Assurance Argument

University of Akron

Review date: 9/12/2022

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 articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference 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 and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

The University of Akron's (UA) mission statement:

> *The University of Akron, a publicly assisted metropolitan institution, strives to develop enlightened members of society. It offers comprehensive programs of instruction from associate through doctoral levels; pursues a vigorous agenda of research in the arts, sciences, and professions; and provides service to the community. The university pursues excellence in undergraduate education and distinction in selected areas of graduate instruction, inquiry, and creative activity.*

is provided in Ohio Administrative Code, Rule 3359-20-01 which also articulates the mission and goals adopted by the Board of Trustees and under which the University currently operates: UA is committed to providing learning opportunities to the full spectrum of students; creating and discovering knowledge through basic and applied research and creative activity; creating a learning environment that emphasizes the full collegiate experience for each student; providing a forum for the examination of ideas and concepts and the generation of scholarly dialogue within the principles of academic freedom; encouraging opportunities for interdisciplinary study and research, striving for continued improving of the teaching and learning environment; preparing career oriented people for leadership roles; and offering educational and professional services to its various constituencies within available resources and established continuing education and research philosophies.

The mission, commitments, and goals listed in the Rule have remained in place since 1991, throughout successive strategic planning processes. As expressed in our 2016 HLC Assurance Argument, our goal was to begin a new strategic planning process in 2017, but ongoing leadership

challenges delayed that work until Dr. Gary Miller was installed as President on October 1, 2019. On November 5, 2019, just a month into his presidency, Dr. Miller initiated the current strategic planning process, following a resolution from the Board of Trustees to prepare a 3-5 year strategic plan to present to the Board in June 2020. The President presented his expectations for this plan to UA's two primary shared governance bodies, University Council and Faculty Senate. Among those expectations was that the strategic plan should align with several elements of the University's mission and commitments, including:

- Reinforcing and supporting our mission as an urban research university;
- Holding true to our commitment to the success of all students;
- Focusing and expanding university engagement activities; and
- Employing a holistic enrollment strategy to encompass the full spectrum of students at the University.

The initial strategic planning process was well underway when COVID disrupted our work. However, significant progress had been made, including a draft strategic plan that included a potentially new mission statement aligned with the mission in the Rule as well as five promises aligned to this mission:

The University of Akron is a public urban research university that builds on historic strengths in business, the arts, and the STEM fields to have a transformative impact on its region and the nation by providing opportunities for all learners and engaging in partnerships that advance commerce, create knowledge and nurture innovation.

Strategic planning remained on hold until October 2020, when the President and Provost re-started the process. Building on earlier work and the draft plan, a newly formed University Planning Group shared the draft with campus, sought feedback from all stakeholders, and provided recommendations to the President. The final plan did not include the revision to the mission statement provided above but instead included a vision aligned to the current mission and five promises, with action steps:

Vision

- The University of Akron will be a leading public urban research university with an unsurpassed commitment to community engagement with a great American legacy city, Akron.
- We will be an opportunity university for all types of learners.
- We will be known as a willing and constructive partner of business, government, and the non-profit sector.
- We will be an institution of innovation willing to invest in unique approaches that increase opportunity for students and reduce costs.
- We will be a diverse and inclusive university.
- We will sponsor an array of superb academic programs relevant to the future.
- We will make and keep promises to our students, ourselves, and this community.

Promises

- We promise to ensure the long-term viability of the University;
- We promise to provide education to and share knowledge with those who seek it;
- We promise to increase our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- We promise to nurture research and innovation; and

- We promise to connect to and serve our community.

Our strategic plan commits to supporting student success, increasing retention and progression, investing in and growing online programs to meet student needs, creating new pathways for degree completion, eliminating disparities in educational outcomes, modifying admissions and financial aid practices to ensure our student body more closely mirrors our regional demographic, incentivizing research activity, providing experiential learning and applied research opportunities connected to community need, improving our delivery of professional and continuing education, and growing our town-gown relationship through the arts.

To achieve our promises, we have engaged in the following:

- Modified admissions practices by adopting a test optional application option and adding a holistic review for students who do not meet threshold GPA numerical admissions criteria.
- Increased need-based aid by implementing the Zips Affordability Scholarship for Pell-eligible students.
- Completed the Diversity Roadmap Strategic Plan 2021-2022 with four primary goals: cultivating a campus environment that thrives on diversity; creating global awareness and multicultural understanding in faculty, staff, and students; recruiting, retaining, and graduating more students with diverse backgrounds; and recruiting and retaining more employees with diverse backgrounds.
- Expanded the Vice President for Research position to a Vice President for Research & Business Engagement with a focus not only on increasing external grant funding and managing intellectual property and technology commercialization but also on promoting the University to the broader business community and aligning research with industry needs.
- Implemented the AkronArts Initiative to "embrace and enhance arts on our campus and in Greater Akron to enrich, empower, and enliven our community" by leveraging our university and community assets including E.J. Thomas Hall, our Arts Administration program, the Myers School of Art Visiting Artist and Lecture Series, the Kulas Concert Series, the Northeast Ohio MFA program in creative writing, The National Center for Choreography (NCCAkron), the UA Press and Akron Poetry Prize, the Art Bomb Brigade, Akron Roundtable, Synapse, and the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology.

Historically, The University of Akron has continuously adapted to serve the evolving needs of our region and community, responding to shifts in the local economic, demographic, and employment profile. While the most dramatic example is in our move from education and research in rubber to our academic programs and research in polymers, UA has responded in other ways as well, most recently in targeting a diverse group of learners to meet a wide range of needs, from degree completion to workforce development. We currently offer over 200 comprehensive programs, from the certificate and the associate degree levels through the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral and professional degrees. UA is ranked Number 1 in the world for polymer science and plastics engineering by EduRank.

To meet the needs of working adults, we offer online associate degrees in arts, science, and technical studies, and we have the only accredited online fire protection program in the state of Ohio. We also offer online bachelor's degrees in high demand areas such as health care, criminology and criminal justice, emergency management and homeland security, and nursing as well as master's degrees in areas such as taxation, speech-language pathology, and business administration (ranked as one of the best part-time MBA programs by Princeton Review and CEO Magazine). Our top degree-producing undergraduate programs for 2021 were Nursing (145 graduates), psychology (106), mechanical

engineering (105), associate of arts (104), organizational supervision (88), and marketing (83). Our top degree producing graduate programs were Law (123), business-MBA (48), social work (48), nursing anesthesia (35), clinical mental health counseling (30), and polymer science (30).

Our department of Online, Continuing, and Professional Education facilitates partnerships with local industry on workforce and professional development on both credit bearing and non-credit bearing programs. We offer courses in Ohio's TechCred program to support workforce development, particularly in technology areas.

Student success is supported through collaboration between the Office of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. The Vice Provost for Student Pathways reports directly to the Executive Vice President and Provost and is responsible for a range of student support services on campus, such as Adult Focus, Office of Academic Retention and Support (including Choose Ohio First, Collegiate Success, and Akron Rises Scholars), and Academic Advising. The Vice President for Student Affairs also reports to the Executive Vice President and Provost and oversees the student life dimension of student success, including Learning Communities, New Student Orientation, and Counseling and Testing.

The collaboration between Academic and Student Affairs has always been strong at The University of Akron. The partnership continues to evolve as this report is written, as the leadership teams in UA's student success structure assess how best to serve our students in light of challenges arising from the COVID experience (such as the adoption of test-optional admissions), the shifting demographics of our applicant pool, and the continuous evolution of student expectations. We offer wrap-around student support through ZipAssist (a state- and nationally recognized program) to help students experiencing challenges with academics, registration, financial aid, or housing; or for students who are experiencing personal, emotional, or financial difficulties via HELP-A-ZIP. Additionally, we have programs to support:

- Undergraduate and graduate student engagement through the Department of Student Life, which provides students opportunities to engage, serve, and lead at UA.
- Adult learners through our Adult Focus office and Military Services Center.
- Health and wellbeing through Student Recreation and Wellness Services, and the Counseling and Testing Center.
- Residential students through Residence Life and Housing.
- Commuter students through ZipAssist programs.
- Career exploration, planning, and development through Career Services.
- Experiential and community-based learning through the EX[L] Center.

Because of our commitment to increase access for a wider range of students, UA also supports pre-college programs through our Office of Academic Achievement Programs. These programs include:

- Educational Talent Search, a federally funded TRIO program to prepare 6th-12th grade students in the Akron area for post-secondary education.
- Strive Toward Excellence Program, an endowed college prep program for 7th and 8th graders in Akron area schools. Eligible students may receive a scholarship to UA.
- Upward Bound Classic and Upward Bound Math/Science and Pre-Engineering, two federally funded TRIO programs that prepare 9-12th grade students in Akron Public Schools for post-secondary education.

The University of Akron is committed to meeting the educational needs of its local community and

increasing access to higher education, focusing the bulk of its recruiting efforts in our local six-county region. Seventy percent of freshman entering in Fall 2021 were from this local region, up from an average of 65% in the three years previous. The enrollment profile of the institution closely approximates the demographics of Summit County, where the City of Akron and the UA main campus are located.

Sources

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1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
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 external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

UA's mission includes providing service to the community, and the vision laid out in the strategic plan articulates a "commitment to community engagement" and its desire to "be known as a willing and constructive partner of business, government, and the non-profit sector." Within the strategic plan are five promises, including a promise to connect and serve our community and three aligned actions:

1. Launching a single, one-stop professional and continuing education office for non-credit bearing training.
2. Partnering with local business, government, and non-profit enterprises to provide experiential learning, service learning, and applied research opportunities that matter for our region.
3. Reconnecting and growing our town-gown relationship through the arts, especially through revitalized programming and community use of the EJ Thomas Hall.

Commitment to the public good is interwoven into the student experience, our research endeavors, and into our community engagement efforts. The University of Akron's primary goal is to educate students and support their success. Part of that effort involves having students engage in their community and become good civic citizens. UA's department of Student Life facilitates this work. Its mission is to build community through collaborative learning experiences that provide our students the opportunity to engage, serve, and lead. Programming includes serveAkron, service-focused student organizations, and Fraternity and Sorority Life. The serveAkron initiative offers a variety of service events and volunteer opportunities for students, including on- and off-campus at local agencies located in the Greater Akron community. It also provides many educational and awareness events, such as voter registration, Super Service Saturdays, drop-in service events, Make A Difference Day, Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week & National Volunteer Week, UA Community Day, Alternative Spring Break, and donation drives. Prior to COVID, participating students regularly completed over 4,000 hours of community service in these events. Though these numbers dropped sharply during COVID, they increased from 665 hours in 2020 to 1,319 in 2021 and are expected to return to more normal levels this coming academic year.

For the last 15 years, Alternative Spring Break (ASB) has involved UA students and staff dedicating their week "off" during Spring Break as a time to help communities in other regions of the country. The ASB program originated following Hurricane Katrina. Over the years, the program has expanded to provide a variety of service experiences for those who participate, each targeting

different social justice issues, service projects, nonprofit partners and populations served. ASB was not run during 2020 and 2021 due to COVID, but between 2017 and 2019, approximately 200 students took part, completing 7,230 community service hours. They engaged in projects that ranged from tutoring at the City of Refuge in Atlanta, Georgia, planting trees to create a community orchard in Asheville, North Carolina, construction work for the Pittsburgh Project (Pennsylvania), trail construction for the St. Paul, Indiana YMCA, and river cleanup in North Carolina.

Also under the guidance of Student Life, Fraternity and Sorority Life supports students in civic responsibility and community engagement. Students serve in local agencies such as the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank, Haven of Rest, Akron Public Schools, Summa Health, and Camp Twin Lakes. Pre-COVID, UA fraternity and sorority members regularly posted between 8,000 and 11,000 community service hours per semester. During COVID, service hours ranged between 4,000 and 5,300 hours per semester.

UA is an anchor institution for Akron and is deeply rooted in the community. Not only does the university have a tremendous economic impact on the local area, it also improves and enriches the lives of those in our surrounding communities by providing services, cultural opportunities, and educational experiences. The University of Akron's School of Law provides several clinics to provide access to legal help for disadvantaged groups. These clinics are staffed by UA faculty, staff, and students who provide free services to individuals who cannot afford legal assistance. These clinics include:

- Reentry Clinic: Law students assist low-income clients file applications to expunge their criminal records, obtain Certificates of Qualification for Employment (CQE), and file clemency applications.
- Ohio Governor's Expedited Pardon Project: Law students screen potential pardon candidates to ensure that they meet the project's requirements. The students also assist the project's clients with preparing a pardon petition to the Governor.
- Inmate Assistance Program: Law students travel to the Summit County and Mahoning County jails under the direction of staff attorneys to interview inmates and provide general legal information on criminal and civil problems.
- Civil Litigation Clinic: assists low-income clients who are experiencing housing problems. Cases are referred to the clinic from Community Legal Aid Services, Inc. Students interview clients, investigate the case, and prepare the case for court.
- Domestic Relations Clinic: Students in this litigation clinic handle family law matters such as child support contempt, dissolutions, and civil protection orders. Students appear in court, argue at hearings, prepare briefings, and advise clients of modest means referred by the Portage County Bar Association.

The School of Law also offers low-cost services to entrepreneurs and small businesses through the Trademark Clinic and the Small Entrepreneur and Economic Development (SEED) Clinic.

The College of Health and Human Sciences offers programs and engages in partnerships for the public good and responds to the needs of external constituencies in a variety of ways:

- The Clinic for Individual and Family Counseling is an innovative behavioral health training facility operating since 1986. Housed in the School of Counseling in the College of Health and Human Sciences, the Clinic offers high quality and affordable counseling services to individuals, couples, families and groups across all ages, cultures, and mental health concerns in the Greater Akron community. The Clinic provides counseling services to approximately

800 individuals annually, and the majority are medically underserved. In 2020, the Clinic became a certified mental health agency by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS) to provide general counseling services.

- The Audiology and Speech Center provides audiologic, speech, language, and cognitive services for individuals from a variety of ages, disorders and cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds. These services are provided by graduate student clinicians under the direct supervision of licensed and/or certified Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists. The Center provides approximately 4,000 visits per year for patients from around the greater Akron area.
- The Training Center for Fire and Hazardous Materials (School of Disaster Science and Emergency Management) currently collaborates with the Canton Township Fire Department to provide training and professional development for current and future leaders in our community. Our Advanced Fire Training Days which are hosted by the Canton Township Fire Department has expanded our participation beyond Summit County to Stark and Portage Counties.
- The University of Akron Nutrition Center provides nutrition assessment and counseling, medical nutrition therapy, computerized menu and food intake analysis, food systems management services, and individual and group nutrition education services to the University as well as the community.

Departments and schools in the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences engage in partnerships for the public good and respond to the needs of external constituencies. These include:

- Summit County Sheriff's Office Recidivism Reduction Project. Faculty in the Department of Criminal Justice Studies are working with the Summit County Sheriff to calculate the cost of recidivism at the county jail, to establish a program targeting high risk offenders (primarily with mental health and addiction challenges) and evaluating the program for efficacy. Research by faculty on the determinants of recidivism will contribute to the design of a post-incarceration support program that may be replicated in other jurisdictions.
- The Center for Literacy (School of Education): This Center provides literacy coaching and professional development to several school districts in Summit County. The Center also offers family literacy engagement activities including Key Steps to Reading Success (created for kindergarteners and their families and being utilized in every school in Summit County) and family literacy night events.
- The H.K. Barker Center for Economic Education (School of Education): This Center prepares and supports the teaching and learning of economics in grades K-16. Priority areas for programming include financial literacy, entrepreneurship education, and global economic education. The goal is to train as many educators as possible so they can bring high quality, standards-based instructional resources to their students.
- The Center for Conflict Management: The Department of Sociology offers high levels of community-engaged educational opportunities focusing on social justice, health, and wellbeing. The Center provides Social Justice education and awareness to the UA community and the broader NE Ohio region via sponsored lectures, workshops, and events.

The College of Engineering and Polymer Science hosts a number of events for elementary, middle, and high school students, providing opportunities to interact in STEM learning. These include:

- Kids Career Day, which introduces students in first through sixth grades to STEM careers and engages them in hands-on learning activities.

- Summer Camps for girls in middle and high school that focus on engineering design, engineering research, and engineering careers.
- ASM Materials Camp® -Teachers, a hands-on lab experience that teaches educators how to use applied engineering techniques in their classrooms.
- Inquire! Innovate! Invent! This program is for 6th through 10th grade girl scouts and teaches participants about the impact of innovations from women inventors.
- National Society for Black Engineers STEM Day, an annual event that introduces middle school students to STEM through hands-on experiments.
- Akron Global Polymer Academy, which provides a variety of opportunities, including in-school visits, family polymer science nights, and field trips to UA's polymer research school.

In addition to their work with K-12 students, the College of Engineering and Polymer Science partners with business and industry to support research, operating a number of research centers in areas such as bioscience and biomedical applications; corrosion and infrastructure; traffic and logistics; aircraft/ vehicle craft worthiness; cybersecurity, data analytics, and human-machine interface; advanced materials and manufacturing; electrical vehicles; and engineered surfaces and coatings. In the area of sustainability, UA researchers have achieved fundamental breakthroughs in energy generation and storage, CO_2 capture, and plastics.

The University of Akron Research Foundation (UARF) supports innovators and entrepreneurs in Northeast Ohio. Its mission is to transform and expand the region's innovation economy through entrepreneurship education, technology commercialization, application of UA research, and creation of new entrepreneurial ventures. Its programs support the public good:

- Starting Line helps creators, innovators, and problem solvers assess an idea for a new product or service. This online, self-paced program teaches people how to apply best practices on the Business Model Canvas, helps them acquire clarity on their customers through interviews, and creates a competitive analysis for market insight. It is open to anyone from Northeast Ohio and has had nearly 100 individuals participate, including UA students, Akron area inventors, and Cleveland-based entrepreneurs.
- I-Corps is UARF's flagship program. It supports teams through an intensive 7-week critical evaluation of a new business idea. The goal is to help faculty, students, and the community answer important questions about their business, product, or technology idea through coaching and direct customer interactions. Since the program started in 2013, I-Corps has supported 25 cohorts and graduated a cumulative 335 teams (deep technology and community teams combined). Community teams have been coordinated since 2015. Of all teams supported through I-Corps, 43% have gone on to form a startup or had a startup formed prior to joining I-Corps. The startups have collectively raised $2.8 million in funding and have employed 112 full time equivalents. Community teams have raised $1.2 million in funding.
- STRIDE Accelerator is an accelerator program for later-stage startup companies from across Northeast Ohio and is fully open to entrepreneurs regardless of affiliation with UA or any other university. STRIDE Accelerator provides cohort-based business training and follow-on support to entrepreneurs with technical backgrounds. This relatively new program has assisted 14 companies, which have collectively raised $4.0 million in funding to support their ventures. One startup has exited, which is considered the biggest potential milestone for a startup's success.
- ARCHAngels (Akron Regional Change Angels) Network is a forum that presents companies with high growth potential to investors and other supporters. ARCHAngels has presented over 175 companies since 2005 at quarterly events. Its aims are to introduce high growth startup

businesses to resources they need in Northeast Ohio and particularly within the greater Akron area such as: investors, mentors, economic development assistance, service providers, and corporate talent; offer an exceptional opportunity to learn about unique area startups and to support them with an opportunity to network; and give students a meaningful opportunity to learn about entrepreneurship and networking. Students from more than 10 universities have attended presentations hosted by ARCHAngels.

- UARF's Senior Fellows program brings retired industry executives to UARF to facilitate interaction between UA and the business community. The Senior Fellows have interacted with hundreds of companies, introducing them to UA research and testing capabilities as well as other logical collaborators. In 2021, the Senior Fellows interviewed dozens of community leaders to understand how UA and UARF can better serve the greater Akron region.

Our College of Business hosts the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, which provides free tax return preparation for international students. This program includes federal, state, and city tax returns for approximately 200 international students each year, saving the students over $15,000 in tax-return preparation fees. The program offers tax education and employment tax resources for international students.

The University of Akron's University Libraries (UL) provides services to our local community through community, high school, and alumni borrowing programs. Alumni and persons not affiliated with the University of Akron may request borrowing privileges, and registered community patrons are able to use online and computing resources from within the library facility. Further, UL's Archives and Special Collections supports the research and scholarly activity of the university community, visiting scholars, and the general public by providing services related to preservation of historical resources and reference and research assistance. Archives and Special Collections collects, preserves, and provides access to important historical resources that primarily document the history of regionally important topics such as the growth of Akron and Summit County, the rubber industry, lighter-than-air flight, Ohio canals, and local book and print culture.

Our Office of Online, Continuing, and Professional Education (OCPE) actively forms a working, responsive partnership with community organizations. OCPE helps to identify specific needs, set strategic goals, and implement customized training programs taught by highly accomplished and credentialed instructors. Several examples include an applied project management course customized for Bridgestone, a Cisco networking course customized for First Energy, and a Lean Mastery course customized for the City of Hudson.

The University of Akron is a long-time partner with Akron Public Schools (APS) and has collaborated to create a pipeline of local students who are ready to pursue post-secondary education at UA. The LeBron James Family Foundation School of Education works closely with the school district to prepare pre-service teachers to fill openings while bringing a unique understanding of issues facing urban school districts. UA students adopt APS as their local district and complete numerous community service activities throughout the year.

As part of our partnership with APS, UA is the Sister University to Akron Early College High School (AECHS), Ellet High School, and STEM High School. These efforts include classroom integration, family support, experiential learning for students and teachers, and in-kind donations annually of at least $75,000 in staff time and resources. UA supports the AECHS students and staff members on our main campus. These students are earning their associate degree at the same time as their high school diploma. Further, UA is a founding partner with STEM High School and the National Inventors Hall of Fame STEM Middle School, both of which are also located on the main campus.

While The University of Akron serves an important purpose in the community, its primary role is to educate students and ensure their success. As described earlier in this section, we demonstrate our commitment to students through the high-quality academic programs we offer, our student support programs, and our efforts to increase access to a more diverse group of students, particularly those in our 6-county region.

Sources

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1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Argument

In alignment with our mission to serve the community, UA provides multiple opportunities for civic engagement. For example, the EX[L] Center for Community Engaged Learning facilitates engagement of faculty, staff, and students with the Greater Akron community through a variety of curricular and co-curricular opportunities that involve teaching, research, service, and transdisciplinary learning. Since its inception, the Center has connected with more than 200 local partners to support the economic and social development of the region by leveraging the University's unique resources and intellectual capital. One of EX[L]'s signature initiatives is the Akron Community Internship Program, where nonprofits, startups, and social enterprises approach the University with specific organizational needs, and students are sourced to respond to those needs. Over the last five years, EX[L]-supported interns have contributed more than 25,000 hours to producing deliverables for organizations such as the Downtown Akron Partnership, the Akron Civic Theater, the Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce, and ArtsNow. Additionally, EX[L] holds pitch competitions not just for entrepreneurship, but for nonprofit and social enterprises, where University students propose ideas and conduct diligence on how to improve their community.

EX[L] also facilitates community-engaged projects driven by the needs of local partners through research, service, and consulting arrangements. Recent examples include:

- A team of Sociology, Anthropology, and Communication faculty and students working on behalf of Akron City Council to facilitate Reimagining Policing focus group sessions, and to deliver a final report;
- An assessment project between the Akron Area YMCA and our School of Communication that investigates membership attrition; and
- A quality improvement project with Summa Health System's mobile COVID vaccination unit to improve community outreach and decrease vaccine hesitancy.

UA has a strong tradition of incorporating civic and community-engaged learning into degree programs, including establishing a new Certificate in Applied Community Engagement through the EX[L] Center. Students are encouraged to apply classroom-based learning to some of Akron's most complicated challenges through assignments, capstone experiences, and Honors projects. Participation in this Certificate program will lead to graduates better prepared to be active in civic life and community-building. Supporting this curricular option is a new co-curricular learning community on Social Justice and Community Transformation, one of the first interest-based learning

communities at UA, which is open to all students who want to make a difference, regardless of whether they pursue the certificate.

In addition to EX[L], our colleges have unique programs that encourage civic engagement and that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success. For example, through its Institute for Leadership Advancement, the College of Business offers undergraduate students the opportunity to earn a leadership designation on their transcript. A three credit capstone course requires students to complete a leadership experience project. Students are provided $2,000 to allocate toward project completion.

The Department of Residence Life and Housing (RLH) strives to engage residents in their community through a multitude of extra-curricular opportunities. Some events are annual traditions, but many are envisioned and implemented independently by student leaders. Through Hall governments, Hall honoraries, and student leadership, community service has proven to be a priority for our residential population. Activities since 2017 have included participation in the Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Walk, World AIDS Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Relay for Life, and UA's Make a Difference Day. Prior to COVID, 700 to 1,400 students participated each year. Approximately 500 students participated in events during Fall 2021.

The office of Career Services provides career advising and programming for students and alumni while developing valuable relationships with employers and campus partners to provide students with ample opportunities for experiential learning, career development, and placement. To help prepare students for workplace success, all students are encouraged to participate in at least one type of experiential learning during their time at UA such as on-campus student employment, internships, co-ops, micro-internships, student organization leadership and campus involvement, volunteering, faculty-led research and projects, clinicals, practicums, field experiences, student teaching, study abroad, service learning, and job shadowing.

More than 25,000 employers use UA's Handshake job board to post opportunities and connect with our students and alumni. Programming includes virtual and in-person internship and career fairs, networking and employer panels, mock interview events, career preparation and graduate school preparation info-sessions, classroom presentations, "Launch to Graduation" senior events, business etiquette lunches, and a career jacket loaner program.

Career Outcomes survey results show that 85% of spring 2021 bachelor's and 47% of associate degree recipients participated in at least one form of experiential learning before graduating. Within six months of graduation, 95% of spring 2021 bachelor's degree recipients were employed full or part-time, participating in a program of voluntary services, serving in the U.S. Armed Forces or continuing their education.

Each college has the dedicated support of college-specific career advisors who are subject matter experts and can focus on exploring relevant opportunities with their students. For example, the College of Engineering and Polymer Science has a robust co-op program that places undergraduate students into a paid industry experience where students can earn 12 or more months of work experience with internationally renowned companies such as Sherwin Williams, Goodyear, and J.M. Smucker or with local companies like Swagelok and Parker Hannifin.

Several programs within the College of Health and Human Sciences have required field placements, opportunities for internships, and other community-based experiences embedded into the curriculum:

- The School of Social Work requires undergraduate students to complete 450 hours of field placement at one of over 200 sites throughout the region including Summit County Children's Services, Community Support Services, and Crossroads Hospice. Graduate social work students complete 900 hours of more advanced training at locations such as the VA, Cleveland Clinic, and Victim's Assistance in Akron.
- In the School of Allied Health, respiratory therapy students go to local hospital systems to gain experience starting the summer after they are enrolled in the program. The program finds the clinical sites for these students.
- The Emergency Management and Homeland Security Program was the first program of its kind in the nation to require an internship to graduate. Students have a required senior internship of 225 hours. Over 50 students are placed each year in different internships across the country and world (including New Zealand and the Emirates). Students intern nationally at places like the Cleveland Clinic, the FBI, NORAD, Dominion Energy, Smucker, Goodyear, the National Park Service, FEMA, Homeland Security, and the Red Cross.
- In the School of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, doctor of audiology students complete over 2,000 hours of community-based clinical training, and speech-language pathology master's degree students complete over 375 hours of community-based clinical training, at locations such as the VA, Cleveland Clinic, other hospitals, clinics, and schools.
- Nursing requires undergraduate students to complete clinical rotations in health care agencies and/or the community in 10 clinical courses. Students in the Advanced Practice options (including Anesthesia and the Nurse Practitioner tracks) work side-by-side with peers in health care facilities. Locations include area hospitals such as Summa Akron City Hospital, Akron Children's Hospital and Cleveland Clinic Akron General.
- Graduate students in counseling programs complete at least 700 hours of practicum and internship at behavioral health agencies, hospitals, and schools serving diverse populations across Northeast Ohio.
- Exercise Science requires undergraduate students to complete between 90 and 180 hours of practicum at one of over 80 sites throughout the region including Cleveland Clinic, Akron Children's Hospital Orthopedic and Sports Rehabilitation, and Yanke Bionics. Graduate Exercise Physiology/Adult Fitness students complete 120 hours or more field experience at locations such as the Summa Health Cardiac Rehabilitation, Peter Lewis Aquatic and Therapy Center, and Stewart's Caring Place.
- The Coordinated Program in Dietetics students complete at least 1,000 hours of supervised practice in the areas of Medical Nutrition Therapy, Community Health and Wellness, and foodservice, working at over 180 sites.
- Sport Studies/Coaching requires undergraduate students to complete between 120 and 180 hours of practicum at numerous locations throughout the region including area high schools, Rubber Ducks, and the Cleveland Browns. Graduate Sport Science/Coaching Education students complete 120 hours or more field experience at locations such the Cleveland Guardians, Cavaliers, and the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

In the College of Business, undergraduate students are highly encouraged to complete internships as part of their major elective requirements. Students in Marketing and Sales Management must complete an internship as part of their degree requirements. College of Business students who register internships for academic credit complete a minimum of 240-hour internship experiences that are directly correlated with the learning objectives for their major. These internships are typically paid experiences. Graduate students are also encouraged to complete internships for credit. Internship hours must equal a minimum of 50 hours worked per credit hour for a maximum of three credit hours per degree.

Some of the companies that consistently hire College of Business students for internships are Union Home Mortgage, Ernst & Young, Progressive Insurance, Goodyear, J.M. Smucker, Sherwin-Williams, Valmark, and FirstEnergy Corp. All students in the College of Business have access to professional development resources to prepare them for a successful internship and job search, including Career Services advisors, the College of Business EDGE Professional Development Program, the Institute for Leadership Advancement, a full slate of communication-based programming, and Suit-Up Week activities. All professional development activities help foster student development in at least one of the NACE career readiness competencies.

The Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences has several programs with internship experiences. The Department of Political Science and the Bliss Institute for Applied Politics have a robust internship program that places both undergraduate and graduate students in a variety of governmental and related agencies to gain work experience and meet professionals in their field of study. The agencies include political offices (campaigns, political parties, interest groups, fundraising, and public opinion/survey research), criminal justice positions (law enforcement, courts, law firms, corrections agencies), and public administration agencies (city and township offices, state government offices). Students can earn up to nine academic credits in fall, spring, or summer semesters.

As an urban research university priding itself on serving the full spectrum of students in northeast Ohio and beyond, The University of Akron has a specific obligation to practice and present itself as a leader for inclusive and equitable access, both as a school and as an employer. Diversity is not simply something we pursue as an end in itself, but as a strategy for making the University a stronger, more productive, and more consequential institution of higher learning. Our purpose in pursuing a diverse student body, faculty, and staff is not to meet numerical benchmarks, but more importantly, to create and sustain a campus population that thrives on human multiplicity and variety.

In addition to the vast array of co-curricular opportunities we offer, a goal of our general education curriculum is to prepare students for responsible citizenship through the analysis of diversity within both domestic and global contexts. Our expectation is that students will apply interdisciplinary perspectives to complex social issues. Our general education program requires two courses in diversity—one in domestic diversity and one in global diversity—and students have options to take courses related to gender, race and ethnicity, economics, cross-cultural theories, intercultural communication, and a wealth of other topics.

Respect for and celebration of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives is evident in the promise described in our strategic plan to increase our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). To fulfill that promise, UA has prioritized DEI work in its leadership and organizational structure. The Vice President of Inclusion & Equity/Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) serves as an executive-level cabinet member reporting directly to the University president. The CDO leads the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity. UA has a campus-wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council that consists of diverse body of administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

The DEI Advisory Council's Diversity Roadmap Strategic Plan was approved and adopted by President Miller and the University's Board of Trustees in December 2021. The Roadmap provides a comprehensive, multi-faceted plan to develop and implement policies, procedures, and initiatives that recognize the unique contribution of each individual and respects each person's differences. The Roadmap integrates principles of diversity at all levels of the University's operations and has four primary goals:

1. Cultivate a Campus Environment Respecting Diversity

2. Create Global Awareness and Multicultural Understanding in Faculty, Staff, and Students
3. Recruit, Retain, and Graduate More Students with Diverse Backgrounds
4. Recruit and Retain More Employees with Diverse Backgrounds

These goals are designed to provide the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity with a proactive framework for leading diversity-related change efforts on our campus. Work grounded in the Roadmap began in January 2022. We are mindful that campus diversity efforts must be data-driven and evidence-based. The Diversity Roadmap Strategic Plan encompasses goals, actions, assignments of accountability, and measures of progress. Outcomes will be demonstrated by new forms of decision-making, communication, skills development, and behaviors in Akron students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

Our CDO works closely with the Chief Financial Officer to ensure DEI initiatives are placed as a high priority in the planning and budgeting process. Consequently, with the support of UA administration, the following UA programs have proved impactful: Rethinking Race, The Black, Brown, and Beyond Male Summit, Diversity Week, Hispanic Heritage Month, Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, Women's History Month, Juneteenth, Pride Month, Black History Month, Diversity Dialogues, and the Diversity Faculty Lecture Series.

Under the auspices of the Office of Inclusion and Equity, the Office of Multicultural Development provides students of color wrap-around services to help them succeed, such as the Peer Mentoring Program, ADVANCE New Student Orientation, and the Diverse Male and PASSAGE Learning Communities. Additionally, there are designated student clubs and organizations that serve the needs of LGBTQ+ students, students with disabilities, first-generation, international, and multicultural students, and student veterans.

In addition to these efforts from the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity, Human Resources and specifically the EEO office collaborate with UA's Counseling and Testing Center, the Dean of Students' Office, and the Department of Student Life to provide several trainings:

- Supporting Our LGBTQ+ Campus Community: focuses on understanding issues and challenges in the LGBTQ+ community as well as how to support community members
- Inclusivity Training: focuses on strategies for creating and fostering and inclusive workplace
- On-Demand Training: personalized, interactive training on unconscious bias, working across cultures, and creating a respectful workplace

Sources

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- Summit_1C.13
- Womens History Month_1C.15

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

The University of Akron's mission, purpose, vision, values, and priorities are clearly articulated and aligned. Our recent strategic planning process, which resulted in new priorities, promises, and actions, was a collaborative effort with broad involvement from the campus community that has been endorsed by the Board of Trustees. The University is committed to providing comprehensive education programs from the associates through doctoral levels, pursuing research that matters, and providing service to our community. Through our narrative and evidentiary sources, UA has provided multiple examples of how we serve our community, provide curricular and co-curricular activities to prepare students to engaged in a diverse society and world, and engage in research that makes a positive impact not only within our local community, but beyond it as well.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

University of Akron's mission statement was developed by the institution and was adopted by the Board of Trustees in 1991. The mission statement has remained stable throughout successive strategic planning processes and demonstrates our commitment to "pursue excellence in undergraduate and graduate education across a wide variety of programs, from associates through doctoral degrees, to pursue research in the arts, sciences, and professions, and to provide service to the community."

In support of this mission, The University of Akron establishes and follows processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior of its Board of Trustees as well as its administration, faculty, and staff. Rules, regulations and policies are accessible online through the Office of General Counsel's website and are linked from the Board of Trustees' website. University Rules describe members of the Board and their powers, officers of the Board and their duties, requirements for meetings of the Board, and for open meetings.

Notarized Oath of Office Forms are required of voting Trustees upon appointment by the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions, which provides copies to the University to be maintained on file by the Secretary of the Board. In this Oath of Office, each trustee promises and swears to support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Ohio, and to faithfully discharge the duties of their office.

The Ohio Ethics Laws are thoroughly reviewed with all newly appointed members of The University of Akron's Board of Trustees by the General Counsel and Secretary of the Board. In addition, periodic ethics training, while not mandatory, is encouraged and offered by the University and other entities. Voting trustees who are appointed by the Governor are subject to an annual mandatory confidential financial disclosure filing procedure administered by the Ohio Ethics Commission, which verifies compliance with Ohio Ethics Laws and is monitored by the General Counsel and Secretary of the Board. The annual financial disclosure file procedure includes the trustee's disclosure of any conflict of interest. The disclosure statements are filed directly with the Ohio Ethics Commission. The University is not furnished with copies of these documents.

The University of Akron operates with integrity in its human resource functions. Hiring processes for UA employees are clearly articulated either in the Akron-AAUP collective bargaining agreement for faculty hiring and hiring of the President and Provost or in University Rules, which describe hiring of part-time faculty, joint appointments, and School of Law appointments. UA's Human Resources department also provides resources for navigating the hiring process including:

- Hiring checklists for staff, contract professionals, and full-time faculty
- Search waiver checklist for faculty and staff/contract professionals
- Step-by-Step guide to the new faculty hiring process

Additional guidance is provided on conducting job assessments, the position request process, advertising open positions, evaluating faculty or staff/contract professional candidates, and writing offer and regret letters. All individuals who serve on a search committee must complete search committee training.

Policies related to employment are found in both University Rule and collective bargaining agreements. Policies found in University Rule include:

- General Staff Personnel Policies and Procedures
- Contract Professional Information
- Professional Leave of Absence and Vacations for Employees other than Bargaining Unit Faculty
- Sick Leave for School of Law Faculty, Contract Professionals, Classified and Unclassified Exempt Staff
- Vacation Policy for Full-time 12-month Faculty, Other than Bargaining Unit Faculty, Contract Professionals, and Unclassified Exempt Staff
- Faculty: Personal Matters and Special Instructions (includes professional responsibilities)

Policies found in the Akron-AAUP collective bargaining agreement include reappointment, tenure, and promotion; working environment, governance, disciplinary action, workload, and other topics related to faculty employment. Collective bargaining agreements for other units describe employee rights and responsibilities. Faculty grievance procedures are described in the AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement and in University Rule for law faculty, part-time faculty, staff, and contract professionals. For other bargaining units, including the Communications Workers of America (CWA), the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), and the International Alliance of Theatrical State Employees (IATSE), grievance policies and procedures are found in the collective bargaining agreement for each unit, which are available on the labor relations section of the human resources website.

Grievance procedures for students can be found in University Rule for graduate students and in the University Rule for student rights and responsibilities (Section C-2), which applies to all students. The rule includes sections on access to education, expectations for students, and rights of students. A separate rule exists that describes the code of student conduct. This code covers academic misconduct, furnishing false information, offenses against others, protected class-based harassment, disorderly conduct, computer/network use, hazing, and several other offenses. It also describes the investigation process, alternative resolution, hearing procedures, and appeals. The rule was most recently updated in December 2021 to codify regulatory changes following the enactment of Collin's Law (the Ohio anti-hazing act) and updated Title IX legislation. These rule changes were accepted by the Board of Trustees at the December 2021 meeting and can be found in the board materials.

Additionally, the Office of Academic Affairs has on its website a student complaint process for issues not covered under University Rule. Students are guided to attempt to resolve the complaint at the lowest level and then escalate the complaint to the next level if it remains unresolved. Students are directed to escalate the complaint to the Office of Academic Affairs if it cannot be resolved. A separate student athlete code of conduct is also included in University Rule.

The University of Akron publishes institutional policies related to ethical and responsible conduct in University Rule, including:

- Anti-discrimination and Harassment
- Affirmative Action (also mentioned in Institutional Mission)
- Student Records (FERPA)
- Conflict of Interest, Conflict of Commitment, Scholarly Misconduct, and Ethical Conduct
- Conflict Management Requiring President's Review
- Intellectual Property (University Research, Copyright, and Patent Policy)

Our Title IX process is described on the University's Title IX website, which includes the Gender-based Misconduct and Title IX Policy and Protocol and the anti-discrimination and harassment policy.

All employees are currently required to complete two trainings: Anti-hazing, which is mandatory by Ohio Law, and the prevention of sexual harassment. Information on mandatory trainings is provided online on the human resource department's website, which also includes other training opportunities. Since 2020, online trainings have been administered through Brightspace, our learning management system. In March 2022, University Council endorsed a resolution to also mandate cybersecurity training for all employees; Faculty Senate endorsement followed at its April 7, 2022 meeting.

Students are required to complete several trainings focused on awareness, respect, responsibility, anti-hazing, and sexual misconduct. All incoming freshmen are required to attend a mandatory Know the Code workshop presented by The University of Akron Police Department, the Department of Student Conduct and Community Standards, Parking Services and the Dean of Students Office. The workshop covers campus safety, the code of student conduct, and sexual respect. During the pandemic, the workshop was facilitated online through Brightspace. Pre-pandemic, participation was 91% but was lower during the pandemic with the online format. Participation in 2020 was 63.5%, which increased to 71.8% in 2021. We expect participation to be significantly higher as we shift back to in-person workshops.

Mandatory hazing training is provided to University of Akron students through an online course entitled "Enhancing a Culture of Respect." The course is provided through Brightspace and was developed by a third-party vendor, AliveTek. The training is approximately 45 minutes and is designed to help students recognize, report, and end hazing. The training includes educational modules, interactive learning exercises, a brief 10 question survey, and a quiz to ensure the students have mastered the material. New students have access to the same training module in a mirror course, "Creating a Culture of Respect." Graduate and law students are also enrolled in separate Brightspace courses that mirror the same course content. The training is coordinated through the Office of the Dean of Students.

Sexual harassment, gender-based misconduct and Title IX training is provided to University of Akron students through a contract with a third-party vendor, Get Inclusive. The training takes approximately 90 minutes to complete and is provided through the same Brightspace Course entitled

Enhancing a Culture of Respect. The training is designed to help students recognize, report, and intervene to stop sexual harassment, assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. The training is mandatory for new students. Graduate and law students are also enrolled in separate Brightspace courses that mirror the same course content.

In addition to these online training courses through Brightspace, The University of Akron provides additional formal and informal training to University employees and students as relevant to their responsibilities and activities.

UA operates with integrity in its financial functions. The institution employs a Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) who provides leadership for all activities within the finance and administration division, working with internal and external constituencies to support innovative and strategic practices. Responsibilities of the Senior Vice President and CFO are provided in University Rule 3359-3-01, which also describes requirements for purchases and for mandatory bidding for contracts over certain thresholds and signature authority.

In February 2022, The University of Akron hired its first Chief Compliance and Risk Officer (CCRO). The Chief Compliance and Risk Officer's responsibilities include developing a risk assessment framework to identify, assess, mitigate, and monitor risks that will drive the planning of the compliance and risk management functions. The CCRO also is responsible for providing direction in the development, review, and revision of compliance-related policies and procedures and partnering with issue-specific compliance leaders across the University to foster a culture of ethics and compliance and mitigate institutional risks. The CCRO meets regularly with members of the University's leadership and makes presentations to the Board of Trustees' Audit and Compliance Committee several times per year.

The Senior Vice President and CFO works with the Budget and Finance committee, a standing committee of University Council—a legislative body of the University that makes recommendations to the President in matters such as strategic planning, University policy, and University operations. The Budget and Finance Standing Committee studies, monitors, and makes recommendations to the University Council on the development of all University budget, finance, and purchasing policies and resource allocations. The committee was instrumental in guiding the development of the University's current budget guidelines and budget methodology.

The University of Akron maintains an internal audit function to oversee financial controls and University policy compliance. The audit function was revamped in July 2019 with the hire of the current Chief Audit Executive. The reporting structure of the audit function was re-aligned at that time to report directly to the President of the University for enhanced independence and increased visibility. The Chief Audit Executive now reports directly to the President on administrative matters and the Board of Trustees through the Audit and Compliance Committee on functional matters. The Chief Audit Executive meets regularly with the Audit and Compliance Committee and has direct access to the Audit and Compliance Committee Chairperson. Prior to 2019, the audit function reported through the University's financial function to the Chief Financial Officer. Also in 2019, the audit function staff was expanded to two staff auditors.

Since 2019, the audit function has performed reviews, audits or provided consultation in the following areas: Purchasing/P-Cards, employee overtime, scholarship administration, NCAA agreed-upon procedures, IT system access termination, building swipe card physical access, physical verification of select assets, cash receipt procedures at select locations, HEA Section 117 compliance, employee benefits dependent compliance, and enterprise risk management.

The financial results of The University of Akron are audited annually by Crowe, LLP through a contract with the Ohio Auditor of State. Audit reports for the University may be obtained from the Ohio Auditor of State website. For the most recent year ending June 30, 2021, UA received unqualified/clean audit opinions over its financial statements, internal controls and compliance. Previous audits are available for 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, and 2016.

During Fiscal Year 2022, the University experienced downgraded credit rating from both Moody's Investors Service, Inc. (from "A1" to "A2,") and Fitch Ratings, Inc. (from "A+" to "A."). The result of an incredibly challenged market environment, the University's downgrade is due largely to two Ohio-wide systemic forces that continue to 1) produce low enrollment and 2) hold our annual fixed pension liability on our balance sheet. Moody's reviewers credited the University for sound management, financial and operational adjustments, good stewardship and a collection of net assets that facilitates a buffer to ongoing challenges. While Moody's recognized that the University has adjusted expenses, the University is still left with a legacy of fixed costs, including our accumulated debt (approximately 9% of total operating expenses). The promising news is that our operating scope has changed with a "Stable outlook – A2," which represents a strong rating (in a smaller class group).

Much like the Moody's rating, Fitch recognized our challenging economic context while crediting our management proficiency. Fitch noted that because our enrollment decline for Fall 2021 was larger than expected, with resulting implications to the revenue side, the University would be more suitable in the middle rather than at the top of the "A" category. Fitch, like Moody's agreed with our management plan around enrollment, which was a factor in the University's "stable" rating decision.

Finally, the University of Akron also maintains an anonymous ethics reporting hotline utilizing a third-party provider. Students, faculty, staff and community members can anonymously submit a concern through either an on-line portal or by phone. Submissions are automatically routed separately to both the Chief Audit Executive and the VP of Human Resources. Both have a responsibility to investigate any items submitted and ensure appropriate attention by the Administration. The ethics hotline is routinely publicized in the email Digest to the University Community.

Sources

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- BOT Meeting Reqs_2A.6
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- StudentAth Conduct_2A.42
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- StudentRights_2A.39
- TitleIX Policy_2A.51
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- UnivCouncil_2A.57
- Vacation_2A.30

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Argument

The University of Akron presents itself clearly to its students and to the public. To ensure consistency, transparency, and accuracy, by University Rule 3359-4-01, the office of University Communications and Marketing (UCM) has oversight of digital communications, including the University website and communication to internal audiences through the Digest (daily email for faculty and staff), Zipmail (weekly email for students), other campus emails, the UA mobile app, e-newsletters, and emergency messaging. UCM leads all institution-level integrated and marketing efforts and ensures consistent messaging. Through the UA mobile app, students can view their class schedule, holds on their accounts, account balances, financial aid status, and grades. Students are also able to access their UA email, get updates on Roo Express (real-time info on shuttle service), our LMS Brightspace, events, availability of computers in all labs, safety information, and dining options.

The Office of Admissions website provides specific instructions for future students to apply to UA based on their entry as a new freshman, transfer student, adult learner, international student, post-baccalaureate, guest or transient student, graduate student, law student, as a middle or high school student seeking dual credit through College Credit Plus, or through some other pathway such as the Pathway to M.D., 60+ program, certificate only, veteran, etc.

The Admissions website also links to information on tuition and fees, financial aid and scholarships, ways to visit campus in-person or virtually, and our undergraduate and graduate degree offerings as well as graduate certificate programs. The Office of Student Accounts provides information on its website about tuition (including the 4-year tuition guarantee), billing and payments, refunds, and repaying loans, and it provides information to parents on the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including responses to parents' frequently asked questions about tuition and billing.

Students and their families have access to a tuition estimator for undergraduates pursuing a bachelor's degree and for tuition and fee schedules for those pursuing an associate or graduate degree. Additionally, from our Office of Student Financial Aid website, students or prospective students can find information on cost of attendance and access UA's net price calculator. The net price calculator helps individuals determine their eligibility for financial aid and estimate out-of-pocket expenses. The tool allows families to create what-if scenarios based on expected family income and anticipated expenses, and the calculator can be used for planning far into the future, allowing families of younger children to estimate future costs and create a savings plan.

The Office of Financial Aid website provides detailed information on types of aid available—including scholarships, grants, loans, federal work study, and student employment—and requirements for maintaining aid on topics such as standards of academic progress, repeating a course, credit/no credit courses, and withdrawing from a course.

In addition to the websites already mentioned that link to our degree programs, specific information on degrees, minors, and certificates offered, special requirements for admission to degree programs (if required), and degree requirements are found in the Undergraduate Bulletin and the Graduate Bulletin. UA no longer prints these bulletins but provides the most recent Bulletins online as well as archives of previous Bulletins, which are linked from the Office of the University Registrar. Included are all programs offered within a field, such as major, minor, or certificate; degrees and concentrations, if applicable; course requirements, including general education, core/major, concentration, and elective courses; and required credit hours to graduate.

The Undergraduate Bulletin provides information on:

- The academic calendar
- General policies on enrollment, new student orientation, veterans, registration, enrollment status, level status, class attendance, and student schedules
- Policies on credit (e.g., ACE, AP, bypassed credit, CLEP, credit by exam, IB, military, College Credit Plus, college tech prep, transfer credit, the Ohio Transfer Module and other Ohio-specific transfer credit programs)
- Grade policies and credit
- Graduation requirements
- General education, including program requirements and student learning outcomes
- College and departments and schools within colleges
- Resources for student life and living
- Support services for students (e.g., academic advising, career services, counseling and testing center, accessibility, student health, tutoring and writing centers, ZipAssist)
- Additional academic programs (e.g., study abroad, learning communities, academic achievement programs, ROTC, multicultural development, adult focus)
- Expenses including tuition and fees
- General information on the financial aid office
- All research centers and institutes
- All courses offered

Similar information is provided in the Graduate Bulletin.

For the past several years, curriculum guides (recommended course sequences) for each major have been located within each student's degree progress report (DPR), which students view within their MyAkron account. However, at its September 2021 meeting, Faculty Senate approved a motion from the Executive Committee to endorse the development of a recommended sequence of courses for each program that would be more widely distributed and available rather than reside inside the DPR. The rationale for Faculty Senate's endorsement was to 1) provide greater transparency to students concerning degree attainment, 2) enhance communication and coordination between students and advisors, 3) facilitate easier and more efficient scheduling, and 4) provide faculty an opportunity to weigh in on the optimal sequence of courses in their area. The Registrar worked with the academic departments throughout the Spring 2022 semester to collect and review curriculum guides. These guides also will be used to create degree pathways in Stellic, a degree planning tool students will begin using in Spring 2023.

The University of Akron provides information on both regional and specialized accreditation from the Office of Academic Affairs website. This includes information on our institutional accreditation through HLC and our academic program and discipline accreditations. For HLC accreditation, we provide information on prior visits, the current visit, interim reports we provided to HLC and HLC's responses to those reports.

The Department of Student Life provides students access to volunteer and community engagement activities and documents student participation in terms of organizations served and hours of service. Additionally, UA documents student outcomes from co-curricular experiences through our co-curricular assessment process, which focuses on five student learning outcomes:

1. Career readiness: students will demonstrate preparedness for 21st century professional learning experiences.
2. Teamwork and leadership: students will engage in collaborative activities and leadership roles that encourage all individuals involved to work toward a shared vision or goal.
3. Global and cultural awareness: students will integrate and celebrate human differences through interaction, scholarship, and active participation to achieve a more inclusive and equitable community.
4. Community and civic engagement: students will make meaningful contributions within local and global communities.
5. Life skills, health, and wellness: students will develop skills to support them in living a healthy, financially sound, and meaningful life.

Assessment of these co-curricular student learning outcomes, with supporting data and annual reports, is available for cooperative education (through Career Services), EX[L] Center's internship program, and our Rethinking Race program. Under the guidance of our Assessment Office, co-curricular assessment plans are being developed for the Esports internship program, EX[L]'s community connectors program, and ZipAssist's programs Balancing on a Budget and Jump Start. The Office of Academic Retention and Support is developing co-curricular assessment plans for three programs: academic and life coaching, summer bridge, and supplemental instruction/career skills development. More detailed information is provided in the narrative for Criterion 4.

In 2018, a statewide economic impact study was conducted by Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI) for the Inter-University Council (IUC) of Ohio, an alliance of the state's 14 public universities. As part of that study, EMSI provided a report on the economic impact of The University of Akron on Northeast Ohio. Results were provided via the UA News website, which also included links to EMSI's executive summary and full report.

Sources

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- StandardsofAcadProg_2B.40
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- TuitionandFees_2B.18
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- UA App_2B.5
- UADigest_2B.3
- UANews_2B.52
- UCM_2B.2
- UndergradBulletin_2B.44
- UndergradDegrees_2B.21
- UnivCommandMkt_2B.1
- Withdrawals_2B.43
- WorkStudy_2B.38
- Zipmail_2B.4

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

The University's Board of Trustees (statutorily determined to be nine voting members and two non-voting student members) are appointed by the Governor of Ohio with the advice and consent of the State Senate, in accordance with O.R.C. 3359.01. Voting Trustees are selected by the Governor based upon their demonstrated superior credentials and experience in various fields in the community including professional, business and nonprofit sectors. Student Trustees are selected based on their exemplary academic, service, and leadership experience. The Board also includes two non-voting advisory trustees who are selected by a majority vote of the Board, as described in University Rule 3359-1-10.

According to state law embodied in O.R.C. 3345.021, the board has full power and authority on all matters relative to the administration of The University of Akron, which includes the authority to delegate administrative authority to the President and other administrative personnel. To make decisions in the best interest of the institution and assure its integrity and to enhance its ability to act autonomously in a more effective manner, the University broadens its base of talents, resources, and experience by including among its members up to three individuals who are non-voting Advisory Trustees.

Further articulation of the high level expectations for the Board relevant to its autonomy in decision making for the best interest of the institution and assurance of integrity are found in the Board of Trustees Resolution 6-9-12 (Board Statement of Mission, Values and Expectations). In 2019, the Board adopted a Principal Goal Statement focused on financial sustainability:

> *The principal goal of The University of Akron Board of Trustees is to achieve sustainable financial stability within three to five years. To reach this goal, the Board is requesting the development of a strategic plan–led by the President and administration in conjunction with the full University community–which the Board will then consider and approve.*

> *The plan is expected to contain the following elements:*

- *Installing stable University leadership, including the president, executive vice president/chief academic officer and college deans*
- *Attracting, retaining and graduating students into productive careers*
- *Significantly increasing donations for student scholarships and endowed chairs*
- *Increasing the perception of UA as a university of distinction and choice*
- *Focusing research in areas of strength and opportunity*
- *Working closely with regional business, community and political leaders to strengthen our local economy*
- *Effectively managing expenses*

State law ensures the ability of the governing board to act as it deems necessary on a broad range of issues, including in the delegation of authority to others within the institution.

The Secretary of the Board, who also serves as the University's General Counsel, provides each newly appointed Trustee an in-person, comprehensive initial orientation that covers a brief University history and introduction of the current academic leadership team, as well as contextual explanations of key provisions of the Ohio Revised Code applicable to governing boards of public universities, including but not limited to the Open Meetings Act, the Public Records Act, Ohio's Ethics Laws (including fiduciary duties, confidentiality, conflicts of interest and annual financial disclosure requirements), and attendance obligations. These materials are provided for future reference and the Office of General Counsel is available to Trustees to provide advice and counsel within the attorney-client privilege when legal issues arise.

In addition, mini-courses and presentations on topics such as public university finance, athletics, and academic affairs are offered by the University to Trustees for those seeking a deeper understanding of those topics. The Ohio Department of Higher Education also offers Trustee conferences, webinars and conference calls on topics relevant to Trustees. The University has a membership with the Association of Governing Boards (AGB), which sends resources to the University and Trustees such as *Trusteeship* magazine and other materials that address current issues in higher education and best practices for governing boards and executive leadership.

The Board of Trustees has and follows rules that provide for both regular and special meetings so that the Board can deliberate and make decisions with respect to matters of importance to the institution. In order to obtain, process, and share information in an efficient and effective manner, the Board of Trustees has, by rule, established standing committees, and has also provided for both special and advisory committees which are constituted based upon institutional circumstances and need. Trustees are polled annually as to their committee interest so that the Board's work will be optimized through those assignments.

In addition, each committee, according to its scope, is assigned a liaison from the University's senior administration who facilitates the work of the committee and ensures that the respective committee chair is appropriately informed on issues relevant to that committee and briefed on agenda items well in advance of each meeting. The vast amount of information provided to the Board and/or gathered by its members for its deliberations can be seen in the Board materials compiled for each regular meeting and are also indicated by the typically extensive minutes from each meeting, which reflect the high level of attention given by the Board to prioritization of those concerns most directly affecting the preservation and enhancement of the institution. These materials are all available publicly on the Board of Trustees website.

The Board of Trustees, in particular consideration of the fact that The University of Akron is a state

institution, takes care to comply with state open meetings law. Furthermore, Board meetings are broadcast live on the Board of Trustees' website and are open to public access. The Board posts and sends notices of its meetings out to a wide array of constituencies, including media outlets. Additionally, the Board has procedures for routine receipt of and response to communications with the Board as well as requests to address the Board, whether those are from the University's internal or external constituents. The Board seeks and incorporates the interests of other constituencies through the inclusion of Advisory Trustees.

Members of the Board and administration communicate regularly with various external constituencies with the goal of strengthening and elevating our community, region, and state. In terms of internal constituencies, the Board expects a close working relationship between the President and Provost with the faculty via the Faculty Senate. In addition, the bylaws of the University Council provide wider shared governance involving open lines of communication, discussion, and recommendations from numerous campus constituency groups, including students, staff and contract professionals, and faculty. To gain a deeper understanding of matters of interest to internal constituency groups, two Trustees are assigned as liaisons to both the Faculty Senate and the University Council and attend their monthly meetings. Legislation passed by those bodies is occasionally forwarded to the Board for consideration.

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

The Board of Trustees has delegated substantial managerial authority to the President of the University as executive head of the colleges and administrative units. Similarly, the Board has delegated certain day-to-day management authority to those serving in the Office of Academic Affairs and has indicated by rule that the organization of instruction shall be such that authority is delegated to the faculty for oversight of academic matters. The Board has delegated certain rule-making authority to the Faculty Senate on admission, government, management, and control of students, courses of study, granting of degrees and certificates, etc., to meet University objectives, subject to Board approval. The day-to-day management of budget and personnel matters has been delegated to the full-time administration of the University as well.

Sources

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

The University of Akron is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of teaching and learning. UA faculty practice and facilitate freedom of expression and pursue the truth in their scholarship and creative activities, teaching and learning practices, and interactions with students and colleagues. UA's commitment to academic freedom is described in Article 9 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement with Akron-AAUP, which describes academic freedom, rights, and responsibilities.

In April 2019, UA's Faculty Senate resolved to endorse a statement of freedom of expression, adapted from the University of Chicago's 2014 statement. UA's statement reflects its commitment to free and open inquiry and states, "Except insofar as limitations on that freedom are necessary for the functioning of the University, The University of Akron fully respects and supports the freedom of all members of the University community to discuss any problem that presents itself." The statement reflects the idea that concerns about civility and mutual respect should not be used to justify closing off ideas, even if those ideas are disagreeable or offensive to some members of the community. The statement ends with a strong endorsement of freedom of expression: "…universities have a solemn responsibility not only to promote a lively and fearless freedom of debate and deliberation, but also to protect that freedom when others attempt to restrict it." The resolution, formally adopted by Faculty Senate as described in the meeting minutes, was reviewed and endorsed by University Council at its May 2019 meeting, and was endorsed by UA's Board of Trustees via Resolution 6-13-19. UA sends out reminder notices related to free expression to make our position clear. An example is provided in the email Digest about use of campus spaces by outside groups.

Students at The University of Akron are also afforded the rights and responsibilities of academic freedom and freedom of expression as described in the preamble to University Rule 3359-42-01 Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Sources

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- FacSenateRes_2D.3
- FreedomofExpression_2D.2
- StudentRights_2D.6
- TheDigest_2D.5

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

As a public research university, UA is committed to ensuring responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff, and students. With an annual research budget of more than $30 million and a portfolio of more than 300 issued, pending and provisional patents, UA is home to best-in-class programs including:

- The largest polymer science and polymer engineering program in the world.
- The National Center for Education and Research on Corrosion and Materials (NCERCAMP), originally funded by Department of Defense grants, with its mission to be a national center leading the nation's fight against corrosion and a model for integrated research and education for the nation and the world.
- First-in-kind collaborations like The Timken Engineered Surfaces Laboratory and Conquer Chiari Research Lab, as well as more than 115 active industry-sponsored research projects.
- One of the first six winners of the U.S. Economic Development Administration's i6 Challenge for biomedical technology commercialization with Austen BioInnovation Institute in Akron (ABIA).
- One of the first three National Science Foundation's I-Corps Sites programs to train technical faculty and graduate students in Lean Launchpad business principles.

The University of Akron's Office of Research Administration (ORA) ensures regulatory compliance, ethical behavior, and fiscal accountability. UA is affiliated with the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) managed by Miami University to provide researcher training. This on-line training is a customized program for UA researchers and is required for: (1) human subjects research (Institutional Review Board/IRB), (2) animal subjects research (institutional animal care and use committee/IACUC), (3) responsible conduct of research (RCR), and financial conflict of interest (FCOI) for Public Health Service and National Institute of Health research. IRB (human subjects) and IACUC (non-human animal subjects) review panels review all research proposals to ensure compliance with federal guidelines. All research involving human or non-human animal subjects also must receive IRB or IACUC approval or exemptions.

UA's IRB website provides guidelines for human subjects research and describes basic CITI certification requirements for faculty, staff, students, and advisors involved in human subjects research. The site also provides information on required elements of informed consent as well as

sample informed consent forms, including those for parents and child assent. Detailed IRB applicant manuals are provided for projects approved prior to January 21, 2019 and those approved after January 21, 2019. These manuals include information on types of IRB review as well as procedures for:

- Conducting continuing review of research
- Reporting findings and actions to investigators and the institution
- Determining which projects require review more often than annually
- Determining which projects require external verification that no material changes have occurred
- Ensuring prompt reporting of proposed changes, unanticipated events, and protocol violations
- Review of research involving protected classes (prisoners; children)

The manual also includes information in HIPAA and mandatory education requirements via CITI.

The University of Akron requires that all individuals (faculty, staff, students, advisors) involved in the conduct of research involving human subjects, including research that qualifies for exemption, take and pass the core modules in Social and Behavioral Research in CITI, which is effective for three years. After that time, the refresher course in CITI must be taken. UA's Institutional Review Board will not approve any research protocol unless all researchers under that protocol are certified through CITI. Topics reviewed and tested include the Belmont Report, history and ethical principles, defining research with human subjects, regulations and the social and behavioral sciences, assessing risk in social and behavioral sciences, informed consent, and privacy and confidentiality.

UA also has an online, web-based effort reporting system to facilitate compliance with federal and University requirements to certify an employee's time and effort that has been charged to a sponsored grant. University Rule 3359-11-24 provides policy and procedures for effort commitment and certification. The rule helps to ensure effort commitments are established when an award is made, that an individual's total commitments across all projects is managed, that salary support charges are reasonable in relation to the work performed, and that commitments to sponsors have been met.

Effort certification must be completed by all faculty assigned to an active grant. In addition to certifying their own effort, faculty certify their support staffs' efforts as well. This includes graduate assistants, part-time faculty, lecturers, and contract professionals who support grant work. Each department is also assigned an Effort Coordinator to monitor and process cards that contain estimated cost transfers. ORA provides training for certification processes.

For those seeking grant funding, the ORA provides assistance to faculty, staff, and student researchers through the entire grant life cycle—from finding funding to preparing proposals, to managing and closing out awards. ORA's grant accountants provide assistance in navigating federal and state law as well as UA policies and procedures to ensure grant costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and consistent with funding agency regulations. ORA assists with account maintenance, financial reporting, cash management, and expenditure monitoring.

University Rule 3359-11-17 provides policy related to Conflict of Interest, Conflict of Commitment, Scholarly Misconduct, and Ethical Conduct. Conflict of interest and conflict of commitment policies cover faculty as well as graduate students who are investigators on externally funded grants. The policy requires pre-approval for outside activities that could represent a conflict of interest or commitment. The rule defines outside activities and provides details on the pre-approval process. Conflict policies regarding research projects and University contracts are also covered in the rule.

Policies and procedures for scholarly misconduct cover UA employees, visiting scholars, and students, and it governs any research that is publicly disseminated through formal or informal presentation or publication.

In addition to requirements for student researchers to complete CITI training, as described earlier in this section, UA provides opportunities for students to learn about plagiarism. For example, The Bierce Writing Commons, located in the library to provide writing support for students, offers resources on plagiarism. University Libraries also provides a LibGuide on avoiding plagiarism, which includes a video on proper citations. Additional LibGuides are provided specific to various fields of study at UA.

Academic misconduct is defined in the Code of Student Conduct provided in University Rule 3359-41-01 as "engaging in any intentional or unintentional activity, individually or in concert with others, which would constitute a breach of academic integrity, or otherwise subverts the educational process." The rule includes various types of academic misconduct including cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, unauthorized collaboration, misrepresentation, gaining unfair advantage, and engaging in behavior specifically prohibited by an instructor.

As outlined in the rule, the Department of Student Conduct and Community Standards investigates reports of misconduct and implements procedures and sanctions described in the rule. The academic misconduct referral process is described on the Student Conduct and Community Standards website. Student conduct data is maintained electronically in our MAXIENT system.

Sources

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- RCR_2E.5
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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

The University of Akron operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources, and auxiliary functions. The University has a well-developed set of policies that govern hiring and employment, grievances, ethical and responsible conduct, academic freedom, and responsible research conduct. The Board of Trustees has authority to make institutional decisions in compliance with university and board policies, and board members maintain connection to the campus community through interactions with our shared governance bodies—University Council and Faculty Senate.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

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

Argument

The University of Akron offers over 200 undergraduate majors at the associate and bachelors levels, certificate programs, and over 80 graduate programs at the masters and doctoral levels. To ensure courses and programs are current, rigorous, and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded, UA relies on its internal system of assessment to measure student achievement of program learning outcomes, the program review process, and specialized accreditation.

The curricular change process is governed by University Rule 3359-20-05.2. The rule requires university approval for course additions; course deletions; changes in bulletin (catalog) descriptions; additions, changes, and deletions of degrees, majors, minors, tracks, and certificates; changes in university-wide curriculum requirements; and changes in general education requirements. After changes are approved at the local level (department, school, college), they are reviewed at the relevant institutional levels (e.g., Graduate Council, general education advisory committee [GEAC], and the curriculum review committee [CRC]). After institutional review, proposed changes are reviewed by Faculty Senate and, if approved, are sent to the Provost for review. Some changes, such as additions of degrees, require Board of Trustees (BOT) approval before they can be implemented. In addition, the Ohio Department of Higher Education's (ODHE) Office of Program Development and Approval reviews and makes recommendation to the ODHE Chancellor on new undergraduate degrees and new and continuing educator licensure and endorsement programs. The Chancellor's Council on Graduate Studies (CCGS), of which UA is a member, reviews and makes recommendations to the ODHE Chancellor on graduate degree programs. In addition, the Ohio Department of Higher Education's (ODHE) Office of Program Development and Approval reviews and makes recommendation to the ODHE Chancellor on new undergraduate degrees and new and continuing educator licensure and endorsement programs. The Chancellor's Council on Graduate Studies (CCGS), of which UA is a member, reviews and makes recommendations to the ODHE Chancellor on graduate degree programs. The ODHE's complete academic program approval process is available on its website.

UA's program assessment system, which focuses on student learning outcomes in the major, is facilitated by the Director of Assessment, who reports directly to the Office of Academic Affairs. Our program assessment process focuses on the quality of the academic program with the purpose of understanding student achievement throughout the major. All degree majors and certificate programs take part in the process. Our program assessment process involves:

1. Creating clear, appropriately rigorous learning outcomes reflective of the discipline.
2. Creating a curriculum map that illustrates how courses in the program build on each other so that students develop the knowledge, skills, and values of the major.
3. Assessing student work throughout the program in a systematic way.
4. Analyzing the data from assessment and using it to inform program changes to improve student learning.
5. Reporting on those efforts to the department and the university.

The curriculum mapping process requires faculty to document where program learning outcomes are measured within their majors and where the outcome is introduced, developed, and mastered. This helps to ensure that the level of student performance is aligned to the credential awarded and that learning goals are differentiated. More detail on the assessment process is provided in the narrative for Criterion 4.

The program review process, which focuses on a holistic review of academic programs, is articulated in an April 2021 Memorandum of Understanding on shared governance with the Akron-AAUP. The MOU explains that all academic programs receive feedback on their status for the purpose of providing guidance and support and promoting continuous improvement. Program Review, which is described in more detail in the narrative for Criterion 4, requires each program to take part in a self-study every seven years, which involves reviewing data for all courses offered, including major courses and service courses. All programs that do not have specialized accreditation are required to take part in the program review process.

The department's program review report must include a narrative on the (1) appropriateness of the course to the goals of the program, (2) the appropriateness of the faculty assigned to teach courses, (3) student demand for the courses, (4) opportunities for improving courses to increase program effectiveness, (5) and opportunities to support and encourage effective program and career advising. Further, departments are asked to provide a narrative on student learning outcomes, ways outcomes are assessed, how feedback is used to improve teaching, advising, and student learning, and any deficiencies with the current assessment process and a plan to improve them. The report must provide separate analyses for undergraduate and graduate programs and credentials, and this provides differentiation of learning goals across different levels of academic programs. Depending upon the type of graduate degrees offered (e.g., research or professional), the report also addresses the role of capstone projects, research, internships or clinical rotations, and their value added.

In addition to UA's internal processes for program assessment and program review, several of our programs have achieved specialized accreditation, which are linked from the Office of Academic Affairs website, and take part in a periodic, rigorous review to ensure program quality in the areas of faculty credentials, curriculum, and student learning outcomes. Our programs with specialized accreditation meet the professional standards of their field and have taken part in self-study and evaluation by their professional accrediting body.

Further, several of our programs have aligned credentialing exams for students including such as the NBRC Respiratory Care Credentialing Exam, Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE),

Dietetics credentialing exam, NCLEX for nursing licensure, social work licensure exams, and PRAXIS exam for speech-language pathology and audiology students. Students in the Lebron James Family Foundation School of Education also take the Ohio Assessment for Educators and the edTPA assessment.

UA's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations. Programs have only one set of learning goals (there is no difference across locations), and there is no difference in course content offered in-person or online, whether synchronous, asynchronous, or hybrid. The same faculty design and teach all courses in all modalities. Further, all dual credit courses use the same syllabi, assessments, and assignments of the UA-offered courses. Dual credit high school instructors are hired by individual departments, and those departments are clear in their expectation that dual credit faculty must follow the approved course goals and objectives and use the same evaluation methods as the UA-offered courses. UA has no contractual arrangements, and all consortia programs are joint with other Ohio universities, which are also accredited by HLC.

To increase the quality of online courses, UA is part of the Quality Matters Ohio Consortium. Originally organized by the Ohio Learning Network (OLN), the consortium has grown to over 63 Ohio institutions for the 2020-2021 academic year and is currently the largest and oldest state consortium in the nation. The consortium is led by 15 individuals across the consortium who volunteer their time to train, educate, and promote quality online course design. Our Online Learning Services (OLS) department oversees Quality Matters (QM) training, including professional development certifications and workshops.

OLS also provides individual assistance to faculty developing and delivering online courses to ensure that faculty apply best practices in instructional design, implement an assessment strategy aligned with course learning outcomes, encourage engagement, and meet ADA accessibility guidelines. OLS recognized a gap in the quality assurance process that did not fully address the delivery of the course and was not inclusive of the student perspective. In response to this gap, OLS is currently developing the UAkron Online Promise. This program is conceptualized as six dimensions to the reciprocal relationship between faculty and students that contribute to a successful online learning experience:

- Preparation: Be prepared to teach a quality online course that provides guidance and resources students need to succeed.
- Communication: Reply to student inquiries within two business days and create an online environment with a clear description of the opportunities for interaction with the instructor and other students in your course.
- Active Engagement: Facilitate a variety of learning opportunities with rich, relevant content that supports active learning and engagement.
- Accountability: Provide a clear description of assignments, due dates, and grading criteria by the first day of class; clearly communicate any adjustments to your syllabus and course schedule.
- Inclusivity: Teach an inclusive and accessible course that affirms the value of diversity and encourages each student to reach their fullest potential.
- Commitment to Success: Provide proactive and timely feedback for assignments and assessments that create pathways for improvement, increase knowledge and achievement, and ensure student learning.

Faculty members who participate in the UAkron Promise attend three consultations for the Committed to Quality process. The first consultation is scheduled before the class begins. During the first consultation, OLS helps faculty develop a plan to achieve the 6 guarantees. The Committed to

Quality badge will be placed on the course homepage during this consultation. The second consultation occurs after the faculty member receives midterm course feedback from students. OLS staff discuss any student feedback or progress that faculty want to share, offer supportive strategies, and assist in the completion of any remaining course features and activities. The third consultation occurs after the course ends and the faculty member has received student course evaluations. In the third consultation, OLS helps faculty finalize revisions focusing on course design, accessibility, usability, and learner support. The consultations are scheduled around student feedback periods to help ensure that the student perspective and needs are being considered.

Faculty members who have completed the three consultations to achieve the *Committed to Quality* badge can complete the Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) Peer Review process. This internal peer review process enables the faculty member to become eligible for the *Quality Online Course* badge. Participants will be paired with a colleague who has completed the workshop, "Effective Teaching in Trying Times: Six Steps to a Better Course." The review process involves a one-on-one virtual meeting where peers share their course pages and discuss strategies for effective teaching, such as establishing instructor presence and using the Learning Management System to engage students in the course. Faculty members receive a letter from ITL documenting participation.

To qualify for the *High-Quality Online Course* badge, faculty can submit their course for Quality Matters (QM) review. Instructors who have demonstrated remarkable dedication to the UAkron Online Promise through their efforts to enhance teaching and learning across multiple courses are able to apply for the *Excellence in Online Teaching Award*. This award includes a $2,500 professional development stipend. A faculty committee will establish the criteria and the process for awarding this designation.

Sources

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- QM Consortium_3A.8 .pdf
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- SpecializedAccred_3A.6.pdf
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3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. 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. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Argument

The University of Akron's revised general education program was implemented in Fall 2017. The goals of the revision were to (1) integrate general education with degree program requirements, (2) consider a reduction of the number of general education credits in anticipation of the University's move to a minimum of 120 hours for baccalaureate degrees, (3) identify multiple pathways toward general education course completion, (4) make greater use of minors, certificates and integrated interdisciplinary sequences of courses, as well as service and experiential learning, and (5) focus on documentable excellence.

In October 2020, the General Education Advisory Committee brought to Faculty Senate proposed modifications to the general education program. The changes included slight modifications to the general education categories, adding an option for the capstone course, and revisions to the learning outcomes for the areas of domestic diversity and global diversity. These learning outcomes focus on students' ability to demonstrate knowledge of the perspectives and experiences of non-dominant groups; reflect on ways social groups are affected by power structures; use knowledge of diverse perspectives to analyze, interpret, and solve problems; describe how dimensions of diversity and intersectionality overlap; demonstrate knowledge of multiple worldviews and experiences; apply global perspectives for analysis, interpretation, and problem solving; and describe global interconnectedness.

Our general education program draws on the theoretical framework of the AAC&U's Essential Learning Outcomes, which outlines knowledge and skills essential to a liberal arts education and preparation for 21st century challenges. Our program is also closely aligned with the Ohio Board of Regent's Ohio Transfer 36 program so that students can easily transfer courses between state institutions. The goal of our program is to provide a common intellectual experience for all undergraduate students. The program helps students develop strong communication and critical

thinking skills, a broad understanding of disciplinary skills, and the knowledge and skills necessary for responsible citizenship in an interconnected world.

Through completion of the general education program, students achieve the following learning outcomes:

Learning Outcome 1: <u>Communication Skills and Information Literacy</u> - Students will demonstrate foundational competency in written communication, oral communication and information literacy.

Learning Outcome 2: <u>Critical Thinking and Complex Reasoning Skills</u> - Students will demonstrate foundational competency in creating and evaluating reasoned arguments, and employing quantitative, qualitative, and normative information in such arguments.

Learning Outcome 3: <u>The Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences</u> - Students will demonstrate foundational competency in knowledge of representative content and methods of inquiry of the arts, humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences.

Learning Outcome 4: <u>Responsible Citizenship in an Interconnected World</u> - Students will demonstrate foundational competency in knowledge and skills that promote personal and social responsibility. This foundational competency shall include an understanding of diversity.

Learning Outcome 5: <u>Integrated and Applied Learning</u> - Students will synthesize, integrate and apply knowledge in new contexts.

Students meet these learning outcomes through the required courses:

- **Academic foundations**

- 3 credit hours in math, stats, logic
- 3 credit hours in speaking
- 6 credit hours in writing

- **Breadth of Knowledge**

- 9 credit hours in fine arts and humanities
- 7 credit hours in natural science, including one lab
- 6 credit hours in social science

- **Diversity**

- Domestic diversity course
- Global diversity course

- **Integrated and Applied Learning**

- Approved capstone course in the major

OR

- Complex Issues Facing Society course

Diversity courses may also fulfil major requirements or breadth of knowledge requirements, and

integrated and applied learning courses may fulfil major requirements. Students must complete a minimum of 36 credit hours to fulfill general education requirements for the bachelor's degree, as well as the Associate of Arts and the Associate of Science degrees, and 15 specified credit hours for applied associate degrees.

The university's mission clearly articulates a commitment to research, inquiry, and creative activity. UA's vision statements describe us as a leading public research university, and one of our five promises is to nurture research and innovation. In pursuit of this, faculty and students at The University of Akron contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of new knowledge. Article 13 of the Akron-AAUP collective bargaining agreement (CBA) provides policy and process related to reappointment, tenure, and promotion, and Section 3.A defines general areas of evaluation, including the quality of research and scholarly activity.

The CBA provides categories for scholarly activity, including publication, presentations, and grant funding as well as additional areas such as professional development and professional recognition. Departments develop their own guidelines aligned to these areas, which are available on the Office of Academic Affairs website. Scholarship and creative work by faculty are also part of the annual peer review process for merit raises, which is described in Article 16, Section 2 of the CBA.

Undergraduate research opportunities are provided through the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), which provides a description of research projects students can engage in across a variety of areas such as advanced materials, aerospace, biomimicry, business, corrosion, ecology, education, psychology, sustainability, and several other areas. Students also can find research opportunities across categories such as for-credit and funded research. Each available project lists the supervising professor, a project description, and project dates. Faculty submit their projects to the UROP website.

Students in the Williams Honors College find research opportunities through UROP or nationwide, including the National Science Foundation's Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU), the NASA Glenn Research Center, the Smithsonian Office of Fellowships and Internships, the Cleveland Clinic Lerner Research Institute, and the Council on Undergraduate Research.

Individual colleges also support student research. REU opportunities are offered through the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences (BCAS), the School of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering, and through the Williams Honors College. BCAS has also supported the UA Interdisciplinary Symposium (UA-IS), where undergraduate and graduate students present their scholarly and creative works in poster sessions.

There are also many opportunities for independent research at the graduate level. Both master's and doctoral students in all graduate degree granting colleges are eligible for assistantship funding. Most assistantships are full-time and provide a stipend and full tuition in exchange for service to the university in the form of teaching or research. Research assistants work 20 hours per week and are funded by external faculty awards from agencies such as the National Science Foundation, Department of Defense, Department of Education, NASA and National Institutes of Health, or community/industry partners. In our Community and Industrial Graduate Assistant (CIGA) Program, graduate students work at companies on company research, providing a particularly unique 'real-world' industrial research experience while still receiving a stipend and a tuition waiver. These research mechanisms not only offer financial support, but also an opportunity to obtain peer-reviewed publications along with building valuable research skill sets specific to the student's discipline. Given the success of UA researchers in obtaining external funding and the success of our CIGA Program,

there is a solid mentorship foundation in these laboratory networks. Most of these laboratories employ a research apprenticeship model where graduate students interact with faculty on research culminating in the student's completion of an independent thesis or dissertation project.

Sources

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. 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, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. 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.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Argument

At the beginning of the Spring 2022 semester, the University had 349 tenured/tenure track faculty, 112 full-time non-tenure-track faculty, 19 full-time visiting faculty, and 24 administrators with faculty rank. The percentage of semester credit hours taught by these faculty is approximately 63%, with the remainder taught by part-time faculty and graduate assistants. Additionally, there were 705 employees (both contract professionals and staff members) who provide student support. This included 139 full- and part-time employees in the division of student affairs and 123 in Academic Affairs, as well as those who are assigned to colleges, the Graduate School, university libraries, and our branch campus in Orrville, Ohio. Data on staffing and enrollment at UA indicate an increased reliance on part-time and full-time non-tenure-track faculty, and an overall decline in staff across student support areas. However, these changes track with our enrollment trends, which show a 31.0% decrease in total enrollment over the past five years (Spring 2017 to Spring 2022). Note in these data dashboards that dual enrollment students are included in either the Early College High School (ECHS) or the College Credit Plus (CCP) category).

The University of Akron is committed to a policy of equal employment opportunity and to the principles of affirmative action in accordance with state and federal laws. UA's affirmative action policy and program is found in university rule. Our commitment is to ensure equal opportunity in employment opportunities with regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, handicap/disability, gender identity and veteran status. We are further committed to recruiting and retaining more faculty, staff, and administrators with diverse backgrounds in alignment with our strategic plan promises and with the goals outlined in our 2021 Diversity Roadmap.

To ensure diverse representation of our faculty and staff, UA maintains and annually reviews an affirmative action plan. The planning process includes input from each college on filling anticipated vacancies and evaluates the demographic composition of the University's employees as compared to the available relevant labor markets. When disparities are identified, additional consideration and discussion occurs to formulate a search plan for those vacancies targeted to a broad and diverse applicant base.

Search committee members are required to complete search committee training developed by our Office of Human Resources before serving on a search committee, with refresher training required every two years. Search committees are also given access to forms including sample posting language, suggested interview questions, and proper screening procedures. For faculty searches, the Office of Academic Affairs reviews the search committee composition, search plan, suggested interview questions, and the qualifications and credentials of candidates selected for interview. All applicant pools, interview requests, and interview questions are submitted to and reviewed by the University's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action to reduce the impact of implicit bias in the hiring process. This process is articulated on the Human Resources (HR) website.

All instructional faculty are required to meet the appropriate credentialing criteria established by each academic unit. Hiring processes are in place to verify the credentials of faculty hires. In programs with specialized accreditation, credentialing criteria are also informed by accreditation agency standards. The process for part-time faculty hiring is covered in University Rule 3359-20-06.1. All hiring actions require approval of the Office of Academic Affairs, recommendation of the President or President's designee, and final approval by the Board of Trustees.

Procedures for approving high school teachers as part-time faculty to teach dual credit require a formal application and approvals by the department or school in which the course is taught. Standards for approving these teachers parallel those used within the department or school for approving other part-time faculty. Once faculty are approved to teach dual credit courses, syllabi, textbooks, and assignment and exam information are provided by the department or school in which the course is taught.

All instructors, including those teaching at our branch campus, additional locations, 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. At the beginning of the spring 2022 semester, the Office of Academic Affairs began reviewing our tested experience process, engaging with deans and department chairs to update the policy. Our current draft policy and procedure will continue to undergo modification as we implement the new process and departments determine whether they will request special circumstances to be considered as tested experience in their disciplines. As of Spring 2022, 86% of the full-time teaching faculty have terminal degrees in their fields.

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

College Testing Association.

UA has processes in place to ensure that the faculty and staff who directly serve students provide quality programming. Faculty members must demonstrate consistent quality in the classroom and current qualifications in their discipline to be considered for merit increase, promotion, and tenure. Article 16 of the Akron-AAUP collective bargaining agreement and department merit criteria provide established guidelines for annual review of successful teaching, scholarship, and service. The Retention, Tenure, and Promotion process and guidelines for Tenure Track and the Retention and Promotion process for Non-Tenure Track faculty along with department developed guidelines provide opportunity for routine feedback of teaching and other performance.

Part-time faculty are expected to document excellence in teaching through means such as student evaluations, peer evaluations, and supervisor evaluations. Merit criteria for part-time faculty include documentation of teaching excellence, professional development related to courses taught, and continuing education in the professional field or discipline. More specific information is provided in University Rule 3359-20-06.1.

The Bylaws of the Graduate Faculty, found in University Rule 3359-24-01, require faculty who teach graduate students to possess a terminal degree in their field as well as meet research criteria established by individual departments, including on-going contributions to advancement of disciplinary knowledge and creative work. Decisions for graduate faculty status involve input from academic departments, colleges, Graduate Council, and the Graduate School to ensure that faculty members working with graduate students meet necessary disciplinary standards. The criteria are more stringent for those faculty members who advise students on doctoral dissertations. To teach at the master's and doctoral levels, faculty must meet expectations outlined in the criteria. Graduate faculty status must be renewed every five years.

Staff members undergo annual performance reviews with their immediate supervisor as described in University Rule 3359-26-02 (p. 7), following the performance review process. During performance review, staff members articulate successful accomplishment of job duties, identify future professional development opportunities, and identify future goals.

All instructors are required to provide office hours to students. These office hours must be posted and are mandatory, but the number of required office hours varies across academic units and departments. Expectations for office hours are found in the *professional responsibilities* section of University Rule 3359-20-04. Academic departments, under the supervision of department chairs and school directors, are expected to determine office hours that provide students with optimal access to their instructors. Part-time faculty also must maintain regular office hours or provide another method of allowing students in their classes to meet with them.

To help all faculty and staff members maintain consistently high quality, the University provides multiple on-going resources for both faculty and staff development. The University of Akron's Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) supports quality instruction by focusing on improving teaching and enhancing student learning through workshops, information sessions, and training related to professional development, general education, diversity and inclusion, student learning assessment, course design and development, and implementation of technology to enhance teaching. ITL provides opportunities for all faculty, including part-time. During AY 2022, the ITL supported a part-time faculty fellow to help with the development of a part-time faculty professional development program.

The University's commitment to professional development and enhanced competence is also demonstrated though the Professional Development Leave (PDL) Program as outlined in Article 18 of the AAUP collective bargaining agreement. Student support staff have the opportunity to take part in professional organizations aligned to their responsibilities. In addition to the inclusivity training offered by UA, all UA employees and students also have access to over 16,000 on-demand training courses through LinkedIn Learning on topics that range from time management to ways to support student learning and growth.

Sources

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for 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 offerings 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 and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Argument

Through collaboration between the Office of Academic Affairs, the Office of Student Affairs, and the degree-granting colleges, the University provides holistic, intentional, proactive support services catered to the unique needs of each student. Beginning at the point of application and continuing through graduation, the University delivers individualized support services and academic advising designed to address the academic, personal/social, and health and wellness needs of all students in addition to specific populations as follows:

- The CARE Team helps students who are experiencing crises, displaying odd or unusual behaviors, or engaging in other behaviors that may be perceived as being harmful. The team accepts referrals and responds to students (and their families, faculty, and staff) when concerns for a student's health, welfare, and safety are identified. They also support members of the University community who interact with at-risk students by assessing and evaluating situations, communicating with individuals involved or impacted by a student's behavior, and providing referrals and resources to assist and address behavioral concerns.
- For all students, Zip Assist serves as a central information hub providing traditional academic and financial aid assistance and referral, in addition to wraparound services including food insecurity support, housing assistance, emergency funding, and personal/social triage and referral via the Help A Zip system. The Counseling and Testing Center provides free and confidential personal, career, and educational counseling for a range of concerns and Student Health Services provides evaluation and treatment for primary health care concerns, well women's care, and uncomplicated illness and injury. Career Services connects students to internship, experiential learning, and employment opportunities in addition to offering career exploration tools and individualized career counseling.
- Undecided students receive intensive academic and career guidance from advisers in the Center for Academic Advising and Student Success with the goal of choosing a major by the end of the first academic year. Students who select the "undecided/exploratory" major participate in career/major exploration programming and complete credit-bearing coursework to aid in the transition to college.
- Students identified as at-risk academically, based on secondary school performance and placement testing results, receive multiple layers of support including college-based advising

and intensive wraparound retention support. The Office of Academic and Retention Support provides a retention coordinator and peer mentor for each student, allowing for highly individualized success plans and comprehensive follow-up. With purposefully small caseloads, coordinators and mentors focus on personal development and campus engagement in addition to traditional academic support.

- The Office of Multicultural Development delivers academic support and transition to college programming catered specifically to culturally diverse and underrepresented students. Peer mentors and professional staff provide one-on-one advising in addition to large scale programming, both curricular and co-curricular.
- Adult Focus provides academic, personal, and financial support services for learners who are twenty-three years or older, who may assume multiple roles as parent, caregiver, or spouse/partner, or who return to university study following a leave of absence. Staff members maintain smaller caseloads allowing for proactive intervention and intentional follow-up.
- Transfer specialists work with prospective transfer students to evaluate credit equivalency and consider majors appropriate to their specific background and goals, then hand students off to a college adviser for continued support.
- The Military Services Center provides comprehensive, specialized academic and financial support for veterans and their families. Additionally, the Musson Veterans lounge provides veterans with a dedicated space for study or social activities.
- The Office of Accessibility ensures that reasonable academic accommodations and a supportive environment are provided to students with disabilities to promote student success.

As the University is committed and dedicated to the success of its students, it recognizes the importance of addressing the holistic needs of students as they transition to college. A centralized Office of New Student Orientation (NSO) guides new undergraduate students from matriculation through their first semester on campus. As part of every NSO program, students meet with an academic advisor. The advisor determines appropriate course placement for each student using available assessment tools and prior college and university coursework. The advisor pays special attention to the student's abilities in writing, mathematics, and reading comprehension. This ensures that students are adequately prepared for the courses they select for enrollment. Academic advisors focus on information found in the following assessment tools, complying with the placement policy recommendations from the Ohio Board of Regents:

1. ACT/SAT scores (if available)
2. Placement tests delivered by the university
3. Advanced Placement courses
4. Prior post-secondary and/or transfer coursework

Once students begin their academic careers at the University, they have access to a wide variety of resources that provide learning support and preparatory instruction. Based on placement mechanisms above, the office of Developmental Programs provides non-credit bearing remedial education in mathematics, reading, and writing with the goal of preparing students for success in college-level courses. In addition, students with placement scores near the cutoff for credit-bearing courses in mathematics and writing may take, with embedded co-requisite learning supports, general education courses in writing and quantitative reasoning. Math/Writing labs and on-line and face-to-face tutoring are available to all students enrolled at the University, in addition to the research and learning resources and services available through the University Libraries. First-year students can also elect to take the Akron Experience course to strengthen their academic and time-management skills.

From the point of intake to graduation, all undergraduate students are assigned a professional or staff adviser to assist in long- and short-term educational planning. The advisor helps students become familiar with the variety of programs and options offered and assists with appropriate course selection. Advisors ensure that students have taken all the necessary prerequisites for each course and provide adequate information about each course.

Academic Advising assists students in their growth and development by constructing meaningful educational plans that are compatible with their life goals. It is a continuous and consistent process built upon the basis of frequent, accumulated personal contacts between advisor and advisee. Academic advising fosters the development of the whole student who is a self-directed, motivated, responsible decision-maker and encourages the successful completion of degree requirements and timely graduation.

The University supports an intrusive advising model that involves and motivates students to seek help when needed. Advising is decentralized, with each degree-granting college responsible for assisting its own students. Every undergraduate student at Akron is assigned to either a professional or faculty advisor, depending on which college is currently working with the student and how far the student has progressed toward degree completion. First-year students who have declared a major may have a faculty advisor, a college-specific professional advisor, or both. Graduate students are advised by the faculty in their specific academic program.

Led by the Office of Academic Affairs, a task force comprised of faculty members, administrators, professional advisers, and student leaders recently completed an intensive study of advising practices campus-wide. To provide for a more consistent student experience across the various advising and student support units, the committee recommended several structural, logistical, and philosophical changes that the Provost approved in April 2022 and communicated to the University community.

Additionally, the university has begun to implement Stellic, a comprehensive degree management software suite. Capable of managing degree mapping and audit, course scheduling, academic advising documentation, communication, and tracking, predictive analytics, and workflow automation, this product eliminates the need to utilize multiple, often disjointed systems. As a result of this streamlined integration, advisers can reallocate time and resources toward proactive student interventions and away from transactional processes.

University Libraries (UL) serves the main campus from three locations: Bierce Library, closed stacks at the Science and Technology Library in the Auburn Science and Engineering Center, and the Archives and Special Collections in the Polsky Building. The mission of University Libraries is to provide resources, services, and expertise to support and enhance teaching, learning, and research. UL contributes to UA's core academic mission by connecting students to resources, providing physical and virtual spaces for academic engagement, and directly supporting curriculum through services such as direct integration of library resources into courses.

In addition to UL's local collections of print materials and electronic resources, the University is also a member of OhioLINK. The mission of OhioLINK is to create a competitive advantage for Ohio's higher education community by cooperatively and cost-effectively acquiring, providing access to, and preserving an expanding array of print and digital scholarly resources to advance teaching, learning, research, and the growth of Ohio's knowledge-based economy. This statewide consortium includes the State Library of Ohio, 16 public university libraries, 51 independent college libraries, 23 two-year college libraries, 16 regional campus libraries, 8 law school libraries, and 5 medical school libraries.

In addition to shared online resources, UA's students have access to the collections of OhioLINK's member institutions.

UL has enhanced and increased technology circulation to support student demand, with 267 Dell laptops and 12 Macbooks available for semester long checkout. Other technology available for students includes DLSR cameras and scientific and graphing calculators. Bierce Library currently has 43 study rooms and 4 Learning Studios available throughout the building. There is also instructor pop-up office hours space and a Mothers' room for breastfeeding or pumping. Room 76B in the Children and Young Adult Center on the ground floor provides a family-friendly space for UA student parents/guardians to study and work on projects with their children. The space provides child-friendly furniture, children's books, toys, and technology. Finally, Bierce also houses the UL MakerStudio and a virtual reality room.

Across campus, technology resources are provided to support and enable the success of our students. There are 157 labs located within various buildings at the University which contain a total of 2,473 workstations available to our students. A portal is provided through the University's website to identify open workstations located within these labs to guide students to available resources. Support for these labs has been consolidated through a shared services program established between the Information Technology Services team and the departments where the labs are maintained helping to insure continuous and up-to-date resources and access to these labs.

Mobile laptop carts for classroom use are available as needed (7 carts/120 laptops) in several buildings located here on campus. The University also provides students remote access to a virtual computing lab environment that can support up to 330 concurrent sessions for students to access lab resources. Students are provided access to a wide variety of software through site licenses that the University has in place for both on-premises and remote use. Students have access to training and information through LinkedIn Learning that supplements or augments classroom learning as well as providing micro credentials for students who complete coursework on this platform. The University has consolidated faculty, students and staff on a common collaboration and communications platform leveraging Microsoft 365, which is integrated into the University's D2L learning management system, aka Brightspace.

Wired and wireless internet access is available in all instructional and administrative buildings as well as in on campus housing. Wireless access has also been implemented at several outdoor locations on campus. The capacity of the network for internet access has been increased to a maximum capacity provided through a 100-gigabyte circuit with a backup connection put in place if the primary connection for Internet access is disrupted or unavailable. The University is also now a member of Eduroam, which provides students with remote access to the University's systems and resources through the networks provided by any participating member of Eduroam.

The Information Technology Services (ITS) group provides students the option to borrow hot spots for remote access to the University network when a student does not have access to an Internet provider that provides this. Through a shared services program, ITS provides students with access to an on-premises high performance computing (HPC) platform used as part of research activities managed at the University. Support is also provided for students and faculty to virtual resources used for research purposes which includes access to the State of Ohio's supercomputer and Microsoft Azure. A complete list of available services is provided on the ITS website.

UA's Affordable Learning Initiative (ALI) encourages faculty adoption and adaptation of open educational resources, the development of corresponding ancillary materials, and the integrated use

of library-provided resources in courses. This initiative lowers the overall cost of education for students while ensuring that they have the learning materials they need to succeed in a course. To date, the ALI has saved UA students more than $1M in textbook costs, impacted over 7,600 students, and engaged 52 faculty. Many faculty have also adopted publisher materials for their courses which are included in an inclusive access package so students save money and have direct and early access to what they will need to succeed.

In addition to classroom lab space, UA provides several scientific labs, including:

- The forthcoming [Timken Foundation Center for Precision Manufacturing](#) (CPM) will provide research lab space emphasizing the link between UA and industry with a focus on developing advanced methods for process technologies, including robotics, automation and smart sensors, digital manufacturing, and machine connectivity. Industry partners will also be able to utilize the CPM's labs for their own training programs.
- The National Center for Education and Research on Corrosion and Materials Performance ([NCERCAMP](#)) is home to a multimillion-dollar suite of equipment, originally funded by the Department of Defense, to provide research, testing, and analysis, by more than 30 faculty members and students, to government and industry.
- The [Timken Engineered Surface Laboratory](#) (TESL) houses labs and equipment where faculty, students, and industry experts collaborate to solve complex problems associated with friction, wear, and corrosion.
- The Department of Chemistry hosts a number of [lab facilities](#), including the Magnetic Resonance Center, the Mass Spectrometry Center, the X-Ray Facility, and the Center for Laser and Optical Spectroscopy offer state-of-the-art equipment for faculty and student research, as well as industry collaborations for research and testing.
- UA's centralized animal care facility supports a comprehensive classroom and research program primarily utilized by faculty and students in the fields of biology, biomedical engineering, and pre-med. The animal facility includes a fully functional cage washing center, procedure rooms, a sterile surgery suite, necropsy capability, a quarantine room, and dedicated storage locations for food, bedding, and equipment.

UA has a Gas Turbine Testing Facility and an environmental testing facility as well as other [specialized labs](#) for the study of alternative energy, energy conversion, power electronics, and motor drives.

The College of Health and Human Sciences also has on-campus clinical sites that support student learning and community outreach:

- The [Clinic for Individual and Family Counseling](#) is an innovative behavioral health training facility operating since 1986. The Clinic offers high quality and affordable counseling services to individuals, couples, families and groups across all ages, cultures, and mental health concerns in the Greater Akron community.
- The [Audiology and Speech Center](#), located in the Polsky building, supports the doctor of audiology degree, the campus-based masters of speech-language pathology degree, and the Bachelor of Arts degree in speech-language pathology and audiology. Audiologic services include hearing evaluations, hearing aid evaluations and fittings, hearing conservation services and products, assistive hearing technology services and products, and canine audiologic evaluations. Speech-language pathology services include evaluation and treatment of disorders of articulation, language, fluency, brain injury, and neurologic disorders.
- The Nutrition Center located in Schrank Hall South is a recognized source for nutrition

expertise, nutrition /dietetic training, research, and community service in Northeast Ohio. Nutrition Center services include nutrition risk assessments using anthropometric equipment in a private counseling setting, analyzing an individual's food intake to determine if they are meeting their nutritional requirements, nutrition counseling for athletes and individuals challenged with eating disorders, or any needed service.

Other specialized facilities that meet specific instructional needs include the nursing program's Learning Resource Center, which includes the nursing simulation lab, the nursing birthing suite, the nursing clinical lab suite, and other resources; the College of Business's Taylor Institute for Direct Marketing and the Fisher Institute for Professional Selling, both in the Polsky Building; and the Exercise Physiology/Human Performance Lab for Sports Science and Wellness Education students in the InfoCision Stadium.

The Cummings Center for the History of Psychology, a unique facility that cares for, provides access to, and interprets the historical record of psychology and related human sciences. The Center, a member of the Smithsonian Institution Affiliations Program, includes a museum of psychology that highlights artifacts, documents, films, and photographs from the history of the human sciences. It is also home to the Archives of the History of American Psychology, comprised of a vast collection of artifacts, media, and documents, including the personal papers of many important psychologists.

UA has several performing art facilities, including Guzzetta Hall—which includes dance studios, theatre stages, shops, and classrooms—the Daum Theatre, and the E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall. The Myers School of Art includes 28 studios, the Emily Davis Gallery, and an innovation lab. These facilities and the faculty, staff and students within the creative and performing arts are a vital part of the AkronArts Initiative, a substantial effort by the University and the city of Akron to revitalize the Greater Akron area through arts collaboration. By creating commercial opportunities for arts and culture, increasing the number of people who travel to visit our region, strengthening regional partnerships and collaboration, and attracting students to enroll at UA, AkronArts is an intentional strategy to strengthen the vital campus-city relationship that to a great degree defines UA. This new and highly coordinated visionary initiative, led by President Miller, members of the UA community, and the city of Akron, proposes a renaissance of the Akron area by leveraging the synergistic relationship that we have mutually shared for more than 150 years.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

The University of Akron has a robust process in place to ensure its academic offerings are current and aligned with the credential awarded. Learning goals are differentiated by program level, and learning goals are consistent across delivery methods. The general education program is based on AAC&U criteria and adheres to state requirements. UA has sufficient faculty and staff to deliver its academic programs and provide student services and ensure faculty and staff are highly qualified. The University provides multiple opportunities to students to support student learning and to faculty to support effective teaching.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
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 ensure 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 ensures 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 ensures that the credentials 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.

Argument

The University of Akron has a process of regular program review for all undergraduate and graduate programs which requires all programs without specialized accreditation to complete program review on a 7-year cycle, including the general education program, which will go through the process during the 2023-2024 academic year. Our process is consistent with Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) recommendations for graduate program review. Although the ODHE guidelines focus on graduate programs, our process includes review of both undergraduate and graduate programs.

The University has continued to engage the Faculty Senate and the Akron-AAUP in continuing conversations as we refine and improve our program review process. To this end, the program review process is included in Section C of the April 2021 Memorandum of Understanding on Shared Governance with the Akron-AAUP and is undergoing a revision through collaborative efforts with the Faculty Senate, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the Akron-AAUP. The revisions were initiated by the Faculty Senate to address two concerns with Section C. First, the regular program review cycle of seven years and the policy that allows programs with specialized external accreditation to forego program review means that underperforming or "at risk" programs may not be identified at an early enough point to address problems. The revised Section C allows for programs to

be identified and recommended for review at any time by the administration or by faculty in the program.

Second, the established program review process is intended for the formative evaluation of programs only and cannot make a recommendation to disinvest in programs that continue to underperform despite intervention. The revised Section C places the responsibility for this decision in an *ad hoc* committee comprised of faculty from the program; representatives from the program review, academic investment, and Faculty Senate executive committees; the program chair; and representatives from the appropriate dean's office and OAA. The committee makes recommendations to the Faculty Senate, which then makes its own recommendation to the President. The President and Board of Trustees have ultimate authority in the process. At the time of the writing of this argument, the revisions are still under review.

The program review committee is co-chaired by an academic administrator and a full-time faculty member. Faculty members serve a three-year term and volunteer or are nominated with selection guaranteeing that members broadly represent all colleges. The process takes a full year and involves the completion of a self-study report that focuses on teaching, research/clinical training, advising and the use of assessment for continuous improvement. Undergraduate and graduate programs are reviewed separately by each department. Programs are provided access to program review dashboards that provide 10 years of enrollment (with demographics), course outcomes, and degree completion data. Programs are also provided 5 years of research expenditures as well as links and instructions to access benchmarking data from neighboring institutions.

Departmental faculty complete the self-study reports which are then reviewed by the department chair or school director as well as the college dean, who provide their own independent evaluations. The timeline also provides for external reviews (paused during COVID). The program review committee reviews the self-study reports using a SWOC approach that focuses upon Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Challenges, and then prepares an initial report for review by the department.

Program/departmental representatives then meet with the program review committee and discuss the review, providing an opportunity for the program representatives to correct the report and provide any additional information. The committee also drafts a brief final memo to address recurring themes, describe critical findings, and make necessary recommendations to improve the review process. The documents are shared with Faculty Senate and formally adopted. Each program under review is then provided with the option of preparing a response document to close the loop in the process.

All documents are posted to the OAA website for public access. To date, the institution, as well as individual programs, have acted upon several of the program review findings and recommendations. For example, the review committee initially was an *ad hoc* stand-alone committee. Upon recommendations of the program review committee that felt the review process was too important to be jeopardized as it was not immune to turnover, program review has been institutionalized as a Faculty Senate standing committee with direct report to its Executive Committee. As such, the Faculty Senate Chair currently has a much more hands-on role in appointing the program review committee members and ensuring committee recommendations are considered.

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

University Rule 3359-20-05.1. Alternative credit opportunities are described in the UA Bulletin and include ACE, Advanced Placement, bypassed credit, CLEP, credit by examination, DANTES, International Baccalaureate, and military credit.

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

UA participates in the state of Ohio's Ohio Transfer 36 program, Transfer Assurance Guides, Career-Technical Assurance Guides, and Military Transfer Assurance Guides that set out formal articulations for selected courses on a statewide basis. UA relies on the faculty panel evaluations that serve as the foundation for these guides in awarding transfer credit for these courses when they are brought to UA from other Ohio institutions.

When a student wishes to transfer a course for which there is no easily identifiable UA equivalent, the course is evaluated by the academic department or by the Coordinator of General Education in the case of General Education credit, through syllabus review. A faculty member from an academic department aligned to the course content evaluates the course syllabus and determines if there is an equivalent UA course. If there is no equivalent, the course may be counted as elective credit. The results are then posted to the student's UA academic record and the student is notified of the faculty decision by email. All course evaluation requests along with results are tracked and logged by the Office of Admissions. In addition, all UA transfer course equivalencies are added, updated, and maintained though the University Transfer Equivalency Database.

The faculty's responsibility for curriculum is described in University Rule 3359-2-02 :

 The functions of the faculty of a college shall be to prepare and recommend to the faculty senate curricula and courses for the college, changes in departmental or school organization, requirements for admission to and graduation from the college, and candidates for degrees and certificates. The faculty shall encourage the improvement of teaching and scholarship.

This clearly identifies the faculty of the University as responsible for the curriculum and its development, and disciplinary faculty are the starting point for all the curricular changes.

Courses are proposed for entry into the UA course catalog and existing courses are revised or deleted via the institution's Curriculum Inventory Management Tool (CIM). The curriculum proposal process is specified in University Rule 3359-20-05.2 and this process reflects the way the CIM was designed. Course listings in the current Undergraduate Bulletin specify course descriptions and prerequisites and these are published only after final approval via the CIM.

Expectations for student learning are listed on syllabi, which are collected and held in academic units. University Rule 3359-20-04 specifies the responsibilities of faculty to inform students in advance of the goals and methods, grading procedures, and standards for their courses, and the

syllabus is a prime mechanism by which to accomplish this goal. Course outcomes and rigor are monitored via course and program assessment processes, which are described and documented in this report.

University Rule 3359-20.05.3 specifies the university's commitment to supporting necessary learning resources including textbooks, teaching aids, and supplies. Additionally, students have access to learning resources through the Student Success Center, which offers tutoring, transition to college assistance, and mentoring. Additional learning support is provided through the Learning Assistants program, which provides trained peer tutors in academically challenging courses, our writing, math, and study skills labs, and in the Bierce Writing Commons and Bierce Math Lab. Some colleges also offer additional tutoring for their majors. For example, the College of Engineering and Polymer Science has an engineering and computing tutoring program and the School of Law has an academic success program that includes a summer workshop series and bar exam prep programs.

The University holds 27 specialized accreditations. All programs also have the Ohio Department of Higher Education's approval, including all teacher licensure/credentialing programs. A listing of the accrediting bodies and accreditation status is provided on the Office of Academic Affairs accreditation website. All specialized accreditation reviews are initiated by the faculty in the respective programs, reviewed by the College, and forwarded to OAA for final review. Once all internal reviews are successfully completed, required accreditation self-studies are sent to the appropriate accreditation agency. Colleges are responsible for costs involved in specialized accreditation.

The University of Akron analyzes career outcomes for graduates using the First Destination Survey, administered each year. Career outcomes are disaggregated by degree level (associate or bachelors) and college from which the student graduated. The survey provides the percentage of students who are employed, participating in a program of voluntary service, serving in the armed forces, or continuing their education. Our 2021 data indicated that 99% of our associate degree completers and 94% of our bachelor's completers were in one of these categories. For our 2021 graduates, average earnings for bachelor's completers were $58,721 and average earnings for associate degree completers were $46,020. Career outcomes and salary averages have increased each year for the past three years.

Additionally, many programs utilize alumni and advisory boards to provide input on curriculum and programs to ensure graduates are prepared for their careers. The College of Business (COB) uses external advisory board extensively for both academic and professional development programs. In total, there are approximately 270 advisory board members, which are comprised of executives and professionals, many of whom are COB alumni. In the College of Engineering and Polymer Science (CEPS), advisory boards exist at both the college and departmental levels, and these boards provide feedback on programs, curricula, and career preparation. CEPS also surveys co-op employers about co-op students' experiences, and most CEPS departments conduct student exit interviews to evaluate career readiness. The School of Law also surveys graduates and employers on an annual basis to evaluate career preparation. In the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences (BCAS), the Department of Criminal Justice, LJFF School of Education, and School of Communication rely on alumni boards to provide feedback on curricula and programs.

Sources

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Argument

Since the comprehensive evaluation visit of 2017, the University of Akron has continued to solidify and formalize its assessment processes for both academic and co-curricular programs.

Assessment at UA is a purposeful and effective endeavor that engages faculty and other professionals in meaningful discussions of program objectives and supports the continuous improvement of student learning.

The Office of Academic Affairs, through the Director of Assessment and the University Assessment Committee, oversees assessment processes across campus. The University Assessment Committee is chaired by the Director of Assessment and includes representatives from all academic Colleges, the Office of Student Affairs, the Institute for Teaching and Learning, and the General Education program. The Director and the Committee support programs by assisting in the development or revision of assessment plans, supporting overall awareness and understanding of the assessment process, and monitoring program compliance.

Each academic program also has an identified Assessment Coordinator, a departmental representative or faculty member currently teaching within the program. The Assessment Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that annual assessment measurements are conducted, raw data is appropriately compiled, and results are presented to all faculty involved in the program for analysis and discussion of continuous improvement opportunities. The Assessment Coordinator also submits the annual report each fall, and when necessary, updates all or part(s) of the existing plan. Currently, 106 Assessment Coordinators, supported by 51 Chairs and Directors, engage with their department and school colleagues on assessment.

The Assessment Peer Review Group, initiated in 2018, assists the director in evaluating select annual submissions. Comprised of up to ten faculty members from across all five colleges, the peer review group also serves to increase faculty understanding of and engagement in the assessment process. Membership rotates annually, with each group meeting with the director three to four times per year for training in the evaluation of annual assessment reports/plans, norming in advance of the peer review process, follow up consultations, and development of assessment templates and training materials. Programs are invited to request peer reviews of their submissions, but the choice resides with them. To date, 33 faculty peer reviewers have provided feedback on 99 reports and plans, and requests for peer review have increased from 16 submissions in 2019 to 40 in 2021.

The Director of Assessment also works with the Vice President of Student Affairs to identify programs that support our co-curricular learning outcomes. Leaders from these programs form an ad hoc co-curricular assessment committee that meets to discuss goals and processes. In AY 2020-21, six campus units submitted reports and/or plans for the assessment of ten co-curricular programs at UA.

The General Education Coordinator is responsible for general education program assessment, with input from the General Education Advisory Committee (GEAC). This committee, comprised of faculty members from across campus, reviews course renewal applications during each assessment cycle and approves proposed updates to General Education learning outcomes. The general education assessment process relies heavily on faculty participation in annual assessment summits. During the first assessment cycle, running from 2016–2021, 149 faculty members were involved.

All programs and assessment processes are further supported by the Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL), which has sponsored 31 events specific to academic program assessment, co-curricular program assessment, or General Education assessment since 2017. The annual General Education Assessment Days (renamed "Assessment Summits" as of summer 2022) are also supported by ITL.

One significant challenge of effective program assessment is the management of (and follow-through regarding) the data and actions reported by over 200 programs each year. Though UA does not employ an outside vendor for program assessment, we do rely heavily on our Learning Management System (LMS), Brightspace, a platform with which faculty are familiar and to which they have easy access. Brightspace was first used for submission collection in 2018. The transition from paper to electronic reports has allowed us to create a more permanent record of annual submissions and to more readily track program engagement over time.

The electronic repository became even more important in 2020, when UA underwent a significant reorganization of colleges and campus-wide shifts in faculty. In response, in AY 2020-21, we expanded the use of Brightspace to create accessible and stable information archives for each of the five colleges, co-curricular programs, the University Assessment Committee, and the general education program.

These archives not only provide a means through which annual reports are submitted but also house numerous materials necessary for effective and sustained program assessment. Once enrolled, Assessment Coordinators, faculty members, deans, program coordinators, and department chairs or school directors can easily access all materials related to their programs, including the program's student learning outcomes, previous years' reports, the current assessment plan, and feedback provided on all submissions from 2018 forward. Through the archives, enrolled faculty can also obtain training materials (including recordings of recent workshops) and templates to use for upcoming submissions. These archives allow faculty within the same college to see what similar programs are doing in terms of program outcomes and assessment while keeping sensitive information primarily in house.

The assessment dashboards (included in the archives) help programs, departments, and colleges track their progress over time. Dating back to 2017, they quickly reveal what type of submission was collected from each program (plan or report) each year and how each submission was scored based on the quality of its assessment processes (blue = excellent; green = competent; yellow = needs work, red = no submission, and orange =low/no enrollment). The dashboard allows members of the University Assessment Committee, as well as deans, chairs, and directors, to identify areas of

strength and weakness within their colleges and to reach out to programs accordingly. Furthermore, this tracking system has enabled departments and schools to more easily identify programs (primarily certificate programs) with low or no student enrollment, thereby streamlining the deactivation process. The UA Assessment Webpage houses many of these resources as well and presents information about the assessment process to those who may not yet be enrolled in the assessment archives.

The new assessment templates developed in 2021 offer another important tool for information management. These templates, which were developed by the Director in consultation with the Assessment Peer Reviewers and the ITL Team, allow faculty to record the details and results of the assessment of each program-wide student learning outcome individually and in specific detail. This makes closing the loop actions related to each SLO easier to identify, implement, and reassess. The new plan template requires programs to include curriculum maps and asks them to provide detailed plans for the assessment of just one to two outcomes per year over a four-year cycle. Similar templates were created for co-curricular programs in 2021. After feedback from those conducting the assessments, however, these forms have been significantly revised. The new templates will be available to those conducting assessments in 2022.

The General Education Archives provide faculty with access to the general education learning outcomes, area-wide assessment reports, course-level assessment results, and course renewal applications/feedback. The course renewal form requires faculty to explicitly address course-level assessment results, describe curricular actions taken, address weaknesses, and develop communication processes that reach all faculty teaching the course at all locations.

Every academic program (graduate, undergraduate and certificate) is required to participate in annual program assessment. Submissions are due by October 31st each year. Program assessment measures the quality of each degree and certificate program at UA, not just that of individual courses, instructors, or students. The process begins with the creation of clear, appropriately rigorous learning outcomes that are reflective of the discipline and program goals. At this time, almost all active programs at UA have complete listings of their Student Learning Outcomes posted on the assessment archives, and the director is working with the assessment coordinators to achieve 100% compliance by AY 2022-23.

The assessment process also includes curriculum mapping that illustrates how courses in the program build on each other so that students develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for the major or Certificate. Programs use this information to determine what they want to assess in a given academic year, how best to assess it, and how to analyze and use that data. They are encouraged to assess just one to two outcomes per year over a four-year cycle, which allows for a more in-depth look at direct (and indirect) measures of student learning drawn from both formative- and summative-level courses or experiences. Such close analysis of each SLO provides valuable insight on strengths and weaknesses in program-wide student learning, which then enables faculty to make informed decisions about how to "close the loop," or take actions to improve student outcomes as necessary.

Over the last five years, our response rate from all degree and certificate programs has increased from 81% (in 2018) to 90% (in 2021). Approximately 80% of the over 200 annual submissions received consist of assessment reports or plans; others are memos providing updates on program deactivations or other changes in program status. The Director of Assessment and University Assessment Committee remain in contact with programs that have not uploaded annual submissions and work to achieve an even higher rate of compliance each year.

Collaboration with program and departmental colleagues is the most important component of the assessment process. Assessment Coordinators work with faculty in their departments to maintain deliberate, on-going conversations about student learning and program improvement. Many participate in assessment retreats that are devoted specifically to the assessment process. For example, the LeBron James Family Foundation School of Education holds an annual Day of Development, and half of that day is devoted to discussion of student outcomes and plans for continuous improvement. The School of Nursing holds a Faculty Workday every spring semester. Faculty use this day as well as dedicated time at monthly Committee and Faculty Organization meetings to discuss their assessment processes and follow-up actions. Similarly, Civil Engineering hosts an "Annual meeting" each fall semester to "review all assessment data and make plans for the next academic year." Assessment further appears as a regular agenda item at all monthly department and curriculum committee meetings in this department.

Because faculty involvement is a key component of our assessment processes, the plan and report templates encourage all programs at UA to foster program-wide collaboration. For example, both templates include a section that requires programs to describe how they promote faculty engagement and communication. Programs that do not provide specific information about how all faculty teaching in the program are involved in the assessment process receive low scores on this section of the evaluation rubric.

Co-curricular programs conducting assessments submit their reports through the Co-Curricular Assessment Archive by June 30th of each year. Co-curricular units are provided with templates that outline the assessment process. They are asked to align their program goals with UA's campus-wide Co-curricular Student Learning Outcomes. Though many programs touch upon several of these outcomes, units are encouraged to look closely at just one or two primary outcomes in relation to each program they assess; no single program or activity is expected to address all five. To develop their reports, units compile and analyze the data they have collected via surveys, interviews, student reflections, or other assessments. They interpret the results and identify opportunities for further development of student learning. As the last step in the process, they outline their plans for re-assessment the following year and/or propose a plan for assessment of additional programs and outcomes addressed within their unit.

The co-curricular process began in AY 2020-21 by drawing upon an earlier campus initiative that brought professionals from academic programs and student affairs units together to develop campus-wide learning outcomes. So far, seven units have assessed and proposed actions for continuous improvement on nine programs spanning all five co-curricular learning outcomes. We expect to increase involvement by one to two programs each year over the next several years.

General education courses are assessed through a centralized assessment process, with samples of student artifacts gathered from all courses taught in each area and assessed by faculty during the annual general education assessment days. During the first cycle of assessment (2016-2019), 149 faculty assessed 2,770 artifacts from 129 courses in ten full-day workshops. The general education program is now in its second cycle of assessment. Academic Foundation courses were assessed in May 2022, with Breadth of Knowledge courses due for assessment in May 2023, and Diversity and Integrated & Applied Learning courses scheduled for May 2024.

All courses must be renewed as part of the assessment cycle. Between 2018-2021, courses in all 10 General Education areas completed the renewal process. This process requires departments and schools to use assessment data to identify and address weaknesses in student learning and to develop communication plans for all faculty teaching the course, including those teaching at both main and

regional campuses as well as through College Credit Plus (CCP) programs. The central focus of cycle one renewal has been improving assignments to better align with general education learning outcomes. GEAC provided feedback on these renewals and the General Education Coordinator followed up with departments to incorporate the feedback into their courses.

The general education assessment cycle also includes time for reflection and implementation of improvements to the general education program. Based on what we learned from the first full assessment cycle, the general education outcomes and structure were updated with significant input from faculty assessors and GEAC. Additionally, the Integrated and Applied Learning option was developed to include relevant Capstone experiences alongside the existing Complex Issues Facing Society courses with 17 Capstone courses added to this category.

With respect to ongoing training and professional development focused on assessment, faculty are regularly invited to attend workshops on each phase of the assessment process. In Fall 2021, a three-part series titled "Making the Most of Program Assessment: Three Steps Toward Meaningful Results," reached 64 attendees. Sessions offered virtually (via MS Teams) were also recorded and made available to others via the Assessment Archives. Individual consultations and in-house workshops offered by the Director for specific programs and departments further strengthen understanding of the process and of meaningful actions suggested by the data collected.

Summer Mini-Grants support faculty as they explore innovative approaches to assessment-related challenges. In 2019, mini grants were awarded to 11 faculty, including five teams of two, who developed creative means of "Closing the Loop" and improving student learning within their programs. The Summer 2022 mini grants will address challenges within Interdisciplinary Programs. Faculty Peer Reviewers and Assessment Coordinators are also sharing insights with colleagues, thereby supporting the culture of assessment we are building at UA.

The General Education Program similarly fosters faculty engagement through scheduled events and outreach. Workshops on assessment results and course renewal days have been held each year of the General Education assessment cycle one, with over 30 faculty members being served annually. In AY 2017-18, six General Education workshops were offered; five were held in AY 2018-19, and six in AY 2019-20. In AY 2020-21, two course renewal sessions were held and three workshops on developing capstone courses were provided as part of our initiative to update the Integrated and Applied Learning category. In addition, the coordinator regularly provides individual consultations with those who request further guidance.

The Director of Assessment capitalizes on opportunities for continuing education and professional development by attending assessment-related workshops and conferences, such as the HLC annual conference, the IUPUI Assessment Institute, and the AALHE annual conference.

The improvement of student learning, also known as "closing the loop," is built into the very processes—and templates—developed for assessment of academic and co-curricular programs at UA. For example, to complete a competent annual report, programs must identify strong, measurable SLOs, use effective assessment methods to evaluate student work, and uncover problems and opportunities for improvement revealed by the data collected. Moreover, they must describe actions to be taken in response to this data and explain their plans for implementation and follow through.

The predominant message regarding assessment at UA, however, is that it should be meaningful and purposeful in the eyes of program faculty. If programs appear to be stalled in their assessment efforts, they are encouraged to look at things differently (by adding indirect assessments or selecting new

student artifacts, for example) or to redesign their assessment processes altogether. Not surprisingly, following the many disruptions and changes UA experienced in 2020 (COVID, college-level reorganizations, shifts in personnel), many programs across campus opted to do just that—and submitted significantly revised assessment plans in 2021.

Included below is a brief description of some recent assessment plans, practices, results, and continuous improvement actions identified within each of the five colleges and within our initial cohort of co-curricular programs.

Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences (BCAS): Assessment within the BCAS, our largest college at UA, is led by 22 department chairs, school directors, and program coordinators, and is facilitated by 42 assessment coordinators. An Associate Dean represents the college on the University Assessment Committee and is responsible for monitoring assessment within the college.

Over the past year, many programs in BCAS strengthened their SLOs and submitted new assessment plans. For example, the School of Communication submitted new plans for all eight of its active programs. While the plans for the B.A. in Communication currently address only core outcomes, they will be amended in future years to include a more focused assessment of each area of concentration (PR, Media Studies, Strategic & Organizational Communication). Importantly, even while developing new assessment plans for these programs, faculty moved forward with their analysis of student learning in relation to their core outcomes. As a result, they discovered that students' ability to create context-appropriate messages (SLO3) did not meet their benchmark. In response, they implemented curricular changes within their Multiplatform Production courses.

The B.S. in Biology program updated both its SLOs and its entire assessment plan, which now includes the use of Gen-Bio MAPS (a nationally standardized program-assessment instrument) as well as the development of a capstone course that will require majors to design original experiments. Students will present their proposals via posters, which will then be used for summative assessment of SLO3: Students will design experiments to test an original hypothesis, demonstrate lab/field skills to carry out experiments, use appropriate methods to record and analyze data to arrive at well-supported conclusions.

Faculty in the School of Music developed new rubrics for the assessment of student performance on individual instruments, a key program-wide learning outcome for students pursuing the BA. The 2021 report indicates that "students love the new rubric and find they have a better idea on what to work on in their performances." The report further notes that the rubrics created a unification of standards across courses and faculty. While completing this report, however, the Music faculty also discovered that they do not currently have a strong assessment plan in place for this degree. As a result, "The entire SOM faculty will meet in Spring 22 to take up this task of writing the SLO for the Assessment Report for the University of Akron."

College of Business (COB): The College of Business has two dedicated assessment officers who oversee the processes for AACSB accreditation and for UA's annual assessment of the BBA/Business Core. Both officers also serve on the University Assessment Committee. Assessment within the COB is further supported by five department chairs, school directors, and program coordinators; assessment of individual programs is directly facilitated by ten assessment coordinators. Degree program submissions from the COB consistently rank "excellent" or "competent." To fortify assessment of their nine certificate programs, the college invited the Director of Assessment to present a workshop on developing assessment plans in Spring 2022.

COB programs reporting on their assessments effectively identified—and acted upon—opportunities for continuous improvement. For example, the 2021 B.S.A. in Accounting submission notes that more class time should be devoted to development of SLO1: Demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and ability to apply core accounting principles, standards, and methods in such areas as financial reporting, cost management, auditing, tax, and systems. To address this concern, they will be adding lectures, creating new class activities, and redeveloping key assignments throughout the core courses mapped to this LO. Similarly, B.A. in Economics faculty responding to data collected on SLO2: explain economic concepts and their application, noted that while students' performance on a nationally-ranked assessment tool (the Peregrine Survey) was acceptable (2.79 percentage points above the average for US schools), faculty will make a conscious effort to further reinforce this outcome—and strengthen student learning—throughout the curriculum.

College of Engineering and Polymer Science (CEPS): Assessment within CEPS is overseen by an Associate Dean, who also represents the college on the University Assessment Committee. Assessment processes within the college's eight departments are directly facilitated by 23 assessment coordinators who work closely with faculty teaching in each program. Many of the undergraduate programs within this college are accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) and therefore submit all or part of their ABET reports in place of UA's standard annual form.

Compliance in CEPS has been increasing annually. In 2019, for example, only 11 programs from Engineering and Polymer Science/Polymer Engineering combined submitted annual reports or plans (five of which were included as part of Program Review for Polymer Science/Polymer Engineering). In 2021, that number increased to 39 program submissions.

The reports received from programs in this college indicate that assessment processes and activities are strong. For instance, the 2021 report for the Master of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering (MSECE) indicates that faculty revised the program-wide SLOs using more specific and measurable language per the feedback received on their 2020 submission. Moreover, upon completion of the 2021 assessments, they decided to require an Engineering Report course for the non-thesis MS so that they could more accurately assess student learning for all students (thesis and non-thesis). The B.S. in Biomedical Engineering report indicates that faculty will be making small but significant changes in class tempo, assignments, lectures and activities across the curriculum in order to improve student learning in targeted areas.

The B.S. in Civil Engineering program continues to conduct strong, meaningful assessments. This year, for example, the assessment coordinator collected data on all seven outcomes but opted to focus the actual assessment (analysis and interpretation) on just two outcomes. Following this year's closer look at SLO1 and SLO2 (ABET Standards 1 and 2), faculty identified several specific measures they will take to strengthen student learning. The measures include adding more theoretical-qualitative problems to the Fundamentals of Engineering Review course, further capitalizing on opportunities to use modern software in designs, and working with programs outside CEPS to strengthen students' foundational knowledge.

College of Health and Human Sciences (CHHS): Assessment within CHHS is overseen by an Associate Dean, who also represents the college on the University Assessment Committee. Eight chairs and directors support 26 assessment coordinators who directly facilitate assessment within the college's departments, schools, and programs. CHHS has averaged 95% in terms of program submissions over the last three years.

Many programs in this college, including those in nursing, social work, and counseling are accredited by outside agencies and have very strong assessment and continuous improvement processes in place. For example, the B.S.N. in Nursing report notes that the transition to online instruction during COVID not only disrupted student learning but also complicated assessment processes, particularly in the absence of in-person labs and actual patient-care experiences. As a result, faculty committed to creating alternate methods of assessment that will help them better evaluate competencies related to professionalism, leadership, and safety within the field, even when working with artifacts produced through online learning.

The Early Childhood Programs certificate submitted a new plan for its assessment processes in 2021 that includes well-constructed SLOs, a curriculum map showing adequate development of all SLOs throughout the curriculum, and specific courses from which assessment artifacts will be drawn. In their evaluation, peer reviewers described the plan as analytical and clearly written. They also remarked that, "There is a connection noted between SLOs, direct measures of outcomes, interpretation of outcomes, and next steps are clear."

School of Law (LAW): The Associate Dean of the School of Law currently serves on the University Assessment Committee and oversees assessment activities within the school. In AY 2021-2022, LAW began a complete revision of its program assessment processes in response to changes in the American Bar Association's standards. Five new assessment coordinators have since been named for the Master of Law, LLM, and Certificate Programs. The Associate Dean is also in consultation with the Director of Assessment regarding next steps.

Co-curricular Programs: Learning-outcome based assessment of our co-curricular programs was initiated in 2021, yet several key programs have already gained valuable insight on means of achieving continuous improvement. Not surprisingly, many of the insights gained by these pilot programs have to do with the assessment process itself. For example, after submitting their plan for the assessment of their cooperative education program, Career Services has begun revising its survey questions to include a mix of open-ended, reflective questions alongside the yes/no questions used in the past. Rethinking Race identified several means of increasing participation in their post-session surveys, which they hope will help them better determine how to support students in the achievement of LO3: Global and Cultural Awareness.

General Education: The mathematics assessment of final exams revealed inconsistencies in the delivery of curriculum, within Algebra for Calculus and Pre-Calculous, among main campus, Wayne campus, and College-Credit Plus classes. The Department of Mathematics now better coordinates assessment at all sites and requires the use of a common final exam so that all students are expected to meet the same learning outcomes.

The natural science assessment showed that students in Applied Anatomy and Physiology I and II were not demonstrating competence in applying the scientific method. In response, the lead faculty completely revised the labs in this course so that they require student engagement with the scientific method.

Through the arts assessment process, faculty noticed that students in Exploring Music: Bach to Rock performed better if they were given an assignment with clear instructions and examples of strong student work. In response, the School of Music now requires all classes to provide students with an assignment rubric and samples of well-written essays.

The Department of Anthropology noted that the assignments in Introduction to Archaeology were

disconnected and unfocused. Faculty used the renewal process as an opportunity to revise the assignments to explicitly focus on the general education learning outcomes.

To improve student performance in Empires of the Ancient World, the Department of History created a "transparent" common assignment using the Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT) method and shifted to an open educational resource textbook.

The lead faculty for Death and Dying, a social science and domestic diversity course, conducted professional development for part-time faculty teaching the course to ensure that everyone understands the general education learning outcomes. Faculty discussed teaching strategies for helping students gain a deeper understanding of course outcomes, with a particular emphasis on insuring quality of instruction in online sections.

As indicated by the information provided above, assessment practices at the University of Akron emphasize the purpose and importance of annual program-wide, student-learning-outcome-based assessment of all academic programs, General Education, and select co-curricular offerings. Programs develop clearly articulated and measurable outcomes that allow for the direct assessment of student learning at both the formative and summative levels. Many also employ indirect measures, such as student surveys and alumni interviews, within their processes. As a result, our assessments yield valuable insight into areas of strength and weaknesses in student learning. By using this insight to design and implement strategic measures in response, faculty capitalize on important opportunities for continuous improvement.

Sources

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- Assessment Templates_4B.3
- Assessment Webpage_4B.2
- BA Econ RPT_4B.14
- BA Music RPT_4B.12pdf
- BS Biology Plan_4B.11
- BS Civil Eng RPT_4B.7
- BSA Acct RPT_4B.13
- BSN RPT_4B.6
- Career Services_4B.15
- CoCurricular Templates_4B.4
- COM Core RPT_4B.10
- Gen Ed Assess_4B.8
- Gen Ed Prog Outcomes_4B.9
- LBJFF Report_4B.5
- Rethinking Race_4B.16

4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

Argument

The University of Akron defines goals for student retention, persistence, and completion in its Campus Completion Plan using the IPEDS definition of a cohort (first-time, full-time bachelor's seeking students at the main campus). Since 2014, the Ohio Department of Higher Education has required all public colleges and universities in the state to submit their Campus Completion Plans to the ODHE every two years, and plans are available on the ODHE Campus Completion Plan website. These plans provide data on retention, progression, and completion and identify strategies the campus has implemented or plans to implement for continuous improvement. Our retention and completion goals focus on increasing first-year retention, the 6-year graduation rate, and job/graduate school placement, as well as reducing achievement gaps based on race and Pell-status in first-year retention.

Our most recent retention and completion data, provided on our data dashboard, indicate fluctuations in first-year retention and 6-year graduation rates. In addition, achievement gaps remain for first generation, Pell-eligible, and underrepresented students. However, the influence of COVID on our recent performance in meeting our goals is difficult to ascertain. Therefore, the Student Success Steering Team, which is comprised of faculty, staff, students, and administrators, reviewed these data in early summer 2022, and then set new goals for retention, completion, and success. The plan defined by the Student Success Steering Team is the framework for our 2022 Campus Completion Plan, which was approved by the Board of Trustees at its June 2022 meeting.

In this Completion Plan we document our goals of increasing retention by 2% annually (from the most recent value of 69.2%) while maintaining our 6-year graduation rate which is currently at 49.2%. Meeting the first goal cannot, of course, be sustained indefinitely, and increases in retention will almost certainly lead to exceeding the second goal in future years, so these will both need to be revisited on an annual basis. An important part of our plan is to work aggressively to increase retention (by 3% annually) and, ultimately, successful completion by Pell-eligible, first-generation

and traditionally underrepresented students, reflecting our promise to serve the constituents of the Akron area and our six-county region.

Sources

- 2022 Completion Plan_4C.4
- ODHECampus Complete_4C.1
- Retention Data_4C.2
- StudentSuccess Steering_4C.3

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

The University of Akron ensures the quality of its educational offerings through program review, assessment of student learning outcomes for both academic programs and co-curricular programs, specialized accreditation for 27 programs, and evaluation of UA graduates via the First Destination Survey. Our student learning outcomes assessment is rigorous and has broad participation across colleges and departments. Several of our co-curricular programs also undergo outcomes assessment as well. We pursue educational improvement for retention, persistence, and completion through our ODHE Completion Plan, which we submit to the state every two years.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Argument

In 2018, UA submitted an interim report to HLC to document the steps taken to address challenges in shared governance and communication. In that report, we described how the administration engages in shared governance with University Council and Faculty Senate, ways we engaged the campus in the academic program review and administrative activities review processes, and steps taken to improve communication. HLC viewed the report favorably, and no additional monitoring was required.

Since submitting that report, The University of Akron has hired a new president, executive vice president and provost, chief financial officer, several deans, and cabinet members. We started and completed a strategic planning process, which took a short pause during COVID, and took significant steps to improve our financial position, including reorganizing our college structure and engaging in a reduction in force that affected faculty, staff, and contract professional positions. Taking these extreme but necessary measures did create challenges in the short term related to perceptions of lack of shared governance. However, the new UA leadership team has a strong commitment to improving campus culture and governance. Throughout the reorganization process university leaders carried on an ongoing engagement in a high level of shared governance with the University Council, Faculty Senate, and Akron-AAUP.

University Council (UC) is a broadly representative, legislative body of the University that deliberates and makes recommendations to the President on matters such as strategic planning, university policy and other substantive matters that pertain to the strategic direction and operations of the University. University Council has three components: the UC itself, the UC Executive Committee (UCEC), and the eight UC Standing Committees. The Executive Committee is elected by the UC from among its members and is responsible for agenda-setting and coordination. The Standing Committees are

elected or selected by the university community constituencies and report to the UC. The UC and the eight standing committees represent all primary campus constituency groups: faculty, staff, contract professionals, students, deans, department chairs, and administrators. University Council meetings are open to the public, and all minutes from the monthly meetings are available to the public on the UC website.

University Rule 3359-10-01.1 describes the role and duties of the UC and provides a definition of shared governance:

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

This definition articulates the differences between the roles of UC and Faculty Senate in shared governance.

The eight UC standing committees are budget and finance, communications, institutional advancement, information technology, physical environment, recreation and wellness, student engagement and success, and talent development and human resources. Each committee sets annual goals aligned with the strategic plan and institutional priorities, and their committee chair makes a progress report at each UC meeting. Annual goals are set each academic year and are usually updated in August or September.

The University Council's standing committees make recommendations on policy, operations, organization and other matters related to the committees' domain. Standing committees develop annual goals in coordination with the appointed administrator as well as review and respond to topic submissions received from the campus community that pertain to their focus. Recent accomplishments by the standing committees include establishing a university sick leave bank, an evaluation of employee performance reviews and request for software to assist with this process, installation of speed bumps for increased safety, and the endorsement of an information security awareness training policy.

Whether the accomplishment arose from the committee's annual goals or because of a topic submission, there is a process and workflow that each must follow. Standing committees review, research, and discuss the topic within the committee, and they seek outside experts to assist when necessary. Their response is provided back to University Council either as a resolution for endorsement or a written response that will be shared with the topic submitter. For example, a voluntary Leave Bank Program was implemented in July 2019 following an endorsement by UC at the March 12, 2019, meeting. The leave bank program allows a donor to contribute accrued sick leave to the bank and a recipient, who has exhausted their own sick time, to use donated leave hours from the bank. The University Council Executive Committee referred the topic, which was received as a campus topic submission, to the Talent Development and Human Resources standing committee and requested the topic be revisited given a change in State of Ohio budgeting processes which

previously had limited the creation of such a policy for UA employees. HR leadership shared a draft of the policy with UCEC to secure feedback and then the final policy was presented to UC for an endorsement. Once the policy was endorsed by UC, and subsequently approved by the upper administration and the Board of Trustees, HR ensured notification to the campus community of the new policy and opened the program for enrollment.

Faculty Senate, like UC, is a legislative body of the University and is empowered to formulate suitable rules, requirements, and procedures for the admission, government, management and oversight of students, courses of study, granting of degrees and certificates, and other academic matters necessary to meet the objectives of the University in accordance with the established policies of the Board. The bylaws of Faculty Senate are found in University Rule 3359-10-02, which describes its primary duties and standing committees. Faculty Senate meets monthly, and all members of the public are invited to attend. Minutes are provided in the UA Faculty Senate Chronicle. There are 43 members of Faculty Senate, which includes representation from each of the colleges, our branch campus, part-time faculty, undergraduate and graduate student government, the Association of UA Retirees, and full-time academic advisors.

There are 14 committees of the Faculty Senate: executive, academic policies, accessibility, athletics, computing and communications technology, curriculum review, faculty research, faculty rights and responsibilities, general education advisory, part-time faculty, program review, reference, student affairs, and University Libraries.

During AY 2021-2022, the Academic Policies Committee brought resolutions for improvements to admissions procedures, including policies to allow for test-optional applications and portfolio-based prior learning assessment. The Curriculum Review Committee reviewed 389 course and program proposals within a shortened timeframe, allowing the curriculum proposal system to close for updating from numeric to alphabetic subject codes (in effect for fall 2022). The Ad Hoc Investment Criteria Committee successfully brought a set of quantitative and qualitative criteria to Senate for approval. The criteria will be used in the evaluation of faculty-initiated proposals for academic investment. Further, as a result of discussions regarding enrollment and retention, Faculty Senate endorsed the development of a recommended sequence of courses for each academic program (also called curricular or degree maps). This was a necessary step towards the implementation of Stellic (anticipated fall 2022), a software product to help students better manage academic planning, registration, progress/risk analysis and degree clearance.

Both the University Council and Faculty Senate Executive Committees meet regularly with university leadership and trustees. The President meets with the Executive Committee of University Council at least three times per year. In 2021-2022 the Board of Trustees Chair started attending executive committee meetings as well and plans to attend UC at least three times per year. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee meets with the Provost monthly. The President and the Chair of the Board of Trustees have attended these meetings three times a year since fall 2021.

Further, members of the UA Board of Trustees are invited to attend monthly Senate and UC meetings, and typically there is at least one board member present. During the 2021-2022 academic year, the chairs of Faculty Senate, University Council, and the Akron-AAUP were invited to meet with the President's Cabinet to discuss ways we could continue to enhance communication and shared governance. One result of this joint meeting was that the three shared governance bodies were able to communicate, coordinate and plan with each other in a way that was critical to growing greater bonds among the three bodies and strengthening shared governance and trust at the University.

The University has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Akron-AAUP on shared governance, which includes areas such as financial transparency, investment in academic programs, the program review process, reorganization of academic units, and workload. The MOU outlines processes for sharing budget information with members of the Akron-AAUP; investing in new academic programs based on input from faculty, chairs, deans, and the Provost; engaging in program review through the Faculty Senate and its program review committee; engaging faculty in decisions about reorganizing or renaming academic units; and engaging deans, chairs, and faculty in creating workload policies.

UA uses data to make informed decisions related to student success, operational planning, and budgeting. Our Office of Planning, Strategy, and Insights (PSI) provides data and analysis for enrollment, budgeting, and student success activities. This information is used both internally for planning and has been shared with consulting groups, such as Kennedy & Company, to refine our student support efforts. For example, in 2020, Kennedy & Company used UA data to develop a student recruitment and retention comprehensive enrollment strategy and plan. The plan included 24 recommendations in areas such as scholarship practices, academic support, advising, admissions, and recruitment. We have implemented several of these recommendations including moving away from admit type categorization, reducing advising holds, shifting to more need-based aid that better aligns with our mission and location, and improving our billing process. This work requires collaboration with the PSI team to provide data on UA applications, admits, deposits, withdrawals, and enrollees at both the undergraduate and graduate levels; event attendance; reasons for enrolling or not enrolling; and demographic information.

For internal planning, we use data from our enrollment and student success dashboard to set enrollment, retention, and completion goals, as described in Criterion 4. When considering a test-optional policy for admissions, the Faculty Senate's Academic Policies Committee referred to a study from University of Chicago demonstrating that high school GPA is a better predictor of collegiate success than are SAT/ACT test scores. The committee also researched admissions policies at other public Ohio institutions.

UC standing committees often use surveys to collect data as part of their work in meeting annual goals or responding to topic submissions. For example, as mentioned previously, the Talent Development and Human Resources committee assisted with surveying staff and contract professionals regarding satisfaction with and seeking feedback on performance review forms and procedures. This survey data, combined with data from HR on the overall use of these forms, led the committee to bring forward a resolution to UC seeking endorsement for purchasing talent management software that will bring our organizational structures and practices up to date with an effective tool that should lead to greater utilization of the performance review process.

Sources

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- FacSenate Bylaws_5A.14
- FacSenate Chronicle_5A.15
- FacSenate Committees_5A.17
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- PSI_5A.19
- Shared Governance_5A.18
- SickLeave Program_5A.12
- U of Chicago Study_5A.21
- UC Budget Comm_5A3
- UC Comm_5A.4
- UC Info Tech_5A.6
- UC Instl Advance_5A.5
- UC Physical Envirn_5A.7
- UC Rec Wellness_5A.8
- UC Student Engagement_5A.9
- UC TDHR_5A.10
- UCTDHR Workday Rec_5A.22
- UnivCouncil Rules_5A.2
- UniversityCouncil_5A.1

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Argument

The University of Akron prioritizes support of academic programs and student success and has qualified and trained operational staff to support its efforts. Our current faculty to student ratio is 17:1, the same as it was in 2017, and over the last five years, our average has been 18:1. As described in Criterion 3, we have sufficient faculty, staff, and contract professionals to support our students and our operations. While the overall number of faculty has decreased by about 26% in the last five years, our student enrollment has decreased by 27% in the same time period.

The expenditure data, which is presented at the functional budget level, confirms resource allocation for the University across the past five years. The time period includes decreasing enrollments coupled with the worldwide COVID pandemic. As the total budget decreased by 22% over the five-year period from FY18 to FY22, we see actual spending across all functions decrease as well. The percentage of budget allocated during this period reflects that the University maintained its commitment to the academic function of the institution. Within the overall 22% budget decrease the University experienced only a 7% decrease in instructional expenditures, which includes instructional (faculty) compensation and direct classroom expenditures over the 5-year period. The reduction is due in large part to the significant reduction in force (RIF) that included more than 100 faculty and staff as a result of COVID and previous declines in enrollment. Concurrently, the University experienced a 3% increase as compared to overall budget in institutional support expenditures. The commitment to growing enrollment through student recruitment and retention is evident in the 4% increase in scholarships and other student aid as compared to the overall budget.

UA's Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) provides leadership for all activities within the finance and administration division, working with internal and external constituencies to support innovative and strategic practices. Responsibilities of the Senior Vice President and CFO are provided in University Rule 3359-3-01. In Fiscal Year 2022, The University of Akron hired its first Chief Compliance and Risk Officer (CCRO) whose responsibilities include developing a risk assessment framework to identify, assess, mitigate, and monitor risks that will drive the planning of the compliance and risk management functions. The CCRO is also responsible for providing direction in the development, review, and revision of compliance-related policies and procedures and partnering with issue-specific compliance leaders across the University to foster a culture of ethics and compliance and to mitigate institutional risks.

The University's recent budgeting methodology is best described as a centralized model that has many of the characteristics of an incremental approach. Our decanal and VP budgets have traditionally been based upon the funding levels of the previous year, and only new revenue is allocated. In the context of decreasing enrollments, incremental budgeting has been beneficial to UA because it is more manageable, provides budgetary stability, and allows units and institutions to plan multiple years into the future, due to the predictability of the model. Under the leadership of our President and Provost, the University is moving towards an all-funds budget model with an incentive to keep a portion of departmental unspent allocations for future strategic initiatives.

Plans are also underway to incorporate a performance-based budget model that aligns funding with results (enrollments or revenues) to incentivize innovation and growth. The Office of Resource Analysis and Budget has developed Budget Process Principles and communicated those to campus by holding mid-year budget reviews and providing timely, transparent information. In addition, beginning in fall 2022, quarterly budget manager meetings will take place to provide updates and support throughout the year. This approach incentivizes innovation and growth while increasing revenue and expense transparency within our academic and administrative units.

The University's budgeting process typically begins in December/January with an initial calculation of estimated revenues based on student credit hour projections, full-time equivalency projections, assumed fee increases, anticipated State support, and inflationary factors including proposed salary increases for faculty and staff. Budget guidelines detailing the University's mission and priorities (increase revenues, reduce expenses, enhance student achievement) are distributed for use in developing departmental budget requests which are incorporated into a preliminary budget model developed by the CFO and the Office of Resource Analysis and Budget. The preliminary budget is then reviewed by the Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer, the President, and finally the University Council Budget & Finance Committee, for review and recommendations.

The Senior Vice President and CFO works with the [Budget and Finance committee](#), a standing committee of [University Council](#) as noted previously. The Budget and Finance Committee studies, monitors, and makes recommendations to the University Council on the development of all university budget, finance, and purchasing policies and resource allocations. The committee was instrumental in guiding the development of the University's current [budget guidelines](#) and budget methodology. After a final budget proposal has been developed, based on this input, the Chief Financial Officer then presents it (in April or June) to the Board for approval. During this planning period, fee and rate recommendations are also presented to the Board for approval (at the April or June Board meetings).

The University divides its current budget into a general fund (main and Wayne campus), a designated fund, an auxiliary fund, and a restricted fund. The general fund budget includes instruction and departmental research, separately budgeted research, public service, student services, general administration, plant operation and maintenance, student aid and reserves. The designated fund is essentially self-funding but is combined with other current unrestricted funds for reporting purposes. The auxiliary fund budget includes all expenditures supported mainly by student-generated revenues, including room and board, parking, bookstore, intercollegiate athletics, and related income. The restricted fund budget includes all expenditures supported by revenues from grants, contracts, gifts, and donations.

The Board adopts annual operating budgets for the general fund and auxiliary fund. The President and other administrative officers review revenues and expenditures monthly and inform the Board periodically of the budget position. Appropriate action is taken by the President and other

administrative officers to adjust expenditures should revenues fall short of projections, and the Board is informed of these actions.

The annual budget process is described in University Rule 3359-1-07 and requires a detailed statement of estimated revenue, expenses, and surplus of the operating funds of the university for each fiscal year. The statement must be supported with supplemental data and should define the university's financial condition. The proposed budget is submitted to the finance committee of the Board of Trustees for consideration and approval. Our budget and planning strategy consists of the following guidelines and principles: 1) Grow revenue, 2) Increase retention and improve graduation rates, 3) Enhance our reputation, and 4) Achieve an operational approach of excellence that is welcoming of new approaches and imaginative solutions. Listed below is a consolidated view of the budget process timeline adopted by the University:

July – August (Start of Fiscal Year)

- Budget Director prepares and distributes end-of-year (EOY) budget reports and analysis for the fiscal year.

September - October

- Budget call issued to Academic & President's Cabinet/VP units (due in December).

- Provost reviews and recommends instructional budget to the CFO.

November

- CFO & Budget Director recommend budget development parameters (tuition, salary increase, fringe, room and board, etc.) to the University Council - Budget and Finance Committee (CFO reviews with President).

December

- Provost, CFO and Budget Director hold Mid-Year Review meetings with Academic units and members of the President's Cabinet.

January - February

- CFO submits summary memo of budget proposals to the President and Provost for initial consideration and direction.

March

- University Council - Budget and Finance Committee reviews and recommends budget to the President and CFO.

April

- President consults with the President's Cabinet re. risk factors and budget.
- CFO presents preliminary budget to the Board of Trustees Finance and Administration Committee.

June

- The Board of Trustees considers and adopts a new budget during the June Board of Trustees meeting.
- Line-item budgets are sent to units for the new budget year that begins July 1.

The budget process outlined above was recently adopted by the University Council Budget and Finance Committee, during the second year of COVID, in FY21. In the throes of the first year of COVID, the Board of Trustees, with an imperfect information set, was challenged to finalize the budget during its June meetings. Relying strictly on market projections and peer consultation, early budget projections reflected initial assumptions of 20% decline in both student credit hour production (SCH) and State Share of Instruction (SSI) resulting in a projected $65 million shortfall.

In order to balance the budget, Administrative (non-academic) units followed a prescribed percentage reduction per unit, while the academic reductions were done in aggregate as the Provost addressed strategic reallocations among colleges. Significant academic restructuring ensued at the University, reducing the campus organizational footprint to five colleges (from eleven) through consolidation and mergers. The five remaining colleges were then charged with reducing their budget for FY21 by 25%, including personnel. To accommodate the necessary staffing reductions, Human Resources worked closely with each unit. Before the end of FY21, the University received its first installment of federal COVID funding (CRFS and HEERF funding) in the amount of approximately $24 million in institutional funding and approximately $7 million in student aid funding.

By August 2020, the outlook and quality of planning information had improved, and the budget was approved by the Board of Trustees with an assumption of 15% decline in SCH, $8.7 million decline in SSI, and a $7.8 million draw on reserves. In February of 2021, the budget was revised to reflect an actual 8% decline in SCH, a $4.6 million increase in SSI (due to state executive order), a re-charge of $16.8 million to COVID relief funds for related expenses, and a $19.6 million General Fund operating surplus.

As FY22 planning commenced and the pandemic continued, the University received an approximate $35 million in institutional funding and approximately $27 million in student aid funding; both sources of funding were exhausted by June 1, 2022. The newly adopted University Budget Guidelines were implemented, and we are currently planning for the FY23 budget using the same guidelines.

The University, like other Ohio public universities, receives operating appropriations from the State's biennial operating budget. These appropriations contribute substantially to funding operations of the University. State appropriations are not included in General Receipts. The methodology for allocating State Share of Instruction funds considers: (a) course completion (completed FTE) comprising 30% of the distribution, (b) degree completion at 50%, and (c) set-asides of 20%, if applicable, including the doctoral allocation. This table reflects the University's State Share of Instruction for Fiscal Years 2017-2023.

Every other year, the University prepares and submits its six-year capital request to the State of Ohio. The Senior Vice President and CFO, in conjunction with the Office and Capital Planning and Facilities Management, prioritizes capital needs. These recommendations are shared with the Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer, the President, the Board of Trustees, the University Council Budget & Finance Committee, and the Environmental Facilities Committee. The State capital appropriations request is then submitted to the Ohio Department of Higher Education. The request identifies the projects proposed to be financed with State appropriations by the General Assembly and the purpose, priority, amount and sources of funds for those projects. The Ohio Department of Higher Education and the General Assembly may approve, modify, or decline aspects

of the University's capital appropriations request.

The University's capital appropriation for the four most recent biennia approximated $18-19 million each biennium and the University has no reason to believe that support will not continue. The University has used its capital appropriations to maintain building infrastructure including roofs, elevators, and HVAC systems, upgrade campus wired and wireless capabilities, and complete hardscape improvements.

Under this new methodology, State capital funding received by the University for the four most recent biennia is as follows:

- 2023-2024 ($17.6 million): These funds will be used primarily for infrastructure improvements, rehabilitation of Buchtel Commons, a major renovation to the Polsky Building, and design services for the renovation of Central Hower.

- 2021-2022 ($18.06 million): These funds were used for the major rehabilitation and addition to Crouse Hall.

- 2019-2020 ($19.3 million): These funds were used primarily for infrastructure improvements, deferred maintenance, major rehabilitation and addition to Crouse Hall, and the razing of a central campus classroom facility.

- 2017-2018 ($19.6 million): The majority of these funds were used for technology improvements ($6.5 million) and deferred maintenance.

- 2015-2016 ($18.5 million): Most of these funds were used to renovate the McDowell Law School ($5 million); support general and research lab renovations ($6.5 million); and address other building/infrastructure needs ($7 million).

Sources

- Annual Budget_5B.7
- BOT Finance Comm_5B.8
- Budget Finance Comm_5B.4
- Budget Guidelines_5B.6
- Expenditure Data_5B.2
- Faculty Percentages_5B.1
- Redesigning UA_5B.9
- SSI_5B.10
- State Capital Funding_5B.12
- SVP CFO_5B.3
- UA SSI_5B.11
- Univ Council_5B.5

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
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, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

The University of Akron allocates resources in alignment with its mission and priorities. In October of 2019, Dr. Gary Miller was appointed President of the University and immediately began a strategic planning process for the campus, intended to connect resource allocation with strategic planning priorities. Five months later, on March 9, 2020, the Governor of Ohio declared a state-wide State of Emergency in response to COVID-19. On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a National Emergency under the Stafford Act and the University of Akron, like most institutions globally, was forced to shift operations – which included the temporary suspension of the strategic planning process.

President Miller has since installed a Sr. Leadership and Cabinet Team, as well as several key academic leaders within the colleges. With this leadership team in place, strategic planning commenced and was launched in FY21 with resource allocation directions embedded within the six value statements, five strategic goals, and the specific short-term goals that outline the need to "develop a budget model that incentivizes enrollment growth across the University, including those associated with cross-unit collaborations – within the next three years." The CFO Division has proceeded accordingly, hiring a Controller and an Interim Budget Director to oversee the revamping of the budget and resource allocation process to accomplish these goals.

Initial work began in FY20 with benchmarking the University's functional budget, as prescribed by IPEDS and Delaware Cost Study data sets, against peer institutions. The University has made specific shifts to ensure that instructional spending is consistent with our peer institutions, as evidenced by the FY2019-20 Functional Expenditures per Student FTE chart. The University of Akron spends at about the average of its peers in the categories of "Instruction expenses per FTE" and "Academic support expenses per FTE." With limited resources, the University is shifting to a budget model that resembles "all funds budgeting" more than the incumbent "centralized budgeting" model. This shift will enable decanal units to lead their colleges more strategically, with a greater degree of control over their respective revenue generation and expenses. In FY22, the University

continued to make improvements to the budget process, as the CFO Division and the Office of Resource Analysis and Budget made deliberate efforts to provide increasing outreach, communication, consultation, and support to academic operations, with the following initiatives:

- **Level budgeting** – As the University transitions its views on leadership and the subsequent planning and budget practices, we held unit (academic and administrative) budgets flat starting in FY22, in order to provide a basis for Vice Presidents and Deans to plan. Although flat budgets were distributed initially, the underperformance on enrollments caused leadership to enforce a budget reduction in proportion to the decrease in tuition income.
- **Budget review sessions** – Once the budget was established, the CFO continued the practice established in FY21 of providing overviews to several of the shared governance (and other) groups, including Board of Trustees, University Council, and the Labor-Management Policy Committee (a joint committee of administrators and Akron-AAUP representatives). These meetings ensure that all constituents of the University community have access to the budget and can directly receive answers to questions they may have.
- **Mid-Year budget review meetings** – In order to provide increased outreach, communication, consultation and support to the academic units, the CFO's office scheduled meetings with each of the academic units during January and February. The purpose of these meetings was twofold: 1) review budget performance for the FY22 year, including a validation of vacant and staffed employee lines and fund balances under the purview of each unit, and 2) begin the planning conversations for FY23.
- **ERP Procurement** – As the incumbent PeopleSoft support was sunsetting, the University chose to use a request for proposal process in search of an upgraded ERP partnership. The University selected the Workday product (Platform and Student) for purchase, setting the stage for a significant change in management implementation and a new approach for the administrative, compliance and reporting responsibilities that the University maintains in the Finance, HR and Student Engagement areas.
- **Communication and Training** – The CFO's office developed comprehensive training modules both for Public Finance and University of Akron Budgeting. These modules have been shared with the Board of Trustees as well as Cabinet level leadership.

As we enter into the FY23 budget cycle, the Office of Resource Analysis and Budget will continue the following initiatives to further enable the allocation of resources in alignment with mission and priorities:

- **Re-design of budget reporting** - The Office of Resource Analysis and Budget has designed a modified, consolidated and transparent view of the three UA unrestricted budgets (General Fund, Auxiliary, Dept Sales and Service) providing a clear picture of the financial performance of the central units and auxiliaries before the issuance of any debt burden. The new reporting also removes financial jargon such as "Transfers In/Out," making the budget more legible for readers.
- **Incentivized budget process** – The University is moving towards an all-funds budget model with an incentive to keep a portion of departmental unspent allocations for future strategic initiatives. Plans are to incorporate a performance-based budget model that aligns funding with results (enrollment or revenues) to incentivize innovation and growth. This process will be applied across all academic and administrative budget units.
- **Compliance and Risk Management** - In FY22, the University established a Compliance and Risk Management Office (CRMO). The CRMO works closely with Finance & Administration and other University functions to assess, and addresses compliance obligations and risks

associated with the University's strategic action plan, operations, and budgeting processes. The CRMO's risk assessment will inform FY23 mitigation activities to address the University's identified "priority risks," which link directly to the University's strategic plan, operations and budgeting. In future years, the risk assessment process will be linked directly into the University's planning, operations, and budgeting.

- **Implement Workday ERP –** The Workday Platform implementation started in earnest in January 2022; the scheduled launch is for January 2023.

Another important aspect of the budget and resource allocation process will be the creation of the Academic Budget Officer position. This position will be an integrated Office of Resource Analysis and Budget team member and will monitor and project the University's functional budget against peer institutions. The position will report directly to the Office of Resource Analysis and Budget Director and collaborate closely with the Provost to ensure that a strategic initiatives budget is available to support critical needs throughout the year. In concert with the Provost and Office of Resource Analysis and Budget, the Academic Budget Officer will administer planning based on a sound understanding of each college's current capacity, including staffing, tuition revenue, scholarship funding, and enrollment trends. The position will serve as the Office of Resource Analysis and Budget liaison and anticipate evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, inflation and the economy, state support, and other critical budget factors.

Sources

- Budget Redesign_5C.7
- Budget Review Sessions_5C.3
- Budget Training_5C.6
- Carryover Guidelines_5C.8
- COVID_5C.1
- Func Exp per FTE_5C.2
- Mid Year Budget Rev_5C.4
- Workday_5C.5

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

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

Sources

There are no sources.