of master course syllabi and to establish a designated repository for them. A single master course syllabus would lend more consistency to course content and expectations.

The university maintains adequate facilities necessary for teaching. The AAUP contract clearly specifies hiring processes and faculty qualifications as well as the reappointment, tenure and promotion process for tenure and tenure-track faculty. The institution will need a Qualified Faculty policy as of September 2017. Additional Board rules specify qualifications of part-time faculty, graduate faculty and faculty of the Law School. Dual credit is regulated at the state level where responsibilities for the school superintendent and the university chancellor are identified. Qualifications of faculty teaching in the high school are ensured by the university offering the credit and are codified through an MOU with the school district.

Currently UA holds 26 specialized accreditations. All programs appear to be in good standing. The College of Education programs have requested an extension of time to submit accreditation documents to CAEP and have a site visit expected October 2017.

The university evaluates the success of its graduates through a graduation survey, the First Destination Survey, given just prior to graduation and a follow-up online survey and phone call six months after graduation. Graduate programs and other programs with specialized accreditation monitor placement and employment more aggressively.

Because the core criterion for program review has not been fully met, Core Component 4.A. has been met with concerns.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

An interim report documenting that program review of all programs is underway. Evidence of program review of undergraduate programs that do not hold specialized accreditation is expected. In

the same report, provide an update on the continued progress of the assessment of General Education. The interim report is due by December 31, 2018.

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.

Rating

Met

Evidence

UA has recently developed a process for the monitoring of student learning. The Assessment Committee has verified that all programs have completed assessment plans and that they are consistently reporting data annually. The university has appointed an interim Director of Assessment to work with faculty to develop student learning outcomes, assessment plans and reports. Each department has a faculty assessment coordinator.

A template for both the assessment plan and report was prepared that outlined required components and guided programs in the process. Several assessment reports were reviewed. In some cases, data were analyzed at the program level and in others at the college level. Where assessment reports were provided, the assessment activities appeared to be well done and resulting in usable information for program improvement. The Assessment Committee reported several programs that have undergone revision as a result of assessment data.

The revised General Education Program is scheduled to be implemented in Fall 2017. General Education Learning Outcomes and Implementation Plan was developed which evaluates each area of general education every four years. The assessment plan depends upon student artifacts which are submitted and evaluated to assess student's writing abilities. The responsibility for academic program assessment rests in the college and for General Education with the (new) General Education Director.

According to the vice president for student affairs the institution assesses the impact of its co-curricular programs through student satisfaction surveys and participation logs.

Based on the above evidence, Core Component 4.B. has been met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.)

Rating

Met

Evidence

UA has clearly defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion articulated in the University Retention and Completion Plan. That plan also identifies several barriers to persistence and completion. First-year retention goal for 2014-2016 was met, the six-year graduation was nearly met while the job/graduate school placement rate exceeded the goal. Recent reductions in the staff of the Office of Institutional Research has hampered their ability to provide data to departments and programs. Only data for the Akron campus were presented with the exception of the IPEDS data which showed both the main campus and Wayne.

Although NSSE and ETS data are collected, and there are many programs available to assist students, it was not clear how these data are used for program improvement or how they are integrated into the admissions and advising process. The Inclusive Pathways approach to identifying student's preparation for success has allowed for scaled services to entering students. No impact data for specific programs such as the early access high school program, the LeBron James Family Foundation, the Akron Experience, or several other early intervention programs were provided, although first year retention rates improved from 2012-2015. The Finish in Time program may be effective in improving graduation rates.

The institution is clearly collecting and using national, standardized, benchmarked data to guide the improvement of its processes and approaches to student retention and completion. Best practices through the Office of Institutional Research appear to be in place.

Based on the above evidence, Core Component 4.C. has been met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Evidence

Since the last HLC review in 2013 and the focused site visit in 2015, the University of Akron has developed a plan for program review and assessment of student learning outcomes for all academic programs. The program review plan has not been implemented. The assessment of student learning outcomes has led to program improvements. In addition, UA has developed a plan to assess General Education and completed the assessment of student writing. UA uses both institutional and nationally-normed data to impact its planning and to promote student success. A process for systematic evaluation of co-curricular activities needs to be developed further and implemented. UA is encouraged to continue its use of data to inform university programs, student services, and student learning.

Based on the evidence documented in each of the core components of Criterion 4 and due to the Core Component 4.A. having been met with concerns, Criterion 4 has been met with concerns. As noted in Core Component 4.A. an interim report on Program Review is due to the Commission by December 31, 2018

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.

Rating

Met With Concerns

Evidence

At the present time, the University of Akron's resources are sufficient for its academic programs and its plans, by use of base and one-time funds, for maintaining and improving the quality of those programs into the future. Despite recent changes in enrollment, the University of Akron has the necessary funds, including access to one-time funds, and personnel sufficient to support its current operations. A strong piece of evidence is the university's 19:1 student to faculty ratio in fall 2016. However, the university's CFI index was negative in FY15 & FY16 (note that these same fiscal years have positive CFIs (1.0 or greater) without the inclusion of GA68). Current HLC guidance is that a monitoring plan must be in place for institutions with negative CFI's; the University of Akron has had two consecutive years of negative CFI's therefore this core criterion can only be considered met with concerns.

There are many signs that the university is working through its budgetary challenges. The University completed a campus building program "New Landscape for Living" from 2000-2016 during which numerous facilities were added or renovated, including an updated physical plant, new student union, and many new student support service facilities. There is ample lecture and laboratory space available for instruction; the university's utilization of this space being less than 75% of the state's target for these learning spaces. The university provides Office 365 to the entire campus community

including students, and software and IT hardware continue to be renovated or added across all campus units.

Several challenges face the University of Akron that intersect with its fiscal resources that support program quality, which include a new state higher education funding formula for appropriations (not advantageous to the University of Akron) and a marked decrease in freshman enrollment in Fall 2016.

Despite these significant challenges, the university has made necessary expenditure adjustments that minimizes the impact on academic programs. Planning for reduction in expenditure has occurred through the University Council, CFO, President and Board of Trustees, which can be evidenced by restructuring of debt, completing an energy efficiency plan, and the freezing of staff and administrative searches. Numerous initiatives are underway to grow enrollment with the intended outcome of growing new sources of income for the institution.

The University of Akron is part of the State of Ohio's public educational system, and therefore does not provide funding to a superordinate entity. While a decline in income has forced the university to make reductions in staffing and other expenses, the university provides several examples where educational programs are impacted less than support programs. Given the necessity to reduce expenses, the HLC team learned during the visit that academic programs have been impacted less by the reductions than support units; of the 200+ staff reductions at the institution, all but one were administrative or support staff in nature, maximizing the number of faculty remaining to support academic programs. Further, deans make the decisions where reductions are best implemented in their units to reduce their academic impact.

Staff are appropriately qualified and trained at the University of Akron. Exempt and non-exempt positions are clearly defined, and the university's policies and website reveal that job descriptions list detailed descriptions and required qualifications for the advertised positions. The Human Resources webpage documents ongoing training opportunities to employees, as well as some tuition remission towards academic courses. In the Facilities division, there is a staff apprenticeship program in the trades followed by ongoing professional development to keep them current in their practices; this includes learning best practices in preventative maintenance thereby reducing the accumulation of deferred maintenance needs of the institution.

The institution has a process in place for budgeting and monitoring expense. There has been frequent turnover in the CFO position, and with changes internal to the institution and from the state, the budgeting process has continued to evolve. Its most recent change has resulted in the CFO working closely with the University Council's Budgeting and Finance Committee to developing future budgets with input from other appropriate campus constituencies. Members of the Budget Committee reported that this was a good working relationship and that several recommendations of the Budget Committee were swiftly implemented by the CFO, including a change in how the cost recovery from federal grants was being handled, in freezing open positions, and in refinancing university debt obligations at more favorable rates. If this budgeting process became documented through policy, misunderstandings concerning the shared-governance aspects of campus finances could be avoided. Effective practices for monitoring expense are evidenced through policies found on the university's website, making expenditure reports publicly available (placing 10-year windows of expenditure on its website, presentations to campus committees), and regular expenditure updates to the Board of Trustees and reports to the State of Ohio.

Senior management is aware of the crossroads at hand to assure the long-term financial stability of the University. Significant future budget "cuts" are planned, but the University's senior management and deans are committed to maintaining quality programs. One-time resources to balance the budget are only available for one more, or at the most, two years (FY18 and FY19). Restoring the number of

academically qualified first time, full-time freshmen students to historical levels followed by sustaining undergraduate retention and strengthening graduate student enrollments are key aspects of assuring a tuition and fee income flow. Maintaining a management system of budgetary controls is essential.

Based on the above evidence, Core Component 5.A. is met with concerns.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

An Interim report documenting that the Institution has stabilized its on-going financial resource base funding and developed a long term plan for funding Maintenance and Repair of its Facilities.

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.

Rating

Met With Concerns

Evidence

The University of Akron's governance and administrative structures have undergone substantial changes over the past three years. Under the guidance of President Scarborough, from July 1, 2014 through May 31, 2016, campus leadership and the Board of Trustees provided ample evidence for concerns under this core component. While the leadership and collaboration exhibited by the current president of the institution (President Wilson) and the Board of Trustees are now making adequate progress on this core component, this change in leadership occurred only 8 months prior to the time of the HLC Team visit and ample opportunities for improvement remain apparent.

As part of its embedded monitoring report on shared-governance (recommended by HLC visiting teams in 2013 & 2015), the assurance argument provided a thoughtful walkthrough of the events that transpired under President Scarborough's tenure. From Board of Trustees minutes, meetings during the 2017 HLC team visit, and news located on the internet, the walkthrough provided by the assurance argument is an accurate portrayal of events. President Scarborough made decisions on the university's strategic plan, finances, and student support without approval of the faculty; yet such decisions were still supported by the Board of Trustees. These actions prior to May 2016 were clearly counter to the shared-governance expected under Core Component 5.B. Following President Scarborough's departure, the Board of Trustees involved internal campus constituents to refine the process to select the interims for president and provost, which was accomplished within two months of the Scarborough resignation. However, the selection of those specific individuals with the subsequent removal of their interim titles by the Board of Trustees did not occur with a search process involving campus committees. Questions can be certainly be raised whether the selection process of these two important positions met the principles of shared-governance. At the meeting with Board of Trustees budget committee, the leadership of the Board of Trustees stated that the U of Akron was placed in an urgent situation where it needed to act decisively to name a leadership team. They needed to lay the framework of a plan to correct the budget problems, gain campus and public acceptance of the stressors to the financial plight of the institution and approve pending internal governing matters

such as the role of the University Council. Despite this shared-governance challenge, much of the campus community indicated communication with the Board of Trustees has improved, and they seek continued opportunities for the growth of trust and collaboration. Comments at various meetings carried a common theme of improvements in the governance structure at this institution.

By way of history, the shared-governance structure was called into question when the collective bargaining unit, represented by AAUP, was established in 2003, just shortly before a HLC site visit. The AAUP leadership and Contract Professional Advisory Committee stated that communication was greatly improved. Regularly scheduled meetings established by the President and senior leadership are positive attributes to a collaborative working relationship to drive the destiny of U of Akron. Not all historic negligence in communication and governing trust has been overcome, but productive relationships exist with administration and HR. There is a new AAUP long-term agreement that unit members represented as fair with good contract administration. The team heard comments such as 1) meetings work well; 2) (leaders) seek out opinion; 3) more communication exists; and 4) 200% better than it was before due to change in senior administration with opportunities of Contract Professional Advisory Council to sit down with the president ("and will meet again in two weeks.")

Many others stakeholders, as evidenced in the 3rd party comments and during several on-site meetings with stakeholders, viewed these actions and others by the campus administration as insufficient to meet the level of shared-governance expected on a campus therefore mistrust remains. The Board of Trustees is knowledgeable about the University of Akron. The Board meets six times a year, and the meetings can be watched by livestream and the agendas and minutes of their meetings are available online to the public. As demonstrated in their meeting minutes and further verified in discussions with Board members during the site visit, the board is fully apprised of the finances of the university and provides appropriate fiscal oversight of the university. The bylaws and authority provided to the Board of Trustees by the State of Ohio is available on its website, and these practices are appropriate for providing guidance to a public university. Minutes provide evidence of the review of administrative, staff, and faculty hires, along with review of academic programs.

The assurance argument states "The Board of Trustees' engagement in shared-governance continues to evolve"; during the site visit, the HLC team learned that the Board of Trustees began having representatives attend Faculty Senate and University Council meetings to improve communication. In the interest of furthering shared-governance and transparency, the Board of Trustees introduced "Information Sessions" during the 2016-17 Academic Year. These sessions give leaders from the Faculty Senate and University Council the opportunity to interact with the Board on a pre-determined subject. The first "Information Session" focused on the costs and benefits of University Athletics. It was widely reported by university administrators, members of the Board, and leaders of the shared-governance process that this session was useful and effective. Another "Information Session" is planned for April 10, 2017. While a helpful mechanism for the dissemination of information and a public meeting by its nature, there was confusion among some campus constituents over who was encouraged to attend the information session; engagement with stakeholders may be increased through explicit invitations to groups vested in shared-governance at the institution. The Chair of the Board and campus leaders uniformly expressed the hope that these sessions would continue during AY 2017-18. Furthermore, members of the Board of Trustees, including the Board Chair, have begun attending Faculty Senate meetings to seek a better understanding of issues facing the university. The Senate has welcomed their addition. This is evidence that shared-governance and communication is improving at the University of Akron, but concerns were expressed during the site visit about the commitment of the Board of Trustees and the administration to these recent improvements.

It was only in August 2016 that the Board of Trustees approved the bylaws for the University

Committee, the intended committee structure to influence shared-governance through the institution. As evidenced during the HLC team meetings with campus constituents and on the university website, the UC is meeting regularly and proposing goals for the academic year. While the HLC team can document that such meetings have begun and planning is in place, few accomplishments can be documented to date given the very recent empowerment of the University Council. As viewed by department chairs and many faculty, requests made of the shared-governance bodies have not included how their recommendations may be used or otherwise modified after it leaves their hands; detailing the full process of how recommendations/resolutions will be subsequently used may improve trust in the shared-governance processes at the university.

The Faculty Senate has appropriate control over the curriculum. The "Curriculum Proposal System," a course and program software program developed in-house, is used to track approvals of changes to the curriculum. The system has sufficient transparency and oversight functions to ensure that curricular changes cannot be made without appropriate oversight. There are college and university curriculum committees to provide review and oversight. These committees also review pre-requisites, whether a course can be delivered online, and other aspects of course delivery. Leaders of the Faculty Senate asserted emphatically that the Faculty has the final say in matters of curriculum.

While the full engagement of internal constituents in shared-governance at the University of Akron has not been evidenced, there is evidence that significant changes have been made in policy and practice leading to large improvements in communication and decision-making at the institution. Based on these findings, Core Component 5.B. can be stated as being met with concerns.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

An Interim report is requested documenting that the Institution has continued to rapidly act on its plans for improving shared-governance structures and communication.

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.

Rating

Met

Evidence

Although not fully comprehensive, the University of Akron engages in systematic and integrated planning. As evidenced in their 2016 Affordability & Efficiency report to the Ohio Department of Education, plans linking resources to priorities have been developed across a range of university functions including procurement, administrative structure, and academics. While evidence of such smaller scale plans exist in the assurance argument and throughout the campus constituencies, the campus remains without a comprehensive strategic plan due primarily to the short tenure of its previous president. The lack of a strategic plan is causing frustration at the level of departments, as it is unclear where they should deploy their resources now to be best positioned for the university's goals a few years from now. Further, the tactical-based plans of the university aimed at stabilizing enrollment and expenditures do not clearly articulate the role of the research mission of the university; strategic planning to support the research mission is critical and would be welcomed by many constituents of the university.

The planning and budgeting process is integrated with the assessment of student learning. This was evidenced by terminating the General Education pilot program and the success coach program when each was found to be ineffective for improving student learning; funds were then deployed elsewhere to support effective programming such as salaries of advising staff. It is clear that there is room for improvement; this linkage has been demonstrated in some areas but is yet to be widely developed across academic areas. The linkage of assessment to budgeting does occur within the colleges separately, however integrating this process across the university should prove more effective.

The University Council, functioning since 2011 and only empowered with bylaws in 2016, has representatives from across stakeholder groups at the University of Akron ensuring that planning encompasses the institution as a whole. Each of the UC's eight committees developed prioritized, annual goals along with benchmarks for success. Many academic programs have advisory boards

folding external constituents into the planning process for those programs. During the site visit, most campus constituents expressed a feeling of inclusion in the university's planning and decision making processes; the exception was department chairs who provided several valid examples where their involvement could have improved the outcome of such decisions.

The State of Ohio changed its model for distributing instructional funds among its universities; in response the University of Akron developed a task force to project future trends of state support based on the new model allowing contingency plans for funding to be developed. As the state's funding model places a heavy emphasis on degree completion, the campus is working together to implement improved ways of supporting student persistence and graduating like improved pay for instructional faculty and advising staff. Institutional research and academic units have worked together to define new data and reports which can help the university track its performance relative to this new funding model. In hiring Ernst & Young LLC, the University of Akron verified its financial status and recent trends, including income sources, cash reserves, retirement commitments, and debt service. Further, the Ernst & Young report provided many of the campus constituents evidence that the university was reporting its financial data- as well as its financial problems- accurately.

Given the recent declines in enrollment, the university has plans in place to react to changes in the demographics of potential students, including the pending placement of a new community college campus proximate to the University of Akron. With many classrooms and laboratories falling under the state's expected use percentage, there is room to grow enrollment. Many of the plans at the university involve ways to grow enrollment or income; knowledge about financial planning for scenarios of continued declining enrollment was prevalent among campus constituents.

The University of Akron's University Council adopted a new integrated planning process on February 7, 2017. It had been developed by the Budget Committee of the University Council. The process articulate six specific steps in the planning process, beginning with an assessment of the long-term outlook and financial assessment and culminating at Step 6 in discussion and adoption by the Board of Trustees, over each calendar year. This process has specific requirements for consistency, inclusiveness, and clarity of the proposals under consideration.

Based on the above evidence, Core Component 5.C. is met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Evidence

The University of Akron documents the performance of its operations, and widely shares that information with its campus constituents. The university has a 10-year profile of income and expenditure by category available online to the campus community and public, and it tracks both KPMG and Ohio Senate Bill 6 metrics of its financial performance. Hiring of Ernst & Young for an independent review of the institution's financial performance is further evidence of such documentation; this included state support resulting from each year's cohort of students along with auxiliary function and its relative contribution to the overall budget of the institution. The assurance argument provides evidence for tracking student satisfaction in its mentoring program, research metrics, and an annual review process for faculty. The university tracks retention, progression, graduation rates of its students by student readiness classification, as well as the average number of credit hours taken by students each year; the university documents this outcome data to determine the impact of its performance improvement initiatives. The university tracks employment data, and academic units request this data and use it to adapt their curriculum to improve employment opportunities for graduates. There is ample evidence of performance data being collected and documented across divisions of the university.

Operational experience is used by the University of Akron to improve its institutional effectiveness and overall performance. The university's Affordability & Efficiency report to the Ohio Department of Education is evidence of implementing change based on data; examples include the purchasing of computers and furniture now undergo a review process to ensure purchase compatibility and compliance with campus standards, and the ride-free partnership with the Akron Metro will be further expanded based on demand and will reduce the university's need for its own buses. An energy efficiency project is being completed by the campus, as financially this had a beneficial pay-back period based on energy consumption by the campus. Based on cost and feedback from students, the university changed its contract to a new food services provider. These actions, resulting from assessing performance across the institution, are increasing effectiveness and efficiency at the University of Akron.

Some units of the university dedicated to continuous quality improvements have been subject to budget reductions that somewhat limit the university's ability to improve its performance. For example, the University of Akron previously provided full-time staff supporting its teaching and learning mission so that members of the faculty could better serve students. This position was

reduced to faculty members on partial reassignment, and today there is no regular staffing of this function. Discussions are underway at the university on how to restore some staffing support for teaching and learning improvement. This is illustrative of the challenges facing the university as it attempts to continue to improve despite significant financial challenges.

Based on the above evidence, Core Component 5.D. is met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Evidence

There is evidence that significant changes have been made in policy and practice leading to large improvements in communication and decision making at the University of Akron. The institution's governance and administrative structures have undergone substantial changes but the full engagement of internal constituents in shared-governance remains as a continuous challenge that the new leadership is committed to improve.

The University of Akron documents the performance of its operations, and widely shares that information with its campus constituents. There is institutional recognition of the need to develop a strategic plan.

Given HLC guidance for a monitoring plan for institutions with negative CFI's and the need to document progress in shared governance and communications and strategic planning, Criterion 5 is considered met with concerns. An interim report addressing shared governance and strategic planning is due to HLC in December 2018. The matter of the negative CFI will follow HLC existing policy for review and improvement.

Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.D	Core Component 1.D	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	Met
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	Met
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.E	Core Component 3.E	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	Met
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met With Concerns
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	Met With Concerns
5	Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met With Concerns
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met With Concerns
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.D	Core Component 5.D	Met
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	Met With Concerns

Review Summary

Interim Report(s) Required

Due Date

12/31/2018

Report Focus**CRITERION 4: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement; Core Component 4.A.**

An interim report documenting that program review of all programs is underway. Evidence of program review of undergraduate programs that do not hold specialized accreditation is expected. The interim report is due by December 31, 2018.

Due Date

12/31/2018

Report Focus**CRITERION 5: Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness; Core Component 5.A.**

An Interim report is required documenting that the Institution has stabilized its on-going financial resource base funding and developed a long term plan for funding Maintenance and Repair of its Facilities.

Due Date

12/31/2018

Report Focus**CRITERION 5: Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness: Core Component 5.B.**

An Interim report is requested documenting that the Institution has continued to rapidly act on its plans for improving shared-governance structures and communication.

Conclusion

The Team found significant evidence that current management strategies have improved the University community and the public understanding of the University of Akron's financial situation. The Board of Trustees, President, Senior Vice President and Provost, and the Chief Financial Officer have collectively, and in concert, led and shared a constructive dialog on finances. The team found that the engagement of Ernst and Young to assess and communicate the financial operation provided a high level of confidence in the fiscal affairs of the University. Open access of plans for fiscal stability in revenue and expenditure has been provided for review by university staff, the collective bargaining units, the public and the press. On the other hand, the long term plan for resourcing the

Maintenance and Repair needs is inadequate. With a \$1.2 billion investment in facilities, long term the current resource base will be inadequate.

Through special efforts in the self-study work and Team meeting settings, the Team found that a transformation at the University of Akron has occurred in shared-governance. There were many examples of open communication and collaborative efforts by leadership at multiple levels and the University committee structure to make decisions of importance to the furthering of the institutional mission.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation

Met With Concerns

Sanctions Recommendation

No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation

Limited to Standard



FORM

Federal Compliance Worksheet for Evaluation Teams

Evaluation of Federal Compliance Components

The team reviews each item identified in the *Federal Compliance Filing by Institutions* (FCFI) and documents its findings in the appropriate spaces below. Teams should expect institutions to address these requirements with brief narrative responses and provide supporting documentation where necessary. Generally, if the team finds in the course of this review that there are substantive issues related to the institution's ability to fulfill the Criteria for Accreditation, such issues should be raised in the appropriate parts of the Assurance Review or Comprehensive Quality Review.

This worksheet is to be completed by the peer review team or a Federal Compliance reviewer in relation to the federal requirements. The team should refer to the *Federal Compliance Overview* for information about applicable HLC policies and explanations of each requirement.

Peer reviewers are expected to supply a rationale for each section of the Federal Compliance Evaluation.

The worksheet becomes an appendix in the team report. If the team recommends monitoring on a Federal Compliance Requirement in the form of a report or focused visit, the recommendation should be included in the Federal Compliance monitoring sections below and added to the appropriate section of the Assurance Review or Comprehensive Quality Review.

Institution under review: University of Akron (1599)

Please indicate who completed this worksheet:

- ☐ Evaluation team
☒ Federal Compliance reviewer

To be completed by the Evaluation Team Chair if a Federal Compliance reviewer conducted this part of the evaluation:

Name: Judy R. Colwell, Ed.D., CPA

☐ I confirm that the Evaluation Team reviewed the findings provided in this worksheet.

Assignment of Credits, Program Length and Tuition

(See FCFI Questions 1–3 and Appendix A)

1. Complete the [*Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours*](#). Submit the completed worksheet with this form.
 - Identify the institution's principal degree levels and the number of credit hours for degrees at each level (see the institution's Appendix A if necessary). The following minimum number of credit hours should apply at a semester institution:
 - Associate's degrees = 60 hours
 - Bachelor's degrees = 120 hours
 - Master's or other degrees beyond the bachelor's = At least 30 hours beyond the bachelor's degree
 - Note that 1 quarter hour = 0.67 semester hour.
 - Any exceptions to this requirement must be explained and justified.
 - Review any differences in tuition reported for different programs and the rationale provided for such differences.
2. Check the response that reflects the evaluation team or Federal Compliance reviewer's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
 - ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

As documented in the accompanying Team Worksheet and a review of the graduation requirements sections of the Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins of the University, the institution meets requirements and demonstrates good practice with respect to credit hour requirements. Baccalaureate degrees require a minimum of 120 credit hours, associate degree programs require a minimum of 60 credits hours, and a minimum of 30 credit hours is required for master degree programs. Semester calendars and lengths, policy and practice of awarding credits across various delivery formats, credit hour policy, and credit hour generation all reflect good practice. All associated requirements are met.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Institutional Records of Student Complaints

(See FCFI Questions 4–7 and Appendixes B and C)

1. Verify that the institution has documented a process for addressing student complaints and appears to be systematically processing such complaints, as evidenced by the data on student complaints since the last comprehensive evaluation.
 - Review the process that the institution uses to manage complaints, its complaints policy and procedure, and the history of complaints received and resolved since the last comprehensive evaluation by HLC.
 - Determine whether the institution has a process to review and resolve complaints in a timely manner.
 - Verify that the evidence shows that the institution can, and does, follow this process and that it is able to integrate any relevant findings from this process into improvements in services or in teaching and learning.
 - Advise the institution of any improvements that might be appropriate.
 - Consider whether the record of student complaints indicates any pattern of complaints or otherwise raises concerns about the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation or Assumed Practices.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
 - ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

University of Akron has a process in place to review and resolve complaints in a timely manner. Complaints are logged into a database with relevant information (date, nature of complaint, status). Both the Student Complaint Policy and a copy of the institution's complaint log since 2013 were included with its federal compliance filing.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Publication of Transfer Policies

(See FCFI Questions 8–10 and Appendixes D–F)

1. Verify that the institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public. Policies should contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions.
 - Review the institution's transfer policies.
 - Review any articulation agreements the institution has in place, including articulation agreements at the institution level and for specific programs and how the institution publicly discloses information about those articulation agreements.
 - Consider where the institution discloses these policies (e.g., in its catalog, on its website) and how easily current and prospective students can access that information.
 - Determine whether the disclosed information clearly explains any articulation arrangements the institution has with other institutions. The information the institution provides to students should explain any program-specific articulation agreements in place and should clearly identify program-specific articulation agreements as such. Also, the information the institution provides should include whether the articulation agreement anticipates that the institution (1) accepts credits from the other institution(s) in the articulation agreement; (2) sends credits to the other institution(s) in the articulation agreement; (3) both offers and accepts credits with the institution(s) in the articulation agreement; and (4) what specific credits articulate through the agreement (e.g., general education only; pre-professional nursing courses only; etc.). Note that the institution need not make public the entire articulation agreement, but it needs to make public to students relevant information about these agreements so that they can better plan their education.
 - Verify that the institution has an appropriate process to align the disclosed transfer policies with the criteria and procedures used by the institution in making transfer decisions.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
 - ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

Transfer policies are articulated in UA board rules and published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins as well as on the University of Akron's website. Articulation agreements are posted on the University's website including links for other resources such as the Ohio

Transfer Model, transfer guides, and Transferology.com. Information is easy to locate and clearly articulated.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Practices for Verification of Student Identity

(See FCFI Questions 11–16 and Appendix G)

1. Confirm that the institution verifies the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided through distance or correspondence education. Confirm that it appropriately discloses additional fees related to verification to students, and that the method of verification makes reasonable efforts to protect students' privacy.
 - Determine how the institution verifies that the student who enrolls in a course is the same student who submits assignments, takes exams and earns a final grade. The team should ensure that the institution's approach respects student privacy.
 - Check that any costs related to verification (e.g., fees associated with test proctoring) and charged directly to students are explained to the students prior to enrollment in distance or correspondence courses.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
 - ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The University has a secure login process utilizing UANetID and password to verify identity. Additionally, as part of the curricular proposal system for offering a course in online modalities, departments are required to use at least one of the following methods to authenticate the student: synchronous face to face meetings via Cisco WebEx, exam proctoring via Respondus Monitor software, or in person proctoring at the University of Akron main/additional locations. There are no additional fees directly charged to students related to this process.

The University's system of authentication is within acceptable practices outlined by the U.S. Department of Education.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Title IV Program Responsibilities

(See FCFI Questions 17–24 and Appendixes H–Q)

1. This requirement has several components the institution must address.

- The team should verify that the following requirements are met:
 - **General Program Requirements.** The institution has provided HLC with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department has raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities.
 - **Financial Responsibility Requirements.** The institution has provided HLC with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department has raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion 5 if an institution has significant issues with financial responsibility as demonstrated through ratios that are below acceptable levels or other financial responsibility findings by its auditor.)
 - **Default Rates.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its three-year default rate. It has a responsible program to work with students to minimize default rates. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department has raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. Note that for 2012 and thereafter, institutions and teams should be using the three-year default rate based on revised default rate data published by the Department in September 2012; if the institution does not provide the default rate for three years leading up to the comprehensive evaluation visit, the team should contact the HLC staff.
 - **Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, and Related Disclosures.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.
 - **Student Right to Know/Equity in Athletics.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The disclosures are accurate and provide appropriate information to students. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion 2, Core Component 2.A if the team determines that the disclosures are not accurate or appropriate.)
 - **Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The institution has demonstrated that the policies and practices meet state or federal requirements and that the institution is appropriately applying these policies and practices to students. In most cases, teams should verify that these policies exist and are available to students, typically

in the course catalog or student handbook and online. Note that HLC does not necessarily require that the institution take attendance unless required to do so by state or federal regulations but does anticipate that institutional attendance policies will provide information to students about attendance at the institution.

- **Contractual Relationships.** The institution has presented a list of its contractual relationships related to its academic programs and evidence of its compliance with HLC policies requiring notification or approval for contractual relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a contractual relationship that may require HLC approval and has not received HLC approval, the team must require that the institution complete and file the change request form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Substantive Change Application for Programs Offered Through Contractual Arrangements on HLC's website for more information.)
 - **Consortial Relationships.** The institution has presented a list of its consortial relationships related to its academic programs and evidence of its compliance with HLC policies requiring notification or approval for consortial relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a consortial relationship that may require HLC approval and has not received HLC approval, the team must require that the institution complete and file the form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Substantive Change Application for Programs Offered Through Consortial Arrangements on HLC's website for more information.)
 - Review all of the information that the institution discloses having to do with its Title IV program responsibilities.
 - Determine whether the Department has raised any issues related to the institution's compliance or whether the institution's auditor has raised any issues in the A-133 about the institution's compliance, and also look to see how carefully and effectively the institution handles its Title IV responsibilities.
 - If the institution has been cited or is not handling these responsibilities effectively, indicate that finding within the Federal Compliance portion of the team report and whether the institution appears to be moving forward with the corrective action that the Department has determined to be appropriate.
 - If issues have been raised concerning the institution's compliance, decide whether these issues relate to the institution's ability to satisfy the Criteria for Accreditation, particularly with regard to whether its disclosures to students are candid and complete and demonstrate appropriate integrity (*Core Components 2.A and 2.B*).
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
- ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

- ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

General Program Requirements. The institution's Title IV program status was recertified on September 20, 2011. The approval expires on June 30, 2017—the reapplication date is March 31, 2017. The University's most recent Title IV program review was conducted February 23-27, 2015 and it has not been audited by the DoE or OIG since the last HLC comprehensive visit.

Financial Responsibility Requirements. The institution's financial ratios available in the Evidence File through 2014-2015 indicate its financial health. Composite ratios have been increasing and are within acceptable range. Financial audits were reviewed and there were no material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, nor noncompliance material to the financial statements noted.

Default Rates. The institution reported its FY 2013 official 3-year cohort loan default rate as 13.2%, compared with 12.6% for FY2012 and 13.5% for 2011. In addition to the federal Direct Loan Entrance Counseling requirement by the DoE, the University offers loan counseling to students and parents through one-on-one counseling. New freshmen are presented with a variety of financial literacy topics during the Akron Experience University 101 course and are given a free account through CashCourse, a financial literacy tool. Although the institution does not participate in private loan programs or provide any loan services directly to students, the Office of Financial Aid sends correspondence to students who are reported by loan servicing companies as being delinquent on their student loan payments, encouraging them to contact their loan servicing companies to learn more about repayment options and to bring payments current.

Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, Student Right to Know, and Related Disclosures. The institution has documented that it meets its obligations concerning campus crime, student right to know, athletic participation, and financial aid through publishing information online, including annual safety and security reports. There have been no DoE investigations or findings in these areas. The institution has documented its sharing of information online with students and the public concerning graduation/completion rates, process for withdrawing as a student, cost of attendance, policies on refund and return of Title IV financial aid, current academic programs and faculty, names of applicable accrediting agencies, description of facilities for disabled students, institutional policy on enrollment in study abroad, athletic participation rates and financial support data, and equity in athletics disclosures.

Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance. Satisfactory academic progress and attendance policies are available to students and the public online, represent good practice, and meet federal requirements. There have been no DoE investigations or findings in this area.

Contractual Relationships. The institution has no contractual relationships.

Consortial Relationships. Information regarding seven consortial relationships were identified and are in compliance: Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology (Kent State), Joint PhD in Nursing (Kent State), Master of Arts in Speech-Language Pathology (Bowling Green State University,

Kent State, Ohio State, The University of Cincinnati, The University of Toledo), Masters in Social Work (Cleveland State University), Northeast Ohio Au.D. Consortium—Doctor of Audiology (Cleveland State University, Kent State), Northeast Ohio Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing (Youngstown State, Cleveland State, Kent State), and The Consortium of Eastern Ohio Master of Public Health (Ohio University, Youngstown State, Kent State NEOUSCOM).

Additional monitoring, if any:

Required Information for Students and the Public

(See FCFI Questions 25–27 and Appendixes R and S)

1. Verify that the institution publishes accurate, timely and appropriate information on institutional programs, fees, policies and related required information. Verify that the institution provides this required information in the course catalog and student handbook and on its website.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
 - ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The institution's undergraduate and graduate bulletins were provided in the federal compliance materials, and online links for student disclosures and right to know were provided in the institution's federal compliance report. Links to student disclosure information are listed on the webpage for the UA Office of Student Financial Aid and the Right to Know and Clery Act related links are located on the UA Institutional Research webpage. The documents provide all the required information on programs, fees, calendars, academic and financial aid policies, and related information.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Advertising and Recruitment Materials and Other Public Information

(See FCFI Questions 28–31 and Appendixes T and U)

1. Verify that the institution has documented that it provides accurate, timely and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its accreditation status with HLC and other agencies as well as about its programs, locations and policies.
 - Review the institution's disclosure about its accreditation status with HLC to determine whether the information it provides is accurate, complete and appropriately formatted and contains HLC's web address.
 - Review the institution's disclosures about its relationship with other accrediting agencies for accuracy and for appropriate consumer information, particularly regarding the link between specialized/professional accreditation and the licensure necessary for employment in many professional or specialized areas.
 - Review the institution's catalog, brochures, recruiting materials, website and information provided by the institution's advisors or counselors to determine whether the institution provides accurate, timely and appropriate information to current and prospective students about its programs, locations and policies.
 - Verify that the institution correctly displays the Mark of Affiliation on its website.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
 - ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The institution's advertising and recruitment materials appear to be up-to-date and processes are in place to insure accuracy, clarity, and appropriateness. Information is available in both online and print formats. For all information published on the institution's website, Board policy (Rule 3359-11-09) specifies responsibility for developing and maintaining specific unit's pages including ensuring that content is accurate, up-to-date, and in conformance with university standards. The University of Akron's website provides information on university-wide accreditations as well as academic program and discipline-specific accreditations. This website includes the HLC Mark of Affiliation as well as information regarding the institution's accreditation status with HLC, including HLC's address, phone number, and a link to the HLC website.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Review of Student Outcome Data

(See FCFI Questions 32–35 and Appendix V)

1. Review the student outcome data the institution collects to determine whether they are appropriate and sufficient based on the kinds of academic programs the institution offers and the students it serves.
 - Determine whether the institution uses this information effectively to make decisions about planning, academic program review, assessment of student learning, consideration of institutional effectiveness and other topics.
 - Review the institution's explanation of its use of information from the College Scorecard, including student retention and completion and the loan repayment rate.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
 - ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The Office of Institutional Research collects information and makes it available online concerning a variety of outcomes. There are four main collection points which include the quality of admitted students (high school courses taken, high school GPA, ACT score, first generation status, Pell eligibility, and other financial indicators), enrollment and persistence through the program (credit hours taken, retention rates, course completion rates, credit accumulation, enrollment by discipline, and major movement), completion (transfer out rates, graduation rates, time to degree, and degrees awarded), and post-graduation data (placement rates and earnings data). The outcomes data are used to guide the university in not only as part of academic program review, but to guide decisions in areas such as admissions advising, enrollment, retention, and completion efforts, and in career advising and placement efforts. This data is appropriate and accurately reflects the range of degrees offered and the students served.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Publication of Student Outcome Data

(See FCFI Questions 36–38)

1. Verify that the institution makes student outcome data available and easily accessible to the public. Data may be provided at the institutional or departmental level or both, but the institution must disclose student outcome data that address the broad variety of its programs.
 - Verify that student outcome data are made available to the public on the institution's website—for instance, linked to from the institution's home page, included within the top three levels of the website or easily found through a search of related terms on the website—and are clearly labeled as such.
 - Determine whether the publication of these data accurately reflects the range of programs at the institution.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
 - ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The institution reports outcome data based on the definition provided by IPEDS for all students regardless of their choice of program. Program-specific information is provided to departments within the university and the University's Office of Institutional Research webpage provides links to outcome data related to career/employment outcomes, college and department degrees awarded, new freshman quality profile, new student profile, retention and graduation rates, university enrollment profile, NSSE, BCSSE, as well as various on-demand reports (ZipReports) and links to State published outcome data for the University of Akron.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Standing With State and Other Accrediting Agencies

(See FCFI Questions 39–40 and Appendixes W and X)

1. Verify that the institution discloses accurately to the public and HLC its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditors and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence.

The team should consider any potential implications for accreditation by HLC of a sanction or loss of status by the institution with any other accrediting agency or of loss of authorization in any state.

Note: If the team is recommending initial or continued status, and the institution is now or has been in the past five years under sanction or show-cause with, or has received an adverse action (i.e., withdrawal, suspension, denial or termination) from, any other federally recognized specialized or institutional accreditor or a state entity, then the team must explain the sanction or adverse action of the other agency in the body of the assurance section of the team report and provide its rationale for recommending HLC status in light of this action.

- Review the list of relationships the institution has with all other accreditors and state governing or coordinating bodies, along with the evaluation reports, action letters and interim monitoring plans issued by each accrediting agency.
 - Verify that the institution's standing with state agencies and accrediting bodies is appropriately disclosed to students.
 - Determine whether this information provides any indication about the institution's capacity to meet HLC's Criteria for Accreditation. Should the team learn that the institution is at risk of losing, or has lost, its degree or program authorization in any state in which it meets state presence requirements, it should contact the HLC staff liaison immediately.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
- ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The institution discloses accurately to the public and HLC its relationships with specialized accreditors and with all governing or coordinating bodies in the states in which it has a presence. Information on these accreditations is readily available online to students and to the public.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Public Notification of Opportunity to Comment (FCFI Questions 41–43 and Appendix Y)

1. Verify that the institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third-party comments. The team should evaluate any comments received and complete any necessary follow-up on issues raised in these comments.

Note: If the team has determined that any issues raised by third-party comments relate to the team's review of the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, it must discuss this information and its analysis in the body of the assurance section of the team report.

- Review information about the public disclosure of the upcoming visit, including copies of the institution's notices, to determine whether the institution made an appropriate and timely effort to notify the public and seek comments.
 - Evaluate the comments to determine whether the team needs to follow up on any issues through its interviews and review of documentation during the visit process.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
 - ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The institution provided timely and accurate solicitation for third-party comment through documented notices in the Akron e-magazine (alumni/donors), Digest to Faculty/Staff/retirees, Zipmail to students, Akron Beacon Journal, Canton Repository, Medina Gazette, Ravenna Record Courier, Cleveland Plain Dealer, West Side Leader, and The Reporter (Akron). ***The assurance review team should confirm whether any comments were received and how the institution followed up.***

Additional monitoring, if any:

Competency-Based Programs Including Direct Assessment Programs/Faculty-Student Engagement

(See FCFI Questions 44–47)

1. Verify that students and faculty in any direct assessment or competency-based programs offered by the institution have regular and substantive interactions: the faculty and students communicate on some regular basis that is at least equivalent to contact in a traditional classroom, and that in the tasks mastered to assure competency, faculty and students interact about critical thinking, analytical skills, and written and oral communication abilities, as well as about core ideas,

important theories, current knowledge, etc. (Also, confirm that the institution has explained the credit hour equivalencies for these programs in the credit hour sections of the Federal Compliance Filing.)

- Review the list of direct assessment or competency-based programs offered by the institution.
 - Determine whether the institution has effective methods for ensuring that faculty in these programs regularly communicate and interact with students about the subject matter of the course.
 - Determine whether the institution has effective methods for ensuring that faculty and students in these programs interact about key skills and ideas in the students' mastery of tasks to assure competency.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
- ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.
 - ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
 - ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The institution does not offer any direct assessment or competency-based programs.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Institutional Materials Related to Federal Compliance Reviewed by the Team

Provide a list of materials reviewed here:

Federal Compliance Filing including Appendices A through Y

University of Akron Policy 3359-20-05 Academic matters and general policies

University of Akron Policy 3359-20-05.2 Curricular changes

State of Ohio University System website: Definitions of credit hour and semester length

Appendix A, Supplement A2: Policies related to the Assignment of Credit

Appendix A, Supplement B1: UA Graduate and Undergraduate Bulletins

Appendix A, Supplement B2: Courses with non-standard terms or compressed formats, Spring & Fall 2016

Appendix A, Supplement B3: Course Schedule for Spring and Fall 2016

Institutional website

Sample Syllabi (57 sections sampled):

3100 103 Natural Science: Biology (Face-to-face, 16-week formats)

3100 103 Natural Science: Biology Lab (Face-to-face, 16-week formats)

3300 112 English Composition II (Face-to-face, Mixed-face-to-face, online, 16-week formats)

3250 200 Principles of Microeconomics (Face to face, online, 16-week, 8-week formats)

3450 145 College Algebra (Face-to-face, online, high school dual enrollment/concurrent)

3450 149 Pre-Calculus (Face-to-face, 16-week format)

3700 100 Government and Politics in the U.S. (Face-to-face, online, distance, 16-week formats)

3850 100 Introduction to Sociology (Face-to-face, Mixed-face-to-face, online, 16-week formats)

3850 320 Social Inequities (Face-to-face, online, 16-week formats)

3850 330 Criminology (Mixed face-to-face, online, 16-week formats)

3850 416 Women in Crime (Face-to-face, online, 16-week, 8-week formats)

5100 200 Introduction to Education (Face-to-face, 16-week formats)

6400 300 Introduction to Finance (online, 8-week formats)

6400 674 Strategic Financial Decision making (Face-to-face, online, 16 week, 8 week formats).



FORM

Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours

Institution Under Review: University of Akron (1599)

Review the *Worksheet for Institutions on the Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours*, including all supplemental materials. Applicable sections and supplements are referenced in the corresponding sections and questions below.

Part 1. Institutional Calendar, Term Length and Type of Credit

Instructions

Review Section 1 of Appendix A. Verify that the institution has calendar and term lengths within the range of good practice in higher education.

Responses

A. Answer the Following Question

1. Are the institution's calendar and term lengths, including non-standard terms, within the range of good practice in higher education? Do they contribute to an academic environment in which students receive a rigorous and thorough education?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

The program requirements align with those of similar programs at other institutions within the State of Ohio and elsewhere. Baccalaureate degrees require a minimum of 120 credit hours, associate degrees require a minimum of 60 credit hours, and master degree programs require a minimum of 30 credit hours.

B. Recommend HLC Follow-Up, If Appropriate

Is any HLC follow-up required related to the institution's calendar and term length practices?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Rationale:

Identify the type of HLC monitoring required and the due date:

Part 2. Policy and Practices on Assignment of Credit Hours

Instructions

Review Sections 2–4 of the *Worksheet for Institutions on the Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours*, including supplemental materials as noted below. In assessing the appropriateness of the credit allocations provided by the institution the team should complete the following steps. The outcomes of the team's review should be reflected in its responses below.

1. **Format of Courses and Number of Credits Awarded.** Review the *Form for Reporting an Overview of Credit Hour Allocations and Instructional Time for Courses* (Supplement A1 to the *Worksheet for Institutions*) completed by the institution, which provides an overview of credit hour assignments across institutional offerings and delivery formats.
2. Scan the course descriptions in the catalog and the number of credit hours assigned for courses in different departments at the institution (see Supplements B1 and B2 to *Worksheet for Institutions*, as applicable).
 - At semester-based institutions courses will typically be from two to four credit hours (or approximately five quarter hours) and extend approximately 14–16 weeks (or approximately 10 weeks for a quarter). The descriptions in the catalog should reflect courses that are appropriately rigorous and have collegiate expectations for objectives and workload. Identify courses/disciplines that seem to depart markedly from these expectations.
 - Institutions may have courses that are in compressed format, self-paced, or otherwise alternatively structured. Credit assignments should be reasonable. (For example, as a full-time load for a traditional semester is typically 15 credits, it might be expected that the norm for a full-time load in a five-week term is 5 credits; therefore, a single five-week course awarding 10 credits would be subject to inquiry and justification.)
 - Teams should be sure to scan across disciplines, delivery mode and types of academic activities.
 - Federal regulations allow for an institution to have two credit-hour awards: one award for Title IV purposes and following the federal definition and one for the purpose of defining progression in and completion of an academic program at that institution. HLC procedure also permits this approach.

3. Scan course schedules to determine how frequently courses meet each week and what other scheduled activities are required for each course (see Supplement B3 to *Worksheet for Institutions*). Pay particular attention to alternatively structured or other courses completed in a short period of time or with less frequently scheduled interaction between student and instructor that have particularly high credit hour assignments.
4. Sampling. Teams will need to sample some number of degree programs based on the headcount at the institution and the range of programs it offers.
 - For the programs sampled, the team should review syllabi and intended learning outcomes for several courses, identify the contact hours for each course, and review expectations for homework or work outside of instructional time.
 - At a minimum, teams should anticipate sampling at least a few programs at each degree level.
 - For institutions with several different academic calendars or terms or with a wide range of academic programs, the team should expand the sample size appropriately to ensure that it is paying careful attention to alternative format and compressed and accelerated courses.
 - Where the institution offers the same course in more than one format, the team is advised to sample across the various formats to test for consistency.
5. **Direct Assessment or Competency-Based Programs.** Review the information provided by the institution regarding any direct assessment or competency-based programs that it offers, with regard to the learning objectives, policies and procedures for credit allocation, and processes for review and improvement in these programs.
6. **Policy on Credit Hours and Total Credit Hour Generation.** With reference to the institutional policies on the assignment of credit provided in Supplement A2 to *Worksheet for Institutions*, consider the following questions:
 - Does the institution's policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution?
 - Does that policy address the amount of instructional or contact time assigned and homework typically expected of a student with regard to credit hours earned?
 - For institutions with courses in alternative formats or with less instructional and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy also equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably achieved by a student in the time frame allotted for the course?
 - Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that HLC will expect that credit hour policies at public

institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

- If so, is the institution's assignment of credit to courses reflective of its policy on the award of credit?
 - Do the number of credits taken by typical undergraduate and graduate students, as well as the number of students earning more than the typical number of credits, fall within the range of good practice in higher education?
7. If the answers to the above questions lead the team to conclude that there may be a problem with the credit hours awarded the team should recommend the following:
- If the problem involves a poor or insufficiently detailed institutional policy, the team should call for a revised policy as soon as possible by requiring a monitoring report within no more than one year that demonstrates the institution has a revised policy and provides evidence of implementation.
 - If the team identifies an application problem and that problem is isolated to a few courses or a single department, division or learning format, the team should call for follow-up activities (a monitoring report or focused evaluation) to ensure that the problems are corrected within no more than one year.
 - If the team identifies systematic noncompliance across the institution with regard to the award of credit, the team should notify the HLC staff immediately and work with staff members to design appropriate follow-up activities. HLC shall understand systematic noncompliance to mean that the institution lacks any policies to determine the award of academic credit or that there is an inappropriate award of institutional credit not in conformity with the policies established by the institution or with commonly accepted practices in higher education across multiple programs or divisions or affecting significant numbers of students.

Worksheet on Assignment of Credit Hours

A. Identify the Sample Courses and Programs Reviewed by the Team

Programs:

Master of Science in Accounting

Master of Science in Nursing

Bachelor of Arts in English

Bachelor of Science in Biology (and Pre-Med)

Bachelor of Science in Accounting

Associate of Arts (Applied General and Technical Studies)

Associate of Science (Applied General and Technical Studies)

Juris Doctorate

Courses:

- 3100 103 Natural Science: Biology (Face-to-face, 16-week formats)
- 3100 103 Natural Science: Biology Lab (Face-to-face, 16-week formats)
- 3300 112 English Composition II (Face-to-face, Mixed-face-to-face, online, 16-week formats)
- 3250 200 Principles of Microeconomics (Face to face, online, 16-week, 8-week formats)
- 3450 145 College Algebra (Face-to-face, online, high school dual enrollment/concurrent)
- 3450 149 Pre-Calculus (Face-to-face, 16-week format)
- 3700 100 Government and Politics in the U.S. (Face-to-face, online, distance, 16-week formats)
- 3850 100 Introduction to Sociology (Face-to-face, Mixed-face-to-face, online, 16-week formats)
- 3850 320 Social Inequities (Face-to-face, online, 16-week formats)
- 3850 330 Criminology (Mixed face-to-face, online, 16-week formats)
- 3850 416 Women in Crime (Face-to-face, online, 16-week, 8-week formats)
- 5100 200 Introduction to Education (Face-to-face, 16-week formats)
- 6400 300 Introduction to Finance (online, 8-week formats)
- 6400 674 Strategic Financial Decision making (Face-to-face, online, 16 week , 8 week formats)

B. Answer the Following Questions

1. Institutional Policies on Credit Hours

- a. Does the institution's policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution? (Note that for this question and the questions that follow an institution may have a single comprehensive policy or multiple policies.)

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

The University of Akron policies related to credit hours align with the Ohio State University System's definition of credit hour. Credit hours are centrally approved and monitored. (University of Akron policies 3359-20-05, 3359-20-05.2; Ohio State University System website www.ohiohighered.org/transfer/policy/definitions)

- b. Does that policy relate the amount of instructional or contact time provided and homework typically expected of a student to the credit hours awarded for the classes offered in the delivery formats offered by the institution? (Note that an institution's policy must go beyond simply stating that it awards credit solely based on assessment of student learning and should also reference instructional time.)

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

The University of Akron policies related to credit hours align with the Ohio State University System's definition of credit hour with respect to instructional/contact time and homework time expected for awarding of credit hours. The institutional policies reviewed stated contact/instructional time expectations, but only the State definition defined the out-of-class expectations specifically. (University of Akron policies 3359-20-05, 3359-20-05.2; Ohio State University System website www.ohiohighered.org/transfer/policy/definitions)

- c. For institutions with non-traditional courses in alternative formats or with less instructional and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably achieved by a student in the time frame and utilizing the activities allotted for the course?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

Non-traditional courses are primarily field experiences, internships, practicums, and dissertation research courses. All require substantial time commitments, and credit hours assigned are appropriate to the learning outcomes.

- d. Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that HLC will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

The policy is consistent with other public universities in the State of Ohio which are part of the University System of Ohio and overseen by the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents.

2. Application of Policies

- a. Are the course descriptions and syllabi in the sample academic programs reviewed by the team appropriate and reflective of the institution's policy on the award of credit? (Note that HLC will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

The course descriptions in the graduate and undergraduate bulletins and the course syllabi reviewed are appropriate and consistent with institutional and state policies.

- b. Are the learning outcomes in the sample reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution's policy on the award of credit?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

A sample of student course outcomes documented in syllabi provides evidence of rigor and confirms good practice and consistency with institutional and state policies.

- c. If the institution offers any alternative-delivery or compressed-format courses or programs, are the course descriptions and syllabi for those courses appropriate and reflective of the institution's policy on the award of academic credit?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

The sample of syllabi reviewed included online and mixed face-to-face, in addition to face-to-face courses, as well as compressed formats, dual enrollment high school, and variable duration courses. Evidence confirmed that the institution's policies are consistently applied.

- d. If the institution offers alternative-delivery or compressed-format courses or programs, are the learning outcomes reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution's policy on the award of credit? Are the learning outcomes reasonable for students to fulfill in the time allocated, such that the allocation of credit is justified?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

The learning outcomes shown in the sample of syllabi of online and mixed face-to-face courses, as well as courses in compressed formats, dual enrollment high school, and variable duration courses are reasonable and provide evidence of rigor and confirm that the institution's policies on credit hour are consistently applied.

- e. Is the institution's actual assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution reflective of its policy on the award of credit and reasonable and appropriate within commonly accepted practice in higher education?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

The evidence provided confirms the institution's assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution is reflective of its policies on the award of credit and represents commonly accepted practice in higher education.

C. Recommend HLC Follow-up, If Appropriate

Review the responses provided in this worksheet. If the team has responded “no” to any of the questions above, the team will need to assign HLC follow-up to assure that the institution comes into compliance with expectations regarding the assignment of credit hours.

Is any HLC follow-up required related to the institution’s credit hour policies and practices?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Rationale:

Identify the type of HLC monitoring required and the due date:

D. Systematic Noncompliance in One or More Educational Programs With HLC Policies Regarding the Credit Hour

Did the team find systematic noncompliance in one or more education programs with HLC policies regarding the credit hour?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Identify the findings:

Rationale:

Part 3. Clock Hours

Instructions

Review Section 5 of *Worksheet for Institutions*, including Supplements A3–A6. Before completing the worksheet below, answer the following question:

Does the institution offer any degree or certificate programs in clock hours or programs that must be reported to the Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes even though students may earn credit hours for graduation from these programs?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If the answer is “Yes,” complete the “Worksheet on Clock Hours.”

Note: This worksheet is not intended for teams to evaluate whether an institution has assigned credit hours relative to contact hours in accordance with the Carnegie definition of the credit hour. This

worksheet solely addresses those programs reported to the Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes.

Non-degree programs subject to clock hour requirements (for which an institution is required to measure student progress in clock hours for federal or state purposes or for graduates to apply for licensure) are not subject to the credit hour definitions per se but will need to provide conversions to semester or quarter hours for Title IV purposes. Clock hour programs might include teacher education, nursing or other programs in licensed fields.

Federal regulations require that these programs follow the federal formula listed below. If there are no deficiencies identified by the accrediting agency in the institution's overall policy for awarding semester or quarter credit, the accrediting agency may provide permission for the institution to provide less instruction so long as the student's work outside class in addition to direct instruction meets the applicable quantitative clock hour requirements noted below.

Federal Formula for Minimum Number of Clock Hours of Instruction (34 CFR §668.8):

- 1 semester or trimester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction
- 1 quarter hour must include at least 25 clock hours of instruction

Note that the institution may have a lower rate if the institution's requirement for student work outside of class combined with the actual clock hours of instruction equals the above formula provided that a semester/trimester hour includes at least 30 clock hours of actual instruction and a quarter hour includes at least 20 semester hours.

Worksheet on Clock Hours

A. Answer the Following Questions

1. Does the institution's credit-to-clock-hour formula match the federal formula?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

2. If the credit-to-clock-hour conversion numbers are less than the federal formula, indicate what specific requirements there are, if any, for student work outside of class.

3. Did the team determine that the institution's credit hour policies are reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that if the team answers "No" to this question, it should recommend follow-up monitoring in section C below.)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

4. Did the team determine in reviewing the assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution that it was reflective of the institution's policy on the award of credit and reasonable and appropriate within commonly accepted practice in higher education?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

B. Does the team approve variations, if any, from the federal formula in the institution's credit-to-clock-hour conversion?

☐ Yes ☐ No

C. Recommend HLC Follow-up, If Appropriate

Is any HLC follow-up required related to the institution's clock hour policies and practices?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Rationale:

Identify the type of HLC monitoring required and the due date:

Name of Institution: University of Akron

Name/Address of Branch Campus: University of Akron-Wayne College, 1901 Smucker Road, Orrville, OH 44667

Date and Duration of Visit: February 14, 2017

Reviewer: Dr. Elizabeth Towell

1. **Campus Overview**

Wayne College is the only regional campus of the University of Akron but the University has additional locations in Millersburg, Medina, Lakewood and Wadsworth, Ohio. As required by the state, Wayne College is an open access campus, teaching introductory and general education courses. Wayne College offers seven associates degrees and two certificates. Through the College Credit Plus program, Wayne College offers dual credit for high school students both on its campus and at multiple regional high schools. Total enrollment at Wayne College is approximately 2500.

Enrollment summary - Associate Degree Program:

PROGRAM	Current Enrollment	Projected Year 1	Projected Year 2	Projected Year 3
Business Management Technology	51	61	71	81
Exercise Science Technology	10	12	15	18
Paraprofessional Education	5	10	15	20
Health Care Office Management	18	20	30	40

- (1) *These numbers only include students enrolled exclusively in Wayne College Associate Degree Programs. These enrollments do not include students enrolled at Wayne College, but on a pathway for an Akron campus degree who often take substantially the same course work.*
- (2) *Total average fall/spring semester enrollment for Wayne College has been about 2,500 students with about 17,000 credit hours produced. These values include all locations and the dual credit courses offered at area high schools.*

The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

2. **History Planning and Oversight**

The College has been associated with the University since its inception in 1972 and its leadership is looking forward to a fifty-year celebration in 2022. The College changed its name from the University of Akron-Wayne General and Technical College to the University of Akron-Wayne College in 1989. The relationship between Wayne College and the University of Akron is unique in the University System of Ohio. Wayne College

students have access to all of the resources at the Akron campus and are considered students of the University. Wayne College, however, has its own HLC accreditation with its next Open Pathways comprehensive visit scheduled for 2020-2021.

The Dean of Wayne College has oversight for all campus operations and reports to the University Provost. The College is bound by University policies and relies on University infrastructure. On the other hand, the College has its own tuition and fees, a separate budget from the state and an independent tenure system. The University of Akron - Board of Trustees authorizes degrees and certificates for both the University and the branch campus. The College has its own application process and maintains separate offices for functional areas such as advising and financial aid. Wayne College security officers are University of Akron police.

The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

3. Facilities and Technology

The Wayne College campus occupies 160 acres and has two buildings used for classroom and student support. The campus boasts a gymnasium built in the late 1980s and houses an area with exercise equipment for use by students and staff. There is also a larger room which can seat up to 500 people that is used for programs, ceremonies and community events. There is no campus housing and students commute to classes from the surrounding area. There is a cafeteria on campus and many spaces for students to congregate and/or study.

The Student Services Center at the Wayne campus uses the same software as the Akron campus to ensure consistency of service and seamless transition for students moving from one campus to the other. Advising units at both Wayne College and at the University of Akron use PeopleSoft and GradesFirst to monitor student progress.

The campus has both PC and Mac labs for classes and independent student work. It also has technology used for developmental instruction and testing. There is a well-equipped digital laboratory with 3D printing, prototyping and training that is open to students as well as community members. The campus has an in-house graphics design department and staff.

The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

4. Human Resources

There are 24 full time faculty at Wayne College, 21 of which are tenured or tenure track and three of which are non-tenure track. The College employs 130 part time faculty and enjoys little turnover in instructional staff either at full time or part time.

The College has three administrative areas (instruction, students support and business) and a Dean who serves as the chief executive officer. The expenditure of funds, the hiring of staff and faculty, and the establishment of agreements are overseen by the Dean, are approved by the appropriate University departments and finally routed to the Board of Trustees as appropriate.

Faculty and staff members are chosen by College search committees. Faculty are granted tenure and promotion at Wayne College and are not members of departments on the University campus. There is a Faculty Committee at Wayne College who meets regularly with the Dean to discuss matters relevant to shared governance. Three faculty member at Wayne College are members of the University Faculty Senate.

The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

5. Student and Faculty Resources and Support

A complete range of Student Services are available on the Wayne College campus including Admissions, Academic Advising, Americans with Disabilities Services, Bookstore, Career Services, Cashier's Office, Student Activities, Counseling, Financial Aid, Library Resources, and Veteran's Services. Academic advising at the Wayne campus mirrors that at the Akron campus. College advisors are involved in regular University meetings to ensure consistency. The College ADA officer provides accommodations to approximately 130 students on campus. The Wayne College Library has a separate reporting structure and budget but shares resources with the University of Akron Libraries.

The Wayne campus provides orientation to first time Wayne College students in small group sessions, as many as forty times a year. New faculty are provided faculty mentors. The College intercollege athletic program consists of two women's and two men's sports. Teams compete against other Ohio regional campuses.

There are a full range of student organizations on campus as well as fiction and non-fiction book clubs. During this visit, staff referred to many recent events on campus including an international fair and a performance by Chinese acrobats both of which were well attended by students and open to community members. Wayne College will host a "Maker Faire" in May, which is a family-friendly fair for tech enthusiasts, crafters, educators, hobbyists, authors and other creative individuals.

The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

6. Educational Programs and Instructional Oversight

The Office of Academic Affairs at Wayne College facilitates and coordinates course scheduling, curriculum development, program evaluation, assessment of student learning and recruitment of faculty for all credit and non-credit instruction.

Beginning fall 2017, a new set of General Education requirements will be implemented including academic foundations, disciplinary areas as well as citizenship and critical thinking. Over 60% of Wayne College students are pursuing a baccalaureate degree. The General Education core courses offered on the branch campus target learning goals established by and shared with departments at the main campus.

Wayne College has an Instructional Technology Work Group and a Director of Instruction who together support faculty development for part time and full time faculty including training for the Learning Management System, Springboard (Desire2Learn) and the distance learning classroom equipment. A Curriculum Work Group together with course coordinators identify and implement aspects of course content or pedagogy needing development or enhancement.

Learning outcomes, evaluation and rigor of courses is consistent across delivery formats and locations.

Wayne College requires evidence of English and Mathematics proficiency in new students and provides developmental training for students who require it.

The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

7. Evaluation and Assessment

Assessment at Wayne College is mature and faculty driven. Wayne College has linked College, program and course level learning outcomes. A Course Assessment Reporting System is used for documenting and assessing course-level learning outcomes.

Assessment at Wayne College encompasses both assurance of student learning and College effectiveness in advancing the institutional mission. Regular program review provides attention to currency and relevance of Wayne College offerings.

The College administers the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) to benchmark against peer institutions and to validate locally developed instruments. SSI results reveal that students are exceptionally satisfied with parking and safety on campus but are less satisfied with a number of items related to their intellectual growth. Wayne College outperforms its peers in CCSSE items related to oral and written communication and their overall effort

spent on preparing for class. CCSSE results suggest somewhat lower engagement with faculty outside of the classroom as related to peer institutions.

The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.

8. Continuous Improvement

The College is able to provide significant evidence of continuous improvement over many years through accreditation, strategic planning, benchmarking and assessment processes.

Assessment processes at Wayne College have been in place for over a decade and occur both in the classroom and at the institutional level. Time is devoted to both data collection and to actions that "close the loop." The College has a rich data set which affords opportunities to take longitudinal views of progress and to conduct evidence-based planning.

Wayne College maintains independent capital and facility planning processes. The new Dean at Wayne College is redesigning and repurposing unused building areas for more effective space utilization.

The Dean is energetic and future looking. He attends meetings weekly with the senior leadership of the University and the University Council of Deans. At the Wayne campus, he participates in many recruiting and advancement activities and lives in and engages with the local community. He would like to extend programming together with necessary faculty in a number of growth areas. He is leading a new initiative with members of the University faculty and staff to revive a large number of evening/weekend programs to provide flexible learning opportunities to adult populations in the region.

The evidence indicates that the institution fulfills the expectations of the category.



Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

INSTITUTION and STATE:	University of Akron, OH
TYPE OF REVIEW:	Standard Pathway Comprehensive Evaluation
DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:	Year 4 Comprehensive Evaluation. A multi-campus visit will occur in conjunction with the comprehensive evaluation to Wayne College, 1901 Smucker Rd., Orrville, OH 44667. Year 4 Comprehensive Evaluation will include an embedded monitoring report on both shared governance and student learning assessment. Comprehensive evaluation to include a Federal Compliance Reviewer.
DATES OF REVIEW:	2/13/2017 - 2/14/2017
<input type="checkbox"/> No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements	

Accreditation Status

Nature of Institution

Control: Public

Recommended Change: No Change

Degrees Awarded: Associates, Bachelors, Masters, Doctors

Recommended Change: No Change

Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2012 - 2013

Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2022 - 2023

Recommended Change: No Change

Accreditation Stipulations

General:

Prior Commission approval is required for substantive change as stated in Commission policy.

Recommended Change: No Change



Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Additional Location:

The institution has been approved for the Notification Program, allowing the institution to open new additional locations within the United States.

Recommended Change: No Change

Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:

Approved for distance education courses and programs. The institution has not been approved for correspondence education.

Recommended Change: No Change

Accreditation Events

Accreditation Pathway

Standard Pathway

Recommended Change: No Change

Upcoming Events

Comprehensive Evaluation: 2022 - 2023

Recommended Change: No Change

Monitoring**Upcoming Events**

None

Recommended Change:

Interim Report Due 12/31/2018: 1.) Program Review, 2.) Evidence of Financial Stability and a Long Term Financial Plan for funding Maintenance and Repair of Facilities, and 3.) Shared Governance and Communication.

Institutional Data -- No Change**Educational Programs****Undergraduate**

Certificate 68

Associate Degrees 32

Baccalaureate Degrees 99

Graduate

**Recommended
Change:**



Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Master's Degrees	79	<hr/>
Specialist Degrees	0	<hr/>
Doctoral Degrees	22	<hr/>

Extended Operations

Branch Campuses

Wayne College, 1901 Smucker Rd., Orrville, OH, 44667

Recommended Change: No Change

Additional Locations

Eastern Gateway Community College, 4000 Sunset Blvd, Steubenville, OH, 43952 - Active

Lakeland Community College, 7700 Clocktower Drive, Kirtland, OH, 44094 - Active

Lakewood Bailey Building, 14701-14725 Detroit Ave., Lakewood, OH, 44107 - Active

Lorain County Community College, 1005 Abbe Road, Elyria, OH, 44035-1691 - Active

Medina County University Center, 6300 Technology Lane, Medina, OH, 44256-5568 - Active

Midpoint Center, 50 Pearl Road Suite 300, Brunswick, OH, 44212 - Active

Stark State College, 6200 Frank Avenue NW, North Canton, OH, 44720 - Active

Tallmadge High School, 484 East Avenue, Tallmadge, OH, 44278 - Active

Recommended Change: No Change

Distance Delivery

13.0501 - Educational/Instructional Technology, Master, Master of Arts in Instructional Technology

13.0604 - Educational Assessment, Testing, and Measurement, Certificate, Certificate in Assessment and Evaluation

13.0604 - Educational Assessment, Testing, and Measurement, Master, Master of Arts in Assessment and Evaluation

13.1315 - Reading Teacher Education, Certificate, Literacy Specialist Certificate

13.1319 - Technical Teacher Education, Bachelor, Bachelor of Science in Teaching and Training Technical Professionals

13.1319 - Technical Teacher Education, Certificate, Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Training Technical Professionals

13.1319 - Technical Teacher Education, Certificate, Undergraduate Certificate in Teaching and Training Technical Professionals

13.1319 - Technical Teacher Education, Master, Master of Science in Teaching and Training Technical Professionals

45.1099 - Political Science and Government, Other, Master, Master's in Applied Politics

51.2201 - Public Health, General, Master, Master of Public Health

51.3801 - Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse, Bachelor, Nursing RN/BSN

52.1601 - Taxation, Master, Master's of Taxation

Recommended Change: No Change



Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Correspondence Education

None

Recommended Change: No Change

Contractual Arrangements

51.3801 Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse - Bachelor - Bachelor - 51.3801 Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse (RN to BSN) - Academic Partnerships, LLC

None

Recommended Change: No Change

Consortial Arrangements

23.1302 - Creative Writing - Master - Master - 23.1302 Creative Writing (Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Writing) - Northeast Ohio Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing

44. - PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS - Master - Master - 44. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS (Master of Public Health) - The Consortium of Eastern Ohio Master of Public Health

44.04 - Public Administration - Doctor - Doctor - 44.04 Public Administration (Doctorate in Philosophy in Urban Studies and Public Affairs) - Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Studies and Public Affairs

45.11 - Sociology - Doctor - Doctor - 45.11 Sociology (Doctorate of Philosophy in Sociology) - Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

51.0202 - Audiology/Audiologist - Doctor - Doctor - 51.0202 Audiology/Audiologist (Doctorate of Audiology) - Northeast Ohio Au.D. Consortium

51.0203 - Speech-Language Pathology/Pathologist - Master - Master - 51.0203 Speech-Language Pathology/Pathologist (Master of Arts in Speech-Language Pathology) - Master of Arts in Speech-Language Pathology

51.38 - Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research and Clinical Nursing - Bachelor - Bachelor - 51.38 Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research and Clinical Nursing (RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing) - RN to BSN

51.38 - Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research and Clinical Nursing - Doctor - Doctor - 51.38 Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research and Clinical Nursing (Doctor of Nursing) - Joint PhD in Nursing Program (JPDN)

51.38 - Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research and Clinical Nursing - Master - Master - 51.38 Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research and Clinical Nursing (RN to Master of Science in Nursing) - RN to MSN

52.0301 - Accounting - Bachelor - Bachelor - 52.0301 Accounting (Bachelor of Science in Accounting) - BS Accounting

Recommended Change: No Change
