Assurance Argument
University of Wyoming - WY

Review date: 11/18/2019

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Argument

1a1. UW's mission statement is defined in its current strategic plan, **"Breaking Through: 2017-2022, A Strategic Plan for the University of Wyoming."**

"We honor our heritage as the state's flagship and land-grant university by providing accessible and affordable higher education of the highest quality; rigorous scholarship; the communication and application of knowledge; economic and community development; and responsible stewardship of our cultural, historical, and natural resources. In the exercise of our primary mission to promote learning, we seek to provide academic and co-curricular opportunities that will:

- *"Graduate students who have experienced the frontiers of scholarship and creative activity and who are prepared for the complexities of an interdependent world;*
- *"Cultivate a community of learning energized by collaborative work among students, faculty, staff, and external partners;*
- *"Nurture an environment that values and manifests diversity, internationalization, free expression, academic freedom, personal integrity, and mutual respect; and*
- *"Promote opportunities for personal health and growth, physical health, athletic competition, and leadership development for all members of the University community.*

"As Wyoming's only public university, we are committed to scholarship, outreach, and service that extend our human talent and technological capacity to serve the people in our communities, our state, the nation, and the world."

Given the University of Wyoming's unique status nationally as the only public university in the state, UW serves simultaneously as a land-grant, flagship, and research institution. Its commitments to scholarship, outreach, and service extend to all corners of the state and require

ongoing and intentional efforts to assess the needs and values of a broad range of constituent groups and stakeholders.

The **strategic plan (p. 25)** provides an overview of the collaborative process that was used to develop the current strategic plan and mission statement: Between September 2016 and July 2017, a series of activities were carried out, including formation of a broad-based leadership committee, campus and **statewide listening sessions**, unit meetings, town-hall meetings, and input from constituent groups (including the Faculty Senate and Staff Senate, the UW Alumni Association, and the UW Foundation).

The Board of Trustees follows the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges' Statement on Board Accountability, which includes board approval of the mission and purpose of the institution. The strategic plan was **presented to and unanimously approved** by the Board of Trustees in July 2017. These meeting minutes from the Board of Trustees provide additional evidence of the process, demonstrating their attention to the unique nature, needs, and culture of our University.

To ensure that the mission continues to be at the forefront of day-to-day operations and ongoing decision making, the University publishes an annual update on progress toward strategic goals. The Board of Trustees reviews the update, as well as the President's Annual Report on Accomplishments as a part of their **Annual Schedule of Items to Approve, Discuss or Report**.

When the UW Board of Trustees decided in 2019 not to renew the then-President's contract and name a new leader, they recognized that stasis during the search process was not an option. Upon naming the interim president, they specifically **appointed him as Acting President**. Trustees indicated in their communications with campus that their expectation is for him to continue to execute the strategic plan and to lead UW not in a caretaking mode, but in a visionary way.

1a2. The University of Wyoming provides programs and support that are well-aligned with the key components of its mission:

- *Accessible and applicable education.* Our **enrollment profile** is consistent with our mission and commitments. More importantly, our commitment to accessible, affordable education is reflected by our flexible admission standards and low cost of admission; programming for minority, low-income, and first-generation students; and first-year learning community for students admitted with support. Resources for entering students include the Bridge Program, TRIO Programs, multi-faceted tutoring programs, and a variety of academic support centers described more fully in 3d.
    - o UW is consistently rated highly in national polls for accessibility based on moderate tuition rates coupled with a quality educational experience. For example, UW is currently ranked #12 in the nation by CollegeAtlas.org Best Colleges and Universities 2014 (updated in 2018) by out-of-state tuition for academic quality, affordability, accessibility, and enrollment.
    - o Other programs, like the new **2+2+3 Law Diversity Pipeline Program,** with its first cohort expected in fall 2019, align with UW's accessibility goals by enabling underrepresented community college students with interest in law to transfer to

UW to earn a bachelor's degree, and then enroll in law school. The program targets both low-income and underrepresented students and offers scholarships and academic support for admitted students.

- *Statewide Extension stations* and *technology transfer efforts.*Such efforts help ensure that we communicate and apply knowledge in ways that benefit the state's economy and communities. Our broad range of majors provide education for critical employment needs throughout the state. Courses and programs offered via distance technology and at UW-Casper create accessibility of knowledge to residents across the state. Furthermore, Division I sports programs lend a strong sense of statewide identity.
- *Research and creative endeavor.* As described more fully in 2e1 and 3b5, the University maintains ethical, high-quality research and prioritizes diverse opportunities for innovative research and creative endeavors.

- *Diversity in modern society.*The recent establishment of an Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (2017) and the Global Engagement Office (2018) comprise two visible commitments to preparing students for a complex, internationalized, and diverse world.

- *Ethical development of the whole person*. As detailed in 2d, UW maintains strong commitment to freedom of expression. The student code of conduct defines our view of integrity and ethical behavior. Our repositories of cultural, historical, and natural resources (see 3d4) help members of campus understand their place within a complex, multi-textured society. Our **undergraduate general education requirement** (the University Studies Program, updated in 2015) helps students to develop a broad foundation for lifelong learning and community engagement. On-campus **intramural and club sports and recreation facilities** promote an environment of respectful, healthy athletic competition. An array of **recognized student organizations** encourage students to become civically active and to develop leadership skills.

1a3. UW planning and budgeting processes are carefully designed to support the University's mission. Annual budget reports demonstrate a history of effective and mission-aligned spending; the newly adopted **WyoCloud suite of cloud-based enterprise management systems** will help UW strategically and efficiently balance allocations to support needs and new initiatives.

College Deans make **regular and annual presentations** to the Board of Trustees Budget Committee, which approves an annual **all-funds budget.** These discussions further facilitate alignment with broad institutional priorities, projections, and strategic plans.

The University Budget Office also provides the Board of Trustees Budget Committee with **q**uarterly reports that track projected budget to actual expenditures. **Account analysis reports** are created at the organization level and provided to each budget manager on a monthly basis; reports can be run by end users at any time. This multi-level approach helps ensure that budget planning and actual spending remain aligned with broad mission goals. There have been challenges to implementation and use of these reports for externally funded grants; a working group is currently focusing on solving these challenges.

Capital construction and **master planning**, including a **10 year housing plan (2017)** and the **Task Force on University of Wyoming Housing (2019)**, help to align facilities renovation and construction with mission goals. With a goal of two or three new residence halls under construction by 2022, new living-and-learning-centered residence halls will better meet the needs of students through expanding living-learning communities and integrating academic, recreational, social, and extracurricular opportunities. As detailed more fully in Criteria 5a1, many new facilities foster stronger teaching and learning, especially in STEM fields.

Over the past several years, careful and responsive planning has guided new programs, policies, and relationships to further UW's mission. Examples include:

- **Creation of new majors**, using data-informed processes to guide investment in viable new fields of study.
- Strategic investment in the recruitment of first-time, full-time students and transfer students, including **establishing an Associate Vice Provost for Enrollment Management** and creating a **Transfer Success Center**. The centralized focus on enrollment helps UW to better target recruiting and student support, especially for underrepresented populations. The reporting compiled by UW's Office of Institutional Analysis on **Transfer Student Retention and Graduation Rates** shows that the emphasis on our transfer student transitions and success is beginning to yield results, with fall-to-fall retention rates increasing from 69.3% in 2013 to 87.7% in 2017.
- Completion of the **WICHE passport** and **2+2 transfer agreements** initiatives. These programs create a clear pathway for students transferring from in-state community colleges as well as from neighboring-state institutions.
- Establishment of a **Native American Education, Research, and Cultural Center**. The Center supports Native students on campus and facilitates the building of deeper relationships with tribal partners on the Wind River Reservation. This center illustrates a specific and substantial effort to overcome historic under-representation of this minority population at UW. The aim of the center is to establish support systems for Native Americans that will stabilize and increase enrollment, retention, and graduation. The **retention rate of this population** has been extremely variable, ranging from 0% to 100% over just a few short years. One recent piece of positive news is that UW's Native American population has risen from 9.3% of the UW student population in 2018 to 10.6% in 2019. The Native American Summer Institute, a program focusing on building a sense of belonging with UW for the Wind River tribes, will enter its third year in Summer 2020.
- Creation of a **First Gen Scholars program** for first-generation students, who comprise about a quarter of UW students and up to forty percent of underrepresented and under prepared first-year students. We believe this program will help us better support these students, who historically depart at higher rates than their UW peers.
- Creation of the **SOAR platform** for **tracking students' experiential work and curating it into an experiential transcript.** This platform will give students a tool by which to document, reflect on, and develop career and lifelong learning strategies based on skills and experiences that job recruiters seek. SOAR is a competency-based program at UW that will shape, engage, and prepare students to meet unpredictable and complex challenges for the future. Through participation in SOAR, students engage in high impact

     learning experiences in research, cross-cultural and international perspectives, internships, entrepreneurship, leadership, and community service.

- Development of a **network of student innovation centers** and the **Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship.** In line with various goals of UW's strategic plan,**t**hese new facilities and resources are designed to foster innovation and entrepreneurship and to serve as a driver for state's economic growth and diversification.

To support our mission to remain an affordable land-grant university, we are proud to have been identified in 2017 as **the top school in Student Loan Hero's list of "20 States Where College is Worth the Cost."** This list's calculations took into account the cost of earning a bachelor's degree at UW ($22,422), the average salary for holders of a bachelor's degree in Wyoming ($45,519), and the average salary in the state for those with high school diplomas only ($31,936). The site concluded that UW provides a 203% return on investment in the first five years after graduation.

In 2018, UW increased its undergraduate resident tuition by $5 per credit hour, from $129 to $134, while the cost for undergraduate nonresidents increased from $516 to $537 per credit hour. This increase kept resident tuition rates among the lowest of the nation's doctoral degree-granting institutions and nonresident tuition and fees among the lowest in the country.

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1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

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

Argument

1b1. The University's mission is broadly available through public dissemination of its strategic plan through venues including the University **website**, printed campus maps, UW social media accounts, the **student code of conduct,** a display in the Union visitor center, first-year-student guidebooks, the textbook for first-year composition, and in booklets for rising sophomores and Student Success Service students.

The **strategic plan** provides clear connections to vision and mission, actionable goals, and specific performance measures. Related division and college-level strategic plans are broadly available and help demonstrate alignment between goals of units within the institution and the broader strategic plan. Examples include:

- Division- and college-level strategic plans;
- **Athletics mission statements,** located on plaques throughout athletic facilities;
- Pocket cards from Residence Life and Dining Services that include their mission statement; and
- Student Health Service's mission statement is printed on thermometers that are distributed to clients.

Regular updates to campus from former President Laurie Nichols and monthly "Notes to Campus" from Acting President Neil Theobald, as well as **annual updates and progress reports related to the strategic plan**, have also helped link the big-picture strategic goals to the ongoing and everyday activity of the University. We currently have strategic annual reports for **year 1** and **year 2.**

1b2. UW is currently guided by **"Breaking Through: 2017-2022, A Strategic Plan for the University of Wyoming,"** adopted by the Board of Trustees in July 2017. This plan articulates

the University's vision, mission, values, and four driving goals (undergirded by several sub-goals):

- GOAL 1: Join together as an intellectual community already renowned for its regional, national, and global relevance and impact by fostering and rewarding excellence in teaching, scholarship, innovation, and creative endeavor.
- GOAL 2: Inspire students to pursue a productive, engaged, and fulfilling life and prepare them to succeed in a sustainable global economy.
- GOAL 3: Improve and enhance the health and well-being of our communities and environments through outreach programs and in collaboration with our constituents and partners.
- GOAL 4: Assure the long-term strength and stability of the University by preserving, caring for, and developing human, intellectual, financial, structural, and marketing resources.

A **set of 27 specific performance indicators** help the University measure progress in areas critical to the attainment of its mission from the baseline year in 2017 to 2022. For example, student-focused indicators include overall enrollment, graduation rates, post-graduation placement rates, participation in study abroad opportunities, and retention of underrepresented and first-time, full-time students, as well as participation in support services, leadership, and community engagement opportunities.

Broader University targets include constructing new residence halls, pursuing Carnegie "community engagement" classification, updating all UW Regulations and policies, increasing faculty research productivity, increasing external research funding, improving employee satisfaction, and growing in University revenue and endowments.

Overall, the strategic plan sets targets that promote a balanced emphasis across its four major goals; **division and unit plans articulated with the University's strategic plan** help to further distribute activity toward major mission objectives and performance indicator measures. For example, the General Counsel's office, the Division of Administration, Institutional marketing, Athletics, Student Affairs, and Academic Affairs aligned divisional plans with the University Strategic Plan; all colleges do as well. For a sampling, see the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, the College of Health Sciences, the College of Law, the College of Education, the Haub School, the College of Arts and Sciences, and UW Libraries.

1b3. In keeping with our land-grant mission, the University's current strategic plan clearly indicates that it seeks to serve the State of Wyoming and influence national and global scholarly and creative endeavors. As indicated in the plan's preamble, UW's status and identity as a land-grant and flagship institution push it to attend to the needs of applied education for the state's varied constituencies, as well as to educational and research opportunities within increasingly global and interconnected systems.

A key value named in the strategic plan (p. 5) is "Engagement and Communication: Engagement with local, state, tribal, national, and global constituencies inspires our daily work. We are

committed to active outreach and clear communication with our extensive communities." As an example of progress toward this goal, UW established **the Office of Engagement and Outreach** in 2019. This new office handles programing for the engagement of Wyoming citizens. This is not only a strategic plan goal, but is also part of the University of Wyoming's mission to participate in and give back to the state and the community. The department is headed by **Director of Engagement and Outreach** Dr. Jean Garrison. The **strategic plan for the Office of Engagement and Outreach** was completed in summer 2019.

Many of the goals in the current strategic plan emphasize that the intended scope of UW's programs and services includes undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, as well as Wyoming, domestic, and international students. The strategic plan highlights collaboration with Wyoming community colleges and tribal nations of Wyoming to enhance Wyoming's educational attainment. It also highlights connections with our alumni; the business, agricultural, and economic development sectors of the state; and employer engagement goals. Goals intended to promote entrepreneurship and innovation that benefit the state, as well as our students, faculty, and staff, are featured.

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1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Argument

1c1. As the preamble to our strategic plan emphasizes, Wyoming's early identity as "the Equality State" inculcated a value for equitable access to education; thus, since 1890 UW has been "equally open to students of both sexes, irrespective of race or color."

Adding precision to that broad goal, several components of UW's current mission statement directly or implicitly emphasize the University's role in a diverse, multicultural society:

"In the exercise of our primary mission to promote learning, we seek to provide academic and co-curricular opportunities that will:

- *"Graduate students who have experienced the frontiers of scholarship and creative activity and who are prepared for the complexities of an interdependent world;*
- *"Cultivate a community of learning energized by collaborative work among students, faculty, staff, and external partners;*
- *"Nurture an environment that values and manifests diversity, internationalization, free expression, academic freedom, personal integrity, and mutual respect; and*
- *"Promote opportunities for personal health and growth, physical health, athletic competition, and leadership development for all members of the University community."*

More than at any other time in UW's history, our institution invites and celebrates diversity of age, sexual orientation, gender, race, ability, and cultural and educational backgrounds. Recognizing the increasingly interconnected and technological nature of cultures and workplaces, UW promotes freedom, integrity, and respect as key values in the development of well-rounded learners, as we elaborate upon in 1c2, among other areas.

1c2. In practice, the University establishes its role in a multicultural society through a variety of processes, policies, and curricular and extracurricular activities. "Breaking Through: 2017-2022" establishes a goal of increasing enrollment of underrepresented student populations at UW by 4% (from 13% to 17%). Beyond goals related to multicultural diversity, the University supports a diversity of experiences and abilities in alignment with its land-grant mission and Wyoming's constitutional mandate for open enrollment.

Perhaps most significantly, the University created an Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) in 2017. Within that office, the Chief Diversity Officer, **Dr. Emily Monago**, now helps

to coordinate and direct the University's diversity efforts in line with the UW Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 2017-2022. Efforts include:

- Under the auspices of Multicultural Affairs, multiple *centers focused* on supporting specific student populations, such as the Rainbow Resource Center, Veterans Services Center, Multicultural Resource Center, and the Native American Education, Research, and Cultural Center. Beginning in spring 2019, and facilitated by ODEI, Multicultural Affairs partnered with the UW Counseling Center to offer a support group for students of color: Student of Color Circle. Similar opportunities are also being planned for multiracial students, women of color, and LGBTQ+ students. Multicultural Affairs also partners with programs such as the Outdoor Program and Alternative Break Program to provide additional opportunities for diverse groups of students. **The retention and graduation rates for underrepresented minority students, including [Native Americans](#) and [African Americans](#),** trail those of our white students and, as such, it is obvious that these stronger coordinated efforts are required to support our diverse students.The outcomes of the **[UW Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)** will be closely monitored for areas of needed investment and improvement. Early indicators are promising; fall 2019 minority student enrollments now comprise 12.7% of UW's student population, up from 11.7% in 2018.

- *Training* for students, faculty, and staff support UW in upholding its role in a multicultural society, including programs related to sexual harassment and discrimination policies. Specific examples include Universal Design for Learning; No More; Safe Zone; the STOP Violence Program; and Diversity and Inclusion in the Modern Workplace. The Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning (in partnership with Wyoming Institute for Disabilities, the Disability Studies program, and ODEI) offers diversity courses open to faculty, new graduate assistants, and other employees. The ODEI offers a **[Cultural Competence Workshop](#), [New Supervisor Diversity Workshop](#), [Implicit Bias Workshop](#)**, an **[Interrupting and Preventing Bias Workshop](#), [ADA and Disabilities Workshops](#),** and **[Virtual Institutes with Dr. Kathy Obear](#).** These offerings balance required trainings with a range of voluntary professional development opportunities, helping to extend knowledge and improve practices across campus constituencies. In 2017-2018, there were 855 students, faculty, and staff who participated in diversity education opportunities and search committee trainings offered by ODEI. An Accommodating Disabilities ADA course was added to the learning plans of 2,826 employees in November 2018 with new employees added on a rolling basis. This required ADA course had a completion rate of 96% with a total of 2,718 employees completing the course by April 2019. In fall 2019, all employees (benefited and non-benefited) will be required to take an online course by Everfi: Diversity and Inclusion in the Modern Workplace. Completion rates will also be monitored. Additionally, ODEI and Social Justice Research Center launched a restorative justice training program in partnership with the University of Michigan in fall 2019. This will enable UW to have a restorative justice team of facilitators, comprised of faculty and staff, who can engage the campus community in addressing issues of harassment, discrimination, bias, and other

community harms. The facilitators are guided by the principles of inclusive decision making, active accountability, repairing harm, and rebuilding trust among students, faculty, and staff.

- *Equitable hiring and employment practices support the University's **role in a multicultural society**,* demonstrated through requirements for diversity efforts in recruiting; an updated search-committee handbook providing clearer guidance on fair hiring practices; a broad **workforce diversity initiative**; support for colleges, units, and departments in conforming to UW's Affirmative Action Plan; support and mentoring for programs who recruit and hire diverse or underrepresented employees; required diversity training for search committee participants, and (as noted above) workshops related to cultural competence, interrupting bias, and creating inclusive environments for veterans.

UW has adopted hiring and employment practices that promote and protect the representation of diverse perspectives on our campus. In addition to ODEI **guidelines for search committees** about fairness in recruiting and training, Human Resources sponsors a **Workforce Enrichment Initiative** that works with regional employment agencies to broaden representation from job seekers of diverse backgrounds, military experience, abilities, socioeconomic statuses, and age. **UW Regulation 1-3** outlines the University's non-discrimination policy; additional information on our **Fairness in Hiring webpage** aligns that policy with additional relevant federal policies. Our **Equal Opportunity Report and Response Unit** is dedicated to investigating alleged violations of UW policies related to discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, and violence in the workplace. Additionally, **Presidential Directive 4-2016-1** provides protection from retaliation for employees who file good-faith complaints of harassment, hostile environment, or retaliation. **The Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** includes student, faculty, staff, and community representation on the council and its subcommittees. The council assists the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with campus-wide initiatives and engagement to ensure UW maintains inclusive, equitable, and multicultural perspectives in decision making, policy discussions, and programs. The Chief Diversity Officer chairs the council and reviews and updates its key focuses each academic year. In 2017-18, charges included inventorying campus diversity and inclusion efforts, and developing the 2017-2022 UW Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In 2018-2019, the council's main focus was developing a Campus Climate Survey. In fall 2018, the council appointed a Campus Climate Subcommittee to develop and implement, working with an external consultant, a campus climate survey. The Campus Climate Subcommittee facilitated three town halls as well as visits to student, staff, and faculty governing bodies, various student groups, and individuals to gather input on developing the Diversity Campus Climate Survey. In spring 2019, the survey was distributed to 18,596 students, faculty, and staff at the University of Wyoming. In October 2019, a town hall was held to distribute survey results, receive input from the campus community on priorities, and identify key people and units to create positive change and facilitate collaborative campus efforts to make progress toward goals identified in the ODEI strategic plan and survey report. The results of the **UW Diversity Campus Climate Survey** will assist the campus community in identifying areas for improvement in the coming months.

Support for individuals with physical accessibility needs is guided by the UW Accessibility Committee and University Disability Support Services, ongoing website updates to comply with

ADA regulations, and faculty development to support best practices in Universal Design for learning. Our learning management system, WyoCourses (Canvas), includes the Universal Design Online Content Inspection Tool (UDOIT) to verify that all text and images are accessible.

Annual events engage the campus in exploring contemporary perspectives on diversity. Major events include the Shepard Symposium on Social Justice, the President's LGBTQ* Reception, Holocaust Memorial week, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Days of Dialogue, and the Anti-Defamation League "Words to Action" Workshop focused on stopping anti-Semitism and other forms of hate and discrimination.

Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) are open to all students and include clubs focused on diverse and underrepresented student populations, such as Keepers of the Fire, Black Student Alliance, MEChA, and Multicultural Association of Student Scientists.

The UW Social Justice Research Center supports scholarship that addresses practical and theoretical questions arising from the pursuit of social justice. In 2016-17, the center funded $14,635 in research grants for students, faculty, and staff, and it provided an additional $16,702 in campus support for social-justice programs. The Social Justice Research Center co-sponsors numerous events such as the Shepard Symposium on Social Justice, Dr. Kathy Obear Virtual Institutes, Martin Luther King, Jr. Days of Dialogue, Black History Month, the "Black 14" Reunion, and various initiatives of ODEI.

Unit-level commitments related to diversity include University Libraries participation in the **Association of College and Research Libraries' Diversity Alliance;** the first-year composition program's 2018-19 readings and speaker focused on issues of race and sexuality; UW Athletics' subcommittee on diversity and equity; and Student Affairs strategic plan goals.

Participation in regional and national associations supports UW in identifying and implementing best practices to further support our diverse populations. In December 2018 the University of Wyoming became an institutional member of the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education. Since April 2018, UW has been a member of the Colorado Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education. Membership in these organizations gives UW access to valuable resources such as a professional network, conferences, publications, and webinars.

Beyond the immediate institutional context, UW also promotes engagement with diverse cultures through various internationalization efforts. In 2017, UW celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Cheney International Center, which oversees the nation's largest land-grant University study-abroad scholarship endowment (approximately $7.5 million). More recently, as part of the "Breaking Through: 2017-2022" strategic plan, UW deepened its commitment to international experiences and relationships by creating the Global Engagement Office. Major units within that office include International Students and Scholars, Education Abroad, the English Language Center, and the Center for Global Studies. Further, **various scholarship and grant opportunities** fund student research and inquiry in a variety of international settings.

During summer 2019, UW hosted seven faculty members from Iraq as part of the Fulbright Visiting Scholar program. This highly successful endeavor was coordinated by the UW School of Politics, Public Affairs, and International Studies and involved multiple campus organizations.

Several UW faculty members serve as ABET program evaluators for international universities. Recent accreditation visits were completed to Northern Cyprus and India.

The University promotes student participation in study abroad not only by offering extensive scholarship support, but also through its experiential curriculum platform, SOAR. Additionally, **ongoing and emerging international partnerships** in over 70 places, including Australia, Brazil, China, India, the Philippines, and Tanzania help create lasting opportunities for students to travel with research faculty and to engage in projects of cultural, scientific, and environmental value. As part of its Alternative Break program, the Service, Leadership and Community Engagement office (SLCE) promotes international community service opportunities, including opportunities in Northern Ireland, Jamaica, and Trinidad in 2020, and is committed to increasing participation to support attainment of goals in the strategic plan.

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1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

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

Argument

1d1. We interpret this criterion primarily in relationship to our land-grant efforts to extend access to UW's intellectual and cultural resources across the state. We are proud to ensure that the University's intellectual and educational resources serve the public good, through efforts such as:

- UW's **Agricultural Extension Service** was created in 1914 to help Wyoming citizens and communities respond to challenges and changes. With its roots in agriculture, UW Extension now supports Wyoming's people and its rural communities in addressing other contemporary challenges. UW Extension has offices in all 23 of the state's counties and on the Wind River Indian Reservation.
- Our **Saturday University** program is a collaboration involving UW, community colleges, and Wyoming communities, which connects popular UW professors with inquisitive residents across the state.
- The **High School Institute, Upward Bound summer program, Summer Bridge program,** and similar summer programs are designed to engage Wyoming high school students in higher education experiences on the UW campus.
- The **Wyoming School-University P-16 Council and Partnership** encourages dialogue between teacher educators and faculty at UW and other educators at Wyoming community colleges, secondary schools, and elementary schools.
- **Wyoming Public Media/Wyoming Public Radio** is physically housed on the UW campus and provides valuable news and media services throughout the state.
- **The Malcolm Wallop Fund for Conversations on Democracy supports** research and other programming about democracy. The Wallop Fund collaborates primarily with UW's American Heritage Center, College of Arts and Sciences, and the School of Politics, Public Affairs, and International Studies to develop future events, including symposia, keynote speakers, student projects, and workshops on campus and around the state.
- Support for statewide cultural programming includes the Ann Simpson Artmobile, **UW Theater and Dance tours,** and statewide performances by various UW music **performance groups.** Our museums, library holdings, and research collections (explained in 3d4) are largely free to state residents.

- Health, legal, and education outreach include **medical clinics,** a **speech and language clinic,** the **Literacy Research Center and Clinic,** and a **free law clinic.** Some of these services primarily serve Laramie residents while others have statewide reach.
- Annual hosting of statewide high school events, including High School Women in Science Conference**, State Science Fair, World Languages Day, Wyoming Latina Youth Conference,** and **Wyoming History Day**.
- **Service-learning opportunities,**coordinated through our office of **Service, Learning and Community Engagement office (SLCE)**, helps students connect through service with a range of organizations. For the 2018-19 academic year (through spring break), SLCE counted 1,001 volunteers working 5,110.5 hours through its various service programs such as Service Saturdays, Big Event, Alternative Spring Breaks. SLCE also supports faculty efforts to incorporate community engagement and service learning in the classroom by offering Community Engagement Mini-Grants.Residence Life and Dining Services houses the Wyoming Conservation Corps, an AmeriCorps program that provides student crew leaders and crew members to complete conservation projects on public lands.Crew leaders complete the WCC Leadership and Conservation class which includes training in service leadership and specialized training for field work.
- **Collaborative practice trainings and consultations** through UW's **Ruckelshaus Institute of Environment and Natural Resources** have fostered dialogue and decision making around complex, interdisciplinary, and multiple-stakeholder issues across the state.

In sum, these activities demonstrate UW's deep commitment to using educational resources to serve the public good, especially at the state level.

1d2. In addition to the broad array of UW's outreach activities (see 1d1) and relationships (see 1d3) that UW willingly pursues, a variety of policies exists to ensure that the University maintains focus and control over its educational responsibilities.

As a public, non-profit institution, concerns about return to investors and contributions to a parent organization are not directly applicable to UW. However, ongoing efforts to secure state funding, establish new sources of revenue, and maintain strong enrollment levels do require UW to balance its obligations in relationship to diverse stakeholder groups. Especially because we depend on high levels of state funding and are guided by a board of **gubernatorial-appointed trustees**, we must take special care to ensure that these groups do not inappropriately influence our operations. For example, the state's funding to the University is allocated as a block grant rather than program-by-program funding, which allows UW the needed degrees of freedom to allocate resources in a timely way to mission-critical needs.

To keep UW's educational responsibilities at the forefront of its efforts, the University maintains Board of Trustees **bylaws** and **conflict of interest policies** that limit the potential for self-interested board members to exert undue influence over University practices. The Board's conflict of interest policy and practice of **signing statements acknowledging potential conflicts** demonstrates its ongoing efforts to uphold ethical principles and shield UW decisions that personally benefit individual trustees.

The University Foundation is guided by its **mission as an independent 503(c) organization**. UW Regulations and policies guide investment policy, **patents and copyright on University innovations (University Regulation 9-1), vendor relationships and consulting relationships,** and **bidding and procurement** to limit the opportunity for partner organizations to apply unreasonable pressure on University activities.

1d3. Our arguments for criteria 1c2, 1d1, 2c2, and 3d1 provide extensive information about the ways that UW engages with and contributes to the needs of its various partner communities and external organizations.

The University actively seeks feedback and guidance from and about its partnerships, through mechanisms such as programming administered by the **Agricultural Extension Service, the Office of Engagement and Outreach**, and statewide **presidential listening sessions.**

In terms of specific organizations with which UW enjoys strong partnerships, we identify:

- Foundation and boosters groups, including the UW Foundation, the UW Alumni Association, and the Cowboy Joe Club.
- Scholarly and professional consortia and alliances, including participation in the **Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries**, other research consortia, and the **WWAMI (Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho) Medical Education Program**, which helps produce health services providers committed to serving Wyoming's rural population.
- Other regional higher education institutions, including Wyoming community colleges, in order to develop strong transfer and articulation processes. The newly created T**ransfer Success Center** helps provide central oversight for these processes, including multiple **2+2 program articulations** with community colleges, and respond to several identified previously-unmet needs.
- UW's longstanding relationship with Casper College (dating back to 1976), which led to development of UW's only branch campus (UW-Casper), as well as the **2014 completion of a $23 million facility** that supports UW-Casper's operations. This partnership makes it possible for site-bound students, often first-generation or non-traditional students, to earn a UW degree in central Wyoming.
- A **range of specific disciplinary/professional accreditor organizations** that ensure specific programs are aligned with criteria in those fields. UW faculty serve on accreditation teams for some of these organizations as team chairs and evaluators for visits to other universities.
- Strong global relationships **with multiple international institutions** are coordinated primarily through the Global Engagement Office. Multiple international agreements support international research and education abroad and provide significant opportunities to enrich our student and faculty experiences. Our **World to Wyoming** program allows us to engage residents across the state in presentations about global diversity.
- **Regional Centers** across the state that work closely with the community college to help engage, recruit, advise, and provide support to students.
- **Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System development** with partnerships between UW, the Wyoming community colleges, the Wyoming Community College

Commission, Wyoming Department of Education, and the Department of Workforce Services. The development of this system should facilitate tracking education and employment outcomes throughout the state.

- Membership in **WICHE**, the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education.

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1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

"Breaking Through: 2017-2022" is a broadly visible strategic plan, developed through a well-planned process, and it provides clear alignment between UW's guiding mission and related goals and targets. Related efforts to align unit-level strategic plans with "Breaking Through: 2017-2022" help ensure that the mission statement filters down to everyday operations.

The mission and strategic plan establish the value of acknowledging diversity and contributing to the public good. More importantly, the actions of the University demonstrate its commitment to diversity and to serving various state and global constituencies. The recent establishment of centers for diversity, equity, and inclusion; global engagement; transfer success; and student involvement and leadership are powerful indicators of the University's recognition that these focuses need to be integrated into the institution's traditional focus on teaching, research, and service

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

Argument

UW strives for integrity in all functions, illustrated throughout our institutional policies. In terms of broad regulations, the following selected regulations illustrate a pervasive institutional commitment to honest and fair dealings regarding governance, finances, employment, and faculty and student expectations.

- Authority for officers (**UW Regulation 1-1**)
- Investment (**UW Regulation 7-7**) and private fundraising activity (**UW Regulation 12-1**)
- Equal opportunity (**UW Regulation 4-1**) and other policies related to human resources and employment (**UW Regulations 5-1**, **5-2**, **and 5-3**)
- Tenure, promotion, post-tenure, and annual review policies (**UW Regulation 2-7**)
- An updated syllabus policy, which spells out UW's commitment to diversity and duty to report (**UW Regulation 2-117**)
- Establishment of an internal auditor (**Board of Trustees Bylaws Section 6-3**) and the Fiscal and Legal Affairs Committee, responsible for protecting the financial health and reputation of the University in all audit-related areas (**Board of Trustees Bylaws Section 7-2**)
- Policies guiding facilities relating auxiliary functions (**UW Regulations 6-1**, **6-4**, **and 6-7**, **6-8**, **and 6-9**)

Our **Consumer Information** webpage centralizes information related to Higher Education Opportunity Act disclosure requirements, demonstrating our efforts to provide easy access to information for decision making by students, parents, counselors, researchers, and legislators.

UW provides training to help members of the campus community recognize and act in ethical ways. Such trainings are described in other sections more fully; examples include training related to universal design for accessibility, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), ethical research conduct, freedom of expression, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

UW's commitment to integrity in budgeting is demonstrated by its transition to the **WyoCloud financial system** beginning in 2016. This system promises not only greater efficiency, but also opportunities for more accurate, transparent, and integrated decision making about budget

allocation. **Annual division reports** ensure budget transparency both within and beyond the University structure. **Internal audits and policy documentation**, including extensive publicly available budget reports and plans on the Budget Office website, provide information about the status of current budgets.

Regarding human resources, UW adopts hiring practices that support equal opportunity and diversity (see 1c2 and 2d). A **Hiring Toolkit resource page** as well as mandatory training for individuals involved in hiring decisions help promote integrity in initial hiring practices. **Human Resources' Classification/Compensation** department gathers information to guide compensation decisions to ensure fair salary rates and distributions. The **Employee Relations department** exists specifically to support resolution of concerns and to ensure that rights and responsibilities are clear both to employees and to the units where they work. The Equal Opportunity Report and Response unit focuses specifically on responding to concerns related to discrimination and harassment (**UW Regulation 4-2**), Title IX and sexual misconduct (**UW Regulation 4-3**), and violence in the workplace (**UW Regulation 4-4**).

Recognizing that policies alone are not enough to eliminate misconduct, our Equal Opportunity Response Unit and Dean of Students office track efforts to investigate and resolve complaints. In 2018, these units responded to approximately 300 cases, usually (93% of the time) within three days of initial report. Discussed further in 3c5, UWYO Cares also allows faculty, staff, students, and family to confidentially report concerns about a student's well-being and safety.

In cases of potential academic dishonesty, UW has processes for appropriate response to such events (see 2e3). Grade appeals are handled at the college-level, according to policies such as **those of the College of Arts and Sciences,** as well as **UW Regulation 2-106** (which governs appropriate changes to recorded final grades). Grade appeal processes ensure that students have recourse if they feel that grading policies have not been applied with integrity. In the event that academic plagiarism, fraud, or failure to complete degree requirements is not detected before a student completes a degree, **UW Regulation 2-120** guides the process for degree revocation.

Additionally, our response to 2e1 explains our efforts to encourage ethical research and to respond to misconduct; the Office of Research and Economic Development's **Policies and Procedures pages** include information not only about responsible research, but also about policies related to ethical practices for outside consulting, access to research data, and efforts to bring UW-driven innovations to market. Specific developments in the University's research program over the past decade include improved training for **ethical conduct of research** (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative, or CITI), updated **approval processes for research with human subjects** (with major updates in 2015 and 2019), **new research proposal** and **exemption request forms** (2018), and updated policies for the **care and use of animals in research** (2015 and 2018).

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

Argument

UW makes ongoing efforts to ensure the accuracy of its claims about programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

In broadest terms, UW's publicly-accessible **Consumer Information website** is a central clearinghouse for many documents, processes, and other materials necessary for federal funding, including broad institutional overviews, financial aid, students' rights and responsibilities, health and safety, and graduation rates, including rates for student-athletes.

Regarding cost, UW's mission is tightly tied to the **State Constitution and statute** and to UW's **land-grant status**; both encourage UW to offer broad access to college education that is "as nearly free as possible." The university's **second-place ranking by the Wall Street Journal** among land-grant universities on student value is evidence of our commitment to keeping higher education affordable to our students. UW has the lowest resident tuition and fees of any public, doctoral institution. This claim is monitored annually through a survey that is conducted by the Office of Institutional Analysis.

In terms of control structure, our status as the state's only public university is a widely-known point of pride. Among other documents, **our mission statement and strategic plan** clearly explain how we seek to balance our land-grant, flagship, and research-intensive priorities.

To ensure the accuracy of publicly available information, our websites are kept as up to date as possible, with most pages undergoing review on at least an annual basis. The **University Regulations and Standard Administrative Policies and Procedures** pages share information about University regulatory and control structures. The **Dean of Students Office** informs students, faculty, and staff about processes for student welfare, student conduct, sexual misconduct, disability, and distress support, as well as absences and withdrawals. The **Office of the Registrar** links to the current University Catalog, recent or current course schedules, academic calendar, residency, degree evaluations, and transcript and enrollment requests. The Admissions Office presents information to potential students considering matriculation to UW through Title IV and Consumer "Right to Know" to ensure that the institution is transparent, provides accurate information, and communicates a clear picture of who we are. The **Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid** provides information about cost of attendance, a net price calculator, federal return of funds policies, scholarships, federal financial aid, loans, grants, and work-study. Our **Accreditation** webpage and additional accreditation pages at the college and program levels communicate information about current status and renewal cycles. **Residence Life and Dining Services' (RLDS)** website makes public information about contracts, dining

plans, on-campus residential options/costs, and student employment opportunities with RLDS. **UW's People Finder** page offers a link to searchable institutional and web directories as a way for stakeholders to quickly find and contact UW personnel and offices. A **student complaint resolution webpage** is another consumer resource.

An institutional website accessibility audit, conducted in 2017 and continuing annually, ensures that information on UW's webpages is not only available, but also accessible to all constituent groups with disabilities.

As an indirect way of assessing student perceptions about transparency of communication between students and administrators, we can point to our recent Student Satisfaction Survey. In 2018, 73% of students agreed that "Administrators are approachable to students" (Graph 67), a response indicating an 8% increase over previous years and the highest satisfaction ever recorded for this question. We believe this score indicates that most students feel that they can access relevant people when they have questions about programs, costs, and accreditation, among other issues.

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Argument

2c1. As detailed in 2c2, 2c3, and 2c4, Board of Trustees bylaws, meeting agendas, and requirements to declare conflicts of interest provide key evidence that the governing board actions are dedicated to preserving and enhancing the University.

2c2. The Board of Trustees solicits input from the institution's internal and external constituencies during its deliberations and decision making. Evidence of successful Board of Trustees decision making processes can be found in several recent major changes at UW. Foremost is the adoption of the new strategic plan, a process detailed more fully in 1a1 and on **page 25 of the strategic plan**, which involved extensive public-input phases.

Although the Board of Trustees bylaws do not mandate feedback-gathering processes during decision making, the board has historically demonstrated in practice a commitment to seeking external and internal feedback during major deliberations. The board's practice of gathering input from constituent groups promotes their broad understanding of the representative values and priorities of many stakeholder groups. As representative examples, in the 2018-19 academic year, the board consulted broadly with stakeholders on important decisions such as the **new academic calendar** and **the choice of an Acting President**.

Board sub-committees focused on issues related to **facilities** and **budget** have similarly included opportunities for and response to public input, demonstrating the board's ongoing commitment to considering internal and external constituencies throughout decision-making processes.

When decisions made by the Board of Trustees have raised concern on campus such as when the board **centralized departmental reserve accounts during a financial downturn,** trustees have taken measures to listen, reevaluate their actions, and seek to rectify them. They have also undertaken effort to calibrate practice to ensure future actions benefit from the experience.

2c3. The Board of Trustees seeks to maintain appropriate distance from donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.All board members must declare any conflicts of interest, in accordance with the University of Wyoming **Board of Trustees Conflict of Interest Policy.** Recusal of board members (such as Trustee McKinley's recusal during recent discussion of UW involvement in a Pilot Hill land swap) is common, especially in executive session deliberations. The Board of Trustees members signed **new conflict of interest policies in July 2019.**

Wyoming State Statute 21-17-201 helps maintain a representative balance of political and geographic interests among board members, which helps protect the University from pressure from any one corner of the state or one side of the political spectrum:

"The government of the university is vested in a board of twelve (12) trustees appointed by the governor, no two (2) of whom may be residents of the same county of the state. At least one (1) trustee shall be appointed from each appointment district pursuant to W.S. 9-1-218. Not more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the members of the board shall be registered in the same political party."

This statute additionally stipulates that the University President, the President of the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming, and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction are ex officio members. Other ex officio members designated by statute include the Governor of the State of Wyoming and Executive Director of the Wyoming Community College Commission.

As a further protection to the independence of the Board of Trustees, the board operates separately from the **UW Foundation**, which takes primary responsibility for managing donor relations. The Foundation functions as an 501(c)3 entity independent from UW's regulatory structures.

2c4. The Board of Trustees entrusts UW's day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and empowers the faculty to oversee academic matters. Specifically, **UW Regulation 1-1** vests the President with "powers and duties as provided by the laws of this State and the Bylaws of the Trustees of the University of Wyoming. In addition to such duties, the President shall enforce UW Regulations as adopted hereof, and the President is hereby clothed with all authority requisite to these ends."

Although day-to-day management is vested primarily with the University President, a close reading of revisions to University Regulations over the past 5 years also shows that the Board of Trustees has increasing involvement in some University matters (including, for example, capital construction in **UW Regulation 6-1** and administrative hiring in **UW Regulation 1-1**). The fact that the University President serves at the pleasure of the board (as stipulated in UW Regulation 1-1) also reveals ways in which the board has indirect leverage over University management.

UW Regulation 2 -203 establishes the composition for various administrative committees, ensures that management and planning decisions involve representation from appropriate colleges and units across campus. University Faculty Bylaws (UW Regulation 2-300) place responsibility for "the establishment of educational and academic policies for the University as a

whole and the promotion of the general welfare of the University, its students, and the faculty" in the hands of the faculty. This regulation additionally establishes the specific objects and authority, membership, and bylaws of the Faculty Senate as a formal mechanism for overseeing academic matters.

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

Several documents and program offerings stake out UW's overarching position toward freedoms of expression. For example, in its **"Statement of Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure,"** UW's regulations identify the importance of academic freedom in teaching, research, governance, and in the broader public sphere. Further, in response to public outcry in 2009 over a controversial invited speaker, faculty member Myron Allen contributed to UW a paper on **"The University as Forum: Aspects of Free Expression in the Academy,"** which offers six suggestions about how universities can carry out their "duty to serve as neutral forums for the exchange and examination of ideas."

The following activities and policies demonstrate a broad commitment to free expression:

- In the 2018-19 academic year, the Provost's Office tasked the Deans with discussing, deliberating, and drafting a policy to update a statement of UW's support for academic freedom. This exercise was integral to reframing conversations about academic freedom on campus and collaboratively developing new UW Regulations.The resulting **UW Regulation 2-15,** Academic Freedom, is in process of approval. It is worth noting that while previously academic freedom was embedded in our regulation governing academic personnel titles, ranks, and tenure and promotion procedures, the new UW Regulation stands alone to highlight the importance of free expression in the academe.
- The **UW Student Code of Conduct** establishes both a student's right to "participate in relevant, civil discussions, inquiry, and expression in academic endeavors" and the concomitant responsibility to "respect the instructor's freedom to teach and the right of other students to learn."

To support the goals espoused in these aspirational statements and regulations, UW provides a range of opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and others to engage thoughtfully in challenging conversations about the nature of truth in a diverse world:

- Both the **Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning** and the **Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** have offered programming focused on effectively facilitating difficult conversations in the classroom.
- The annual **Martin Luther King, Jr. Days of Dialogue program** serves to expand institutional awareness about issues of diversity and social justice, foster an inclusive community, and empower individuals to act in solidarity with marginalized communities.
- A required **syllabus statement** (initiated in spring 2019) establishes the value of classroom diversity as a resource for student learning.

- The Anti-Defamation League's **Words to Action Workshop** was offered to invite students to learn how to combat anti-Semitism and hate. The program was sponsored collaboratively with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the Division of Student Affairs, the Department of Athletics, and Associated Students of the University of Wyoming.
- To protect the rights of students to engage in co-curricular opportunities, Recognized Student Organizations are required to include a non-discrimination clause found in the **RSO Handbook, p. 24** in their membership policies.
- The University supports centers and other programming that increase visibility and understanding of historically disenfranchised groups. **Safe Zone training**, the **Rainbow Resource Center**, and the **Queer Studies minor,** for example, help to create space for the voices of LGBTQIA+ students. In fall 2019, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will start five new E-Networks to build supportive communities for faculty and staff of color or who identify as LGBTQIA+.
- In September 2018, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Student Affairs, and the School of Politics, Public Affairs, and International Studies presented **a panel on Freedom of Speech** for students and the campus community.
- The People's Supper, a program hosted by the UW Service, Leadership, and Community Engagement office, brings people of varying political and ideological points of view together for friendly conversation over a shared meal. This provides an opportunity to move past argument and focus on listening to each other.
- In September 2019, the University celebrated the accomplishments of and issued an apology to the "Black 14," 50 years after these student-athletes were dismissed from the UW football team for expressing a wish to protest the racist policies of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

In sum, these activities demonstrate a commitment to freedom of expression that goes beyond policies, extending to trainings and events that allow and encourage students to engage directly in the hard work of confronting uncomfortable historic and contemporary truths.

When hate speech diminishes the ability of UW to serve as a safe place for all members to pursue freedom of expression, our administration has been consistent in **condemning such actions**. Additionally, the University encourages students, faculty, and other members of the campus community to **engage in difficult questions about the boundaries of protected speech**.

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2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

Argument

2e1. UW provides guidance and resources to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice. **UW Regulation 2-114** and the **University Policy for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct** clearly spell out the University's expectations for ethical research. Many t**enure and promotion guidelines** establish appropriate disciplinary expectations related to ethical research.

As detailed in 2e2, undergraduate general education courses help establish baseline expectations for ethical research. These standards are reinforced through **syllabus statements about academic dishonesty**, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The Dean of Students' Office maintains a database of academic dishonesty cases, which is tracked by college reporting the incidents. This is delineated in more detail in 2e3.

In terms of oversight and support services for faculty and student research and scholarship, the Office of Research and Economic Development offers oversight and substantial assistance on **compliance and ethical conduct of research**. These include guidance for compliance areas, including an **Institutional Review Board**, **Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee**, **Institutional Biosafety Committee**, and **Radiation Safety Committee**, as well as **Responsible Conduct of Research and Conflict of Interest policies**.

In support of increasing calls for researchers to make raw data available for inspection (and follow-up research) by others, the UW Libraries, in partnership with Information Technology, now offers **a data repository as a service to support ethical research**.

As the University continues to expand its attention to economic development, the Office of Research and Economic Development has increased its support for ethical pursuit of marketable innovations, in part by updating its **regulations related to patents and copyrights** in 2018.

2e2. UW encourages students' attention to ethical use of information in a variety of ways. To support undergraduate students' development of information literacy, four required general education courses (the first-year seminar course and a series of communication-intensive courses) include learning outcomes focused on evaluation, integration, and documentation of secondary research. The University Libraries has developed a set of **modules accessible to all**

registered UW students to help provide students a foundation in information literacy; the Libraries additionally offered library instruction to over 100 courses in the 2018-19 academic year.

The University does not collect information about specific program-level requirements for students' ethical use of sources, but expectations focused on research methodologies, ethics, and appropriate disciplinary practices are common in departmental **student learning outcomes** at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Many co-curricular support programs, including the Writing Center, the tutoring center for UW athletes, and the STEP peer tutoring center provide tutor training to help ensure that these support systems do not overstep the boundary between honest and dishonest academic support.

2e3. UW has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity. **UW Regulation 2-114** establishes clear definitions and penalties for student academic dishonesty. Some programs, including the Honors College and the College of Law, have their own conduct policies that reinforce the importance of academic honesty, and in some cases help to prepare students to understand the professional standards that guide their future areas of practice. As of fall 2019, the **standard syllabus template proscribed by UW Regulation 2-117** requires all faculty to include statement on academic dishonesty.

Accusations of academic dishonesty are managed both at the college level by the Academic Deans' offices and at the institution level by the Dean of Students' office. The Dean of Students' office maintains **a repository** of academic dishonesty cases by college: The Dean of Students received 45 reports of academic dishonesty cases between 2016- and 2019. One of those cases resulted in suspension. It should be noted that some cases are resolved at the individual faculty or department level, in accordance with UW Regulation 2-114, and are not reported to the Dean of Students.

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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

The University aggregates important data about the institution, financial aid, student rights, health and safety, and student retention, completion, and diversity on its Consumer Information webpage. This page provides transparent information that helps ensure our compliance with the Higher Education Act of 1965; it allows data about the University to be collected and compared to other institutions; and it serves as evidence of responsible practices.

Additionally, a variety of University Regulations and other policies establish expectations for ethical conduct, including academic honesty, fair and respectful workplaces, and appropriate relationships between the faculty, administration, the President, and Board of Trustees. Trustee bylaws help to promote decision making that is autonomous from undue influence and that represents political and geographic diversity.

The values of free expression and responsible research conduct are established and directed most visibly in the Student Code of Conduct, UW Regulation 2-15 Academic Freedom in process of approval. in policies of the Office of Research and Economic Development, and in principles affirmed by the Deans Council and Faculty Senate.

Sources

There are no sources.

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

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Argument

3a1. UW has **processes for vetting proposed new programs, majors, and minors (UW Regulation 2-119)**. There is also a process for **de-cataloging courses** that have been inactive for six years or longer. **Institutional**- and college-level course committees. The course committees oversee many of the processes related to approving new or modified courses.

Our general education program underwent a major update in 2015, and key courses within that program must be re-approved on a cycle of no more than three years. More broadly, an **academic program review policy** (adopted in July 2018) requires programs to be reviewed every seven years, and provides special guidelines for new programs, low-producing programs, programs on suspended admissions, and programs involved in specialized accreditation review.

To help encourage students to complete programs in a reasonable time frame, we now require programs to create **4-year plans** that demonstrate clear pathways to completion. Some departments indicate course "expiration dates" for students in undergraduate and graduate programs.

The levels of performance required for our programs are established and enforced in a variety of ways:

- As indicated in the **University Catalog**, colleges set undergraduate program expectations for total credit hours (120-142) and upper-level credits (42). Additional requirements, as

      well as criteria related to second and dual-bachelor's degrees, are also spelled out in **UW Regulation 2-103**.

- Relationships with a variety of external accreditors provide additional opportunities to demonstrate that our programs are both current and of high quality. Our **Accreditation Schedule** (updated April 2019) demonstrates the range of external accrediting bodies who review and evaluate programs at UW.

- For students transferring to UW, our acceptance of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education **WICHE Interstate Passport** helps ease transfer while ensuring students have taken coursework aligned with our general education outcomes. We work with Wyoming community colleges to maintain **course-level articulation** so students at these partner sites achieve adequate levels of performance to continue their education at UW. Our membership with the **National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements** (NC-SARA) improves accessibility of our distance learning courses and programs, both within the state and across state lines.

- **UW Regulation 2-103** sets a University-wide minimum of 2.0 GPA for continuing enrollment. Across many programs, additional GPA requirements help maintain a high level of performance. For example, students pursuing degrees in the College of Business who have earned 60 hours of credit must attain **Advanced Business Standing,** which requires a cumulative GPA of 2.5; their cumulative GPA at graduation must also remain at or above this level.

As detailed more fully in Criteria 3c and 5a, we strive for quality of programming by guaranteeing that faculty are well trained and effective in their teaching duties. Professional development opportunities and annual review processes both help ensure that faculty are able to teach and assess the levels of performance required within our programs. The assessment committee has provided direction and evaluation in past years to facilitate department-level student learning outcomes.

Finally, **retention rates**, data about **graduates in the workforce**, consumer information, and surveys of student satisfaction and outcomes all inform our understanding of the relevance and quality of our programs. These data show that UW has made progress in supporting our students' success. For example, the **Bridge Program,** which serves a substantial number of our underrepresented minority students and first-generation students as they transition to college, has steadily increased the retention rates for socioeconomically-disadvantaged students. **Hispanic student retention rates** have also increased. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the **Native American Education, Research, and Cultural Center** will help UW make greater strides in supporting our underrepresented students.

3a2. UW articulates and differentiates learning outcomes across its wide range of programs.

The Student Learning Outcomes page links to departmental pages that explicitly state student learning outcomes. 93% of academic programs (151 out of 173) have explicitly published their learning outcomes on their departmental pages. Those outcomes are articulated for each program offered within that department; for example, the School of Politics, Public Affairs, and International Studies department identifies distinct outcomes for its **BA in Political Science, MA in Political Science**, and **MPA program**.

To help maintain a general environment of outcomes-driven learning, **new program proposals must include student learning outcomes** as part of the application process. To support clear differentiation of learning goals across undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs, **UW Regulation 2-10**0 offers guidance to help establish general expectations for various course levels (1000- to 6000-level).

Institutional processes for program assessment are driven by programmatic learning outcomes; additionally, many programs' student learning outcomes (especially in health sciences, education, and engineering) are aligned (and assessed in accordance) with outcomes developed by **relevant professional accrediting bodies**. The College of Business, as an example, has acted upon major **recommendations made by their accrediting body, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)**.

In terms of our general education curriculum (the University Studies Program), revision efforts (2011-2015) focused on the committee-based development of **new courses, as well as new learning outcomes**. Outcomes of the **communication-intensive (COM)** series set expectations for students to demonstrate increasingly nuanced skills in disciplinary and interdisciplinary communication. A First-Year Seminar Coordinator and a Director of Communication across the Curriculum help oversee assessment of learning outcomes for four of the key courses within the generation education curriculum. Discussion of potential revisions to the general education curriculum is beginning now and is focused on the rapid pace of change in artificial intelligence and machine learning, as well as its implications for education and work.

3a3. UW seeks consistency across all modes and sites of delivery. Though the **UW Outreach School was reorganized in 2017**, we see this move as one which will strengthen support for distance programs by eliminating an artificial boundary between "on-campus" and "distance" coursework. The adoption of a new learning management system in 2013, called WyoCourses, has helped shift many faculty toward more effective multimodal teaching, both on campus and in distance settings. **Ongoing faculty development session**s (offered through our Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning) continue to support faculty in using WyoCourses.

In general terms, our recently-adopted academic program review process provides a mechanism for the University to ensure consistency among programs offered at a distance and with partner organizations. Assessment for online programs is now integrated within other ongoing program-, college-, and institution-level processes. The Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning is exploring the use of Quality Matters rubrics for evaluating online and campus-based courses; we believe that these rubrics can help the University better assess major weaknesses or inconsistencies especially in online delivery. We are currently implementing HonorLock, an online exam proctoring technology, to ensure integrity in the administration of exams for our online students that matches our practices for on-campus students. Previously, proctoring had to be done in person on campus or at alternate locations. Not only will this new technology ensure integrity, but it will eliminate obstacles for our online students who must complete proctored exams and assignments.

In terms of in-state articulation, responsibility for ongoing course- and program-level articulation with Wyoming community colleges resides with departments and is coordinated by the **Transfer**

Success Center. Articulation with Wyoming community colleges in lower-level coursework occurs on an annual basis; informal meetings help ensure course goals and quality are consistent for transfer students who pursue upper-level coursework at UW. As noted in 5a1, our participation in the **Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education** (WICHE) and **National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements** (NC-SARA) provides some affirmation that our student learning outcomes and course delivery approaches are consistent with those offered by other schools regionally and nationally.

We believe it is important that students at locations other than our main Laramie campus have equitable access to appropriate resources. The foundation of the UW Libraries' services to distance learners is the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Standards for Serving Distance Learners, which states that all patrons, regardless of location, are entitled to the same library services. Online students also have access to **online tutoring resources** matched to all of our online programs. In 2017, our **Writing Center** expanded its offerings to include synchronous online sessions, helping to provide a tutoring experience for distance students that is more similar to the face-to-face model offered for on-campus students. The **UW Distance Resources page** provides information about other services that help improve program quality and increase equitable access to resources.

Laramie and Casper departments are responsible for conducting credential checks for off-site part-time or temporary instructors of online courses to confirm that these instructors have qualifications and experience appropriate to the course level. These checks help ensure that distance students receive instruction that is comparable in quality to those of on-campus students.

In cases where our programs are delivered in agreement with partner organizations (such as medical degrees offered through the **WWAMI regional partnership** or the MS Natural Sciences Education offered in partnership with **Teton Science Schools**), MOU's allow for monitoring of consistency and quality of offerings.

While our policies and support for faculty demonstrate our efforts to create consistency across modes and sites of delivery, we also recognize that gaps remain. Information-gathering activities, through projects such as our **Student Satisfaction Survey** help us better identify those gaps and take action to further improve the overall quality of experience for all students.

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

Argument

3b1. UW's general education program (University Studies Program 2015) is appropriate to the mission and to its broad array of undergraduate educational offerings. Because UW is Wyoming's only four-year-degree granting institution, with degrees across a diversity of STEM, social science, and humanities fields, we feel it is essential that all students develop a broad base of knowledge. **UW Regulation 2-105** requires the establishment of a general education program aligned with key institutional values.

The purpose of the University Studies Program (USP) is to establish baseline learning requirements which all undergraduate students should meet regardless of their fields of study. These baseline learning requirements should be flexible and transparent. They should easily transfer between collegiate level institutions, such as community colleges and the University; and among colleges and departments at the University. They must be based on assessable learning outcomes that are clearly stated and made available to all interested parties, including students and instructors.

Coursework that fulfills the goals of the USP involves multiple and diverse disciplines in order to provide students with broad learning experiences, exposure to different viewpoints, and diverse skill sets. Coursework includes knowledge of human culture, the physical and natural world, and United States and Wyoming Constitutions; intellectual and practical skills; and personal and social responsibility. The expectation is this coursework should produce citizens able to function in a complex and changing society.

USP 2015, **adopted in 2013** and implemented in 2015, currently guides general education requirements for all undergraduate students. As the **USP 2015 curriculum map** indicates, communication and critical and creative thinking learning outcomes are spread across multiple courses. The program requires courses related to civic, quantitative, cultural, physical, and natural ways of understanding the world. Each requirement, as well as an additional set of personal and civic responsibility objectives, is guided by a set of clearly defined **student learning outcomes**.

Beyond USP 2015, external professional accrediting organizations may have additional expectations for general skills, attitudes, or behaviors within specific professions, including education, counseling, nursing, business, law, pharmacy, and engineering.

At the graduate level, UW does not dictate a set of general education requirements; instead, individual programs are charged with determining the essential outcomes.

3b2. UW's University Studies Program (USP) 2015 is organized around a clear purpose, essential focuses of learning, and student learning outcomes. USP 2015 defines and guides the delivery of a broad base of knowledge and intellectual concepts that we believe every college-educated person should possess.

In 2010, then-Provost Myron Allen authored a white paper, "Revisiting University Studies Program 2003: Guidelines and Reflections on the Task of Updating the Core Curriculum," which served as a starting point for formal multi-phase review, revision, and adoption of updated undergraduate general education requirements. This white paper, in light of both broader trends and local circumstances, laid out basic premises, gaps to address, and a tentative structure for the new general education program.

USP 2015 was developed through an extensive, multi-year, faculty-driven process. Historical information about the creation of USP 2015 notes that starting-point program outcomes were based on **AAC&U Liberal Education & America's Promise (LEAP) categories and outcomes** and were revised through a **multi-phase** and cross-campus collaborative process. By adapting LEAP outcomes, we both recognize the value of national conversations and trends regarding liberal education while simultaneously acknowledging the particularities of our local context.

As outlined in the overview to USP 2015:

"The University of Wyoming student learning outcomes provide a framework for the undergraduate educational experience. While students choose different academic majors, the University Studies Program provides a common experience for all undergraduate students. Through the pursuit of a baccalaureate degree, UW students will "develop knowledge of human cultures, the physical and natural world, and the United States and Wyoming Constitutions; acquire a core set of intellectual and practical skills; and develop personal and social responsibility." In addition to helping students become successful in their chosen fields, UW aspires for its graduates to become life-long learners, ethical leaders, and contributing members to society."

In line with UW's philosophy, student demographics, and current mission statement, USP 2015 establishes 30 credits of general education coursework, which address the two broad areas of (1) "Knowledge of Human Culture, the Physical and Natural World, and the United States and Wyoming Constitutions" and (2) "Intellectual and Practical Skills," including communication, critical thinking, and quantitative skills. Outcomes related to "Personal and Social Responsibility" are currently articulated, but not attached to specific courses or evaluated as part of undergraduate students' graduation requirements. The development of the **SOAR experiential transcript,** discussed in more detail in 3b3,was done, in part, to allow UW to begin assessing these latter learning outcomes.*As noted in* **3b1**, these courses and outcomes are aligned with University Regulation 2-105, which states that the general education program should "produce citizens able to function in a complex and changing society."

A standing University Studies Program committee, with representation from each undergraduate college and the UW Libraries, reviews new course proposals and course renewals to ensure that USP-designated courses meet relevant student learning outcomes. Established first-year seminar and communications courses are reviewed on a regular rotation.

3b3. UW programs engage students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information, mastering modes of inquiry or creative work, and developing flexible skills for career and life success. As noted in 3b1 and 3b2, all undergraduate students must complete three communication-intensive general education courses, as well as a first-year seminar course. These courses include outcomes specifically focused on conducting research, critically evaluating claims, and communicating with others. Additional components of the general education program (especially the required "Human Culture" and "Physical and Natural World" courses) expand students' understanding of forms of inquiry across multiple fields of study.

As noted in 3a2, most programs have articulated clear learning goals at the undergraduate and graduate levels, which generally demonstrate multiple outcomes related to collecting and communicating information, understanding disciplinary approaches to inquiry, and developing flexible skills for the modern world.

As one representative example, the four undergraduate programs offered by our Physics and Astronomy Department share four student learning outcomes, underpinned by the broader goal of producing "well-trained scientists who are competitive for jobs in the technical sector and for admission to graduate study." These goals clearly allude to values for information gathering, communication, disciplinary inquiry, and relevant, flexible skills:

- Outcome 1. Conceptual and analytical understanding of the four major areas of physics: mechanics, electricity and magnetism, quantum mechanics, and statistical physics.
- Outcome 2. Understanding of scientific reasoning, i.e., the roles of theory, hypothesis, and experiment in the scientific method.
- Outcome 3: Demonstration of a working knowledge of laboratory and programming skills as they relate to gathering data and comparing data to the predictions of theoretical models.
- Outcome 4: Ability to clearly communicate the results of scientific analysis in written and oral form.

Course descriptions in the course catalog additionally suggest the depth and breadth of programs' focus on content, methods, and forms of inquiry relevant to changing workplace, civic, and cultural needs. Specifically, numerous capstone and senior seminar courses provide space for demonstrated research, communication, and disciplinary inquiry skills.

UW's newly adopted experiential transcript platform (SOAR) will increasingly allow the University to track student participation beyond the curriculum, which in turn will help UW better understand how students adapt to the evolving demands of contemporary society. SOAR is a competency-based program at UW that will shape, engage, and prepare students to meet unpredictable and complex challenges for the future. Through participating in SOAR, students engage in high-impact learning experiences in research, cross-cultural and international perspectives, internships, entrepreneurship, leadership, and community service offered through UW offices such as the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership; Advising, Career Services, and Exploratory Studies; Residence Life and Dining Services; UW sponsored speaker series; and academic programs.

UW's most-recent results from the **national Collegiate Learning Assessment** demonstrates that seniors in 2015 scoredhigher than first-year students on a variety of measures of higher-order thinking skills, including scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical reading and evaluation, and argument critique. This national assessment lends support to our claims that a UW education promotes mastery of modes of creative and critical thinking.

3b4. UW and its educational programs recognize the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work. In terms of curriculum, UW's required undergraduate "Human Cultures" general education courses draw undergraduate students' attention to cultural difference and intercultural literacy. Students must take two of these courses, which are driven by **these learning outcomes**:

1. Examine values about human culture and the place of humanity in the world.
2. Explain human ideas and experiences and how those influence societies, human behavior, and human-social interactions.
3. Compare different methods and theories to interpret and explain human events and cultures.
4. Examine the role of diversity in human societies and how diversity impacts global change.
5. Analyze how culture and diversity can be depicted through different forms of expression (e.g., visual arts, performing arts, etc.)
6. Apply cultural meanings through different forms of expression (e.g., music, art, dance, etc.)

Students completing degrees in the College of Arts and Sciences are required to complete **"Global"** and **"Diversity"** courses as part of the A&S Core; these courses further engage students in considerations of diversity and internationalization.

Beyond the general education program, other key documents also demonstrate UW's commitment to providing a range of undergraduate programs that can help students achieve

success across diverse professional and disciplinary settings: both the **University Catalog** and the master list of degrees demonstrate the breadth of course and program offerings at the University of Wyoming. More broadly, the institutional value of internationalization and diversity is captured in **Goal 1 of our current strategic plan;** in support of its primary educational mission, UW seeks to "nurture an environment that values and manifests diversity, internationalization, free expression, academic freedom, personal integrity, and mutual respect."

In support of this strategic goal, UW offers an increasingly extensive set of educational resources that invite students to appreciate diversity in a contemporary, globalized world. Responses to 1c1, 1c2, and 3e1 describe the various centers, organizations, and events that infuse our campus with access to diverse perspectives and experiences.

Further, the **strategic plan** names diversity and internationalization as one of six values that drive decision-making processes at UW and articulates the view that human and cultural diversity "multiplies our capacity to explore, innovate, and educate." The establishment of the Office of Engagement and Outreach (2019), Center for Student Involvement and Leadership (2018), Global Engagement Office (2018), and Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (2017) create institutional structures that will help UW expand its curricular and co-curricular offerings in support of diversity and internationalization.

For students who want to deepen their attention to human and cultural diversity, UW offers programs which focus exclusively on specific forms of diversity. For example, our newly-formed **School of Culture, Gender, and Social Justice** offers multiple majors and minors that explore "the historical, social, political, and cultural forces that shape society," including African American and Diaspora Studies (undergraduate major and minor), American Indian Studies (undergraduate major and minor, graduate minor), and Gender and Women's Studies (undergraduate major and minor, graduate minor). Further, the **Disability Studies minor** also provides an interdisciplinary understanding of theory and practice related to contemporary understanding of disability.

To help ensure that faculty are prepared to engage students in recognizing and appreciating diverse human and cultural perspectives, UW offers a range of programming for new faculty, graduate assistants, and staff. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion catalogs many of those professional development opportunities; see 1c for more information about these offerings.

3b5. At UW, faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge appropriate to the institution's simultaneous roles as land-grant, research-intensive, and flagship university.

UW is classified as a Doctoral Institution of Higher Research Activity within the Carnegie Classification System. The task of supporting a robust research environment at UW falls primarily to the Office of Research and Economic Development, which coordinates the origination, organization, and execution of UW's research mission. Thirteen units report to the Office of Research and Economic Development, each of which has research, innovation, or product development as a primary focus. In the **UW Fact Book** (p.18), the Office of Research

and Economic Development reported that UW received around $83 million in external awards from federal, state, and industry sources in 2018.

The **strategic plan of the Office of Research and Economic Development** details current status, as well as ambitious goals for extending the participation of students and faculty in scholarly inquiry. In addition, the Office of Research and Economic Development, in collaboration with the Provost, is exploring a "Grand Challenges" framework for marshalling UW's inherent academic strengths to tackle social challenges. This framework is being fleshed out in conversations with academic units and is, at present, a very loose concept and not precisely defined. The Office of Research and Economic Development is gathering feedback in listening sessions across campus to help formalize and give form to this framework.

A 2014 publication, **UW's Economic Footprint,** provides extensive information about how UW's research activity impacts the State of Wyoming's economic and cultural development. As the executive summary of this document notes:

"In every county across Wyoming, we provide courses and degrees for those who cannot come to Laramie; research that advances fundamental understanding, as well as practical solutions to business, industry and government; service to professional and community organizations; information and advice to policy makers; cultural performances and exhibitions; academic programming, workshops, and seminars; access to legal services, health services, and library databases; a wide variety of other contributions to the full social, business, cultural, creative, and economic environment of the state*."*

To make the research work of UW more broadly accessible, the University Libraries implemented an institutional repository in 2014 which contains scholarship produced by faculty, staff, and students. An additional new digital repository, **WyoFolio,** housing University-generated data, also helps UW comply with mandates for accessible sharing of federally-funded research.

Regarding student research and creative endeavor, the University is increasingly engaging undergraduates in meaningful disciplinary research. **Undergraduate Research and Inquiry Across the Disciplines** (formerly Undergraduate Research Day) is an annual event currently in its eighteenth year. In 2019, the event had over 500 participants and is undergoing a substantial redesign to further increase its impact. Multiple programs, including **McNair Scholars**, **INBRE (IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence)**, **EPSCoR (Established Program to Stimulate** Competitive Research**)**, the **Honors College,** and **capstone engineering design courses** provide undergraduate students with opportunities to engage in research. Workshops and mentoring offered by these programs help to develop students' understanding of ethical research conduct. The Top Tier Science Initiative includes a robust **Wyoming Undergraduate Research Scholars** program. SOAR, our new platform for tracking students' experiential activity and described more fully in 3b3 above, includes research as a major competency. Over time, this platform will allow us to develop a clearer sense of the depth, range, quality, and impact of undergraduate research activity at UW. The Global Engagement Office also supports student research through the Center for Global Studies. In summer and fall 2018, the Center for Global

Studies supported 17 student research and internship projects through its **International Research/Internship Excellence Awards**.

Graduate education and research is core to the mission of a flagship university in creating and disseminating new knowledge and nurturing the next generation of scholars. It is supported by both Graduate Teaching and **Graduate Research Assistantships** facilitated by the Office of Graduate Education.

UW supports the exploration and application to **Fulbright** and other prestigious post-graduate scholarship programs by maintaining and disseminating information to students via email in May each year. Dedicated campus advisers administer each of these programs; however, UW's high achieving students should be supported in a more coherent and structured way. A small working group has convened to rethink how UW administers, supports, and encourages students to apply to these programs. This working group's effort will culminate in a more structured effort that will be rolled out in spring 2020.

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Argument

3c1. UW maintains sufficient faculty staffing levels to provide effective classroom learning, as well as carry out non-classroom tasks such as curricular development and assessment of student learning.

UW currently maintains about a 1**5:1 student-faculty ratio, with 82% of faculty holding the highest degree in their field**. Throughout a major statewide economic downturn and the resulting f**ormation of a UW Financial Crisis Advisory Committee** in 2016, UW has kept an eye toward trying to ensure that course availability and quality of instruction is kept at the foreso that adverse impacts to students are minimized.

A **major capacity study conducted in 2017-18 by Huron Consulting** has helped UW develop a better understanding of instructional capacity. The study concluded, "While there are pockets of departments and academic units that are approaching current capacity constraints at varying levels of target utilization, increased academic section size and scheduling management combined with higher utilization targets can accommodate additional students with limited additional instructional effort" (slide 13). Huron's study included recommendations to better manage faculty resources (slide 68); these recommendations include strategic changes for maintaining effective instruction.

UW approves changes or additions to academic programming when units can show capacity. Specifically, college-level curriculum committees, the Academic Program Committee, and the Graduate Council serve as checkpoints for proposed new or revised programs.

Other evidence that helps us gauge adequacy of course offerings includes waitlists. Analysis of waitlists indicates a limited number of pressure points where demand for courses consistently outstrips availability. When appropriate and possible, priority for hiring is shifted toward those spots. For example, new extended-term lecturer positions were allocated to the English department in 2019 to increase the number of sections of Technical and Professional Writing and other upper-level communication-intensive courses required as part of the general education program. Lecturer positions were allocated to the Bridge Program to address capacity issues in 2019 as well.

In terms of faculty sufficiency and continuity for supporting non-classroom academic tasks, UW is committed to assessment of student learning. As detailed more extensively through our responses to Criteria 4, we believe our decision to move institutional assessment into the **Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning (in 2018**) will provide broader expertise and support for maintaining ongoing assessment practices. We hope this move will create a distributed assessment climate, in which faculty will view themselves as partners who share responsibility for assessment on an ongoing basis.

As to developing, maintaining, and revising curricula, ongoing program revision across campus suggests that most units are able to adequately staff committees to carry out this necessary work. Examples of major and minor program revisions over the past several years include:

- **University Studies Program 2015,** revised and adopted over a multi-year period through multi-phase, cross-institutional processes. See 3b.
- **Assessment of the largest tranches of USP 2015 in scheduled reviews** starting in 2018 (first-year seminars and communications sequence courses). In tandem with these reviews, feedback was provided to instructors and departments teaching these courses.
- **Re-alignment of College of Engineering and Applied Sciences programs** with new Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) professional accreditation outcomes.
- Ongoing assessment and reporting for College of Education programs, required as part of their national accreditation with the **National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).**
- Intensive faculty participation by members of the College of Business to retain accreditation status with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), and to **extensively review curriculum and assessment practices** in response to AACSB recommendations.
- Development of new curricula (since HLC's last site visit) for majors in Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management, Special Education, General Studies, and Construction Management, a certificate in Cybersecurity, and minors in Sustainability and Sustainable Business Practices. In addition, new 4+1 programs have been developed to channel outstanding undergraduate students into master's programs in Chemistry, Economics, and Political Science.

3c2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

Academic Affairs has a standing policy on **tenure-track faculty holding terminal degrees in their field and maintains records of tenure-track faculty vitae and transcripts.** In 2019 that database was expanded to include transcripts for all academic personnel. A transcript review conducted in 2019 verifies that UW faculty are adequately credentialed for their academic roles.

Existing regulations (UW Regulation 2-1, pp. 2-3) require that instructors have at least a master's degree and preferably one year of additional study or experience in the relevant field of study. This regulation requires that research professors must hold a terminal degree, but allows that other assistant professors, associate professors, and professors should "normally" hold the terminal qualification for their field. Clinical professors and professors of practice are expected to have extensive field experience, but are not required to hold terminal degrees, in recognition that higher education programs can benefit from expertise beyond traditional academic measures. Per **UW Regulation 2-4**, academic professional extension educators must have a master's degree or equivalent experience; a portfolio of their professional activity, reviewed by regional peers, helps ensure that their qualifications remain appropriate to their work. UW departments where hiring of practicing professionals is standard, including **Theater and Dance** and **Music**, have developed documented expectations for tested experiential equivalents for non-tenure-track instructors.

Beyond policy requirements regarding appropriate qualifications, we also have 20 years of **Student Satisfaction Survey data** to help us understand student perceptions. Those data (see pp. 15, 16, and 17) indicate several all-time high scores related to faculty quality: 83% of students agreed that "The Instruction I receive in my major field is excellent"; 80% felt that "The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent"; and 90% agreed that "Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field." Adjunct faculty, who teach about a third of courses at UW, are also generally perceived by students as qualified for their jobs: 79% of students agreed that "Adjunct faculty are competent as classroom teachers."

Faculty who teach at our UW-Casper site are required to hold the same credentials as for related programs in Laramie. At UW-Casper, department heads approve hires and credentialing. UW offers no dual-credit courses directly and has a **concurrent enrollment only agreement with Albany County School District #1 in Laramie**. For dual-credit courses, UW relies on state community college partners to confirm credentials for instructors who teach dual- or concurrent-credit courses at the high-school level. The Manual for Wyoming Dual and Concurrent Enrollment Programs recommends qualifications for instructors in these programs that are aligned with HLC criteria and assumed practices.

3c3. At UW, instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures. Annual review processes for instructors are governed both by University-wide regulation and by supplemental department policy. **UW Regulation 2-1 (sect. IV)** describes reappointment, tenure, and promotion for tenure-track and tenured faculty, and **UW Regulation 2-7** more substantially defines these processes. **UW Regulation 2-4 (including Appendices A, B, C, and D)** similarly describes appointment, review, and promotion processes

for academic professionals, as well as reappointment processes for academic professionals on temporary contracts.

Most academic positions are evaluated in relationship to common national categories of service, research, and teaching, and may also include advising, extension, administration, and professional development. Working definitions for several of these categories are offered in UW Regulation 2-7, which governs tenure-track positions). However, departments are charged with developing appropriate criteria for the categories that are informed by their disciplines, as well as specific criteria to distinguish expectations at each promotion level, as described in **UW Regulation 2-9 sect. 4.G**. **UW Regulation 2-9** addresses faculty workload, in line with AAUP guidelines; this regulation acknowledges that ensuring teaching effectiveness requires a balance with other components of academic job descriptions. **UW Regulation 2-5** establishes processes for evaluating teaching, including student evaluations and peer observation.

3c4. UW has processes and resources for professional development, helping assure that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles.

From the perspective that currency of "knowledge [is] essential to effective teaching,"(**UW Regulation 2-4, sect. E**), lecturer positions at UW include a professional development expectation of at least 1/8th of the job description. This policy helps ensure that lecturers, whose positions focus primarily on the teaching mission of the University, are able to participate in larger conversations about best practices for teaching in their fields. Many important teaching and learning initiatives such as **UW's Top-Tier Science Initiative program**, called **LAMP** (Learning Actively Mentoring Program), and **UW's award-winning Bridge Program**, which serves students admitted with support, are headed by lecturers who have effectively leveraged their professional development into programming that directly benefits other faculty and impacts student learning.

In the initial process for many academic hires, applicants are required to provide previous evidence of teaching effectiveness. Peer observation and student evaluations, as mentioned in 3c3, are mandated by UW Regulations and help ensure that teaching is adept and up-to-date.

In terms of additional resources to support instructors' professional development, consider the following:

- Most departments and programs dedicate a portion of their budget to professional development.
- UW Libraries and the **Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning** both maintain a set of holdings focused specifically on higher education and disciplinary pedagogy.
- The Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning offers **extensive, free, and responsive professional development activities**, including Rapid Course Design workshops; summer "boot camps" and a workshop series focused on technology and teaching; a workshop series focused on best practices for new faculty and graduate assistants; and faculty learning communities focused on critical thinking, universal design for learning, the scholarship of teaching and learning, collaborative communication practice, and writing and communication across the curriculum.

- The LAMP program (mentioned above) and the Tier-1 Engineering Initiative provide faculty development specifically in support of best practices in STEM pedagogies.
- The Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning and the Learning Resource Network provide workshops and other support for instructors who teach required communication-intensive general education and first-year seminar courses.
- The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offers training for faculty in developing inclusive classrooms. (See 1c2.) Additionally, the Ellbogen Center offers the Diversity Certification Program, open to faculty, staff, and graduate students in support of their teaching.

3c5. At UW, instructors and many personnel providing academic support are accessible for students. **UW Regulation 2-117 (sect. B.2)** establishes that faculty are "expected to have a minimum of three (3) hours spread over two (2) days of the week of out-of-class availability to students each week"; depending on class delivery method, those office hours may be in person or virtual. Many faculty include their commitment to email availability in their syllabi. Anecdotally, our adoption of the Zoom video conferencing platform, and its easy integration within UW's campus-wide learning management system, has further increased instructors' availability for student questions. An overall student-to-faculty ratio of 15:1 further helps ensure availability of instructors.

Data from UW's participation in the **2018 National Survey of Student Engagement** (NSSE) indicate that 36% of seniors have "frequently" talked with a faculty member about career plans, 32% of first-year students "frequently" talked about course topics outside of class, and 46% of first-year students rated the quality of their interactions with faculty as "high." Internally, our annual **Student Satisfaction Survey (graph 20)** results show that, in 2018, 86% of students (an all-time high) were satisfied with the availability of faculty after class and during office hours.

So that faculty can proactively assist students, the University asks faculty to participate in **Early Alert grade reporting.** Faculty can indicate potentially problematic student performance or attendance, allowing early intervention and follow-up by advisors and **residence hall assistants.** This reporting was made mandatory for all first-year-level courses starting in the fall semester of 2019. This alert encourages students to speak with their instructors and seek academic support services. The fact that UW instructors submitted over 30,000 Early Alert reports in 2018-19 is additional evidence that faculty members are deeply committed to helping students' access resources to increase student success.

Beyond faculty availability, an increasing number of peer tutors, peer mentors, and supplemental peer instructors ensure that students have additional support for inquiries about their coursework and transitions to academic university life. The **STEP tutoring program** records approximately 6,500 appointments per year. STEP supplemental instruction reaches 9,000 contact hours with students per year, spread across 75 distinct classes. The Writing Center provides over 1,600+ consultations annually and supports students from every college on campus. Athletes have additional access to tutors through the Academic Services unit within UW Athletics.

To facilitate instructors' availability for co-curricular student inquiry projects, UW sponsors a variety of undergraduate and graduate research programs, including National Institutes for

Health IDeA Networks for Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE), NASA Space Grant Consortium, McNair Scholars, and Honors College thesis projects. These programs generally include extensive mentoring from a faculty researcher. Some departments, such as English, also provide one-on-one support for department-level undergraduate thesis projects. As noted in 3b5, UW's undergraduate research celebration in 2019 featured research conducted by over 500 students across a variety of fields. Data from UW's 2018 participation in the **NSSE survey** indicated that by spring of their senior year, 46% of students had participated in some form of internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement; 41% of first-year students and 43% of seniors said "at least some" of their courses included a community-based service learning project; and 5% of first-year students and 21% of seniors worked on a research project with a faculty member.

Initiated in fall 2016, **UWYO Cares** allows faculty, staff, students, and family to submit a simple for that confidentially report concerns about a student's health, well-being, security and/or academic success; submitting this form triggers a response from a multi-disciplinary team responsible for assessing, responding to and evaluating student safety and welfare. In fiscal year 2018-19, 391 student reports were received and a determination made. UWYO Cares is managed by the Dean of Students and core team partners include Residence Life and Dining Services; UW Police Department; University Counseling Center; Student Health Services; Disability Support Services; Advising, Career, and Exploratory Studies; the Title XI Coordinator; and the Registrar's Office. The UWYO Cares Team also works with external resources on campus and in the community to connect students with appropriate support and services. UWYO Cares allows faculty and others to refer concerns to professionals who are trained to identify the services students may need.We also hope that our new, more centralized advising model, which includes the Academic, Career, and Exploratory Studies (ACES) Center, will make it easier for students to reach out when they need help navigating their coursework and other academic requirements.

Many faculty serve as advisors for the **Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs**). As a member of an RSO, students have the opportunity to seek advice, guidance, and mentorship through their RSO advisors. As described in 2e1 there are over 250 RSOs at UW.

3c6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

UW hires qualified candidates for student support services. This process starts with position descriptions that articulate job expectations and requirements in line with best practices and recommendations of national organizations for advising (NACADA), student affairs (NASPA), Student Health Services, and the Dean of Students Office. Similarly, the **University Counseling Center** establishes appropriate qualifications for its employees.

UW also encourages and provides opportunity for training and professional development. The new **Employee LearnCenter** serves as a centralized location for required employee training and professional development learning; it allows UW to offer both in-house and external training modules and to track employee progress and training completion. Major training categories

within the Employee LearnCenter include diversity and equal opportunity, human resources, information technology, safety, and WyoCloud (including budget, as well as hiring topics). UW's Human Resources department also recently began offering professional development opportunities through LinkedIn Learning. More specific to student support, many programs (i.e. Professional Academic Advisors, Residence Life and Dining Services, and Student Health) offer their own in-house training on relevant professional issues, and they provide funding to support participation in external and off-site training. Financial Aid requires its staff to complete training related to Title IV regulations.

Training for resident assistants (including both residence hall RAs and apartment RAs) includes **a preliminary class** (see RA Class Guide), as well as two weeks of training each August. Surveys administered after each day of training allow staff to follow up immediately on any topics where training may not have been effective.

In terms of adequate resources for staff, less than half of UW respondents to the **2018 Great Colleges to Work For Survey** "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement "I am provided the resources I need to be effective in my job" (p. 10). A closer look at open-ended comments seems to suggest that discontent is focused more on increasing job responsibilities, rather than lack of qualification/training specifically. Similarly, however, **Huron Consulting's 2017 institutional capacity study** acknowledged, "Many of the student support units on campus expressed beliefs that they are pushing the upper limits of both internally and nationally acceptable staffing ratios on campus."

To address these and other concerns raised by staff and faculty in the Great Colleges survey, a **Strategic Improvement Working Group** will recommend methods "to encourage and support staff training and professional development through opportunities, resources, and release time," among other actions.

Students who serve in student support roles, especially in various tutoring centers on campus, generally receive extensive training and are encouraged to further professionalize their work. Students who tutor in our STEP program, for example, are **required to achieve Level I CRLA (College Reading and Learning Association) certification** and are encouraged to achieve Level II certification. Similarly, undergraduate and graduate tutors in the Writing Center complete extensive training as part of their employment in the center.

A key performance indicator in the **Student Affairs strategic plan** (Goal 1: Driving Excellence) is for staff participation in comprehensive professional development program, aiming for 25% participation of staff, 50% of student staff, and 75% of student supervisors by 2022. To support this goal, Student Affairs is in the process of implementing division-wide professional development programming based on 10 professional competency areas for student affairs educators (derived from ACPA and NASPA), with a goal of four on-campus trainings per year. Campus Recreation is also piloting a student employee mentorship and development program based on *Iowa GROWS*, which it is hoped can be expanded throughout Student Affairs.

Student Affairs encourages departments to include their student employees in student learning outcome efforts so that those students, like program participants and clients are also the recipients of intentional learning opportunities.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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

Argument

3d1. UW provides student support services suited to the needs of its diverse student populations.

Longitudinal data from our annual Student Satisfaction Survey from 1998 to 2018 indicate strong, positive attitudes toward many of our student support services. Key findings from these results include:

- Around 87% of student respondents expressed satisfaction with recreation and intramural programs and services. UW's investment in a renovated Half Acre Recreation and Wellness Center and consequent ability to expand offerings saw improvement in satisfaction from around 68% in 2016 to 84% in 2018.
- Student satisfaction for UW's Student Union was 87% in 2018. Dissatisfaction with this facility has registered at 3% or lower since 2004.
- Around 90% of student veteran respondents expressed satisfaction in 2018 with Veterans Services, a program which UW has heavily invested in, including the creation of a new facility embedded in the Student Union.
- Around 76% of student respondents were satisfied with student health services.
- Students are generally dissatisfied with the UW residence halls and campus living options. This has been an area of needed improvement for some time. The Wyoming Housing Task Force is moving forward with recommendations for new housing that will suit the needs of today's students.
- Over 84% of student respondents were satisfied that "Tutoring services are readily available." This score reflects a 9% increase in satisfaction since 2016. (Graph 28)
- Around 92% of student respondents were satisfied that "Library resources and services are adequate" (a 15% increase from 2016). The libraries' renewed commitment to

increasing its range of services is a likely cause for this jump in satisfaction rate. (Graph 33)

- Student satisfaction with UW's computer services on campus was 83%, which is significantly higher than the national average, but represents a drop from a high of 91% in 2010. (Graph 35)
- Around 77% of student respondents are satisfied with the University Store, UW's textbook source, which is consistent with responses over the past 20 years. (Graph 84)
- In the category of communication about financial aid awards, 73% of student respondents were satisfied that "Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning." This is a 5% increase since 2016, likely due to the implementation of the Award Management (AcademicWorks) software (2014), which has increased the efficiency of award dispersal and announcements. (Graph 54)
- Around 73% of student respondents are satisfied with registration procedures and 80% of students were satisfied with the helpfulness of personnel in the Office of the Registrar. These scores represent the highest satisfaction rates in this area over 20 years. (Graphs 62 and 63)
- A large majority of student respondents, 72%, are satisfied (Graph 86) with billing procedures, the highest since 2000. This uptick may have resulted from a recent move and remodel of our Accounts Receivable group's office space, making services more accessible to students by being located right next to our Cashier's Office and Scholarship and Financial Aid.
- Financial aid services present an area for improvement. In the most recent Student Satisfaction Survey, 64% of student respondents were satisfied with financial aid (Graph 54), representing an 8% decline since 2016. Simultaneously, however, financial aid counselors were rated 7% higher than in 2018 and higher than any previous years. We suspect the drop may be reflective of external factors such as changes to the FAFSA; we are aware of this change and will work to remedy this decrease in satisfaction.

UW has significant populations of students who are first-generation, non-traditional, academically under-prepared, online, and international. For each of these groups, the University has a center or program that supports these students in transition and persistence at UW:

- UW's land-grant mission and its **national status as top value for the money** requires the University not just to provide access, but also support for students unfamiliar with college-level academic expectations and conventions. To this end, **the UW Bridge Program** (formerly Synergy) was established in 1999 and provides wrap-around support for students who are admitted with conditions. The Bridge Program has expanded its learning community model and other services for students admitted with support, from 30 students to over 400 each year.
- The creation of the UW Honors College in 2018, elevating the former UW Honors Program to a College with a Dean and additional budget support.
- The **Student Educational Opportunity** program, which includes **Gear Up**, **Upward Bound,** Student Success Services, McNair Scholars Program, and statewide Educational Opportunity Centers, offers support for students from low-income, first-generation, under-represented minority, and military veteran backgrounds.

- The **International Students and Scholars** office provides assistance to international students for visas, financial aid, transfer, enrollment verification, and other support services. It also provides orientation sessions for new international students and offers other programming to create a welcoming environment for these students.
- Recognizing that many students entering UW may come from rural areas of Wyoming or surrounding states, the University provides extensive technology access and support to help bridge the **"digital divide"** that still limits rural communities' and residents' experience with cutting-edge technologies. UW Information Technology maintains **numerous computer labs and classrooms,** provides trainings for students, maintains free and discounted software licenses for students, and offers troubleshooting and repair services. For distance and online students, UW has heavily invested in technologies that allow UW to effectively support students across the state, including a new learning management system (WyoCourses) and the Zoom video conferencing application.
- Recruitment and Enrollment Specialists around the state are positioned to provide support and resources to rural Wyoming, as discussed further in 3d3 below.
- As mentioned previously in 1a2 and 1d2, UW Extension works with communities statewide on development, sustainable agriculture and natural resources, rangeland management, nutrition, food safety, and 4-H youth development.
- UW created a **First Generation scholars program** (2019) and the **Native American Education, Research, and Cultural Center** (2017); both of these centers will help focus increasing support on these two historically under-acknowledged groups at UW.
- UW's ranking as **a top-35 "outdoor" school** means that the University has continued to expand its **Outdoor Program activities,** with nearly 100 spring 2019 events, including maintenance clinics, technique workshops, film showings, and single- and multi-day outings.
- In support of student mental and physical health, the **University Counseling Center** and the **Student Health Service** ensure access to professional, affordable care. University Disability Support Service provides assistance to students with recognized disabilities.
- To promote equitable support for students at UW-Casper, Zoom video conferencing software has been installed in six classrooms and all faculty and staff offices to enhance communication and instruction. UW-Casper students access UW Libraries services with their UW login; library materials are mailed to students free of charge. Additionally, UW-Casper shares space with UW's Regional Educational Outreach Center and Upward Bound, which encourages students to pursue assistance across all units.
- As indicated in 1c2, UW provides a range of support services and centers that recognize and support the cultural diversity of the student body. These include Multicultural Affairs support for students with interests in student organizations but may feel marginalized or encounter barriers they are unsure how to navigate.

3d2. A variety of learning support, preparatory instruction, and program guidance is available to students, in some cases starting even before students arrive at UW:

- For high school students, **UW sponsors Gear Up**, Upward Bound**, High School Institute**, **Honors Summer Bridge**, **STEP Summer Bridge**, **World Languages Day**, and other programs to help increase potential students' familiarity with UW programs and to build these students' college academic skills.

- For students at Wyoming community colleges, on-site Recruitment and Enrollment Specialists advise transfer students, helping direct students to programs for which they are prepared.
- At **first-year student orientation sessions** each summer, UW offers intensive academic advising and opportunities to build a sense of belonging with their prospective academic departments. Orientation also provides a chance to learn about specific majors, courses, and programs, and the opportunity to take the **Math Placement Exam** (the ALEKS Placement, Preparation, and Learning [PPL] exam). Orientations for transfer students, international students, and veterans offer similar guidance, tailored to these specific student groups and designed in response to evaluations identifying the need for programming that speaks more directly to these populations
- An agreement with Laramie County Community College allows students to register for and take pre-1000-level math courses as non-credit-bearing coursework on the UW campus. Current practice is for students who are unsuccessful with the Math Placement Exam or who have not taken sufficient high-school math coursework to take these remedial courses; however, the institution is beginning conversations about co-requisite coursework and other innovative models for allowing students to obtain the quantitative literacy needed for their degrees.
- Beyond the Math Placement Exam, other placement exams and policiessuch as credit by exam, transfer credit, and credit by proficiency (e.g., credit for AP and IB courses) allow students to be placed into courses that match their existing levels of experience, skill, and knowledge.
- **The English Language Center** provides courses and other support for international and non-native speakers of English.
- UW is committed to an affordable and accessible education, and simultaneously maintains a set of requirements for regular admission. An increasing number of students are admitted who do not meet those requirements, and UW has consequently implemented robust programming and assistance for students admitted with support. The Bridge Program, a learning-community-based model coupled with increased faculty training and additional advising support, has shown continued signs of effectiveness since its inception in 1999.
- For enrolled students, our **central advising office (ACES)**, as well as **first-year advising centers** (implemented in 2018), can help students assess interests and strengths, so that students can redirect their program/major goals in light of academic success and struggles they encounter. ACES provides students access to the EPIC career preparation platform, which includes an exploratory module to help students identify majors that fit their interests.
- **New Exploratory Studies academic tracks,** essentially meta-majors, were instituted in 2018, replacing the undeclared major for first-time students. These six tracks pull together suites of first-year courses that help students progress more quickly in their eventual major based on broad interest, ranging from Culture, Society, and Diversity; to Math, Data Science, and Business; to Human Service, Wellness, and Social Science. These tracks were designed in response to risk indicators seen in students who had no affinity or attachment to an academic "home."
- For first-year students, **academic recovery and probation support** helps students develop new academic habits and understand their options if they fall short of overall

GPA requirements. The fact that UW's academic probation rate has fallen steadily from 24% in 2012 to a little over 15% in 2017 indicates these efforts are contributing to academic recovery for students.

- For some programs (including nursing, education, and business), entry requirements were instituted as students move toward upper-level coursework to ensure students are prepared to continue with more advanced learning in those programs.

3d3. UW provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students. UW's redesigned advising model, managed by ACES, increases academic centralized academic support, especially for lower-division undergraduates who do not yet have a declared major. The move from undeclared majors to exploratory tracks was part of this restructuring. UW feels that this move aligns with best practices in advising and is especially suited to UW's programs and students.

Another aspect of the restructuring was new investment in advising support for students located across the state. Recruitment and Enrollment Specialist positions located at regional centers and at our UW-Casper site provide advising support for students located outside of Laramie. UW-Casper additionally staffs two academic advisors for its academic programs. These advisors work closely with ACES and follow similar training, communication, and availability protocols.

A number of colleges and programs provide specialized and coordinated advising for students in their programs, including the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, the College of Business, the College of Education, the College of Health Sciences, and the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources.

We are interested to see how the new ACES office impacts student satisfaction with advising. Based on longitudinal data from our Student Satisfaction Survey, we know that students are generally satisfied with advising, but we still have room for improvement:

- 75% of students are satisfied with the availability of their advisor (Graph 21), a percentage which is relatively consistent with data for the past 20 years.
- 76% of students are satisfied with the accessibility of their advisors (Graph 22), representing a slight dip since a high point in 2014.
- 82% of students find the advisor "knowledgeable about the requirements in my major"— the highest satisfaction rate in 20 years (Graph 23).
- 71% of students are satisfied with the value of information they are being provided by their advisor (Graph 24).

With the implementation of the new advising system, there has already been a decline in advising errors reported by students. Orientation data indicates increased satisfaction with advising since the new model was implemented. A **report on the advising system** is updated each semester, with special attention to metrics on student satisfaction and knowledge pre- and post-advising.

3d4. UW maintains infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning such as technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance

spaces, clinical practice sites, and museum collections. The institution is committed to continuous, focused investment in infrastructure for teaching and learning. Planning committees and task forces focused on **facilities**, **housing**, and classroom space all work to direct future development, while **budget documents** and **planning and use processes** provide evidence of action in support of those long-range plans.

Section 5a1 provides more detailed information about several key infrastructure improvements in the past decade. In sum, the University has spent over $400 million over the past 10 years on building or renovating classroom and laboratory space. Construction is currently underway on a **$100-million-dollar facility that will accommodate research and learning associated with the UW Science Initiative.** The new **Engineering Education and Research Building** (EERB) also contains innovative "collision space" for students and researchers to interact and learn from each other. Such facilities will especially contribute to UW's ability to provide updated facilities for science learning in the 21st century, aligned with contemporary understandings of best practices for active and engaged learning.

On-campus technology developments include increased access to co-curricular design spaces, including **Studio Coe** and makerspaces such as the **Coe Student Innovation Center**, improvements and expansions to classroom instructional technology, and regular update cycles for computer lab technologies.

In terms of cultural and information collections, UW maintains a number of important repositories. The **American Heritage Center** continues to successfully gather and provide access to archives of American and Western United States history and cultural heritage for the UW community, faculty, staff, and campus organizations, as well as for citizens of Wyoming and global audiences. The UW Libraries, including the William Robertson Coe Library and four branch libraries, provide **extensive access** to resources necessary for effective operation of a research-intensive institution. Their development of **Mountain Scholar,** a repository service that collects, preserves, and provides access to digitized library collections and other scholarly and creative works from several institutions in Wyoming and Colorado, will help make UW research publications and datasets more accessible to a broader audience of potential users. The **UW Geology** and **Art Museums** provide free access to their impressive collections and exhibitions. The **Wyoming Natural Diversity Database (WYNDD)** is a member of the Natural Heritage Network and serves as the most complete source of data for species and vegetation communities of where conservation is a concern in Wyoming. The updated **Buchanan Center for the Performing Arts** and the recently completed **Visual Arts Building** modernize classroom and work spaces for creative art programs.

UW extends student and faculty access to facilities through a variety of partnerships and applied-practice centers, including the **regional WWAMI medical program**, clinical sites for pharmacy and nursing students, the **on-campus K-8 Lab School**, a **Speech and Hearing Clinic**, the **UW Literacy Research Center and Clinic**, the **University Counseling Center**, and **family practice residency sites** in Cheyenne and Casper. The College of Education's innovative new UW-E4 teacher preparation program will embed pre-service teachers in Wyoming partner schools for a full-year residency, deepening the learning opportunities for those students.

In terms of infrastructural investments that help establish a general environment that is conducive to teaching and learning, Student Satisfaction Survey data indicate markers of success, as well as concern:

- 81% of student respondents are satisfied with UW athletic facilities (Graph 95).
- 80% of student respondents are satisfied with personal security and safety at UW, reflecting high overall perceptions of security staffing and safety measures on campus. Only 56% of students were satisfied that "security staff respond quickly in emergencies," representing a 5% drop from 2016, but still a significantly higher rating than national averages. (See Graphs 65 and 66.)
- 76% of student respondents are satisfied with student health services (Graph 78).
- 57% of student respondents are satisfied with the availability of student housing, and 61% of students were satisfied with the food services provided in the residence halls. (See Graphs 71 and 72.) We believe that **planned construction of new residence halls and affiliated dining options** will help to lift these relatively mediocre rates. Significant changes were made to the structure of resident meal plans starting this year, offering students more flexibility. Additionally, a new retail outlet, Einstein Brothers Bagels opened this year in the new **Enzi STEM building** to provide options on that side of campus. The Union Food Court has also undergone renovations and updated store options to better address changing needs and demand. The Union Food Court and all other retail locations are constantly evaluated to determine how to best serve the campus community's needs.
- RLDS invested over $1,000,000 in a renovation of the repurposed Tobin House to provide a living-learning community for the new First Gen scholars program.
- 80% of students indicate satisfaction with UW mass transit, but only about 50% of students report using mass transit (Graphs 92 and 93). For those who prefer to drive to campus, satisfaction with parking services and facilities is very low: 54% of students are dissatisfied with parking services/facilities, and 69% are dissatisfied with the current amount of parking (Graphs 89 and 90). A number of parking areas were eliminated in 2006 to increase campus infrastructure, and UW has compensated by increasing the amount of mass transit available throughout the city for students. Recent analysis by Walker Consultants will help UW develop a 10-year parking and transportation plan.

3d5. UW provides guidance to students in the effective use of research and information resources. Our responses to 2e, 3b5, and 3e5 provide information about opportunities for students to develop research skill and information literacy. Demonstrating this:

- Four required general education courses have information literacy outcomes embedded in them.
- The **UW Libraries' Research and Instruction department supports information literacy instruction for programs** across campus at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- A number of programs engage and support undergraduate students in research activities; **growth in our annual undergraduate research day** participation over the past 17 years indicates increasing recognition of the value of course-based and co-curricular inquiry

projects to develop effective research skills. Many of these programs offer workshops or other training to improve students' use of primary and secondary research data.

- Our experiential transcript platform (SOAR) includes research as a major competency and will help us better track students' participation in research activity during their time at UW.

In addition:

- Statements about academic dishonesty in our **Student Code of Conduct** and in our **institutional syllabus template** reinforce the importance of appropriate use of research and information resources.
- The UW Libraries provide a set of information literacy modules that can be embedded into individual course shells. The libraries also offer chat, email, and text contact methods to provide just-in-time assistance to students as they work on research projects.
- Science laboratory courses include instruction in safe and ethical lab behavior.
- **Collaborative Institutional Training Initiation (CITI)** training for research related to human subjects, animals, and biomedical topics is available to undergraduates and is required for any researchers (including undergraduates) working on approved projects.

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3.E - Core Component 3.E

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

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

Argument

3e1. Co-curricular programs at UW are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of our students. As suggested in responses to 1c2, 3d1, and 3d2, UW attempts to understand its students and to develop programs and centers that enrich students' experiences at UW. Efforts across the institution are aligned with our mission and extend educational opportunities for students.

These co-curricular offerings are especially relevant to students' educational experience:

- Over **250 recognized student organizations** allow students to develop leadership skills, become active in professional societies related to their majors, connect with social and civic organizations and causes, and develop relationships with other students with similar interests.
- Various student centers support educational success for non-traditional students, minority students, and other specific student populations. See 1c1, 1c2 for more information.
- Educational programming in campus residential facilities helps to build communities that are conducive to study, social interaction, and individual development.
- **Freshman Interest Groups** (FIGs) and Residential Living Learning Communities (RLLCs) strengthen first-year students' connections at UW. Topics for 2019 FIGs and RLLCs include food culture policy, molecular and microbiology, engineering, and Army/Air Force ROTC. Around 25% of first-year students participated in one of these types of learning communities in 2017; by 2022 our goal is that all first-year students participate in a learning community.
- A number of annual events, including the **Martin Luther King, Jr. Days of Dialogue**, **Shepard Symposium on Social Justice**, **Undergraduate Research Day**, **the Big Event**, **Alternative Spring Break trips**, Diwali, and Holocaust Week, provide co-curricular opportunities for students to extend their educational engagement with service-learning and with diverse and global populations.
- Because personal health and wellness is valued within our general education program, our exercise facilities and sports programming serve as part of education at UW. Campus Recreation houses the **Half Acre Recreation and Wellness Center**, campus swimming pools, the **Outdoor Program**, and club and intramural sports, which support students' opportunities to pursue health and wellbeing. The **AWARE program**, part of the

Wellness Center, offers education programs that address alcohol and other drug abuse. The Wellness Center also facilitates and supports the general health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity and fitness, safety, sexual health, occupational, and financial wellness of our students.

- An **educational gallery at the UW Art Museum**, **archival research opportunities** a**t** the American Heritage Center, and a variety of STEM-based research opportunities funded by **INBRE**, NASA Space Grant Consortium, and other organizations provide co-curricular research experiences related to a range of student majors.
- The **Writing Center** and the **STEP tutoring program** provide training for undergraduate and graduate tutors and supplemental instructors; such training not only provides professionalization for tutors, but also creates valuable co-curricular support for learning.
- In addition to faculty research, the Social Justice Research Center funds both graduate and undergraduate research initiatives. The funds are used to increase student interest and engagement in research opportunities that promote equity, inclusion, diversity, and social justice.
- The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offers the Inclusive Leadership Program for co-curricular education. This seven-week program is designed to develop leaders who are equipped with an inclusion lens that prepares them to advance issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion across different professions and organizations upon graduation from UW. This new initiative is being piloted fall 2019 with graduate students and will expand to undergraduate students and interested faculty and staff in subsequent semesters as resources can be added to expand these efforts.

UW's commitments to offering curricular and co-curricular opportunities for research, community engagement, service learning, and innovation are extensively visible across campus. These commitments are also made explicit in three of the six **key values that inform our current strategic plan (page 9)**:

Exploration and Discovery: Free, open, and unfettered exploration and discovery supported by rigorous peer review and the communication and application of that scholarship, constitute the core principles and practices of this university.

Innovation and Application: Creative thinking leads to new knowledge, inspires student achievement and brings practical innovation to our communities.

Engagement and Communication: Engagement with local, state, tribal, national, and global constituencies inspires our daily work. We are committed to active outreach and clear communication with our extensive communities.

3.e.2. The institution is increasingly committed to collecting information to help us understand how many students participate in research, community engagement, service learning, and entrepreneurship activities. These data helps us understand how well we are achieving our strategic goals, especially those related to the development of students who will be successful in

civic, financial and economic, and disciplinary settings. These commitments are reflected in these examples:

- A general education program (**University Studies Program 2015**) that includes outcomes related to scientific research inquiry and civic knowledge and engagement. These outcomes help ensure that students reach baseline expectations related to research and civic participation; the new SOAR platform (adopted 2018) will allow us to better track and analyze students' co-curricular civic engagement.
- Our goal (reflected in multiple unit strategic plans)to achieve Carnegie **Community Engagement** Classification. The target for this classification is to submit a compelling application in 2024; UW seeks this classification because it serves as "evidence-based documentation of institutional practice to be used in a process of self-assessment and quality improvement."
- Reorganization of units in the Wyoming Union into the **Center for Student Involvement and Leadership**, which centralizes all student involvement programs into a single department. Most notably, the new center includes the Service, Leadership, and Community Engagement office (SLCE), Fraternity and Sorority Life, Veteran Services, Campus Activities Center, Multicultural Affairs, Associated Students of the University of Wyoming (the University's student government), and others. These activities allow us to be confident that we provide multiple ways for students to engage in service and civic activity.
- Increased support for student innovation as a driver of economic development. UW's **Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship**, created in 2018 as part of a statewide initiative to promote economic diversity, facilitates entrepreneurship principles in academic courses (including a new major and minor in entrepreneurship). Additionally, events like the **Fisher Innovation Challenge** and the **Ellbogen $50K Entrepreneurship Competition** further encourage student engagement in innovative thinking.

In terms of implicit claims we make about the lifelong value a UW education, we can look to various measures that demonstrate our impacts, including:

- **Very high rates of satisfaction** (consistently above 90%) with overall educational experience among current and past students (Student Satisfaction Survey, Graphs 1 and 2).
- A relatively strong sense of loyalty and connection to UW among alumni, as illustrated in a **2017 UW Alumni Association survey**.

While we feel that many indicators demonstrate high levels of student satisfaction and engagement with the educational experience at UW, we acknowledge below-average participation rates in the high-impact practices (HIP's) of service learning, research with faculty, and culminating senior experiences, when compared to regional and Carnegie peers on the 2018 National Survey of Student Engagement. With the implementation of the SOAR experiential transcript, we believe that engagement in HIP's will rise in the next two years. Indeed, this was the reason for implementing this program.

In terms of other specific concerns we have about student experience at UW:

- We are concerned about UW students' relatively low use of career and job placement services. Because we seek to prepare students to contribute to valuable economic activity, we believe it is important to help them in locating and pursuing appropriate internship and job opportunities. Yet, our most recent **Student Satisfaction Survey** shows fewer students using career services (just 17% of UW students, compared to a national average or 23%. See Graph 37). Additionally, only 71% of students who use the career planning service are satisfied, a percentage that has been stagnant for almost eight years (Graph 38). Student satisfaction with UW's job placement services show similar trends (Graphs 39 and 40). Gen Z students are now much less likely to want to use "a career office" and visit with career counselors one on one. In any case, this is an area in which we hope to improve. In 2018 UW established the Career Everywhere Task Force, which was charged with re-envisioning the delivery of career support and programming. The task force expects to deliver its recommendations by fall 2019. Included in these recommendations will be models for enhancing our students' career and graduate school readiness.
- Like many universities, we struggle with collecting comprehensive and accurate outcome data for our graduates. Though we are putting significant effort into collection of the information through the **First Destination survey,** more work in this area needs to be done.
- An additional area of concern is civic engagement with diverse populations. NSSE data indicates that only 42% of seniors felt their experience at UW contributed substantially to "being an informed and active citizen," and half (50%) thought the experience greatly increased "understanding people of other backgrounds." Similarly, senior-level participation in community-based projects and discussions with diverse others lag behind our regional peers (Snapshot p. 3). We believe that our strategic investments in SOAR, centers for civic and global engagement, and a centralized office for diversity will allow us to make positive, measurable strides in these areas in the next several years.
- Our Office of Research and Economic Development does not currently track the number of students who participate in research activity. Though we maintain information about grant funding by college and department, this information does not provide a clear picture of funding that directly supports student research. However, the Office of Research and Economic Development lists as a strategic goal the development of an **Undergraduate Office of Research**, which should allow UW to develop a much more comprehensive understanding of student research involvement. The SOAR experiential transcript emphasizes undergraduate research as a high-impact practice and thus is a full competency within the transcript.In addition, the UW Science Initiative is piloting Course Based Undergraduate Research (CURE) to incentivize first-year students to become involved in undergraduate research. As noted in 3b5, we know that we provide extensive opportunities for students to engage in research across a range of fields. We just do not collect good institution-level data about the scale and impacts of those opportunities.
- The **Diversity Campus Climate Survey** (2019) indicates several areas of improvement campus-wide. The survey was administered to students, faculty, and staff. Select survey results suggest areas for improvement

(1) 34% of international students feel discrimination.

(2) In a class of 30 students, six to eight students would not agree that UW is welcoming or supportive to international students.

(3) In a room of 100 people, eight will not be comfortable with someone who is coming from a different country, a different race, gender, religion, or a veteran.

(4) Over one-quarter of respondents indicated they were not comfortable with a 'non-binary' identified individual, meaning that a non-binary student could be confronted with dozens of classmates and several faculty a year who are not comfortable in their presence.

(5) Over one-quarter of respondents have witnessed racial discrimination.

(6) Among all respondents, only 54% agree that UW is a welcoming place for individuals of all races.

(7) Nearly 50% of respondents with disabilities perceive UW as unsupportive; this number increases to 60% when examining responses from students with disabilities, specifically.

(8) The survey indicates that 36% of respondents have some experience or heard jokes about religious beliefs and 62% of respondents have had some experience with sexist jokes or comments.

(9) Based on the responses from all groups, 59% have some experience with objectifying comments or jokes about someone's body or appearance.

(10) Finally, within the last 12 months, 21% of students ran out of food and had no money to buy more or knew where or how they could obtain more food. The figure is 34% when faculty and staff are included. It should be noted that when employees are unable to provide for their essential needs, they may not be able to offer our students the best educational experience.

Engagement with the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming, our student government, is also an area in need of improvement. On our Student Satisfaction Survey, the questions on satisfaction with "student voice in college policies" and "student government" showed among the highest rate of neutral responses (45.7% and 45.9% respectively) in 2018, with students not expressing satisfied or dissatisfied opinions, strong or otherwise.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

Nearly all UW educational programs are driven by clear and visible learning outcomes. In many cases those outcomes are aligned with professional accrediting bodies to help ensure that UW degrees are comparable to those offered by other peer institutions. Annual Program Review processes, adopted in 2018, provide additional assurance that our programs meet the needs of students, employers, and society more broadly, and that programs are underpinned by knowledge and skills appropriate to the degree type and level.

The University maintains a student-to-teacher ratio of approximately 15:1 and substantial investments in information technology (on campus and for distance students), research infrastructure, and instructional facilities help ensure an environment for effective teaching and learning. An updated advising model, student centers for specific populations, and continued investment in a variety of student support programs ensure that we remain able to help the range of students we admit. The adoption of the SOAR experiential transcript application should make it easier for UW to develop a better understanding of its impacts outside the classroom. Student Satisfaction Survey data from the past 20 years indicate high measures of satisfaction with overall student experience, as well as with specific academic experiences and support programs.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

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

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

Argument

4a1. UW has recently updated and extended its practice for regular program reviews. A **Standard Administrative Policy and Procedure adopted in 2018** provides guidelines for ongoing institutional program reviews. UW's approach to program review uses a framework of continuous improvement and a self-study process that allows programs to examine the quality of its curriculum, climate, and scholarly activity as a whole and explore areas for improvement. Departments undergo an external peer review as part of the evaluation process, which helps departments and administrators understand what peers are doing to stay relevant in the field. Comprehensive reviews are conducted on a department-by-department basis, every seven years. However, peer input has led UW to consider accelerating this to three to five years in the near future. Other forms of review (for new or low-graduate-producing programs, for example) may occur on an adjusted timeline. During academic year 2018-19, seven departments or colleges underwent this review. During the five-year period between 2019 and 2024, 47 programs

(including departments, schools, colleges, and interdisciplinary programs) are tentatively slated to undergo institutional program review.

Upon completion of these reviews, program representatives meet with the Provost's Office to engage in dialogue about and formulate an action plan to improve in areas of concern and enhance areas of strength. The department, consulting with their Dean, will also provide follow up reporting the following year.

In addition, UW reviewed 58 low-graduate-producing degree programs in 2016-17, resulting in elimination of five degree programs with very small enrollments and the mandatory overhaul of the curriculum of six programs. Several academic units also merged into new larger units for administrative efficiency.

4a2. UW takes steps to evaluate all of the credit that it transcripts, making use of a variety of internal and external processes.

For on-campus courses, college- and institution-level curriculum committees evaluate courses for credit-worthiness (in accordance with **UW Regulation 2-116**); these review processes help ensure that courses meet institutional and federal guidelines. With respect to credit for experiential learning (such as internships, co-ops, and other practica) curriculum committees help ensure that adequate checks are in place. For some colleges, internships can only be earned when such coursework is affiliated with a faculty sponsor; other programs require a contract specifying expectations for the student, workplace sponsor, and campus contact. For example, students in our Bachelor of Applied Sciences program must complete a six-credit internship. That internship involves a faculty mentor, a workplace mentor, and a contract written by the student and mentors.

For credits transcripted but not directly offered by UW, the University has various processes that help ensure the validity of those credits:

- **The Office of the Registrar maintains up-to-date information to help support transfer/transfer-equivalency of credits**, especially from regionally-accredited U.S. colleges and universities, from in-state community colleges, and pre-college courses, including AP, IB, and CLEP.
- To further support fair transfer of in-state community college credits, UW maintains the Transfer Catalog and a set of **2+2 transfer degree plans**. These are reviewed on a regular basis, connected to our student information system, and updated during annual catalog reviews to ensure that transferring credit is equivalent to credit earned on campus.
- For courses taken during study abroad, UW relies on **partnerships**, **standard international credit conversions**, and UW departmental review of syllabi to help ensure that returning students can achieve appropriate credit for their experiences.
- For veterans, a first-year seminar course helps these students conduct a prior-learning assessment in order to effectively achieve credit for non-academic experience and expertise.

4a3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

As noted in 4a2, UW maintains an equivalency catalog for in-state transfer through ongoing articulation relationships with Wyoming community colleges. Additionally, the University maintains a website that allows students to look up courses that the University of Wyoming has previously accepted from regionally accredited U.S. institutions, and our TREQ (Transfer Equivalency Self-Service) interface further helps students understand UW equivalencies. Wyoming is a member of the WICHE Interstate Passport program, allowing students to block transfer lower division general education courses.

When a direct match to a Wyoming course has not been previously established, University faculty (usually at the department level) review the course to determine whether direct equivalency is appropriate, or, alternately, whether general electives and/or University Studies credit can be awarded. Looking forward, there is a statewide, legislatively mandated effort to develop a common-course numbering system that includes using the same course numbers, course subject codes, and standardized credits per course for courses with identical or highly similar content and learning outcomes.

4a4. UW adequately exercises its authority over course and program quality, including prerequisites for courses, course rigor, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs. Specifically, UW creates clear and responsible policies and practices regarding:

- *Prerequisites for courses*: Prerequisites are clearly identified in the **course catalog;** requirements for previous course completions, GPA, class standing, and test scores are enforced through the Office of the Registrar via automated transcript checks when students register for courses. Individual petitions for waiver of prerequisites are handled at the program level.
- *Course rigor*: **UW Regulation 2-100** provides general guidance to distinguish expectations for various levels (from 1000- to 6000-level courses). New courses are reviewed and approved by multiple committees, as stipulated in **UW Regulation 2-116**. This process provides additional assurance that course rigor is aligned with the course level.
- *Expectations for student learning*: Programs have learning outcomes that are posted on a central websites. At the university-level, the focus of assessing student outcomes has shifted from supervising program based learning outcomes to considering how University Studies Program outcomes are being assessed. For more information, see response to 4b1.
- *Access to learning resources—facilities*: With the goal of maintaining high-quality instructional spaces, UW Regulation 6-7 mandates an annual review of space assignments and utilization. The review pays particular attention to the availability of classroom space for instructional purposes. More broadly, the **University Facilities Council** advises the President on facility and space planning; the council is guided by key principles that "enable and support the mission of the University to provide a quality education, conduct world-class research, scholarship and creative activity, and provide service to, and engagement with the state" and that "support student success, including recruitment, retention, and graduation." New facilities construction, detailed in 5a1,

provides evidence that UW's authority for providing access to learning resources is exercised in effective ways.

- *Access to learning resources—support programs*: **UW Regulation 8-1** addresses the University's commitment to providing technology resources in support of administrative, research, service, and instructional functions. Though no UW Regulation mandates the provision of resources to support learning, UW's commitment to providing effective resources for its diverse student populations is evident throughout this accreditation argument. (See especially 1c, 3c, 3d, and 3e.)
- *Faculty qualifications*: **UW Regulation 2-1** describes the appropriate qualifications for academic personnel, while allowing for flexibility by establishing that "general qualifications for faculty designation... may be waived or modified at the discretion of the President and the Trustees." However, UW's general practice is to "fill tenure-track or tenured faculty positions, as well as most extended-term-track and extended-term positions, with people who hold terminal degrees in their fields." Academic Affairs and Human Resources jointly maintain a credential database to ensure that tenure-track faculty are appropriately qualified for the courses they teach. Beginning in 2019, that database also includes credential verification for non-tenure-track faculty.

UW does not directly provide lower-division dual-credit courses or programs for high school students. UW offers a concurrent enrollment only agreement with Albany County School District #1 in Laramie. Nonetheless, we maintain ongoing articulation relationships with the community colleges, with the goal of helping them to understand and translate our expectations to high school instructors who teach dual-enrollment courses that can be transferred to UW.

4a5. UW maintains specialized accreditation for many of its programs. Its **list of accredited programs and colleges** is updated routinely as notifications of decisions are made, and indicates the next cycles for reaccreditation. At present, all eligible programs for which specialized accreditation is sought are being accredited.

The institutional program review process described in 4a1 allows departments and colleges to use the UW review as a preparatory exercise for an upcoming program accreditation visit or as part of that visit. For example, the **College of Business** used the UW review as a low-stakes drill for their upcoming AACSB reaffirmation of accreditation*;* the UW School of Nursing used their **Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education on-cycle review visit** as their UW program review. Departments may also use the review as an exploratory exercise to determine whether they wish to seek accreditation*.* For example, the **Department of Theater and Dance used their UW review** in part to gather insight on whether it should seek accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Theater. UW encourages programs with potential specialized accreditors to explore the value brought in those relationships for improving pedagogy and curriculum, learning outcomes, and faculty and student recruiting and to apply for specialized accreditation when the program and institutional benefits are strong.

Beyond formal accreditation processes, the University and many of its programs maintain membership in professional associations that help them keep abreast of major developments in pedagogy and curricula in higher education generally, as well as in specialized fields.

4a6. UW gathers data about graduate success from multiple sources, helping us understand graduates' plans, experiences, and perceptions after they leave the University. At present, here are some of the types of data we collect:

- We use IPEDS standards to calculate **first-time, full-time cohort graduation rates**. From 1992 to 2012, six-year graduation rates increased from 48% to 58%.
- We track the total number and types of degrees awarded. From the 1988-89 academic year to the 2017-18 academic year, the total number of degrees awarded annually increased by 862, representing a 40.8% increase.
- Our annual **First Destination Survey** helps us gather information at the institution and college level about graduates' immediate plans after completing their degree at UW. From our **2016-17 survey**, we know that 66% were placed in jobs or advanced degree programs within one year following graduation for their first post-graduation experience at the time when they completed the survey. The survey also allows UW to gather information about top employers, as well as average salary data from participants.
- Our interactive **"Brown and Gold Report"** site allows users to explore a variety of information about student demographics, including post-graduation plans. The site shows that over 50% of bachelor's degree recipients are primarily working, around one-fifth are seeking employment, and another one-fifth are continuing their education.
- As reported in 3e6, student **satisfaction with overall UW experience** has consistently remained above 90%.
- Many units track post-graduation employment. Such units include the **College of Law**, and the **College of Engineering and Applied Sciences** We would like to see more program-level tracking of post-graduation employment since the programs tend to have a closer relationship with their graduates.
- For programs that typically include licensure at or after graduation, UW tracks **our success rates in comparison to national licensure rates.** For nearly all programs (with the lone exception of College of Engineering and Applied Science), our March 2019 data showed that we were above national rates by 3% to 18%
- Feedback reports are sent annually to all Wyoming high schools. The information provided compares each high school's graduates attending UW to other Wyoming high school students attending UW, and to the overall first-time population. Information includes admission rates, enrollment, retention and graduation rates, and distributions of course grades in courses with the highest enrollments.
- As part of an annual articulation summit, each Wyoming community college receives feedback reports regarding transfer student performance and enrollment at UW. The tailored reports provide information comparing the specific community college to other Wyoming community colleges, out-of-state colleges, and UW undergraduates overall. It includes enrollment, grades, retention and graduation rates, and demographic information.
- The Office of Institutional Analysis provides time-to-degree reports for every program at UW, based on the Complete College America methodology. This information is used by college advisors and is part of information considered in program review.
- In 2017, seven Cowboy and Cowgirl athletic teams earned **all-time high NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) score**s, and all UW's teams exceeded the 930 minimum four-year average benchmark set by the NCAA to qualify for postseason competition.

Additionally, all of UW teams' most recent NCAA Graduation Success Rates were above comparable rates for all new first-time UW students.
- Our newly created **Global Engagement Office** and **Center for Student Involvement and Leadership**will allow the institution to better aggregate information about participation in fellowships, internships, and programs such as Fulbright Scholars, Rhodes Scholars, Peace Corps, and AmeriCorps.
- Admissions provides weekly reports to departments and colleges tracking admission rates to their programs**.**This tracking helps with operational decision making. This information is also available in Oracle Business Intelligence reports. Further, we publish reports at census-date that show enrollment yield rates for undergraduate and graduate and professional program applications.

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Argument

4b1. Nearly all UW programs have clearly stated and visible student learning goals for each of their majors, minors, and graduate degrees. As indicated earlier, 151 out of 173 programs, 93%, clearly state their goals on their website and other publicly available documentation. The **Student Learning Outcomes page on UW's Assessment site** provides direct links to many of these program-level outcomes statements. **Outcomes for the University Studies Program's 10 requirements** are published on the University Studies Program 2015 web pages. Outcomes for all approved courses must be stated in the syllabus. Student Affairs also lists clearly stated learning outcomes for their programming.

The work of assessing student learning outcomes has been effectively broadened since HLC's last site visit in 2009. Although a push to require, review, and rank annual assessment reports by each program has not been fully sustained at the institutional level, this effort has increased the number of programs who are managing ongoing assessment at the program level. **Information about programs' 2016 tier status,** reflecting quality and consistency of assessment, is available on the UW Assessment site. We anticipate that the hiring of a new assessment coordinator in fall 2019 will bring renewed oversight and guidance to this process.

Moreover, efforts to assess key parts of the University Studies Program have been sustained in the past few years. For example, assessment of first-year seminars has involved faculty in professional learning communities, as well as students as partners in research and assessment. Similarly, assessment of communication-intensive courses is currently underway and will help produce a broader picture of these courses' impact on student learning.

4b2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

To help our institution gather big-picture data about the overall development of student learning, UW continues to participate in the **Collegiate Learning Assessment,** recruiting freshman and

seniors to participate every three years for cross-sectional analysis. This assessment instrument allows UW to gather information about the institution's value-added contributions to students' higher-order thinking skills. Results from our most recent survey indicate that we are helping to develop critical thinking skills at a rate that is comparable to other participating institutions (see pages 4-5).

Several academic units at UW, including the School of Pharmacy, School of Social Work, College of Business, College of Nursing, Department of Kinesiology and Health, Department of Veterinary Sciences, Department of Zoology and Physiology, and Department of Life Sciences have participated in the **Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)** since 2011. The aim has been to help programs learn more about student performance on critical thinking outcomes within their programs. An unexpected outcome of the CAT test was the strong comradery that formed among the UW CAT reviewers from, a wide variety of different disciplines. The reviewers worked together with other faculty to gain new insights into critical thinking and ways to use the test administration and results more thoughtfully.

The implementation (2012-2016) of assessment review at the department level, overseen by college-level assessment coordinators, helped create expectations for ongoing assessment across campus. One of the highlights of the process was the annual review process, wherein three committee members would review each department plan and provide feedback. The assessment reviewers feedback was the topic of discussion in department meetings held early in the academic year to consider how and to what extent changes in assessment planning and curriculum should take place in the coming terms.

Key developments in the past few years include:

- The integration of assessment within our new program review process (see **self-study structure**) provides a new mechanism for encouraging broad-based participation in ongoing program-level assessment. Because substantial curriculum revision may result from the department's self-study, external reviewers' recommendations, or the Dean's and Provost's response to the academic review, this process creates new motivation for programs to develop ongoing assessment plans.
- The development of a document-harvesting module within our learning management system provides a new way for us to assemble repositories of student work for direct assessment. This module has been effectively used for first-year seminar assessment, as well as assessment of courses within the College of Arts and Sciences' required core curriculum.
- As noted in 3e, the recent creation of SOAR, a platform for tracking students' experiential learning, will facilitate the assessment of students' co-curricular experiences related to research, service, cultural competence, and career readiness, as well as other outcomes that are not directly tied to specific courses. Since launching in fall 2018, the platform has recorded engagement for 16% of undergraduate students and 30% of first-year students. We hope this platform will emerge as a way to better assess the "Personal and Social Responsibility" student learning outcomes of the University Studies Program.

- The creation of a coordinator position for first-year seminar courses (2014) and a Director of Communication across the Curriculum (2018) should sustain attention to assessment of these key components of the University Studies Program.
- The **Global Engagement strategic plan highlights** the formulation of plans to assess the learning outcomes of students participating in education abroad.
- As part of the **its strategic plan,** Student Affairs committed to creating updated student learning outcomes goals. The process was completed this summer with input from all Student Affairs departments and leadership. Five learning outcomes were developed: Leadership Development, Personal Responsibility, Intrapersonal Development, Respecting Diversity and a Global Society, and Community Engagement. These encompass a wide range of activities facilitated throughout the division and incorporate the core community standards outlined in the Student Code of Conduct: Integrity, Social Consciousness, Respect, and Responsibility. Student Affairs will support its departments as they identify the outcomes their services and programming foster, and implement consistent standards for measurement and evaluation as part of assessment planning.

4b3. UW is increasingly effective in closing the assessment loop by using the information gained from assessment to improve student learning. The most visible use of assessment to drive faculty development and impact student learning can be seen in our emerging model for supporting teaching of first-year seminars. A combination of ongoing assessment efforts, the assignment of a coordinator committed to providing faculty development, and efforts of faculty learning communities will drive a continuous-improvement loop.

Within the next two years, the assessment of communication-intensive general education courses will adopt a process similar to that of first-year seminars. In spring 2019, the Director of Communication across the Curriculum facilitated course-level assessment projects for a broad selection of communication-intensive general education courses. A **synthesis of those disparate projects** will generate topics for faculty learning communities, workshops for instructors of communication-intensive courses, and development of future assessment projects.

The Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning initiated a new **universal design certification program for college teaching and learning**, which includes strategies for course assessment. The Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning's 2019 Summer Institute also brought in national experts to help faculty design and make use of better in-class critical-thinking assignments and assessments.

For programs accredited by professional organizations, program review processes associated with re-accreditation contribute to meaningful assessment and improvement cycles. In the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, for example, the **ABET Working Group** supported the transition to new accreditor-mandated outcomes by training champions and updating continuous improvement assessment processes.

As indicated in 4b2, we believe that our relatively new Academic Program Review self-study process will drive strategic assessment and targeted change at the program level. As an outcome of self-study, programs are asked to explain how they will make use of the information they have gathered, including information about their assessment processes and results. Emerging plans

from the new assessment coordinator indicate that we will revive program-level assessment reporting requirements, with support from a reconstituted and reframed assessment coordinator team.

4b4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

As noted above (see 4b2), UW implemented a process requiring program-level assessment reports in 2012. Though the process has not been sustained at the institutional level, it did have the effect of helping promote a view of assessment across campus as direct, ongoing, and faculty-driven in line with contemporary understandings of best practice in assessment. This view is now being sustained through academic program review and in assessment practices for first-year seminars, communication-intensive courses, courses in our Honors College, and in several professionally-accredited programs, including Nursing, Business, Education, and Engineering and Applied Science. Additionally, our new assessment coordinator, hired in fall 2019, plans to revive institution-wide processes and requirements for program-level assessment reports.

Our ongoing participation in the **National Survey of Student Engagement**, the **Faculty Survey of Student Engagement**, and the **Collegiate Learning Assessment** helps us gather information that has been extensively validated and that allows comparison of experiences at UW with other institutions.

At present, we do not have effective measures for tracking the participation rates of faculty and other staff in assessment processes. Unfortunately, the status of assessment processes and participation at UW is still fairly similar to the state we described in our 2010 HLC Self-Study: "Specific issues of concern include using data from multiple levels (course, program, and institutional) to make improvements, determining how to streamline processes and coordinate with other accreditation processes to avoid burnout, and extending and adapting assessment of student learning to distance delivered courses."

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Argument

4c1. **Goal 2 of UW's current strategic plan** sets meaningful targets for increasing student retention, persistence, and completion, illustrated in part by the following performance indicators:

- Enrollment of underrepresented students;
- Retention rate for first-time, full-time baccalaureate degree-seeking students;
- Construction of new residence halls;
- Student participation in support services;
- 4- and 6-year graduation rates for undergraduates;
- Percentage of students completing an experiential transcript; and
- Percentage of graduates with credentials from the Honors College.

Each of these performance indicators includes a baseline value and 2022 target metric, and the strategic plan aligns these targets to values appropriate to our mission. Specifically, many of the performance indicators listed above are relevant to our **strategic plan efforts** to "welcome, support, and graduate students of differing backgrounds, abilities and needs, and from different cultures, communities, and nations" and to "engage and graduate well-rounded and creative thinkers, capable of meeting unpredictable and complex challenges" (strategic plan, p. 15).

Our **Year 1** and **Year 2 reports** on progress toward those targets show incremental progress in many areas. Highlights include a 1.6% increase in retention of first-time, full-time students; a 6.8% uptick in the utilization of support services, and a 1.3% increase in six-year completion rates.

UW has increased structural support for meeting these goals. The appointment in 2017 of an **Associate Vice Provost** for Enrollment Management, the establishment in 2018 of a **Transfer Success Center**, and the **restructuring of advising services** in 2018 are key structural developments that we believe will help us to meet our goals for retention, persistence, and completion. The newly created Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion's Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee has identified access, affordability, and support for underrepresented students as key areas of effort for the coming academic year.

4c2. At the foundation of our efforts to collect and analyze data on retention, persistence, and completion is UW's **Office of Institutional Analysis (OIA)**, whose central charge is to "provide reliable, comprehensive, and authoritative information about the institution to support planning and decision making at UW…to support the institution's mission, values, and goals related to the success and learning of our students, as well as overall institutional effectiveness."

The **2018 Fact Book** illustrates some of the information that we gather and make available publicly. Additional public data include official **enrollment counts**, **retention** and **graduation rates**, and **degrees awarded**.

The Office of Institutional Analysis also contributes information about UW through the national Common Data Set, which allows external entities to gather standard information about UW.

To support Wyoming K-12 schools and community colleges, OIA publishes feedback reports to these institutions that include information on retention and graduation rates for their students and graduates who enroll at UW.

The **Brown and Gold Report** (formerly the University of Wyoming Dashboard) is designed for prospective students and their parents. It provides interactive and up-to-date visualizations of key measures about UW's students, tuition and fees, retention and graduation rates, degree programs, post-graduation plans, and credit hours.

As an institution offering NCAA Division 1 athletic programs, UW also actively tracks information about student-athlete persistence and completion, through the **Academic Progress Report** and **Graduation Success Rate**.

4c3. UW uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by data. As noted in 4c1, new offices, structures, and positions in support of enrollment and persistence were created at UW in the past several years. These new components increase our ability to make ongoing adjustments to support student success. Along with the creation of an Associate Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, UW also initiated a **five-year Strategic Enrollment Plan** to better guide efforts to gather information and make decisions.

Furthermore, other groups on campus help UW actively improve programming in light of data gathering and analysis. Key examples include:

- A **Data Governance Committee** created in 2018, which initially reported directly to the Office of the President and now reports to the Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs and Information Technology, is guiding dialogue on definitions, processes, and structures for more effectively sharing data across divisions in the University.
- Three **Strategic Enrollment Management committees,** supported by an additional set of advisory groups, helped drive collaborative, well-informed decision making for enrollment, advising, and student success.
- **The Course Management Strike Force** that makes use of data about enrollment patterns to determine how resources can be shifted to better support student progression in their majors.
- **Student Educational Opportunity (SEO)** and the **Learning Resource Networks (LeaRN)** provide support for student success. These are attentive to enrollment and retention patterns and continuously update their support programs in light of emerging trends. SEO provides services to students that are economically disadvantaged, ethnic minorities, veterans, first-generation, disabled, and underrepresented populations. Their goal is to provide greater access to educational opportunities to support academic success. LeaRN provides tutoring and supplemental instruction. It encompasses the first-year experience and includes the summer and fall bridge programs and freshmen interest groups. LeaRN supports faculty with teaching guides, writing resources, and promotes diversity and recognition of faculty. These services have expanded since the last HLC visit to provide better access to needed services to our students and faculty.
- UW uses central position management for hiring allocations to units across the institution, including the Colleges. All proposed academic hires must be justified in terms of need and of potential impacts on retention.

4c4. UW processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice.

UW's Office of Institutional Analysis was formerly a member of the Consortium of Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE), which brings together two- and four-year institutions around the common goal of increasing student success through collaboratively sharing data, knowledge, and innovation. CSRDE data adopts many IPEDS definitions. Through this consortium, UW adopted and developed definitions appropriate for our context. UW uses IPEDS definitions and formulas for determining retention, persistence, and program completion, and follows well-established procedures that guide other data collection processes.

UW is a participant in the Student Achievement Measure (SAM) program. This allows students and external stakeholders a richer set of measures about student progression toward degree, and has allowed UW to participate in various national initiatives such as the APLU Powered by Publics project focused on reducing the achievement gap in degree attainment.

UW also participates in Complete College Wyoming, a program designed to build awareness of the value of college completion and to develop institutional capacity for achieving completion among Wyoming post-secondary institutions. UW and the State of Wyoming see the goal of increasing the percentage of working-age residents with post-secondary credentials as essential for statewide economic diversification and social mobility. Complete College Wyoming is

affiliated with Complete College America and benefits from the data-gathering and good-practice models of this national organization. Complete College America provides the basis for **our methodology for time-to-degree reports**, which are available for all undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

The newly adopted Annual Program Review process should help UW better evaluate the quality of academic programs on an ongoing basis. Participation in local and national assessments, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement, Collegiate Learning Assessment, and the Great Colleges to Work For survey, help us better understand factors shaping our learning environment and make valuable changes to improve practice.

UW has long collected and evaluated data on recruitment, retention, and completion rates. The Associate Vice Provost for Enrollment Management position created in 2017 is helping to focus and better coordinate our efforts to support students throughout their time at UW.

Despite several years of successful, centralized assessment report processes (~2012-2016), the current assessment specialist is pursuing a more distributed model in which numerous individuals are responsible for small pieces of institutional assessment. For example, the assessment of two key pieces of the general education curriculum, first-year seminars and communication-intensive courses, now fall to the coordinators of these courses. Though this model has the potential for success, it is not yet achieving our goals for campus-wide continuous improvement.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Argument

5a1. UW has sufficient resources and infrastructure to support its varied operations. A range of planning committees and policies, including **facilities and use documentation**, the development of a **new master plan**, and a **housing planning process** ensure that UW is continuously monitoring current and anticipated needs and resources.

Financially, our annual reports demonstrate that UW maintains a long history of operating to sufficiently deliver programs within budget. Over the past decade, a downturn in the state economy resulted in **major decreases in UW's block gran**t. Significant budget cuts were imposed by the state legislature in 2010, 2014, 2017, and 2018. These decreases pushed UW to identify inefficiencies and to pursue **external consultation**.

Even during economic downturns, our efforts have enabled UW to continue delivering effective programs while maintaining faculty and staff levels appropriate to our central priorities. The institution currently employs 730 full-time instructional faculty and maintains a 15:1 faculty-student ratio.

A point of pride for UW during the economic downturn was the continued investment in physical and technological infrastructure, without taking on substantial new debt (the current bonded debt for UW is just over $80 million). Strategic developments include:

- Adoption of a **new learning management system,** WyoCourses, for delivering courses across multiple formats. This adoption included not only new technology, but also new positions to support effective digitally-mediated teaching and learning. On a smaller scale, new technologies are currently being implemented that will increase integrity for **online testing and proctoring**.
- Construction of a **3D Visualization Center** (2013), a new **Enzi STEM learning center** (2016), an **Engineering Education and Research Facility** (2019), and ground-breaking on a new **active-learning science facility** to be completed in 2021. These buildings directly support the teaching mission of the University, especially in the STEM fields.
- Substantial renovation of our **performing arts building** (now the Buchanan Center for Performing Arts) and construction of a Visual **Arts facility.** Especially because we serve as a land-grant, research, and flagship institution, we are proud of these investments that support academic and cultural programs in the humanities and fine arts.
- New research facilities, including the **High Bay Research Facility** (2017) and the **Literacy Research Center and Clinic** (2014). Facilities like these enable UW to continue pursuing high-quality research across a range of programs.
- Major updates to athletic facilities, including the 2018 opening of the new **McMurry High Altitude Performance Center** and the renovation of both the Arena Auditorium, UW's primary indoor sports facility, and War Memorial Stadium, UW's primary outdoor sports facility.
- The 2014 opening of the **Marian H. Rochelle Gateway Center**, which now houses the UW Foundation, UW Alumni Association, the McMurry Family Legacy Hall, conference space, and spaces for recruiting, career fairs, and job training.

These capital investments were made possible in part by an ongoing relationship with the state legislature, which has historically supported University capital construction projects, and successful outreach on the part of the **UW Foundation**, which oversees annual giving in excess of $50 million per year and endowments totaling $514.3 million (2018).

Although many of these capital construction plans have taken human resource and staffing needs into consideration in planning and budgeting, sustainable staffing resources for new construction is a continuing concern requiring intentional planning.

5a2. Because UW is a non-profit institution, it does not disburse revenue to a superordinate entity. Instead, **UW Regulation 7-1** is the key driver for purposeful and strategic resource allocation. Specifically it guides the development of an annual operating budget and condition for transfers among UW units. Other relevant policies include:

- **UW Regulations 7-2, 7-7 and 7-8**, which relate to expenditures and signature authority.
- **Presidential Directive 3-1993-1**that establishes a policy for receipt and handling of University funds.

- **UW Regulations 6-4, 6-7 and 6-9,** which relate to use of buildings, space allocation and projects.
- **UW Regulation 9-2**, that articulates an indirect cost policy.

Additionally, the University's budget planning calendar and its **new-program proposal policy** (which involves consultation with the Faculty Senate, Deans, Provost, President, and the Board of Trustees) ensure that resource allocations are made in a systematic way, in line with strategic planning, and focused on educational purposes.

Institutional **Academic Program Review policies** implemented in 2018, as well as revised position management procedures, also help ensure that resources are allocated in support of identified educational needs.

UW's response to statewide economic downturns and their resulting impact on state funding provide additional evidence that the University seeks to maintain strong educational programming. Through a process involving public input, the University was able to **eliminate five low-enrollment programs while taking action to protect and improve other programs** identified for potential elimination.

5a3: UW strives toward progress and expansion, yet it maintains a careful eye on development in light of its overall structures and resources. This realistic approach is most visible in its strategic planning documents. Specifically, the inclusion of **baseline and 2022 targets for over two dozen performance indicators** (pp. 20-23) illustrate UW's reasonable and incremental approach to goal setting and attainment.

Additionally, for many programs and units, such as the College of Engineering and Applied Science and the School of Nursing, **professional accreditation agencies** require programs to demonstrate that adequate financial, staffing, and other resources are in place to ensure effective program delivery.

While the University has a long history of working effectively within its allocated state budget, it also makes additional annual funding requests to the state. During the legislative process, UW reports on current successes, as well as new opportunities that may benefit from additional funding. In the 2019-20 fiscal year, the legislature approved **$17.4 million in supplemental requests.** UW's long success in receiving supplemental budget funding is some measure of the strong relationship between the University, the state legislature, and the various constituencies that both entities seek to serve.

5a4: Ensuring that all staff are adequately qualified begins with hiring processes that clearly identify necessary qualifications for each position on campus. These hiring processes have been updated recently, increasing the alignment of qualifications and job activity. Job qualifications and descriptions for staff in financial aid, academic advising, and other areas ensure that students are served by highly qualified staff. Academic Affairs maintains a **credentials policy and inventory** for all academic positions, to ensure that its teaching mission is carried out by appropriately-trained faculty.

As explained in 3c4, 3c6, and 5c5, UW is committed to providing and improving access to necessary training to help staff remain qualified for changing policies, technologies, and job tasks. UW's commitment to ongoing training is evident in its adoption of the Employee LearnCenter (released to campus June 2018), which allows for increased coordination and tracking of job training opportunities and progress. Training is supported for a broad array of job tasks from ethical research (CITI training) to pedagogy (through onsite professional development from the Ellbogen Center for Teaching Learning and other units), from productivity software (through onsite Information Technology sessions) to best practices in residence life and dining, and from budgeting (through the WyoCloud financial system) to academic advising.

A new professional development opportunity available to UW employees is LinkedIn Learning. It complements training available in the Employee LearnCenter. Employees may select learning plans to guide them in their career progression, watch guided videos, and complete tutorials on today's leading creative and business software. This resource is available for all benefited employees to advance their business, creative, and technical learning skill sets. Diversity education virtual institutes by Dr. Kathy Obear were made available in the Employee LearnCenter in fall 2019 for both benefited and non-benefited UW employees. These new professional development tools support the development of our human resources in alignment with the strategic plan and respond to requests by staff for more learning opportunities.

5a5: UW has effective processes in place for monitoring its financial health. As noted in 5a2 above, **UW Regulation 7-1** serves as an essential policy, mandating close attention to budgeting and expenses. Logistically, quarterly budgeting information is available through the WyoCloud financial system (beginning FY2019). WyoCloud additionally offers **account analysis reports** that provide up-to-date snapshots of revenue and expenditures. The challenges in using this tool for grant-funded accounts, mentioned in Criterion One, are being addressed, but were frustrating for departments.

During the transition to new accounting charts as part of the institution's change to the WyoCloud accounting and finance systems, UW effectively consolidated more than $135 million in reserve accounts. The University created five reserve accounts from these funds and drafted policies for their use. This process, colloquially called "the sweep" at UW, was the **subject of significant frustration** for several departments and student groups on campus. The Board of Trustees has worked throughout the past two years to make the process for requests for the return of funds from these reserve accounts more clear and transparent.

UW's internal auditors regularly work with the trustees to identify priorities for focused consideration. Further, UW must undergo an external audit of finances annually to monitor and ensure compliance with financial laws and regulations.

UW also completes the Standard & Poor's Rating Services questionnaire annually and has had regular conversations regarding ratings and bonding authority. During the 2017-18 fiscal year, UW's AA- long term rating on outstanding Facilities Revenue Bonds was reaffirmed.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Argument

5b1. UW's Board of Trustees is knowledgeable about the institution. In terms of adequate legal and financial guidance, the Board of Trustees **bylaws** and **committees** help the board delineate its role in overseeing financial and academic policies and practices, and in meeting its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

UW enjoys a strong relationship with its Board of Trustees. That relationship starts with and is fostered by effective orientation practices and resources. **Materials that help onboard new trustees** provide information about duties, structures, and other aspects of trustee activity. Ongoing board development activities that assist members of the board in understanding the institution's environment and forecasting emerging opportunities and challenges are a potential gap in our programming.

From a policy and process perspective, the bylaws of the Board of Trustees clearly lay out the duties of the board's officers and its various committees, including Fiscal and Legal Affairs, Budget, Facilities Contracting, Financial Management and Reporting, Legislative Relations, Academic and Student Affairs, and Research and Economic Development. The **Fiscal and Legal Affairs Committee** takes primary responsibility for "assuring that the University's organizational culture, capabilities, systems and processes are appropriate to protect the financial health and the reputation of the University." This group works extensively with our internal auditor to identify any internal issues that need to be addressed.

At a more fine-grained level, a board-initiated overhaul of UW regulations and policies has included extensive and ongoing participation by board members, which has increased their knowledge of the institution.

5b2: While the Board of Trustees carries final authority on University operations, a variety of shared governance processes ensure that internal constituencies are represented.

UW Regulation 1-101 establishes the procedures for modifying and approving University Regulations, including review by internal constituencies. **The University of Wyoming Policies and Procedures Vetting Process** outlines the process for internal constituencies to review and provide feedback. Currently, **UW Regulation 2-203** provides for multiple committees that participate in institutional governance.

Various UW Regulations establish the role of governance bodies for staff, faculty, and students:

- **UW Regulation 1-3** establishes the Bylaws of Staff Senate;
- **UW Regulation 2-300** establishes the Bylaws of University faculty;
- **UW Regulation 2-301** establishes Faculty Senate Bylaws; and
- The **Constitution and Bylaws of ASUW** establish the authority of the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming and their responsibility in governance of the University. The presence of the ASUW President as an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees provides an opportunity for direct relationship between the student body and the Board of Trustees.

Minutes of board meetings also help illustrate how their actions are informed by extensive input from internal constituent groups. Recent examples are their hearing and discussion of a report about the current **campus master plan** (September 2019 meeting) and the public input for the **academic calendar** (March and May 2019). The Board of Trustees has structured the **Presidential Search Process (2019)** to allow multiple points for public participation at both the beginning (three pubic listening sessions, a website to gather comments) and as the process culminates in public visits for the finalists.

An illustration of the effective relationship between the University and its governing board is the new program approval process. This process provides extensive internal discussion before new programs are brought to the board, but places final decisions about legal, financial, and academic impacts in the hands of the trustees. The Board of Trustees also stays abreast of and consults extensively with UW on administrative hires through its **Vice President and Dean Search Committee**.

5b3: Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

As noted in 5b2 above, UW Regulations 1-3, 2-300, 2-301, and ASUW's Bylaws and Constitution ensure the participation of staff, faculty, and student governing bodies, including their roles in guiding academic policies and processes. **Board of Trustees bylaws** section 7-9 establishes the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, which oversees and recommends changes to ensure alignment with the University's academic mission.

The University of Wyoming Policies and Procedures Vetting Process encourages and, in the case of the Faculty Senate, requires that new policies and procedures are sent to relevant internal

constituencies for input. UW is currently updating its University Regulations, through extensive consultation with and input from the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Associated Students of the University of Wyoming on development of policy and regulations. Similarly, the development and approval of new degrees, minors, and certificates is carried out through a clear process that requires the involvement of administration and relevant faculty.

UW helps prepare administrators to participate in academic decision making partially by offering **mandatory workshops** for department heads. Major foci of these workshops include tenure and promotion processes, graduate education, and de-escalating and dealing with sensitive personnel matters.

Evidence of adequately representative involvement in academic programming is also demonstrated in the minutes and documents of several Faculty Senate committees, as well as the Academic Planning Committee, the Graduate Council, the Budget Planning Committee, the University Studies Program Committee, and course revision and approval committees at both the college and university levels. Each of these committees is guided by a clear scope of responsibility and by appropriate policies.

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

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

Argument

5c1: Internal budget processes require ongoing and proposed allocations to be aligned with the University strategic plan on an annual basis. Once these internal processes have been completed, College Deans are given the opportunity to confer with the Board of Trustees about their priorities. The President then presents the full budget to the Board of Trustees. The trustees are guided by **Bylaw section 7-9,** which establishes a committee to ensure that decisions are aligned with the University's academic mission. Similarly, any supplemental requests to the state legislature must also be aligned with the strategic plan. **Internal process documentation** demonstrates how overall mission and priorities drive resource allocation.

For hiring decisions, the Budget Office works with the President and Provost to determine when new faculty lines will be funded. All vacant faculty lines are consolidated into the Provost's budget to be reviewed prior to any authorization to recruit.

As noted in 5a, the University's response to statewide economic crisis demonstrates our efforts to maintain focus on the academic mission and priorities even as we have faced tens of millions of dollars of cuts to our annual operating budget.

5c2. At UW, processes for assessment, budgeting, planning, and analysis of operations are not tightly linked, but certainly inform one another. Most notably, UW commissioned an i**nstitutional capacity study** (completed in 2018) that synthesized instructional and residential capacity, student support and administration, growth potential, cost per credit, and prospective student perceptions, among other factors. This study provides guidance that has and will continue to inform planning, facilities, program assessment, and resource allocation for the next decade.

An example of links between student learning, budgeting, and planning is seen in the **Science Initiative and the related Wyoming Governor's Top-Tier Science Programs and Facilities**

Task Force. As a result of this program and group, UW has engaged in planning and construction of new facilities reflecting best practices in STEM learning.

Another example of links among assessment, budgeting, and planning is the **Bridge Program,** which provides additional assistance to students admitted to UW with support, generally due to low GPA or college entrance exam scores. In response to changing enrollment trends and admissions requirements, students admitted with support now make up about one-fifth of the first-year class each year. Because of the Bridge Program's strong ongoing assessment efforts, UW has supported the expansion of this program from a 30-student pilot in 1999 to a program that presently serves over 400 students annually.

UW also makes use of various surveys to help increase the links between planning, budgeting, operations, and student learning. For example, decisions about campus dining options and dining plans are informed by trends and feedback from a nationally benchmarked dining satisfaction survey that UW has administered for 13 continuous years.

Illustrating another data-informed effort to continuously improve is UW's participation in the **Great Colleges to Work For** survey in 2018. Results revealed a number of challenges related to job satisfaction. Some areas for improvement include increasing morale, respect, and appreciation; compensation; resources and staff; views of senior leadership; needs for more communication and transparency; and shared governance. The University is currently engaged in a variety of efforts to meaningfully use that information to inform change through a **Strategic Improvement Working Group**.

5c3. UW's planning processes consider the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups. In general, task forces, standing committees, and the Board of Trustees are formed with an eye towards representational make-up to ensure that internal and external constituencies are engaged in planning processes. Specifically:

- The **Board of Trustees bylaws** and **Wyoming State Statutes** mandate that trustee membership must be balanced in terms of political party and geographical representation. These additionally require representation for committees, meetings, voting, and other activities.

- **Faculty Senate**, **Staff Senate**, and **student government bylaws** require certain representation for committees, meetings, and voting.
- Administrative committees also require diverse representation, including representation from different units, colleges, and demographic groups of the University community.

As an illustration of broad representation in planning processes, the **Strategic Planning Leadership Council** consisted of 24 members representing a range of internal constituencies. A series of **statewide listening sessions** for the plan ensured that external groups also had an opportunity to weigh in on this planning process.

In December 2018 the University's Board of Trustees approved Sasaki as the consultant for the Campus Master Planning. Work on the project began in January 2019. When the plan is finalized later this year, it will provide the needed framework for decision making and strategic development to address infrastructure needs, environmental sustainability, and economic development over the next 20 years. Planning elements include use of green space, land use, new buildings, rehabilitation of buildings, repurposing of existing buildings, pedestrian/traffic flow, and many others. The planning process is comprised of five components: 1) Academic and Research; 2) Housing and Residence Life; 3) Student Life (including Athletics and Recreation); 4) Mobility and Landscape and 5) Connections to the Region and Beyond. Sasaki has held several work and listening sessions that include sessions with task force committees, executive leadership, students, faculty and staff, and the general community. The process included gathering input about the University from a few Wyoming communities.

5c4. As noted in 5c2, a 2018 capacity study provides UW with an understanding not only of current capacity, but also of projected opportunities for recruitment and enrollment. Because Wyoming still enjoys relatively strong financial support from the state, budget planning processes are designed to be responsive to the state's use of bi-annual budget forecasts.

Additional committees, including a **course management strike force**, a financial crisis group, and a revenue enhancement group help the University responsibly anticipate and respond to challenges, as well as opportunities related to University revenue sources.

The University is currently formulating a timeline to update UW's general education framework, In spring 2020, broad consultation will begin with faculty, staff, students, and external constituents on what a new University Studies Program might entail. Though it has been the norm in recent times to revise general education every decade or so, the significant disruption presented by artificial intelligence in education and the workplace has accelerated this timeline. Multiple working groups are also discussing appropriate new directions for UW in online degree program development, the exploration of stackable credentials, and other necessary permutations to traditional degree structures.

Section 5c5, below, provides more evidence of the ways in which we make planning decisions based on sound information about key operations, resources, and trends.

5c5. All four goals of our current strategic plan reaffirm our commitment to innovation and adaptation in response to local, national, and global factors. Examples of our programming and planning aimed at anticipating demographic and technological change are:

- A robust center for teaching and learning, the **Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning,** which provides an array of programs and services to help instructional faculty maintain an up-to-date understanding of technologies for teaching and learning, universal design and inclusive teaching practices, emerging trends in program and certificate development, and national and global shifts in higher education.
- Technology boot camps and trainings offered through UW's Information Technology unit to help faculty and staff stay current on the variety of applications they must use in order to effectively carry out their teaching, research, and service.

- Institution- and program-level speakers series featuring contemporary scholars, officials, and professionals are broadly available to faculty and staff across campus. Such speakers provide the campus with access to new information, policies, and practices relevant to higher education. Many professional development opportunities are also available via Zoom videoconferencing so that the information is available to employees anywhere—on or off campus. In fall 2018, for example, **Academic Affairs sponsored author Jeff Selingo,** former chief editor of the Chronicle of Higher Education, to talk about how institutions can help students navigate schooling in relationship to a changing job market.
- The new LinkedIn learning opportunities making available over 13,000 courses available to employees at any time. For more information, see **5a4**.
- A new program proposal process supports Goal One of the strategic plan, to "Join together as an intellectual community already renowned for its regional, national, and global relevance and impact by fostering and rewarding excellence in teaching, scholarship, innovation, and creative endeavor." This process assures that new programs are created with attention to projected workforce needs, opportunities for global engagement, the institution's goals for diversity, and technology-enhanced learning.
- Training and planning to help UW effectively engage in an increasingly multicultural society. Planning includes the affirmative action plan and training for virtual diversity workshops. A teaching certification that focuses on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion is a step toward educating better-informed citizens. Intentional efforts are in place to recruit students, faculty, and staff who are more reflective of diversity at the national and international levels. See1c and **2d**.
- Changes in recruiting efforts with more attention to Texas, California, Utah, Idaho, and Colorado based on regional data from **WICHE's Knocking at the College Door** projections as well as on projected decreases in Wyoming high school graduates. Our **enrollment statistics** from the past few years indicate that our strategies are effective: Between 2016 and 2018, the percentage of students identified as in-state residents dropped by 1.3% while the percentage of non-resident students increased by 4.8%.
- Increased efforts to attract transfer students, especially from Wyoming community colleges, are motivated by our strategic goal of increasing educational attainment and implementing four-year bachelor's degree plans statewide. See 1a3 for more information about the creation of our Transfer Success Center.

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5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

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

Argument

5d1. UW maintains a clear understanding of its operations and operational needs through ongoing planning, reporting, and documentation processes, including:

- Weekly, monthly, and semester-based **enrollment data** from the Office of Institutional Analysis: Analysis of these data guides decisions about recruiting, marketing, and student retention.
- **Annual assessment reports,** collected from each department and aligned with student learning outcomes at the program level: In aggregate, these reports help provide a barometer of the nature of student learning across campus. These reports were collected annually until 2016, but as noted in Criteria 4, UW is currently undergoing a shift in its institution-level assessment reporting processes.
- **Academic Program Review processes,** initiated in Summer 2018, are ongoing processes allowing each academic program to assess overall quality, not only in terms of student learning but also in relationship to a variety of other operational factors, including advising, climate, career development, current faculty composition, the range of faculty scholarly activity, and department culture.
- Annual department reviews and other planning supported by the Office of Institutional Analysis. Many standard reports of historical data related to students, faculty, salary data, credit hours offered, class size, type of faculty teaching, grant information, and other relevant information were offered until 2016. Information is being redeveloped in our business intelligence system and will be available through WyoCloud.
- Additional review processes, including for new programs, low-producing programs, and suspended or discontinued programs. These additional reviews defined in the **Standard Administrative Policy and Procedure for Academic Program Review** help ensure that the University can adequately staff and deliver the programs it offers, given existing and projected staffing, needs, and resources.
- **Strategic planning** and **campus master planning** direct overarching decision making in relationship to major goals, facilities, and project development. Examples of this are provided throughout the report (5c3 and 5c4 to name two).

5d2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

In addition to the range of ongoing practices described in 5d1, UW uses information to further improve overall institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability. UW's participation in the **Great Colleges to Work For** survey, for example, will be used to inform efforts related to campus climate, hiring practices, organizational relationships, benefits and compensation, and other practices. As mentioned previously, a Strategic Improvement Working Group is currently facilitating dialogue and generating an action plan to address specific areas of concern.

On a smaller scale, UW takes into account information such as communication response rate in ongoing efforts to recruit new students. Processes such as this further demonstrate the University's commitment to learning from its operational experience.

UW has also adopted an Oracle-based WyoCloud data management system that was developed to increase transparency and efficiency for financial management and human resources functions. The implementation strategy coupled a shift in financial accounting principles with a new technology platform. The pace and volume of change in UW's systems has been intense, especially when coupled with budget pressures. UW is committed to learning from this experience and intends to be more collaborative and patient in implementation of major changes going forward.

The University's **Year 1** and **Year 2** updates on progress toward the **strategic plan's goals** further demonstrate the institution's commitment to learning from and reacting to information and data on our operations. Additionally, the use of pro forma budgets and market data on student and employer demand for new program development provide evidence that the institution carefully studies and plans its operations and operational needs through ongoing reporting and documentation processes.

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

UW's reasonable and incremental approach to goal setting can be seen in its strategic plan, which identifies baseline and 2022 targets for over two dozen performance indicators.

Although UW faced multiple years of reductions to its allocation from the State of Wyoming, the institution's forward-looking planning has allowed it to weather these storms and continue to move forward with a strong commitment to the educational mission of the University. Additionally, UW's participation in the Great Colleges to Work For survey will be used to gauge employee satisfaction and inform decision making in areas for improvement. Similarly, UW commissioned an institutional capacity study that informs planning, program assessment, and resource allocation for the next decade.

Decision-making processes for budgeting, hiring, and planning continue to be collaborative endeavors, and the University's program proposal policy informs and guides resource allocations that are made systematically, in line with strategic planning, and focused on educational purposes.

The adoption of Oracle-based WyoCloud data management system has presented some challenges, though in the long run it will increase transparency and efficiency for financial and human-resources processes. The implementation strategy coupled a shift in financial accounting principles used by UW with a new technology platform. Indeed, multiple changes at a rapid pace has been a feature of UW's landscape for the past several years. Together, this led to a low user acceptance rate initially. However, UW is optimistic that the next stages of the implementation of these and other new systems will begin to deliver on the system's promised benefits.

Sources

There are no sources.