Focused Report for SACS-COC

Western Carolina University
501 H.F.R. Administration Building
Cullowhee, NC 28723

On-Site Committee Visit: April 3-6, 2017

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Note to Reviewers

This Focused Report was completed in Campus Labs’, Compliance Assist, platform. For each core requirement or comprehensive standard, please find information arranged in the following order:

- Core requirement or comprehensive standard number and description
- Compliance self-judgement
- Narrative from the Compliance Report
- Off-site Committee’s comments
- WCU’s Institutional Response
- Sources section, which contains evidence related to the Institutional Response

An accompanying USB drive contains:

- The electronic version of this Focused Report with linked, viewable evidence
- The original Compliance Report
- All relevant Compliance Certification documents
  - Signatures attesting to integrity
  - Institutional summary
  - List of substantive changes
- Directions for accessing the information above

Please contact me with comments or questions.

Kind regards,

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2.7.4

Coursework for Degrees
The institution provides instruction for all coursework required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees. If the institution does not provide instruction for all such coursework and (1) makes arrangements for some instruction to be provided by other accredited institutions or entities through contracts or consortia or (2) uses some other alternative approach to meeting this requirement, the alternative approach must be approved by the Commission on Colleges. In both cases, the institution demonstrates that it controls all aspects of its educational program. (See Commission policy "Core Requirement 2.7.4: Documenting an Alternative Approach.")
(Note: If an institution does not offer all coursework for at least one degree at each degree level, it must request approval and provide documentation for an alternative approach that may include arrangements with other institutions. In such cases, the institution must submit information requested in Commission policy, "Core Requirement 2.7.4: Documenting an Alternate Approach." This information should be submitted as part of the Compliance Certification).

Judgment
- Compliance
- Partial Compliance
- Non-Compliance
- Not Applicable

Narrative
WCU provides instruction for all coursework required for at least one degree program offered at each level at which the institution awards degrees. This is evidenced in reviewing examples of the degree audit for a student at each level. The attached examples are WCU degree audits that list all program requirements and the assigned grade for the course; they include the Doctor of Physical Therapy, Master of Arts in History, and Bachelor of Science in Finance degrees (Doctorate, Masters, Bachelors).

All program descriptions and detailed program curricula are listed in the 2015 Undergraduate Catalog and 2015 Graduate Catalog. Course Reports (Accounting course report example) that include course location and instructor can be generated from the Student Data Report Portal in Banner.

Control over all aspects of WCU’s educational programs is detailed in Section 14.00 Policies and Procedures for Curriculum Development and Revision of the Faculty Handbook. Academic departments maintain oversight and control over all courses and programs regardless of location or mode of delivery. Western Carolina University at the Biltmore Park instructional site offers a mix of undergraduate and graduate degree programs, allowing students to complete entire graduate degrees at the Biltmore location (Biltmore Park Course Report).

Comprehensive Standard 3.4.1 contains more information on program oversight.

Off Site Reviewer Comments
The institution states that it provides instruction for at least one degree program offered at each level for which it awards degrees. Specifically noted by the institution were degrees at the doctorate, master’s and bachelor’s level. Evidence of this was provided through presentation of three programs reflecting the coursework in the Graduate or Undergraduate Catalog; the course report reflecting the courses offered and the location for a given term; and degree completion sheets for an individual having earned the identified degree.

However, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee’s review noted in the graduate catalog that the institution does offer the education specialist degree, but this was not noted in the presented information. The Committee was unable to find sufficient information to conclude that the institution provides instruction for at least one degree program at the specialist’s level.

Institutional Response
Reviewer comment: "the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee’s review noted in the graduate catalog that the institution does offer the education specialist degree, but this was not noted in the presented information."

The Education Specialist, Ed.S., program is being discontinued.
WCU submitted a letter to SACSOC notifying them of this substantive change.

The Program Change Form, A6, and Request to Discontinue a Degree Program, Appendix D, were completed in October of 2013 and signed at the Provost level in April of 2014. The proposal to delete the program was put on hold per the Dean’s request due to review and strategic discussion of a like program at another UNC school.

The proposal to discontinue should have been completed (and the program officially deleted) in 2011, but it was not. Student admissions had been stopped in this program prior to 2010. When the College of Education and Allied Professions underwent program prioritization and subsequent college reorganization, it became clear that maintaining the Ed.S. program was no longer consistent with the mission of the college. It was recommended that the Ed.S. be discontinued so that resources could be concentrated in support of the revision of the Education Leadership Ed.D. program.

There are two relevant attachments. The first shows the approvals in Curricolog. The proposal has passed through the college, the Professional Education Council, and the Graduate Council. The second shows the current step and final step, which is the Academic Policy and Review Council and Faculty Senate.
Specialist School Psychology (S.S.P.) intermediate degree program

In the process of investigating the above, we discovered that the Specialist School Psychology (S.S.P.) intermediate degree program was inadvertently left out of the documentation that was submitted for the compliance certification in September 2016. The program started in 1972 but became an "intermediate" degree program in 2010. An attached letter from SACSCOC confirms the change. WCU provides instruction for all coursework required for the S.S.P. program. An S.S.P. degree audit is attached for a student who graduated in December, 2016. It shows that the student took all courses at the Cullowhee campus and indicates grades for each course.

Sources

- EDS AA-6
- EDS Appendix D
- EdS Curriculog Current status
- EDS discontinuation curriculog
- Intermediate Degree Completion
- SAC SCHOOL PSYCH SSP 20090714
- sacscoc Discontinuation EdS letter 20170111
2.10

Student Support Services
The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that are intended to promote student learning and enhance the development of its students.

Judgment
- Compliance
- Partial Compliance
- Non-Compliance
- Not Applicable

Narrative

Student Support Programs and Services Alignment with University Mission

As detailed in the university’s strategic plan, Western Carolina University creates engaged learning opportunities that incorporate teaching, research, and service through residential, distance education, and international experiences. The university focuses its academic programs, educational outreach, research and creative activities, and cultural activities on improving individual lives and enhancing economic and community development in the region, state, and nation. WCU is committed to providing programs and services that support student learning and the overall academic mission of the university. These services enrich the total student experience, enhance student satisfaction and development, support a culturally diverse student population, and encourage interaction and integration of in- and out-of-class experiences. These programs, services, and activities are offered through collaborative relationships among Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and multiple student support services.

Student Body Profile and Student Support Programs and Services

WCU is a regional comprehensive university with 10,340 students enrolled as of the Fall 2015 census date. Distance learners total 1,856 including part-time and full-time as well as undergraduate and graduate students. Undergraduates make up 85% of enrollment. A majority of these students are traditionally aged and enrolled full-time. With on-campus housing totaling just over 4,100 beds, fewer than half of undergraduates live on campus. Fifty-five percent of our graduate students are enrolled part-time. A majority of both undergraduate and graduate students are US citizens from North Carolina (91% of undergraduates and 86% of graduate students). Fifty-seven percent of the total student population are female and almost 18% identify as underrepresented minorities. Comprising 5.6% of the student population, Hispanics are the fastest growing minority population. The Hispanic student population grew 16% between Fall 2014 and Fall 2015.

Student support programs and services are positioned to advance the mission of the university and support the needs of all students. Students are informed of the programs, services, and activities available to them beginning in the recruitment and enrollment process, which is continued by New Student Orientation. Once students are enrolled, they learn about the programs and services available to them in a variety of methods. Information about student support services and programs is available on the university’s Web site, intranet portal myWCU, and the student life calendar. Individual offices e-mail students directly to inform them of the services and programs available, and they use social media to promote events and activities. The Office of Student Affairs sends out a weekly e-mail to all students informing them of upcoming events, opportunities, and important dates and deadlines. Students also learn about social activities via the student television station, the campus newspaper, and promotional materials distributed across campus and in e-mail.

Student Support Programs, Services, and Activities

Western Carolina University offers more than 200 programs, services, and activities to promote student learning and enhance the development of students. A sample of these initiatives and their relationship to student learning follows:

1. Student Life.

The following programs and activities are housed within the Division of Student Affairs and designed to further WCU’s mission by enhancing student life and contributing to the personal and social development of all WCU students.

The department of Campus Activities, housed in the A.K. Hinds University Center, advances student learning by encouraging students to participate in sponsored activities, programs and services, and cultural, social, and educational programs offered throughout the year. The University Center houses student organization offices, overall meeting space for conferences, programs, events, and workshops, a food court, meeting rooms, ballroom, movie theater, and student lounge areas.

Arts and Cultural Events. The Arts and Cultural Events committee, consisting of students, staff, and faculty, brings visiting performers, thought-provoking films, speakers, and arts to Western Carolina University. Through its many and varied cultural programs, ACE challenges and inspires thought and discussion among the students and community. ACE is the only fine arts series in the western North Carolina region and provides an important service to the campus and local communities by broadening the availability of cultural and arts offerings.

Leadership and Student Involvement. This program offers students various curricular and co-curricular activities that enhance their leadership skills and knowledge and provide exposure to available resources that can be used in their personal and professional lives. Through programs such as the Freshman Leadership Institute, the Whee LEAD Conference, Cat Camp (a leadership retreat for new first-year students), any one of the eight LEAD Living-Learning Communities, undergraduate students within the Leadership minor (an 18 credit-hour
interdisciplinary academic program), students gain knowledge and engage in experiences necessary to serve as leaders in college and in their communities after graduation.

**Student Organizations.** Western Carolina University has more than 170 registered student organizations including honorary, performing, professional, religious, service, sports, and social organizations. Open to all students, these diverse organizations provide opportunities to develop leadership and social skills and provide a variety of experiences that enhance the student experience.

**Student Media Organizations.** Western’s student media organizations provide students with valuable hands-on experience in print and broadcast media. Students develop journalistic, business, technical, and management skills through their involvement with the Western Carolinian (newspaper), WV62 (television), The Gadfly (journal of social criticism), and The Nomad (art and literary magazine). Students who plan to work in the communications, journalism, or broadcast fields use student media to enhance their curricular experience and learn new skills in a peer-to-peer training environment. Their student media experience is also a great resume builder and has aided students with multiple job and internship opportunities.

**Campus Recreation and Wellness (CRW)** works to create a campus-wide culture of recreation and wellness by offering an array of programs and services that educate, empower, and engage individuals to pursue and sustain healthy, balanced lifestyles. Campus Recreation and Wellness provides a range of fitness and wellness activities including Group Exercise classes, personal training, and special events that help students develop healthy habits. CRW also offers Intramural Sports and Club Sports which foster personal growth through responsible behavior, sportsmanship, cooperation, and socialization. Students can also take advantage of Campus Recreation and Wellness’s comprehensive outdoor programs that foster self-awareness, community, and leadership. **Students taking classes at the Biltmore Park instructional site** have access to the fitness center at Biltmore Park as well as the recreation center on the main campus.

**Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)** provides short-term individual and group mental health services for students at the Cullowhee and Biltmore Park locations. CAPS strives to empower students to engage and succeed in a full range of academic, social, and cultural endeavors through fostering psychological wellness. Clinical services are provided to students by licensed psychologists, professional counselors, and a social worker. A psychiatric nurse practitioner is also available for medication evaluations. After-hours emergency care is available evenings and weekends via an on-call counselor. Additionally, CAPS provides outreach programs to the campus community on a variety of topics including suicide prevention, substance use, and mindfulness to enhance student learning and self-awareness. CAPS also provides training for masters’ level students enrolled in mental health programs at WCU and hosts an APPIC-accredited doctoral internship. CAPS is accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services.

**Social Greek student organizations** support the central mission of WCU by providing an enhanced out-of-class living and learning experience with social and educational programs, opportunities for skill development related to academic success, collaboration, community awareness, leadership, service to others, self-governance, and social responsibility. The university supports these organizations through advising, dedicated staffing, resource allocations, and other programs and services. The ideals and goals expressed by these organizations promote personal development, camaraderie, and a strong sense of identity.

**Health Services** provides access to quality health care for students and promotes personal, social, and intellectual development and well-being. The facility offers services and programs that meet the health needs of a diverse campus community through ethically sound practice, confidentiality, and integrity. Health Services offers primary care, urgent care, women’s health clinic, allergy and immunization/travel clinic, in-house laboratory services, and a limited pharmacy. Services are supported by the student health fee. After-hours and weekend care is available at Harris Regional Hospital Urgent Care in Sylva and at the emergency room at Harris Regional Hospital in Sylva. The campus Emergency Medical Services team and ambulance service is available 24 hours a day while classes are in session and provides transport to the emergency room at Harris Regional Hospital. Services are available to students at either the Cullowhee campus or the Biltmore Park instructional site. Clinical education experiences for interested and eligible students are also available at Health Services.

The department of **Intercultural Affairs** contributes to a culturally rich campus through advocacy, social justice, diversity education, leadership, and the development of global citizens. Intercultural Affairs provides lectures, cultural awareness programs, films, and workshops to promote social justice and cultural competency. Staff members within the department also work closely with university officials to respond to acts of discrimination and bias. Intercultural Affairs also administers the campus Safe Zone program. Safe Zone provides training, support, and a network committed to supporting gender and sexuality orientation issues on campus and in the local community.

**Residential Living** provides clean, safe, and healthy living environments that enhance and support the educational mission and goals of the university. They provide living and learning communities where students feel valued as individuals and where diversity and fellowship with others are celebrated. Hall programs coordinated by residential living staff, most of whom are WCU students, provide co-curricular activities that provide opportunities for input from residents and that supplement academic learning. Residential Living also includes the **Office of Academic Partnerships**, which integrates academic life into the residence halls and supports residential students personally and academically. This office has four main goals:

- Promote positive academic behavior
- Facilitate interaction between students and faculty
- Expose students to campus resources available to support their success
- Identify and intervene with students who are experiencing difficulty either personally or academically

The Department of **Student Community Ethics (DSCE)** administers the student conduct process for the university and works to support an honest and responsible community. Under the process, students are held accountable for adhering to established community standards as presented in the Community Creed and Western Carolina’s Code of Student Conduct. Student Community Ethics adjudicates cases of alleged misconduct in a fair, responsible, and timely manner emphasizing WCU’s core values of respect, trust, and integrity. DSCE also helps students and members of organizations learn to become more responsible members of the WCU community through presentations, committee representations, and individual consultations. Students have opportunities for leadership through service on the Student Hearing Board and the Academic Integrity Board.

### 2. Academic Student Success.

The resources and opportunities included in the programs listed below contribute to the academic and co-curricular success of students. These services are administratively housed in the Division of Academic Affairs in the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Office of Academic Student Success.

The **Advising Center** offers comprehensive academic advising to undergraduate students who haven’t declared a major and for some undergraduates who have already declared a major. Staff members seek to understand students’ developmental needs and work with students to create an academic plan that incorporates their goals with their skills, knowledge, abilities, and values. In addition, professional advisers assist students with course selection, declaring majors and selecting careers, understanding university academic policies and
The Center for Career and Professional Development furthers student development through individual meetings and group workshops. Career counselors offer vocational tests that help students to become more self-aware and to identify their interests and aptitudes. Counselors also assist students with selecting a major, applying for internships, crafting a resume or cover letter, applying for a job, or applying to attend graduate school.

The Center for Service Learning (CSL) has been classified as a Carnegie Community Engaged Institution (The CSL was originally classified in 2008 and reclassified in 2015). The CSL provides service learning and experiential education opportunities that allow students to engage in organized activities designed to enhance their intellectual, social, and personal development while meeting community needs. Through curricular and co-curricular spaces, the CSL engages both undergraduate and graduate students in a range of ways. For example, the CSL sponsors a comprehensive program (faculty development; co-curricular initiatives; curricular/course-based initiatives; tracking, measuring, and monitoring processes; and community development programs) in collaboration with faculty, administrators, staff, students, and community partners to encourage academic excellence and foster civic responsibility and engagement. Academic courses and service projects sponsored by campus organizations work with the CSL to design and implement experiences that meet the learning goals identified by the faculty member, program director, or organization. Community engagement is prioritized in the University's mission, and the CSL seeks to operationalize this mission across the campus and community by advancing the University’s efforts to improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in the region, state, and nation through engaged learning opportunities in academic programs, educational outreach, research, and creative and cultural activities.

The office of International Programs and Services focuses its efforts on WCU's international students, faculty, scholars, and their family members. The office sponsors workshops and university events that promote international understanding, and it fosters the university's strategic directive of global understanding. In addition, the staff in the office provide support and assistance, such as applying for scholarships and selecting courses, for incoming international students as well as for students who wish to study abroad.

The office of Student Transitions (formerly the First Year Experience) provides social and academic support for first-year students, first-generation students, sophomores, and transfer students, thereby advancing WCU's strategic goal to provide access for a diverse student population while fulfilling its commitment to student success. Initiatives include high-impact practices such as common intellectual experiences, first-year seminars, and learning communities that include collaborative assignments and projects, writing intensive courses, and service learning activities. By ensuring that all students have the support they need to successfully make the transition into the academic and social life of the university, the office of Student Transitions effectively supports students from matriculation to graduation.

The office of Accessibility Resources (formerly Disability Services) provides accommodations, accessibility resources, and support services designed to level the playing field and ensure equal access to students with disabilities who self-identify through an interactive registration process. Accommodations may include note-taking support, accommodated testing, textbooks in an alternate format, sign-language interpreters, and/or assistive technology. Services are provided on a case-by-case basis when deemed necessary and reasonable for a particular student. Accessibility Resources also acts as a resource for faculty, staff, administration, and students on issues involving disability and accessibility.

The primary purpose of Office of Mentoring and Persistence to Success (MAPS) (formerly Student Support Services) is to identify, support, retain, and graduate students who have met all the required admission standards for acceptance and face potential barriers to success due to their status as first generation, low income, conditional admission, unsheltered, or independent. Program Counselors provide support to alleviate barriers that can prevent these students from achieving at their full potential; such support includes an intrusive developmental case management model of academic advising, counseling (personal, academic, and career), individualized tutoring, and mentoring. Participation in the program is voluntary, and all services are free.

The Writing and Learning Commons (WaLC) provides free writing and course tutoring, academic skills consultations, graduate and professional exam preparation resources, online writing resources, and in-class workshops on topics ranging from note taking to citing sources correctly. Course tutoring services are focused primarily on undergraduate courses, but writing tutoring and online writing resources are available to first-year through graduate students. Additionally, the Mathematics Tutoring Center (MTC) provides drop-in tutoring for math courses and math-related content across the curriculum. Distance students and students taking classes at Biltmore Park are encouraged to use the WaLC's on-line resources and SmarThinking, an online tutoring service provided by the Division of Educational Outreach. The mission of the WaLC and MTC is to provide students with the support, skills, and confidence they need to achieve academic excellence and to become independent learners. Peer-facilitated tutoring sessions focus on collaborative, active, and engaged learning strategies. Additionally, the WaLC partners with faculty to identify qualified student tutors and provides a tutor-training program that has been certified by the College Reading and Learning Association. The WaLC and MTC advance the university's core value of academic excellence by promoting services to students and faculty—not as remedial stop-gaps but as essential steps on every student's path to academic success.

The mission of Student-Athlete Academic Support Services (SAASS) is to successfully promote student-athlete welfare by integrating academic, athletic, and leadership experiences. The SAASS office serves student athletes at all levels and works to position these students to benefit from the educational, professional, and cultural advantages of higher education.

The SAASS office fulfills its mission in the following ways:

- Assisting student-athletes in reaching academic, career, and life goals
- Developing student-athlete life skills
- Providing leadership opportunities
- Supporting the success of student-athletes by actively engaging the larger university community
- Providing necessary resources to be academically successful
- Providing leadership opportunities
- Maintaining NCAA eligibility

Technology Commons

Please see the narrative for comprehensive compliance standard 3.4.12.

Student Support Programs and Services in Jamaica and Colombia

As discussed in WCU's Jamaica Program Accreditation Self-Study, students receive information and support before enrollment through the WCU Program Office in Kingston. Students register for the WCU program through the Office of Educational Outreach at WCU. Advisement is...
not required for selection of courses because of the structured nature of the curriculum; however, faculty members provide guidance and support to students at the course level. Students seeking special accommodation, such as personal leave for health reasons, consult the WCU Program Office for alternative program completion plans. The program office in Jamaica and Educational Outreach provide advising and support for the special circumstances of Jamaican students including obtaining the appropriate passport and visa, what to expect on the US Embassy visit, expectations of US Customs and Border Patrol upon entry into the US, referral to scholarship and loan options in Jamaica, support for reimbursement from the Jamaican Ministry of Education and on-campus support for the summer intensive. Financial aid is not available to international students from Western Carolina University. Academic integrity and discipline policies are outlined in the Jamaica Student Handbook, Appendix L of the Self-Study mentioned above and are the same as on-campus policies although they are specifically discussed with Jamaican students during orientation. Health and wellness activities and equipment are not provided to students in Jamaica or Colombia, but are available for students during their attendance at the summer residency program on the WCU campus. While student support services in Jamaica and Colombia do not match those provided to students on the main campus, they are determined to be adequate, appropriate and are continually reviewed for possible improvements. All students in programs in Jamaica and Colombia are employed educators and have health benefits as the result of employment.

Off Site Reviewer Comments
The institution offers a variety of support services to meet the needs of their student population, which is predominately comprised of undergraduates. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee finds that these services are aligned with the institution’s mission of providing opportunities for engaged learning that enhance the overall student experience. While the institution’s narrative specifically addresses support services for its students in Jamaica and Colombia, aside from technology resources and online tutoring and writing resources available through the Writing and Learning Commons, the Committee could not find how other support services are made available to distance learners, including those in an online environment.

Institutional Response
Reviewer comment: "the Committee could not find how other support services are made available to distance learners, including those in an online environment."

Note: In several cases, in order to show all of the tabs open on webpages, some pages were copied multiple times and combined. For example, the New Student Orientation web site was copied twice and combined to show the three tabs: Getting Started, Advising and Registration, and Financing Your Education.

Student support is sufficient to meet the needs of distance students.

Division of Educational Outreach
The Division of Educational Outreach (Ed Outreach) manages a variety of student support services for distance students and periodically evaluates on-line student satisfaction (see On-line Satisfaction Summary example). Ed Outreach is supported and advised by a Distance Learning Council, which consists of all distance program directors and key student support staff. The Council purpose includes advocacy for distance programs, resolution of common distance concerns, and promotion of continuous process improvement in distance programming. For an overview of Educational Outreach’s role in Distance Education at WCU, please see the Distance Basics document.

Full-time support in Educational Outreach is provided by the office of Distance and Online Programs which is managed by the Associate Director of Distance Learning and is assisted by a Student Support Specialist. Additional support is also provided by the entire staff in Educational Outreach.

The Associate Director of Distance Learning supports students in the following ways:

- Primary liaison between academic departments and student support units
- Advocates for Distance Students on the Associate Dean’s council
- Helps transfer students matriculate to WCU by developing relationships with community colleges
- Maintains a FAQ for Distance Students
- Works closely with the Advising Center and attends Advising Center staff meetings to address any issues affecting distance students
- Teaches LC 101 course for distance students. This course is for students who are on warning and need help to get back on track
- Evaluates and advises student applicants through personal contact and web resources to include:
  - Transcript Evaluation (unofficial)
  - Orientation
  - Referrals to University departments, like Financial Aid
  - Financial Aid
  - Documentation of student contacts in Grades First™ to facilitate a holistic approach to student services

The Student Support Specialist supports students in the following ways:

- Point of contact for distance learning students in One-Stop
- Works with the Associate Director to help students engage with University departments
- Advises undeclared students
- Helps students navigate the completion of Liberals Studies, WCU’s general education program
- Communicates University Policies, deadlines, and important dates to students
- Helps student with registration

Distance and Online Programs provide a variety of resources to support distance students. The New Student Orientation and Distance Support for Current Students web sites provide students with information on accessing and using the technology resources available to them, academic policies, the myWCU portal, required training, advising and registration, and information about financial responsibilities and funding options. The Distance and Online Programs website contains helpful information for all students, including a robust FAQ. Some distance programs require preliminary training, which includes technology training to facilitate online learning. For example, WCU’s online Emergency Medical Care program and R.N. to B.S.N. programs require new students to take a two-week online orientation class before the start of the semester. During this session, students are oriented to the program, registered for classes, and instructed in the use of the online course materials. Distance students have access to the UNC-Online proctoring services. WCU Educational Outreach provides proctoring through a National Collegiate Testing Association affiliation testing center. Please see the WCU Compliance Report response, Federal Requirements 4.8.1 and 4.8.3, for details about proctoring services. Ed Outreach also contains the Office of Military Student Services. Military Student Services staff support and serve as the liaisons for both residential military and distance military students.
Other student support services include, but are not limited, to the following:

- **Technology**
  - Distance students have the same access to receive free or reduced-cost software downloads as residential students.
  - The University supports distance learning students and faculty by providing access to course management software (Blackboard) and giving technical assistance to enhance teaching and learning activities.
  - Information Technology Support is available for distance students.
    - The IT help desk is available M-F: 7:30 am - 6:30 pm for all students including distance students.
    - Blackboard support is available from M-F: 7:30 am - 6:30 pm for all students including distance students. All students have telephone and online support access over a 24/7 period.
  - **Tutoring - Brainfuse** has replaced Smarthinking (mentioned in the Original Narrative above) as WCU's free, online tutoring platform, which provides academic tutoring services and access to basic training on programs such as Microsoft Office.
  - **Library services** - The library provides specific resources for students beyond those supplied to residential students. Please see Core Requirement 2.9 and Comprehensive Standard 3.8.1 for more information about Library Services.
  - **Advising services** - Prior to declaring a major, distance students are advised by Educational Outreach. Once admitted to a major, distance students are assigned a faculty advisor by the academic department, as with all other students.
  - **Career services** - Distance students have access to resources available to residential students including several software programs (Job Cat, Focus II, Vault, Kredible, Big Interview) that can be accessed through the Center for Career and Professional Development website. Students can book virtual/phone appointments by going through GradesFirst or calling the CCPD and booking over the phone.
  - **Accessibility** - All students requiring accessibility services can seek accommodations through the Office of Accessibility Resources.
  - **Students in the undergraduate Engineering Technology distance program have access to labs at both WCU and their respective community colleges.**
  - **All services offered by the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Office of Student Success are accessible by both residential and distance education students.**
  - Each college appoints a Distance Student Coordinator who supports distance students in their college and acts as a liaison to Educational Outreach. For example, Rachel Wike is the Coordinator of Education Admissions & Distance Programs in the College of Education and Allied Professions.

Certain programs maintain advisors specifically for distance students.

- **College of Education and Allied Professions**
  - Coordinator of Education Admissions & Distance Programs
  - Birth - Kindergarten, Annie McCord 828-227-3755 or amccord@wcu.edu, Rachel Wike 828-227-3431 or rwike@wcu.edu
  - M.A.Ed. in Special Education, Sharon Dole, 828-227-3282 or dole@wcu.edu
  - M.A.T in Special Education, Lisa Bloom, 828-227-7310 or bloom@wcu.edu
  - Post Master’s Certificate in Public School Licensure, Ann Allen, 828-227-7310 or alallen@wcu.edu
  - Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) licensure program, Sharon Dole, 828-227-3282 or dole@wcu.edu
  - Human Resources, Dr. John Sherlock, 828-227-3380 or sherlock@wcu.edu

- **College of Business:**
  - Business Law, Peter Christiansen, cobdistance@wcu.edu
  - Entrepreneurship-Graduate, Robert J. Lahm, Jr., 828-227-3295 or rjlahm@wcu.edu
  - Innovation Leadership and Entrepreneurship-Undergraduate, Peter Christiansen, cobdistance@wcu.edu
  - Project Management, Vittal Anantatmula, 828-227-3990 or vittal@wcu.edu

- **College of Health & Human Services**
  - Emergency Medical Care, Michael Hubble, 828-227-3516 or mhubble@wcu.edu
  - Health Sciences, Brian Raming, 828-227-3512 or brraming@email.wcu.edu
  - Nurse Administration-Grad. Cert., Jessi Shirley, 828-670-8810 ext.221 or jshirley@wcu.edu
  - Nurse Educator-Grad. Cert., Jessi Shirley, 828-670-8810 ext. 228 or jshirley@wcu.edu
  - RN to BSN, Jessi Shirley, 828-670-8810 ext. 228 or jshirley@wcu.edu

- **College of Engineering and Technology**
  - Construction Management, George Ford, 828-227-2519 or gford@wcu.edu
  - Engineering Technology, Amber Thompson, 828-227-2517 or athompson@wcu.edu

- **College of Arts and Sciences**
  - Criminal Justice, Aaron Vassey, pavassey@wcu.edu
  - CJ/EDM Liberal Studies, Paul Denkenberger, 828-227-2737 or rdenkenberger@wcu.edu
  - Emergency & Disaster Management, Aaron Vassey, pavassey@wcu.edu

Sources

- Distance Basics
- DistanceLearningFAQ
- Online Student Satisfaction Survey Summary
- Undergraduate Distance Communication Flow
- WCU - Advising Center
- WCU - Distance services for Current Students
- WCU - Distance Student Orientation
- WCU - Engineering Technology
- WCU - Library for Distance Students
- WCU - Office of Accessibility Resources
- WCU - Online Career Resources
3.2.3

**Governance and Administration: Board conflict of interest**
The governing board has a policy addressing conflict of interest for its members.

**Judgment**
- Compliance
- Partial Compliance
- Non-Compliance
- Not Applicable

**Narrative**
The University of North Carolina (UNC) Board of Governors adopted a conflict of interest policy that applies to the following:

- the UNC Board of Governors
- the WCU Board of Trustees
- the chief executive officers of UNC and WCU
- the chief financial officers of UNC and WCU

This policy ensures that decisions made on behalf of UNC by its governors, trustees, chief executive officers, and chief financial officers are in the best interest of the constituent institutions and are not influenced by any potential gain, financial or otherwise, to the decision-makers. The policy also outlines procedures for resolving allegations of conflict of interest by the respective board members, chief executive officer, or chief financial officer.

The UNC Board of Governors policies on ethics, dual memberships, and conflicts of interest, published in Section 204 of the Code and Section 200.1 of the Policy Manual, require that the Chairman of the UNC Board of Governors and the Chairman of the WCU Board of Trustees designate a standing committee to determine whether a potential conflict is a permissible or impermissible activity and to make recommended findings as to whether the policy has been violated. In instances where a potential conflict of interest is identified, the WCU Board of Trustees solicits advice from University General Counsel and makes a motion to resolve the issue. The policies further provide for self-disclosure of substantial interests by board members on an annual basis. (Western Carolina University Legal Counsel Coverage Areas)

Board members, chief executive officers, and chief financial officers are informed of the policies addressing conflict of interest during the orientation meetings held for new board members. Legal Counsel from UNC and Western Carolina University are responsible for communicating the information and for ensuring that the policies are implemented. Please see pages eight (8) through fourteen (14) of the included Orientation Material. (Orientation Material)

**Off Site Reviewer Comments**
Conflict of interest policies have been implemented by the UNC Board of Governors that apply to the UNC Board and the WCU Board as well as the CEO and CFO of both UNC and WCU. Board members are informed of the COI policies during orientation sessions for new Board members. Documentation of Board conflicts of interest policies was provided. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to find evidence of implementation of these policies.

**Institutional Response**
Reviewer Comments: "Documentation of Board conflicts of interest policies was provided. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to find evidence of implementation of these policies."

Please find attached pages 13-14 from the Board of Trustees By-Laws, which covers conflicts of interest. Part 4d references the UNC Policy 200.1 on Dual Memberships and Conflicts of Interest. The relevant portions of 200.1 are highlighted. Policy 200.1 references a "Statement of Economic Interest" for Board of Trustees appointees; a copy of one has been attached.

The Board reads a conflict of interest statement each time it meets with a request for the trustees to disclose any conflicts of interest. For example, the agenda for a recent "agenda setting meeting" of the Board of Trustees is included which shows that the Board Chairman, Ed Broadwell, reads the COI disclosure statement and requests members disclose conflicts of interest. Finally, the website that publicly publishes meeting minutes for the Board of Trustees has been provided in addition to meeting minutes for all of 2016 and 2015. Please note that there were no conflicts of interest reported in those years.

**Sources**
- 200.1 Board COI policy
- agenda for Jan 30 phone meeting
- BOT Bylaws
- statement of econ interest redacted
- WCU BOT web and minutes
3.3.1.1

Institutional Effectiveness: Educational Programs
The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: 3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes.

Judgment
- Compliance
- Partial Compliance
- Non-Compliance
- Not Applicable

Narrative
The content presented is divided into three sections:

1. The original compliance narrative addressing the standard
2. The off-site committee comments
3. The institutional response to the off-site committee comments

Original Compliance Narrative
Please see narrative in Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 for the overarching description of our assessment processes. As delineated in the Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 narrative, outcomes assessment for educational programs at Western Carolina University can be organized in a three-tier system, consisting of the following:

1. Annual outcomes assessment reports;
2. Annual reports submitted to other campus leadership or other agencies/accreditors;
3. Multi-year reports, such as university-coordinated program/unit review or external accreditation, which include both self-studies and external review reports. Additionally, the recent and ongoing transition to the Compliance Assist assessment management platform results in the presentation of assessment reports in non-uniform formats.

Annual Outcomes Assessment Reports
Annual outcomes assessment reporting is an established practice, as documented in the Faculty Handbook, in five of the six degree-granting colleges of the university. Academic programs use assessment plans, which are periodically updated (typically on a 5-year schedule), to guide their annual assessment processes.

Examples of assessment plans:

- Biology (2009-2014)
- Philosophy and Religion (2011-2016)
- Psychology (2011-2016)
- Criminal Justice ((2013-2018)
- Business Administration, MBA (2013-2020)
- English, Prof. Writing (2014-2017)
- Public Administration, MPA (2014-2018)
- Physical Therapy (2014-2019)
- Chemistry (2015-2019)

Final assessment reports are due at the end of each academic year in June. Certain programs with robust program accreditations that address outcomes assessment are exempt from this process. The following table provides linked samples of annual outcomes assessment reports spanning the past three years. Sampling methodology involved counting total undergraduate and graduate programs in each college and establishing a minimum 33% sample size for each college and program level (sample summary). The overall sample size of annual outcomes assessment reports across all educational programs is 41% (40 of 97 degree programs).

Because evidence of improvements can be difficult to quickly discern from the reports, specific detailed examples demonstrating evidence of improvements resulting from outcomes assessment are provided in a section below entitled, “Examples of improvements resulting from outcomes assessment.” Please note that WCU is in the process of migrating to a new outcomes assessment management solution, and consequently the 2016 reports will appear differently than the 2014 and 2015 reports.
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<th>2016 samples</th>
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Other annual reports addressing outcomes assessment

1. Program Development Plans

Program Development Plans (PDPs) are used as part of the periodic unit-review process and are described in WCU’s response for Core Requirement 2.5. Each year, after the five-year unit review has been completed, units are required to submit an annual update report for the Program Development Plan, describing progress toward recommended actions, which can be viewed as operational outcomes. In some instances of program review, recommendations are made pertaining to student learning outcomes assessment. The following
documents provide examples of initial Program Development Plans and of subsequent Program Development Plan “update” reports.

- Communication: 2012 PDP; 2013 PDP update; 2014 PDP update; 2015 PDP update
- Natural Resource Conservation and Management: 2013 PDP; 2014 PDP update; 2015 PDP update

2. Annual Accreditation Reports

Several educational programs that maintain accreditation through professional organizations are required to submit annual reports to their accrediting organization, or maintain internal monitoring reports for the purposes of accreditation compliance. A few of these organizations require annual updates on outcomes assessment processes and results. The following documents provide examples of annual accreditation reports addressing outcomes assessment.

- ACEND annual report: 2014
- CAEP annual report: 2015
- School of Nursing annual program evaluation report: 2014, 2015

Multi-year review and accreditation reports

Periodic unit review for academic units is an established process that has been described in detail for Core Requirement 2.5. Briefly, academic units are required to undergo review every five years. This comprehensive review process utilizes both internal and external reviewers, and it requires a self-study document, a reviewer report with recommendations for improvements, and a forward-looking program development plan to guide unit improvements over the next several years. The review process focuses on both unit goals and outcomes, and student learning outcomes.

In addition to the academic unit review samples presented as evidence for Core Requirement 2.5, the following samples spanning 2014, 2015, and 2016 are presented here:

- Unit review - English (2014)
- Unit review - Mathematics (2015)
- Unit review - Master of Health Sciences (2015)
- Unit review - Film and Television Production (2015)
- Unit review - Parks and Recreation Management (2016)
- Unit review - Psychology (2016)

Accredited programs are not required to complete a five-year program review. The accreditation review satisfies the requirement for periodic review. A number of programs at WCU are accredited, and these programs are required to report their outcomes and achievement of outcomes. Below are examples of recently completed accreditation reviews demonstrating assessment of operational and/or student learning outcomes:

- Accreditation report - Construction Management (2013)
- Accreditation report - Dietetics (2014)
- Accreditation report - Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology (2014)
- Accreditation report - Engineering Technology (2014)
- Accreditation report - Physical Therapy (2014)
- Accreditation report - College of Business (2015)
- Accreditation report - Electrical Engineering (2016)

Other outcomes assessment processes for educational programs

1. College of Fine and Performing Arts

The College of Fine and Performing Arts (CFPA) maintains program-level accreditations in art, music, theatre, and interior design, and consequently had not historically participated in institutionally established annual outcomes assessment processes. The accreditation agencies maintain clear expectations for continual improvement and outcomes assessment. For example, interior design is accredited through CIDA, and the 2015 accreditation progress report clearly evidences student learning outcomes assessment. NASM (music), NASAD (art and design), and NAST (theatre) accreditations are on a 10-year cycle, with reaffirmations occurring in 2016, 2017, and 2018 respectively.

With multiple changes in leadership in the CFPA during 2015, the new Dean of the CFPA and the former university Director of Assessment determined that CFPA programs should participate in the university’s established annual outcomes assessment process, with the goal of establishing assessment plans in 2015. Assessment plans have been established for the programs in the School of Music and in the School of Art and Design. The School of Music produced their first annual assessment reports in June 2016. The School of Music also produced a 3-year assessment summary report. Due to recent leadership changes in the School of Stage and Screen, assessment planning has been delayed as the school conducts a self-study, scheduled for completion in the spring of 2017.
2. Liberal Studies Program

The General Education Program (Liberal Studies) at WCU undergoes regular assessment. The Liberal Studies program is described for Core Requirement 2.7.3. A description of outcomes assessment for liberal studies is provided for Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1.

3. Honors College

The Honors College serves over 1300 undergraduate students and is the oldest Honors College in the University of North Carolina system. The Honors College has conducted routine annual outcomes assessment reporting for a number of years. In 2006, a review and update of program goals and outcomes was completed, including establishment of a new 5-year assessment plan. In 2013, a strategic plan, with revised program goals was established. Examples of assessment reports are provided for 2011, and 2015. Under new leadership since July 2015, the Honors College has recently worked to review and revise its mission and goals, and is actively monitoring progress towards its new goals. Its five-year unit review was postponed one year because of the transition in leadership; it is being conducted during the 2016-17 academic year. Unit review documents will be made available to the on-site review committee.

Examples of improvements resulting from outcomes assessment

The following examples are presented, to clearly demonstrate how outcomes assessment processes result in improvements at WCU. While these examples of improvements, and many others, can be derived from the reports provided, it is admittedly difficult to quickly identify the improvements, which can take several assessment cycles to realize. Additionally, the various processes of assessments utilized at WCU, along with their distinctive reporting structures, requires focused effort to discern what has been accomplished. Each example provided is linked to supporting documentation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>The Communication Department had several deficiencies in lab space and inadequate funding to keep pace with rapid industry changes. Many of the labs had technology that was at the end of their useful life, and stable sources of funding were needed for ongoing maintenance and updating in order to remain current. Specifically, WCU needed to fund the television studio upgrade to high definition and the expansion of new social media labs for journalism and broadcasting. The TV studio upgrade is currently underway and Stillwell 144 has been designated as the new communication department lab space. Additionally, Killian 219 was renovated as an advanced electronic classroom and all of the communication classes needing advanced computing are taught there as of Fall 2016.</td>
<td>2012 Program Review Report; 2016 Program Development Plan Update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>In spring of 2013, the WCU Program Prioritization Task Force recommended the discontinuation of the Spanish BA program. In his final report, Chancellor Belcher agreed that the Spanish program had a profile that was “weak at best,” but did not accept the task force’s recommendation for discontinuation, but rather stipulated that the department devise an action plan that would achieve two goals: re-envision the program as a dynamic degree that responds to the applied needs of the WNC region and to generate robust enrollment, retention, and graduation for them. In the aftermath of the final report, the department developed an action plan that included, among other things, the following items: 1) recruit more minors into the major, 2) increase number of Spanish-related events on campus, 3) increase student engagement with Spanish-speaking opportunities in the community, 4) improve web page and social media presence, 5) create a regular newsletter for the majors, 6) create a weekly Spanish conversation practice hour, 7) increase faculty-led programs in Latin America, and 8) update the course mix for the major to focus on oral production and listening comprehension. Over the course of the last six semesters, the department has implemented all of these action plan items, the last being the program course mix change, which was just approved this last spring. Since the start of our implementation of the action plan, our enrollments have steadily and dramatically increased, growing from just 33 majors to almost 80 (See attached enrollment document). Our graduation rate has increased dramatically as well, with our last semester’s graduating class outnumbering the previous five semesters combined. These numbers attest to the attainment of the goals set forth in the Chancellor’s final program prioritization report.</td>
<td>2013 Program Prioritization Report; 2016 Update report; Enrollment report, 2013-2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>In English Education, an student performance improvement has been realized for the learning outcome: “Candidates will demonstrate content-area knowledge including, though not limited to, extensive knowledge of British and American literature, working knowledge of world literature, knowledge of writing and the pedagogy of writing, basic knowledge of non-print media, and basic knowledge of English grammar and usage. NCTE 2012 standards are also explicit about the need for candidates to be prepared to teach young adult and adolescent literature, particularly in support of literacy training.” Over time, the English Department has adjusted its assessment of this outcome in various ways with various measures. In 2014, it was determined that as the State continued to increase the emphasis of content knowledge in the area of Young Adult literature, there was a need for a new course. English 422, Young Adult Literature was designed as a partial content and practical methods course to proactively meet this need, and all English Education majors are now required to take it. As a result, students continue to score very successfully on the measure of their content-area knowledge, and placement for them has been steady now for a year at 100%.</td>
<td>2015 Annual Assessment Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Business</td>
<td>Assurance of Learning and Feedback Loop (AoL): Using data collected to improve student learning is the foundational purpose of AoL processes. In many instances, the recommendations made to improve student learning are small but effective, for example, reviewing assessment rubrics in class, providing step by step instructions, spending additional class time on a particular topic, emphasizing certain aspects of a topic in class, or adding additional assignments on a particular topic. In some instances, more extensive actions are needed to attempt to address student performance, and the College dealt with this after several writing measures demonstrated that student writing skills were not at an acceptable level. After a lengthy faculty discussion on the issue of student writing, and conversely the level of student reading skills, the College implemented several initiatives. The AoLC assigned a pilot measure on grammar and used an internet-based grammar checker, Grammarly, as the measurement instrument. As a result of this measure and the AoLC recommendation, Grammarly is now available at no cost to all College of Business students; and 1025 accounts have been created. Recognizing the link between reading and writing, the College also provides the digital Wall Street Journal to all College students, faculty, and staff and subscribes to Bloomberg Business Week (BBW). This magazine is available to all faculty and to students in the MBA and undergraduate capstone courses. To encourage faculty usage of the periodical, the AoLC developed the “Bloomberg Business Week Teaching Award” presented to faculty who integrate BBW materials into their classes in support of the College’s learning goals and objectives. Writing resources are also published on the College web site and updated as needed. Moreover, student and faculty workshops are coordinated by the AoLC each semester to assist students and faculty in enhancing learning and teaching skills. Student workshops focus on the development of skills related to program learning goals. Workshops for students include such topics as “Effective Oral Communications,” “Algebra Refresher,” “Writing an Essay,” “How to Cite in APA,” and “A Beginner’s Guide to Voting,” Faculty members have attended workshops on topics such as “Designing an Online Class,” “ The Golden Twenty,” “Teaching Large(r) Classes,” “Creating Videos with Panopto,” and several on the usage of the Blackboard Learning Management System. The College and AoLC also appreciate the importance of sharing Assurance of Learning data and information to all members of the College community. To facilitate communication, the AoLC maintains an “Assurance of Learning” Blackboard site accessible by all faculty and staff. All AoL information is available on the site: annual Assurance of Learning Reports, 2010-2015</td>
<td>2012 Program Review Report; 2016 Program Development Plan Update</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and semester reports, learning goals and objectives, curriculum maps, assessment plans, rubrics, data collection information, newsletters, documentation of special events, teaching resources, and AACSB standards and white papers on AoL. The AoLC also publishes the “Assurance of Learning News” each semester; the newsletter provides summaries of reports and short articles on all things AoL. The AoLC also regularly contributes articles to the College of Business newsletter to spread news of AoL activities to the College, alumni, and other external constituents. To ensure that new faculty, tenure track, fixed term, and adjuncts are aware of AoL activities, an informational letter was developed by the AoLC and is distributed to all new faculty.

| College of Business | Master of Business Administration: At the end of fall 2010, feedback from students in the MBA program was shared with over 30 faculty members by a group of Graduate Assistants who were in the first cohort of the 2009 curriculum change. As a result, the MBA Program Review Committee was formed and tasked with reviewing all aspects of the MBA program, including the curriculum. All committee members were either teaching or had taught in the MBA program. The committee solicited and examined feedback from faculty, students, and the Advisory Board, in addition to comparing the MBA curriculum of our AACSB peer institutions and UNC peers to our own. It articulated MBA learning objectives and goals and carefully crafted an updated curriculum proposal designed to fulfill those goals and remedy a number of concerns, including subject matter overlap and a deficiency in quantitative skills. The proposal was discussed with the faculty, additional changes were proposed and made, and a revised program became effective in 2012-13. As part of that process, an MBA advisory board was established, and the first Pre-MBA Boot Camp program was held in August 2013 for incoming MBA students. The purpose of the Boot Camp is to solidify the unity of the cohort and to provide students with basic business principles before entering the program. This two week program has three components: orientation, review sessions, and a group activity. Review classes covered offered Excel, accounting, mathematics, statistics, and finance. A corporate sponsor offsets the costs of this program. | 2015 AACSB report (page 39) |

| College of Business | Master of Accounting: During the summer of 2009, an alumni focus group of seven individuals (three female, four male) was convened by marketing professor James Deconinck. Graduation years of the participating alumni were 2002 through 2007. The focus group identified a clear need for relevant accounting electives in the program. With this information, coupled with feedback from the Accounting Advisory Board (curriculum and the state of the practice of accountancy is reviewed at every meeting), the faculty set forth a plan to develop and offer more accounting discipline electives at the graduate level, particularly in the areas of taxation and governmental/not-for-profit accounting. The following curriculum changes were initiated:

A defunct class that was previously required for the MBA program (ACCT 651) was reconstituted to be more relevant to MACC students as an elective. This course is now a regular summer elective class offering.

A one-credit hour tax research class was offered in Fall 2012 to lay the groundwork for the development of new assignments. The tax research essentials from the one-hour class were then incorporated into the basic Accounting Theory and Research course (ACCT 605) in Fall 2013.

A special topics class in taxation related to flow-through entities was developed and taught during Spring 2014 and Spring 2015. That class is now an elective, ACCT 630.

A special topics class in Governmental/Not-for-Profit Accounting was developed and taught during Spring 2014 and Spring 2015. That class is now an elective, ACCT 635.

A special topics class in taxation related to advanced individual taxation was developed and taught in Spring and Summer 2015 and may be proposed as a permanent elective next year.

A subsequent alumni survey in Spring 2014 also indicated a need for relevant elective classes. In that survey, 38 out of 64 (59%) alumni respondents indicated satisfaction with elective classes. Those respondents were 55% female and 45% male and completed the program between 2000 and 2013. The 59% satisfaction rate shows room for improvement and was viewed as supportive of the steps already underway to develop and teach additional elective courses. The faculty presented comparisons of the WCU offerings with eight peer institutions in the southeast (Tennessee, South Carolina, and Georgia) to the Advisory Board at its May 2014 meeting. The concept of a "concentration in taxation" was reviewed and supported by the Advisory Board. A follow up with more recent graduates during the 2015-16 academic year should provide additional feedback as to the relative success of the measures taken. | 2015 AACSB report (page 39) |

| College of Education and Allied Professions | A summary of program changes in undergraduate programs, with supporting data was produced for the 2015 NCATE accreditation visit. | NCATE undergraduate program changes 2015 |

| College of Education and Allied Professions | A summary of changes in graduate programs, with supporting data was produced for the 2015 NCATE accreditation visit. | NCATE graduate program changes 2015 |

<p>| College of Fine and Performing Arts | The Interior Design program was required to follow-up with the Council for Interior Design Accreditation regarding student learning outcomes assessment. The program implemented changes resulting in improvements, as documented in the evidence provided. | Interior Design outcomes improvements |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College of Fine and Performing Arts</th>
<th>Film and Television Production implemented a correction to an admissions policy as identified in the 2012-13 Program Prioritization process.</th>
<th>Film and Television Production program change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Fine and Performing Arts</td>
<td>The Stage and Screen Program in Film and Television Production implemented a successful curriculum change in response to program prioritization review. The Theatre Performance Program made two curriculum changes improving student learning. These improvements are described in the evidence provided.</td>
<td>Stage and Screen program changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Health and Human Services</td>
<td>Data analysis led to change in program practices concerning the initial 2009 MS program Nurse Anesthesia track NCE certification pass rates. While the rates remained above the mandatory pass rate, but not the preferred pass rates set forth by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs, they were below the national average, and faculty were concerned. Potential causes were discussed in team meetings, and changes in curriculum and policy were implemented. For example, the new question formats being used by the certifying body were included in program tests, and the students were pulled from clinicals the last month of the program and came to school 4 days per week to study for boards all day. Also, the Nurse Anesthesia Review NSG 672 course was revised to better reflect National Certification Exam content. The analysis and decisions are documented in the minutes of the Nurse Anesthesia team meetings.</td>
<td>Nursing Self Study (2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Health and Human Services</td>
<td>In Communication Sciences and Disorders, the feedback we received annually from our graduate student exit surveys suggested that the MS project activity was not meeting the needs of students exiting our graduate program in Speech Language Pathology. The project included a written clinical case and an oral juried case presentation (juried by two person faculty teams using program rubrics). Graduate exit feedback suggested that the experience varied greatly depending on faculty team pairings. During the 2015-16 academic year, a CSD faculty committee reviewed the process and generated a new capstone experience to be initiated during the 2016-17 year. The new process includes a class sign-up where students, under the leadership on one faculty member (to rotate annually), generate a portfolio of experiences accrued during their graduate studies (clinical and academic) illustrating competencies for entry level Speech-Language Pathologists established by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.</td>
<td>None provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Health and Human Services</td>
<td>Ten Social Work Competencies and accompanying practice behaviors for Bachelor of Social Work students are assessed based on three components, a final field internship evaluation, an exit exam, and a self-efficacy measure. Data from these measures are expected to meet an 80% benchmark, that is 80% of students are expected to receive a mean score of 80% or greater across the three measures. When a mean score falls below 80% the undergraduate curriculum committee considers a revision of the curriculum. For two years, assessments indicated that undergraduate students were performing lower than expected on measures of knowledge and practice behaviors specifically related to case management practice. In response, the faculty added a required course to the undergraduate Social Work curriculum which specifically focused on the knowledge, skills and practices related to case management—SOCW 360: Practice II-Case Management. Recent measures of student competencies indicate a significant increase in mean scores for students on outcomes assessing case management skills and competencies.</td>
<td>2014 Assessment Report; 2015 Assessment Report; 2016 Assessment Report</td>
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**Off Site Reviewer Comments**

The Off-Site Reaffirmation committee was unable to verify compliance with the documentation provided by the institution. The narrative does not provide a compelling case of an integrated assessment process. Additionally, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not find reference to assessment of online courses and programs. Moreover, the annual reports seem to be missing summative or integrated learning outcomes that are reviewed year over year. In some cases, such as Social Work, the unit assessment reports incorporate a holistic approach that includes summative examples. Other unit assessment reports, such as the Chemistry MS, seem to rely on course grades. A sampling approach was used but there is no clear explanation as to why 33% was selected by the institution. The narrative and examples provided do not support an integrated, mature, institutional effectiveness process.

**Institutional Response**

Educational Programs at Western Carolina University (WCU) are committed to ongoing continuous improvement. All educational programs are accountable to establish expected outcomes (to include student learning), to assess the extent to which the outcomes are being met, and to have evidence of improvement based on an analysis of results. Contextually, it is important to know that there is great variety to the ways in
which educational programs across the institution carry out and report outcomes assessment. The variety is due in part to historical practices, accreditation requirements, structural factors such as the size of a program and departmental organization, and specific programmatic needs. Some approaches are more sophisticated and mature than others, with accredited programs not surprisingly further along than non-accredited programs.

Given the diversity of approaches, WCU began to standardize annual reporting of assessment activities in 2006 for educational programs and has continued doing so to the present. Recently, attention to assessment processes has expanded from compliance with institutional policies to include enhancing the quality of assessment practices. Concomitantly, there has been a shift from a focus on reporting planned activities to demonstrating planned actions were indeed effective. Beginning in 2014, the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (an ad hoc committee of faculty and staff from across the institution) evaluated outcomes assessment practices, leading to the 2015 report, Assuring Quality Self-Assessment Summary: The Assessment of Assessment. The report noted a strong commitment to assessment, and a significant need to improve communication strategies to ensure that internal and external stakeholders clearly understand student learning outcome statements.

With the diversity of assessment processes in use, our primary challenge is to effectively communicate these processes and results to external stakeholders. In order to clarify and demonstrate compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1 we have restructured our approach to present a college-by-college description of institutional effectiveness assessment practices. While diverse at first glance, it will become evident that each college does in fact have structures and processes that support the collection, analysis, and use of assessment data. In all cases, assessment data is rolled up from the student level to the program level. Often, data is rolled up to the department/school or the college level to meet stakeholders needs and inform strategic planning efforts.

We recognize there are trade-offs in mandating a one-size-fits-all approach to institutional effectiveness to the more diversified approach we currently have. In an effort reach a middle ground and to shift annual reporting from a traditional approach that documented planned assessment activities to one that emphasizes an analysis of the effectiveness of improvement actions, a common reporting template was developed in January 2017. Programs were asked to translate information from existing documents and reports into the template, for work completed in academic year 2015-16 (commonly referred to as the AY2015-16 look back report). In an intentional effort to more closely tie strategic planning efforts with annual outcomes assessment activities, programs were requested to sample high priority goals and outcomes from their 2015-16 work and align outcomes with broader priorities (in the present case, SACSCOC Comprehensive Standards 3.3.1.1-5).

What follows is a description of assessment practices organized by college, culminating in a description of assessment practices in online programs. The description of each college’s assessment practices is support with evidence from such things as strategic plans, college and departmental assessment plans, meeting minutes, accreditation reports documenting student performance and compliance with assessment standards, and the like. At the end of each college section is a table summarizing the evidence of improvements based on an analysis of data for all degree programs in the college. The links provide consistent, uniform evidence of (1) improvement actions taken, (2) program outcomes the actions were the focus of, (3) the assessment measure(s) that were used (including the target level of performance, the actual performance, and whether the target was met), (4) how the results were shared internally and externally, and (5) what recommendations arose out of the analysis of results.

Taken as a whole, we believe the supporting evidence to follow demonstrates that, as an institution overall, we are compliant with Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1

College of Arts and Sciences

The College of Arts and Sciences, the largest academic College at Western Carolina University, is comprised of twelve academic Departments supporting some 30 degree programs. In addition to a wide range of academic programs, the College supports the University’s broader mission through extensive gateway courses and broad participation in the Liberal Studies core. The College and its constituent Departments takes assessment very seriously, especially in utilizing assessment information in goal-directed decision making.

The College of Arts and Sciences does this in a number of different ways, from assessing student learning in degree programs, to engaging in annual reporting on progress being made towards strategic program review goals and recommendations. In terms of student learning outcomes and implementing actions that lead to student success, departments track student achievement with operationalized assessment plans, using the data that is collected to hone the teaching culture, course offerings, and related matters. Presentations before the College Curriculum Committee regularly focus on the ways in which student assessment data inform curriculum changes. The first example presented below demonstrates significant program improvement actions that were based on an analysis of data.

The more intensive cyclical program review process includes assessment of not only student performance, but also faculty scholarship, professional development, departmental governance and other matters that directly and indirectly impact educational program goals and outcomes. Such assessments have resulted in a number of policy and budgetary decisions that enhance faculty work, student experiences, and related issues. The second example provided below illustrates where program review recommendations led to substantive changes in faculty productivity. Improvement actions have been verified by an analysis of data.

Twice each year, the Dean meets formally with all Department Heads, first in the late summer to set their goals for the Department and then again after the end of the Spring term to assess progress towards those goals. During these sessions, they share information gleaned from a wide variety of sources including Student Assessment of Instruction (SAI) results, Annual Faculty Evaluations (AFEs), strategic plans, department head evaluation surveys, senior surveys, program reviews, and related materials. Using this information, which can range from student assessment data to faculty performance to the effectiveness of departmental operations, the Dean works with the respective Departments to address issues raised and set metrics for success. As a result of these planning sessions, the College of Arts and Sciences has accomplished a range of improvements including the equity upgrading of three Administrative Support Associate positions to the Journey level, adding operating funds to the Philosophy and Religion budget to support student engagement, and establishing job descriptions and evaluation procedures for all program directors in the College. In short, by integrating such assessment information into leadership discussions, the
College does have a decision-making culture of improvement actions that are based on an analysis of data which is focused on improving the College for students, faculty, and staff.

Examples of improvements made based on the analysis of results

In the first example, the B.S. in Chemistry program faculty noticed that students were underperforming. For Student Learning Outcome 1 (Problem Solving Skills: Students will demonstrate complex problem-solving skills within a limited set of chemistry knowledge, by solving a set of complex problems), the program had observed poor performance on standardized final exams in CHEM232 (Quantitative Analysis). The hypothesis for this poor performance was that the students were listening to problems being solved and not doing enough of the problem solving themselves. The teaching methodology was changed for this course from a lecture (chalk-talk) format to a Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL) format. POGIL involves a guided self-learning philosophy. The mean final exam scores increased after POGIL was implemented by about 0.3 standard deviations. An additional observation is that the spread of the student final exam scores also narrowed after POGIL by about 0.3 standard deviations. Also the upper end scores decreased after the implementation of POGIL.

In the second example, a recent major curriculum revision by the History Department for the relied on various student outcome assessments including student performance over time in sophomore-level methods courses and capstone projects, coupled with qualitative information from senior and alumni surveys and national disciplinary initiatives by the American Historical Association. The improvement action was to redesign the curriculum in alignment with stronger, more modern curricula. Follow up evidence of curricular effectiveness depends upon the new assessment model for the department, currently being implemented in the 2016-17 academic year.

As a third example demonstrating attention to not only student learning outcomes, but broader programmatic goals, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences noted several external program reviewer recommendations based on interviews with faculty that departments needed additional resources to support faculty scholarship. Faculty scholarship has been and is an important program, departmental, and College goal. After taking these findings to the Department Heads Council, the College implemented the College of Arts and Sciences Research Grants program, which seeks to provide summer funds to support faculty scholarship. The grants resulted in two funded research grants, four published articles, and one published book over the last three years, indicating this was a useful program for the faculty. Based on the output and feedback from faculty, the College of Arts and Sciences is looking for ways to increase funding.

Summarized improvements made, Academic Year 2015-16

The following table provides links to summary reports describing selected goal and outcome based actions and improvements in academic year 2015-16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Program</th>
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<tr>
<td>Anthropology B.A.-B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biology B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biology M.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemistry B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemistry B.S. and M.S.-ACS 4 Plus 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemistry M.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forensic Science B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency and Disaster Management B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>English B.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>English M.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Studies Pedagogy B.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Science B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geology B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Resource Conservation and Management B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>History B.A.-B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>History M.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Science B.S.</td>
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<td>Mathematics B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philosophy B.A.</td>
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<td>International Studies B.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Science B.A.-B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Affairs M.P.A.</td>
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<td>Sociology B.A.-B.S.</td>
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<td>Spanish B.A.</td>
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College of Business

The vision of the College of Business is to be a leading educator of high-performance innovative leadership talent who are prepared to meet tomorrow’s business and the region’s evolving development needs. The College of Business vision aligns with the University’s 2020 Vision.
Strategic Plan: Goals 1.1 (Deliver high-quality academic programs (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) designed to promote regional economic and community development); 1.3 (Ensure that all programs include cross-curricular, experiential, applied, and international/global awareness opportunities for all students); 2.1.5 (Create leadership and experiential opportunities at the local, regional, national, and international levels); and 3.2.6 (Facilitate collaborative ... development efforts between WCU and external partners). The College of Business is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

To facilitate alignment with university goals, the College of Business has a robust assessment process led by a college-wide assessment group, the Assurance of Learning Committee, comprised of faculty from across the college and graduate program directors. The group is chaired by the college's Coordinator of Assessment. The Assurance of Learning committee maintains five-year assessment plans and curriculum maps for all programs. The assessment plans are designed such that each program outcome is measured twice in a five-year period. Not every program takes multiple measures in a given year, but may instead focus on a single, planned, strategic outcome.

Assessment results are discussed first by discipline-specific faculty, then with the Assurance of Learning Committee, then by the entire faculty at a college meeting. The Assurance of Learning committee distributes a comprehensive annual report to the college summarizing all Assurance of Learning committee activities for the year. The annual report details many of the program assessment activities and improvement actions that have taken place. Each semester, the Committee produces a newsletter to keep constituents informed. This information is included in the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business annual report as well as in the Maintenance of Accreditation Report. It is reviewed with the College's Advisory Board. Assessment plans, course maps, and Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business annual reports are available on the college's web page. The College of Business was recently recognized with a commendation from its accreditation body, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, during its most accreditation reaffirmation with the following noted as a strength:

"6. To facilitate communication, the AoL Committee maintains an "Assurance of Learning" Blackboard site accessible by all faculty and staff. All AoL information is available on the site: annual and semester reports, learning goals and objectives, curriculum maps, assessment plans, rubrics, data collection information, newsletters, documentation of special events, teaching resources, and AACSB standards and white papers on AoL. The AoL Committee also publishes the "Assurance of Learning News" each semester; the newsletter provides summaries of reports and short articles on all things AoL." (Reference)

All of the aforementioned information is shared with faculty and staff on the College of Business's Assurance of Learning Blackboard site. The Assurance of Learning committee work and the Blackboard site are exemplars of continuing improvement processes for the institution.

The College of Business prides itself on the assessment processes it has established, including the proactive and cyclical publication of student learning outcomes assessment results. The Assurance of Learning Committee disseminates assessment results each semester in the Assurance of Learning News, fostering a culture of informed decision making. The Spring 2016 issue of presented assessment results and interpretations from the previous semester (Fall 2015), while the Fall 2016 issue presented results from the Spring 2016 assessment activities. Each issue of the Newsletter notes the faculty who are responsible for continued assessment in the current semester.

Example of an improvement made based on the analysis of results

In Fall of 2014 the College of Business assessed a common outcome across the undergraduate programs, students will speak and write effectively. Fall 2014 assessment results had shown that students were having trouble with grammar, organization, and style in written assignments. Actions taken included faculty stressing the use of the Writing and Learning Commons, writing fellows, and the use of Grammarly, an online grammar checking tool. Assessment of student writing in AY 2015-2016 demonstrated 82% of students meeting or exceeding learning outcome expectations.

Summarized improvements made, Academic Year 2015-16

The following table provides links to summary reports describing selected goal and outcome based actions and improvements in academic year 2015-16.
College of Education and Allied Professions

The comprehensive unit assessment system of Western Carolina University’s College of Education and Allied Professions is designed to collect, report, and analyze data in order to draw conclusions and inform decision making with regard to candidate knowledge and dispositions, program effectiveness, and unit performance and operations. The assessment system reflects a continuous improvement process and is based on Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)/National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards, North Carolina Board of Education standards, the conceptual framework of the College of Education and Allied Professions, and general university standards including those of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Assessment data are collected and reviewed with the purpose of informing college leadership, faculty, staff, stakeholders, and candidates of the findings concerning three key areas: candidate performance, program effectiveness, and overall unit operational effectiveness.

The College of Education and Applied Professions’ assessment system is based on NCATE Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation, which states:

The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on applicant qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and unit operations to evaluate and improve the unit and its programs. The assessment system

1. identifies transition points at the unit and/or program level;
2. identifies the major assessments to be used at the transition points;
3. identifies a timeline for the development and implementation of the major assessments;
4. identifies the design for the collection, analysis, summarization, and use of data;
5. identifies aspects of the system that address unit operations; and
6. identifies how information technology will be used in the maintenance of the assessment system.

During its most recent NCATE reaccreditation, the College of Education and Applied Professions was recognized for its high quality assessment system by achieving the highest rating possible, At Target-Attained. The onsite reviewers' summary of the College’s assessment system performance stated:

"The unit has demonstrated that the assessment standard functions as the target status level. Clear, convincing and sufficient evidence demonstrates that the unit is performing as described in all aspects of the target level rubric for this standard and the processes and procedures currently in place suggest that the unit will sustain target level performance indefinitely. The assessment system is used to collect and analyze data on applicant qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and unit operations to evaluate and improve program operation and ensure that teacher candidates are well-prepared to serve as effective educators. The unit has developed a data collection, analysis, and evaluation system that documents candidate proficiencies aligned with professional standards and is demonstrated through multiple assessments at the program, unit, state, and national level. Multiple points of input are gathered from a variety of assessments and are supported by a strong technology infrastructure. The unit’s use of assessment Data for Program Improvement is comprehensive and drawn from multiple points of input and is evaluated regularly and systematically by the faculty during assessment retreat; review and support for the assessment process is provided by a faculty assessment committee and a clearly articulated assessment process."

Program Assessment

Data collected for candidate performance is also aggregated for program and unit analysis. The data is shared with the College of Education
and Applied Professions’ Assessment Committee, Professional Education Council, Leadership Council, and program coordinators. Program coordinators, in turn, report the data to faculty for discussion in departmental and program meetings or during the annual College of Education and Applied Professions Assessment Day. Assessment Day is a day-long retreat away from classes and meetings for programs to review assessment data, update reporting templates including key program assessments, clinical field experience descriptions, alignment of courses to professional standards, program changes over the past year as a result of analysis of aggregated and disaggregated data, and program transition points.

At the end of each academic year, all program coordinators prepare an annual assessment report (for example, the Birth-Kindergarten 2015-16 Annual Assessment Report) to the Director of Assessment and to the university Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness. The annual assessment report includes candidate student learning outcomes assessed during the year, the method of assessment(s), and changes to the program curriculum as part of the continuous improvement process.

A College of Education and Applied Professions Strategic Planning Day early in the semester allows program faculty to plan for the academic year. Programs consider curricular and budgetary spending needs that are aligned with the college strategic plan and based on outcomes and goals set during the previous Assessment Day.

Unit Assessment

Unit assessment encompasses student performance, program effectiveness and overall effective unit operations. The College of Education and Applied Professions unit assessment is systematic using internal and external assessment measures to review unit operations. Internal assessments include college enrollments and retention rates, review of program and candidate data through TaskStream and Tk20, student evaluations and host teacher or cooperating teacher observations, the college strategic plan, college effectiveness via committee and program evaluation, evaluation of Assessment Day results, review of the annual College climate survey, and annual program assessment reports. External assessment includes the University of North Carolina System teacher education preparation performance data, North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction Electronic Evidences summary data, federal Title II reporting, national CAEP accreditation reporting, US News and World Report on Graduate Education, and national testing organizations (e.g., ETS, Pearson).

Examples of an improvement made based on the analysis of results

The following example illustrates improvement actions taken based on an analysis of results. Both employer surveys and candidate completer surveys collected over several years showed a gap in knowledge of, and ability to work with, both English Learners and students with exceptionalities (e.g., both graduating students and the principals of our recent graduates reported this weakness or gap). After several cycles of this data confirmed this finding, action was taken.

Curricular design was analyzed over one year. The program faculty wanted to determine whether to incorporate content and clinical experiences into existing coursework or create new courses and experiences. Current candidates were included in this decision-making process. The program ultimately revamped the entire program (reducing hours, adding clinical experiences, and adding two new courses). The next year, the new clinical experiences and courses were taught. At this point, the program faculty have been teaching the courses for two or three times. There is now sufficient data (a large enough N) from completers to look at the full impact of these changes. The program is now on the verge of completing one cycle of employer survey data. It is recognized that there are many other factors to consider such as performance in coursework, in clinical experiences, and so forth. Programs need to be able to document a true cycle of assessment over time to drive programmatic changes and student success.

Summarized improvements made, Academic Year 2015-16

The following table provides links to summary reports describing selected goal and outcome based actions and improvements in academic year 2015-16.
College of Engineering

The College of Engineering and Technology at Western Carolina University is proactive in assessment as part of the accreditation requirements of its programs. All Engineering Technology and Engineering programs are accredited, or will be once they produce graduates by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), with the exception of the non-accredited Engineering Technology Operations program. The Construction Management undergraduate program is accredited by the American Council on Construction Education (ACCE). Each accredited program uses a student learning outcomes-based approach to assessment outlined by the accrediting agency. The Engineering Technology Operations and Masters-level programs are assessed using an annual cyclical process.

The College of Engineering and Technology assessment process is comprised of multiple levels of review. Each school in the college has an assessment committee responsible for overseeing all assessment processes for the individual programs in each school. Assessment data are shared with programmatic curricular area committees to review the outcomes results and make any needed changes to the curriculum. Reports of all assessment data is shared with the Dean’s office and the College’s Assessment committee. Data and results are stored and shared with faculty and staff on a college shared drive.

The assessment process workflow for reviewing student outcomes follows the following steps.

1. Departmental Assessment Committee determines the overall schedule of assessment and evaluation for each program. The schedule of
assessments and evaluations are submitted to the Department Head, Program Committee, and College Assessment Committee. At least one member from each Program Committee will hold a seat on the College Assessment Committee.

2. The individual Program Committee determines the appropriate locations in the curriculum for assessing the Performance Indicators (PIs) per Student Outcome (SO). Meeting minutes are recorded and archived in designated location.
   1. The individual instructor determines and documents both the artifact and assessment tool.
   2. The individual instructor applies the appropriate assessment method (stored rubrics, etc.).
   3. The individual instructor pilot tests the assessment method and documents pilot test.
   4. Using the piloted assessment method, the individual instructor collects data recording the % of students at Excellent, Satisfactory, Marginal, and Unsatisfactory for all assigned PIs.
   5. The individual instructor archives artifacts and assessment processes for future reference and inquiries from the Departmental Assessment Committee and/or ABET site-visit Program Evaluators.
   6. The individual instructor reports summary assessments to the Program Director.

3. The Program Director, in coordination with the Department Head, collects and compiles the scheduled assessment results. These results are tabulated for each PI and Student Outcome so as to provide a means to compare Student Outcome level of attainment with established threshold values.

4. The Program Director provides (stores digital files and notifies) the Program Assessment Report to the Departmental Assessment Committee and Department Head.

5. The Departmental Assessment Committee evaluates, with meeting minutes recorded and archived, each Student Outcome assessment measure against the established threshold value, where threshold values are as follows:
   - >= 80% sufficient evidence exist to continue process as directed
   - 70-80% evidence exist requiring close observation/questions per processes
   - <70% evidence exist for thorough review of process

   The Departmental Assessment Committee determines appropriate action, which may include issuing:
   1. No action required – move to next cycle
   2. Re-measure PI(s) and Student Outcome in same course
   3. Re-measure PI(s) and Student Outcome in different course
   4. Invite instructor to discuss assessment and results
   5. Request review for Student Outcome requiring curriculum change (trends in low attainment).

6. The Departmental Assessment Committee provides assessment and evaluation results, along with meeting minutes, to the:
   1. Program Committee
   2. Departmental Curriculum Committee
   3. Department Head

7. The Department Head provides the assessment and evaluation results, meeting minutes, and Departmental Assessment Committee meeting minutes to the College Assessment Committee.

8. The College Assessment Committee reviews all artifacts associated with the continuous improvement process and reports the status of these activities to the Dean.

Based on assessment for continuous improvement, the following steps are followed if a performance indicator (PI) for a program outcome is observed to be less than 70. Note that the steps below correspond to PIs that are assessed in the context of a course, but in some cases a PI might be assessed in a non-course setting; given such situations, that PI assessment point should be substituted for the course in the steps below.

1. The assessment committee discusses the PI with the Program Director and the faculty member who evaluated the PI (typically the course instructor). In this discussion all pertinent information is reviewed, such as the course syllabus, the course prerequisites, assessment rubrics, and the assessment map, in order to find the root cause for the low PI.
2. If a root cause is identified, the PI is re-evaluated when the course is taught again. If the PI is found to be greater than 80, the findings are documented and distributed to the faculty by the Program Director. No other action items are necessary.
3. If a root cause is not identified, the Assessment Committee and the Program Director develop a corrective action plan. This plan may include changes to the assessment rubrics or changes to the prerequisites or changes to the assessment map after consulting the relevant faculty and department committees.
4. The corrective action plan is documented and the Program Director leads the efforts in re-evaluating the PI in collaboration with the instructor teaching the relevant course.
5. The assessment committee reviews the results from the reevaluation. If the PI is found to be greater than 80, the findings are documented and distributed to the faculty by the Program Director. No other action items are necessary. The corrective action plan is closed at this stage. If the PI is still found to be less than 80, steps 3 to 5 are repeated again.

The School of Engineering and Technology Assessment Committee specifically reports assessment results and continuous improvement actions to School’s faculty, the Electrical Engineering Program Advisory Board, and the appropriate administrators.

During AY 2015-16, the College of Engineering and Technology had the following Assessment achievements:

- Established the College Assessment Committee, chaired by the Associate Dean.
- Submitted the Interim Report to ABET for the Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission (ETAC) Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology – Applied Systems. Weaknesses identified during due process were resolved.
- Submitted the ABET Institution Accreditation Commission (EAC) Self-study for the Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering. On-site visit occurred in October 2016. Preliminary results showed no weaknesses and one concern. The Self-study was selected as an exemplar for the 2017 ABET Symposium in April.
• Submitted the 2nd year ACCE report addressing weaknesses from the 2014 visit. The Report was accepted.

Examples of improvements made based on the analysis of results

In this first example, the B.S. in Construction Management faculty noted the American Council on Construction Education revised a standard to include the outcome, students will demonstrate an ability to create a construction project safety plan. The program faculty established course exercises on construction safety plans and a method of assessment. Assessment results demonstrated 72% of students met the desired level of performance, falling just short of the desired level of performance (75%). The program faculty decided to repeat the assessment in the subsequent year, without change to the curriculum or assignments. While this does not demonstrate an improvement in an existing student learning outcome, it demonstrates the program being responsive to current practices in the discipline by amending curriculum and corresponding assessments, in order to graduate students with a current and relevant skill set.

In the second example, the M.S. in Technology program has a thesis and a non-thesis option for students. Based on prior observations, the program faculty considered whether better assessment measures could be developed to determine if actions designed to improve the performance of the non-thesis students could be taken. The program also considered if the criteria by which students are evaluated to determine if program goals are met was unrealistic. The specific student learning outcomes they were interested in were (a) "an ability to select and apply masters level knowledge of mathematics, science, engineering, and technology to complex problems in a specialized area of engineering and/or technology that requires the application of principles and applied procedures or methodologies," and (b) "an ability to design, organize, prepare, and deliver technical information utilizing oral presentation skills and visual aids.” The program improvement action was to implement a new assessment measure evaluating the degree to which students met each student learning outcome.

For the thesis option students, a thesis committee generally consisting of three members of the faculty evaluated the level of technical knowledge students demonstrated, scoring student performance on a scale from 1-10. For the non-thesis option students, a comprehensive examination panel generally consisting of three members of the faculty evaluated the level of technical knowledge demonstrated by the students, scoring student performance on a scale from 1-10. The target level of performance for both student learning outcomes was set to 70% of all students (thesis and non-thesis) achieving a score 7 out of 10 or higher. Results from AY2015-16 indicated that for both student learning outcomes overall 87% of the students met the performance goal of 7 or higher. While this exceeded the overall target of 70%, it was noted that the thesis students outperformed the non-thesis students, with 100% of the thesis option students meeting the performance goal, while only 67% of the non-thesis students met the goal. The assessment scores for both learning outcomes were identical suggesting that the metrics may be to similar and that differentiation was needed. The program faculty are in the process of mapping the curriculum and clarifying the goals and outcomes to address the differences in student performance.

Summarized improvements made, Academic Year 2015-16

The following table provides links to summary reports describing selected goal and outcome based actions and improvements in academic year 2015-16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction Management B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction Management M.C.M.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology B.S.</td>
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<td>Electrical Engineering B.S.E.E.</td>
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<td>Engineering B.S.E.</td>
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<td>Engineering Technology B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology M.S.</td>
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College of Fine and Performing Arts

In the past, outcomes assessment was done poorly throughout the college and follow-up was notably lacking. With the hiring of a new Dean, the college has established a clear structure and process for outcomes assessment, along with a calendar for assessment and reporting that extends over the next ten years.

On Friday, January 6, 2017, the CFPA held its first annual Assessment Day. Modeled on the same event held by the College of Education and Allied Professions, the event kicked off with a presentation on assessment and Bloom’s taxonomy by a team from the Coulter Faculty Commons (CFC). The Director of the CFC and the university Director of Assessment participated in planning this event through a series of meetings that began in the fall of 2016.

The assessment day resulted in each degree program establishing student learning outcomes, defining direct and indirect assessment methods, codifying benchmarks, assigning responsibilities, outlining curriculum maps, and creating assessment timetables (for example, the Master of Fine Arts degree program). Discussions were lively and productive, reflective of the college’s faculty’s commitment to curricula that are geared to student learning and success.

An assessment reporting structure was established to facilitate communication at every level of the college—from the faculty, to the department heads, up to the college level, and finally to the university Director of Assessment. The Associate Dean serves as assessment coordinator for the college, and unit-level assessment coordinators represent Art and Design, the School of Music, and the School of Stage and Screen.
The College of Fine and Performing Arts has made great strides in their assessment planning, by determining to go beyond compliance and implementing a college-wide culture of assessment.

Examples of improvements made based on the analysis of results

External review by the Council of Interior Design Accreditation identified a need for improvement in students' ability to synthesize complex information and use it in generating multiple design concepts and solutions. Interior Design Program faculty meet regularly to re-evaluate instructional methodologies, projects/assignments, and student learning outcomes for each class within the curriculum for the purposes of identifying students' areas of weaknesses and improving upon their strengths. Program faculty established the following student learning outcome: Students will demonstrate and apply knowledge of human experience, behavior and fundamentals of design as it relates to the built environment. Adjustments were made to course content to require students to generate multiple bubble diagrams, thumbnail sketches and preliminary design layouts for each design project. Assessments were developed with a desired level of achievement set at entry level competence for the interior design profession. Achievement expectations were met.

An example of an improvement made towards an operational outcome involved production deadlines in the School of Stage and Screen. Faculty in the School of Stage and Screen wanted to create a more robust and comprehensive production process to give the students a better experience that more accurately reflected standards of the profession. They also wanted to reduce the level of stress and work load of production staff, faculty, and students by adhering to strict standards for production. They used two separate Production Process Mapping sessions (one in the Fall of 2015, one in the Spring of 2016) with Dr. Todd Creasy, Professor in WCU’s College of Business, and Jayme McGhan, Director of the School of Stage and Screen. The outcome was the establishment of new guidelines, timelines, and standards for theatrical productions including season selection, marketing, design due dates, construction due dates, and number of shows per season for the B.F.A. in Theatre (General concentration) and B.A. in Stage and Screen (Theatre Concentration in Design/Tech) programs. The assessment metric was the number and significance of missed production due dates verses due dates that were met in ALL areas of production. The desired level of achievement was set to 90% of production due dates being met. After one year of assessing this ongoing measurement, approximately 80% of production due dates are dates being met.

Given that a production is literally hundreds of moving parts, the faculty expected that this would take approximately two years to become fully functional. The results were disseminated through the Theatre, Musical Theatre, Design Tech, and Student Advisory Committee meetings. The full production process map was given to the Dean’s office, and was used as an example by Professor Creasy in other classes. Furthermore, the process map will be utilized by the Film and Television Production Program for future film projects. The recommendation going forward is to keep the current course of action to assess whether or not the production process map will fully meet the needs of productions in the School of Stage and Screen.

Summarized improvements made, Academic Year 2015-16

The following table provides links to summary reports describing selected goal and outcome based actions and improvements in academic year 2015-16.

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<tr>
<th>Degree Program -- Concentration</th>
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<tr>
<td>Art B.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art B.F.A.--Art Education</td>
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<td>Art B.F.A.--Graphic Design</td>
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<td>Art B.F.A.--Studio Art</td>
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<td>Fine Arts M.F.A.</td>
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<td>Interior Design B.S.</td>
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<td>Music B.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music B.M.--Commercial and Electronic Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music B.M.--Music Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music B.M.--Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage and Screen B.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre B.F.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film and Television Production B.F.A.</td>
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College of Health and Human Services

Departments and Schools in the College of Health and Human Sciences (Units) share a common approach to the assessment of unit and program-level goal and outcomes. The process involves the assessment of specific student learning outcomes, with data rolling up and integrating with broader goal-oriented assessments such as retention rates, faculty peer-review of teaching, and findings that become part of annual accreditation summary reports.

At the College-level, the Dean reviews many of the outcome parameters with department heads and school directors on an individual basis (e.g., Pass rates) as part of their annual review. As a College leadership group, the department heads and school directors collectively review the strategic plan and address outcomes across the College. What follows are descriptions of unit-level assessment processes, the range of assessments used to measure student learning outcomes and broader goals, and examples for each department and school. Note the common
approach.

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders conducts formative and summative assessment annually at the school level. Assessment includes the evaluation of both program goals (which tend to be broader in scope) and student learning outcomes (which tend to be more focused and specific). The Department's assessment and evaluative processes that are more summative in nature occur throughout each year and include (roughly arranged in order from those assessments measuring student learning outcomes to broader program goals, from more summative to more formative, culminating in broad accreditation reports):

1. Student praxis scores. Praxis scores for graduate student certification by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) are archived by the program annually and appear on the program website and in the program newsletter.
2. Graduate student Knowledge and Skill Assessment. Knowledge and Skills across the curriculum are archived and monitored through student and faculty entry of experiences in Calipso – an electronic archival system.
3. Student progress reporting. Twice each semester undergraduate and graduate student performance is reviewed by the faculty at large. Students are informed of needs and records of reviews are archived in faculty minute notes.
4. Graduate student program retention/completion rates. Rates are archived by the program annually and appear on the program website and in the program newsletter.
5. Graduate student employment rates. Rates are archived by the program annually and appear on the program website and in the program newsletter.
6. Student Assessments of Teaching. These are managed by the University and occur each term. Reviews of teaching data occur by the Department Head and are shared in Annual Faculty Evaluation sessions occurring each April.
7. Annual Faculty Evaluations. The Faculty Activity Data base is where faculty activities are archived. Individual sessions occur between faculty and the Department Head. Summaries are forwarded to the Dean for actions including merit recognition.
8. Peer-review of teaching. All faculty participate in peer-review of teaching annually. Findings inform the annual faculty evaluation process.
9. Tenure, Promotion, Reappointment Reviews. These occur annually for all untenured faculty members using departmental, college, and, when appropriate, university guidelines, procedures, and review schedules.
10. Post-tenure review. As mandated by the UNC system, this review occurs every five years post a tenure or promotion action throughout a university faculty member’s career. Data are forwarded and reviewed at all university levels. Actions are taken when needed as directed by university guidelines.
11. Annual accreditation reports and approval by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA). ASHA accredits in 8-year cycles. Western Carolina University’s current accreditation runs through 2021. All annual reports in the present cycle have been approved without compliance issues.

Assessments that are more formative in nature occurring throughout the year include:

1. Student exit surveys are collected each year and presented in faculty retreats.
2. Graduate surveys are pursued each year and presented in faculty retreats.
3. Employer surveys are pursued each year and presented in faculty retreats.
4. Program advisory board meetings occur annually and feedback from stakeholders specific to program goals is shared with the faculty and CHHS Dean.

Examples of an improvement made based on the analysis of results

CSD 681 has historically been the placeholder class for what was once called “Comps” and then called a “Master’s Project.” The old project was a written case presentation that was presented by two faculty and eventually defended orally to the two-person faculty team. Several years of student exit feedback resulted in ongoing modifications of the project, with unsatisfactory results. This year it was totally re-designed as a capstone, portfolio experience providing an opportunity for students to demonstrate academic and clinical competencies. The new experience is being well-received and really only came about as a result of direct student feedback.

School of Health Sciences

The School of Health Sciences conducts formative and summative assessment annually at the School and College levels. Assessment includes the evaluation of program goals and student learning outcomes (examples: Athletic Training, Nutrition and Dietetics). Results are reported and shared through the Western Carolina University Annual Program Assessment Report and annual accreditation reports required by accrediting bodies of the various programs.

Summative evaluative processes occur throughout each year and include:

1. Student licensure and credentialing scores. Pass rates on licensure and credentialing exams for graduates are obtained on an annual basis by each program with said exams (Athletic Training, Nutrition & Dietetics, Dietetic Internship, Emergency Medical Care, Recreational Therapy) and reported to the School Director and Associate Dean.
2. Graduate student program retention/completion rates. Rates are archived by the program annually (Master of Health Sciences) and reported to the School Director and Associate Dean.
3. Student Assessments of Teaching. These are managed by the University and occur each term. Reviews of teaching data occur by the School Director and are shared in Annual Faculty Evaluation sessions occurring each April.
4. Annual Faculty Evaluations using the Faculty Activity Data base where faculty activities are archived. Individual sessions occur between faculty and the School Director. Summaries are forwarded to the Dean for actions including merit recognition.
5. Peer-review of teaching. All faculty participate in peer-review of teaching annually. Findings inform the annual faculty evaluation process.
6. Tenure, Promotion, Reappointment Reviews. These occur annually for all untenured faculty members using departmental, college, and, when appropriate, university guidelines, procedures, and review schedules.

7. Post-tenure review. As mandated by the UNC system, this review occurs every five years post a tenure or promotion action throughout a university faculty member’s career. Data are forwarded and reviewed at all university levels. Actions are taken when needed as directed by university guidelines.

8. Annual accreditation reports on various cycles (e.g. 5 year, 8 year, 10 year). All annual reports in the present cycle have been approved without compliance issues. Programs with these reports include: Athletic Training, Nutrition & Dietetics, Dietetic Internship, Recreational Therapy, Environmental Health, and Emergency Medical Care.

Formative evaluative processes occur throughout the year by programs and are shared with the School Director.

1. Student exit surveys are collected each year and presented in faculty retreats.
2. Graduate surveys are pursued each year and presented in faculty retreats.
3. Employer surveys are pursued each year and presented in faculty retreats.
4. Program advisory board meetings (Recreational Therapy, Environmental Health, Emergency Medical Care, Master of Health Sciences) occur annually and feedback from stakeholders specific to program goals is shared with the program faculty and School Director.

Examples of improvements made based on the analysis of results

In the Athletic Training degree program, an improvement in student achievement was achieved related to the student learning outcome, students will demonstrate knowledge of concepts, theories, and clinical application related to athletic training. Upon completion of the Senior Exit Interviews and review of course evaluations of Athletic Training (ATTR) 415, the faculty identified that students’ ability to use and interpret patient outcome measures was a concern. Based upon this data, the program implemented a secondary project in the fall during ATTR 410 that carried over into the Spring in ATTR 415. This project required students to utilize a patient outcome measure during their clinical practice and gather data. During the spring, students then analyzed the data and determined how the outcome measures were useful. Students were then required to complete presentations regarding their projects and analysis of the data. After implementation, the project grades overall went up significantly from Spring 2015 - Spring 2016. Although the goal of 80% was met, the average in 2015 was 83% and the average in 2016 was 91%.

In the Emergency Medical Care Program (B.S.), focus was placed on annual pass rates, as well as, the 3 year average pass rate on the National Registry Written Examination for Paramedics. As of December 2015 less than half (47.1%) of the graduating class of 2015 attempted the Nation Registry written examination. The overall pass rate for the class of 2015 (37.5%) was lower than previous years. Weekly review time was created during the senior year for curriculum review. EMC 496, Senior Seminar, has been expanded to review more of the paramedic curriculum in preparation for certifying examinations. In 2016, 100% of EMC students passed the National Registry Written Examination. The current 3-year average pass rate (2013-2015) is 95.5%.

Department of Physical Therapy

The Department of Physical Therapy conducts annual formative and summative assessments at various levels. This includes the evaluation of broader program goals and more specific student learning outcomes. The following is a summary of these assessment processes and criteria that occur throughout each academic year (roughly arranged in order from those assessments measuring student learning outcomes to broader program goals, from more summative to more formative, culminating in broad accreditation reports):

1. Performance on National Physical Therapy Examination (licensure exam) - Since transitioning to the doctoral level with the first class graduating in 2014, the first time passing rate for all three cohorts of students graduating from Western Carolina University’s D.P.T. in Physical Therapy program has been 100%.
2. Comprehensive Examination pass rate - For the past three years, the D.P.T. in Physical Therapy program has utilized a test developed by a national exam preparation company (TherapyEd) and had students take the test on-line in a format similar to the National Physical Therapy Examination.
3. Annual formative and summative student evaluation of the physical therapy program - Carried out via electronic surveying and in-person discussion by individual students and small groups of students during their final semester of academic preparation as part of the PT 720, Capstone course. Collected data is summarized from rating scores and comments related to a) Achievement of Curriculum Outcomes, b) Strengths, and c) Weaknesses.
4. Student Assessments of Instruction/Teaching - These are managed by the University and occur each term. Reviews of teaching data occur by the Department Head and are shared in Annual Faculty Evaluation sessions occurring each April.
5. Graduate student program retention/completion rates and employment rates - Rates are collected and archived by the program annually.
6. Professional Behaviors Checklist - Used as a self-assessment and self-reflection for students, as feedback for clinical education, and is included in academic advising.
7. Peer-review of teaching - All faculty participate in peer-review of teaching annually. Findings inform the annual faculty evaluation process.
8. Annual Faculty Evaluations - using the Faculty Activity Data base, faculty activities are archived. Individual sessions occur between faculty and the Department Head. Summaries are forwarded to the Dean for actions including merit recognition.
9. Tenure, Promotion, Reappointment Reviews - These occur annually for all untenured faculty members using departmental, college, and, when appropriate, university guidelines, procedures, and review schedules.
10. Post-tenure review - As mandated by the UNC system, this review occurs every five years post a tenure or promotion action throughout a university faculty member’s career. Data are forwarded and reviewed at all university levels. Actions are taken when needed as directed by university guidelines.

11. Annual accreditation reports and approval by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) - CAPTE accredits
in 10-year cycles. Western Carolina University’s Doctor of Physical Therapy program accreditation runs through 2024. All annual reports in the present cycle have been approved without compliance issues.

School of Nursing

The School Of Nursing at Western Carolina University has a clear plan in place for using aggregate student data for program improvement. Analysis occurs at various levels: the course level, in teaching teams, in the graduate faculty committees, at Faculty Organization Meetings, and at the college and university-wide assessment initiatives.

School of Nursing faculty members have identified assessment capture points for performance. The School’s evaluation plan includes performance points made by each of the 9 individual programs. The plan includes dates for updating the information as available. The School’s Executive Committee is responsible for completing the systematic plan for each program based on surveys and committee input. The systematic plan documents the changes implemented related to assessment findings. The Executive Council, which is composed of the School of Nursing director as well as the associate director and all program track directors, meets twice a year to review whether objectives and outcomes have been met in the various tracks. Annually this information is shared with the School of Nursing faculty at large during a full-faculty meeting.

Performance related to School of Nursing program outcomes is additionally captured through surveys distributed to students each semester as well as through an end of program assignment specifically addressing Graduate Program Outcomes. The extensive collection of data from multiple sources is analyzed for program improvement. For example, the Graduate Faculty committee reviews graduate completion rates and certification rates to improve admissions and progression policies.

The School of Nursing Strategic Plan is reviewed several times a year for an evaluation of progress made in achieving School goals corresponding with the College of Health and Human Sciences and Western Carolina University’s Vision 2020 strategic plan.

The following illustrates the program improvement and assessment processes that are carried out within the School of Nursing degree programs.

School of Nursing-BSN-Pre-Licensure Assessment Summary

The Pre-Licensure nursing program, comprised of the regular and accelerated B.S.N. programs, performs evaluation of formal and informal data, which are collected every semester on every course. The findings are used to inform changes in the curriculum as appropriate. Pre-Licensure faculty meet monthly where any new curriculum-related concerns are discussed. This discussion often includes review of evaluation data. This is initiated by the Pre-Licensure Committee or Program Directors. An example includes updated information from EBI Reporting (Exit Graduate surveys and Alumni survey) reports.

Annually in May, the Pre-Licensure faculty hold a day-long evaluation meeting that is led by the Pre-Licensure Curriculum Committee. The meeting includes a discussion of a variety of curriculum assessment points such as NCLEX-RN® pass rates, NCLEX-RN® program reports (outlines specific low scoring topic areas), ATI performance testing (an external testing service used through the Nursing curriculum), clinical performance (most program outcomes captured here), student feedback (SWOT analysis—strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). The Pre-Licensure students provide formal feedback related to clinical placements at the end of the semester through Survey Monkey evaluations. The findings from this annual evaluation meeting are reported in meeting minutes. The faculty are asked to use the feedback and implement curricular changes in each course. Performance measures are discussed, evaluated and changed as needed based on the data available from each academic year in addition to the trends that are being seen over several years. It is a cyclical process. Changes that are planned for implementation in the new academic year (based on May data) are then discussed in the Annual all-day August meeting of Pre-Licensure faculty. Faculty members discuss changes planned in individual courses that help to achieve our overall program/school/college goals.

Performance related to School of Nursing program outcomes is additionally captured through surveys distributed to students each semester as well as through an end of program assignment specifically addressing Nursing, B.S.N. program outcomes. The B.S.N. in Nursing program outcomes correspond with the current QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan) Outcomes, which ensure that our goals are congruent with the university initiatives.

Nursing, M.S. Graduate Program

The M.S. in Nursing program, comprised of the Nurse Anesthesia program, Family Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Educator, and Nursing Leadership tracks, performs evaluation of formal data, which are collected every semester on every course using Survey Monkey Course Evaluations. In addition, informal data based on student feedback directly to faculty throughout the semester is examined. Each program track director reviews findings that are used to inform changes in the curriculum as appropriate. The Graduate Curriculum Committee, made up of faculty and student representatives from each program track, meets monthly where any new curriculum-related concerns are discussed. This discussion often includes review of evaluation data. An example includes student feedback regarding NSG 501 – Roles and Issues. Students felt that the content was too focused on nurse practitioner practice and requested that additional information be added for the other specialties. The course objectives were revised and approved at the Graduate Faculty Committee and the Graduate Curriculum Committee. The course was revised based on the revised objectives and implemented Spring 2017.

Nursing, D.N.P. Graduate Program

The Graduate Program seeks to improve the programs through the evaluative process. The DNP Program, a cooperative degree program between WCU and the University of North Carolina Charlotte (UNCC), performs evaluation of formal and informal data, which are collected
every semester on every course. The program coordinator/director at each university reviews findings that are used to inform changes in the curriculum as appropriate. Courses are reviewed and any recommended changes and/or any new curriculum issues are presented at the UNCC/WCU DNP Advisory Oversight Committee meeting. The committee meets twice each semester. Any decisions and recommendations from that committee are then taken to the Graduate Curriculum Committee at each university to begin the process of change. The Graduate Curriculum Committee at WCU, made up of faculty and student representatives from each graduate program track, meets monthly where any curriculum-related concerns are discussed. This discussion always includes review of evaluation data that lead to the proposed change.

**Examples of improvements made based on the analysis of results**

An example of this process from the D.N.P. program includes the removal of content related to the Logic Model in the Clinical Residency and Project Development courses. Consistently, students provided feedback that including Logic Model content as a means to develop their projects was confusing, because they did not understand if the Logic Model was supposed to serve as the theoretical framework for their entire project. This feedback was reviewed between the program coordinator at UNCC and director at WCU along with another faculty member at UNCC who teaches some of the Clinical Residency courses. As a result of the review, it was decided to take the Logic Model content out of the course, with the students given the Squire Guidelines to use as a template for developing the sections of their projects. This recommendation was taken to the Advisory Oversight committee, and approved. After that, each school curriculum committee was presented with the recommendation from the Advisory Oversight committee along with the student feedback that lead to the proposed change. The committee was supportive of the change. Since this is not a theoretical framework, the students have not provided any more feedback about difficulty with the project development process.

**Department of Social Work**

The Department of Social Work conducts both process and outcome evaluations of the implicit and explicit curriculum at the Department and School levels at the end of each semester. Assessment includes the evaluation of program goals, attainment of student competencies, student learning outcomes, for both the Bachelor’s and Master’s programs, and departmental processes including but not limited to advisement, the application process, and the quality of instruction. Outcomes assessment is reported annually. The Department’s assessment and evaluative approaches are framed around outcomes assessment and process assessment. A description of the range of assessments are provided below (roughly arranged in order from those assessments measuring student learning outcomes to broader program goals, from most summative to more formative, culminating in broad accreditation reports).

**Outcome Evaluations include:**

1. MSW student knowledge and skills are evaluated annually and BSW student knowledge and skills development is evaluated the semester prior to completion, using measures of self-efficacy, evaluation of field practicum internship supervisors, attainment of competencies in key courses, and successful completion of exit examinations. Annual results are published online for both the Bachelor’s and Master’s programs.
2. Student progress reporting. Each semester, undergraduate and graduate student performance is reviewed by the appropriate Faculty Progressions Committee. Students are informed of areas of concern as well as areas that exceed expectation.
3. Student Assessments of Instruction (SAI) evaluations are managed by the university and occur each term. The Department Head reviews the data and includes the review in the Annual Faculty Evaluations which are completed with faculty and shared with the Dean of CHHS.
4. Undergraduate and graduate program retention/completion rates, employment rates and licensing pass rates (graduate only) are collected annually with data shared with the College of Health of Human Services.
5. Annual Faculty Evaluations use data from the Faculty Activity Database where faculty activities are archived. Individual sessions occur between faculty and the Department Head. Summaries are forwarded to the Dean for actions including merit recognition.
6. Peer-review of teaching. All faculty participate in peer-review of teaching annually. Findings inform the annual faculty evaluation process.
7. Tenure, Promotion, Reappointment Reviews. These occur annually for all tenure-track and fixed term faculty members using departmental, college, and, when appropriate, university guidelines, procedures, and review schedules.
8. Post-tenure review. As mandated by the UNC system, this review occurs every five years post a tenure or promotion action throughout a university faculty member’s career. Data are forwarded and reviewed at the college and university levels. Actions are taken when needed as directed by university guidelines.
9. Annual accreditation reports and approval by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE accredits in 8-year cycles. Reaffirmation for both the undergraduate (BSW) and graduate (MSW) programs will occur in 2022. All annual reports in the present cycle have been approved without compliance issues and are posted on the Department of Social Work website per CSWE requirements.

**Process evaluations occur throughout the year and include:**

1. Undergraduate and graduate student exit surveys that are collected each year and data are presented in faculty retreats.
2. Evaluation of the advisory process is presented each semester in faculty meetings.
3. Alumni surveys are maintained annually and data are presented in faculty retreats.
4. Community advisory meetings occur annually and feedback from stakeholders specific to program goals is shared with the faculty and College of Health and Human Services Dean.

**Example of an improvement made based on the analysis of results**

In the Social Work degree program (B.S.), continued effort is being made to further strengthen student achievement of the program competency/learning outcome related to application of ethical principles (Learning Outcome 2). The BSW program undertook the following
revisions: 1) Ethical considerations content was increased in SOCW 253: Interviewing and Ethics by the inclusion of additional class assignments and skills building exercises focusing on ethical reasoning, toleration of ambiguity in practice and ethical decision making; 2) Field instructors were provided a continuing education program on "Ethics and Supervision" in an effort to increase their skills in helping BSW practicum students address ethics and ambiguity in working with clients and client systems during supervision; and 3) In SOCW 486 Field Practicum Seminar, students were given additional content and skills building exercises that encouraged using consultation and supervision to address and strengthen ethical decision making in practice settings. After making the curriculum revisions to SOCW 253 "Interviewing and Ethics" and SOCW 486 "Field Practicum Seminar" and providing additional training to Field Instructors supervising BSW Students, composite subscale scores increased by 1.2 percentage points from 89.5% to 90.7%.

Summarized improvements made, Academic Year 2015-16

The following table provides links to summary reports describing selected goal and outcome based actions and improvements in academic year 2015-16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletic Training B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Sciences and Disorders B.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Sciences and Disorders M.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Medical Care B.S.</td>
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<td>Environmental Health B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Science M.H.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nursing B.S.N.</td>
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<td>Nursing M.S.</td>
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<td>Nursing D.N.P.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition and Dietetics B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Therapy D.P.T.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recreational Therapy B.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Work B.S.W.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Work M.S.W.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Distance (Online) Education Degree Programs

Western Carolina offers a number of programs via online instruction. Outcomes assessment for online degree programs mirrors the processes established within the college they are housed. Online degree programs were included in the original sample provided for off-site review, and original assessment reports were provided for academic years 2014, 2015 and 2016 (refer to the table of assessment reports provided in the Annual Outcomes Assessment Reports section of the original compliance narrative above). For additional evidence of improvements made based on the analysis of results, the following table provides summarized improvements made for academic year 2015-16.

Summarized improvements made, Academic Year 2015-16

The following table provides links to summary reports describing selected goal and outcome based actions and improvements in academic year 2015-16.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLEGE</th>
<th>DEGREE PROGRAM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>Criminal Justice (B.S.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emergency and Disaster Management (B.S.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Business Administration and Law (B.S.B.A.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Innovation Leadership and Entrepreneurship (B.S.B.A.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project Management (M.P.M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Allied Professions</td>
<td>Sport Management (M.S.) - new in Fall 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Birth - Kindergarten (B.S.)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Human Resources (M.S.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Administration (M.S.A)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Special Education (M.A.T)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Special Education (M.A.Ed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Construction Management (M.C.M)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Human Services</td>
<td>Emergency Medical Care (B.S.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Health Sciences (M.S.)</td>
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<td>Nursing (B.S.N.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nursing (M.S.N)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources

- College of Arts and Sciences
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Biology B.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Biology M.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Chemistry B.S. and M.S.--American Chemical Society 4 Plus 3-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Chemistry B.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Chemistry M.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Communication B.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Computer Science B.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Criminal Justice B.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Emergency and Disaster Management B.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-English B.A.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-English M.A.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Environmental Science B.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Forensic Science B.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Geology B.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-History B.A.-B.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-History M.A.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Philosophy B.A.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Political Science B.A.-B.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Sociology B.A.-B.S.-AY2015-16
Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Spanish B.A.-AY2015-16

College of Business
- COB 2010 to 2015 AOL Maintenance Report
- COB 2015-2016 AOL Annual Report
- COB 2015-2016 AOL Report
- COB 2015-2016 AOL Report--Commendation
- COB AOL Blackboard Site
- COB AOL News Fall 2016
- COB AOL News Spring 2016

Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Accountancy M.Ac.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Accounting B.S.B.A.-AY2015-16

Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Business Administration M.B.A.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Entrepreneurship B.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Entrepreneurship M.E.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Project Management M.P.M.-AY2015-16

College of Education and Allied Professions
- CEAP Assessment Day Agenda 2016
- CEAP Assessment Diagram of Approval Process
- CEAP NCATE Recognition
- CEAP Unit Assessment System
- CEAP_Annual Assessment Report 2015-16 BK
- CEAP_strategic planning conference agenda 93016 agenda
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Art B.S.Ed.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Birth-Kindergarten B.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Clinical Mental Health Counseling M.S.-AY2015-16
- Institutional-Effectiveness-Report-Elementary Education B.S.Ed.--Art-AY2015-16
Institutional Effectiveness: Administrative Support Services

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: 3.3.1.2 administrative support service.

Judgment

- Compliance
- Partial Compliance
- Non-Compliance
- Not Applicable

Narrative

The content presented is divided into three sections:

1. The original compliance narrative addressing the standard
2. The off-site committee comments
3. The institutional response to the off-site committee comments

Original Compliance Narrative

Outcomes assessment for administrative support units involves both annual reporting and periodic review. Greater flexibility is afforded administrative support units in their assessment processes in an attempt to accommodate their unique functions and cultures. For example, the Division of Administration and Finance (A&F) submits reports several times per year to external entities, including the UNC General Administration, the WCU Board of Trustees, and Federal auditors, and they use a single annual report to summarize key accomplishments involving many of the administrative support units. For example, improved marketing efforts were emphasized throughout the strategic plan (Strategic Initiatives 1.5.4, 2.1.2, 2.3.4, 2.3.5, and 3.1.5, among others). In response to these needs, the Office of the Chancellor established and hired a Director of Marketing, who subsequently developed and is now implementing a comprehensive marketing plan for the university, as is evidenced in the Strategic Plan Progress Report (refer to the initiatives referenced above). The strategic plan also placed emphasis on institutional diversity efforts (Strategic Initiatives 1.6.6 and 4.3.5). In response, Academic Affairs established the position and recently hired a Chief Diversity Officer. A third example of administrative support services outcomes driven by the strategic plan involves the institutional priority of employee compensation (Strategic Direction "Invest in Our People", Goal 4.1: Make salary and total compensation packages an institutional priority in order to attract, reward, and retain the highest quality employees). The development and implementation of the Five-Step Salary Plan, managed and supervised by Administration and Finance, is evidence of work towards achieving this goal.

Annual Assessment Reporting

Annual outcomes assessment occurs primarily in two formats: annual summary reports and annual assessment reports. Administrative units may produce one or both of these documents. Units engaged in annual assessment reporting maintain assessment plans which describe operational and student learning outcomes (if any), and means of assessment. Outcomes are aligned with institutional goals, mission, and strategic directions as well as with appropriate unit missions and disciplinary and professional standards. As stated above, the 2020 Vision: Focusing Our Future, WCU's most recent strategic plan, was adopted in 2012 and articulates the University’s shared vision, direction, and core values; it also adopts six strategic directions.

Historically, plans and reports depicting progress toward meeting the University's strategic directions were created according to a template developed by the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (OIPE). The institution is currently transitioning to the software platform, Compliance Assist (Campus Labs, Buffalo, NY), to manage assessment reporting. Each unit gathers and analyzes collected evidence and uses the results to prepare responses to its original assessment plan. Each unit identifies the unit’s mission and its alignment with the university’s mission and goals, desired and measurable outcomes (student learning or operational), data source, data collection and frequency, methodology, measures, targets, and, in the case of student learning outcomes, relationship to the five institutional learning outcomes. Units provide the results and analysis of assessment conducted during the reporting year as well as evidence of improvement based on assessment analysis.

Examples of assessment plans and reports:
Examples of Periodic Unit Reviews

Periodic unit reviews are conducted on a five- to seven-year cycle to foster continuous improvement in the quality of core functions, and operations. Unit reviews are formative, build on the results of the annual assessment and strategic planning processes, and include common standards that units address as part of the continuous improvement process: mission, planning, administrative structure, budget, cost effectiveness, overall quality, peer benchmarking, alignment with WCU mission, and opportunity analysis. Units complete three phases in the review cycle:

1. Self-evaluation and the creation of a self-study
2. External review and accompanying report by four professionals external to the unit
3. Program development planning: a transfer of the major outcomes and recommendations from the external review into an action plan with timelines, degrees of priority, resources, and responsible persons.

The periodic review process largely mimics the academic program review process, and involves both internal and external assessment processes. The Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness maintains a calendar of previous and upcoming administrative unit reviews, and provides guidance over the review process, via consultation and published guidelines. Units construct a self-study to analyze current strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. During the semester before a visit from an external team, representatives within the unit work with the supervisor and division head to craft the self-study; they use qualitative and quantitative data provided by the unit, and peer institution metrics comparison, when appropriate and available.

Typical site teams are made up of two content specialists external to WCU and two reviewers from WCU. One reviewer is selected from within the same division—but a different unit—from the one undergoing review at WCU, and one reviewer is selected from a different division. The two-day review by the external team involves multiple fact-finding and data-gathering sessions with appropriate stakeholders and an exit conference with the appropriate division head (vice chancellor or provost), program director, and/or department head, as well as the OIPE Director of Assessment or Student Affairs Director for Marketing and Assessment. The on-site visit concludes with the submission of the team’s report within 30 days of the team’s visit.

A program development meeting is held to produce an action plan around viable recommendations, identify areas of responsibility, assign priority levels (low, medium, and high), determine budget implications, and attach timelines to actions. The program development meeting is an opportunity for the director/department head to build authenticity into the review process and make plans for improvements or changes to a program or unit. If appropriate, certain recommendations may be incorporated into the annual assessment plan.

It is important to note that academic and student support units preside on the unit review model described above with minor variation. However, units in administrative support, research, and outreach implement unit review in a customized fashion that is unique to their reporting frequency, demands, and culture. Some of the examples provided below reflect a more individual approach to reporting on the implementation of review recommendations. For example, IT’s review report is organized differently than that of OIPE. However, both involve rigorous review by external peer evaluators. Regardless, periodic review is implemented across every division at WCU.

Examples of Periodic Unit Reviews

1. Coulter Faculty Commons: Self Study, External Review Report, Program Development Plan
2. Recycling and Surplus: Self Study (recycling), Self Study (surplus), External Review Report (the Program Development Plan is not yet available)
3. Office of Communications and Public Relations: Self Study, Appendices, External Review Report (the Program Development Plan is not yet available)
4. Office of Marketing: Self Study, Appendices, External Review Report (the Program Development Plan is not yet available)
6. Division of Information Technology: 2015 WCU IT Program Review Report

Examples of Using Assessment to Effect Change in Administrative Support Units
The following examples are provided to demonstrate how assessment has been used to improve program and service delivery.

In 2014, the Academic Engagement and IT Governance team conducted a year-long study of the research technology needs of faculty. As a result, a Scholarship Technology Consultation Service for faculty was implemented; a file collaboration tool, OneCollaborate for Business, was implemented; and encryption licenses were purchased for faculty who need them. The AETITG staff also worked with Amazon Web Services (AWS) in partnership with Relus, a services provider, to provide high performance computing to WCU faculty and staff. This innovation permits WCU scholars to leverage cloud-based data centers offering massive capacity for intensive data processing. Since the implementation, AETITG staff have engaged faculty across campus in an awareness campaign; they have also hosted vendors on campus to offer hands-on training and support for faculty.

The 2013 unit review for the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness produced a several recommendations. One high priority recommendation was to add a statistician position to the office. This position was approved for the 2013-14 budget year, and the position was filled in May 2014. Another recommendation involved transferring administrator performance evaluations to Human Resources. This was achieved during the 2015-16 review cycle. Another recommendation involved establishment of a task tracker to facilitate the office to monitor data requests and related performance. After reviewing several tracking products, the office established a home-grown task tracker in December 2014. These improvements are documented in the office’s program development plan update report.

At the request of Faculty Senate, WCU initiated a trial faculty “ombuds” position during 2013-2014 academic year. Complications in the model were identified because the position was not a true, professional ombuds, and the individual in the position took on an advocacy role that was beyond the scope of responsibilities. As a consequence, the position was not renewed for a second year. Although the position went away, the perceived need did not, and Faculty Senate requested a reinstatement of some form of semi-impartial mediator within the faculty that could serve as a resource for faculty. The position description was revised to clarify the position as a Faculty Relations Fellow, making expectations and responsibilities more explicit, and a call for applications was made in Fall 2014. Initially, no applications were received. The issue was discussed with at Faculty Senate, the position description was further revised and reposted, and a Fellow was put in place for Fall 2015. The position was renewed for a second year 2016-2017.

Western Carolina University’s faculty and staff often engage in university business away from campus. As a result, the division of Administration & Finance processes several million dollars’ worth of travel reimbursements each year. The travel prior approval and reimbursement process consists of paper-based forms, an approval process facilitated by interdepartmental mail, and manual data entry occurring at multiple points throughout the process. Through end-user feedback and intentional monitoring of the process, Administration & Finance determined the travel process to be inefficient and outdated. As a result, the division is working with its ERP vendor (Ellucian) to procure and implement an on-line travel module that will completely digitize and automate both travel prior approvals and reimbursement processes.

Off-Site Reviewer Comments

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not find sufficient evidence of institutional effectiveness process that clearly identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results. While WCU notes greater flexibility in how administrative units assess outcomes, a cursory look at the annual reports do not exhibit an assessment strategy but rather an annual summary of tactical functions or duties. The documents do not exhibit the clarity of expected goals, outcomes and assessment.

Institutional Response

The Administrative Support Service units at Western Carolina University are committed to ongoing continuous improvement. All units engage in processes involving regular review of operational activities, establishment of goals, and evaluation of outcomes. Each Division of the University is given the freedom to develop planning and reporting processes best suited to their specific functions and needs. Consequently, planning and reporting documentation is not uniform across units, and in some cases, for units within the same division. The material presented below attempts to clarify these ongoing processes. Evaluators are encouraged to review the original narrative for Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.2 for a description of existing assessment and review processes and examples of assessment plans, assessment reports, annual reports, and periodic unit review reports. Several specific examples of improvements made as a result of ongoing assessment processes are provided. Additionally, the off-site committee noted in their comments on technology support services (Comprehensive Standard 3.4.12), “regular assessment via surveys and studies have resulted in improvements to technology such as improved wireless, a computer refresh plan, additional network storage, updated equipment and software, and the aforementioned Technology and Faculty Commons.” Evidence of improvements made based on the evaluation of results in the Division of Information Technology was provided for both Comprehensive Standards 3.3.1.2 and 3.4.12.

With a variety of processes in use, our primary challenge is to effectively communicate these processes and results to external stakeholders. In order to clarify and demonstrate administrative support service units have ongoing assessment processes, including unit goals, outcomes evaluations and evidence of improvements based on the analysis of results, descriptions of existing planning, assessment and evaluation processes were collected and are presented below. Additionally, a common reporting template was developed in January 2017, and units were asked to translate information from existing documents and reports to the template, for work completed in academic/fiscal year 2015-16. Units were requested to sample high priority goals and outcomes from their 2015-16 work, rather than being comprehensive, in order to minimize redundancy of effort (as most units had previously completed some form of an annual report or annual assessment report, many of which were provided as evidence in the original compliance narrative for Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.2). The information will be arranged by university division.
Academic Affairs – Coulter Faculty Commons

In June 2015, the Coulter Faculty Commons (CFC) staff met off-site to discuss their assessment plan. By October 2015, the CFC experienced an extreme change in organization such that previous assessment documentation was not available for the period between 2012 and 2015. The re-imagined CFC assessment practices are as follows.

- The CFC Advisory Board has been reconstituted and will have its first meeting February 16, 2017 to review a new mission statement for the CFC and issues of immediate impact. This board will meet twice a year to provide feedback and advise the CFC in its mission to meet faculty needs at WCU.
- Additionally, a representative from the CFC is participating in the IT Metrics process, and the CFC has defined five metrics for its IT functions: Faculty Satisfaction, Supported Tool Use, Supported Tool Uptime %, Interactions, and Available Device Use Metrics. The CFC will report quarterly on these metrics.
- As part of its ongoing assessment, CFC staff plan benchmarking visits to centers of similar scope to provide standards against which its efforts can be measured.

The CFC has begun the construction of an internal tracking sheet that will detail internal and external projects and committee work. This tracking system will allow CFC staff to assess return on investment of unit resources and to maintain written record of ways in which the CFC became responsible for projects, projects successfully completed, and ways in which completed projects and processes can benefit from future improvements.

Examples of improvements made based on the analysis of assessment results

- When the interim director took charge of the CFC, the team prepared a project list detailing all projects in which they were involved at that time. Comparing the project requirements to the amount of time available in a day, the team determined which projects were essential and within mission and which projects could be directed to other units or abandoned.
- In the absence of systemic data, the CFC devised a needs assessment to determine—from client feedback—the projects and services that clients found most useful and most needed. This assessment will be repeated yearly, and resulting information will be used to inform CFC mission, vision, and strategic goals.
- When the new director came on, the unit had three open positions, and the new director assessed that a lack of human resources was impeding the further progress of the unit. The new director’s first goal was to begin hiring processes so that the CFC would have a full complement of resources to deploy toward completing its work.
- The new director assessed the equipment with which the staff was working and determined that many staff did not have sufficient physical resources to complete their work appropriately or in a timely way. The CFC then spent a significant amount of its budget to acquire necessary physical resources. The CFC also put in place a plan to replace resources in a timely way so that team members are always properly equipped to perform their job duties.
- The team analyzed feedback from several major events including the Summer Institute for Teaching and Learning, the Health Educator’s Academy, and the Mid-Year event considering return on investment in budget and human resource terms. For each of these events, feedback has and will continue significantly to impact future directions.

Academic Affairs - Educational Outreach

Educational Outreach meets annually in the spring (usually in May) to discuss progress toward the Educational Outreach Strategic Plan. This meeting includes all members of the Division and selected stakeholders. During this meeting, the division evaluates each goal and measures the progress toward the goal. There is debate on whether goals are obtained if the goal is culture or does not lend itself to quantitative measurement. There must be a consensus on the percentage at which the goal is attained. These goals might be cultural or relational. For example, “Improving the relationship with community colleges in the Piedmont” has been a goal. Goals with distinct measures (such as distance enrollment or retention) are either achieved, not achieved, refocused or may be abandoned as no longer relevant in the current environment.

Individuals (or subgroups) with primary responsibility within Educational Outreach for a specific goal present the data or narrative for the goal. Others in the Division critique the data or narrative. This analysis includes a “return on investment” analysis presented by the budget officer. Each subgroup either has a strategic plan (connected to the Educational Outreach Strategic Plan - which is connected to the WCU 20/20 Vision Strategic Plan) or presents the development of that plan for the group analysis. Budget decisions are made during these meetings that support the division goals.

Additionally, new goals are set based on the current environment, stakeholder input or identified need, budget analysis, and research reports such as those completed by EAB or others. Individual employee goals are typically linked to the strategic plan for that subgroup. A weekly staff meeting is held where goals may be discussed in addition to other operational issues. Educational Outreach meets in the fall semester (usually October) for a professional development and enrichment session. Follow-up on the strategic plan may be discussed during this session.

Example of an improvement made based on the analysis of assessment results

To address student retention of distance students (a goal of educational outreach), the process by which course sections are established was examined. It was determined that liberal studies course offerings were of greatest concern in the retention of distance students, as supply and demand were not well aligned. The liberal studies course report was modified to provide better information and guidance to academic Deans. Consequently, there was a 24 percent increase in distance education liberal studies courses from 2014 to 2016.

Academic Affairs – Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

The Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness accomplishes its mission through focus on both long term and short term goals. The office maintains a common set of overlapping long-term goals, which anchor measurable outcomes that are evaluated annually. These outcomes are depicted in the annual assessment report. In addition, the office staff meet to review mission, goals, performance and achievements bi-annually. The progress towards recommendations and action from periodic unit review are also evaluated at these bi-annual meetings. For example, specific office priorities and goals for fiscal year 2016-17 were developed during the summer 2016 retreat. The summer retreat provides an essential mechanism to review progress achieved in the previous fiscal year, as well as establish priorities and goals for the current year, given that the annual budgeting request process for the subsequent year begins in November of each year. It is important that budget requests are connected to mission-critical priorities and goals. Progress towards the achievement of annually
established goals, as well as the long-term goals and outcomes are reviewed during the annual winter day retreat (January/February), and finally at the summer retreat of the subsequent year. Data informing achievement of progress towards outcomes is evaluated and utilized to determine actions going forward. For the long-term goals and outcomes, this data is presented in the annual assessment report. For recommendations stemming from periodic unit review, an updated progress report is produced. For annual office priorities and goals, data is used to inform priorities and goals for the subsequent year, although this isn’t recorded in a formalized report.

As an operational unit designed to be responsive to institutional and system leadership, annually established priorities and goals are often set aside to address immediate needs and priorities of campus, the system, and site leaders. Consequently, the office attempts to maintain focus on its broadly defined and long-term goals, while striving to make progress on annual priorities and goals. Annual priorities and goals may become part of an individual staff person’s annual performance goals, or may become a project several staff members will work towards. These shorter term goals are not reported in the office’s annual assessment report, but are more often addressed as part of an individual’s annual performance evaluation. For example, there is a clear connection between 2016-17 office priorities and goals and the 2016-17 goals established by a particular staff member.

Example of an improvement made based on the analysis of assessment results

Timely completion of data requests is a primary goal of the office. In 2014, it was determined that individual tracking of each data request by the staff person completing the task was an ineffective means of collecting data on timeliness. Consequently, the office staff agreed to participate in using an office-wide task tracker, which was built in-house using Sharepoint. The system was designed to collect deadline and date of completion information. In 2015-16, deadline and completion data for the majority of the data requests were collected and evaluated against the goal of timely completion.

Academic Affairs - Programs at Biltmore Park

Since 1937, WCU has hosted academic programs in Asheville at various instructional sites. Today, all of the University’s Asheville Programs are consolidated at its instructional site in South Asheville at Biltmore Park Town Square.

WCU Biltmore Park operates from a Strategic Plan developed from broad community input and published in the spring of 2015. Centered around six major goals, implementation of the plan is the responsibility of the WCU Biltmore Park administrative team, departments and programs within five academic colleges, the Division of Educational Outreach, the Division of Alumni and Development, the Graduate School, the Division of Student Affairs, Hunter Library, units within the Office of the Chief of Staff, as well as the Office of the Provost. Each of these units is responsible for specific components of the plan. In the end, WCU Biltmore Park is a facility which supports the existing work of the aforementioned units. It does not operate independently of those units. The goals of WCU Biltmore Park, as outlined in the Strategic Plan, are extensions of the strategic goals of the various units.

An internal advisory committee of a dozen different leaders from the units noted above meet at the end of each semester to evaluate achievements and review and update the plan. Each initiative under the six goals have specific measures that are used to assess progress.

Example of an improvement made based on the analysis of assessment results

An example of an improvement made based on analysis of results was the decision to relocate the Mental Health and School Counseling Graduate Programs to the WCU Biltmore Park instructional site from the Cullowhee campus. Initiative 4.1 calls for ongoing market analysis to retain WCU’s leadership in graduate education in the region. The Counseling program’s application numbers had been in decline and the evaluation of the surveillance data indicated that a relocation of the programs to Asheville would advance the program. As a result of the move, Counseling has received the largest number of applications in the program’s history for the Fall 2018 cohort: a 46 percent increase in the number of applications. A similar analysis is now being conducted for Master of Social Work’s (MSW) program, which currently offers its curriculum in Cullowhee and in Asheville, but whose market position is being threatened by other institutions establishing MSW programs in the area.

Academic Affairs - Registrar

The Registrar’s Office accomplishes its mission through a focus on both long-term and short-term goals. The unit conducts two annual one-day retreats during the fall and spring breaks. The purpose of these two retreats is to review the office’s mission, goals, performance and achievements; and to ensure the mission and goals are aligned with the mission and goals of the Division of Student Success and of the University. Department goals are aligned with specific division goals and/or the University Strategic Plan. Budget and funding requests are also tied to specific goals in the strategic plan. The Registrar’s strategic plan is maintained as a living document and is reviewed and amended as needed after each planning retreat. Departmental progress toward goals is documented in an annual report and submitted to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Success.

As an operational unit charged with managing and maintaining the mission-critical processes associated with student records (e.g. section building, classroom assignments, registration, grading, academic action) the Registrar’s Office monitors and reacts to point-in-time metrics to insure the university meets its published deadlines for many different processes. These types of metrics may influence the goals we set through our deliberate strategic planning process and most typically when our assessments indicate there is a problem. For example, we set a specific goal around catalog production after we missed our target production date for three academic cycles.

Examples of improvements made based on the analysis of assessment results

We set as a goal, re-automating the calculation of academic standing when the institutional policy that determines good standing evolved beyond what the Enterprise Resource Planning software (Banner) standing rules could handle. We developed and tested a script that was vetted with academic advising and financial aid. The performance of the script was assessed and fine-tuned at the end of each cycle until we were satisfied with its performance.

The goal for grade submission by the grading deadline is 100%. We’ve made numerous tweaks to our communication plan (i.e. enhancing the grade submission direction with more screenshots and fewer words, adding a near deadline reminder to instructors that shows what grades remain to be submitted, etc.). The changes resulted in our office meeting the 100% grade submission goal.

Administration and Finance

The Division of Administration and Finance (A&F) accomplishes its mission to support the University’s primary programs for instruction, research, and public service through the prudent and ethical management, efficient delivery and effective enhancement of its physical, financial, administrative, safety and human resources.
A&F’s planning cycle conforms to the University’s fiscal year (July 1 – June 30), with goal setting as well as annual achievement reporting occurring in the summer. The Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance (VCAF) is in continuous development of Divisional goals through:

1. The annual budget Process for the University, where priorities for budgeting are articulated by the entire campus.
2. The annual tuition and fee process for the University, which is a partner to the Budget Process.
3. Regular review of physical facility planning and Campus Master Plan issues at meetings of the Campus Master Planning Committee.
4. Regular interaction with Executive Council (EC) consisting of weekly meetings as a group on Monday mornings and one on one monthly meetings with each individual EC member.
5. Regular interaction with direct reports in each functional area within A&F – Facilities (Biweekly), Fiscal Affairs (Biweekly), Human Resources (Biweekly), Financial Planning and Budgets (Monthly), Emergency Services (Monthly), Police and Parking (Monthly).

Late in the Spring Semester, the VCAF requests draft goals for the upcoming year from each direct report in the functional areas. Goals for fiscal year 2015-16 are presented for Facilities Management and Financial Services, as examples. Established goals are coordinated with the University Strategic Plan, with other relevant planning documents and with initiatives that have emerged. A short list of high priority goals culminate for the Division and are agreed upon with the Chancellor. The VCAF and direct reports in the functional areas agree upon more comprehensive lists of goals for each area. Many goals do not fit neatly into a one-year time window, so frequently incremental progress toward a longer range initiative comprises an annual goal.

Throughout the course of the year, the status/progress toward goals is discussed and monitored during the regular biweekly or monthly meetings between the VCAF and direct reports. At mid-year (January), a status report on the VCAF short list of priority goals is prepared and discussed by the VCAF with the Chancellor. Late in the Spring Semester, the VCAF asks for draft accomplishments of the goals for the current year from each direct report in the functional areas and an Annual Report is developed. As an operational unit designed to be responsive to institutional and system leadership, annually established priorities and goals are often set aside to address immediate needs and priorities of campus, system, and state leaders. Consequently, A&F attempts to maintain focus on our broadly defined and long-term goals, while striving to satisfy immediate needs and priorities. The accomplishment of these immediate needs and priorities along with other operational achievements that may not have been articulated as specific goals are also shared in the Annual Report.

_Example of an improvement made based on the analysis of assessment results_

Evaluation of campus safety management resulted in a determination that enhanced campus safety measures were needed, including the establishment of a new Director of Emergency Services position and establishment of a campus security fee to enhance campus security staff salaries in order to address retention issues. The Director of Emergency Services position was approved and filled. The campus security fee was approved and implemented. Campus safety staff salaries have been increased and are more competitive with the area market.

Athletics

As an integral part of the Western Carolina University, the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics must align its strategic direction and goals with the University's 2020 Strategic Plan. To do so, the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics developed its own Strategic Plan in 2013, detailing six (6) Strategic Directions, each containing multiple goals, aimed at achieving Initiative 2.3.1 of Strategic Plan 2020 to: "Build and sustain a high-quality athletics program that excites and instills pride among students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the University".

To achieve the initiatives and goals as established in the Strategic Plan of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, the Director of Athletics, on an annual basis, assigns specific goals to each of his direct reports in their annual Human Resource Evaluation process. These goals are the basis of each employee's annual evaluation, and allow the Director of Athletics to evaluate if the department achieved the desired outcomes, what level of outcome were reached, and to develop recommendations and action plans for achieving desired outcomes in the following year.

_Example of an improvement made based on the analysis of assessment results_

Donation information was utilized to determine that donation levels were near capacity for the current Catamount Club members. A new strategic focus was taken to broaden the Catamount Club membership, resulting in exceeding the annual donation target for Catamount Club members.

_Chancellor’s Division – Communications & Public Relations; External Affairs; Marketing_

The Chancellor's Division consists of units involved in two primary functional areas: external affairs/messaging and internal controls/compliance. Specific offices include Communications and Public Relations, University Marketing, External Relations, Legal Affairs, Internal Audit, and, the recently formed, Office of Special Events. The Division engages in continuous improvement via a set of long and short term processes.

At a macro level, the division is wholly or partly accountable for a number of strategic goals and initiatives outlined in the University's 2020 strategic plan. Of particular focus are those 2020 goals/initiatives related to marketing (Goals 1.5, 1.6, 6.2), communications (Goals 2.3, 3.1, 6.1), external relations (Goals 3.1, 3.2, 6.2, 6.3), and internal controls/compliance (Goal 5.3). Progress towards these initiatives is evaluated and reported annually.

At the unit level, each office engages in annual assessment planning and reporting. In their annual assessment plan, each office articulates a set of programmatic outcomes and defines appropriate assessment methods and data gathering procedures. The results of assessment for each outcome are reviewed annually, at which time the office proposes and implements improvements informed by the assessment results. These reports are developed and documented in consultation with the Division head through a standard template provided by the Director of Assessment. Moreover, an annual report for the entire division is submitted annually to the Chancellor.

In addition to annual assessment planning and reporting, the division also engages in periodic, external program review facilitated by the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness. The program review process is on a five to seven year schedule and entails a more comprehensive review of the overall effectiveness of each office beyond that of the annual assessment horizon. During the external program review, a team of external consultants reviews a self-study prepared by the office, conducts an on-site review, and provides a verbal and written report that includes a summary of their findings and proposed recommendations for improvement. The unit self-study is developed around a set of standard criteria maintained by the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness that includes a review of the unit's mission, staffing, scope, need, budget, and assessment of programs/services. Upon completion of the program review and receipt of the consultants' report, the unit head develops a program development plan with the input of the division head that identifies accountable parties for each recommendation, resources that may be necessary to implement the recommendations, and target dates for
implementation/completion of each recommendation. The offices of Communications and Public Relations, and University Marketing have recently completed external program reviews.

As a supplement to the processes outlined above, each unit head in the Division also develops and reports annually on a set of targeted goals and objectives as part of the staff performance evaluation process. These goals and initiatives are proposed by each unit head and approved by the Division head through a formal evaluation process that is initiated in June of each year. Interim progress toward the goals and initiatives is assessed during a mid-year evaluation review in January. At the conclusion of each annual evaluation cycle, the individual unit head reports on progress toward the goals and initiatives identified the prior year and proposes a set of new goals and initiatives for the upcoming year. This evaluation process is formally documented as part of the unit head’s employment evaluation record.

**Example of an improvement made based on the analysis of assessment results**

Analysis of admissions yield data in 2015 revealed an increase in application count but a drop in yield. A goal was set to increase yield by at least 1.5%. A project led by university marketing, partnered with the admissions office, was initiated to revamp the communication plan for accepted students. In 2016, yield showed a 4.15% increase over the previous year.

**Division of Development and Alumni Affairs**

The Division of Development and Alumni Relations’ mission is to work in collaboration with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends to build and strengthen the University’s relationships with those who will make a difference in the life of the institution. Our annual goal setting process begins with an all staff retreat intended to obtain group buy-in and ownership of the division and unit goals developed during the course of the one-day retreat.

All division and unit goals are written to support the University’s Strategic Plan 2020 Vision Focusing Our Future with a particular emphasis on the following three strategic directions:

- **Strategic Direction #1:** Goal 1.6; Initiative 1.6.4 Make the securing of endowed merit and need-based financial aid an institutional fundraising priority
- **Strategic Direction #6:** Goal 6.2; Initiative 6.2.3 Create a network for regional engagement and statewide advocacy through a mobilized and informed alumni base
- **Strategic Direction #6:** Goal 6.3; Initiative 6.3.6 Pursue a comprehensive development campaign targeting endowed need and merit-based scholarships.

Tracking progress toward unit and division goals is done on a quarterly basis through the use of dashboard reports designed to compare year to year goals and goal attainment. Below is the report for FY16 which compares goals and results to FY15. Based on those results from the prior two years, recommendations were made for FY17. All years are referenced as fiscal years and includes activity from July 1 through June 30.

### WCU Development and Alumni Engagement Fundraising Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 17 Goals</th>
<th>% increase</th>
<th>FY 16 Goals</th>
<th>% increase</th>
<th>FY 15 Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign commitments</td>
<td>$10,989,055</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>$9,990,050</td>
<td>12,599,731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Giving</td>
<td>$2,720,000</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>$2,365,788</td>
<td>New standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Giving</td>
<td>$2,750,000</td>
<td>New standard</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned Giving</td>
<td>$2,998,820</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>$2,726,200</td>
<td>New standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Cash to Foundation Funds</td>
<td>$5,600,000</td>
<td>15%+</td>
<td>$4,836,669</td>
<td>$3,953,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall donor count with credits</td>
<td>5,906</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6,025</td>
<td>5,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergrad Alumni donor count</td>
<td>3,334</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3,031</td>
<td>3,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New donors</td>
<td>1,424</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1,382</td>
<td>1,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Donor Retention</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Alumni participation</td>
<td>6.70%</td>
<td>5.35%</td>
<td>6.36%</td>
<td>6.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowed Scholarship Dollars</td>
<td>2,164,867</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>$1,968,061</td>
<td>$1,535,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># new endowed scholarships</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example of an improvement made based on the analysis of assessment results**

Evaluation of the mass emailing process for annual giving revealed both labor inefficiencies and a software platform re-evaluation due to current software nearing end-of-life. The evaluation resulted in a collaborative project between advancement staff and IT staff to establish a more efficient means of uploading prospect data from the Banner ERP system into the iModules mass emailing software platform. The improvements realized from the project included migration to a new platform for mass emailing and improved efficiencies in data migration between Banner and iModules resulting in reduced time on task and corresponding cost savings.

**Information Technology**

The Division of Information Technology (DoIT) adopted a continual improvement process in 2010, which continues to be refined annually. This process is managed by the Information Technology Leadership Council (ITLC), consisting of the Chief Information Officer, Craig Fowler, and his direct reports (DoIT Organizational Chart).

Annual goals for the coming year are created in June at the ITLC retreat, and launched at the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1). These goals are the result of multiple inputs, including:

- DoIT Strategic Plan (created for 2013-2020; reviewed and modified annually)
- DoIT Governance Advisory Groups
- Academic Needs Meetings (held with deans and division leaders)
- Metric and KPI reporting (DoIT Annual Report 2015-16)
- Constituent feedback via surveys
Other informal channels

We begin with a spreadsheet which includes the description of the goal, the owner, the deliverable(s), and the status. The spreadsheet is converted into an easy-to-read chart, color-coded, which covers three broad categories of desired outcomes, including Satisfaction with IT, Improving IT, and Projects; this document is called the DoIT 1-Pager. General Administration (UNC System-wide) mandates are also listed. Each quarter, the ITLC scores the goals based on progress made at that point in time. Goals are marked as on track (green), warning (yellow), key issues (red), or complete (blue). Goals aligning with the WCU Strategic Plan are also identified. The final scoring is completed in the fourth quarter, and our IT Performance Factor (ITPF) is established, which is the sum of the category averages times the weighted percentage. An ITPF score of greater than 175 is an "A."

The 1-Pager is disseminated to university stakeholders each semester, including all DoIT employees, governance groups, deans, division leaders, and the Chancellor. Additionally, quarterly and annual reports are created and shared in the same way. These reports are also presented to the Board of Trustees.

In 2015, DoIT instigated an external program review. The review was based on input from three primary channels: 1) The Information Technology Self-Study Report and the WCU 2020 Plan; 2) preparatory discussions with WCU personnel pre-visit; and 3) meetings conducted September 27-29, 2015, with the review team visiting the WCU campus. The self-study submitted to the team included an executive summary as well as six criteria: Purpose, History and Structure of the Unit; Alignment with WCU Mission, Vision, Values; Demand for the Program; Quality; Cost Effectiveness; and Opportunity Analysis.

The results were shared with: all DoIT employees; the five DoIT governance committees; via meetings held each semester with the CIO, Assistant CIO for Academic Engagement and IT Governance, and Academic Deans; via reports and meetings with key stakeholders; and finally, via formal report to the Chancellor.

Since the final report was received, IT has added the team’s recommendations for improvement to our annual goals, incorporating individual items to our AY2016-2017 1-Pager. This program review has added a crucial perspective, enabling additional input to our strategic vision and goals.

Example of an improvement made based on the analysis of assessment results

The DoIT 1 pager reporting process was established in response for the need to gain a clearer understanding of priorities and progress towards goals across the entire division. Moreover, the division recognized a need to establish clear communication pertaining to goal achievement. This quarterly report, along with the end of year summary report has been a significant improvement in task management and forward planning.

SUMMARIZED IMPROVEMENTS MADE (Academic/Fiscal year 2015-16)

The following table provides links to summary reports describing selected goal and outcome based actions and improvements in academic/fiscal year 2015-16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Affairs</td>
<td>Coulter Faculty Commons</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educational Outreach</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Institutional Planning and Effectiveness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Registrar</td>
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<td>Administration and Finance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chancellor’s Division</td>
<td>External Affairs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Communications and Public Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development and Alumni Affairs</td>
<td>Accounting and Gifts processing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advancement Research</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Alumni Engagement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Donor Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td>Auxiliary Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources

- Chancellor's Division
- Division of Academic Affairs
- Division of Athletics
- Division of Information Technology
- Division of Student Affairs
- 2013-cpr-selfstudy
- 2013-oipe-externalreviewreport
- 2013-oipe-programdevelopmentplan
- 2013-oipe-selfstudy

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3.3.1.3

Institutional Effectiveness: Academic and Student Support Services

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: 3.3.1.3 academic and student support services.

Judgment

Compliance  ☑️  Partial Compliance  ☐  Non-Compliance  ☐  Not Applicable

Narrative

The content presented is divided into three sections:

1. The original compliance narrative addressing the standard
2. The off-site committee comments
3. The institutional response to the off-site committee comments

Original Compliance Narrative

Academic and Student Support Services

The programs, services, and activities offered by and through collaborative relationships between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs are designed to promote student learning and enhance students' personal, social, and intellectual development as they live and learn within a diverse community. The programs, services, and activities for students are administratively organized by division. The divisions of Student Success and Undergraduate Studies are in Academic Affairs, and the remaining units are located in the division of Student Affairs. Collectively, these services and programs comprise WCU’s student support services, and they help to advance the mission, core values, and strategic directions of the institution. Core Requirement 2.10 and Comprehensive Standard 3.4.9 describe WCU support services.

University Assessment

Academic and student support personnel at Western Carolina University are committed to regular review of their units to ensure excellence in student learning, educational practices, and operational outcomes. This process involves both internal and external reviews of outcomes assessment and of unit quality and productivity. Outcomes assessment serves to promote excellence in student learning, educational practices, and quality of service by establishing and maintaining a campus culture of self-evaluation and improvement at all levels of the institution. The Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness provides leadership and supports the campus community in assessment and evaluation efforts. Unit assessments are reported annually to the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness.

Assessment of Support Services at WCU

The division of Academic Affairs conducts ongoing, formative, summative, and systematic assessment of academic programs, academic support units, and administrative units—annually through assessment reports, and every five to seven years by conducting external unit reviews for those programs that are not externally accredited. Descriptions of the assessment and program review and examples of evidence of improvement follow later.

In addition to aligning with the university’s strategic plan, the division of Student Affairs uses standards established by the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) as well as discipline-specific national organizations to guide strategic planning and assessment. Evaluation and assessment of the impact and effectiveness of all student support programs, services, and activities are conducted annually. Units within Student Affairs also participate in regular Administrative Program Reviews; the exception is Counseling and Psychological Services, which is accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services.

Assessment within the Division of Student Affairs is managed by the Director for Marketing and Assessment and supported by the Assessment Steering Committee (ASC) and Assessment Working Group (AWG). The ASC is comprised of members of the division’s executive leadership team; it provides oversight and direction for assessment work within the division. The AWG is comprised of representatives from the division’s units. It works to build assessment capacity at the unit level. Student Affairs has used Campus Labs’ Compliance Assistant Planning (Campus Labs, Buffalo, NY) platform to manage assessment plans and reporting since Fall 2014.

The Director for Marketing and Assessment and the assessment teams provide feedback directly to the unit heads on strategic and assessment plans, dashboards, and other related assessment work. Individual program improvements are implemented at the unit level as necessary. The Director for Marketing and Assessment also provides training for each unit or department, in group or individual settings, in assessment and reporting best practices as well as in topic-specific skill-building workshops such as writing learning outcomes and creating assessment plans. The review and training process allows priorities for departments and programs to be shared horizontally and vertically within the division. The process also allows for data sharing and encourages collaborative work.
Annual Assessment

Support units establish assessment plans that are aligned with institutional goals, mission, and strategic directions as well as with appropriate unit missions and disciplinary and professional standards. The 2020 Vision: Focusing Our Future, WCU’s most recent strategic plan, was adopted in 2012 and articulates the University’s shared vision, direction, and core values; it also adopts six strategic directions.

Historically, plans and reports depicting progress toward meeting the University’s strategic directions were created according to a template developed by the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (OIPE). Recently, OIPE transitioned to a software platform, Compliance Assist, to manage assessment reporting. Each unit gathers and analyzes collected evidence and uses the results at the end of the academic year to prepare responses to its original assessment plan. Each unit identifies the unit’s mission and its alignment with the university’s mission and goals, desired and measurable outcomes (student learning or operational), data source, data collection and frequency, methodology, measures, targets, and, in the case of student learning outcomes, relationship to the five institutional learning outcomes. Units provide the results of assessment conducted during the reporting year as well as evidence of improvement based on assessment analysis. All subsequent changes to assessment plans and annual reports are submitted to OIPE.

The compiled reports present qualitative and quantitative data that have been analyzed by teams of faculty and/or staff in each unit according to timelines originally presented in the assessment plan. The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC) and the Operational Outcomes Assessment Committee (OOAC) develop rubrics designed to provide feedback on outcomes reporting. The results of the annual assessments are incorporated into departmental actions, annual reports, curricular revisions, exit processes, or the budgetary approval process, if appropriate, as well as the external unit review.

Examples of Annual Assessment

3. Center for Service Learning (CSC) 2015 Report
7. Math Tutoring Center (MTC) 2015 Report, 2014 Plan

The divisions or offices that contain the units listed above also prepare annual reports for the Board of Trustees. Examples below are excerpts from the 2015 and 2016 Board of Trustee reports prepared by the Office of the Provost and the full reports from the Division of Student Affairs:

- Office of Academic Affairs 2016, 2015
- Division of Student Affairs 2016, 2015
- Office of Student Success 2016, 2015
- Office of Undergraduate Studies 2016, 2015

External Unit Reviews

External unit reviews are conducted on a five to seven-year cycle to foster continuous improvement in the quality of core functions, operations, professional/creative activity, and public service/academic outreach. External unit reviews are formative, build on the results of the annual assessment and strategic planning processes, and include common standards that units address as part of the continuous improvement process: mission, planning, administrative structure, budget, cost effectiveness, overall quality, peer bench-marking, alignment with WCU mission, and opportunity analysis. Units complete three phases in the review cycle:

1. Self-evaluation and the creation of a self-study
2. External review and accompanying report by four professionals external to the unit
3. Program development planning: a transfer of the major outcomes and recommendations from the external review into an action plan with timelines, degrees of priority, resources, and responsible persons.

Units construct a self-study to analyze current strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. During the semester before a visit from an external team, representatives within the unit work with the supervisor and division head to craft the self-study; they use qualitative and quantitative data provided by the unit, common and consistent data from Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, and peer institution metrics comparison.

Typical site teams are made up of two content specialists external to WCU and two reviewing from WCU. One reviewer is selected from within the same division—but a different unit—from the one undertaking review at WCU, and one reviewer is selected from a different division. The two-day review by the external team involves multiple fact-finding and data-gathering sessions with appropriate stakeholders and an exit conference with the appropriate division head (vice chancellor or provost), program director, and/or department head, as well as the OIPE director of Assessment or Student Affairs director for marketing and assessment. The on-site visit concludes with the submission of the team’s report within 30 days of the team’s visit.

Upon receipt and acceptance of the team’s report, the Provost’s or Student Affairs office schedules a program development meeting and creates an accompanying document to discuss the findings of the review, form an action plan around viable recommendations, identify areas of responsibility, assign priority levels (low, medium, and high), determine budget implications, and attach timelines to actions. Led by the Provost or Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (or designee), the program development meeting is an opportunity for the dean and director/department head to build authenticity into the review process and make plans for improvements or changes to a program or unit. The annual assessment plans incorporate actions items that were recommended as part of the external unit review.

It is important to note that, while the division of Student Affairs has a track record of departments participating in external reviews, the division has only formally adopted the OIPE external program review management process over the last year. The examples from Student
Affairs units provided below reflect a more individual approach to reporting on the implementation of review recommendations. Also, the breadth and variety of services offered under the umbrella of the division of Student Affairs require more variety in the approach to the external review process. For example, Counseling and Psychological Services is externally accredited, and units such as Financial Aid are heavily governed by federal and state agencies; their business processes are impacted by the implementation and use of third-party systems. These differences will be reflected in the external unit review examples provided below.

Examples of Externally Reviews

7. Coulter Faculty Commons: Self Study, Appendices, Visit Schedule, External Review Report, and Program Development Plan
10. Diversity Services Improvement Self Study, External Report and Findings Resulting IT Project Request
17. University Center (now Campus Activities) 2012 Site Visit Report, Recommendations and Report on Recommendations

Examples of Using Assessment to Effect Change in Academic and Student Support

Below are a few examples of how data has been used to improve program and service delivery.

In recent years, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) documented an increasing demand for services. In addition, student clients reported a higher rate of mental health treatment before college as compared to the national data. Unfortunately, hiring additional therapists to support the increasing demand on services was difficult due to budget constraints. To meet the growing demand for services and to serve this changing student population, CAPS increased the availability of group therapy to student clients. In 2015-2016, CAPS offered 25% more group therapy appointments than the national average, and 10% of CAPS clients participated in group therapy. Evaluations indicated that students found group therapy to be helpful and showed that a majority would recommend it to friends if they were struggling.

Every year, New Student Orientation provides each student and their family members an opportunity to assess the program through an online survey emailed to them, usually on the day following their attendance. The survey data results, comments made to orientation counselors and university staff, and best practices within the field of orientation result in changes to the program the following year. For instance, in 2014, students and families were asked specific questions regarding financial aid, scholarships, advising, and residential living. In 2015, as a result of the responses pertaining to financial aid, students/families received envelopes at check-in with information on missing pieces needed to be completed prior to the start of the semester. Distributing these envelopes proved to be only partially effective in the 2015 survey results. So in 2016, in addition to giving envelopes to students at check-in, representatives also met with students/families on day one to review what the student was missing, explain what the student needed to do, and talk with the family about the one-on-one sessions available on day two. The full report contains additional examples of data-driven change in New Student Orientation.

In Fall 2015, the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs (Dr. H. Sam Miller) charged the Associate Vice Chancellor/Dean of Students (Dr. Kevin S. Koett) with the responsibility of overseeing the enhancement of the Greek Life program. Current students involved in Greek Life as well as alumni and campus partners were surveyed to learn more about their experience with the Greek Life program. The survey results were compiled and then shared with students, alumni, and campus partners. The survey found that the Greek Life program lacked identity and leadership and was governed by regulations that students and alumni found overly complicated. As a direct result of the survey findings, the name of the program was changed, additional resources were allocated to hire a director to administer the program, and the confusing rules and regulations were eliminated. The full report is available here as is the survey instrument and communications to students, alumni, and campus partners.

Each year, the Writing and Learning Commons (WaLC) administers pre- and post-tutoring surveys to students. One of the questions on the post-tutoring survey asks students to describe any skills or strategies learned in their tutoring sessions that they will be able to use when completing course work on their own. In 2014, only 20% of respondents were able to cite specific transferrable skills/strategies at the conclusion of their tutoring sessions. Based on these findings, staff decided to make adjustments to the curriculum for tutor training classes (UST 202, 302, and 402). WaLC now routinely emphasizes with tutors the importance of closing their tutoring sessions with a brief review. Tutors are trained to have their clients summarize what was covered in the session and identify specific skills/strategies that they plan to use as they complete work on their own. As a result of this training modification, in 2015, over 60% of post-tutoring survey respondents were able to cite specific skills or strategies they could use to study independently.

In 2015, the WaLC conducted a faculty focus group to gauge faculty awareness of services. Findings from the focus group suggested that many faculty were not aware of services offered. As a result, in 2016, this unit worked with its Advisory Board to create a flyer that was sent to all new faculty. The flyer includes data about students’ use of tutoring services and quotes from faculty about how they have partnered with the WaLC to promote students’ academic success. The flyer will be distributed again this year during New Faculty Orientation.

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subcategory indicated above; this demonstrates the University’s emphasis on civic learning and engagement. The Center for Service Learning, in conjunction with representatives of the student body, regularly conducts voter registration drives and recently successfully petitioned the local Board of Elections to create an early polling station at WCU for the first time in history. Given the challenges of transporting students to and from polling stations off-campus, locating a station in the center of campus will increase students’ civic engagement as reflected by voting. The next NSLVE report, as well as general and specific NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) items that address civic engagement, will be analyzed to show progress in this context.

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Changes Based on Assessment—Liberal Studies Program

A summary and subsequent recommendation from last year’s assessment of the Core 1: Writing, Rhetoric, and Critical Studies (WRCS) component of the Liberal Studies program was to “provide additional support for English as a Second Language (ESL) students in English 101 and English 202. The Assessment Team believes sections of English 101 and 202 should be reserved for ESL students and facilitated by faculty with background and training in teaching students for whom English is a second language. Suggestions include mandating that international students with TOEFL reading and writing scores below a benchmark level (determined by a team of the appropriate faculty and staff) should be required to enroll in these specialized sections. Grades First could be adapted to include a feature that will allow advisors or faculty to identify students who would greatly benefit from participation in an ESL section of English 101 or 202. If a student with such a flag tries to enroll in a non-specialized section of English 101 or 202, permission of the instructor should be required to allow the student to register for the class.”

The Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies facilitated conversations with representatives from International Programs and Services, an advisor for international students, the department head and faculty in English, and the Director of WRCS to design and implement new approaches to improve these services to non-native speakers. Changes were implemented during Summer 2016 that address the needs of incoming international students, specifically, assessing the students’ command of English, scheduling their courses early, and reserving a section of English 101 that will be taught by a faculty member with experience working with students for whom English is not the primary language.

Off Site Reviewer Comments

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not find sufficient evidence that documents an on-going assessment cycle with clear expected outcomes, assessments, and improvements. As noted, the annual assessment documents do not provide a clear process of institutional review, and several present an annual report of accomplishments rather than expected outcomes. While WCU notes the implementation of external program review every five to seven years, the documentation does not appear to provide examples of continuous improvement.

Institutional Response

The academic and student support service units at Western Carolina University are committed to ongoing continuous improvement. All units engage in processes involving regular review of operational activities, establishment of goals, and the evaluation of outcomes. Each Division of the University is given the freedom to develop planning and reporting processes best suited to their specific functions and needs. Consequently, planning and reporting documentation is not uniform across units, and in some cases, for units within the same division. The material presented below attempts to clarify these ongoing processes. Evaluators are encouraged to review the original narrative for Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.3 (available above) for a description of existing assessment and review processes and examples of assessment plans, assessment reports, annual reports, and periodic unit review reports. Several specific examples of improvements made as a result of ongoing assessment processes are provided.

With a variety of processes in use, our primary challenge is to effectively communicate these processes and results to external stakeholders. In order to clarify and demonstrate administrative support service units have ongoing assessment processes, including unit goals, outcomes evaluations and evidence of improvements based on the analysis of results, descriptions of existing planning, assessment and evaluation processes were collected and are presented below. Additionally, a common reporting template was developed in January 2017, and units were asked to transfer information from existing documents and reports to the template, for work completed in academic/fiscal year 2015-16. Units were requested to sample high priority goals and outcomes from their 2015-16 work, rather than being comprehensive, to minimize redundancy of effort (as most units had previously completed some form of an annual report or annual assessment report, many of which were provided as evidence in the original compliance narrative for Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.2).

Academic and student support services are provided through units in the Division of Academic Affairs and in the Division of Student Affairs. Quarterly joint leadership meetings are held between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to ensure good business practices and to sustain the collaboration and coordination necessary to manage the various student support services.
Examples of improvement made based on the analysis of assessment results

The Honors College assists the university towards Goal 1.6 of the University Strategic Plan 2020 Vision by working to recruit and retain high achieving students. A review of honors student data by the Dean of the Honors College revealed significant deficiencies in honors student tracking, resulting from inadequate coding of honors students. A project was initiated with the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness and the Division of Information Technology to establish a new process for coding and tracking students in the Honors College. Data from 2015-16 indicated there were technical barriers to successful implementation. Based on the analysis of data, a different solution was proposed and is now being implemented.

The Honors College works closely with Office of Admissions using admissions data to answer goal-directed questions about student profile, demographics, and scholarship effect. In 2015-16, the assessment data was used effectively to move the influx of new students from mid-year to start-of-year enrollment, to improve diversity, and to manage our scholarship portfolio in identifying yield and effect sizes for scholarship offers within categories of academic profile. Many of these results will be used to set benchmarks for comparison for future years also. The Honors College also shares responsibility for assessment of several undergraduate research initiatives.

### Division of Academic Affairs - Hunter Library: Assessment Process

The Hunter Library assessment process involves a library planning committee, a survey of services provided to students, evaluation of library services to the Biltmore Park instructional site, and evaluation of classroom teaching.

The library organization consists of three departments: Research and Instruction; Technology Access Systems and Special Collection; and Content Organization Management. Each department develops an annual action plan containing annual goals and objectives, and presents it to the library planning committee. Some goals are based on the outcome of the student services survey. The library planning committee is open to all library faculty and staff and is chaired by the dean of library. In 2015-16 the committee had 12 members. The committee meets every month to review and discuss the progress of each department’s goals. Each department identifies persons who are responsible to meet their goals, indicate their strategies, and assign a time-line for each goal. The department heads monitors progress towards their goals. If departments are not able to meet their goals and objectives, they have to describe why they could not accomplish their goals. At the end of the academic year we evaluate the outcomes and plan for the next year’s goals. An annual report of library activities, including progress made towards annual goals, and other improvements, is submitted to the Provost. Due to the nature of our work, some of the goals are considered as one-time for that particular year, rather than ongoing. Examples include equipment upgrades, facility renovations, and new equipment and software purchases.

Library services for the Biltmore Park instructional site were evaluated by an outside consultant in 2014. Progress made towards recommended actions are summarized in the attached report.
Example of improvement made based on the analysis of assessment results

In response to dissatisfaction with existing assessment methodology, the library staff developed an improved method of assessment for evaluation of a particular student learning outcome shared between the Department of English and the Hunter Library (locating and evaluating sources). The assessment instrument was implemented and resulted in a strong data set used to evaluate the student learning outcome.

Division of Academic Affairs - Student Success: Assessment Process

Each Student Success unit director is responsible for that unit’s assessment. Annually, concurrent with individual employee performance reviews, employees are asked to present the previous year’s assessment methods, metrics, and observed trends. The Assistant Vice Chancellor (AVC) for Student Success evaluates the annual report, assessment plan, and processes for each of the following units: Office of Accessibility Resources, the Advising Center, Office of the Registrar, Office of Student Transitions, Office of Mentoring & Persistence to Success, One Stop Student Services, Summer Session, Writing and Learning Commons, and Math Tutoring Center. At that time, a strategy for the next year is discussed. If changes are needed, notes are made and revisited at 6- and 12- month intervals.

Assessments submitted vary widely between units due to the different functions of each office. Student-facing offices report metrics on (face-to-face, phone, and email) interaction counts, student populations served, and year-to-year changes in those figures. In the cases of tutoring units (Math Tutoring Center and Writing & Learning Commons), student client impacts are measured, as well as the efficacy of embedded tutors and other supplemental support strategies. Summer Session reporting, as it incorporates many university offices and resources, creates a wide-ranging assessment tracking everything from student demographics to instructor compensation. If no change or a negative change is observed year-to-year in a metric area, the unit director and AVC for Student Success will discuss a change in the unit processes at that time.

In addition to office assessments, each unit also submits an annual report, based on a basic template. Annual reports include goals, expectations, and initiatives for offices, which are tied to explicit timelines and benchmarks. Annual Reports also ask each director to reflect on each unit’s mission statement at that time, as well as the highlights of the unit’s activities over the academic year.

Student Success also self-assesses as a unit, semi-annually, with the guidance of the Student Success Strategic Plan—a 4-year plan which was imposed in 2016. The plan provides a framework for goals that are shared between Student Success units and require the input and work of multiple campus partners. The plan and its initiatives are fleshed out with action items which may be updated, removed, or replaced when they are satisfied, unsatisfied, or no longer applicable. The Student Success Strategic Plan is informed by, and supports the initiatives of, Chancellor Belcher’s 2020 Vision—WCU’s university-wide strategic plan.

Examples of improvements made based on the analysis of assessment results

Each year, the Writing and Learning Commons (WaLC) administers pre- and post-tutoring surveys to students. One of the questions on the post-tutoring survey asks students to describe any skills or strategies learned in their tutoring session that they will be able to use when completing course work on their own. In 2014, only 20% of respondents were able to cite specific transferrable skills/strategies at the conclusion of their tutoring sessions. Based on these findings, staff decided to make adjustments to the curriculum for tutor training classes (USI 202, 302, and 402). WaLC now routinely emphasizes with tutors the importance of closing their tutoring sessions with a brief review. Tutors are trained to have their clients summarize what was covered in the session and identify specific skills/strategies that they plan to use as they complete work on their own. As a result of this training modification, in 2015, over 60% of post-tutoring survey respondents were able to cite specific skills or strategies they could use to study independently.

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Division of Academic Affairs - Undergraduate Studies: Assessment Process

Undergraduate Studies has oversight for the Centers for Service Learning, Mountain Heritage, and Career and Professional Development. Additionally, the division administers the Liberal Studies Program and Synthesis, a pathway to intentional learning, our enhanced learning plan for the past 10 years. Undergraduate Studies has three overarching outcomes that are related to institution-level outcomes and, in addition to participating in the university-wide strategic planning process, the division completes assessment of the overarching division-wide outcomes and makes improvements based on the results of outcomes assessment. The units in Undergraduate Studies create annual targets that link to the overall division outcomes; these targets are assessed and adjusted annually (as appropriate). The table below provides the division-wide outcomes and the process used to measure progress toward meeting the outcomes.
Undergraduate Studies Outcomes | Assessment and Review
--- | ---
Foster an integrated, seamless, and holistic undergraduate experience that promotes educational excellence distinguished by collaboration between faculty, students, and staff in academic and co-curricular initiatives | Tri-annual directors’ meetings and summer retreat with the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies; Annual performance evaluation of unit and division heads; Analysis and report out of Survey results directly correlated with the outcomes (National Survey of Student Engagement; University of North Carolina General Administration sophomore and senior surveys); Periodic surveys on effectiveness of the unit

Promote civic responsibility, foster social and personal development, and advance intellectual curiosity | Annual assessment of the learning outcomes of the Liberal Studies Program; Center for Service Learning qualitative feedback from students who participate in the Lily Community Engagement program; Analysis of results from the annual faculty community based assessment survey by the director of the center for Service Learning and the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies

Facilitate the development of education/career objectives in students | Tri-annual directors’ meetings and summer retreat with the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies; Annual performance evaluation of center directors; Analysis and report out of Survey results directly correlated with the outcomes (National Survey of Student Engagement; University of North Carolina General Administration sophomore and senior surveys; student and career events surveys;

Examples of improvements made based on the analysis of assessment results

WCU’s global learning outcomes include a charge to “practice civic engagement.” To that end, the institution participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) to gauge student voting rates as one element of civic engagement. The most recent results indicate registration and voting rates in presidential and mid-term elections, by age group, education level, gender, race/ethnicity, field of study, voting methodology, and by institutional Carnegie Classification. WCU out-performs other universities in its Carnegie Classification on the 2012 presidential election (51% to 46%) and still strives to increase the registration and voting levels in each of the subcategories indicated above; this demonstrates the University’s emphasis on civic learning and engagement. The Center for Service Learning, in conjunction with representatives of the student body, regularly conducts voter registration drives and recently successfully petitioned the local Board of Elections to create an early polling station at WCU for the first time in history. Given the challenges of transporting students to and from polling stations off-campus, locating a station in the center of campus will increase students’ civic engagement as reflected by voting. The next NSLVE report, as well as general and specific NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) items that address civic engagement, will be analyzed to show progress in this context.

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Division of Student Affairs: Assessment Process

The following units are housed under the umbrella of the Division of Student Affairs:

Bookstore
Campus Activities
Campus Recreation & Wellness
CatCard/Auxiliary Services
Counseling and Psychological Services
Dining Services
Financial Aid
Greek Student Engagement and Development
Health Services
Intercultural Affairs
Marketing & Assessment
New Student Orientation
Scholarships
Student Community Ethics
Undergraduate Admissions
Assessment within the Division of Student Affairs is performed at the department or unit level and is managed from a divisional perspective by the Director for Marketing and Assessment. Goals, outcomes and assessment plans are developed by departments in consultation with the Director for Marketing and Assessment. Department goals and outcomes are specific to the department’s functional responsibilities and aligned with the division’s strategic plan as well as the university’s 2020 strategic plan. The outcomes that are assessed vary widely between the individual units. Dining, the Bookstore and Auxiliary Services each have significant financial and operational goals and outcomes that they assess regularly while enrollment support units like Orientation and Undergraduate Admissions report on students recruited and enrolled. Student activities related units such as Campus Activities and Campus Recreation and Wellness track student participation, event satisfaction and student development. Service oriented units such as Counseling and Psychological Services and Health Services report on the number of students served and student wellness outcomes.

Assessment planning and annual reporting are managed within the Campus Labs Compliance Assist platform. Departments submit the results of their assessment work in June of each year. Departments report on data sources, assessment measures, outcome targets, findings, analysis of findings, finding status and resulting changes from assessment results. The Director for Marketing and Assessment and the division’s Assessment Working Group - a committee with representatives from a majority of the division’s units that has been charged with developing the division’s assessment capabilities - provide feedback directly to department leaders on strategic and assessment plans, dashboards, and other related assessment work. Individual program improvements are implemented at the department level.

The Division of Student Affairs has also adopted an external program review process to complement annual outcomes assessment. External reviews are conducted on five year cycles and include a review team comprised of internal and external reviewers. As part of the continuous improvement process, external reviews address department mission, planning, administrative structure, budget, cost effectiveness, overall quality, alignment with WCU mission, and an opportunity analysis. The review team’s report from the external program review results in a program development plan which outlines how the department will implement the team’s recommendations for improvement. Outcomes from the program development plan are incorporated into the department’s annual assessment planning and reporting.

Examples of improvements made based on the analysis of assessment results

In recent years, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) documented an increasing demand for services. In addition, student clients reported a higher rate of mental health treatment before college as compared to the national data. Unfortunately, hiring additional therapists to support the increasing demand on services was difficult due to budget constraints. To meet the growing demand for services and to serve this changing student population, CAPS increased the availability of group therapy to student clients. In 2015-2016, CAPS offered 25% more group therapy appointments than the national average, and 10% of CAPS clients participated in group therapy. Evaluations indicated that students found group therapy to be helpful and showed that a majority would recommend it to friends if they were struggling.

Every year, New Student Orientation provides each student and their family members an opportunity to assess the program through an online survey emailed to them, usually on the day following their attendance. The survey data results, comments made to orientation counselors and university staff, and best practices within the field of orientation result in changes to the program the following year. For instance, in 2014, students and families were asked specific questions regarding financial aid, scholarships, advising, and residential living. In 2015, as a result of the responses pertaining to financial aid, students/families received envelopes at check-in with information on missing items that needed to be completed on day two while at the OneStop Student Services Center. Distributing these envelopes proved to be only partially effective in the 2015 survey results. So in 2016, in addition to giving envelopes to students at check-in, representatives also met with students/families on day one to review what the student was missing, explain what the student needed to do, and talk with the family about the one-on-one sessions available on day two. The full report contains additional examples of data-driven change in New Student Orientation.

In Fall 2015, the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs charged the Associate Vice Chancellor/Dean of Students with the responsibility of overseeing the enhancement of the Greek Life program. Current students involved in Greek Life as well as alumni and campus partners were surveyed to learn more about their experience with the Greek Life program. The survey results were compiled and then shared with students, alumni, and campus partners. The survey found that the Greek Life program lacked identity and leadership and was governed by regulations that students and alumni found overly complicated. As a direct result of the survey findings, the name of the program was changed, additional resources were allocated to hire a director to administer the program, and the confusing rules and regulations were eliminated. The full report is available here as is the survey instrument and communications to students, alumni, and campus partners.

SUMMARIZED IMPROVEMENTS MADE (Academic/Fiscal year 2015-16)

The following table provides links to summary reports describing selected goal and outcome based actions and improvements in academic/fiscal year 2015-16.
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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Accessibility Resources</td>
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<td>Math Tutoring Center</td>
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<td>Mentoring &amp; Persistence Services</td>
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<td>One Stop Student Services</td>
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<td>Financial Aid</td>
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<td>Division of Student Affairs</td>
<td>Greek Student Engagement and Development (established July 2016 - no report available for AY 2015-16)</td>
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<td>Division of Student Affairs</td>
<td>Health Services</td>
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<td>Residential Living</td>
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<td>Division of Student Affairs</td>
<td>Scholarships</td>
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<td>Student Community Ethics</td>
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<td>Undergraduate Admissions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Sources

- 2020 Strategic Plan
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report AY2015-16_Accessibility Resources
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report AY2015-16_Advising Center
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report AY2015-16_Center for Service Learning
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report AY2015-16_Honors College
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report AY2015-16_Hunter Library
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report AY2015-16_Math Tutoring Center
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report AY2015-16_Mentoring Persistence
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report AY2015-16_MHC
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report AY2015-16_One Stop
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report AY2015-16_Student Transitions
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report AY2015-16_WaLC
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report_A2015-16_Admissions
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report_A2015-16_Auxiliary Services
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report_A2015-16_Bookstore
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report_A2015-16_Dining
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report_A2015-16_DSCE
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report_A2015-16_ICA
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report_A2015-16_Residential Living
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report_A2015-16-CAPS
- Annual Institutional Assessment Report_A2015-16-CRW
3.3.1.4

Institutional Effectiveness: Research

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: 3.3.1.4 research within its mission, if appropriate.

Judgment

☐ Compliance  ☐ Partial Compliance  ☐ Non-Compliance  ☐ Not Applicable

Narrative

The content presented is divided into three sections:

1. The original compliance narrative addressing the standard
2. The off-site committee comments
3. The institutional response to the off-site committee comments

Original Compliance Narrative

According to Western Carolina University’s mission statement, the University “creates learning opportunities that incorporate teaching, research, service, and engagement. . . .” At WCU, faculty conduct research to enhance pedagogy in the classroom and for professional growth, publication, and personal curiosity. Success in the first three categories is evaluated through the WCU tenure and promotion process. Research submitted for external funding requires scrutiny and regulation by the institution prior to submission and after the completion of the grant or contract. When possible, graduates and undergraduates are included in faculty research projects so that faculty can mentor students in disciplinary conventions and standards. For example, WCU has a strong track record of sending students to academic research conferences like NCUR.

Research support services are provided by the Office of Research Administration (ORA), which is housed administratively in the division of Graduate School and Research. The ORA mission aligns with the WCU mission by cultivating and supporting a robust culture encouraging sponsored research for all faculty and staff while assuring institutional integrity. The ORA typically supports faculty seeking funds to support fundamental research or programmatic activities. The ORA also supports staff seeking external funding to implement programs in support of the community (e.g. Tuckasegee River cleanup efforts funded through the American Whitewater fund and the Jackson County Tourism Development Authority) or student support programs (e.g. transforming youth recovery programs funded through the Stacie Mathewson Foundation).

Expected Outcomes in Research Activities

Until June of 2016, the ORA functioned strictly as a pre-award office. The Office was responsible for proposal development, submission, award negotiation and execution, and non-financial research compliance. The university opted to combine the ORA with the Office of Contracts and Grants into one unit housed within the Graduate School and Research. Combining these pre- and post-award functions in a unified team will provide investigators and departments more effective access to grant proposal and award management resources. As depicted in this organizational chart, the director leads a staff of five. Two are dedicated to pre-award services, two to post-award services, and one to non-financial research compliance.

The ORA produces an Annual Report that summarizes the activities related to the pursuit of external funding. Data collected includes the institutional view of activity related to numbers and dollars of proposals and awards. The data is also presented at a college/unit level.

The ORA has broadened its use of metrics to identify trends and opportunities to increase research activity more strategically. Future annual reports will include activities related to both pre- and post-award functions.

Table 3.3.1.4-1: Number of Proposals Submitted in Pursuit of External Funding
(with change from the previous year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposals</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>72 (-16)</td>
<td>74 (+2)</td>
<td>88 (+14)</td>
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</table>

Table 3.3.1.4-2: Number of Grants Awarded
(with change from the previous year)
In 2012, WCU released its 2020 Vision plan. Strategic initiative 6.3.7 of the 2020 plan includes a goal for increasing and expanding infrastructure and activities for research and sponsored programs, technology transfer, and commercialization. This strategic priority calls for the institution to achieve the following by 2020:

- Increase by 100% (to 144 proposals per year) the number of research grant and contract proposals
- Increase by 50% (to 138 per year) the number of grant and contracts awarded
- Increase by 25% (to approximately $7,125,000 per year) the total financial amount of awards received

The goals outlined in the strategic plan are ambitious but reflect the desire of the institution to dramatically grow external funding.

**Steps in Achieving Research Outcomes**

In support of the ambitious goals to achieve growth in external funding, the Office of Research Administration implemented programming and initiatives to support and recognize the efforts of faculty and staff who pursue external funding.

- **Financial Support:** The Chancellor and the Provost have committed a portion of their indirect cost returns to the implementation of the Provost's Internal Grant Program. This is a competitive, peer-reviewed internal grant program that is administered by the ORA.
- **Non-financial support:** Presentations, training, and workshops centered on the proposal development and submission process are offered throughout the year. While the initiatives are hosted by the ORA, speakers range from ORA staff, faculty/staff across campus, and external subject-matter experts.
- **Recognition:** The ORA, in collaboration with other units across campus, hosts an annual faculty scholarship celebration. This campus gathering allows the community to recognize scholarly accomplishments of the previous calendar year.
- **Student Research:** Historically, undergraduate research and graduate student research were recognized at their own individual celebrations. In 2016 they were combined in a collaborative event. The University enhances the undergraduate research experiences through voluntary programs such as the Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP).

To monitor increases in activity, the ORA provides monthly activity reports to the Provost and produces an annual report. These data then become the basis for conversation across the broader campus community. The reviews also allow ORA to identify target audiences (e.g., new investigators, specific departments).

To monitor its own internal operations, ORA underwent an Administrative Program Review (ADPR) in 2014 which involved a comprehensive self study. The ADPR resulted in 11 recommendations for improvement in areas ranging from processes to resource allocation. Several changes were made in response to the recommendations. Here are some examples:

- The ORA has improved its collection and reporting of performance metrics and has identified areas of improvement.
- The Pre-Award and Post-Award functions are highly inter-dependent, though they were not combined unit initially. The units have undergone a series of reorganizations to ensure that investigators are being served effectively. In June 2016, the pre- and post-award units combined to provide a more seamless experience for investigators.
- The ORA has relied heavily upon the Sponsored Research Council (SRC) during times of transition to ensure that this strategic direction is responsive to the needs of the institution and the investigators. The SRC is an ad-hoc committee of WCU investigators (both faculty and staff) who are appointed by the Office of Research/Chief Research Officer. This committee was very helpful in developing policy/procedure for the office and in identifying higher priority initiatives. A study was conducted by Alison Krauss, ORA Proposal Development Specialist, to help the ORA evaluate the purpose, function, and strategic direction of SRC.

**Highlands Biological Station**

The Highlands Biological Station is an inter-institutional center of the University of North Carolina System and is administered by Western Carolina University. The Highlands Nature Center, Laboratory, and Botanical Garden are part of the Station, which is supported in part by the Highlands Biological Foundation.

HBS has a long tradition of programs in education, research, and service for the WCU community, the region, NC, and the national and international scientific community. Specifically, HBS creates or supports

1. Experiential learning opportunities in diverse biological/environmental sciences;
2. Research experience for undergraduates, graduates, and post-graduates;
3. Service and community engagement for local, state, and federal organizations (e.g., programming provided for K-12 schools of the surrounding western North Carolina counties, the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, USDA-Forest Service, and the US Army Public Health Command).

HBS is further valued for its role in regional tourism and informal education in western North Carolina through its Nature Center museum and Botanical Garden.

More information about assessment activities, organization, and reporting can be found in the 2015 HBS External Review (Self Study, Appendices, Visit Schedule, External Review Report, and Program Development Plan). Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.3 explains the external review process in more detail.
**Off Site Reviewer Comments**

The institution notes the importance of research in the institutional mission statement. WCU defines a select number of goals referring to its 2020 vision plan, strategic initiative 6.3.7. However, the institution does not provide evidence of an on-going institutional effectiveness cycle that includes assessing outcomes and establishing improvement.

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**Institutional Response**

Research is part of Western Carolina University’s mission, where the university “creates learning opportunities that incorporate teaching, research, service, and engagement...” The university strives to provide support for research through the continuum of undergraduate student, graduate student, to faculty member, on through broader university research endeavors in the form of centers such as Highlands Biological Station, the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines, and the Rapid prototyping center. The goals within each of these areas are tied to institutional goals included in the 2020 Vision Strategic Plan (including, Initiative 6.3.7: Develop infrastructure for research and sponsored programs...), providing an integration from individual (student, faculty, or program) goals to higher-level, institutional expected outcomes. Below we provide examples of expected outcomes, assessment examples, and evidence of improvement based on analysis of assessment results in each of these areas. These activities ultimately connect with resource allocation and research support and relevant examples of institutional support are provided.

**Faculty Research**

For faculty, individual research goals and activities are reviewed annually through the Annual Faculty Evaluation (AFE) process which serves as the regular (annual), multi-tiered assessment tool of faculty teaching, service, and research/scholarship/creative activities. Review is conducted, at a minimum, by the department head/director and dean to insure alignment of individual research goals and achievement with department, college, and university priorities. It is through this process, where support needs are identified and linked back to resource requests which come from the faculty, through the department head and dean, to the broader university in the budget process.

**Expected Outcomes**

Research goals and outcomes for individual faculty are measured with respect to discipline specific criteria as outlined in Departmental Collegial Review Documents (DCRD), which are developed by the disciplinary faculty and approved by the department head, dean, and provost. The DCRD provide clear guidance on expected outcomes with the flexibility to accommodate variations across disciplines, rank (i.e., assistant, associate, and full professor) and across areas of peer-reviewed Boyer scholarship (discovery, integration, application/engagement, scholarship of teaching and learning).

**Assessment/Evaluation**

The Annual Faculty Evaluation (AFE) process is described in detail in the Faculty Handbook Section 4.05. Faculty submit their AFE to the Department Head/Director, who provides their assessment in the form of a written statement in the AFE document. The faculty AFE and Department Head/Director statements are submitted to the Dean for approval. In addition, AFEs are also included in materials (dossier) submitted to the Provost for reappointment (in years 1-5), tenure (year 8), promotion, and post-tenure review (every 5 years after tenure).

Redacted sample Department Head AFE statements from 2015-2016 are provided in the table below for tenure track Assistant, Associate, and Full Professors from across the university. Non-tenure track faculty (Instructors and Lecturers) are evaluated annually, but do not typically have expectations of research as part of their duties, so they are not included in the sample. The most recent relevant DCRDs are also provided for reference.
**Evidence of Improvement**

Formative feedback (through the AFE), as well as peer and departmental mentoring are important to providing the guidance for faculty to be able to improve their research productivity within the mission of the institution. Research productivity over time is evidence of growth and improvement and is recognized and celebrated. This includes awards attained by the faculty at the international, national, state, and system level (in 2016, Dr. David Shapiro received the prestigious O. Max Gardner award, the highest UNC system level faculty award), to on campus recognition in the form of Faculty Scholarship Celebration and the University Scholar Award. Improving the way research activity is identified and collected includes the use of the Faculty Activity Database in spring 2017 to gather information on faculty scholarship for inclusion in the Faculty Scholarship Celebration program.

In addition to mentoring and feedback, faculty also need support for their research endeavors. WCU offers a broad range of mechanisms to support faculty success. These include:

- Peer reviewed Provost’s Internal Support Grants
- Release time and Scholarly Development Assignment Program
- Library resources – including item requests beyond holdings and access to databases, publishing assistance, data management plans
- Hunter Scholar Award program
- Professional Development Grants
- Chancellor’s Travel Funds
- Coulter Faculty Commons
- Graduate School and Research Office

**External Grants**

In addition to the internal resources that are dedicated to support faculty (and student) research and travel, WCU seeks to increase the external grants and contracts.

**Expected Outcomes**

WCU's 2020 Vision outlines specific outcomes in external funding targets (Initiative 6.3.7) to the following by the year 2020:

- Increase in the number of research grant and contract applications by 100 percent (to 144 proposals per year)
- Increase in the number of grants and contracts received by 50 percent (to 138 per year)
- Increase in the total annual amount of awards received by 25 percent (to ~$7.125M per year)

**Assessment/Evaluation**

The following Tables track the submission, awards, and funding level of external grants and contracts since implementation of the 2020 Vision in 2012 as tabulated by the Office of Research Administration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.3.1.4-1: Number of Proposals Submitted in Pursuit of External Funding (with change from the previous year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proposals</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3.1.4-2: Number of Grants Awarded (with change from the previous year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awards</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>69 (+9)</td>
<td>66 (-3)</td>
<td>66 (no change)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3.1.4-3: Funding Requested and Received from Grant Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposals</td>
<td>$14,309,581</td>
<td>$10,186,462</td>
<td>$18,568,627</td>
<td>$17,423,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards</td>
<td>$4,729,290</td>
<td>$3,442,970</td>
<td>$5,547,962</td>
<td>$5,712,555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evidence of Improvement

Over the last four years since 2012, the number of proposal submissions recovered from a decrease in 2013, the number of awards and total dollar amount of awards has increased by almost $1M (+~20.7%). Improvements and support that have been put in place to help achieve this growth are described in the Office of Research Administration Annual Report.

Graduate Student Research

In alignment with WCU’s mission and 2020 Strategic Plan, we train and mentor our graduate students to become knowledgeable content and practice experts in their field. To enable our graduate students to succeed in their programs, our Strategic Plan (e.g. WCU 2020 Initiative 1.6.5 – Enhance support for scholarships, graduate assistantships, and student research to attract and retain students who are prepared for the rigors of a Western Carolina educational experience) guides us to increase support at the masters (38 programs) and doctoral (3 programs) levels.

This support includes financial support in the form of graduate assistantships, travel support in the form of Graduate Student Association travel grants, and clinical support in the form of agreements, relationships, and mentorships with agencies and institutions that provide clinical practice in numerous fields.

Examples of Outcomes, Assessment, and Improvement in graduate research are provided below. Focus areas include graduate assistantships, Three-Minute Thesis Competition (3MT), and Graduate Student Association (GSA) Travel Funds. The Research and Scholarship Celebration (RASC) is a fourth example that also includes undergraduate students and is described in the undergraduate research section below.

Graduate Assistantships

Expected Outcomes

Graduate Assistantships – support graduate students in residential programs with graduate assistantships that will enable them to become experts in their field of study by teaching and/or researching under the mentorship and guidance of their major advisor. In some graduate programs, this research leads to a thesis, dissertation, or disquisition and in other programs the graduate student may become the instructor of record after earning 18 graduate credits in the field of study.

Assessment/Evaluation

Graduate Assistantships – Western Carolina University allocates $2,004,364 annually to graduate students in 16 residential programs. Graduate Program directors identify specific plans for formative and summative evaluation of their graduate assistants’ job performance in reference to their learning outcomes and job responsibilities and indicate how often the graduate assistant will receive assessment feedback. Assessment examples may include: classroom observation, small-group analysis by the Coulter Faculty Commons, mid-semester evaluations by supervising faculty member, evaluations by unit colleagues, peer assessment, or regularly scheduled meetings with supervisor for the purpose of constructive feedback. Example assessment plans are included for graduate assistants in the following programs: Physical Therapy, Engineering and Technology.

Evidence of Improvement

Graduate Assistantships – Our Graduate Program Directors for residential programs continue to advocate for an increase in the number and the amount of the assistantships to their programs to attract and retain more and better graduate students to their programs. In addition, online programs are advocating for an assistantship allocation to attract full-time students to their programs. In the 2016-2017 Western Carolina University budget process, the Dean of the Graduate School and Research requested an increase of $100,000 to the graduate assistantship budget. During our open review and ranking exercise of recurring budget priorities, the request was ranked #19 out of #87 requests in the WCU Academic Affairs Division.

Three Minute Thesis

Expected Outcomes

Three Minute Thesis (3MT) – organize, mentor, and train graduate students to summarize and highlight their scholarship and research into a compact, coherent, and convincing, three-minute presentation. The Three-Minute Thesis competition began at the University of Queensland in New Zealand in 2008 and has quickly spread to numerous U.S. institutions as a tool to train and mentor graduate students to package their research thesis, research project, business plan, or other scholarly product into a concise three-minute presentation. The Council of Southern Graduate Schools now holds a 40-institution 3MT competition at their annual meeting each spring.

Assessment/Evaluation

3MT – Western Carolina University has held a Three Minute Thesis competition for the past three years and our campus winner has participated in the regional Council of Southern Graduate Schools competition. Our participation peaked in the second year (2015) of our WCU competition with 9 competitors and has declined to 4 competitors in 2016.

Evidence of Improvement
3MT – We have increased both the internal communication to our Graduate Program Directors and our graduate students to encourage them to register in the November 2017 competition. Also, we have instituted a $500 tuition award for the top three 3MT finishers to incentivize more students to participate. In addition, several graduate programs including the Doctorate in Education and in the Higher Education Student Affairs programs are now requiring their students to utilize the 3MT format as a regular part of their discussion of the literature of the field and of their presentation of research summaries.

Graduate Student Association Travel Awards

**Expected Outcomes**
Graduate Student Association (GSA) Travel Awards – the Graduate Student Association supports $12,000 in graduate student travel awards during each academic year. The GSA is allocated these funds annually from the WCU Student Affairs Division from graduate student fees. The travel proposals are solicited, reviewed, and ranked by the GSA Executive Committee with priority given to those proposals that involve the presentation of original research.

Assessment/Evaluation
GSA Travel Awards – The Graduate Student Association budget for Travel Awards increased from $7,000 in 2014 to $12,000 in both 2015 and 2016. However, the number of applications has continued to rise. (There were 45 applicants in 2014-2015 and 103 applicants in 2015-2016.) After the upcoming application deadline of 15 February 2017, we expect to have another record high number of travel award applications resulting in increased competitiveness for the awards.

**Evidence of Improvement**
GSA Travel Awards – The increase in graduate headcount from the 2015-2016 academic year (Fall 2015 headcount: 1519 students) to the 2016-2017 academic year (Fall 2016 headcount: 1634 students) has increased the demand for graduate student travel awards. As a result of the enrollment increase, more graduate student fees are being collected by the Division of Student Affairs. Proposals for increases to student organization budgets are accepted in April of each year and the Graduate School will be supporting the Graduate Student Association with a proposal to Student Affairs to increase the GSA Travel Award budget by $5,000 from $12,000 to $17,000.

Undergraduate Student Research

In alignment with WCU's mission and 2020 Vision, we strive to provide access to authentic research experiences, and other High Impact Educational Practices (HIPs), for all students who seek them (e.g., WCU 2020 Initiative 1.3.2: Incorporate expectations for experiential and applied learning opportunities, including undergraduate research opportunities). The value placed on undergraduate research can be seen in our record of student involvement in research conferences like NCUR, SURF, national and regional discipline-specific conferences, and on-campus conferences such as the Undergraduate Expo (now RASC).

These research experiences may occur in the form of one-on-one student-faculty research outside the classroom, through Honors Contracts, or specifically infused within the curriculum as program goals (e.g., Athletic Training).

Examples of Outcomes, Assessment, and Improvement in the realm of undergraduate research are provided below, in part extracted from the 2015-2016 Undergraduate Research Assessment Report. Focus areas include the Research and Scholarship Celebration (RASC), Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP), Academic Program Grants (APG), and development of an Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR).

Research and Scholarship Celebration (RASC)

**Expected Outcomes**
RASC - Create combined undergraduate-graduate-faculty Research and Scholarship Celebration (RASC) - Demonstrate the continuum and growth of research possibilities from undergraduate to graduate and ultimately professional/faculty research and scholarship. Over a series of meetings between Honors College, Graduate School and Research, and Office of the Provost, we developed a combined university event to celebrate that continuum.

Assessment/Evaluation
RASC - Inaugural RASC took place March 30-31, 2016 combining Undergraduate Expo, Graduate Research Symposium, and faculty scholarship presentation. Our expectations of at least matching previous participation were met. There were 135 undergraduate poster presentations and 24 graduate student posters combined with 27 undergraduate oral presentations on day one. Graduate students presented 55 oral presentations on day two with 11 featured undergraduate students (a first). In 2015, the Undergraduate Expo had 119 posters and 40 oral presentations from undergraduates.

**Evidence of Improvement**
RASC - The second RASC is planned for 2017. People were happy with the move to the Ramsey Center as the venue, noting that the change in location did not deter participation. Everyone agreed that the poster set up worked well, but that we need to be more careful with our internal communications to get the total number of expected posters correctly sent to Ramsey. Inclusion of the undergraduate speakers in the graduate talks seemed to work well, and will be continued. The review of student abstracts process needs more reviewers to be involved, with improved quality in feedback to students. The EXPO committee needs to be larger and with more responsibilities shared among committee members. Faculty speakers and the Keynote Speaker in Ramsey, concurrent with the poster session, had some detracting features. We will work to move things around to lessen distractions and increase student attendance. Create a presentation space (place and time) for creative performances in the arts. The budget for the event was not clear and the expenditures were diffuse across multiple units; recommend creating a single event budget with itemized cost allowances.

Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP)

**Expected Outcomes**
SURP - Create Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) - In recognition of the lack of a "hallmark" summer undergraduate research opportunity, the Honors College developed the Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) in collaboration with Office of the Provost. The goal in 2016 was to have 10 faculty-student teams participate and to build infrastructure to support those teams.

Assessment/Evaluation
SURP - We were successful in having a competitive program; however, only 9 faculty:student teams were selected. We successfully set up the infrastructure to support the teams and the program ran for the full eight-weeks, concluding with a high-profile symposium. A full [SURP 2016 Report](https://example.com) on program outcomes is available, including student participant surveys (for both research students and research scholars).

**Evidence of Improvement**

SURP - Because the 2016 program was funded on one-time only funds, we need to find a sustainable way to continue and grow the program; include a request for SURP funding in the FY17 budget hearing process. To help smooth out some of the infrastructure details, it was recommended that we have a planning meeting in the future to get all of the various offices at the table so that everyone is on the same page and find out how to better navigate the WCU systems. To enhance student outcomes, it was recommended that all of the student participants be enrolled in the research course, for credit. To avoid processing errors, it was recommended that we modify the application procedures to assure that all documents get assembled properly for review.

**Academic Project Grants (APG)**

**Expected Outcomes**

APG - Improve the application process for Academic Project Grants (APG), awards made to students to support research, to improve the quality of submissions and the overall workflow for application review and awards. Improve workflow by changing the rolling (or on-going review) deadline to set dates each month during peak application times, with the objective to focus committee member's time on task and improve review time and feedback to applicants. Improve the quality of requests by requiring applicants to provide information on dissemination plans related to their research goals.

**Assessment/Evaluation**

APG - Analysis of the grant application process, as well as funding guidelines and reporting expectations were reviewed by the Honors College staff in August 2015. Feedback from the prior year APG committee members was considered. Two primary concerns were identified: lack of greater context for the research requests and resulting poor quality of many requests, and workflow and timing of reviews placed a high demand on the APG committee. Total expenditures, by grant type, and by year were also reviewed.

**Evidence of Improvement**

APG - The actions taken resulted in a smoother review process. The [Guidelines](https://example.com) were updated and the newly implemented template made for more consistent applications, speeding review and reducing committee questions to be relayed back to potential grantees; a majority of approved applications receiving a yes vote from the majority of the committee members. With the set date for reviews, grantees were more informed of turnaround times and regular, timely decisions related to funding were made. Communications about status were improved by assigning numbers to each grant and sending confirmation emails to grantees when applications were received. Dissemination plans, now a part of all proposals, have not only improved the quality of proposals but also led to a better understanding of the shared funding that goes into student research work. The number of grants held roughly steady (given the total available and maximum award) to last year and the diversity was improved by one additional department (compared to the previous year) getting at least 10% of the funds and six departments represented in the funded pool that were not in the funded pool last year.

**Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR)**

**Expected Outcomes**

OUR - Establishment of an Office of Undergraduate Research. Provide improved general oversight and coordination of undergraduate research across the institution. There is a recognition of wide-spread, but disparate undergraduate research activities ranging from: course-based projects, integrated CURE activities, student-faculty projects within and without the Honors College, to presentations at on-campus, disciplinary, and undergraduate research conferences like NCUR.

**Assessment/Evaluation**

OUR - Meetings where undergraduate research was a discussion topic were held throughout the year (see assessment report). These included meetings with Department Heads, small committees, and larger open forums with an external expert. A small group also attended a CUR Institute on Initiating and Sustaining Undergraduate Research Programs. The meetings and Institute were informative and we learned that the majority of participants recognize the value of establishing an Office, but there is also some that are concerned with "administrative bloat". It was also clear that an office that was not supported by a recurring budget would not be successful.

**Evidence of Improvement**

OUR - A [budget request](https://example.com) to support an Office of Undergraduate Research was submitted by the Associate Provost in the fall 2016 during the FY17-18 budget request cycle. University funding decision will determine next steps in the establishment of an Office.

**Research Centers**

As a regional comprehensive institution, WCU has three centers with a significant research-focus. These are Highlands Biological Station, the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines, and the Rapid Prototyping Center.

**Highlands Biological Station**

The Highlands Biological Station (HBS) is an inter-institutional center of the University of North Carolina System and is administered by Western Carolina University. The Highlands Nature Center, Laboratory, and Botanical Garden are part of the Station, which is supported in part by the Highlands Biological Foundation.

Example research-related outcomes, assessment, and improvements are provided below, extracted from the [2015-2016 HBS Assessment Report](https://example.com).

**Expected Outcomes**

The 2015-2016 assessment focused on 3 outcomes:
1. Increase summer salary to improve instructor recruitment. Achieve parity between HBS and WCU faculty compensation for summer.

2. Improve communication and information sharing within the HBS staff. Increase to biweekly staff meeting that include minutes. Create electronic calendar for the Station. Recommendation came from program review.

3. Make facilities upgrades for the aquatics laboratory and Cottage dormitories. Seek funding to make facilities improvements.

**Assessment/Evaluation**

1. Compared HBS and WCU summer salaries. Increased summer course compensation from $2500 to $3000 per 3-unit course.

2. Increased meeting frequency. Determined that approximately bi-weekly meetings of 1-1.5 hour duration adequate to keep staff mutually informed, but discovered the difficulty of doing so during the busy summer season.

3. Sought and received $410k in state repair and renovation funding to expand Cottages. Submitted $265k NSF grant proposal for aquatics lab renovation.

**Evidence of Improvement**

1. Moved summer pay at HBS from 55.5% of WCU rate to 66.7%. The program was able to recruit necessary faculty and will continue to adjust upwards toward parity as budget allows.

2. Staff feel more well-informed based on feedback.

3. Work on Cottage renovation currently underway. Aquatics lab proposal recommended for funding.

**Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines**

The Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines (PSDS) is a joint Duke University/Western Carolina University research and policy outreach center serving the global coastal community. The primary mission of PSDS is to conduct scientific research into coastal processes and to translate that science into management and policy recommendations through a variety of professional and public outreach mechanisms. The Program specializes in evaluating the design and implementation of coastal engineering projects.

Example research-related outcomes, assessment, and improvements are provided below, extracted from the 2015-2016 PSDS Assessment Report.

**Expected Outcomes**

The 2015-2016 assessment focused on 3 outcomes:

1. Diversify funding streams to secure operational and personnel funds beyond 18-month window. Successfully fund all existing research staff through continued National Park Service (NPS) funding and additional sources.

2. Secure space and laboratory improvements in response to proposed relocation/restructuring of units within the College of Fine and Performing Arts.

3. Develop strategy to fund endowment for long term financial stability.

**Assessment/Evaluation**

1. New project proposals submitted to United States Geological Survey (USGS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service. The USGS proposal was awarded funding. That award, combined with NPS funding exceeded necessary staff funding needs for 2015-2016.

2. Relocation/Space proposal submitted to, and approved by, the University Space Committee. Institutional funds secured for move and remodel of the laboratory space.

3. Working with WCU Office of Development and Alumni Affairs to identify list of potential donors top create an endowment.

**Evidence of Improvement**

1. Funding for scientific staff secured 18-months out (longest in PSDS history). Continue to diversify potential funding sources. Received unsolicited gift of $50,000 to support activities.

2. PSDS offices and lab relocated to Old Student Union building (Fall 2016). Remodel of laboratory facility underway.

3. Beginning to craft development strategy with support of Development office.

**Rapid Prototyping Center (Rapid Center)**

The College of Engineering and Technology partners with businesses, industry and entrepreneurs to develop new products and processes through the Rapid Center, Western Carolina University’s research and development center on the Cullowhee campus. The facility offers resources that are unmatched in the region, including high-tech engineering labs and equipment as well as accomplished faculty members with decades of combined industry experience in R&D.

Additive manufacturing equipment in this facility includes Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM), UV Polyjet, and Direct Metal Laster Sintering (DMLS) technologies. Metrology equipment includes a CNC-controlled Coordinate Measuring Machine (CMM), white light scanning system, and CNC video measuring system.
Example research-related outcomes, assessment, and improvements are provided below, extracted from the 2015-2016 Rapid Center Assessment Report.

**Expected Outcomes**
The 2015-2016 assessment focused on 2 outcomes:

1. Complete externally funded projects for 130 regional business and industry customers.

2. Research advanced manufacturing projects for regional employers in 3D additive metal manufacturing processes. Perform a minimum of 8 project builds.

**Assessment/Evaluation**

1. In 2015-2016, 120 projects were completed (92% of goal). Results were included in the Annual Report of the Rapid Center and College of Engineering and Technology.

2. In 2015-2016, 10 projects were completed. Results were included in the Annual Report of the Rapid Center and College of Engineering and Technology.

**Evidence of Improvement**

1. Discussions were held with Rapid Center staff and Dean of the College of Engineering and Technology to improve communications with regional industries and economic development groups. Reviewed approach to marketing the research and economic development capabilities of The Rapid Center for AY2016-17 with an increased focus by Director and Dean to visit new industries to develop additional industry partners.

2. Knowledge gained from research has been used to increase knowledge of post-processing of printed metal components and use in advanced manufacturing environments. Monthly meetings with the Rapid Center staff and graduate students were held to update current and future project progress and share lessons learned.

**Sources**

- AFES
- DCRDs
- Highlands Biological Station
- New 3.3.1.4
  - 2014-ora-selfstudy
  - 2020 Vision: Focusing Our Future - WCU Strategic Plan (Page 11)
  - 2020 Vision: Focusing Our Future - WCU Strategic Plan (Page 14)
  - ADPR ORA External reviewers report (20140404)
  - AKrauss Capstone Paper
  - Faculty Scholarship Celebration showcases 187 works _ The Reporter
  - FY15 Annual Report
  - FY-16-Provost-Internal-Research-Support-Grants
  - ORA Org Chart
  - ORA Website
  - Provost Report Sample
  - PSDS Assessment Report 2015-2016
  - Rapid Center Assessment Report 2015-2016
  - sample trainings etc
  - SURP research scholar qualtricsvReport
SURP research students qualtricsvReport
Undergraduate Research Assessment 2015-2016
WCU - Research Funding
WCU Faculty Handbook 2015-2016 (Page 74)
WCU sends another big student contingent to NCUR, but this time to Asheville - WCU News
WCU Strategic Plan Initiative 6.3.7
Western Carolina University - Summer Undergraduate Research Program
Western Carolina University - Undergraduate Expo
3.3.1.5

Institutional Effectiveness: Community/Public Service

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: 3.3.1.5 community/public service within its mission, if appropriate.

Judgment

Compliance  Partial Compliance  Non-Compliance  Not Applicable

Narrative

The content presented is divided into three sections:

1. The original compliance narrative addressing the standard
2. The off-site committee comments
3. The institutional response to the off-site committee comments

Original Compliance Narrative

Overview

Community engagement and public service are core to WCU’s identity as a regionally engaged university. This commitment is explicitly stated in the university mission and strategic plan: “Partnerships with regional businesses and industries, nonprofits, civic organizations, government agencies, communities, and cities are an integral part of WCU’s core mission as a recognized, regionally engaged university. The University’s emphasis on integrated learning experiences, its commitment to engaged scholarship, and its embrace of the institution’s role as both a steward of this unique and special place and a catalyst for economic and community development all demonstrate and reinforce WCU’s commitment to enhancing engagement with external partners” (Strategic Direction 3 Introduction).

WCU’s community engagement and public service efforts, while integrated into the fabric of the university, are led by the Center for Service Learning, the Provost Office’s Millennial Initiatives office, the Division of Educational Outreach, the annual Leadership Academy, the Mountain Heritage Center, and the Center for Rapid Product Realization. Each of these units undergoes internal and external review processes on a regular basis, including annual assessment and external review (administrative program review). Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.3 contains more details about these processes.

I. Center for Service Learning

Definition and Recognition

As a widely adopted concept, WCU defines engaged learning as the integration of purposeful academic and co-curricular activities to equip students with the intellectual and experiential skills necessary for success in life beyond college. Engaged learning incorporates teaching, learning, and scholarship by faculty, students, and community partners characterized by reciprocity and respectful exchange (Academic Community Engagement Home).

WCU was recognized as a Carnegie Community Engaged Institution in 2008, and this recognition was renewed in 2015. This places WCU as one of only 360 US institutions with this designation and shows the depth and breadth of community engagement at WCU. The designation demonstrates a deep commitment to engagement with local, regional, national, and global communities with a focus on teaching and learning and on research that engages communities and is driven by academic and civic purposes (Carnegie Community Engagement Application Highlights).

Assessment and Strategic Plan Alignment

Just as important as the community engagement programs and initiatives are the mechanisms that help measure and monitor this work. WCU identified its systematic tracking and assessment mechanisms that capture the community-engaged work of faculty, students, and staff in curricular, co-curricular, and other areas, including the following:

- 2016 CSL Annual Report
- University of North Carolina’s General Administration Community and Economic Engagement Metrics
- Curriculum-Based Community Engagement Faculty Survey
- The National Assessment of Service and Community Engagement (NASCE)
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE-Civic Engagement Module)
- Lily Community Engagement Award Program
- CSL Service Learning Course Designations
- Community Partner Impact Survey

II. Educational Outreach

The Mission statement of Educational Outreach is “[to extend] access to education and training through innovative courses, programs, and
services for individuals and communities both locally and globally.” The Division provides customer-driven services to a broad definition of communities including residential and distance students, local community groups, local community market segments, global market segments, and global communities. The Division takes a proactive approach to serving non-traditional and under-served populations, professionals, businesses, local communities, and global communities. Educational Outreach provides high-quality programs and services with an open-access attitude of service or referral and demonstrates honesty, reliability, and collegiality in its partnerships with all constituents. The Division is committed to innovation and creativity in all business processes from inception to implementation and to evaluation in all aspects of our work. Continuing and Professional Education, Military Student Services, and the Cherokee Center are the community-focused segments of the Division.


III. Millennial Initiatives

Millennial Initiatives, housed in the Office of the Provost, is a comprehensive regional economic development strategy designed to enable the university to engage in public-private partnerships that enhance educational opportunities for students and increase the ability of faculty to conduct research while also promoting regional development. The goals of the Millennial Initiatives are detailed in the WCU’s 20/20 Vision as Strategic Initiatives 3.1.3, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.5, 3.2.6, 4.4.1, and 6.3.8 and are tracked on an annual basis.

Broadly, the goals of the Millennial Initiatives include the development of the Millennial Campus through public-private partnerships and the facilitation of an annual conference, WNC: LEAD, for regional leaders focusing on regional development strategies.

Annual conferences have been held in Fall of 2014 and 2015. The annual conference is planned by a steering committee comprised of university employees and community members. A few days following the conference a survey is e-mailed to all participants. A few weeks later the committee holds a debrief session to evaluate all aspects of the conference including the survey results. Improvements are discussed and incorporated into the planning of the following conference. Please see the attached meeting minutes for conference evaluation evidence.

IV. Leadership Academy

The annual Leadership Academy is managed by the Coulter Faculty Center in consultation with university and community stakeholders. The outcomes for the Leadership Academy are collectively set and include the following:

- Demonstrate acquisition of leadership skills by developing and activating a leadership project in their areas of responsibility
- Present for comment and solicit feedback regarding a leadership project to address an issue that affects the WCU community
- Participate in the Leadership Tour
- Engage with WCU and community leaders in developing solutions for WCU and the region of WNC

Each year, the participants in the Leadership Academy also participate in the Leadership Tour. This Tour introduces participants to specific needs and areas of Western North Carolina, creating the opportunity for participants to form relationships with community leaders. Additionally, participants complete a survey with open-ended questions regarding the Tour to provide feedback. Leadership Academy facilitators also conduct stakeholder interviews.

This feedback, collected from participants and stakeholders, is used to shape Tour experiences for the next year. For example, the Tour for the 2014-2015 group included Cataloochee, Lake Fontana, the School of Alternatives, and Cherokee. Tour participants indicated that they wanted reflection time as well as intentional activities for each stop. Feedback was used to shape the Tour for the 2015-2016 group. Tour planners provided reflection questions for each day to assist participants in connecting the information that they learn to their experiences at WCU and to the broader Western North Carolina community.

V. Mountain Heritage Center

The Mountain Heritage Center (MHC) is a museum that engages WCU and the wider community in the study, preservation and celebration of southern Appalachia’s cultural heritage and history. The museum seeks to connect visitors with local history and culture, builds bridges between the university and the regional community, and serves as a cultural resource for Western NC. In addition to the museum being open to the public, museum staff are available to present educational programs in local schools as well as at the museum. Additionally, WCU plays host to Mountain Heritage Day each fall which is a much anticipated signature event sponsored by the Center. The event draws visitors from the region and beyond to experience Southern Appalachian music, arts, dance, song, and food.

The Mountain Heritage Center’s goals align with WCU’s 2020 Plan, but they are also based on nationally recognized core standards as expressed by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM Characteristics of Excellence). The MHC is fully engaged in WCU’s cycle of assessment and reporting, including the 2016 Mountain Heritage Annual Report and the 2011 External Review (described in 3.3.1.3): Self Study, Appendices, Visit Schedule, External Review Report, and Program Development Plan, which is updated on an annual basis (see 2016 and 2015 Updates to the PDF). The Center also undergoes museum-specific review, such as the national Museum Assessment Program (MHC MAP Report).

The following are examples of the use of outcomes assessment to improve programs and processes that specifically address WCU’s community service mission:

Goal 2: Enhance MHC’s cross-disciplinary academic partnerships and increase access to educational and cultural resources for students, faculty, and the community

- Class projects and research are frequently incorporated in the MHC’s exhibit and program offerings. Recent improvements include utilization of Public History students’ 2012 visitor studies research (MHC Dwell-Time Research) in a Spring 2016 Public History class’s creation of new prototype exhibits on the same subject. The student-developed prototype exhibits received feedback from MHC staff (MHC Kephart Exhibit Notes) and will now be used to create a major exhibit, opening in the MHC’s Hunter Library gallery in Fall 2016.
A recent graduate assistantship project, the development of a “Haunted WCU Walking Tour” is another example of the MHC’s use of student research and event participant feedback. After the student developed a tour outline, he worked with an Anthropology faculty member to use his Fall 2015 Folklore class as a focus group (MHC Haunted Tour Focus Group). Class feedback was used to develop the final tour, and several of the Folklore class members volunteered to present the tour, while others became paying customers. All tour participants were asked to complete an on-line survey (MHC Haunted Tour Survey Results). This data will now be used to improve the tour, which will be presented again in Fall 2016.

Goal 5: Develop and maintain thought-provoking, multi-sensory educational experiences that inspire understanding of Appalachian culture and history and the historical foundations of Western Carolina University

- The MHC coordinates Mountain Heritage Day (MHD), WCU’s largest annual event and major regional tourist attraction. Event analysis includes on-site visitor surveys, vendor and performer surveys, student volunteer surveys, MHD steering committee debrief sessions (MHC MHD 2015 Steering Committee Debrief) and on-line survey (MHC MHD on-line Survey), as well as sponsor feedback. This information guides future event content, logistics, and marketing planning. Recent improvements include changes in festival layout and the addition of dancing platforms to facilitate visitor participation.

VI. Center for Rapid Product Realization

The Center for Rapid Product Realization (Rapid Center) is a unit within the College of Engineering and Technology (CET) (formerly called the Kimmel School). The mission of the Rapid Center is to match the CET’s expertise and resources to Western North Carolina’s needs by forming effective partnerships to grow the economy of the region, assisting in generating value-creating jobs, and improving the quality of life for its people.

The goals and priorities of the Rapid Center are as follows:

1. Contribute to the Project-Based Learning objectives of the Kimmel School;
2. Accelerate the transition of concepts to commercial products for regional inventors, entrepreneurs and companies;
3. Lead the region in economic development and job retention/creation by providing services to clients including business counseling, market analyses, and product development;
4. Partner with academic units across the WCU campus to bring a unique set of tools and expertise to bear on some of the region’s most challenging technical problems and most promising solutions.

The Rapid Center mission aligns nicely with that of WCU: To improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in the region, state, and nation through engaged learning opportunities in academic programs, educational outreach, research, and creative and cultural activities. Additionally, the Rapid Center operational structure supports several of the strategic priorities in the WCU “2020 Vision” Strategic Plan. For example, the Rapid Center is a natural leader for WCU’s Strategic Direction #3: Enhance our external partnerships.

The Rapid Center serves as an enabler for economic development and growth in the region through engineering design, development, and testing for companies and entrepreneurs. With direct Rapid Center projects, academic Capstone projects, and partnerships with the colleges of Business, Arts and Sciences, and Health Sciences, the Rapid Center supports over 150 clients per year through business counseling, engineering design, prototype development, and product testing, with a principal focus on regional economic development. The Rapid Center’s leadership and its partners’ successes are made possible with the unique prototyping and test capability in the Center—the ability for a small start-up to see its idea realized in an affordable “one-off” proof of concept.

The Rapid Center is fully engaged in WCU’s cycle of assessment and reporting, as evidenced by the 2016 Annual Assessment Plan and the 2013 External Review (described in 3.3.1.3): Self Study, Visit Schedule, as well as the updated 2016 Program Development Plan.

Off Site Reviewer Comments

WCU notes that “Community engagement and public service are core to WCU’s identity as a regionally engaged university.” The institution also notes several units and initiatives on campus that support/contribute to community engagement. However, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not find clearly defined goals, with expected outcomes and cyclical improvement.

Institutional Response

Institutional Commitment to Community Outreach and Engagement

WCU defines community outreach and engagement as the “alignment and application of University goals and resources to local and regional issues through the development of reciprocal, collaborative partnerships and exchanges” (engagement.wcu.edu). Community outreach and engagement include the exploration and application of knowledge, information, and resources and are prioritized in university mission and vision statements as well as articulated in university core values (2020 Plan).

WCU developed its strategic plan, “2020 Vision: Focusing our Future,” in partnership with a number of institutional representatives as well as external community leaders and members who served both at the executive advisory level and in working groups to develop outcomes, core values, and strategic directions. The articulation of the institutional direction was the result of a year-long conversation and collaboration with community and internal representatives. Through the process, community engagement and outreach became core, integrated components of the university’s strategic plan (About the 2020 Plan).
Mission
Western Carolina University creates learning opportunities that incorporate teaching, research, service, and engagement through on campus, off campus, on-line and international experiences. The university focuses its undergraduate, master’s and three doctoral programs, educational outreach, research, creative, and cultural activities to sustain and improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in Western Carolina and beyond. (Mission Statement)

Core Values and Guiding Principles
- Excellence, Scholarship, Teaching and Learning
- Collaboration with and Respect for our Communities
- Free and Open Interchange of Ideas
- Responsible Stewardship and Organizational Effectiveness
- Organizational and Environmental Sustainability
- Cultural Diversity and Equal Opportunity

Vision
To be a national model for student learning and engagement that embraces its responsibilities as a regionally engaged university. (Mission Statement)

Strategic Directions (three of the five)
1. Fulfill Educational Needs of Our State and Region - WCU's faculty, staff, and students together make the University’s academic mission paramount.
2. Enrich the Total Student Experience - Every WCU student's experience reinforces high standards and expectations, incorporates meaningful external engagement, and instills pride in the University.
3. Enhance Our External Partnerships - WCU is recognized as an active partner within the Western North Carolina region, its communities, organizations, and business.

Cyclical Assessment of Community Outreach and Engagement
Annual assessment of WCU’s progress toward meeting the established goals and outcomes of community outreach and engagement is accomplished by the University’s strategic planning process that incorporates unit level analysis and improvement. For every strategic initiative, including those for community outreach and engagement, a coordinator is assigned the role of overseeing progress toward achievement, documenting improvements resulting from action on the initiative, and ensuring an annual progress report is submitted (Strategic Planning - OIPE). The coordinator, in this case the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies, is authorized to monitor and work with assigned accountable staff throughout the year as required by the community outreach and engagement initiatives. The Strategic Plan Yearly Progress Report, managed through a central online system (Strategic Plan Yearly Progress Report or Compliance Assist), is completed annually in March and published in April. A university-wide open forum is held in late spring to present highlights of improvements/progress made and the Chancellor presents the status report to the Board of Trustees at its annual meeting in June. The cycle repeats annually.

Units that are tasked with implementing community outreach and engagement (e.g., the Center for Service Learning, Educational Outreach, academic colleges, External Affairs, Millennial Initiatives (recreated as Community and Economic Engagement and Innovation), and the Mountain Heritage Center) establish and act on goals and outcomes that support the institutional commitment to community outreach and engagement. The units analyze their progress toward meeting these goals and provide evidence of improvement as part of their annual reports and the strategic planning process (Strategic Planning - OIPE).

Institutional Goals and Outcomes in Community Outreach and Engagement
Western Carolina University has identified the following goals in relation to its commitment to community outreach and engagement.
1. Deliver high-quality academic programs designed to promote regional economic and community
2. Fully integrate into the general education program and into each major and minor at both undergraduate and graduate levels an emphasis on those core abilities expected of all WCU students [including]: to practice civic engagement
3. Foster active citizenship among WCU students
4. Strengthen relationships and communication between the University and its external partners
5. Position the University as a key leader in regional economic and community development efforts.
6. Align internal processes and reward systems to foster external engagement
7. Adequately support scholarship and creative activities in support of WCU's mission as a regional comprehensive university
8. Facilitate a shared understanding of [our] strategic vision among the University's external communities.

The following table depicts 1) goals (clearly defined, overarching, strategic, campus-wide statements that provide desired direction); 2) outcomes (expected achievement resulting from the goals; refined to initiatives level); 3) sample delivery points of the outcomes; 4) cyclical, standard assessment and review mechanisms; and 4) examples of improvements resulting from the goals and outcomes.
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| 1.1 Deliver high-quality academic programs designed to promote regional economic and community development. | a. Undertake a rigorous and inclusive process to prioritize all programs based on universally applied criteria: quality, regional need, demand, enrollment trends, retention and graduation rates, and mission (Initiative 1.1, WCU Strategic Plan)  

b. Increase the number and impact of Service Learning Course Designations (SLC) across the curriculum (designed to connect community and students) (Center for Service Learning, Initiatives 1.1.5, 2.2.1, & 2.2.2). | a. The 2012-13 first Program Prioritization process encompassed a study of academic programs and academic support units to identify, among other goals, those programs within WCU that are or can become collaborators with external partners and/or meet regional need.  
b. Develop a review process and committee for approving courses that meet specific conceptual and practical criteria associated with high-level service-learning courses. | a. Nine comprehensive and detailed criteria were applied to each academic program, including to "discuss program distinction in the region and the state (i.e., community engagement/service, student quality outcomes, faculty contributions to the program in scholarship and creative works, and uniqueness in the state.)" Analysis by a representative committee resulted in assigning the programs to one of four categories for further action.http://www.wcu.edu/learn/office-of-the-provost/program-prioritization/final-report.asp  
b. The tracking of SLC designated course sections across the curriculum, National Survey of Student Engagement data, and the results acquired by the Service Learning Course Assessment (SLCA), which address the following outcomes:  
  • Academic Impact Outcome  
  • Personal Growth Impact Outcome  
  • Community Engagement Impact Outcome | a. Utilizing the results of the program prioritization process, two programs were maintained due to regional need and importance to WCU’s mission (Spanish B. A., Spanish B. S. Ed.); several programs were designated category one partially due to their regional focus and value (Nursing, Environmental Science, Natural Resource Conservation Management, Parks and Recreation Management, Social Work, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Emergency Medical Care, and Recreational Therapy) and targeted for additional investment by WCU.  
http://www.wcu.edu/learn/office-of-the-provost/program-prioritization/final-report.asp  
b. In 2013-2014 the CSL redeveloped the CSL designation process and application based on recommendations from the CSL’s 2013 Program Review. The CSL created the CSL Review subcommittee and the Academic Community Engagement Board, extended the SLC course approval period from 1 semester to 2-year re-approval process, and required applicants to include their assignments in addition to the course syllabus, which has helped increase the number of SLC designations over the past three years.  
2012-2013 – 16 course sections  
2013-2014 – 45 courses sections  
2015-2016 – 61 courses sections |
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<td>1.2 Fully integrate into the general education program and majors/minors at undergraduate/graduate levels an emphasis on those core abilities expected of students: integrate information from a variety of contexts, solve complex problems, communicate effectively and responsibly, practice civic engagement, and clarify and act on purpose and values.</td>
<td>a. Hire faculty and staff who understand and will contribute to WCU’s core educational values, its holistic academic mission, its commitment to outreach and engagement, and the achievement of the institution’s strategic priorities (Initiative 1.2.1, WCU Strategic Plan).</td>
<td>a. The following statement was added to all advertisements for faculty positions: “WCU embraces its role as a regionally engaged university and is designated by the Carnegie Foundation as a community engagement university. Preference will be given to candidates who can demonstrate a commitment to public engagement through their teaching, service, and scholarship.”</td>
<td>a. Each academic department maintains an approved process for faculty evaluation annually and during the promotion and tenure cycles. The processes are reviewed and approved at the dean/college, and the Provost’s level to meet institutional guidelines and mission. (Faculty Activity Database).</td>
<td>b. Improvements have been made on annual faculty evaluations and promotion and tenure decisions which now explicitly reference community outreach and/or engagement:</td>
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<td>b. Increase the number and impact of Service Learning Course Designations (SLC) and community-based courses across the curriculum (Center for Service Learning, Initiatives 1.1.5, 2.2.1, &amp; 2.2.2).</td>
<td>b. Develop a review process and sub-committee for approving courses that meet specific conceptual and practical criteria associated with high-level service-learning courses. This review process includes an end of the semester SL Course Assessment (SLCA) to determine impact on student experience and the all faculty receive the Community-based Activities Survey.(CbAS).</td>
<td>b. The SLCA has items that operationalize the following relevant outcomes (which aggregate back into this overarching goal): Personal Growth Impact Outcome Community Engagement Impact Outcome.</td>
<td>1. The [faculty] statement should present citations of evidence from the candidate’s record in the Faculty Activity Database or other sources that are specifically related to the person’s quality and effectiveness of teaching, scholarship, service/engagement, and promise for sustained performance.</td>
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<td>2. The candidate may include a narrative of up to 500 words describing graduate students supervised, service learning projects, engagement activities, and/or directing student research.</td>
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<td>3. Appendix G Documentation of service and engagement Include representative materials to substantiate significant off-campus and professional service, as relevant.</td>
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<td>b. Data from the SLCA has been collected for the past two years and identifies impact of SL designated courses on students:</td>
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<td>• Personal Growth Impact Outcome (Likert scale, 1–4)</td>
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<td>1. 2014-2015 (n=86) – m=3.41 (agree)</td>
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<td>2. 2015-2016 (n=170) – m=3.31 (agree)</td>
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<td>• Community Engagement Impact Outcome (Likert scale, 1–4)</td>
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<td>1. 2014-2015 (n=86) – m=3.38 (agree)</td>
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<td>2. 2015-2016 (n=170)– m=3.29 (agree)</td>
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<td>Recommendation 1: Data collected from the CbAS highlighted those faculty who were including community-based activities in their courses.</td>
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<td>Action 1: The CSL followed-up with these faculty members to determine/discuss how to make the course to community connection stronger and move appropriate courses to a level for SLC designation application.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 2: CbAS data highlighted some of the professional development needs of faculty.</td>
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<td>Action 2a: Those faculty members who are doing high-levels of community-based activities within their courses receive invitations to faculty development sessions on integrating reflection methods into courses, or crafting high-level learning outcomes, or approaching community partners.</td>
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<td>Action 2b: There is a sub-committee of the Academic Community Engagement Board that is designing a Faculty Development Institute specifically for faculty who are wanting to build an SL-designated course or produce a scholarly output.</td>
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<td>2.2 Foster active citizenship among WCU students.</td>
<td>a. Create a culture of participating in the democratic process as demonstrated by large percentages of students who are registered to vote and who vote (Initiative 2.2.5, WCU Strategic Plan).</td>
<td>With a specific initiative housed within the Center for Service Learning (the Democracy Coalition), develop, implement, and support a student-oriented and driven structure for organizing and preparing students on voter registration, education, activation, and celebration efforts associated with democratic processes.</td>
<td>a. The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report tracks full- and mid-term election voter registration and voter activation rates. We have used this report to help understand our voter registration and activation rates and how we can improve this engagement.</td>
<td>a. Based on NSLVE data collected on the presidential election cycle in 2012 (registered UG students: 6,579 of 8,958; UG students voted: 4,565 of 8,958 = 51% of student body) and the mid-term election cycle in 2014 (registered students: 6,680 of 9,478; students voted: 1,750 of 9,478 = 18% of student body) discussions were facilitated across campus and with the Jackson County Board of Elections.</td>
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<td>b. Analyze the impact of curricular service-learning experiences on students' perception of impact on their personal growth (individual development) and community/civic engagement (comprehension of responsibility) (Center for Service Learning, Initiatives 1.1.1, 1.1.2).</td>
<td>b. Center for Service Learning (CSL) co-curricular programming (through direct impact, awareness/advocacy, and donation/philanthropic programming) and the Lily Community Engagement Program. This program tracks and monitors student volunteer engagement through all sanctioned CSL programming.</td>
<td>b. The Lily Community Engagement Program distributes an assessment and reflection tool to all participants following every sanctioned Center for Service Learning program. The assessment and reflection tool is completed by student volunteers within 5-business days of completing the service experience. The assessment focuses on the following outcomes:</td>
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<td><strong>3.1 Strengthen relationships and communication between the University and its external partners.</strong></td>
<td>a. Establish an annual leadership tour of the Western North Carolina region designed to reinforce WCU’s connection with its external constituents and to update University leadership consistently about regional and local priorities (Initiative 3.1.2, WCU Strategic Plan).</td>
<td>a. Established in 2013, the annual regional tour engages WCU executive members, regional partners, and members of the WCU Leadership Academy in collaborative ways.</td>
<td>a. WCU Regional Tour evaluation and assessment instrument and focus groups.</td>
<td>Recommend 1: Data from WCU participants suggested that the tour was too long and that a clear and intentional structure was missing. Programming needed to be tied directly to campus priorities.</td>
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<td>b. Establish the appropriate leadership and organizational structure at WCU to support, coordinate, and facilitate external partnerships and collaborations (Initiative 3.1.3, WCU Strategic Plan).</td>
<td>b. Created and hired the Executive Director of Millennial Initiatives position within the Provost’s Office and the Director of External Relations in the Chief of Staff’s Office who are responsible for cultivating community and economic development initiatives between the University and the wider-WNC region and maintaining communication with external and internal constituents.</td>
<td>b1. The annual LEAD:WNC survey evaluation &amp; assessment, results from regional economic impact reports, and success of the bond referendum campaign (supported by voter turnout). b2. Focus groups facilitated with external constituents through the Biltmore Park Strategic Planning process were key sources for informing the development of a new program.</td>
<td>Recommend 2: Organize a pre-tour meet-and-greet opportunity so tour members can better know one another and understand the larger purpose of the tour.</td>
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<td>b2. Established the official WCU-Biltmore Park instructional site in Asheville and focus both Biltmore Park’s and Educational Outreach’s missions on explicitly sustaining and improving individual lives and enhancing economic and community development in Western North Carolina and beyond.</td>
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<td>Recommend 3: Obtain additional points of evaluation and assessment that includes responses from external regional partners who are involved in the leadership tour to ensure they are meeting their goals through this partnership.</td>
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- The development of the North Carolina state bond referendum advocacy and awareness campaign that led to the approval of a $110 million bond designated to replace the current WCU Science Building. This campaign helped WCU students vote at a higher rate that the general voting population (37% WCU voting rate vs. 36% NC voting rate).
- An economic impact study demonstrating WCU’s economic impact on the WNC region, which led to an award from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education commending the campaign articulating this economic impact.
- Developed an advocacy website to serve as a tool to provide external and internal stakeholders with information to confidently speak about WCU’s legislative agenda and needs. A revamp of the website is being facilitated in order to find a more streamlined approach for regular communication with external advocates.

b2. Educational Outreach has partnerships with constituents across the Western NC region.

Recommendation: The Biltmore Park Strategic Planning focus groups suggested the development of a non-credit certificate in non-profit management.

Action: Educational Outreach has developed a new non-credit certificate in non-profit management that is nationally recognized by the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance.

The Biltmore Park instructional site serves as a community engagement space within the Asheville community. This responsibility and purpose was confirmed through the strategic planning process.

Recommendation: To expand the external partnerships between Biltmore Park and regional organizations of all types.

Action: Biltmore Park has grown partnerships with entities from Business & Industry (e.g., Borg Warner, ThermoFisher), Health Care (e.g., Mission Health, Pardee Hospital), Education (e.g., AB Tech, UNC-Asheville), non-profit (Asheville Art Museum, the Collider (climate science)), Government Agencies (e.g., City of Asheville, Asheville Chamber of Commerce), and Community Institutions (Aphasia Clinic, conferences).

Recommendation: To grow educational programs that meet community needs and WCU’s mission.

Action: WCU Biltmore Park site now offers degree completion programs in Engineering, Hospitality & Tourism, and Nursing based on the alignment between regional workforce development opportunities in the region. The position is now referred to as the Executive Director for Community and Economic Engagement and Innovation.
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<td>3.2 Position the University as a key leader in Regional economic and community development efforts.</td>
<td>a. Facilitate an annual conference for regional government, nonprofit, community, education, and business leaders to focus attention and action on regional strategies for economic and community development (Initiative 3.2.1, WCU Strategic Plan).&lt;br&gt;b. Work with external partners to facilitate economic and community development in Jackson County and participate in the formation of formalized community leadership that can serve as the voice of the community as it anticipates growth and development (Initiative 3.2.4, WCU Strategic Plan).</td>
<td>a. Annual LEAD:WNC Conference and LEAD:Discipline Specific Conferences designed to invite leaders from across the region to collaborate on ideas and solutions to our region’s greatest challenges and opportunities.&lt;br&gt;b. WCU-Dillsboro Partnership was established to assist the small tourist town of Dillsboro with its economic recovery by matching WCU expertise/resources with Dillsboro’s challenges and opportunities to help the town revive.&lt;br&gt;c. In collaboration with the Small Business Technology &amp; Development Center, the College of Business manages project-based learning capstone experiences in the Master of Business Administration and Bachelor of Science in Business Administration programs.</td>
<td>a. The annual LEAD:WNC survey evaluation and assessment.&lt;br&gt;b. Focus group session facilitated with Dillsboro Partnership constituents. The report entitled, “Estimating the Economic Impact of GSMR Turntable and Spur/Steam Engine/Train Depot in Towns of Dillsboro, Jackson County, NC” (Ha &amp; Grunwell, 2013) to estimate the economic and fiscal impact of the GSMR in Dillsboro.&lt;br&gt;c. Assessment is on an individual project basis and is a combination of faculty and assigned business/community partner evaluation.</td>
<td>a. After organizing the LEAD:WNC Regional Leadership Conference and upon analysis of data collected during that conference, it was apparent that additional, smaller discipline-centric LEAD conferences were needed. For example, following the first LEAD:WNC conferences and six additional on more discipline-centric conferences focused specifically on LEAD:TOURISM, LEAD: EDUCATION, LEAD:ARTS, LEAD:HEALTH CARE, and LEAD:INNOVATION. This shift from formal LEAD:WNC conference to discipline-centric have been valuable to helping position WCU as a key leader in regional engagement efforts.&lt;br&gt;Across these LEAD focused conferences, over 1,200 regional leaders have engaged with WCU.&lt;br&gt;b. Through this process numerous improvements have been made within the Dillsboro community. The primary improvements, documented through focus group reflections facilitated in 2014, was the &quot;attitude shift&quot; in the leaders of Business community, providing the &quot;building blocks... to keep going forward,&quot; and helping set the stage to bring 10 new businesses to Dillsboro in the past three years (see p. 10, Carnegie Report).&lt;br&gt;b. 66 Capstone projects resulting in 14,467 engagement hours were facilitated in 2015 and each of these projects addressed a specific challenge being faced within a local business, non-profit, government organization, etc. All 66 projects resulted in satisfactory responses and evaluations from faculty and partners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal 4.4: Adequately support scholarship and creative activities in support of WCU’s mission as a regional comprehensive university. This goal is aligned with the outcomes, delivery points, and review tools described above in Goal 1.2 (integrate core ability of practicing civic engagement) and Goal 3.3 (aligning internal processes to foster and reward external engagement).

Goal 6.2: Facilitate a shared understanding of [our] strategic vision among the University’s external communities. This goal is aligned with the outcomes, delivery points, and review tools described above in Goal 3.1 (strengthen relationships with external partners) and Goal 3.2 (position WCU as a leader in the region).

Sources

- MHC
- MHC AAM Characteristics of Excellence
- MHC Gallery Checklist 2016-2
- MHC Haunted Tour Focus Group
- MHC Haunted Tour Survey Results
- MHC Kephart Dwell-Time Research
- MHC Kephart exhibit notes
- MHC MHD 2015 Steering Committee Debrief
- MHC MHD Online Survey
- MHC Post-visit Survey
- MHC Program Development Update 063015
- MHC Review Report
- MHC Sample GA Work Plan
- MHC Student Worker Orientation Checklist
- MHC Worker Evaluation of MHC
- NEW 3.3.1.5 Focused Report Evidence
- 10-NSSE2015_High-Impact_Practices
- 11-NSSE2015_Frequencies_and_Statistical_Comparisons
- 1-2020 CSL Mission, Vision, Directions

Goal 4.4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal (Strategic Plan)</th>
<th>Specific Example Outcome(s)</th>
<th>Example Program Delivery Point(s)</th>
<th>Assessment &amp; Review Tool(s)</th>
<th>Improvement Example(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. Align internal processes and reward systems to foster external engagement amongst faculty (Center for Service Learning, Initiatives 4.1.1, 4.1.3, &amp; 4.1.5).</td>
<td>Identifying the annual recipient of the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Community Engagement. In addition to this, the CSL manages the Annual Awards Ceremony, which includes five different faculty/staff award categories and the Community-based Activities Survey in conjunction with the STAR Project Recognitions process.</td>
<td>The CbAS STAR Project Recognitions are selected by an ad hoc committee on an annual basis.</td>
<td>b. Developing and awarding the recognition for Excellence in Community Engagement (winners, established 2014) to the following faculty has helped clarify the “meaning” of community engagement and set the bar on campus:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 2014 Professor Betty Farmer (Communications)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 2015 Associate Professor Patricia Bricker (Education)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 2016 Professor Todd Collins (Political Science)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Community-based Activities Survey has been a valuable tool in tracking, measuring, and monitoring community-based learning across campus. One specific area that has been improved is focused on clarifying the “meaning” of service-learning and community engagement on our campus. The concrete examples provided by the STAR Project Recognition vignettes are valuable for demonstrating the many forms community engagement can take across the disciplines.
Case Media Award
Compliance Assist_planning
Strategic_Plan_2020
wcu office wins case media relations award for economic impact project_the reporter
western carolina university - academic community engagement
western carolina university - strategic planning
western carolina university - wcu 2020 plan
western carolina university - wcu mission statement
2011_mhc_externalreviewreport
2011_mhc_selfstudy
2011_mhc_selfstudy_appendices
2011_mhc_unitdevelopmentplan
2011_mhc_visitschedule
2012 MHC Museum Assessment Report
2013-crpr_visitschedule
2013-crpr-selfstudy
2015 CKEC Annual Plan
2015 MHC PDP
2015-ckec-externalreviewreport
2015-ckec-selfstudy
2015-ckec-selfstudy-mou
2015-ckec-selfstudy-surveyresults
2015-ckec-unitdevelopmentplan
2015-ckec-visitschedule
2016 CRPR Annual Assessment Plan
2016 CRPR PDP update
2016 CSL Annual Report
2016 EO Annual Report
2016 MHC Annual Report
2016 MHC PDP
Academic Community Engagement Home
Carnegie Community Engagement Application Highlights
Carnegie Community Engagement Full Application
Community Partner Directory, CSL
Community Partner Survey
Curriculum-Based Community Engagement Faculty Survey
LEAD Strategic Planning Committee Minutes
Lily Community Engagement Overview
Lily Evaluation & Reflection
Mission Statement
NSSE - Civic Engagement Module
SLC Designation Application
SLCD Assessment & Evaluation
Strategic Direction 1
Strategic Direction 2
Strategic Direction 3
Strategic Plan Yearly Progress Report
UNC Engagement Metrics
WCU NASCE
3.4.11

Educational Programs: All: Academic program coordination

For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration.

Judgment

- Compliance
- Partial Compliance
- Non-Compliance
- Not Applicable

Narrative

Program coordination, curriculum development, and review are the responsibilities of academically qualified faculty, as determined by University curriculum and employment practices and by assignment of responsibilities. Article IV Section 1.2 of the Faculty Constitution of Western Carolina University (Section 3.02 of the Faculty Handbook) affirms that the Faculty of a College shall have primary responsibility within broader policy guidelines of the University, for curriculum, courses, method of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process.

Section 14.0 of the Faculty Handbook (Policies and Procedures for Curriculum Development and Revision) details the direct roles and responsibilities of the departmental faculty in the curriculum process. The primary responsibility for curriculum development and revision rests with the faculty working with the program. All curricular changes, however, are reviewed by the entire departmental faculty, the curriculum committee of the college, and other affected approving bodies. Five University-wide groups have responsibility for reviewing proposed changes in the curriculum. These are the Liberal Studies Committee, the Graduate Council, the Professional Education Council, the University Curriculum Committee, and the Faculty Senate (Faculty Handbook Section II.10.1). Specific processes, instructions, and forms for curricular revision are described in Academic Procedures and Regulations (APR) 17: Curricular Proposal Guide.

Direct oversight of academic programs, including majors, is the responsibility of the department head. The Faculty Handbook of Western Carolina University (Section 3.02 Article V Section 5.3 ) specifies that the department head is responsible for, among other things, oversight of all matters pertinent to the departmental curriculum, including instructional standards, methods, materials, and quality, advisement and other work with students, and the planning, evaluating, and proposing changes and additions in courses and programs.

In departments that offer degrees at several levels, or offer degrees in more than one discipline, program oversight may be delegated to a program director or coordinator. Academic program directors, who may also be the department head, are faculty members and must have a terminal degree in the program field or otherwise be qualified through a combination of academic degrees and work experience (see Program Director tables below). Duties of program directors are outlined in APR 1: Academic Program Director Guidelines. As described in APR 1 and depending on the position in the department, responsibilities may include oversight and faculty recruitment, faculty load adjustment, and evaluation.

Table 3.4.11-1 below lists programs and degree type by colleges with the respective Program Coordinator’s name, highest earned degree, and field. Each Coordinator’s name is linked to their curriculum vitae. An examination of this information demonstrates that more than 90% of program coordinators have a terminal degree in the program field. The exceptions include the following programs and individuals:

Table 3.4.11-1: Programs and Degree type by College with Program Coordinator’s Name, Field, & Credentials

Inspection of CVs demonstrate their alternative qualifications, based on professional experience, licensure, or other demonstrated competency.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name: *</th>
<th>Program Degree</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Coordinator for Program</th>
<th>Highest Earned Degree and Field</th>
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<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Kathleen Brennan</td>
<td>Sociology, Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>BS</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Kathleen Brennan</td>
<td>Sociology, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forensic Anthropology</td>
<td>BS</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Nicholas Passalacqua</td>
<td>Anthropology, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Biology</td>
<td>BS</td>
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<td>Tom Martin</td>
<td>Biology, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Biology</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Sabine Rundle</td>
<td>Plant Biology, Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology Education, 9-12</td>
<td>MAT</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Sabine Rundle</td>
<td>Plant Biology, Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>BS</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>David Evanoff</td>
<td>Analytical Chemistry, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Carmen Huffman</td>
<td>Chemistry, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cherokee Studies Certificate</td>
<td>PB</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Jane Eastman</td>
<td>Anthropology, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
<td>BS</td>
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<td>Don Connelly</td>
<td>Mass Communication, M.A.</td>
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<td>AS</td>
<td>Sabine Rundle</td>
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<td>BS</td>
<td>AS</td>
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<td>Computing and Information Systems, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>English</td>
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<td>German</td>
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<td>Will Lehman</td>
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<td>Political Science, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>History, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Alberto Centeno Pulido</td>
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<td>American History, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Spanish, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Teaching English as a</td>
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<td>Eleanor Petrone</td>
<td>Education Curriculum, Culture, and</td>
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**College of Business (BS)**

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<td>Computer Information Systems</td>
<td>BSBA</td>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Danial Clapper</td>
<td>Decision Sciences, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>BS</td>
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<td>Strategic Management and Entrepreneurship, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>BSBA</td>
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<td>Robert Carton</td>
<td>Strategic Management and Entrepreneurship, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Finance</td>
<td>BSBA</td>
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<td>Grace Allen</td>
<td>Economics, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Hospitality Management</td>
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<td>Agricultural Economics, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sport Management</td>
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**College of Education and Allied Professions (EA)**

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Faculty Name</th>
<th>Faculty Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Birth-Kindergarten (O)</td>
<td>Undergrad</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Cathy Grist</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education and Teaching, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Clinical Mental Health Counseling</td>
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<td>Family Studies, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Education - Elementary Education (K-6)</td>
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<td>Roya Scales</td>
<td>Curriculum and Instruction, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>EA</td>
<td>Roya Scales</td>
<td>Curriculum and Instruction, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>EA</td>
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<td>Human Ecology, major in Community Health Education, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Educational Leadership and Administration, General, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>EA</td>
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<td>Educational Leadership and Administration, General, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Educational Supervision</td>
<td>MAED</td>
<td>EA</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Ed. Admin/C&amp;I, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>EA</td>
<td>Kia Asberg</td>
<td>Clinical Psychology, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>MA</td>
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<td>Tom Ford</td>
<td>Social Psychology, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<td>EA</td>
<td>Windy Gordon</td>
<td>Experimental Psychology, Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
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<td>Marv Schade</td>
<td>Health Education, M.Ed.</td>
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<td>Higher Education Student Affairs</td>
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<td>EA</td>
<td>April Perry</td>
<td>Higher Education-Student Development, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Parks and Recreation Management</td>
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<td>EA</td>
<td>Ben Tholkes</td>
<td>Parks, Recreation and Leisure Studies, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Urban Educational Leadership, Ed.D.</td>
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<td>EA</td>
<td>Lisen Roberts</td>
<td>Family Studies, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Psychology</td>
<td>M SSP</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Lori Unruh</td>
<td>School Psychology, Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary (9-12) &amp; Special Subjects (K-12)</td>
<td>Undergrad</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Sarah Meltzer</td>
<td>Educational Leadership, Ed.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary (9-12) &amp; Special Subjects (K-12)</td>
<td>Grad</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Sarah Meltzer</td>
<td>Educational Leadership, Ed.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Graduation Year</td>
<td>Field of Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Education - Inclusive Education</td>
<td>Undergrad</td>
<td>Marissa Ray</td>
<td>Special Education, Behavior Disorders, M.A.Ed.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education (K-12)</td>
<td>Grad</td>
<td>Karen K. Cooper-Duffy</td>
<td>Special Education (Severe Disabilities), Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talent Search</td>
<td>Grad</td>
<td>Todd Murdock</td>
<td>School Counseling, M.A.Ed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Education - Social Sciences</td>
<td>MAED</td>
<td>Elizabeth McRae</td>
<td>American History, Ph.D.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**College of Fine and Performing Arts (FP)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Graduation Year</th>
<th>Field of Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Seth McCormick</td>
<td>Art History, Ph.D.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>BFA</td>
<td>Erin Tapley</td>
<td>Art Education, Ph.D.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Education</td>
<td>BSED</td>
<td>Erin Tapley</td>
<td>Art Education, Ph.D.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Education, K-12</td>
<td>MAT</td>
<td>Erin Tapley</td>
<td>Art Education, Ph.D.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art, Studio</td>
<td>BFA</td>
<td>Ron Laboray</td>
<td>Painting, M.F.A.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Education - Art</td>
<td>MAED</td>
<td>Erin Tapley</td>
<td>Art Education, Ph.D.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Education - Music</td>
<td>Undergrad</td>
<td>Michael Shallock</td>
<td>Music Education, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>minor</td>
<td>Ashlee Wasmund</td>
<td>Acting, M.F.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>MFA</td>
<td>Tom Ashcraft</td>
<td>Studio Art/Sculpture, M.F.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interior Design</td>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Erin Adams</td>
<td>Interior Design, M.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Michael Shallock</td>
<td>Music Education, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>BM</td>
<td>Michael Shallock</td>
<td>Music Education, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Industry</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Michael Shallock</td>
<td>Music Education, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Education</td>
<td>BSED</td>
<td>John West</td>
<td>Music Education, Ph.D.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Education</td>
<td>BM</td>
<td>John West</td>
<td>Music Education, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre</td>
<td>BFA</td>
<td>Claire Eye</td>
<td>Performance, M.F.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre/Musical Theatre</td>
<td>BFA</td>
<td>Katya Stanislavskaya</td>
<td>Musical Theater Writing, M.F.A.</td>
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</table>

**College of Health and Human Sciences (HH)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Graduation Year</th>
<th>Field of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletic Training Sports Medicine</td>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Jill Manners</td>
<td>Physical Therapy, Ph.D.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Sciences and Disorders</td>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Bill Ogletreet</td>
<td>Speech-Language Pathology, Ph.D.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Sciences and Disorders</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Bill Ogletreet</td>
<td>Speech-Language Pathology, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culturally-based Native Health Certificate (FF/O)</td>
<td>certificate</td>
<td>Lisa Lefler</td>
<td>Anthropology, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dietetic Internship Program</td>
<td>Post Bac</td>
<td>Sherry Robison</td>
<td>Clinical Nutrition, M.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency and Disaster Management</td>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Carlie Mertitt</td>
<td>Criminal Justice, M.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Medical Care</td>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Melissa McNeil</td>
<td>Education, M.H.S. (residential)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Medical Care</td>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Mike Hubble (online)</td>
<td>Policy Sciences, Ph.D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Health</td>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Tracy Zontek</td>
<td>Environmental Health, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Nurse Practitioner Certificate/Nurse Educator Certificate (O)</td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Tamera Pearson</td>
<td>Nursing, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Sciences (O)</td>
<td>MHS</td>
<td>Brian Raming</td>
<td>Industrial Psychology, Ph.D. Health Care Management, MBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Information Administration (Inactive)</td>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Mary Teslow</td>
<td>Library and Information Science, MLIS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Educator/Nurse Administrator/Nurse Anesthesia/Family Nurse Practitioner (FF/O)</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Ramona Whichello/Ramona Whichello/Shawn Collins/Tamera Pearson</td>
<td>DNP/ DNP/ Leadership, Ph.D./ Nursing, Ph.D./ Nursing, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nursing (FF/O)</td>
<td>BSN</td>
<td>DNP</td>
<td>DNP</td>
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</table>

**College of Health and Human Sciences (HH)**
Academic Program Coordination for the Jamaica and Colombia Programs

Program coordination for the Jamaica program is shared by the College of Education and Allied Professions in Cullowhee, North Carolina and the on-site coordinator indicated in the Jamaica Program Contractual Agreement between On-Site Coordinator and Inter-Regional Center, Inc. (appendix A of self-study) with WCU maintaining control of the content of all undergraduate and graduate programs through syllabi, assigned readings, and course learning objectives established on campus through the standard curriculum approval procedures. The On-Site coordinator frequently communicates with University administrators through telephone and electronic media when questions related to curriculum arise. Further, WCU faculty members routinely travel to Jamaica to teach classes, visit local schools, and advise students. The 2015 Jamaica Program Accreditation Self-Study includes a Program Functional Chart (p. 109) that identifies the Dean of the College of Education and Allied Professions as having the final authority for all undergraduate and graduate academic programs.

The MA.Ed program in Colombia is offered at a less regular frequency. When the director at one of the international schools has enough teachers interested in pursuing the degree, he/she contacts the Division of Educational Outreach and the MA.Ed. International Concentration coordinator. Applicants (teachers in the school) are bi-lingual native Colombians, or native English-speaking teachers, often from Canada or the United States. The MA.Ed. coordinator works with the international school director to schedule the program cohort over a two-year period. The program coordinator recruits faculty to build MA.Ed. classes that are delivered face-to-face for seven or eight sessions, and then completed in Blackboard.

To continuously monitor program effectiveness, cohorts in the Jamaican and Colombian programs fill out feedback surveys which are summarized for reporting purposes. Also, see pages 59, 68-70, and 171-182 of the 2015 Jamaica Program Accreditation Self-Study.

Off Site Reviewer Comments
Within the departments, the department heads have primary responsibility and oversight. The institution provide curriculum vita for each of the department heads, and when appropriate, faculty directors or coordinators. For those who do not have the terminal degrees, other criteria considered are a combination of academic degrees and work experience. The institution provided data that indicated 90 percent of coordinators have a terminal degree. However, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not determine

Institutional Response
Reviewer comment: "The institution provided data that indicated 90 percent of coordinators have a terminal degree. However, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not determine"
In response to the off-site reviewer’s comments, each of these program directors had new AA21s completed recently in order to better display their qualifications. Please see the original Compliance Report narrative for 3.7.1, which describes the AA21. Additional qualifications and justifications have been added for these program directors below.
3.5.4

Educational Programs: Undergraduate: Terminal degrees of faculty
At least 25 percent of the course hours in each major at the baccalaureate level are taught by faculty members holding an appropriate terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate or the equivalent of the terminal degree.

Judgment
☒ Compliance    ☐ Partial Compliance    ☐ Non-Compliance    ☐ Not Applicable

Narrative
The tables below summarize the number and percent of course hours in each baccalaureate program that were taught by faculty members holding an appropriate terminal degree during the fall 2015 and spring 2016 semesters. The 2015-2016 Undergraduate Academic Catalog was used to find information about programs and coursework. As shown in the tables below, which are separated according to college, 25 percent or more of the course hours in every baccalaureate major were taught by faculty members holding an appropriate terminal degree. On average, 87% of the course credit hours were taught by faculty holding the appropriate terminal degree using the method below.

The percent of course hours taught by faculty with the appropriate terminal degree was calculated according to the Non-Duplicated Credit Hours method. The NDCH method was explained by Daniel S. Mynatt at the December 2015 SACSCOC Annual Meeting (page 6). The calculation is shown below.

\[ \% = 100 \times \left( \frac{\text{# of credit hours for each unique course in the major taught by terminally-degreed faculty}}{\text{# of credit hours for each unique course in the major}} \right) \]

The term "unique course" refers to the fact that only one section was used for the calculation in courses that contain multiple sections.

In general, the following types of courses are included in the calculation:

- core requirements
- additional requirements for residential students (Criminal Justice B.S. residential)
- concentration core courses (Criminal Justice B.S. for distance learning)
- required theory, practical, research and professional courses (Communication B.S.)
- required gateway and capstone courses (English B.A.)
- core competencies (International Studies B.A.)
- business core requirements (All B.S.B.A. majors in the College of Business)
- professional education sequence courses

In general, the following types of courses are not included in the calculation:

- liberal studies (general education) courses
- electives
- prerequisite courses
- required courses that were not offered/taught during the Fall 2015 - Spring 2016 academic year

The tables for each college, disaggregated by site and mode of delivery can be found in the list below:

College of Arts and Sciences
College of Business
College of Education and Allied Professions
College of Engineering and Technology
College of Fine and Performing Arts
College of Health and Human Sciences

Majors with Concentrations

Majors were not disaggregated by concentration. All possible courses in all concentrations for a major were combined. The total number of course credit hours required (column S) includes the required core courses plus the required concentration courses and/or additional required courses. No elective courses are included. There are no repeats; courses are counted only once per major (e.g. if a course appears in multiple concentrations, it is counted once).

Distance Programs

For majors that are offered as distance programs (e.g. B.S. Criminal Justice), calculations are based only on courses offered as 'distance'. Residential courses are not included in the calculation because residential students are not permitted to enroll in distance courses. (please see page 29 of 2015-16 Undergraduate Catalog)
Banner course designations

Please see the Instructional Method Description document for a list of instructional methods and their corresponding codes in Banner. HFACE, "Hybrid: Primarily Face-to-Face" are considered to be face-to-face courses in the table calculations above. HWEB, "Hybrid: Primarily Web" are considered to be online courses in the table calculations above.

College-specific notes:

College of Business

- The total number of course credit hours required for a major or concentration in the College of Business equals 36 credit hours in the Business Core plus the required credit hours in a particular major. For example, the total number of course credit hours for Accounting B.S.B.A is 57 (36 credit hours in the Business Core and 21 credit hours in the major).

College of Education and Allied Professions

- Elementary Education B.S.Ed. – The total number of course credit hours required for the major includes 47 credit hours from major courses, 24 credit hours from the professional education sequence, and 18 credit hours from the second academic concentration. The program includes 10 different concentrations. Please see the Elementary Education, B.S.Ed. program description.
- Middle Grades B.S.Ed. - The total number of course credit hours required for the major includes 47 credit hours from major courses, 27 credit hours from the professional education sequence, and 23-27 credit hours in the concentration. The program includes 4 different concentrations. Please see the Middle Grades Education, B.S.Ed. program description.
- Science Education B.S.Ed. - The total number of course credit hours required for the major includes 65 credit hours in major courses, 23 course credit hours from the professional education sequence (23 course credit hours), and 3 credit hours from the capstone course. The program offers 4 different concentrations. As an example, please see the Science Education (Concentration in Biology), B.S.Ed. program description.
- Middle Grades B.S.Ed. (Jamaica Program) - The total number of course credit hours required for the major or concentration includes 12 credit hours in the Professional Core, 6 credit hours of additional Liberal Studies courses, and 18 credit hours in the concentration as outlined in the WCU Jamaica Self-Study on pages 25-28.

College of Health and Human Sciences

- Nursing, B.S.N. Degree/RN to BSN Program – The total number of course credit hours required for the major or concentration includes 24 credit hours of online core WCU RN to BSN courses.
- Nursing, B.S.N. Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses (RIBN) Program - The program’s first three years are hosted on a community college’s campus, with one class each semester taken online through WCU. Please see Comprehensive 3.4.4 for a description of articulation agreements. Upon successful completion of the first three years, students then finish the fourth year of classes through WCU Programs at Biltmore Park. For this program, 24 total course credit hours are included which are earned in the fourth year (12 semester hours in Fall and 12 semester hours in Spring).

College of Engineering and Technology

- Engineering Technology B.S. (Engineering and Technical Operations Concentration) (Distance) - The curriculum is designed for career-focused working adults who wish to pursue their degree through part-time study. The first two years of the program may be taken at any North Carolina Community College or on campus in Cullowhee. Students receive instruction through online courses and evening classes at off-site locations. The total number of course credit hours includes only the ETO Program Requirements and ETO Lower Level Core courses as those are required courses in the program and may be taken through WCU.

Off Site Reviewer Comments

The institution used the "Non-duplicated Credit Hours" method (as presented by Mynatt in 2015 at SACSCOC Annual Meeting) to calculate the percentage of faculty holding the terminal degree. Courses excluded from the calculation were liberal studies (general education) courses, electives, prerequisite courses, and required courses not offered or taught during the Fall 2015 - Spring 2016 academic year. The method used to calculate the percentage of courses taught by those holding the terminal degree does not include repeats ("There are no repeats; courses are counted only once per major."). Therefore, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not determine if all sections of a course (where those holding terminal degree handle one section; those without the terminal degree teach another section) were included in the calculation. Additionally, the reviewers did not locate a list of degrees the institution considers "terminal" and used in the determination of 25 percent of the course hours in each major at the baccalaureate level are taught by those holding an appropriate terminal degree.

Institutional Response

Reviewer comments: "the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not determine if all sections of a course (where those holding terminal degree handle one section; those without the terminal degree teach another section) were included in the calculation. Additionally, the reviewers did not locate a list of degrees the institution considers "terminal" and used in the determination of 25 percent of the course hours in each major at the baccalaureate level are taught by those holding an appropriate terminal degree."

NOTE - most of the content of this narrative is similar to the original, however the method for calculating % courses taught by an instructor with a terminal degree is different. All content that is new is displayed in red.

The tables below summarize the number and percent of course hours in each baccalaureate program that were taught by faculty members holding an appropriate terminal degree during the fall 2015 and spring 2016 semesters. The 2015-2016 Undergraduate Academic Catalog was used to find information about programs and coursework. Program directors, faculty, and commonly accepted practice were used to assemble a table of degrees that are considered terminal in each major. The links below list terminal degrees for each undergraduate major program and were confirmed by each Department Head at WCU:

List of Terminal Degrees by College
College of Arts and Sciences
College of Business
College of Education and Allied Professions
As shown in the tables below, which are separated according to college, 25 percent or more of the course hours in every baccalaureate major were taught by faculty members holding an appropriate terminal degree. On average, 69% of the course credit hours were taught by faculty holding the appropriate terminal degree using the method below.

The percent of course hours taught by faculty with the appropriate terminal degree was calculated according to the formula below using data for Fall 2015 and Spring 2016.

The calculation: \[ 100 \times \left( \frac{\text{the total number of credit hours produced in the major taught by instructors with a terminal degree}}{\text{the total number of credit hours produced in the major}} \right) \]

NOTE: All sections of courses are included in the calculation.

In general, the following types of courses are included in the calculation:

- core requirements
- additional requirements for residential students (Criminal Justice B.S. residential)
- concentration core courses (Criminal Justice B.S. for distance learning)
- required theory, practical, research and professional courses (Communication B.S.)
- required gateway and capstone courses (English B.A.)
- core competencies (International Studies B.A.)
- business core requirements (All B.S.B.A. majors in the College of Business)
- professional education sequence courses

In general, the following types of courses are not included in the calculation:

- liberal studies (general education) courses
- electives
- prerequisite courses
- required courses that were not offered/taught during the Fall 2015 - Spring 2016 academic year

The tables for each college, disaggregated by site and mode of delivery can be found in the list below:

- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Business
- College of Education and Allied Professions
- College of Engineering and Technology
- College of Fine and Performing Arts
- College of Health and Human Sciences

Majors with Concentrations

Majors were not disaggregated by concentration. All possible courses in all concentrations for a major were combined. The total number of course credit hours required (column 5) includes the required core courses plus the required concentration courses and/or additional required courses. No elective courses are included. There are no repeats; courses are counted only once per major (e.g. if a course appears in multiple concentrations, it is counted once).

Distance Programs

For majors that are offered as distance programs (e.g. B.S. Criminal Justice), calculations are based only on courses offered as 'distance'. Residential courses are not included in the calculation because residential students are not permitted to enroll in distance courses. (please see page 29 of 2015-16 Undergraduate Catalog)

Banner course designations

Please see the Instructional Method Description document for a list of instructional methods and their corresponding codes in Banner. HFACE, "Hybrid: Primarily Face-to-Face" are considered to be face-to-face courses in the table calculations above. HWEB, "Hybrid: Primarily Web" are considered to be online courses in the table calculations above.

College-specific notes:

College of Business

- The total number of course credit hours required for a major or concentration in the College of Business equals 36 credit hours in the Business Core plus the required credit hours in a particular major. For example, the total number of course credit hours for Accounting B.S.B.A is 57 (36 credit hours in the Business Core and 21 credit hours in the major).

College of Education and Allied Professions

- Elementary Education B.S.ED. – The total number of course credit hours required for the major includes 47 credit hours from major courses, 24 credit hours from the professional education sequence, and 18 credit hours from the second academic concentration. The program includes 10 different concentrations. Please see the Elementary Education, B.S.ED. program description.
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- Science Education B.S.ED. – The total number of course credit hours required for the major includes 65 credit hours in major courses, 23 course credit hours from the professional education sequence (23 course credit hours), and 3 credit hours from the capstone
course. The program offers 4 different concentrations. As an example, please see the Science Education (Concentration in Biology), B.S.Ed. program description.

- Middle Grades B.S.Ed. (Jamaica Program) - The total number of course credit hours required for the major or concentration includes 12 credit hours in the Professional Core, 6 credit hours of additional Liberal Studies courses, and 18 credit hours in the concentration as outlined in the WCU Jamaica Self-Study on pages 25-28.

College of Health and Human Sciences

- Nursing, B.S.N. Degree/RN to BSN Program - The total number of course credit hours required for the major or concentration includes 24 credit hours of online core WCU RN to BSN courses.
- Nursing, B.S.N. Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses (RIBN) Program - The program’s first three years are hosted on a community college’s campus, with one class each semester taken online through WCU. Please see Comprehensive 3.4.4 for a description of articulation agreements. Upon successful completion of the first three years, students then finish the fourth year of classes through WCU Programs at Biltmore Park. For this program, 24 total course credit hours are included which are earned in the fourth year (12 semester hours in Fall and 12 semester hours in Spring).
- The B.S.N. program at Western Carolina University uses a team approach to didactic, lab, and clinical education. In some courses, even though the lead instructor may not have a terminal degree, an instructor who is prepared with a terminal degree is involved in the course for the entire semester to provide oversight, as well as initial and continuing course development. With that understanding, in team-taught courses where one of the instructors has a terminal degree, the course is considered to be taught by terminally-degreed faculty.

In the sources section below, please see the Nursing Syllabi folder, that contains syllabi for team-taught courses, where one of the instructors has a terminal degree. The name of the instructor who has a terminal degree is highlighted yellow in each syllabus.

In addition, the following B.S.N. instructors are in the process of earning terminal degrees from D.N.P. or Ed.D. programs:

College of Engineering and Technology

- Engineering Technology B.S. (Engineering and Technical Operations Concentration) (Distance) - The curriculum is designed for career-focused working adults who wish to pursue their degree through part-time study. The first two years of the program may be taken at any North Carolina Community College or on campus in Cullowhee. Students receive instruction through online courses and evening classes at off-site locations. The total number of course credit hours includes only the ETO Program Requirements and ETO Lower Level Core courses as those are required courses in the program and may be taken through WCU.

College of Fine and Performing Arts

- The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) is the recognized terminal degree in the School of Stage and Screen and School of Art and Design. Please see the following links: College Art Association (CAA) and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) (see page 140).

Sources

- Nursing Syllabi
- Terminal Degrees
- Updated Tables
- 2015_2016UndergraduateAcademicCatalog
- ET_BS_ETOC_distance
- Instructional_Method_Descriptions
- NASAD_HANDBOOK_2016_17
- Program_Accounting_B.S.B.A.
- Program_Communication_B.S.
- Program_Criminal Justice_B.S.
- Program_Elementary Education_B.S.Ed.
- Program_English (English Studies Pedagogy)_B.A.
- Program_International Studies (Interdisciplinary)_B.A.
- Program_Middle Grades Education_B.S.Ed.
- Program_Nursing_B.S.N. Degree_Basic Curriculum Option
- Program_Nursing_B.S.N. Degree_RN to BSN
- Program_Nursing_B.S.N. Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses (RIBN) Program
- Program_Science Education (Concentration in Biology)_B.S.Ed.
- Standards and Guidelines College Art Association
- WCU_JamaciaSelf_Study_Final
3.6.2

Educational Programs: Graduate/Post-Baccalaureate:Graduate curriculum

The institution structures its graduate curricula (1) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (2) to ensure ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences.

Judgment

Compliance  Partial Compliance  Non-Compliance  Not Applicable

Narrative

Graduate curricula at WCU incorporate literature of the applicable graduate disciplines in a variety of ways: reading assignments, literature reviews, text requirements, writing based on current research, and literature in the field of study—and in programs requiring a thesis or dissertation, a "Proposal" which outlines appropriate literature to conduct the study. Graduate programs assure students are prepared to meet the standards of graduate education through collaborative research with and mentorship by the graduate faculty, and through instructional learning experiences that incorporate term papers, independent projects, practica, internships, portfolios and/or theses, disquisitions, dissertations, or comprehensive examinations. In addition, each graduate program also includes learning outcomes specific to its program.

Instruction and Curricula

Graduate instruction implies a higher level of study than baccalaureate-level study in an academic discipline. It is more challenging because it may include any of the following: more breadth and depth of current literature in the field, more intensive analysis, and application of such literature in course work and in non-course work requirements. Many programs require out-of-class work experiences and independent study courses to help students develop independent learning skills and gain applied, hands-on experiences.

Professional Experience Requirements

Many graduate programs are designed to satisfy legal licensure or professional certification requirements. These often require professional experience outside the classroom, which is incorporated as an integral part of degree requirements. For example:

- Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T) programs require a full-time, semester-long internship or the equivalent (M.A.T Web site).
- Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) and Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.) programs require clinical internships (M.S.N. Web site).
- Master of Public Affairs (M.P.A.) program is designed for students who possess professional experience and seek additional education to prepare for career advancement (in-service students) and also for students planning careers in the public service area (pre-service students). In-service students already have significant professional experience. Pre-service students must complete three hours of internship (PA 685) as part of degree requirements (M.P.A. Web site).
- Master of Arts in English with track in Professional Writing program requires a written comprehensive examination based on reading lists and content knowledge specific to each concentration. For those writing a thesis, a final oral defense is required (M.A. English Web site).
- Master of School Administration (M.S.A.) program requires an intensive six-credit hour internship in a public school setting. This experience leads to the development of a portfolio containing an environmental scan of a school as well as an action research project (M.S.A. Web site).
- Master of Entrepreneurship (M.Ent.) students take three sets of courses in the M.Ent. program. These include:
  - An integrated set of classes focusing on developing an actionable business plan intended to help students raise money and effectively run the resulting business.
  - A set of classes that use a business simulation to give students experience with running a start-up. The simulation is enhanced by requiring students to solicit funds and present results as they would to a venture capitalist.
  - A set of classes which provide tools for running a start-up, including incorporation paperwork, HR manuals and promotional materials (M.Ent. Web site).


Many masters’ degree programs require preparation of a thesis or offer a thesis option. Programs that offer a non-thesis or project option require students to engage in independent learning experiences that possess an equal degree of rigor (Non-course graduate requirements).

The following examples reflect such experiences:

- The Master of Science in Technology (MST) program requires completion of a directed project. Students must obtain approval from the graduate faculty member and submit thorough written documentation of the completed project. A formal presentation is typically required. Each student must demonstrate independent learning through a variety of activities, many of which have been recognized for their local and regional engagement, as well as their contributions to local economic development (Reporter Article 1; Reporter Article 2; Reporter Article 3):
  - Submitting research proposals
  - Developing acceptable research designs
  - Identifying standard methods for measurement and data collection
  - Conducting analyses based on theoretical models
  - Developing sound conclusions based on established theory.
• The Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) program requires students to complete a business plan during their last semester.
• Accountancy (M.Acc.) program students also conduct independent research as part of their course of study. Individual courses in the History program provide opportunities to learn independently. The two required core courses emphasize independent learning in the primary projects assigned in each:
  ▶ In the first semester, students master a specific field of historiography (of their choice) and write a detailed historiographical essay.
  ▶ In the second semester, students research and write a proposal with an appended bibliography, reflecting independent research and reading.
• The Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) program in Studio Art requires non-thesis independent work appropriate to the discipline, including gallery shows of graduate candidate work and participation in a Thesis Exhibition, with an oral defense and a required written paper. This rigorous combination of visual work, writing, and critique encourages students to create work of high quality, to understand the conceptual basis of their work, and to place their work in the context of other contemporary and historical artists. The graduate experience is further enhanced by the Artist-in-Residence program and the close working relationship with the WCU Fine Art Museum. Visiting artists provide inspiration and critical perspective as well as valuable professional connections; whenever possible, critiques with WCU students are arranged with artists and critics visiting campus.
• The Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership requires core coursework in leadership and research, written benchmark assessments, and a dissertation.

Graduate Research Symposium
The Graduate School sponsors an annual Graduate Research Symposium. Research submissions include dissertation, thesis, and non-thesis research-based project work, written works, oral presentations, and poster-presentations.

In 2012, there were 67 presentations; in 2013: 82 presentations; in 2014: 70 presentations; and in 2015: 65 presentations (Graduate Research Symposium Web site; Graduate Research Symposium 2015 program).

Three-Minute Thesis Competition
Since Spring 2013, each semester, the Graduate School has sponsored a Three-Minute Thesis Competition. The first-place winner represents the institution at the Regional 3MT Competition held at the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools Annual Meetings.

In Spring 2014, 9 students presented at the 3MT; in Fall 2014, 7 students presented; in Spring 2015, 10 students presented (ThreeMinute Thesis Web site).

Further, many departments sponsor individual program-discipline specific activities (conferences, capstones, etc.).

Publication and Dissemination of Graduate Student Scholarship
The university community sponsors a number of publication outlets for graduate students to present their work including the English Department’s Nomad literary magazine, the History Department’s Tuckasegee Valley Historical Review, and the Coulter Faculty Commons’ Buzzard Roost Road Review (Tuckasegee Valley Historical Review Web site).

Resources to Support Student Development
The Graduate School provided 195 graduate assistantships in AY 2012-2013.

• AY 2013-2014: 227 graduate assistantships.
• AY 2014-2015: 226 graduate assistantships.

Many graduate assistantships require graduate students to conduct research with WCU faculty members as part of their responsibilities.

In 2013, WCU began offering competitive Summer Research Assistantships to support student research under the mentorship of a faculty member:

• 2013 17 Research Assistants
• 2014 12 Research Assistants
• 2015 34 Research Assistants

Additionally, the Graduate School, in collaboration with the Coulter Faculty Commons, has developed a professional development program requirement, “The Climb,” for all graduate assistants to encourage independent learning to enhance academic requirements (The Climb Web site).

The Graduate School is establishing graduate assistantship opportunities for discipline-specific academic and vocational peer-mentoring opportunities (GPS Web site).

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) currently uses part of its budget to support competitive travel grants for graduate students to attend conferences to present their research (GSA Travel Grant Web site).

Learning resources are adequate to support graduate education at the University. WCU maintains substantial library staffing, holdings, and research materials to support graduate learning and development.

Graduate Faculty Qualifications
Graduate faculty members are an important resource for graduate students. Appointment to the graduate faculty entails consideration of terminal degree, excellence in teaching, and a record of current scholarly and/or creative activities as described in section 4.11 of the WCU Faculty Handbook (Graduate Faculty Status). Graduate faculty status assures that a faculty member’s credentials and experiences prepare them to mentor graduate students in independent learning, internships, and career counseling.

Assessment and Review
Annual assessment reports include learning outcomes that refer to independent learning. For example, the Master of Public Affairs (M.P.A.) program requires that students develop and demonstrate awareness of appropriate research methods. The Master of Health Sciences (M.H.S.) program requires students to apply research to clinical and organizational problems.

Off Site Reviewer Comments
Ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences is demonstrated through use of internships (varying lengths), clinical placements, simulations, and/or development and completion of a thesis (thesis-option programs) or independent project (non-thesis option programs) such as business plans, performance or individual exhibition. The institution also supports various activities that contribute to the student’s profession development including research symposium, three-minute thesis competition, publication of student scholarship, and travel grants to present at conferences.

While the institution discussed how knowledge of the literature of the discipline is incorporated into the graduate programs, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to locate evidence of the how this is accomplished.

Institutional Response
Reviewer comment: "While the institution discussed how knowledge of the literature of the discipline is incorporated into the graduate programs, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to locate evidence of the how this is accomplished."

Below, we have included evidence that each graduate program incorporates the "knowledge of the literature of the discipline" in its curriculum. We have included a representative syllabus with relevant sections highlighted from each graduate program. Additionally, each program director or department head has provided narrative explaining how graduate students in their programs engage with the "knowledge of the literature of the discipline".

Lastly, we have provided evidence in the form of representative examples, such as: Ed.D. Disquisition, M.S. Chemistry Thesis, M.A. Clinical Psychology Thesis, and a non thesis Project Report for the Master of Health Sciences.

College of Art and Sciences

Biology (M.S.)
BIOL 697: Introduction to Graduate Studies
Every course in our graduate program requires a research paper, research proposal and/or research presentation. Each of these require the student to delve into the primary literature in biology, but from different angles. Research papers generally expect to have a broader view of a topic in biology while research proposals are more narrow and focus on the literature on the student’s topic. Finally, a student cannot write his/her thesis and pass their thesis defense without the ability to engage with literature in Biology.

Chemistry (M.S.)
CHEM 553: Physical Chemistry - Quantum Chemistry and Spectroscopy
The graduate project highlighted in the syllabus for CHEM 553 involves students writing a 5-10 page paper on a singular topic within physical chemistry. The project description states that the paper should include enough detail to explain the theory of the topic to a peer. It should also cite one or more examples of how the technique is used or the relevance of the topic. In the example, students should present one or more of the following:

- data and an explanation of the primary authors’ interpretations and conclusions
- advantages and/or challenges associated with the topic
- descriptions of the kinds of studies being performed in the field of your topic

To complete these requirements, students are expected to access, read, understand and relate evidence from the primary literature in the field of physical chemistry.

English (M.A.)
ENGL 693: Major Writers, A Digital Approach
As stated in the “Course Aims and Objectives” on page one of the course syllabus, a goal of English 693: Major Writers, A Digital Approach is that by the end of the course all students who successfully complete the course will be exposed to and become more familiar with great writers of Nineteenth-Century Britain, which will be accomplished through students’ developing “knowledge of the skills associated with academic literary research in English.” Through a wide variety of readings, in achieving this goal students engage with the literature of the discipline, becoming familiar with its foundational theories, current literature such as peer-reviewed publications, and creative works. As outlined on pages two and three of the course syllabus, students demonstrate this engagement with literature of the discipline via papers where students develop a “well-research paper” the length of “an approximately 20-minute talk, a standard in the field of English Studies.” Demonstrating engagement with literature of the discipline, on the final exam students, must show they have “engage[d] the material,” and that they are “familiar with the reading, the class activities, and the ideas with which we have wrestled this semester.” Again, successful completion requires that students engage directly with literature of the discipline and communicate their knowledge of it. On a more mundane level, the participation grade is based upon students’ having “READ.” Active participation thus requires students to be engaged in course readings from the literature of the discipline.

History (M.A.)
HIST 631: Historiography
Historiography (HIST 631) is an introduction to historical method, interpretation, and analysis. The primary objectives include: (1) reading, writing, and communicating ideas like a historian; (2) becoming familiar with and conversant in schools of historical thought, elements of an historical argument, major academic journals, and leading historians; and (3) understanding how historiography informs research and teaching. Students have several options for a final project with each option geared towards their program of study. For example, many MA students write a draft of their thesis proposal which addresses the relevant historiography and includes a summary of primary sources that they have uncovered and consulted. Public history students research and design a historical exhibit using secondary sources and primary artifacts. MAEd or MAT students write a syllabus for an elective class—freshman level in college—that includes a discussion of readings central to their preparation, lecture titles with relevant readings, primary document workshops, and assignments. They can also write a unit plan (5 days of instruction) that is informed by both historiography and their immersion in scholarship on the teaching of history.

Public Affairs (M.P.A.)
PA 672: Public Organizational Theory
PA 672 (Public Organization Theory) requires MPA students to read a minimum of eight foundational works in the fields of public administration and organization theory. Students are required to discuss the literature in a proficient manner as part of their participation
grades in the course (20% of total course grade). Additionally, students are assigned four reflections, each worth 10% of total course grade, which ask them to react to two foundational pieces of literature at a time. In sum, an understanding of foundational literature is directly worth 40% of PA 672 students’ grades (reflection assignments), and indirectly worth an additional 20% (classroom participation). Our MPA program takes very seriously student learning related to core literature in the PA field, and that commitment is reflected in PA 672 and other core and elective MPA courses at Western Carolina University.

College of Business

Accounting (M.Acc.)
ACCT 605: Accounting Theory and Research
For the Master of Accountancy (MAcc) program, two of the categories of literature of in the discipline are tax authority and financial accounting authority. Tax authority includes the Internal Revenue Code, Federal Tax Regulations, case law, IRS Administrative Rulings, and any other Federal tax law that has been issued by Congress, the Treasury Department, Internal Revenue Service, or a Federal court. The students access tax authority using the CCH Tax Research database. Financial accounting authority is contained in the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) Accounting Standards Codification, which is the single source of authoritative nongovernmental U.S. generally accepted accounting principles (US GAAP). The syllabus of ACCT 605 sets forth separate objectives for locating and using both of these literature sources (highlighted on the first page of the syllabus). Each of the seven assignments in the class (highlighted on the second page of the syllabus) requires students to perform research using these two sources of literature. Therefore, students increase their knowledge of the body of literature of the discipline throughout the semester by researching using tax and financial accounting authority and communicating their findings.

Entrepreneurship (M.E.)
ENT 630: Entrepreneurial Growth
See the ENT 630 Entrepreneurial Growth Narrative in the required sources.

Business Administration (M.B.A.)
MBA 631: Human Resources Management
The pedagogy in this course is comprised of three elements – exams, presentations and debate. All three elements reflect the necessary literature of human resources be in textbook or journal article format. Students are asked to complete exams based on lectures comprised of materials from the course textbook and academic journal/trade journal articles the professor deems appropriate. Each student is asked to prepare a 10 presentation on a particular human resource subject (ie. Employee training). This presentation is open for Q/A at the end, could contain subject matter eligible for exam testing and requires textbook, journal article support. Lastly, students engage in debate over human resource topics (i.e. “offshoring – good idea/bad idea?”). In support of their opinion favoring one side of the debate or the other, students must engage in rigorous literature review/research to find investigators who support their point of view. Additionally, they must also find researchers who oppose their opponents point of view. In other words, with the literature as their foundation for conceptualization and debate strategy, students must engage in an “intellectual joust” with the other classmates serving as judges. The other class students judge winner/loser with the winning team getting an “A” and the loser getting a “B”. The debate format is also open to classmate/professor Q/A at the end prior to voting.

Project Management (M.P.M.)
PM 658: Project Execution and Closeout
We adopted a layered approach in teaching all courses. Teams are specifically constructed with a diversity of industries represented by the students. More importantly, three assignments in each learning module are specifically designed to build from theory/concepts to application and then to synthesis and development of best practices on each topic studied. First, we utilize reading assignments to introduce a concept; second, an individual assignment is designed to analyze their workplace projects; and finally, the team assignment is aimed at developing best practices after learning diverse perspectives from different industries from other students in the team. On many occasions, teams are asked to participate in discussion forums and share their team submissions with other teams.

Sport Management (M.S.)
SM 615: Critical Issues in Sport
Students are assigned readings (listed in the syllabus) on various ethical theories. To demonstrate understanding of the theories, students will critically assess and debate sport-specific topic areas. They will be required to incorporate content from topic readings and the integration of applicable ethical, sociological and legal theories into a synthesized response.

College of Education and Allied Professions

Education - Comprehensive Education (M.A.Ed.) - Art Concentration
ART 697: Seminar in Art Education
Students must create an annotated bibliography drawing from sources related to their thesis. Most of this will come from the list included in this syllabus that are key literary sources in the discipline in art education. To keep up with new sources in our discipline the students will visit the NAEA (National Art Education Association) website that annually tracks these. Because this is a degree that includes both art and pedagogy, students may also wish to pursue scholarly resources in the latter discipline pursuant to their research. For example, a student conducting research about the tactile sense in art-making may look at articles from Educational Psychology in which experiments about the reduction of this sense have been conducted.

Education - Comprehensive Education (M.A.Ed.) - Biology Concentration
BIOL 515: Plant Physiology
Every course in our graduate program requires a research paper, research proposal and/or research presentation. Each of these require the student to delve into the primary literature in biology, but from different angles. Research papers generally expect to have a broader view of a topic in biology while research proposals are more narrow and focus on the literature on the student’s topic. Finally, a student cannot write his/her thesis and pass their thesis defense without the ability to engage with literature in Biology.

Master of Arts in Education (M.A.Ed.) - Counseling
COUN 602: Professional and Ethical Issues in Counseling
Most courses this graduate Counseling program (MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and MAEd in School Counseling) require students to engage with the the literature of the discipline. One example of this can be seen in COUN 602: Professional and Ethical Issues in Counseling, the course that serves as an introduction to the counseling profession. In addition to weekly readings from a current textbook, students in this course are required to write two research papers that integrate current literature. These assignments are the CACREP paper, that focuses on accreditation in the counseling profession, and the Ethics of Issue paper, that requires students to choose, describe, and defend an on-going ethical dilemma within the
counseling profession. In each of these papers, students are required to seek, summarize, and integrate literature from multiple current peer-reviewed academic journals.

**Education - Comprehensive Education (M.A.Ed.) - Elementary Education Concentration**

**EDRD 640: Reading Diagnosis & Instruction**

Reading Diagnosis & Instruction is a course for classroom teachers of grades K - 8 who want to know more about using literacy assessment data to inform their reading instruction, especially for struggling readers. Reading is a significant tool for learning, hence the need for intentional instruction tailored to meet students’ diagnosed reading needs. Readings are from the two required practitioner texts listed on the syllabus, as well as selected chapters about reading research and evidence-based practices. Students are also required to select and read recent peer-reviewed journal articles from well-respected literacy organizations (e.g., International Literacy Association; The National Council of Teachers of English) that will help with their ongoing case study and then writing their case study reports. Journals included The Reading Teacher, Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, Language Arts, and Voices in the Middle.

**School Administration (M.S.A.)**

**EDL 603: Leadership for Student Learning**

During the four or five semesters of enrollment in the program the students lead a team improvement project designed to improve the conditions at their internship site. The student guides a team through the process of identifying a systemic problem at the school by collaboratively collecting and local analyzing data; examining the problem from a global view by looking at research and studies completed on similar problems at other sites; selecting, designing, implementing and assessing an intervention selected by the team; and presenting the team’s findings at a local board or PTO meeting and a WCU sponsored event. All of this work is ongoing and integrated into the various content and internship courses students take in the program.

**Educational Leadership (Ed. D.)**

**EDL 832: Decision Making**

The goal of this course is to enhance participants’ decision making skills through discussions of foundational theories and practical explorations. Moreover, this is accomplished as a result of participants being exposed to key writings (peer-reviewed articles and academic texts) in the subject area as indicated in the lists of Primary Texts and Additional Required Readings.

Through readings and class assignments, participants will be immersed in the theoretical concepts and general knowledge of the area of decision making (in educational institutions).

**Education - Comprehensive Education (M.A.Ed.)**

**Education - Comprehensive Education (M.A.T.)**

**ENGL 674: Transnational Literature**

As stated in the “Course Aims and Objectives” on page one of the course syllabus, the first goal of English 674: Transnational Literature is that by the end of the course all students who successfully complete the course will “be able to identify major trends, topics, and themes in contemporary in how ‘transnational’ literature is constructed.” Through a wide variety of primary course readings and supplementary readings, in achieving this goal students engage with the literature of the discipline, becoming familiar with its foundational theories, current literature such as peer-reviewed publications, and creative works like the primary texts. As outlined on pages four and five of the course syllabus, students demonstrate this engagement with literature of the discipline via papers where students “read texts, analyze them, and draw conclusions based on supporting evidence that you will assemble.” In the case of the first two they specifically, “develop a ‘transnational lens’ based upon and reacting to theoretical course readings,” and in the second “use that lens to analyze one of the works covered in class,” both of which explicitly require profound engagement with literature of the discipline. Similarly, via the in-class presentation students are “responsive for presenting and leading class-discussion on one of the supplementary works read for class on a particular day,” meaning that they must “cover all salient points as well as to give [their] classmates a solid grounding in what they should take away from a particular article.” Again, successful completion requires that students engage directly with literature of the discipline and communicate their knowledge of it to their fellow students. On a more mundane level, the participation grade is based upon students’ “actively participate[ing] in discussion by coming prepared, having read the day’s reading, bringing your book, and by asking and responding to questions.” Active participation requires students to be engaged in course readings from the literature of the discipline.

**Higher Education Student Affairs (M.Ed.)**

**HESA 693: Special Topics - Professionalism in Higher Education: Becoming a Practitioner-Scholar**

In each class in the HESA graduate program curriculum, students engage in the literature of the discipline in a variety of ways. For example, in HESA 693: Becoming a Practitioner-Scholar, students engage in readings and discussion each week on relevant happenings in the field. We call these readings – K.U.R.E. – Keeping Up with Relevant Events. The students read articles from Inside Higher Ed, The Chronicle, and other headline publications that address timely and current events in the field. Additionally, the students are required and expected to incorporate literature, theory, and research in all their writing assignments for all courses. For example, in HESA 693: Becoming a Practitioner-Scholar, students create an Academic Writing Sample, where they select an issue of interest in the field, contextualize the issue with literature, research, and theory, and then critically analyze and synthesize the research to make a logical argument for improved practice, intervention, or further research.

**Human Resources (M.S.)**

**HR 610: Literature Review/Evidence Synthesis Assignment**

See the Literature Review/Evidence Synthesis Assignment description in the required sources.

**Psychology (M.A.) - General Experimental Psychology Concentration**

**PSY 610: Advanced Social Psychology**

Please see the Clinical & Experimental Thesis Guidelines document for additional information.

**Psychology (M.A.) - Clinical Psychology Concentration**

**PSY 672: Evidence-Based Psychotherapy**

Students in PSY 672 interact with the psychology literature in a variety of ways. Given the focus on empirically supported treatments (ESTs), much of the course literature covers the controversies, big issues, and the hallmark studies on the development and implementation of ESTs. Students will complete weekly readings in the form of peer reviewed journal articles and come prepared to discuss the research. Students will also write their own APA-style research paper and be expected to conduct a review of the literature. A minimum of five recent journal articles must be included in their paper.

Please see the Clinical & Experimental Thesis Guidelines document for additional information.

**Specialist in School Psychology (S.S.P.)**

**PSY 673: Professional Issues**

The WCU School Psychology Graduate Program is recognized as an approved program by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). As such, this program is organized around the 10 standards identified in the NASP Practice Model. The students are introduced to these 10 standards in one of their first courses, PSY 673 Professional Issues, and at that point begin exploring the professional literature on
each of these standards. One of their primary literature sources initially is the Best Practices book, which is an edited text that provides a summary of research on a wide variety of topics related to school psychology. The students in this course also have an assignment that involves them doing a literature review on a hot topic in the area of School Psychology or education in general. This assignment requires them to search out research articles on the topic selected and provide a summary of that information. Often this becomes the basis for the student’s thesis or research work, which is a requirement for the program. All other courses in this program are designed to address one or more of these same NASP standards and all of them continue to involve the students in becoming familiar with the research literature related to that standard.

For additional course description, please see School Psychology Research Requirements document.

Education - Comprehensive Education (M.A.Ed.) - Special Education Concentration
SPED 528: Programs and Services for Individuals with Severe Disabilities
In SPED 528 students are asked to read current and significant research literature on issues in the area of severe disabilities. The students are to use this content to show knowledge of these issues and address the issues as a teacher of children with severe disabilities. In the course the students are asked to use the research by first locating it in the library, reviewing the research, and using it to select a topic relevant to their teaching position in the public schools, then draw conclusions about the viability or importance of the topic.

College of Engineering Technology

Construction Management (M.C.M.)
CM 656: Construction Forensics
60% of the students’ grade depends upon research/literature related materials. A research paper including a bibliography is required. The syllabus also lists case studies that students read and digest during the course, also outline in the syllabus course schedule (highlighted).

Technology (M.S.)
ET 699: Thesis
the attached documents and the narrative below explaining how students engage with the “the literature of the discipline”. Research within the discipline occurs throughout the program in many difference courses. However, due to the flexibility in our curriculum students are allowed to choose from a variety of different courses. Students on our mechanical track take difference courses than those in our electrical track and those at Biltmore Park. As a result, there are few courses that are taken by all students. However, there are some consistencies among student’s curricula.
All thesis option students (mechanical or electrical track) take ET 699, the research and thesis writing course. This is generally taken the third and fourth semester of graduate school. Chapter two of the thesis is typically the literature review (see attached syllabus - ET699). Students read in and write a detailed review of the literature and include this in their thesis. Thesis option students begin their literature review while taking ET688 the semester prior to taking ET699 for the first time. Thesis option student use ET688 primarily as the thesis preparation course. They focus on their research topic, conduct preliminary analysis, preliminary testing, and a detailed literature review. At the end of ET688 students typically generate a 10 - 20 page detailed thesis proposal including preliminary research and a detailed literature review. In addition, thesis option students typically also have a graduate research assistantship. As part of the GRA, they are required to submit an abstract to participate in the Graduate Research Symposium where they present their research. First year students apply to present a poster of their thesis proposal and second year students apply for an oral presentation of their research. Both of these will require a literature review and cited references.
The other category of students in our program choose the non-thesis option. Typically, these students work full time and take courses in the evening at our Biltmore Park location. They also take ET688 making it the one course taken by all students in the program. For the non-thesis students, the content of this course shifts from thesis proposal writing to application of technical knowledge. In this challenging course students apply knowledge they have gained in the program to an actual problem that they have at their work. Because the topic is not simply an academic exercise, students need to conduct research including the evaluation of existing literature in order to gain the specialized knowledge needed to tackle such a project. Sources of information include text books, journal articles, company documents, government documents, vendor documents, engineering standards, military specifications, and other sources. These projects are diverse in scope and activities performed.

College of Fine and Performing Arts

Fine Arts (M.F.A.)
ART 674: Studio Critiques
Studio Critique is the studio practice seminar and inquiry home base of the MFA Program that graduate students are required to take each semester. This course is designed to examine the content and context of students’ independent creative research and art-making process. Group critique, discussion, presentation, reading and writing are aimed to encourage interdisciplinary study, develop a comprehensive understanding of the field, and supplement individual practice and expertise in studio art.
Student knowledge of the literature of Studio Art is demonstrated by

- Structured individual and group critique of artwork by faculty, visiting artist and scholars, and peers.
- Experimentation and integrated activity
- The development of a body of work prepared for exhibition, specific installation, or performance.
- Examining and engaging in a wide spectrum of creative research in the field of contemporary art making
- Development of a professional web based portfolio, written statements of individual practice, and exhibition of artworks

College of Health and Human Sciences

Communication Sciences and Disorders (M.S.)
CSD 678: AAC Assessment and Intervention
In the graduate course CSD 678, students are required to engage with the literature of the discipline in several highlighted course assignments. Student elect to either write a diversity/prevention paper where they explore how these issues impact augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) service delivery or create an AAC solution specific to a nonspeaking child or adult of their choice. Either activity requires them to engage the literature to explore paper hypotheses or create evidence-based communication solutions. All students in CSD 678 also participate in a class group presentation where they examine and present emerging trends in AAC services. This “hot topics” activity requires literature exploration and engagement.

Health Sciences (M.H.S.)
MHS 675: Research Methodology in Health Sciences
MHS 675: Research Methods in Health Sciences is the 1st of 2 research preparation courses. Graduate students begin developing a scholarly research proposal. Students engage with the Instructor regularly and their academic advisor during several key activities. The input and feedback of the academic advisor is critical at this early stage as this faculty most likely will be facilitating the student’s research.
Students design, construct, analyze and revise: an annotated bibliography (a framework for student discovery in the professional and peer-review literature); a draft of a comprehensive literature review on an approved topic—evaluating both supportive/conflicting literature; a draft methodology based on the development and modification of topic research question/s. Students complete the required online Human Subjects Research training—translating ethical principles into the proposed use of data, recruitment and interaction with potential research participants. Students perform 'peer evaluations' of a classmate's draft literature review and draft methodology. Students in MHS represent multiple health care disciplines—such as, peer evaluations promote appreciation and understanding of unique and complementary practices as well as provide essential skill practice in constructive feedback.

**Nursing (M.S.):**
- **Nurse Anesthesia Concentration**
- **Nurse Educator Concentration**
- **Nursing Leadership Concentration**

**NSG 511: Research for Advanced Practice Nursing**
The NSG 511 course prepares graduate nursing students for research projects or thesis and emphasizes critique of research for application to practice. As such, the activities focus on the use of interdisciplinary research findings. The students perform two critiques of research studies, and thus must search the literature for something that applies to their current nursing practice (discipline). They must also appraise a systematic review of the literature related to their discipline. Finally, the student must also create a preliminary research project proposal, which must be supported by the literature regarding your topic, again, within the discipline of nursing.

**Nursing (M.S.) - Family Nurse Practitioner Concentration**

**NSG 814: Foundations and Applications of Evidence Based Practice**
In this course, students are provided a variety of research articles on clinical topics that are relevant to nurse practitioners to analyze study components and discuss as a group. They are then required to develop individual research query parameters to investigate a clinical question (discipline related topic) as the first step in their literature review. Students identify and analyze research literature related to the clinical topic they have identified in order to prepare an evaluation table and a synthesis table. The assignments and activities in this course provide the basis for students to continue engaging in the literature to complete their graduate project paper over the next several semesters.

**Nursing (D.N.P.) Doctor in Nursing Practice**

**NSG 884: Clinical Residency and Project Development**
This is the second course out of 4 Clinical Residency and Project Development courses. As you can see, this course includes a very in-depth review of the literature with regards to the student’s Clinical Scholarly Project. The examination of the literature in this course is very specific to the student's topic. I have highlighted the module/assignments that are specific to this objective.

**Physical Therapy (D.P.T)**

**PT 899: Doctoral Project I and II**
The purpose of PT 899 Doctoral Project I and II is to develop student learning in the areas of applied research and research methods related to physical therapy. In this series of two courses, students select a project topic related to the practice of physical therapy from faculty-sponsored offerings. Students are expected to develop their advanced research methods skills and scientific reading, writing, analysis, and synthesis skills through the development, implementation, and assessment of their chosen doctoral research projects. Students work both independently and collaboratively on these projects with the ultimate goal of developing their understanding of the role of research and/or service learning as a venue for applying evidence-based practice in physical therapy and/or community settings. In addition to the PT 899 course series, the physical therapy program curriculum includes a series of four Research Methods and Statistics courses (PT 841 - PT 844) designed to enhance students understanding of research methods and statistics related to physical therapy.

**Social Work (M.S.W.)**

**SOCW 551: Social Policy**
Students who successfully complete this course:
Use effective written and oral communication skills to distinguish, appraise and integrate multiple sources of social policy research and practice information to advance social and economic justice and ensure that basic human rights are equitably distributed. (PB 11, 13, 19, 20, 22, & 25)
Grading (see syllabus)
20% of the grade is based on generation of question from and discussion of readings from classic and current social policy journal articles. In addition, 35% of the student’s grade is based on the completion of a comprehensive social policy analysis paper which must include a review and critical analysis of evidence-based research that describes a social problem or issue, provides the social research related to that problem, and critically analyzes the history and current status of social policy designed and developed to address that problem. Students read a minimum of 2-3 journal articles a week for class preparation and conduct independent library research related to their chosen policy topic.

**Sources**
- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Business
- College of Education and Allied Professions
- College of Engineering Technology
- College of Fine and Performing Arts
- College of Health and Human Sciences
- Theses, Disquisitions, and Projects
3.7.1

Faculty: Faculty competence
The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty. (See the Commission guidelines "Faculty Credentials").

Judgment
☒ Compliance  ☐ Partial Compliance  ☐ Non-Compliance  ☐ Not Applicable

Narrative
Western Carolina University’s primary mission is teaching and learning regardless of location or mode of delivery. This mission is further extended by faculty scholarship and service. The University ensures faculty are qualified and competent to address this mission through its faculty recruitment and appointment, development and evaluation, and credential verification processes (see Mission, Core Values and Guiding Principles, and Vision).

Faculty Recruitment and Appointment
The faculty appointment process is carefully controlled so that the most qualified candidates are identified, recruited, and employed. Procedures are clearly stated in the Recruitment and Selection Procedures for EPA Faculty and Administrators handbook maintained by the Office of Human Resources. In some cases, candidates may be hired without terminal degrees. National searches are required for all tenure-track faculty positions and follow all Affirmative Action guidelines. Typically, candidates are required to present a guest lecture or seminar to assist in evaluating their abilities to teach at a level consistent with the institutional mission.

Faculty Development and Evaluation
Faculty evaluation and development policies and procedures are in place to ensure faculty are qualified for their assigned duties. Comprehensive Standard 3.7.2 provides information on faculty evaluation, and Comprehensive Standard 3.7.3 provides information on faculty scholarship and development. Faculty teaching at the graduate level are approved for graduate faculty appointment and reappointment through the Graduate School. This approval process considers academic degrees, teaching performance, and scholarly activity. Many programs at WCU maintain accreditations and/or memberships in external professional organizations; many of these organizations require that faculty in accredited programs demonstrate discipline-related standards of quality (please see Comprehensive Standard 3.13.1).

Credential Verification
Department heads must verify the credentials of all instructional faculty recommended for interview and appointment by completing a Certification of Credentials and Qualifications for a Faculty/Staff Instructional Appointment form, the AA21. The full AA21 process is explained here. Briefly, the AA21 process requires department heads to:

- Verify academic credentials and qualifications, including the terminal degree of faculty
- Identify qualifications for instruction at the graduate level, as appropriate
- Justify alternative qualifications in cases where a discipline-appropriate or a terminal degree in field is not possessed by the candidate.

Faculty credentials, including alternative justifications, must be approved by the college dean, graduate school dean (in cases involving graduate instruction), and the Provost, before a contract for employment is issued.

Faculty Qualifications
Qualifications of faculty employed during the Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 terms are presented (by department) in the list below. Clicking on each department name links to the department's Faculty Roster Form: Qualifications of Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty. Each roster includes a listing of all faculty, their degrees, and their assigned courses by term. In cases where the terminal degree is in a discipline other than that of an assigned course, additional justification and documentation is provided. Credentials for each faculty can be found in the 'sources' section below and are grouped by college and department.

Approximately 78% of the full-time faculty hold a terminal degree. Graduate teaching assistants are rarely used as instructors of record at Western Carolina University, in keeping with the mission focus on teaching and faculty-student interaction. All graduate students who are instructors of record for undergraduate courses have completed at least 18 hours of coursework in the discipline.

College of Arts and Sciences:
- Anthropology and Sociology
College of Business:
- Accounting, Finance, Information Systems and Business Law
- Economics, Management and Project Management
- Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Sport Management and Hospitality & Tourism

College of Engineering & Technology:
- Construction Management
- Engineering and Technology

College of Education and Allied Professions:
- Human Services
- Psychology
- School of Teaching and Learning
- Programs in Jamaica
  - Faculty who teach in Jamaica are included on the College of Education and Allied Professions rosters. However, more information can be found on page 49 of the *Jamaica Program Self Study*.

College of Fine and Performing Arts:
- Art and Design
- Music
- Stage and Screen

College of Health and Human Sciences:
- Communication Sciences and Disorders
- Health Sciences
  - Athletic Training
  - Emergency Medical Care
  - Environmental Health Sciences
  - Health Sciences - Liberal Studies
  - Master of Health Sciences
  - Nutrition and Dietetics
  - Recreational Therapy
- Nursing
- Physical Therapy
- Social Work

University Studies:
- USI

Off Site Reviewer Comments
A review of the faculty roster indicates that additional justification is required regarding certain faculty and their qualifications for instruction in the listed courses. See the *Request for Justifying and Documenting Qualifications of Faculty* form appended to this report.

Institutional Response
A revised instructor roster has been created. It only includes instructors that were identified in the Preliminary Report of the Reaffirmation Committee (pages 45-50). New information has been highlighted in yellow on the roster. Names on the new faculty roster appear in the same order as the "Request for Justifying and Documenting Qualifications of Faculty" (pg.45-50).

Updated CVs, transcripts, and/or AA21s (see the original narrative for a description of the AA21) were provided for some of the instructors in the list below. In those cases, the instructor names are hyperlinked to the additional material which resides in the Sources section below.

The instructors that are included on the revised instructor roster are organized by College below:
3.7.2

Faculty: Faculty evaluation
The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status.

 Judgment  
 □ Compliance  □ Partial Compliance  □ Non-Compliance  □ Not Applicable

Narrative
Western Carolina University regularly evaluates faculty members for effectiveness following established criteria publicized in the Faculty Handbook. Evaluations include one or more of the following:

- Annual faculty evaluation (AFE)
- Consideration for reappointment
- Tenure and promotion
- Appointment and reappointment to the graduate faculty
- Post-tenure review

The Faculty Handbook contains a description of policies for all of these evaluations and is available on-line.

Clarifying note: Of the six academic units reporting to the Provost, five are referred to as colleges (College of Fine and Performing Arts, College of Business, College of Education and Allied Professions, College of Health and Human Sciences, and College of Arts and Sciences) and one as a school (Kimmel School of Construction Management and Technology). However, in Spring 2016, the Kimmel School of Construction Management and Technology was recently renamed the College of Engineering and Technology. Hunter Library also has faculty with academic appointments. Within those units, some subunits are referred to as departments and some as schools, e.g. History Department, School of Nursing, etc. For purposes of this standard, all major units will be referred to as colleges and all sub-units will be referred to as departments.

Annual Evaluation of Faculty (AFE)

Evaluation of Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty

Each full-time, tenured/tenure-track faculty member must be evaluated once each year. This evaluation is conducted at the department level, using policies and procedures established by the faculty and published in the Faculty Handbook. This AFE process includes consideration of three areas: teaching, scholarship, and service.

The evaluation of teaching must, at the minimum, include data from the following:

- Students’ assessments of instruction (SAI)
- Instructor’s self-report and assessment
- Colleagues’ review of teaching (classroom observation and/or teaching materials)

Definitions of these three data sources are included in the Faculty Handbook in §4.05.B.2. Policies for the evaluation of teaching focus on pedagogical content knowledge, the professional administration of the class (including supervision of students), and student response to instruction. Each of these areas is further defined in the Faculty Handbook in §4.05.B.1. In order to improve the reliability and validity of student assessments of instruction, the Faculty Senate approved implementation of an evaluation instrument (SAI) for use by all departments across the University which was implemented in 2007. This instrument and process are owned by the faculty with appropriate guidance for changes and is administered by the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness.

The university is in the process of implementing, university-wide, a faculty activity database (FAD), Activity Insight, as a repository for documenting faculty teaching scholarship and service activities for use in tenure, promotion, reappointment and annual faculty evaluation decisions. In March 2015, the Faculty Senate passed a resolution adding a statement to the Faculty Handbook §4.04.A requiring faculty to “… document their teaching, scholarship, and service as related to their primary responsibilities in the Faculty Activity Database…” Faculty are primarily responsible for maintaining the currency of information in Activity Insight, although certain information, e.g. courses taught, enrollments, etc. are automatically loaded from Banner.

While the Faculty Handbook provides policy and general evaluation procedures, specific procedures and criteria for the evaluation of teaching, scholarly activity, and service are established by departments through preparation of their Departmental Collegial Review Documents (DCRD). Although the department AFE criteria must satisfy those of the University, each department may also define discipline-specific expectations for performance. Guidelines for preparing the AFE plan and procedures for implementing the process are provided annually by the Provost. The departmental AFE plan is developed in conjunction with the DCRD. The following is a list of DCRDs, one per college:

- Accounting, Finance, and Information Systems (College of Business)
- Construction Management (College of Engineering and Technology)
Evaluation of Non-Tenure Track Faculty

The Faculty Handbook publishes general guidelines for the evaluation of full-time and part-time non-tenure-track instructors which must include both Student Assessment of Instruction and direct peer observation of teaching. Additionally, each department is required to develop and implement written procedures for the evaluation of non-tenure track faculty. As stated above, in order to improve the reliability and validity of student assessments of instruction, the Faculty Senate approved implementation of an evaluation instrument (SAI) for use by all departments across the University, which was implemented in 2007. This instrument and process are owned by the faculty with appropriate guidance for changes and is administered by the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness.

Reappointment

The Faculty Handbook includes general criteria for reappointment. Discipline-specific criteria are developed by each department in their DCRD’s (explained above). Files submitted by faculty for reappointment consideration include materials supporting and documenting effectiveness according to both University and departmental criteria (example of reappointment application).

Tenure and Promotion

The Faculty Handbook includes general criteria for tenure and promotion. Discipline-specific criteria are developed by each department in their DCRDs. Files submitted by faculty for tenure and/or promotion consideration include materials supporting and documenting effectiveness according to both University and departmental criteria (examples of applications for tenure and promotion, and promotion to professor).

Graduate Faculty Appointment and Reappointment

Faculty are evaluated as a part of the process of appointment and reappointment to the graduate faculty. This evaluation is based on their effectiveness in teaching at the graduate level (as defined by the DCRD), possession of a terminal degree, and on their scholarly/creative activities. Processes for initial appointment as well as continuing/renewal of Graduate Faculty Status are delineated in more detail in Faculty Handbook §4.11.

Post Tenure Review (PTR)

Tenured faculty are formally evaluated "no later than the fifth academic year following the most recent of any of the following review events: award of tenure or promotion at Western Carolina University, prior post-tenure review, or return to faculty status following administrative service (UNC Policy Manual 400.3.3.1 [G]-2)." In Spring 2014, UNC-GA mandated that all units of the UNC system review, revise, and update their PTR process to comply with new guidelines. During the 2014-2015 academic year, the Collegial Review Council reviewed and revised the PTR policy. Several open meetings were held to gather faculty input, and a new revised policy was passed by Faculty Senate in Spring 2015. The post-tenure review policy is designed to promote "continuing faculty development, to promote academic vitality, and to encourage excellence among tenured faculty." Policies for this evaluation are published in the Faculty Handbook (example of post-tenure review application). UNC Board of Governors’ revised Guidelines on Performance Review require each faculty member to develop a five-year plan (directional goals) at the beginning of a post-tenure review cycle. (see Sample Guidelines for Faculty 5-Year Directional Goals)

The tenured faculty of each department develop specific procedures for peer review that must be based on the four most recent AFE statements, a current curriculum vitae provided by the faculty member, and the most recent set of directional goals. As of August 2015, final approval of the revised policy is still pending from UNC-GA. Guidelines for preparation of applications/dossiers for tenure, promotion, and reappointment can be found here.

Off Site Reviewer Comments

The institution has policies and procedures that are governed by UNC System with faculty input. The Faculty Senate approved implementation of course evaluation system that was implemented in 2007 and managed by the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness. Each of the colleges provides guidance to faculty through the Departmental Collegial Review Documents (DCRDs) that provide college-level policies, procedures and criteria for faculty evaluation (annual faculty evaluation, reappointment, tenure, promotion and post-tenure review). The institution provided an example of 1) a reappointment application, 2) application for tenure and promotion; and 3) application for promotion to professor. However, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not locate evidence of annual evaluation of faculty in tenure or non-tenure-track positions and of faculty post-tenure review.

Institutional Response

Reviewer comment: "the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not locate evidence of annual evaluation of faculty in tenure or non-tenure-track positions and of faculty post-tenure review."

Representative Annual Faculty Evaluations (AFE) have been included in the list below for faculty who went through the Tenure, Promotion, and Reappointment (TPR) process during the Fall 2015-Spring 2016 academic year.

For non-tenure track instructors, please see these AFE examples: [Redacted]

Graduate students do not go through an Annual Faculty Evaluation. In most cases, they are not the instructor of record but their teaching is monitored by program directors or graduate coordinators. For example, in the Chemistry program, course coordinators meet weekly with graduate student teaching assistants and provide necessary teaching instruction and help. The Department head reviews Student Assessment of Instruction (course evaluations) from the graduate assistants’ students, to ensure adequate instruction.

In Psychology, graduate students are the instructor of record for PSY 150, General Psychology. The program director directly observes at least three classes that each graduate student teaches during the semester followed by meetings to provide verbal feedback and written feedback. The last observation’s written feedback also goes to the Department head. Graduate student instructors complete bi-weekly
reflections that are discussed in weekly class meetings. During the last week of classes, there is a debrief session to evaluate the students' experiences and, to a lesser extent, evaluate the students' teaching performance.

List of AFEs by College

In the list below:
3.9.3

Student Affairs and Services: Qualified staff
The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff - with appropriate education or experience in the student affairs area to accomplish the mission of the institution.

Judgment
Compliance

Narrative
Sufficient Staff to Accomplish the Mission

Professional staffing in the Division of Student Affairs has grown by 12% over the past five years to support increased student enrollment to meet the needs of students. These new full-time positions extend across most departments in Student Affairs including a general counselor in Counseling and Psychological Services; alcohol/other drug counselor in Student Community Ethics; certified medical assistant in Student Health Services; functional support specialist (case managers) for Residential Living; Graphic Designer for the division, Assistant Director in Campus Recreation and Wellness; Senior Assistant Directors in Student Financial Aid; Associate Director for Intercultural Affairs; Associate Director of Campus Activities; Associate Directors in Admissions; and a Director and Assistant Director of Greek Student Development and Engagement.

As of AY 2015-2016, the Division of Student Affairs employed 173 full-time staff, 3 permanent part-time staff, and more than 400 student employees including graduate assistants, work-study assignments, and general campus students.

Student Affairs Programs and Staffing

The Division of Student Affairs is comprised of the following fifteen areas: Campus Activities, Residential Living, Student Community Ethics, Intercultural Affairs, Counseling and Psychological Services, Dean of Students, Campus Recreation & Wellness, Admissions, New Student Orientation, Student Financial Aid, Health Services, Catamount Stores, Dining Services, Marketing and Assessment, and the Kneedler Child Development Center. The Student Affairs organizational chart outlines administrative and reporting structures of units in the Division.

Additional descriptions of the programs and services offered by Student Affairs units can be found in the narrative for Core Requirement 2.10.

Qualifications for Student Affairs Personnel

The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs along with other senior administrators in the Division work collaboratively with Human Resources to ensure that the search and hiring process for employees is conducted to identify the best qualified candidates for positions. All vacant administrative-level positions are advertised nationally. All professional positions are advertised through approved Human Resource sites such as HigherEd jobs, UNC-system, and Student Affairs jobs. Qualifications for professional staff members include the minimum of a bachelor's degree. Positions at the coordinator level or above require a bachelor's degree with a master's degree preferred. Successful candidates must have the appropriate combination of education and work experience as outlined in the job description. Of the 86 full-time and part-time professional employees in the Division of Student Affairs, 3 Registered Nurses have Associate Degrees, 21 staff members have Bachelor's degrees, 53 have one or more graduate degrees, and 8 have earned terminal degrees.

The Vice Chancellor requires all supervisors to review job descriptions for professional and support staff once each year in conjunction with the annual evaluation process and send necessary revisions to Human Resources at that time. The annual review process ensures that employees are aware of expectations, receive timely feedback about their performance, and receive opportunities for training and development.

A chart of professional staff in the Division of Student Affairs, arranged by position title, provides evidence of the qualifications, including education and experience of all professional employees as well as a summary of their job responsibilities. NOTE: The "sources" area at the bottom of the narrative contains resumés and job descriptions for each employee showing the connection between staff qualifications and job responsibilities.

Training and Professional Growth Opportunities for Student Affairs Staff

Both professional and support staff in the Division of Student Affairs are encouraged to take advantage of training and professional development opportunities. Professional staff are expected to be involved in relevant professional organizations and attend professional conferences. Support staff are encouraged to take advantage of continuing education and training offered by the institution to enhance skills and develop competencies. Each department is responsible for budgeting professional development funds. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs' budget can be used to supplement department budgets as needed to support staff attending local, regional, and state conferences such as ACPA, NASPA, SACSA, ACUHO-I and NIRSA. Supervisors have nominated staff to attend the SACSA/NASPA Region III New Professionals and Mid-Manager's Institute, University of North Carolina Women's Leadership Academy, the Chief Housing Officer’s Institute, and the Regional Entry Level Institute sponsored by the Southeastern Association of Housing Officers.
Membership in professional organizations as well as leadership roles held by professional staff are evidence of their broad level of involvement and commitment to ongoing professional development. Professional development opportunities are also discussed during monthly leadership meetings held the first Tuesday of each month.

Student Affairs has several division-wide standing committees with professional staff serving on at least one committee. Another standing division-wide committee is the Assessment Committee. This committee guides development of student learning outcomes and objectives; conducts appropriate training regarding assessment and Campus Labs software; maintains an up-to-date record of assessment activities planned/completed by departments; makes recommendations on assessment-related issues; serves in a consulting capacity on assessment for division staff members; and shares data/results within the division and among other campus constituents as appropriate. Student Affairs assessment reports can be viewed as evidence provided for Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.3.

The Dean of Students also established a Programming Committee in 2014 to provide a level of consistency, support, and opportunities for collaboration among the departments in Student Affairs. Partnerships are considered an important aspect of professional growth and development. The leadership of Student Affairs and the Provost Office meet each semester to discuss ways our services and collaborations promote intentional learning experiences for students. The following programs are examples of ways in which we support the mission of the university:

- The Academic Partnerships office housed in the Department of Residential Living works closely with the Office of Student Transitions to integrate academics into the students’ residential experience by assisting advisors with five-week-progress reports, co-sponsoring academic-achievement celebrations, and providing case managers to support students.

- All Living-Learning Communities (LLC’s) include one course connected to Residential programming designed to complement and support academic and co-curricular learning outcomes. Students are organized into living-learning cohorts by interest and goals, affording the opportunity for integrated learning to occur in the classroom and in their living room.

The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs encourages and recognizes outstanding performance by all employees through an end of the year division award picnic. In addition to the Vice Chancellor providing an overview of the divisions’ progress and success during the previous year, new staff members are introduced and focus is given to staff nominations for the division awards such as Star, New Professional, Program of the Year, Energizer and Special Recognition.

Off Site Reviewer Comments
The narrative provided lists all of the units within the Division of Student Affairs. These units are varied and appear to attend to all aspects of student life. Based on the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee’s review of provided resumes, the Committee finds that the administrators overseeing these units have the requisite experience and education to appropriately direct these units. Employees within the Division of Student Affairs are encouraged to attend conferences, and they have the opportunity to participate in division wide committees to develop professionally. While the narrative speaks to 12% growth in staffing for the Division of Student Affairs, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not find any information detailing how each unit in the Division is staffed. The Committee, therefore, was unable to ascertain whether or not the institution provides "a sufficient number" of qualified staff.

Institutional Response
Reviewer comment: "While the narrative speaks to 12% growth in staffing for the Division of Student Affairs, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not find any information detailing how each unit in the Division is staffed. The Committee, therefore, was unable to ascertain whether or not the institution provides "a sufficient number" of qualified staff."

When factoring in new positions and organizational restructuring, professional staffing in the Division of Student Affairs has actually grown by 17% from 2010 - 2015. This growth was verified with the Office of Human Resources. As of AY 2015-2016, the Division of Student Affairs employed 182 permanent staff and more than 400 student employees including graduate assistants, work-study assignments, and general campus students.

The university’s total student enrollment has grown by 10% during the same time period. Since 2011, New Student Orientation, Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid moved from the Division of Academic Affairs into the Division of Student Affairs to become the Student Recruitment and Transitions unit. In 2013, Catamount Bookstores, Auxiliary Services, and Dining Services moved from the Division of Administration and Finance into the Division of Student Affairs to join Residential Living to become the Campus Services unit. In addition to restructuring, information from department program reviews and consultation with other UNC schools, Student Affairs added the full-time professional positions below:

- Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students
- Assistant Vice Chancellor for Campus Services
- Director of Campus Services
- Director of University Scholarships
- General Counselor in Counseling and Psychological Services
- Alcohol/Drug Coordinator in Student Community Ethics
- Certified Medical Assistant in Student Health Services
- Functional Support Specialist ("Case Managers") for Residential Living
- Graphic Designer for the Division of Student Affairs
- Assistant Director in Campus Recreation and Wellness
- Senior Assistant Directors in Student Financial Aid
- Associate Director for Intercultural Affairs
- Associate Director of Campus Activities
- Associate Directors in Admissions
- Director and Assistant Director of Greek Student Development and Engagement.

Because the committee "was unable to ascertain whether or not the institution provides "a sufficient number" of qualified staff", each unit’s organizational chart has been updated to include all Student Affairs employees. These organizational charts which list the name of the employee, working title, and the employee hiring status can be found below in the Unit Organizational Chart folder in the Sources section following this narrative.

In addition, a Revised Qualified Staff table has been created in the Sources section that lists professional staff by unit. "Professional" is a classification from the State of North Carolina and can be EHRA (non-faculty positions that are Exempt from the State Human Resources Act) or SHRA (positions that are Subject to the State Human Resources Act). The unit color on the Revised Qualified Staff table matches the
unit head's organizational chart color that can be found on the New Office of the Vice-Chancellor Organizational Chart, which is the organization chart for the division leadership. For example, the organizational chart color (pink) for Phil Cauley, Director of Student Recruitment and Transitions, matches the unit's staff listing background color (pink) in the Revised Qualified Staff table.

Employee resumes are also included in the Resumes folder in the Sources section below. Note: Several new resumes have been included for recent hires.

Sources

- Resumes (some updated after August 2016)
- Unit Organizational Charts
- NEW Revised Qualified Staff Table Color Coded by Unit
3.11.3

Physical Resources: Physical facilities
The institution operates and maintains physical facilities, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.

Judgment
Compliance

Narrative
Western Carolina University is committed to operating and maintaining physical facilities that appropriately serve the needs of all the institution's education programs, support services, and mission-related activities. As noted in standard 2.11.1, WCU controls land acreage and facilities at its main campus and at Highlands Biological Station. WCU also has lease agreements for its academic programs at Biltmore Park and Jamaica.

The physical facilities of WCU are operated and maintained so that they serve not only WCU's mission but also its aspirations as outlined in the University's WCU 2020 Strategic Plan. Under the direction of the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance (VCAF), Facilities Management is charged with the fiscal responsibility and overall stewardship of the university's physical resources. Facilities Management works to effectively and efficiently provide an environment conducive to WCU's mission statement.

The Campus

The WCU campus consists of acreage and square footage as noted in standard 2.11.1. The university uses 143 facilities consisting of over 3.71 million gross square feet (gsf) in support of its mission. A WCU Main Campus Map shows the layout of the campus. To ensure that Facilities Management accomplishes its mission, it annually sets forth its departmental goals and measures its progress in achieving those goals (Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.2).

Capital Improvements

In 2014, WCU adopted a Campus Master Plan which provides a brief overview of the proposed changes to the campus. (Only the executive summary and chapter 1 are included here. The full plan can be found at http://www.wcu.edu/webfiles/pdfs/WCU_2014CampusMasterPlan_ScreenRes.pdf.) Plan updates have been shared in campus-wide open forums. The plan is based on an analysis of spatial, operational, and programmatic needs. The plan addresses issues related to new building needs, use of existing space, parking and transportation, technology infrastructure, sustainability, safety and security, preservation of campus heritage, and integration of the campus with the surrounding community. The initial development of the plan was a 1.5-year-long process including committees, tours, campus and community forums, consultants, focus groups, and final approval by the WCU Board of Trustees. As described in standard 2.11.2, the University is ensuring the plan remains a living, strategic document through semiannual public forums and through the creation of a Master Planning Committee that meets at least quarterly to track progress on goals or determine if changes in the plan are needed. The committee members include senior leadership and campus leaders from Academic Affairs, Administration and Finance, Facilities Management, Student Affairs, Residential Living, Information Technology, Chief of Staff, Advancement, and Athletics.

As part of its formal annual facilities planning program, and as described in standard 2.11.2, WCU submits its six-year Appropriated Capital Improvements Plan, six-year Repair and Renovation Appropriated Plan, and six-year Non-Appropriated Capital Improvements Plan biannually to the University of North Carolina Board of Governors (BOG). The six-year Capital Improvements Plan lists and describes all potential projects. Campus administrators, WCU Board of Trustees, and the BOG review the six-year plans to ensure they comply with the Campus Master Plan and the WCU 2020 Vision Strategic Plan. Funding requests must comply with The University of North Carolina Guidelines and Policies, the Office of State Construction Cost Estimate (OC-25), and North Carolina General Statutes G.S 143C-4-3(b). WCU adheres to all these rules and regulations in the development of its facilities planning efforts.

As described in standard 2.11.2, the following examples show capital improvements since 2000 to serve the growing student population:

- State-of-the-art, 133,000-square-foot Fine and Performing Arts facility
- Six-building Residence Life Village that houses 250 students
- Two new residence halls accommodating more than 600 students
- State-of-the-art, 159,600-square-foot Health and Human Sciences facility
- Campus Recreation Center (74,000 square feet)
- Campus Dining Hall and Food Court (56,423 square feet)
- Noble Hall, a mixed use facility to provide residence hall accommodations and retail space in the center of campus (under construction)
- Brown building renovation to provide space for greater dining square footage and student activities
- New Natural Sciences Building, approved by voters in a state bond referendum (construction will begin in the next several years; facility will replace existing Natural Sciences Building)

Space Planning
Besides planning for new space, WCU works to ensure it uses existing facilities efficiently through the University Space Management Committee. This committee reviews space allocation and reallocation proposals, and it makes recommendations based upon the current/proposed space-use code, space needs, FTE production, utilization patterns, and the source of funds supporting the space. The Space Allocation Process describes the process involved in examining a space for use or re-use.

Facilities Management

Facilities Management is a support unit within the Division of Administration and Finance responsible for executing the university Master Plan; providing capital improvement for the university; accomplishing day-to-day operations, maintenance, and repair of physical facilities and campus grounds—all while being student-centered and seeking to achieve the missions, goals, and objectives of the University. The Assistant Vice Chancellor for Facilities Management is the chief administrative officer. Headquartered in the Facilities Management building at 3476 Old Cullowhee Road, the Office of Facilities consists of the Departments of Planning, Design, and Construction; Operations and Maintenance; Safety and Risk Management; and Sustainability and Energy Management. These units are described in the below paragraphs:

- **Planning, Design, and Construction**
  
  This office manages the Campus Master Plan and Capital Improvement Program by overseeing designer selection, schematic design development, and design and construction-document creation; financially managing capital projects; performing project management related to building / renovating facilities that meet or exceed the university’s standards and building code and regulatory requirements; surveying existing facilities to evaluate and recommend plumbing, electrical, architectural, structural, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning inadequacies; and helping university departments develop construction and renovation budgets.

- **Operations and Maintenance**
  
  This office is responsible for ensuring daily operations of facilities by providing preventive maintenance and routine repair services to all campus buildings, equipment, and grounds. The campus community may request assistance through the on-line work request system, as described in standard 2.11.2. This system is hosted on a secure campus network with the following available hours:
  
  - Emergencies during regular and off hours are serviced through a 24 hours/365 day phone number (828-227-7224). This information is also posted on the "Contact Facilities Management" Web page.
  - Emergency calls related to facilities management issues are routed by the University Police to the office of Facilities Management if reports are made to the University Police phone numbers (828-227-7301 for non-emergencies and 828-227-8911 for emergencies).

  This office performs the following services, among others:
  
  - Building maintenance and cleaning
  - Carpentry
  - Electrical
  - Energy audits
  - Estimating services
  - General repairs
  - Greenhouse and planting
  - Grounds maintenance
  - Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning
  - Housekeeping
  - Landscaping
  - Lock services
  - Material services
  - Motor pool
  - Electric Resale
  - Utilities
  - Moving
  - Painting
  - Plumbing
  - Preventive maintenance
  - Renovations
  - Sewer maintenance
  - Special events/Setups
  - Steam plant
  - Trash, recycling, and pest control
  - Water planing
  - Sustainability management

- **Safety and Risk Management**
  
  The Safety and Risk Management office is composed of professionals trained in the field of occupational and environmental health and safety to provide support for University activities and to assure a safe and healthful environment for employees, students, and visitors. The Safety Office’s responsibilities include biological safety, chemical safety, environmental affairs and hazardous waste management, fire and emergency response, indoor air quality, occupational and environmental hygiene, radiation safety, workplace safety, and risk management and insurance. The Safety and Risk Management office prepares and maintains safety manuals that are distributed to the campus community through the department's Web site.

- **Sustainability and Energy Management**
  
  The Sustainability and Energy Management office supports a comprehensive effort to increase awareness and to support and facilitate sustainable practices throughout the University, local, and regional communities. Campus and student participation is encouraged through the Sustainable Energy Initiative Committee. Projects considered by this committee must have educational value to students and be related to sustainability.

**Routine and Preventive Maintenance**

Preventive and routine maintenance is scheduled through the online work order system as described above and in standard 2.11.2.
Preventive maintenance is developed to support the continuing operation of buildings systems—including dynamic equipment—and the campus utilities infrastructure. Its proper implementation reduces systems/equipment failure, extends the life expectancy of buildings and infrastructure systems, and maximizes the availability of campus facilities' support of the university's mission. Routine maintenance involves cyclic or scheduled periodic maintenance such as painting and light fixture replacement. For FY year 2014-2015, preventative work requests totaled 5,876, and routine work requests totaled 2,008.

**Building Coordinators**

To facilitate the activities performed by the physical plant, at least one individual is designated as a building coordinator for each university building that has a single department occupant. These individuals, appointed by the department(s) that occupy each building, serve as the liaison between the Office of the Physical Plant and the building occupants to ensure that services performed are consistent with customers' expectations.

Physical plant provides each building coordinator with detailed information, including procedures to handle service requests as well as information specific to each building. To ensure the building coordinator is aware of activities in the building, building occupants should route all service requests and communications with physical plant through the coordinator unless a particular task is associated with an individual customer.

**Customer Feedback**

Customer feedback is received from various sources and is constantly assessed by the Office of Facilities Management to make improvements that fulfill the needs of customers and the University mission. The Assistant Vice Chancellor for Facilities Management meets weekly with the Director of Operations and Maintenance; Director of Planning, Design, and Construction; Chief Sustainability Officer, and Office of Safety and Risk Management. The Assistant Vice Chancellor for Facilities Management also provides quarterly updates to the Board of Trustees and advises the Chancellor's Executive Council. Besides being part of the Chancellor's Leadership Council, which meets quarterly about university updates and issues, the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Facilities Management serves on several campus-wide committees composed of faculty, staff, and students—committees concerned with university facilities and property, space allocation/usage, events, and master planning.

**Off Site Reviewer Comments**

As noted in Core Requirement 2.11.2, the institution reports that it has more than two million assignable square feet with 295 acres. The campus also supports two other sites - Biltmore Park with 11,333 square feet and the Highlands site with 23 acres for biology research support. Two offshore programs are also documented. Details on Biltmore Park campus and the facilities of the off-shore programs are not provided. Building condition information was not provided for these sites.

The institution provides some evidence of operating and maintaining physical facilities that enhance education programs, support services and other mission related activities through development and implementation of a campus master plan tied to the strategic plan.

The campus master plan, updated in 2014 spaces to 2023 and documents space needs that will support the 2020 strategic plan initiatives. The master plan anticipates enrollment increases and additional student support needs. The campus has a campus planning process and space utilization plan in place. The North Carolina Higher Education Comprehensive Planning Program includes building inventory, space utilization and building condition only at the highest campus level. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to find any indication of specific building condition at the programmatic level. The report notes that 62.4% of space is satisfactory, but reviewers were unable to determine which particular spaces are satisfactory and which are not. Routine and preventive maintenance is highlighted with work requests noted to exceed 7800 for the 2015 year. No supporting evidence of the routine and preventive maintenance plan was provided.

Facilities Management is responsible for the operation and maintenance of existing campus facilities, utilities, design and construction, HVAC operations, custodial services, landscaping and grounds maintenance.

The institution supports sustainability and energy management through a dedicated office that increases awareness and supports sustainable practices. A Sustainable Energy Initiative Committee is charged with allocated funding towards the implementation of energy efficiency efforts. Funding is generated by a student fee of $5 per semester.

**Institutional Response**

The off-site committee found WCU non-compliant with Comprehensive Standard 3.11.3. The off-site reviewer comments are listed below in red and our bulleted responses follow below.

**Reviewer comment: "Details on Biltmore Park campus and the facilities of the off-shore programs are not provided. Building condition information was not provided for these sites."**

- Regarding the Biltmore Park Instructional Site facilities, the following information is provided by Dr. Kevan Frazier, Executive Director of WCU at Biltmore Park: Western Carolina University’s instructional site in Asheville is located at 28 Schenck Parkway in Biltmore Park Town Square. Biltmore Park is a new urbanist mixed-use community that includes corporate offices, retail shops, restaurants and residences. WCU leases the first and third floors of 28 Schenck Parkway which includes approximately 35,000 square feet of floor space. The lease is a full-service lease for class-A office space and is maintained by both the landlord, Biltmore Farms LLC, and other appropriate contractors and vendors. The building, which is LEED Gold Certified, is less that ten years old, and the upfits to accommodate WCU were original to the space and were completed in 2012 (3rd floor) and 2014 (1st floor). Part of the On-site Committee will be visiting the Biltmore Park Instructional Site on April 3 to learn more about the facilities in Asheville.

- WCU offers programs in Jamaica. The classrooms that WCU instructors use are the same public high school and community college buildings that Jamaican high school and community college students use. Part of the On-site Committee will be visiting three sites in Jamaica on March 13 to learn more about the facilities that WCU uses in Jamaica.

- The Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines is housed on campus within the Old Student Union which is included in both the State of North Carolina Higher Education Comprehensive Planning Program – Facilities Inventory and Utilization Study 2014 and the 2014 Facilities Inventory Data. Both are included below.

- Like the program above, The Highlands Biological Station space data are included in the information below.
Reviewer comment: "The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to find any indication of specific building condition at the programmatic level. The report notes that 62.4% of space is satisfactory, but reviewers were unable to determine which particular spaces are satisfactory and which are not."

- Reference is made to "... 62.4% of space is satisfactory but reviewers were unable to determine which particular spaces are satisfactory and which are not." This data comes from the attached State of North Carolina Higher Education Comprehensive Planning Program – Facilities Inventory and Utilization Study 2014 (Table 22, pages 120-122). We are unable to determine where this number came from in the report but the 2014 report indicates that the quality determination was "based on the best judgment of those responsible for campus development", indicated on numbered page 121 (page 135 of the previous pdf document, "1. Definition..."). Based upon the data in the 2014 State of North Carolina Higher Education report, we have reconstructed the breakdown of building condition (as of 2014) as seen in attachment 2014 Facilities Inventory Data, completed by Joe Walker, PE, Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities Management. Also note that there is a discrepancy in total GSF of 1,387 square feet, which is the difference between the State of NC value (3,175,222) and the WCU value (3,173,835).

- The Facilities Inventory and Utilization Study 2014 also mentions the Facilities Condition Assessment Program (FCAP). As stated, "(t)his study is conducted by the State Construction Office, a division of the North Carolina Department of Administration, on a three year cycle for the UNC institutions. Figures are generated for both appropriated (fund) and non-appropriated facilities. Table 22a (page 124 from the Facilities Inventory and Utilization Study 2014) presents the FCAP dollar deficiency data as of the completion of the 2014 FCAP cycle (March, 2015), for the sixteen UNC institutions". A copy of our latest FCAP report (Nov 2014) is attached.

Reviewer comment: "Routine and preventive maintenance is highlighted with work requests noted to exceed 7800 for the 2015 year. No supporting evidence of the routine and preventive maintenance plan was provided."

- Please find an updated copy of WCU's previous Preventative Maintenance Plan. We are in the process of creating a new Standard Practice Manual and this will be the new format. The Instruction Number will be added at a later date based upon overall manual layout.

- Please find exported reports for completed FY15-16 preventative maintenance work requests (along with PM Task Coding) and completed FY15-16 routine work requests. All work requests are tracked and managed via Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS). Our CMMS is WebTMA by TMA Systems.

Sources

- 2014 Facilities Inventory and Utilization Study
- 2014 Facilities Inventory Data
- campus MPlan update
- FCAP WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
- FY15-16 PM Report Export
- FY15-16 Routine Report Export
- PM Task Coding
- Preventative Maintenance Policy
- WCU campus master plan summary and chapter 1
- WebTMA Solutions
3.13.3

Policy Compliance: Complaint Procedures Against the Commission or Its Accredited Institutions

Applicable Policy Statement. Each institution is required to have in place student complaint policies and procedures that are reasonable, fairly administered, and well-publicized. (See FR 4.5). The Commission also requires, in accord with federal regulations, that each institution maintains a record of complaints received by the institution. This record is made available to the Commission upon request. This record will be reviewed and evaluated by the Commission as part of the institution's decennial evaluation.

Documentation: When addressing Federal Requirement 4.5, the institution should provide a copy of its student complaint policy or policies and, for each policy, an example of how the institution follows it through resolution of the complaint. (An institution may have several policies adapted to student services, academics, etc.) When addressing this policy statement, the institution should provide information to the Commission describing how the institution maintains its record and also include the following: (1) individuals/offices responsible for the maintenance of the record(s), (2) elements of a complaint review that are included in the record, and (3) where the record(s) is located (centralized or decentralized). The record itself will be reviewed during the on-site evaluation of the institution.

Judgment

Compliance  Partial Compliance  Non-Compliance  Not Applicable

Narrative

Process for student complaints and concerns

Western Carolina University (WCU) has developed and implemented an on-line process to allow students to submit complaints and concerns at any time. Through the use of a third-party system (Maxient), WCU has a centralized, on-line process where students can submit general and specific concerns. The landing page for the student complaints and concerns provides students with clear information about how to submit a report; it can be accessed via menu navigation, which is optimized for mobile devices. Multiple WCU Web pages, including the university budget office page, the facilities management page, and the Dean of Students page, allow students to communicate comments, complaints, and concerns. All of these sites redirect interested parties to a Maxient submission form. In addition to general complaints and concerns (academic and non-academic), students can use this process to submit information related to concerns about self and/or others (Student of Concern), conduct (Student Conduct), or discrimination (BIAS). Separate but similar forms are used for student complaints and concerns and incident reporting (Student of Concern, Student Conduct, and Bias reporting).

General complaints and concerns that are academic in nature are reviewed by Dr. Lowell Davis (Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Success). General complaints and concerns that are non-academic in nature are reviewed by Dr. Kevin S. Koett (Associate Vice Chancellor/Dean of Students). Student of concern reports are reviewed by Ms. Kellie Angelo Monteith (Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs). Conduct reports are reviewed by the Department of Student Community Ethics. Reports of discrimination are reviewed by Dr. Kevin S. Koett (Associate Vice Chancellor/Dean of Students). Upon receipt of a report, the designated University official will review the information to determine the best course of action.

All complaints and concerns submitted through the on-line process are centrally located in Maxient. Each University official working on a specific matter is responsible for updating the information in the Maxient file. When a complaint or concern has been resolved or investigated to the fullest extent possible, the case status is changed to “closed” and is available in the Maxient archives. The Maxient archives serve as WCU’s complaint log. Students are informed about availability of this process through the Code of Student Conduct available on the WCU Web site, through orientation presentations to students and parents, and by web access.

Process for Academic Appeals

Specific procedures for academic appeals pertaining to academic integrity, academic suspension or dismissal, and academic action—including final assigned grades and program dismissal—are described in the Undergraduate and Graduate catalogs. The advising center provides additional information for academic suspension on their Web site.

Other types of appeals

Students may appeal parking tickets. The appeals process is described on the Student Government Association's Web site.

More information on WCU’s student complaint process, including examples of submitted student complaints and associated processes and resolutions, is available in Federal Requirement 4.5 (Student Complaints).

Off Site Reviewer Comments

The institution employs an online centralized system, Maxient, to manage student complaints. Specific administrators, by virtue of their role at the institution, are designated to review complaints that are related to their specific areas of focus. Maxient maintains a log of all complaints thereby serving as the institutions record of complaints. Students and parents are made aware of the complaint process and how to access the Maxient system through the Code of Student Conduct, orientation, and university web pages, including the Dean of Students page and the facilities management page as examples. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to find information about the elements of a student complaint included in the record.
Institutional Response

Reviewer comments: "The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to find information about the elements of a student complaint included in the record."

Elements of a student complaint are demonstrated in the following examples: Student Complaint 1, Student Complaint 2, and Student Complaint 3. Elements of student complaints can be seen in this summary of complaints (maxient summary) document. An empty complaint template is provided as well.

Sources

- Academic appeals_GR catalog
- Academic appeals_UG catalog
- Case report_4
- Communication_6
- Complaint Example Packet #1
- Complaint Example Packet #2
- Complaint Example Packet #3
- complaint template
- Division of Student Affairs Reporting Form_3
- Maxient Summary
- Student Complaint Report_2
- WCU - Appeal of Academic Suspension
- WCU - Budget Office
- WCU - Facilities Management
- WCU - Student Parking Ticket Appeals
- WCU Student Code of Conduct_Document
- WCU Student Code of Conduct webpage
- WCU_DOS_Complaints_mobile
- WCU_DOS_Complaints_web