Assurance Argument
Ashland University - OH

Review date: 9/1/2022
1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution’s mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution’s emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution’s academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

1.A.1. Ashland University’s current mission statement is:

Ashland University, guided by our Christian heritage, is a comprehensive, private university that provides a transformative learning experience, shaping graduates who work, serve, and lead with integrity in their local, national, and global communities.

The specific process that led to Ashland University’s current mission statement was initiated in 2014 by a cross-section of faculty, staff, and administrators. The mission revision was a direct outcome of the University’s Comprehensive Review process, which was officially implemented by the University Board of Trustees in 2014. The year-long Institutional Comprehensive Review included the Mission Statement, all academic and non-academic programs at the University as well as the Board of Trustees’ structure, role, and governance. The Review Committee was comprised of campus-wide members including faculty, staff, administrators, and Board of Trustee members. The combination of the Comprehensive Review, the Board of Trustees’ renewed emphasis on a return to foundational values in its roots in the Brethren Church, and a series of changes in leadership led to the revised Mission Statement which was approved by the Board Of Trustees on January 29, 2016.

The Institutional Comprehensive Review process leading to a revision of the mission statement was broadly communicated through the University’s Portal site. The announcements included bi-weekly communications. Town Hall meetings were held and community feedback was sought through electronic means via the Review portal site. Students, staff, faculty, and even alumni participated in the process, as the draft version was shaped into the final version. Today, the Mission Statement as redefined effectively describes the University’s mission and guides its strategic planning and day-to-
The Mission Statement guides the operations of the University through the Strategic Plan priorities, set forth in the document, Ashland Rising 2020. The Mission Statement and the Strategic Plan priorities were developed through a campus-wide collaborative process that began in the fall of 2015.

Foundational strategic planning sessions were led by a guest facilitator, Matt Breitenberg of Straight Path Management. These sessions were attended by faculty, staff, the Provost, President, alumni and Board of Trustee members. Strategic Planning Committees were formed for each of the five 'Pillars,' with a diverse group chosen for their expertise in each area. The resulting strategic plan includes five (5) foundational goals, referred to as “Pillars of Distinction,” that serve the strategic imperatives for the University. Specifically, the five goals (Pillars) of the University Strategic Plan are as follows: 1) Academic Excellence; 2) Our Unique Christian Identity; 3) Exemplary Fiscal Stewardship; 4) A Healthy, Safe and Supportive Campus Environment; and 5) Enhanced Community Engagement.

The goals in the plan closely mirror the key elements of the Mission Statement and our five "core values." Pillar 1, Academic Excellence, gives reference to the missional value of offering a comprehensive and transformative learning experience, and our core value of "teaching excellence": Pillar 2, Our Unique Christian Identity, speaks to being guided by the University’s Christian heritage in shaping graduates who work, serve and lead with integrity, as well as our core value of "spirituality and faith": Pillar 3, Exemplary Fiscal Stewardship, derives from improved organizational and financial infrastructure put into place following the economic reversals of 2008-2009 and a concomitant enrollment downturn. Pillar 4, Supportive Campus Environment, places emphasis on the transformative and shaping responsibilities of the institution. It also references the “integrity” we attempt to nurture as we help the individual student toward completion, graduation, and life calling/career, and it also supports our core value of "character development": and Pillar 5, Enhanced Community Engagement, models at the institutional level the call to work, serve and lead with integrity in our local, national, and global communities. Thus the Pillars distill the mission as one of serving the whole person in their scholastic, spiritual, physical and relational dimensions – an idea consistent with more than 100 years of Brethren tradition.

1.A.2. Ashland University’s academic programs are consistent with the Constitution, Rules, and Regulations of the Corporation (Constitution) of the University and mission by offering academic programs and coursework which support the promotion of education, morality, Christian ethos, the fine arts and the professions. A comprehensive listing of programs can be found in the 2017-2018 catalog. Each program maps its student learning outcomes to the University’s institutional learning outcomes (p. 6) to support consistency with our mission.

The Division of Student Affairs, through collaboration with faculty, staff, and students, strives to build a strong community of respect and affirm the value of each individual. Student support services include:

- Student Center
- Orientation
- Residence Life
- Campus Activities
- Student Handbook
- Psychological Counseling
- Career Services Center
- Center for Community Service
- Commuter Services
Since the University's inception, it has been an inclusive institution as identified within its Constitution, Mission Statement, Vision Statements, and Core Values. In admitting women in its first class, it became one of Ohio’s first higher education institutions to serve men and women. The Constitution: Article 4: Section 4.1 states “the University shall be open to the reception of all students of proper qualifications, who shall express a willingness to submit to the regulations of the Faculty and the Board of Trustees. No distinction on account of religious views shall be made in admitting students”.

As further evidence of consistency of the University's enrollment profile with mission, the University was one of the first institutions to participate with the federal "Second Chance Pell" pilot program, an experiment announced in July 2015 to test whether participation in high-quality education programs increases after expanding access to financial aid for incarcerated individuals. This is an opportunity for an underserved population to gain access to the transformative learning experience offered by the University. This Pell grant provides opportunities to increase the University’s current offerings and partnerships with correctional institutions across the country.

Currently, the University draws more than eighty percent of its traditional on-campus undergraduate students from a 90-mile geographic radius. The racial makeup of Ashland County is 97.3% white. Many of the University's students come from this mostly rural, racially homogeneous area. Ashland is challenged within these enrollment realities to attract a racially diverse population of students from both urban and rural backgrounds. Relying on our reputation in athletics, the University has been able to improve its male to female ratio and diversify the population. In addition, we have partnered with churches and other organizations in the Cleveland area to try to attract more Hispanic students to our campus. President Campo has worked with national Hispanic networks to enhance our reputation in Hispanic circles. Despite our institutional commitment to supporting and increasing diversity, the extent of racial diversity attained among students, faculty and staff remains limited. In order to proactively promote diversity and multicultural awareness, the University has several offices and programs for the purpose of increasing multicultural awareness and supporting the diversity of learners, which are described in Criterion 4.C.1.

The University also acknowledges and acts on its diversity strengths: one-fourth of entering First-Time, Full-Time, Degree-Seeking Freshmen are first generation. The percent of First-Time, Full-Time, Degree-Seeking Freshmen receiving Pell funds is approximately 37%. Our non-traditional undergraduate population (i.e., other Undergraduate Programs) grew from 3,716 in Fall 2015 to 4,536 in Fall 2016 and to 4,678 in Fall 2017. Consistent with its mission documents (mission, vision and value statements), the University addresses its role in a multicultural society by its Core Values (referenced in Criterion 1.B.3) and Diversity Statement, its Strategic Plan, academic programs, and Core Curriculum. The objectives and strategies for the University’s recruiting, enrolling, retaining and graduating a diverse student population are described in detail in Criterion 4.C.1 under the section on the Office of Institutional Diversity.

Through the commitment to an identity rooted in Christian faith and emphasis on Accent on the Individual (one of our five core values), the University provides students an environment that promotes the University's values and respect toward each person. The Mission Statement itself
acknowledges providing a transformative learning experience. The establishment of a Diversity Office and the development of initiatives focused on diversity and global perspectives speaks to the efforts the University is taking to support its mission.

The University carefully considers the needs of its students and provides academic support that aligns with those needs. A detailed discussion of student support services is discussed in 3.D.1.

1.A.3. The institution, like so many private universities in the United States, has faced issues with its finances in recent years. Ashland University strives to use clearly defined, data-informed processes for planning and budgeting which align with and support the mission, to ensure that every dollar is spent strategically. This subcomponent is addressed more fully in 5.C.1.

As the Strategic Planning document evolves into a living document, all goals and outcomes are connected to institutional priorities and funding sources. Also, the new Institutional Budget Committee (IBC) was formed in 2016-2017 to connect various stakeholders to the discussion of how to allocate available resources.

*** The text below has been merged from Core Component 1.B ***

1.B.1. Ashland University’s mission, vision and value statements are articulated in a number of
documents, in print, on campus and online. These documents are accessible to the public, including statements defining the mission, vision, values, and the strategic plan that appear on the University’s websites, in the academic catalog, and many marketing publications. In addition, each College has an articulated mission that aligns with and complements the overall University mission. These College missions are published in the University Catalog. All of these documents support the University’s mission and vision and are publicly available to all constituents. In addition, the Mission and Vision Statements are printed and prominently displayed in large formats in the Board of Trustees’ meeting rooms. The two statements are also permanently featured in large formats in the Student Center.

1.B.2. All of the University’s mission documents are current and were approved within the last two years. The Mission and the five Pillars of the Strategic Plan clearly explain the University's emphasis on instruction, scholarship, service, and the Christian (Brethren) heritage. The strategic plan, Ashland Rising 2020, links the five Pillars for Ashland University through 2020 to institutional emphases regarding the mission:

Academic Excellence: Be a nationally recognized academic institution with a focus on exemplary teaching practices and extraordinary faculty-student engagement.

Our Unique Christian Identity: Refine Ashland University’s identity as a unique university with a Christian heritage that guides University practice.

Exemplary Fiscal Stewardship: Optimize the University’s potential through greater efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity by supporting strategic fiscal growth and development.

Supportive Campus Environment: Provide a healthy, safe and supportive campus environment.

Enhanced Community Engagement: Be an active contributor to the University’s local and regional community.

The “Pillars of Distinction” figuratively rest on the mission and values of the institution, and serve as the support mechanism enabling the institution to achieve its vision. With the Pillars of Distinction established, broad-based objectives were developed under each pillar to fulfill the intent of the strategic plan.

1.B.3. The University mission statement and the attendant Ashland Rising 2020 Strategic Plan identify the institution as “a comprehensive, private university.” The recitation of five, foundational Core Values in the preamble to Ashland Rising 2020 further describes the key characteristics, reach, and community to which the mission refers:

• Accent on the Individual

Pledges the best individual and collective efforts to challenge and encourage each member of the university within a supportive community.

• Spirituality and Faith

Affirms Christian values as a core element of the University's institutional identity, emphasizing faith in God, moral integrity and respect for the diversity of values and faith of each person in a community of learning.

• Character Development
Promotes integrity, self-discipline, responsibility, compassion, leadership, service and good citizenship.

- **Academic Freedom**

Supports free, open and critical inquiry for both students and faculty necessary for intellectual and professional development.

- **Excellence in Teaching**

Emphasizes teaching supported by research and scholarship as the University's central responsibility.

The Mission Statement and Core Values Statements articulate Ashland University’s emphasis on the importance of each individual in the community of faculty, staff, students, and administrators. The phrase “Accent on the Individual” which has been the Ashland University motto for many years was reaffirmed and highlighted throughout the Institutional Comprehensive Review and subsequent strategic planning process as a valid inspirational characterization of the nature of the campus environment. The University’s primary emphasis is concern for the dignity and value of each individual student that extends beyond the assurance of a quality education in the classroom and laboratory to include a commitment to provide a stimulating and supportive environment in every respect.

**Sources**

- AS Ashland University's Tutoring Programs 2018
- ASSESS CAS Annual Assessment Report, 2008-09
- BOT meeting minutes January 2016
- CORE Curriculum _ Administration _ Ashland University
- IE Fall Enrollment Summary 2015-2017
- IE Percent of First Gen and Pell Students 2017
- PRES AU_Rising_booklet Revised
- PRES AU's Comprehensive Review Home
- PRES Campus Announcements - Institutional Budget Committee Formed IBC 2018
- PRES Comprehensive Review Materials 12.17.14
- PRES Constitution APPROVED 05.08.15
- PRES Constitution APPROVED 05.08.15 (page number 1)
- REGIS Catalog 2017-18
- REGIS Catalog 2017-18 (page number 1)
- REGIS Catalog 2017-18 (page number 6)
1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

1. The institution’s actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution’s educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1.D.1. Since its founding in 1878, Ashland University has embraced its role to serve the good of the public. The Mission Statement includes shaping graduates who “work, serve and lead with integrity in their local, national, and global communities.” Ashland University takes pride in our core value of "character development," which "promotes integrity, self-discipline, responsibility, compassion, leadership, service and good citizenship." We work to shape the lives of change agents who will enhance the communities they reach following graduation. During the 2013-2017 period of self-assessment that included the University’s Comprehensive Review, Mission Statement revision, and creation of the Ashland Rising 2020 strategic plan, a renewed emphasis on the University’s commitment to local, regional, and national communities emerged, culminating in the Strategic Plan’s Fifth Pillar of Distinction: Enhanced Community Engagement. Following the Board of Trustees’ adoption of the plan, the University’s president in early 2016 invited the greater Ashland community to join the University in developing a Community Task Force. This meeting succeeded in bringing several dozen community and agency leaders together with the University faculty, staff, administrators and students, to establish eight task force subcommittees focusing on areas as diverse as the hospitality industry and education to faith-based non-profits. A series of meetings between the University faculty, staff, and Ashland area community representatives followed and generated an increase in community engagement activities. The full range of the University’s community engagement activities is described under Criterion 3.E.2.

1.D.2. Ashland University does not have investors or a parent organization. The Constitution, Rules and Regulations of the Corporation of Ashland University states in Article 1: Section 1.1; “The object of Ashland University shall be to establish and maintain a university for promotion of education, morality, Christian religion, the fine arts and the professions, and to afford its patrons the advantage of an education in all departments of learning and knowledge. The training of suitable persons for the ministry of the gospel shall always be sacredly regarded as one of the main objectives of this corporation.” The initial expectation is strong today as demonstrated by the first component of the Ashland University Mission Statement: “a private university that provides a transformative learning experience” and in the first Pillar of the strategic plan focuses on academic excellence.

1.D.3. Ashland University plays a critical leadership role in bringing cultural events, sports events, and activities to the Ashland area and the North Central Ohio region. Throughout the year, the institution offers a range of concerts, art exhibits, lectures, theater, and activities, open to students
and the general public. In addition, the Ashland Symphony is housed on our campus, and students and faculty are often participants. Frequently, students play an active role in performances or exhibits. A recent sample from the Calendar of University Events illustrates the extent of the institution’s offerings to students and the broader community.

Engagement with external constituents is not limited to academic departments and colleges. The University actively strives to collaborate with external constituents and respond to the needs of the local community. The Community Engagement Pillar as identified in the University’s strategic plan and the goal of being an active contributor to the University’s local and regional community is important to the institution. The full range of the University’s community engagement activities is described under Criterion 3.E.2.

**Sources**

- MARK Campus Announcements Activity Open to the Community 2018
- PRES Community Engagement Launch
- PRES Community Task Force Meeting Minutes 2016
- PRES Constitution APPROVED 05.08.15
1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Argument

1.C.1. Ashland University values its role in a multicultural environment by emphasizing accent on the individual and respect for the diversity of its employees, students, and communities served.

As stated in 1.A.2., attracting a diverse student, faculty and staff population has been a challenge but remains a priority. Among our successes, the University has hired its first Hispanic president, first African American seminary president, first black seminary dean, first African American female vice president, and first Asian American provost. In its diversity efforts, the University strives to be a community respectful of others; a community that embraces difference and develops servants and leaders in a global community.

Ashland University strives to deliver a distinctive education and a dynamic developmental experience to all students. The University serves students with a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds; with numerous students being first generation college students and/or Pell eligible. The University's student population is also academically diverse. The University strives to help these students through various support programs, services, and initiatives such as an early alert system to identify and intervene quickly to students who are struggling, requiring all students to take a dedicated success course, tutoring services, as well as a pathways program available through the Office of Diversity. For students who are academically strong, the University provides an honors program that offers cross-disciplinary experiences and participation in a community of students devoted to discussion and dialog.

The Core curriculum also has, as one of its goals, to contribute to meeting the Core and institutional outcomes centered on multicultural and global awareness as discussed in 1.C.2.

1.C.2. Ashland University affirms the value and dignity of all human beings and strives to provide opportunities for students, faculty, administrators, and staff to relate to a diverse world. The University’s mission focuses on shaping graduates who “work, serve and lead with integrity in their local, national, and global communities.” Because the University has not yet attained an immersive, multicultural campus experience for all students, extra emphasis is placed on making available supplementary opportunities for students to interrelate with peers, mentors, educational opportunities and career resources that offer diverse interaction and inclusion. Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) along with academic programs and co-curricular outcomes, support this commitment:
**Intellectual Development**: Students will analyze evidence, apply specialized knowledge, and think critically and creatively to solve problems.

**Ethical Development**: Students will apply principles of integrity and ethical decision-making to address real-world issues.

**Civic Engagement**: Students will apply knowledge, skills, and values in order to work, serve, and lead in their communities.

**Global and Intercultural Competence**: Students will exhibit competence for constructive engagement within global and intercultural contexts.

The Core Curriculum requires a three-credit Critical Cultural Inquiry experience. This requirement can be satisfied with a single three-credit modern language course or a three-credit Critical Cultural Inquiry (CCI) course, or one approved study-abroad or study-away program that involves a CCI narrative. These Core experiences focus on effective communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries, understanding the world from a perspective other than one's own, and interacting effectively within diverse societies and cultures. This area of the Core helps students to formulate answers to the question: What does it mean to understand a culture other than one's own? Details of co-curricular programs and activities that contribute to student multicultural awareness and experience are described in Criterion 3.E.1.

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**Sources**

- AS Ashland University's Tutoring Programs 2018
- AS early alert description 2018
- AS Freshmen Success Seminar description 2018
- AS Honors Program 2018
- CORE Core Curriculum requires Critical Cultural Inquiry 2018
- SA Pathways Program 2018
1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

Ashland University’s current Mission, Vision, and Core Values statements have evolved from previous mission, vision and values statements and reflect a recent period in the institution’s history where intense focus was placed upon determining who we wanted to be and where we wanted to go. Since adoption, these current mission, vision and value principles have guided the development of a strongly aligned strategic plan and are articulated on our website and invoked in speeches by our President. Our academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with our mission.

Sources

There are no sources.
2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

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

Argument

2.A. The University strives to operate with integrity in all of its functions; this is accomplished by advocating for responsibility and ethical behavior. Furthermore, the University's organizational structure is designed to operationally carry out practices through specification and delegation of responsibilities to assure ethical and responsible conduct.

Financial Functions: The University is committed to ensuring that the University will continue to have the physical, human and educational resources needed to fulfill its educational mission. Administrative oversight of financial processes is provided by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), the Audit and Compliance Committee of the Board of Trustees, and the Finance and Facilities committee. The full Board oversees the financial policies on campus, whereas the Finance and Administrative Division develops, updates, and administers compliance with the University’s financial policies and procedures. The annual audit and the oversight of the Board of Trustees and particularly the Audit and Compliance and the Finance and Facilities Committees, serve to aid in the University’s adherence to best practice with financial stewardship.

The University engages an independent CPA firm at the end of each fiscal year to audit its annual financial statements to review the application of generally accepted accounting principles. An example of how the University has worked to achieve a higher level of financial integrity is the development and implementation in 2015-2016 of a matrix designed to provide administrative oversight to the University’s audit findings. The matrix ensures that the University’s financial practices are aligned with the highest standards in this area.

Academic Functions: The Provost’s office is responsible for oversight of established academic activities including academic policies and procedures contained in handbooks. Oversight of academic policies and procedures for academic programs takes place within the faculty governance structure. The collaborative processes between these units facilitate the development of new policies and programs to advance undergraduate and graduate education across all modalities offered.

The University’s commitment to integrity in its academic endeavors is conveyed to students and faculty in publications such as the course catalogs (undergraduate/graduate and seminary); student
handbook; and Rules and Regulations (faculty handbook). Each publication clearly outlines a set of policies and practices which explain how academic decisions are made on a departmental and administrative level; how to seek assistance with questions or concerns regarding academic issues; and resources or services that are available to members of the university. Students are informed of these publications at the beginning of their matriculation process during events such as student orientation and academic advising. Faculty are informed of these publications during Faculty College and Human Resources events.

The University Academic Integrity Policy describes the University’s expectations for academic integrity and outlines the process for addressing academic dishonesty.

Ashland Theological Seminary has an Academic Integrity Statement found in the Student Handbook 2015-2016 (p. 42). Academic violations and procedures are listed in the ATS Student Handbook (p. 42) and ATS Catalog (p. 28), and the ATS academic integrity statement is listed on all syllabi. ATS has a policy for the dismissal of students in the 2017-2018 Catalog (p. 31).

**Personnel Functions:** Key policies and procedures that reflect the University’s commitment to integrity include: Confidentiality, Whistleblower Policy for Suspected Ethical/Legal Violations, Causes for Discipline or Dismissal, Title IX Sexual Harassment, and the Acceptable Use Policy. The University communicates its policies and practices regarding personnel matters to new and current employees via presentations, print and communication sources. For example, all new hires to the organization are required to submit to state and federal background checks. Items of concern are addressed with candidates, and when appropriate, can result in withdrawing a contingent offer of employment.

The administrative employee handbook and the hourly employee handbook are the key documents that undergird a program to ensure that employees understand and commit to integral employment policies and procedures. Each new hire validates that they have reviewed and commit to the contents of the handbooks. For current employees, personnel policies are communicated at town hall, departmental or administrative unit meetings, individual appointments, and on the staff and faculty portal. Finally, the Human Resources Department regularly reviews and revises the handbooks, completing its most recent comprehensive review in 2016.

The University adheres to numerous federal and other laws aimed at protecting the well-being and personal information of students, faculty, and staff. Policies that reflect this commitment include the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Sexual Misconduct and Prevention Policy. Presentations on FERPA are presented to students, staff, faculty and external stakeholders such as parents throughout the year by the Human Resources Office and Center for Academic Support. As referenced on the Title IX website, the Title IX Committee, which is co-chaired by the Vice-President for Student Affairs and Director of Human Resources and Legal Affairs, is comprised of 12 members who represent areas such as student affairs, academic affairs, and athletics. The objectives of the Title IX committee are to provide training to members of the campus community, review and revise, if necessary, the Sexual Misconduct and Prevention Policy on an annual basis, and measure the effectiveness of programming via climate surveys. Members of the Title IX Committee present throughout the year at events such as orientation, faculty meetings, and freshman seminar classes and participate in ongoing training programs sponsored by organizations such as Ohio Department of Higher Education and the Association of the Title IX Administrators (ATIXA).

**Auxiliary Functions:** Auxiliary Services is a centralized campus support unit housed within the Division of Operations and Planning that achieves its mission of “enhancing the quality of campus
life through goods and services” via the following administrative units and services: campus bookstores, catering and conferences, copyright management, dining services, eagle card office, laundry services, printing, fleet management, and trademark and licensing.

The Director of Auxiliary Services provides administrative oversight and leadership to this area. Given the potential impact of this area on the educational and professional experiences of members of the campus community, a thorough review of policies is conducted on an annual basis. Working closely with colleagues, the director coordinates the review process and any changes or amendments to programs and services offered by Auxiliary Services is communicated to students, staff, faculty, and other stakeholders via print and electronic sources, as well as presentations. The University ensures its policies and practices are fair and ethical by adhering to the institutional policies and state and federal laws that govern these offices and services.

As described above, the University strives to establish and follow policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The University strives to uphold integrity and ethics in its functioning in efforts to provide high-quality programs and services to our students. In terms of the integrity of the Board of Trustees, Board Policy Manual outlines the code of ethics and expectations of the Board of Trustees (pp. 15 - 19). Trustees have a fiduciary responsibility to the University and all decisions are based on the institution's best interests. All Trustees and executive staff are expected to abide by the Conflict of Interest Policy and the Code of Ethics.

Sources

- ATS Academic Catalog 2017-2018
- ATS Academic Catalog 2017-2018 (page number 28)
- ATS Academic Catalog 2017-2018 (page number 31)
- AUXS Annual Reports 2015-2016
- BOT Board Policy Manual Revised May 2017
- BOT Board Policy Manual Revised May 2017 (page number 13)
- BOT Board Policy Manual Revised May 2017 (page number 15)
- FS Faculty Rules & Regulations 2017-18
- FS Faculty Rules & Regulations 2017-18 (page number 11)
- HR Administrative Employee Handbook UPDATED 2.01.17
- HR Hourly Employee Handbook UPDATED 2.01.17
- HR Sexual Harassment
- HR Technology Use Policy
- HR Whistleblower Policy
- IT Acceptable Use Policy 2018
- PRES Executive Leadership Team 2018
- PROV FERPA 2015
- REGIS Catalog 2017-18
- SA Student Handbook 2017-2018
- SA Student Handbook 2017-2018 (page number 35)
- SA Student Handbook 2017-2018 (page number 42)
- SA Climate Survey Results 2016
- SA Title IX_Sexual Misconduct _ Student Affairs _ Ashland University
2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

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

Argument

2.B. Ashland University communicates clearly and completely to students and to the public through a variety of documents in print and on the web regarding the University’s academic programs; enrollment and program requirements; descriptions of faculty and staff; tuition, fees and other charges; and accreditations. Documents include the Course Catalog, the Student Handbook, the University website, and Accent Magazine (alumni magazine). The University maintains robust marketing communication, both in print and digitally to prospective and current students.

Ashland University’s HLC accreditation is presented publicly on the Accreditation page accessible on the University’s website and in the current 2017-2018 academic catalog.

Ashland University’s Consumer Information page on the website contains required information that is to be disclosed to the public under the Higher Education Act of 1965 and updated in 2009. This webpage follows the three mouse click approach so that the information can be found using a minimum amount of searching. The consumer information page also houses data on institutional student outcomes including retention and graduation rates.

Academic Programs & Accreditations: Academic programs and Accreditations can be found in the current 2017-2018 academic catalog and on the University’s website. Specific requirements are presented on the University website, catalog(s), admission marketing materials, and social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram specifically). Other information that is readily available in the catalogs includes Ashland University Rights; Individual Rights; FERPA; Student Right to Know Act; the University’s Mission, Identity, Core Values, and Vision statements; Admission Procedures; Finance and Administration (tuition and fees); Financial Aid; Academic Affairs (programs of study, degrees offered, core requirement, credit and grade policies, probation and dismissal, residency requirements); Ashland Theological Seminary; Founders School; Academic Honors Program; and all individual degree requirements.

Faculty and Staff: Listings of Ashland University faculty and staff can be found in the University Catalog (pp. 308 - 318).

Costs to Students: Tuition and fees can be found on the University website. Current and prospective students can also calculate their cost of attendance using the University’s Net Price Calculator. Students can check their financial obligations and view their fees/bill by logging into WebAdvisor. A section of the website entitled Billing Information explains how to access billing statements and
the monthly email notifications of balances due. Also listed is contact information for Student Accounts so students or other stakeholders can call, email, or visit the office with any questions they may have.

Other student-oriented topics are displayed on the website including, Financial Aid Code of Conduct, Outside Scholarship Policy, Terms of Payment and Withdrawal & Refund Policy. Payment options are also explained and the Statement of Financial Responsibility is disclosed. The Statement of Financial Responsibility details the University’s procedures for billing and collecting education costs.

**Alumni Communication:** Accent Magazine is published twice a year (spring and fall) and mailed to approximately 30,000 alumni and friends of the institution. Accent Magazine is available in print and digitally via email and on the website. The magazine covers stories of activities, programs, and events which impact the University and are of interest to AU’s constituents.

*** The text below has been merged from Core Component 3.E ***

Ashland University supports an enriched educational environment through a variety of programs that are available to all students. Each college has a story to tell along these lines, of which the following are but a few examples.

The College of Arts and Sciences has supported a variety of intellectual figures coming to campus, including the ‘Against Indifference Symposium’, an annual event which brings speakers to campus based on an organized theme. The MFA program brings writers and poets for campus readings; the Environmental Lecture Series has brought scientists presenting their recent research for the past 26 years, and visiting artists are consistently supported and their work presented in plays, concerts, and exhibitions. The CAS also houses an award-winning radio station, a television station, and campus newspaper "The Collegian". Beginning Fall 2017, in addition to 88.9-FM and WRDLFM.com, the station can be heard on mobile devices and tablets. The Collegian is also available fully online. The Ashbrook Center, an independent center at Ashland University, restores and strengthens the capacities of the American people for constitutional self-government. The Ashbrook Center contributes to the education experience of Ashland University students by providing opportunities such as the Major Issues Lecture Series, Ashbrook Colloquia, Constitution Day Lecture, Statesmanship Theses required of all Ashbrook Scholar graduates, Taylor Excellence in Writing Competition, Henry Clay Speech Competition, and internship assistance program.
The College of Business and Economics has hundreds of students actively engaged with renowned speakers of national and international reputation through the Ford Lecture Series every fall. MBA and undergraduate Delta Mu Delta inductees have the opportunity to interact with the speakers, and multiple classes attend an afternoon session where students are able to ask questions.

3.E.1. Ashland University offers students hundreds of programs a year, providing work for 200+ student employees, and supporting 100+ student organizations, providing opportunities for students to engage in educational experiences that lead to a higher degree of awareness of their roles and responsibilities in an interdependent and global community.

The mission of the Division of Student Affairs is to “promote the academic purpose of the University while enhancing student learning outside of the classroom. Through collaboration with faculty, staff and students, we strive to build a strong community of respect and affirm the value of each individual.” Units within the Division of Student Affairs include the following administrative offices: Counseling, Health Center, Career Services, Christian Ministry, Recreation Services, Campus Wellness, Orientation, Greek Life, Activities/Student Organizations, Community Service, Institutional Diversity, Student Conduct, Residence Life, Mail Center, and Safety Services. Using the divisional mission as a guide, the aforementioned offices develop and implement weekly programs for students that examine issues such as cultural awareness, spiritual formation, career development, and health and wellness.

Student Affairs have articulated student learning outcomes for their functional areas. In the summer of 2017, directors of the functional areas in Student Affairs attended two workshops presented by the Director of Assessment and Accreditation on the development and implementation of student learning outcomes. Using the institutional learning outcomes and material covered in these workshops as a guide, each area produced a list of student outcomes for their respective office. Furthermore, each director identified specific programs that would be assessed during the academic year. These assessment/programmatic changes, coupled with extant assessment initiatives such as annual or bi-annual surveys, represent the evolving assessment efforts of the division of student affairs.

The Ashland University Athletic Department with its twenty intercollegiate athletic programs supports the mission of the University and its Institutional Student Learning Outcomes.

The International Student Services Office contributes to the University mission by offering many programs such as a monthly World Cafe where an international student profiles his/her home country. They also coordinate international programming that is open to the Ashland community, including potlucks, conversation groups and the Friendship Family Program that connects an international student with a local family for regular activities during the academic year.

3.E.2. Ashland University has a lengthy menu of activities demonstrating its claim of being guided by its Christian heritage and contributing to students’ educational experience by providing a transformative learning experience and shaping graduates who work, serve and lead with integrity.

On campus, many students attend programming supported by the Office of Christian Ministry and also the Ashland Theological Seminary. The Office of Christian Ministry provides a wealth of opportunities for students to grow their faith while connecting with others in worship, reflection on Scripture, prayer and service/mission experiences. Programs supported by the Office of Christian Ministry include The Well, Catholic Campus Ministry, Community Chapel, and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. The Office also organizes and supports the Isaiah Project Mission trips to places
such as Peru, South Africa, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Colorado, Kentucky, and California. Students participate in yearly trips such as a Spring Break trip for Habitat for Humanity. The Seminary enriches the educational experiences of its counseling students through the Smetzer Counseling Center which was established in 2002. Students pursuing degrees in Clinical Mental Health Counseling may also be selected to provide clinical services as Counselor Trainees under the supervision of designated supervisors, thus fulfilling practicum requirements.

The University hosts weekly chapel services on both its main campus and Seminary which are open to the community. Students are involved in chapel services through planning, leading services, providing music and preaching, thus helping to prepare them for ministerial leadership. Local pastors and other guest speakers are invited to participate. Students are encouraged to attend. Pastors from local churches also attend weekly chapel as a means for their own spiritual refreshment. The Seminary also hosts an annual Christmas Chapel which features vocal and instrumental soloists from the community, international students, and faculty, staff and students from the Seminary.

As described in Criterion 3.B.5, the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity annual Symposium, and Student Research Grants contribute to transformative learning experiences. Many of the University’s faculty work with students to prepare them for these events and often attend with them in support of their endeavors.

The Burton Morgan Center for Entrepreneurial Studies in the College of Business and Economics has a number of opportunities for contributing to the educational experience, including:

- Working with businesses through hosting the Small Business Development Center (US Department of Commerce and Development Services Agency, State of Ohio)
- Working with businesses through Eagle Consulting
- Participating in seminars and programs on entrepreneurship
- Participating in business theme-based competitions
- Meeting with and interacting with business leaders

The College of Business and Economics, provost-supported Connection Living Learning Community has partnered with KIVA, an international nonprofit organization, to engage in microlending programs in disadvantaged communities. To date, they have given 67 loans to 31 countries around the world. The Eagle Investment Group provides hands-on experience of real money management.

Enactus is an international organization that connects student, academic, and business leaders through entrepreneurial-based projects. The Ashland University Enactus student group has been working with the small Ohio business, Local Roots, in helping them with their marketing campaign and completing a solid business plan. This is an ongoing Enactus project. Enactus continues to work with Safe Haven Women's Center. They offer classes in basic business skills, personal self-defense, computer literacy, and nutrition and healthy eating information. During the spring 2017 semester, Enactus took a group from Safe Haven Rape Crisis/Domestic Violence Shelter on a "shopping spree" to buy each woman a business-appropriate outfit to wear to an etiquette lunch. This activity is supported by funding Enactus received from a Walmart grant. This is the third year Ashland has worked with them. In 2016, the Enactus team took first place at the Enactus Regional Competition and competed at Nationals in St. Louis.

Further evidence for community engagement and economic development can be found within several courses in the College of Business and Economics that work directly with local business and nonprofit organizations. For instance:
The **Principles of Marketing class** works with local business to make marketing plans. In 2016-2017, for example, they designed plans for Annette's Victorian Garden, Mitchell's Orchard, Bohland Jewelers, Downtown Perk, and Antiques on Main - all local small businesses in the community. Each team presents a formal plan for each business owner at the end of the semester.

The **Special Topics in Marketing class** works on various community projects. One team worked to promote the Ashland University Day of Giving fundraising campaign. Another team worked to help increase awareness of and participation in a small local business, Rise Yoga Studio. A third team worked with Vantrition to help the owner expand his market share and sales in a variety of sports venues.

During the **Introduction to Business Management class**, students hear from at least three industry speakers - one from J.M. Smucker Company to talk about careers in Business Analytics; the head of Ashland County Mental Health Services to talk about Leadership and the nonprofit sector; and a third speaker to talk about mission/vision and team building.

The **Ashland Center for Nonviolence** is dedicated to raising awareness, thinking and acting creatively and encouraging open discussion on issues of peace and social well-being. The Center provides programming for the students and the community, including hosting an international conference each spring.

Three consecutive **NetVUE career exploration grants** have been received from the Council of Independent Colleges to assist students through self-awareness and self-development to gain a better understanding of their life calling. In that effort, life calling elective courses were offered through the College of Business and Economics for all majors. The life calling initiative has recently expanded with a $230,000 donor contribution.

The University’s music department has produced a student-led **Madrigal Feaste**, a longstanding annual tradition between the university and the community for the last 42 years. The Feaste is a medieval dinner theatre with 16th-century music, authentically made costumes, and improvisational theatre which is held around the holidays involving student costume supervisors, instrumentalists, vocalists, actors, and lighting technicians. This activity allows students opportunities to work and lead in the local community.

Ashland University has placed a major emphasis on being a strategic community partner. One way this has been achieved is by partnering with United Way of Ashland County as a Pacesetter and in 2016 received the Dr. Richard N. Aft **LIVE UNITED Award**. Not only do faculty, staff, and students contribute financially but also through assistance with several United Way Community Impact Initiatives such as “Crunch Out Obesity” and “Talk, Read and Play.”

In the College of Education, teacher candidates develop an understanding of the teaching profession and their professional responsibilities through their coursework, field experiences, and the many opportunities provided through student membership in professional organizations. The **Ashland University Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)** student organization supports the mission of the international CEC professional organization which is dedicated to improving the educational success of individuals with disabilities and/or gifts and talents.

Finally, the University has established **Corporate Connections** to align Ashland University with local, regional, and national corporations based upon “mission fit” and shared values. Corporations may ensure the quality of future employees and provide corporate executives and employees to mentor students in their career-related fields. The University has connected with corporations across the
state, the country, and the globe to help them improve performance, enhance efficiencies, locate new
talent, and ensure the quality of their future talent pipeline. By working with corporations that share
the University’s values, the University creates economic value in a way that also creates significance
for society by addressing its needs and challenges.

Sources

- CAS Arts Guide 2017-18
- CAS Ashbrook Center 2018
- CAS Ashland Center for Nonviolence 2017-18 Events
- CAS Center for Nonviolence 2017-18 Events
- CAS EVS Lecture Series 2017
- CAS Journalism and Digital Media Student Media 2017
- CAS MFA Visiting Writers.Editors 2013-2017
- CAS News Release_Madrigal Feaste 2017
- CAS Symposium Against Indifference Brochure 2017-18
- CAS URCA Booklet 2018
- CI Consumer Information web 2018
- COBE Connection LLC 2017
- COBE Burton Morgan Center 2017
- COBE Delta Mu Delta
- COBE Eagle Consulting
- COBE Eagle Investment Group_EIG Activities
- COBE Enactus 2017
- COBE Ford Lecture Booklet 2017
- COBE Living & Learning Communities (LLC) 2018
- COBE MKT 233 Principles of Marketing syllabi 2017
- COBE MKT 315 Retail Merchandising syllabi 2017
- COBE MKT 451 Special Topics 2017
- COBE Morgan Center Seminars & Programs 2017
- COBE Small Business Development Center 2017
- COBE Walmart Grant 2014-17
- COE Student Organizations 2017
• FA Net Price Calculator 2018
• FA Student WEB Advisor site 2018
• IA Accreditations 2018
• MARK Publications Accent Magazine 2018
• PRES Corporate Connections 2017
• PRES LIVE UNITED AWARD letter 2016
• PRES NetVUE VERG Award Letter 2016
• PROV Ashbrook Center 2018
• PROV International Student Services FA17
• PROV Major Issues Lecture Series.Ashbrook Center 2018
• PROV Supported Student Research Grants 15-16
• PROV The Ashland University FriendshipFamily ProgramFA17
• PROV Volunteer Opportunities with AU International Students SP17
• REGIS Catalog 2017-18
• REGIS Catalog 2017-18 (page number 2)
• REGIS Catalog 2017-18 (page number 3)
• REGIS Catalog 2017-18 (page number 6)
• REGIS Catalog 2017-18 (page number 308)
• SA Catholic Campus Ministry 2017
• SA Community Chapel 2018
• SA Division of Student Affairs SLOs 2017
• SA Fellowship of Christian Athletes 2017
• SA Habitat for Humanity 2017
• SA Isaiah Project Trips 2018
• SA Office of Christian Ministry 2018
• SA Student Affairs Programming Fall 2017
• SA The Well 2018
• SEM 2016-2017 Seminary Academic Catalog
• SEM 2016-2017 Seminary Academic Catalog (page number 36)
• SEM 2016-2017 Seminary Academic Catalog (page number 37)
• SEM Christmas Chapel 2016
• SEM Smetzer Counselor Trainee Applications 2017
2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Argument

2.C. All Ashland University Board of Trustees Board policies and practices are outlined in the Policy Manual. The current board is made up of 33 members (16 At-Large and 17 church), with a service history of 1 to 24 years and an average of 9 years of service. The Board meets three times annually in the fall, winter, and spring. The Board Policy Manual is reviewed at each of these meetings and revised, if necessary following each meeting. The fall meeting includes the annual review of the President and the organization for the past year. The Board committees each review the "key performance indicators" linked to the strategic plan, and at least one board development activity is included in each meeting. The committees only include "report-out" if there are action items, which gives the Board far more time to consider strategic topics at every meeting.

2.C.1. The Ashland University Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing and maintaining the institution’s integrity, providing proper fiduciary oversight, providing proper governance and delegating the operational and educational responsibilities to the administration and faculty. Their work is guided by the Board Policy Manual, Constitution, and Bylaws. During the past three years, beginning in late 2014, the Board has been deeply involved with the transition of leadership at the University. This included the employment of an interim and then permanent president. The interim president was tasked with the development and completion of a comprehensive academic review. The new president leads the development and implementation of a new mission, vision and strategic plan which was adopted by the Board on January 29, 2016. All University operations are now being aligned with specific Pillars and goals in this strategic plan, with key performance indicators for each area.

Evidence that the board focuses on priorities to preserve and enhance the institution include:

- The BOT approved a new contract for the President in October 2017.
- The BOT assisted in the completion of a new strategic plan.
- The BOT enlisted the services of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) to work on board development for one year. ACTA had BOT experts review our board materials, mission, vision, and strategic plan, and give us recommendations for improvement. They
included a refinement of our key performance indicators, improvement of the agenda and goals for each board meeting, improved evaluation procedures for the president, and recommendations to reduce the overall size of the board. All of these improvements have been or are being implemented.

- The Board approved the acquisition of a former Buffalo Wild Wings property, as well as a number of homes in strategic locations near the University. The University purchased these properties because of their strategic location and reflect the forward-thinking nature of the trustees as they consider the Master Plan for the University.
- The Board of Trustees seeks to continually improve as a governing body. As a result, the Board added a Committee on Trusteeship that reviews and recommends policies, monitors compliance, and makes recommendations for any changes in the Board Policy Manual, Constitution, and By-Laws. The individual board committees review the policy manual at each meeting as a standing agenda item. The Committee on Trusteeship recently created a "heat map" that identified the current strengths of the board, and also identified some areas of weakness where they should be more intentional regarding recruitment. In particular, the Board realized that they had a very strong board in regards to legal issues, but did not have enough board members with experience in higher education. The Board also includes at least one board development activity at each meeting. For example, at a recent meeting, the board had Dr. Henry Smith, a long-time HLC peer reviewer, come and speak to them about the role of the BOT during an HLC visit and reaccreditation.
- The Board recently enacted a reduction in the number of board members. In their commitment to continuous improvement, and because there was wide consensus regarding the fact that smaller boards are generally more effective and efficient, a decision was made to reduce the size of the board accordingly, but more importantly to ensure that the board has the right mix of members to reach the vision of the institution.

2.C.2. The Board utilizes a standing committee process, as outlined in the Board Policy Manual (pp. 10 - 15), to ensure oversight and to get input from the various constituencies in each area of the University. All Board and Committee minutes are posted on the trustees' portal, so every trustee can view the minutes from their own Committee as well as those for all other Committees. During committee meetings, the Board may hear reports directly from faculty, staff, administration and student representatives. The following standing committees and subcommittees help to ensure trustee oversight of University operations:

- Executive Committee
- Committee on Trusteeship
- Committee on Academic Affairs, Student Life, Institutional Advancement, Enrollment Management and Marketing
- Finance and Facilities
- Investment Committee
- Audit and Compliance Committee
- Retirement Plan Subcommittee of the Audit and Compliance Committee
- Ashland Theological Seminary Committee
- Presidential Assessment Committee- Subcommittee of Committee on Trusteeship

As representatives of the University, Trustee Members are committed to transparency and engage in active dialogue at the board level prior to actions being taken. Trustees regularly interact with employees, alumni, donors, elected officials and other professional organizations.
2.C.3. Section 2 of the Board Policy Manual outlines the code of ethics and expectations for Trustees (pp. 8-19). Trustees have a fiduciary responsibility to the University and all decisions are based on the institution’s best interest. All Trustees and executive staff are expected to abide by the Conflict of Interest Policy and the Code of Ethics. In addition, Board Members sign an annual Conflict of Interest Statement (Tab E, p. 4), which discloses any business affiliations and relationships that could be a conflict of interest and pledges to refrain from participation in potential conflicting transactions.

2.C.4. Section 3 of the Board Policy Manual (pp. 19-23) describes areas of partnership and coordination between the Board, President and Administration: “The President shall be the chief executive and administrative officer of the University and shall have active management in business operations, educational activities and other affairs of the University. The Executive Leadership Team, under the President's direction, assists in these functions.”

The Committee on Academic Affairs of the Board is responsible for reviewing and recommending policies and monitoring compliance in academic areas. The Board delegates the oversight of the curriculum and academic matters to the faculty as it functions within the Faculty Governance structure.

The Board Policy Manual identifies the following administrative and faculty associations with the standing committees: Executive Committee - President and Vice President of Faculty Senate (non-voting) and the Ashland Theological Seminary Advisory Board - President of Seminary

Sources

- BOT Board Policy Manual Revised May 2017
- BOT Board Policy Manual Revised May 2017 (page number 8)
- BOT Board Policy Manual Revised May 2017 (page number 10)
- BOT Board Policy Manual Revised May 2017 (page number 19)
- BOT Board Policy Manual Revised May 2017 (page number 50)
- BOT Bylaws APPROVED 10.16.15
• BOT EXCERPT Executive Session Minutes August 21 2017
• BOT EXCERPT Executive Session Minutes October 13 2017
• BOT meeting minutes 2015-2017
• BOT Self-Assessment Survey Results (heat map) 2017
• PRES Constitution APPROVED 05.08.15
2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

2.D. Academic Freedom Statements: Ashland University’s mission includes the commitment to “work, serve, and lead with integrity.” The mission statement highlights the institution’s commitment to the learning experience as an opportunity to transform students as part of their academic journey. As a university with a Brethren Church heritage, the University embraces the values of moral integrity, respect, and service as part of its Strategic Plan, Ashland Rising. Two of the five core values established by the University, “Academic Freedom” and “Excellence in Teaching”, demonstrate the institution's commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth. The core value of academic freedom grants faculty the freedom to pursue knowledge in research and present it in the classroom. Academic freedom “supports free, open and critical inquiry for both students and faculty” exemplifying the commitment to freedom of expression.

Section 1.3.7 and Section 1.3.8 (p. 5) of the Board of Trustees policy manual addresses the academic freedom of faculty members and students. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in the classroom and in their research and publication. Faculty are advised against introducing controversial topics that are not relevant to a course’s subject matter. When speaking or writing as a citizen, faculty members are reminded that they still reflect on the University and must, therefore, be accurate, respectful, and exercise appropriate restraint. Student learning depends on opportunities to search for truth. Students are free to express their beliefs and views both inside and outside of the classroom, although exercising this freedom should not be disruptive to others’ learning and serving.

The University encourages student groups and departments to invite external speakers in recognition that a university is a forum for the exchange of ideas. Speakers are assured a respectful hearing regardless of their message. Recently and publicly, the University’s president and the student senate agreed to adopt the Chicago Principles of Open Discourse at academic institutions. Also, student marches and other demonstrations are permitted provided that they do not interfere with members of the University community proceeding with their normal activities.

Sources

- BOT Board Policy Manual Revised May 2017
- PRES AU Adopts Chicago Principles of Free Speech 2017
- PRES Mission Vision Core Values
2.E.1. Ashland University has a Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) whose mission is to protect the welfare, rights, and privacy of human research participants. These safeguards are based upon the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 45, Part 46 and the ethical principles articulated in the Belmont Report issued by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research in 1979. Information about the HSRB is available on the University website. The HSRB provides oversight of applicable research activities and guidance to faculty and student researchers through its procedures and guidelines.

All faculty, staff, and students who conduct research on our campus that uses human subjects are required to submit an HSRB proposal form to the HSRB chair and gain approval before beginning any research. A summary of the number of HSRB submissions from the last three years, a listing of Board members, and current status of Federalwide Assurance (FWA) for the Protection of Human Subjects demonstrates the University’s commitment to the protection of human subjects in research conducted at the University.

Ashland University also demonstrates integrity in the care and maintenance of animals used for research purposes. The University complies with all applicable provisions of the Animal Welfare Act and follows guidelines to assure the proper care and use of laboratory animals. The University received unconditional approval of its Animal Welfare Assurance in 2016.

2.E.2. Ashland University undergraduate and graduate students engage in research activities. Responsibility for providing information to students about the ethical use of information resources rests mainly with the faculty who interact with the students in the classroom, in the research lab or in conference settings as described in criterion 3.D.5. The Library also supports the faculty by providing guidance in the use of information resources. The University recognizes the importance of supporting students by providing them information and guidance on the ethical use of information technology and library sources. Acceptable use policies are posted on the consumer information page of the website.

2.E.3. The Student Code of Conduct is included in the Student Handbook, where it details policies regarding the University’s requirements for academic honesty and integrity. Procedures for
enforcing the policies are also detailed in the Student Code of Conduct. The policies listed in this handbook are enforced by the Vice President of Student Affairs. Course syllabi also include academic honesty and integrity language.

Sources

- PROV Animal Research Protections 2016
- PROV HSS Unconditional Assurance approved 2016
- SA Student Handbook 2017-2018
- SA Student Handbook 2017-2018 (page number 98)
2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

Numerous ethical policies and processes adopted by the Board of Trustees and practiced at Ashland University demonstrate a strong commitment to integrity with respect to academic programs and student-centered policies and practices. The Board accepts its responsibilities to act in the best interest of the University while delegating the management and academic functions of the University to the administration, faculty, and staff. Ashland University is committed to freedom of expression and to the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Sources

There are no sources.
3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Argument

3.A. Ashland University provides high quality education through its five Colleges, the Graduate School, the Seminary, and the Founders School of Continuing Education. The University is a multi-accredited institution that offers programs in face-to-face, hybrid and fully online formats. The University offers Associates, Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral programs. There are also a number of certificate and licensure programs which complement the University’s diverse program offerings.

3.A.1. A rigorous, well documented curriculum development process ensures that new courses and programs require the levels of performance appropriate to the degree awarded. Undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees review and approve all proposals for new, changed, and eliminated courses, majors, minors, and certificates. Both undergraduate and graduate curricular changes are submitted to the appropriate curriculum committee using a common template. When a new undergraduate program, major or minor is proposed the proposal must be approved by the department chair, college assessment coordinator, college curriculum committee, the college dean, the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee and then the Faculty Senate. When a new course is proposed as a core course, the proposal must additionally be approved by the Core Advisory Council prior to submission to the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee. If a new course is proposed as a core course outside of the primary discipline, the proposal must also receive approval from the primary discipline chair. The Seminary process currently differs from the undergraduate and graduate process as outlined in the following documents (Undergraduate UG Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee Handbook 2017-2018, Graduate Council Curriculum Committee (GCCC) Handbook, Seminary Faculty Handbook, p. 58, p. 70). These deliberative processes ensure that there is consistent and appropriate rigor in courses and programs.

Existing courses are reviewed and revised as needed to maintain up-to-date curricula as initiated by a variety of factors such as when new textbooks are produced, new subject matter is available, or results from student learning outcomes indicate revisions are needed. The currency of discipline-specific course content is evaluated through the promotion and tenure process that typically requires annual
or biennial submission and review of a faculty member’s curriculum development.

Through the administration's establishment of the College of Online and Adult Studies and identification of fully online programs, a course design process was developed (pp. 22-24) using industry best practices such as the Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education Programs (Online Learning) set by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC), Online Learning Consortium (OLC) membership resources, and Educational Advisory Board (EAB) membership resources. Through the creation of this college, a process was also established allowing for continual re-design of courses utilizing instructional design services of LearnAU.

Appropriate student-level performance and the currency of the University’s courses and programs regardless of the modality in which they are delivered, are reflected in both internal and external measures. Internally, the University has created departmental, college and campus-wide systems of assessment that encompass all academic programs and all faculty and administrative staff. Departmental Annual Assessment Reports from each college help support the rigor and relevance at both the program and course level. These annual assessment reports are intended to encourage and support the collection and use of student learning data for the purpose of program improvement. Assessment Coordinators and Curriculum Committee members encourage faculty to utilize Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives to examine the logical and sequential cognitive levels of all course learning activities/assignments in relation to the relevant program outcomes.

Academic Program Review, coordinated through the Provost’s Office, is an important monitor of general degree quality, currency, and appropriateness. There are two processes that make up Academic Program Review: Full Academic Review completed on a five-year rotation, and Annual Academic Review. Through the Annual Academic Review process discussed further in 4.A.1, all programs complete a brief annual report called the Dimensions Survey. The Full Academic Review requires submission of a self-study, master and course syllabi, among other items which are reviewed by an outside reviewer. Both of these processes help to verify that programs are current.

All graduate students must meet program-specific standards (pp. 52-54) that are appropriate to their fields. Oversight is maintained through the Graduate Council, a faculty body which is assigned authority to endorse policy recommendations on matters concerning graduate education. The Graduate Council also approves additions and changes to the graduate curriculum and advises the director of the Graduate School and the Provost.

Professional preparation programs at the University also draw on practitioner and stakeholder expertise to ensure that their programs are relevant and up-to-date. The College of Business and Economics uses three different advisory boards with the Business Advisory Council meeting at least two times each academic year to inform its various programs. Similarly, the Social Work program uses a team of advisors from a range of social work-related fields. In the College of Nursing and Health Sciences and the College of Education extensive clinical and intern partnerships in diverse settings provide ongoing updates to the currency of the curriculum and practical skills. Most recently, the College of Education conducted a stakeholders meeting to give regional educational leaders more explicit and direct input into how the University can improve the preparation of teachers.

Ashland has external measures for the currency and appropriate performance levels of its offerings as well. One measure is the extent to which individual programs are guided by their respective accrediting bodies. The University’s individually accredited colleges and programs include the College of Business and Economics; the College of Education; Ashland Theological Seminary; Department of Chemistry; Department of Music; Department of Nursing; ACCESS; Athletic
Training; and the Dietetics program.

3.A.2. Ashland University articulates and differentiates outcomes for different programs. Program-level outcomes are published in the catalog and course outcomes are listed on master and course syllabi. The learning goals are approved through established processes including those of the College Assessment Coordinators, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Graduate Curriculum Committee, Core Advisory Council, Graduate Council, and the Faculty Senate. In addition to course SLOs, Core Outcomes are clearly articulated on all core course syllabi. In addition to its various specialized external accreditations the University participates in nearly 70 discipline-specific national and international organizations that promote high professional standards and/or student excellence. These program-related external advisory groups, along with the University’s curriculum processes, assessment processes, and periodic campus-wide program reviews for quality and efficiency, ensure an ongoing, multi-dimensional check on program quality.

Course syllabi list SLOs which differ based on course level. For example, if a course is populated by both undergraduate and graduate students, differing SLOs and assignments are articulated on the syllabus. Syllabi from courses within the same program but with differing course levels have outcomes that indicate the different level of rigor for the courses. Faculty utilize both traditional and new creative methods of instruction to facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes for students at various degree levels, while maintaining degree-appropriate rigor for assignments, testing and grade requirements. The use of Bloom’s taxonomy informs decisions about the desired level of learning and rigor and the continual refinement of course content.

3.A.3. Regardless of where an Ashland University program is offered or in what format (online, hybrid or face-to-face), most SLOs are consistent and those few that are not have been identified and will be updated following the implementation of a consistent review plan. The Curriculum Committee established a standard format for master syllabi for all courses taught at the University that includes student learning outcomes. Curriculum has been developed according to the same policies and processes for all programs. Efficacy and high quality are regularly assessed through a variety of means, from direct assessment measures to end-of-course student evaluations. To provide the best feedback, chairpersons may select from among five forms that are tied to differing class types (lecture, lab, clinical, studio), but each course evaluation utilizes the same criteria regardless of location or delivery modality. All programs regardless of delivery mode fulfill the same quality requirements for annual assessment reporting by submitting annual assessment reports for review to the Director of Assessment and Accreditation.

An example of recent evidence of this consistency in program quality is born-out in internal statistical analysis in the Schar College of Education (COE) completed between 2014-2016. To assess the quality and learning goals across the three Ashland University locations with similar teacher education programs, the College compared the education pedagogy teacher licensure tests scores between the three locations. All three centers have both undergraduate and post-baccalaureate licensure programs, a somewhat diverse demographic, and both rural and metropolitan populations. COE found no significant difference in pass rates among the three centers or among program levels. These findings suggest that the three centers have similar quality and learning goal outcomes.
Sources

- ASSESS Assessment Report Form 2016-17
- ATS and IR merged Course Eval Forms
- CAS AU Social Work Handbook excerpt 2017
- CAS PSYC 210 Research & PSYC 310 Advanced Research SYLLABI
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The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution’s mission.

Argument

Ashland’s commitment to intellectual inquiry branches out from the core principles of the institution, synthesizing and expressing those principles across all facets of the educational programs, beginning with the Institutional Core Curriculum (pp. 42-46).

3.B.1. Evidence that Ashland’s undergraduate core curriculum is appropriate to its mission and educational offerings can be seen in how the core and its learning outcomes connect with Ashland’s Mission Statement and Strategic Plan, and in how the Core is aligned with Ashland’s Institutional SLOs.

The undergraduate core curriculum is aligned primarily with three of the ‘pillars’ of the most recent strategic plan, Ashland Rising 2020. The first is that of Pillar 1: academic excellence. Core instruction, guided by the University mission, seeks to establish transformative experiences for students. One example of such student transformation is how recent research conducted in introductory core science courses led to 2013 legislation amending the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (Ohio, 2008). Subsequent research showed decreases in lead levels as a result of the amended Act. Students in introductory courses got a front-row seat to the dangerous effects of lead in cheaply produced toys and utensils, and the power of research to change public practices in government.

In order for a course to be approved as a Core educational offering, the course proposal must demonstrate its alignment to the guiding questions for each area of the Core, meet the essential qualities of a Core course, have SLOs determined by the primary discipline and must be approved by the Core Advisory Committee and Faculty Senate.

The second aspect of the Strategic Plan expressed in the core is Pillar 2: Unique Christian Identity. While there are no creedal requirements of students or faculty at the University, the
institution’s commitment to a ‘third way’ (between religious and secular institutions) retains a 
religion requirement in the core. Students have a variety of courses by which to fulfill this 
requirement, including courses that emphasize Christian themes, and those that focus on other world 
religions besides Christianity.

The fourth pillar of the strategic plan; supportive campus environment and respect for diversity is 
also supported by the Core. While the campus enjoys a Christian religious climate, the core allows 
for an enormous diversity of opinions, positions, and diverse expressions of ideas. Different religious, 
moral, and political ideas are expressed and explored across hundreds of sections, and this 
intersection of ideas deeply informs the core, without constituting some static normative ideal. Add 
to this the core requirement for critical cultural inquiry (pp. 45-46), and the core again is a central 
expression of the identified institutional pillar goals. In addition, the content and overall curricular 
focus of our CCI courses reinforce our mission that references our graduates leading in their “global 
communities.”

Ashland's Institutional SLOs articulate four learning outcomes, those of intellectual development, 
ethical development, civic engagement, and global intercultural competence. The principles and 
outcomes of the Core Curriculum indicate three broad areas to which students are exposed.

Regardless of what major students pursue, all graduates share a Core Curriculum that prepares them 
with 'liberal arts' values including the ability to seek answers to fundamental questions, to free the 
mind from unreflective opinions, and to demonstrate competence in university-level writing, reading, 
listening, and reasoning skills. The University’s Core values and outcomes are operationalized for 
the purposes of general assessment and map on to ISLOs.

For a student to develop intellectually and engage civically, means to think critically with regard to 
their futures as human beings, as workers, and as citizens. With regard to ethical development, for a 
student to develop ethically is best understood in terms of demonstrating critical thinking with regard 
to their ethical lives. For a student to exemplify cultural competence is to be able to engage 
in critical cultural inquiry. Thus, the overriding SLO of Ashland's undergraduate core curriculum is 
best measured in terms of critical thinking skills, manifested in a variety of program-specific 
outcomes in the different areas of the core. These features of our overall University mission and its 
ISLOs are subsumed (pp. 9-10) under the mechanisms assessing critical thinking with regard to the 
core.

3.B.2. Ashland University has had an identifiable core curriculum for over 100 years. Its most recent 
version came when faculty voted in 1998-1999 to have the core not merely be a distribution 
requirement of arbitrarily assigned coursework, but a substantive expression of a unified liberal arts 
orientation. These principles and outcomes were made effective in 2000 and have been subsequently 
revised and expanded in a variety of ways. The Core Curriculum has been the subject of numerous 
committees and task forces to address a variety of campus initiatives. The Academic Task Force 
(2011-2012) called for a review of transfer equivalencies and online tracks for each area of the core. 
Most recently, the Core was reviewed as part of the overall prioritization process, with multiple 
groups, including the Senate Core Task Force reviewing the core and issuing recommendations, 
including reducing core hours, eliminating areas of the core, and designating primary departments 
for core oversight. These changes culminated in a Senate Core Vote in December 2015 that were 
fully implemented in August 2016.

The University’s core curriculum, consistent with the liberal arts, seeks to develop wisdom and 
transferable, lifelong skills. Through 10 subject areas and a variety of teaching formats, the core 
prepares students to think with reason, act with skill, and live with values. The intended purposes
and content of the University’s Core Curriculum are articulated on the University’s website. Undergraduate students are required to complete 45 credit hours of Core coursework from the following distribution list:

- Communication 3 credits
- Composition 6 credits
- Religion 3 credits
- Math/Logic 3 credits
- Critical Cultural Inquiry 3 credits
- Historical Reasoning 3 credits
- Humanities 6 credits
- Aesthetics 6 credits
- Social Science 6 credits
- Natural Science 6 credits

As stated above, each area of the Core is linked to guiding question(s) that inform the development of aligned curricula and methods of teaching and learning. As the Core preamble (pp. 9-10), approved by the Faculty Senate December, 2015 indicates, the University’s Core prepares students for a lifetime of thoughtful engagement by teaching them to identify relevant questions and pursue educated answers as every college-educated person should be able to do. The University’s Core Curriculum, much of which is offered by departments in the College of Arts and Sciences, has a significant focus on these skills. Further discussion of the Core assessment is presented in 4.B.1.

3.B.3. A review of published student learning outcomes from the 2017-2018 course catalog provides evidence that both undergraduate and graduate degree programs engage students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments. All programs, at the degree appropriate level, require students to collect, analyze, and communicate information through assignments such as research projects, report writing and presentations ranging from classroom to professional conferences. The University prides itself in the alignment of academic theory with practice. All colleges and the Seminary include practical training as part of their degree programs.

Students mastering these modes and developing these skills can be seen in the following examples. The College of Education requires student internships and field experiences; the College of Business and Economics mandates one internship for all undergraduate majors and College of Nursing and Health Sciences requires a preceptorship for all nursing students. In the College of Arts and Sciences, many students engage in internships, research or creative activity. Social Work requires a full-time semester long field instruction; all Art, Journalism and Digital Media, Music and Theatre students engage in creative activity and many other students engage in mentored research.

The foundations for a wide range of critical inquiry are laid during the Core experience. As students then move into their more specialized preparation, they are offered numerous opportunities to focus their critical inquiry on the needs of their disciplines or professions. While each college can provide illustrations of this process, one example of such integration into the professions is within the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

3.B.4. Ashland University recognizes the importance of preparing students for living and working in a diverse world. As global perspectives have changed, the University has adapted to these changes by modifying requirements as related to student acquisition of cross-cultural competency. The University’s requirement has changed from students taking courses designated as International
Perspectives Requirement (IPR) courses to Global Passport Strategies (GPS) to the current Critical Cultural Inquiry (CCI).

The University works to increase the number of students participating in study abroad, study tours and second language acquisition. The Study Abroad Office coordinates numerous credit-bearing study abroad programs. Every major has an opportunity to participate. In addition to semester programs, the University faculty take students abroad over spring break and during the summer. Popular programs include the AU in Germany program, AU in Costa Rica, the Israel study tour, the College of Business and Economics in Taiwan, Honors Program study tours, AU in France, WW II Europe Ablaze, the Footsteps of Peter and Paul in Italy, International MBA study tours, CONHS Navajo Immersion, and Choir and Jazz Orchestra performance tours. In addition to the study abroad programs offered, the Office of Christian Ministry coordinates spring break and summer mission trips. The destinations have included the Dominican Republic, South Africa, Peru, Argentina, Russia, Kenya, and Italy. There are also three medical mission trips each year associated with the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. For the May 2017 graduating class, at least 30% of students had a travel experience through the University.

In the College of Education, students have opportunities to student teach in numerous high-need areas around the country and abroad. After reviewing data on field placements of teacher candidates it was found that while placements directly associated with the diversity courses were higher in student diversity than other placements, the percentage of student diversity found with these sites was not at the level deemed necessary by the College of Education faculty and administration. As a result, the University began working with an additional local school district (Mansfield City Schools) to provide more exposure to students from non-white and lower socio-economic status populations; students with limited English proficiency, and student populations presenting other forms of diversity. The new collaboration is in addition to existing partnerships with Columbus area schools and other diverse settings. In the fall of 2017, the College of Education also provided training for its faculty on the impact of implicit bias on teacher-student interactions.

The Seminary coursework provides another example of the University’s commitment to acting on the University’s global awareness opportunities to address issues of diversity and multiculturalism. Specific courses in programs which take up these issues: one of the oldest programs is Black Church Studies (pp. 98-99 and pp 135-144), based at the McCreary Center for African American Studies (p. 27) in Cleveland. Seminary faculty are also encouraged to ensure syllabi, required readings and topics represent the diversity and multiculturalism of churches, theological perspectives, and the contexts in which students are living and ministering. Programs for minorities (Hispanic, African American and Asian) are included in the expansion plan for the Detroit center. Additionally, the Master of Fine Arts program in Creative Writing has made a concerted effort to increase faculty diversity. Today, the program employs one of the most diverse faculties in the region.

3.B.5. Ashland University faculty and students contribute to scholarship and creative work in a variety of ways. From student theses to Core courses, from Ashbrook and Honors research requirements to graduate capstone projects, the discovery and creative expression of knowledge is a reflection of the University’s Mission Statement and Strategic Plan. The following section describes a number of representative examples.

On an annual basis, student organizations across disciplines and colleges take students to professional conferences to learn about the process of research and presenting. Trips conducted last year included the student chapters of Institute of Management Accountants (IMA), National Society
of Minorities in Hospitality (NSMH). In addition, students from chapters like The Association for Operations Management (APICS), Eagle Investment Group, and Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) participated in case competition which requires preparatory guidance about doing research to solve a specific problem.

The Provost’s Innovation Fund (established in 2016) is distributed through a competitive, private grant process to provide limited funding for the University faculty, staff and administrators to plan and implement new and creative initiatives that enhance the education of the University students. The Provost invited faculty, staff and administrators to submit proposals for the funding of innovative projects at the University. Collaboration among faculty, staff, administrators and students on these projects was encouraged. In 2016-2017, the total funding available for the award cycle was $20,000, with five different recipient groups across campus having received these awards. Maximum funding per project was $5,000.

The annual Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Symposium organized by the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), has provided CAS students a forum to share their research, scholarly, and creative work with peers, professors, and members of the community since 2010. The Symposium showcases a wide range of scholarly experiences as participants present projects from the fine arts, the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. In 2017, 69 student presenters were competitively selected from a pool of College of Arts and Sciences student applicants by the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Symposium committee. All CAS courses are canceled for the day of the symposium and non-presenting students are encouraged to attend through sign-in sheets and a variety of course assignments.

Natural Science students undertake scientific research alongside faculty, co-publish their findings and present them at scientific meetings. Some students work full-time conducting research over the summer months funded by a variety of grants. For example, research performed by undergraduates has identified problems with cadmium contamination of children’s jewelry resulting in several recalls as well as legislation to restrict cadmium use. Other student research has included genome editing techniques to study proteins involved in lens cataracts, a leading cause of human blindness.

The University Portal includes announcements showcasing various faculty scholarship conference presentations, research, writings, and works and also a list of conference travel grants awarded to faculty for presentations during the past decade. The library also maintains a database of faculty publications.

The University’s Center for the Arts holds and displays creative works by both faculty and students in the Coburn Gallery. The Gallery features these works as well as various exhibits from museums from around the state, country, and world. In addition to students’ art exhibits, music and theatre performances are featured in the Center for the Arts.
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3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Argument

The University has highly qualified faculty and staff that work together to support the University's mission and institution, college, and program level student learning outcomes.

3.C.1. **Between Fall 2013 and Fall 2015 enrollment at Ashland University dropped by 5%.** As a result, the composition of the faculty body has undergone notable change over the past several years. Initially, several open faculty positions from retirement and departures were not filled. In addition, in fall 2015 the decision was made to not renew several faculty contracts for the 2017 academic year, including both non-tenure track faculty and tenure/tenure track faculty. The result was a **23% reduction of full-time faculty members between fall 2013 and fall 2016.** The university took several steps to ensure the continuity of offerings and services. First, the faculty load was increased from 21 hours to 24 hours in the 2016 academic year to more closely resemble the **load of peer institutions.** Second, the University **increased the number of faculty teaching on supplemental contracts, both adjunct faculty as well as full-time faculty teaching on overload.** Third, the University strived to increase efficiency by increasing the average number of students in classes while still maintaining a small classroom experience. As a result, the **average class size in classroom settings increased from 16.0 in fall 2013 to 20.0 in spring 2017.** Evidence for sufficiency can be seen in the average student to faculty ratio. In fall 2013 the University’s reported undergraduate student-to-faculty ratio of 9 to 1 was the lowest among the University’s current operational peers and was well below the average of 14 to 1. By fall 2016 this ratio had increased to 16 to 1, which was the highest among the operational peers (though if the prison outreach numbers are excluded the ratio is 12 to 1). Overall, these changes have enabled the University to operate more efficiently during a fiscally difficult time.
All program staffing is conducted by appropriate directors and department chairs and full-time faculty oversee the delivery of curriculum. Faculty continue to maintain and build strong academic programs, serve in essential positions of governance and institutional organization, and conduct meaningful research. However, the changes noted above have served to increase the workload of full-time faculty. Results of the 2017 Faculty Welfare Survey show that many faculty have felt overburdened by the changes. In academic year 2017 the President and Provost, upon mutual agreement with Faculty Senate leadership, committed to no further faculty reductions in academic years 2017 and 2018. To the contrary, the Provost has replaced critical positions and added more full-time faculty positions based on the data-driven analysis of programs. The opportunity for further expansion and growth will increase as necessary faculty positions are filled to ensure program stability across the university.

A responsibility of all faculty includes curriculum oversight and establishing expectations for student performance (pp. 12-14). The Graduate or Undergraduate Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee or the Seminary Academic Council approves new/revised courses and programs. Over the time period spanning 2014-2017 there were 190 curriculum memos, program revisions, new courses, and new programs that were processed through the undergraduate and graduate curricular system. Faculty-led curricula submissions and approvals are posted on the Graduate and Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Portal Page.

The University provides overarching criteria for faculty appointments and the establishment of specific academic credential evaluation of instructional staff within a particular program is determined by program faculty and approved by the appropriate dean as part of each department/program according to Promotion and Tenure Guidelines. All instructors of graduate courses must be approved as meeting the criteria for one of the categories of Graduate Faculty Designation (pp. 26-29) as they are defined in the Rules and Regulations of Ashland University. The list of approved graduate faculty is posted on the Portal.

In addition to curriculum oversight, faculty members are actively involved in the assessment of student learning both within individual courses and more broadly as part of department/program assessment plans. Additionally, faculty make up the full membership of the Academic Assessment Committee. In 2016, the leadership of student learning outcome assessment was taken outside faculty senate and expanded to include the assessment of student learning outcomes in co-curricular areas by the University Assessment Committee (UAC). The Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) serves in an advisory capacity for student learning outcome assessment. A more detailed account of assessment is detailed in Criterion 4B.

3.C.2. Instructors (adjunct and full-time) are appropriately credentialed with all holding a minimum of a Master's degree in a relevant field or a Master's in a related area and a minimum of 18 credit hours of graduate level course work in the specific discipline being taught. In terms of instructor qualifications, the University adheres to HLC Assumed Practices as outlined by Assumed Practice B.2.a-c. The criteria for appointment to the faculty is outlined in the Standard Operating Procedures (pp. 1-1 - 1-7), and Faculty Rules and Regulations - Article V (pp. 16-20).

Many external certification standards such as the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) for the College of Business and Economics require a certain percentage of faculty to be qualified at the doctoral level.

3.C.3. Ashland has routine and rigorous mechanisms for the regular evaluation of instruction. Faculty Rules and Regulations (pp. 21 - 25) as well as Seminary Faculty Handbook (P. 51) outlines
specific procedures for annual evaluation of instructional faculty including peer and student evaluations. Faculty evaluations, peer evaluations and department chairperson evaluations are conducted annually for tenured, tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty. The Seminary develops their own promotion and tenure guidelines (pp. 32-35) specific to the disciplines. Tenure track faculty within the Colleges follow the promotion and tenure process outlined in the Faculty Rules and Regulations (pp. 29-37). All faculty, regardless of the modality in which they teach, follow the guidelines as referenced above.

3.C.4. Faculty are evaluated regularly (pp. 4-1 - 4-2) to ensure they are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching role. Every section of every course taught each semester is evaluated by students using the standardized evaluation instrument. A minimum of one peer observation and evaluation is to be completed per year. Chairs write an evaluation for each faculty according to the annual/biannual schedule.

Ashland has a variety of programs and opportunities for professional development. Faculty are supported in their professional development through faculty development grants and senior faculty study leaves. There are also multiple additional opportunities and resources including the Maude V. Rutt Award, conference grants, international experience grants, professional discipline experience grants, alternative instructional delivery grants, and study/writing grants. For example, the mentoring model within the College of Nursing and Health Sciences Nursing Department involves a department chair assigning a faculty mentor who reviews faculty and program policies and procedures with the incoming faculty while also providing support throughout the faculty member’s first academic year. Advanced practice faculty members, new to the role, are mentored by peers in the role of overseeing clinical experiences as they assume these responsibilities. Nursing faculty requested a mentoring model and it has been well received by new faculty.

Additional support is available through the Ashland University Research and Writing Community (AURWC). AURWC hosts a semester-long program that trains participants to use empirically-proven techniques to increase research/writing productivity while simultaneously improving work/life balance.

The University guidelines also allow for faculty to perform eight hours of optional extracurricular employment per week. This policy provides an opportunity for faculty to maintain their specialty certification(s) while remaining current within their discipline. Faculty with certifications, such as Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and Certified Management Accountant (CMA), are required to conduct continuing education to retain their certifications.

Established in 2015 and led by the College of Online and Adult Studies (COAS), the Center for Innovation and Teaching Excellence (CITE) is another new initiative for professional development. This center is designed to cultivate the professional growth and learning of faculty in their development as teacher-scholars by providing and coordinating support, resources, and collaborative programs. By offering opportunities for faculty development in the areas of Faculty Collaboration, Faculty Mentoring, Assessment, and Service and Scholarship, the Center sustains learning experiences for students. In 2016-2017, the COAS Director of Faculty Services designed and built an innovative and collaborative classroom space on campus that is the home for training and development opportunities as well as special programs for faculty. One of the new ongoing initiatives through CITE is Teaching and Technology Tuesdays. These professional development sessions are designed to assist faculty in learning best practices in teaching and learning as well as assessment (face-to-face, hybrid, and online). Sessions apply new technologies, discover mentoring and collaboration strategies, and emphasize service and scholarship.
Resources are available to instructors to ensure that they have the resources they need to maintain and improve proficiency in their teaching roles. LearnAU provides services ranging from Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS) training to develop online hybrid courses in Blackboard Collaborate with the assistance of a LearnAU instructional designer in hybrid courses. LearnAU also offers training or often partners with the CITE to offer training in the areas of legal issues such as copyright and Fair Use, educational technology uses and support, and course design models and best practices.

Regularly scheduled ‘Faculty College Week’ occurs at the beginning of each semester. Programming includes updated information from the library, discussion of faculty development opportunities for the academic year, reports from senior faculty study leave experiences, and other information of importance to faculty. The Director of Faculty Development coordinates this program.

The University also recognizes innovative and effective teaching by presenting awards to outstanding educators on campus. The Taylor Teaching Award, given since 1999, is presented each year to a faculty member who, among other attributes, “stays current on theories and practices in both pedagogy and discipline-related items” and “is willing to devote time and energy to incorporate innovative practices for improved instruction in the classroom.” Additionally, the University Board of Trustees honors a very select number of full professors with the designation of Trustees’ Distinguished Professor, the University’s highest accolade for exemplary teaching. Faculty whose extraordinary achievements include widespread recognition among students and peers are eligible for the Trustees’ Distinguished Professor honor.

3.C.5. Ashland University emphasizes faculty's accessibility to students. Findings from the fall 2017 Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory demonstrate that students find accessibility of faculty to be important and they rated it highly in terms of satisfaction. Full-time faculty members are expected to hold five contact hours a week in which they are available for consultation (Sec 3.12, pp. 3-8) with students. These scheduled hours are posted on their office doors and listed in the course syllabus. Adjuncts are accessible to student via email.

The Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) program Scholarly Project committee has a faculty member in the Department of Nursing with a terminal degree in nursing, and an external member and/or additional faculty member who mentors students throughout the completion of scholarly projects. As students continue in the program and complete assignments, faculty support students as they develop literature reviews as required in the foundational DNP courses.

3.C.6. The Center for Academic Support houses the following areas: Professional Academic Advising, Tutoring Services and Disability Services. The Director of the Center for Academic Support oversees the Professional Academic Advisors and the Tutoring Programs Coordinator. In addition to webinars, teleconferences, and video conferences, professional memberships are supported.

All professional staff in the Center for Academic Support have a Baccalaureate Degree; most have a Master’s Degree. All of the Professional Academic Advisors within the Center are members of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and the Ohio Academic Advising Association (OHAAA). The Tutoring Coordinator is a member of the Association for the Tutoring Profession (ATP). The Director of the Center allocates 43% of the Center for Academic Support budget to professional development for the professional academic advisors and the tutoring coordinator to attend.
Given the responsibilities and expectations of student affairs administrators, it is imperative that they meet a minimum set of educational and professional qualifications before they are hired to serve in an administrative capacity. Within the Division of Student Affairs, the hiring process consists of a series of phone and in-person interviews, presentation, and reference checks. This hiring process ensures that the person selected for a staff position has met or exceeded the qualifications established for that position.

To ensure that student affairs administrators remain current in their respective fields, the Division of Student Affairs encourages and supports their participation in professional development opportunities. Additional professional development opportunities include but are not limited to, training institutes sponsored by professional associations, in-service workshops hosted by staff or consultants, and webinars that address current issues in higher education or related fields.

Financial aid staff are required as well as offered additional opportunities to engage in a variety of options for training and professional development such as conferences and trainings.

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• PROV Taylor Teaching Recipients List 1997-2017
• PROV Training and Professional Development for Financial Aid Administrators
• SA Student Affairs Professional Development 2016-18
• SEM ATS FACULTY HANDBOOK 2017-2018
• SEM ATS FACULTY HANDBOOK 2017-2018 (page number 32)
• SEM ATS FACULTY HANDBOOK 2017-2018 (page number 51)
3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

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

Argument

The University emphasizes individual students and their learning needs. The institution offers a wide complement of support structures for student learning and effective teaching as described below.

3.D.1. Ashland University’s student population has a variety of needs, including academic support, disability services, tutoring services, counseling, career services, and veteran services. Services are available to students regardless of location or program modality, with assurances that personal concerns will be treated as completely confidential, within the parameters of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and the Licensure Board of the State of Ohio.

The development of the Center for Academic Support evolved from a series of action steps taken by the administration beginning in 2012. One of the initial acts was the development of the Academic Advising, Support, and Retention Committee (AASRC) at the request of Faculty Senate. This committee is a collaborative initiative comprised of faculty, students and staff and is charged with making recommendations to the administration to strengthen the student experience at the University. Based on the recommendations from this committee, the Center for Academic Support was created in 2013 and is currently in operation.

The Center for Academic Support coordinates the University’s student success and retention strategies. Since 2013, retention rates have increased. Housed within the Center for Academic Support are Accessibility Services, the University’s Tutoring Program, and the Professional Academic Advisors. Since the Center’s inception in fall 2013, a freshman-only centralized Academic Advising model was instituted to create consistency and collaboration between advising within each College. These professional advisors work with freshmen and the students are then assigned to a faculty advisor within their discipline.

The University's Student Accessibility Center collaborates with students who have disabilities in order to coordinate support services that enable equal access to education and university life. In fall 2016, the new Student Accessibility Center Director began tracking the total number of students served in this office. In its inaugural semester, a total of 179 students were provided services in fall 2016, and 171 students in spring 2017. The Director also began tracking online program students served and, specifically, their needs to ensure those needs were being met. Nine online program
Tutoring programs are designed to supplement the information presented by the University’s faculty with no added fee for students. Tutoring assistance is offered in a variety of academic subjects at the University. Subjects may be added depending on requests made by the students for tutoring in specific subject areas. All tutors are full-time Ashland University students who have been recommended by faculty and have demonstrated academic excellence in their subject. On-going training of tutors is provided in an effort to foster academic success. Tutoring Services are offered one-on-one, online (both Undergraduate and Graduate (e-tutoring), small group, or on a drop-in basis. Soft skills taught include stress management, time management, test taking skills, note taking skills, and study strategies to support student needs and to help students be successful.

Tutoring services have experienced a significant increase in demand from students since the fall term of 2013. The 2016-2017 academic year experienced the highest demand, with 974 students serviced. The University works to ensure that students are utilizing these services.

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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of students served</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>854</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>974</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The University Writing Center welcomes all students who are writing papers for courses in any discipline and in any program. Services are provided to undergraduate, graduate and seminary students of the University. The aim of the service is to collaborate with and mentor students as they explore ways to improve their academic writing skills. The service includes both individual and small-group consultations; and can be held in-person or online. All consultations are confidential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Center- Campus Undergraduate Appointments</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
<th>Spring 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of appointments</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>1304</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Center - Hours of Consultation June 1, 2016 - November 1, 2017</th>
<th>Graduate Students</th>
<th>Seminary Students</th>
<th>Online undergrad students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of hours</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ashland University has renewed its commitment to military and veteran students. The Coordinator of Veterans Affairs, housed in the Office of Records and Registration, certifies Veteran students for their VA benefits. In fall 2017, the University received a $1 million grant to establish a Military Veterans Resource Center on campus. Support services that will be offered to student veterans through the Center include recruitment, admission, registration and GI Bill processing, financial aid, academic advising, accessibility services, mental health counseling and career development.

3.D.2. To ensure that Ashland University students receive the preparatory services they need, the University offers placement exams for English, Foreign Language, and Mathematics. The University’s College of Online and Adult Studies Admissions offers all the functions of a traditional admissions office including providing appropriate information regarding admissions, tuition, and financial assistance. COAS Admission staff also work with potential online program students to
ensure they are aware of and prepared for any demands or needs that may be specific to learning in the online environment.

Other supports include the:

**Freshman Success Seminars**, which are dedicated to assisting first-year students in becoming active and engaged members of the university community. Students focus on adjusting to the collegiate experience, exploring the opportunities and expectations of university life, and charting their degree plan.

**Online Orientation** provides an all-encompassing tool for our Online Students. It serves as a resource regarding specifics of their program as well as tutoring services, disability services, veterans services, and general institutional information to ensure students are academically successful. Students have access to this orientation before courses begin until they graduate. Through the orientation, students are also invited to have an open dialogue with faculty and staff. They are encouraged to ask questions, introduce themselves, and get to know colleagues in their respective programs. These orientations allow for support on day one and continued support throughout their program. Students are supported personally, professionally and academically through this orientation.

The University recognizes the unique needs of students and integrates support strategies for underprepared students. For example, to prepare students for math courses having a prerequisite of one year of high school algebra, students with a Math ACT score of 18 or less (or similar levels of TABE/CASAS scores) are registered in **MATH 100: Developmental Math**. The English department has guidelines for placement of students into appropriate composition courses based on ACT scores and High School GPA. Students who wish to challenge their placement may do so on the basis of their performance on the English Composition Assessment. The Composition Committee reviews all challenges to verify placement. The University has plans to pilot a standardized English Composition Placement Exam in fall 2018 and is currently in the process of piloting the use of **ENG 100** as a co-requisite with ENG 101 in the Online Prison Program.

A further example of directing students includes **foreign language placement** of students continuing their study of high school foreign languages. Placement is determined by the number of years of high school study, along with two of the following three factors: GPA, ACT and WebCape score. All students with prior study of French or Spanish in high school are called upon to complete the WebCape to ensure proper placement.

Academically talented students are also properly directed. The **Ashland University Honors Program** offers academically talented undergraduate students cross-disciplinary experiences as well as participation in an intellectual community devoted to discussion, dialogue, and challenging coursework. The Honors Program has shown significant growth since 2015 with enrollment increasing 54.5% from fall 2015 to fall 2017.

**3.D.3.** The mission of **Center for Academic Support's professional academic advising team** is to support students through their college transition and help create academic plans that promote educational, professional, and personal development within a collaborative environment. All freshman students, including those with undeclared majors, are assigned a Professional Academic Advisor based on their major. Students are advised by a Professional Advisor for the first year and then assigned a faculty advisor at the end of the freshman year.
In addition to professional advisors, faculty members serve as advisors to undergraduate students as part of their service to the University. The Professional Academic Advisors (in consultation with the department chair) assign a faculty advisor for each freshman student when a major is declared and recommend a faculty advisor in the major department for students declaring or changing their major after the freshman year, but the student may request another advisor at any time. Faculty advisors continue to work with the student to develop the four-year plan initiated by the professional academic advisor.

The University has a specialized advising mechanism for its adult populations through Graduate, Online and Adult Advising Services (GOAS). Every student is assigned an Academic Advisor upon admission into their academic program. Academic Advisors are available to assist students with questions regarding their academic program, student concerns, or to determine options for accessing available resources. GOAS Advisors are responsible for registering all graduate, online, and adult students for courses from their second semester and continue to monitor the academic progress of all graduate, online, and adult students until degree or program completion. GOAS Advisors also coordinate with the Director of International Student Services to provide orientation for international students entering into the MBA program at the University each semester. The Online Orientation also serves as a student portal providing students with continuing specific training and updated policies, procedures, and materials as they become available.

3.D.4. Ashland University strives to make continuous improvements to classrooms throughout the main campus and off-campus centers. Evidence of the University’s commitment can be seen through the consistent investment of facilities and infrastructure over the last decade, as discussed in 5.A.1. The College of Nursing and Health Sciences is one example of the University’s commitment to providing an infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning.

The nursing school within the College of Nursing and Health Sciences moved into a new academic building in 2012, located on the Mansfield Campus, fourteen miles from the main Ashland University campus. The 46,500 square foot building was designed for anticipated program growth, including the addition of the advanced practice graduate program. The College’s administrative offices, faculty offices, classrooms, Simulation Center, conference rooms, student study spaces, student and faculty lounge space, bookstore, and café are housed in the building. Full-time faculty have private offices, with part-time and adjunct faculty sharing office space throughout the building. Faculty have computers, phones, and locked storage files within their office spaces, with shared faculty workrooms located on both floors of the building. Staff have private offices with computers, phones, locked file spaces, and other office equipment as needed. Teaching space within the academic building is shared with the other nursing programs. The space is sufficient to meet programmatic needs for the online Doctor of Nursing Practitioner (DNP) program and includes:

- Five classrooms with 64 seats, 48 seats, and 32 seats that may be subdivided into nine classrooms with 32 or 24 seats each
- Three conference spaces
- Simulation Center located on the second floor (12,000 square feet) includes a foundations of health lab, adult health lab, family health lab, complex health lab, advanced care lab, community health lab, 4 examination rooms, and 2 debriefing conference rooms

The new academic building for the nursing program provides state of the art facilities to conduct simulated learning in a variety of clinical settings which contribute to student learning and mastery. This permits students to practice nursing in a simulated manner as though they were in the actual clinical environment e.g. hospital, long-term care, pediatric acute care, birthing center, home care,
critical care etc. For example, the virtual IV simulator teaches students how to do a venipuncture (start an IV). Students truly master the steps of this skill before they ever start an IV on a real patient. They truly are ready to do this skill with the need for little to no guidance from the supervising clinical instructor when working with a real patient in a real clinical setting.

The University grant-seeking activities prior to 2012 were distributed between two administrative areas. The Development department (now Institutional Advancement) pursued campaign grants, while the office of the provost supervised sponsored program applications. In November of 2012, the activities were merged under Development in the newly-formed University Grants and Sponsored Programs office. The office developed a set of new proposal processes and board-approved policies for researching, drafting and submitting grant applications matching University priorities for recruitment, retention, and infrastructure. In late 2016, the grants team restructured roles and added a Grants Management position, creating the current Office of Foundation and Government Relations (F&GR). Since 2013, total grant awards have grown from less than $400,000 annually to over $1.8 million over the 12-month period ending in November of 2017, with the majority of grants supporting scholarships, internships, student support, and faculty capacity-building projects and programs. Among recent grants received is a $650,000 award from the National Science Foundation for a five-year program of scholarships and activities for students majoring in the natural sciences.

Features of the Science Scholars program include:

1. Guidance from faculty, peer, and alumni mentors
2. Participation in a learning community with fellow AS Science Scholars
3. Enhanced career-preparation programming for the science field
4. Renewable scholarships ranging in amounts from $4,000 - $10,000

The Douglas and Jean Sherman Manuscript Library is another example of a distinctive resource for student use. Located at the Seminary, the Manuscript Library houses examples of ancient writing and portions of early Bible manuscripts. This collection includes a fragment of the Dead Sea Scrolls; a fifth-century papyrus fragment of Exodus; a five-hundred-year-old parchment scroll in Hebrew of the Pentateuch; and pages from early printings of the Wycliffe, Luther, Tyndale, Geneva and King James Bibles. The collection boasts a page from the first Bible printed in North America (in Algonquin) as well as the first European Bible printed in America.

The following specific examples are further representative of the general trajectory of institutional investment. In December of 2012, several classrooms were completely renovated at the University’s Columbus Center, adding podiums and state-of-the-art audio/visual equipment including projectors and Smartboards. In 2013, a cadaver lab was added to the Kettering Science Center as well as the upgrade to several classrooms integrating large flat screen displays. The cadaver lab features a Pan, Tilt, Zoom (PTZ) camera positioned on the ceiling above the cadaver table and microscopes that are connected to a large high definition display.

In 2014, a space within the College of Business and Economics was renovated specifically for the University’s Fashion Merchandising program. The area features space to store sewing machines and materials and integrates a room arrangement that allows students their own workspace. The audio/visual equipment was custom engineered for this program to accommodate their unique needs. Another noteworthy project within the College of Business and Economics is an entrepreneurship
suite that features a 3-D printer and various collaboration stations.

In 2014, the University made the decision to begin using “Blackboard Learn” Learning Management System (LMS) moving from a previous LMS which was about to “sunset”. Utilizing the functionality and versatility of Blackboard Learn allows the University to deliver courses online, hybrid, and also assists students in face to face classes. Blackboard can also be used as a repository to hold information such as course information, syllabi, PowerPoints, discussion boards, etc. For hybrid and online courses, asynchronous and synchronous activities and discussions can be held through Blackboard Collaborate. The new system also allows for more seamless partnerships with textbook and content publishers, corporations and specialty field experts, and other educational technologies. Further, Blackboard has allowed the University to design a consistent course shell structure for all courses, regardless of delivery method, to provide students ease of access to content materials, learning resources, library resources and technical support resources within the LMS and via links in their courses.

In 2015, both the College of Education and College of Business and Economics upgraded audio/visual equipment with confidence monitors and cameras in the back of the rooms to facilitate online synchronous and asynchronous classes and collaborations. In 2016, multiple rooms across the main campus were similarly upgraded. In the Rybolt Sport Sciences Center, audio/visual equipment was completely restructured to include multi-use functions and to allow for collaborative spaces both within the classroom and online. In 2017, multiple classroom upgrades were completed including a new collaborative classroom at the University’s Columbus Center designed specifically for the needs of the new One-Year MBA Program. With the help of the new Provost Innovation Grant, a high-tech classroom was created for CITE.

Information Technology (IT) supports classroom technologies and digital applications that enhance teaching and learning, including digital cameras, networked classroom PCs with access to University applications, and the Internet. The University maintains an open computer lab for student use and Bring Your Own Device spaces with power outlets, and small group workspaces for collaboration. IT is responsible for researching, purchasing, establishing, setup, initial training, and maintenance of classroom technology.

The University has a collaborative classroom, which is equipped with tables, easily movable chairs, monitors and smart projector, and a flexible instructor station. All other classrooms have at minimum an instructor station with a computer, ceiling-mounted projector, screen/whiteboard, and document camera. The college provides wireless access in every building on campus.

All faculty and staff are supplied with a computer, either a laptop or a desktop. As part of the University, all personnel have access to a wide array of learning technologies and professional development via College of Online and Adult Studies and LearnAU such as Blackboard Learning management system, Kaltura lecture capture software, - Learning environment, Qwickly and Respondus.

The University uses an IT Governance Committee that facilitates technology purchases and upgrades. IT has an Educational Technology expert that works with leadership, faculty, staff, and students to finalize new classroom technology expenditures and upgrades and works to align them with the Campus Strategic and master plan. Those costs go into the fiscal year budget planning presented to leadership and board for approval. Once approved, IT works in conjunction with facilities to determine timelines and upgrade/install priorities. This is a continual process across the fiscal year.
The University has invested in technology within the libraries. The library utilizes technological advances such as Blackboard Learn, LibGuides, and E-Reserves to enhance student research and learning. The recent implementation of OneSearch, EBSCO’s discovery service, on the library website, provides users with the ability to conduct comprehensive searches across various databases, catalogs, and additional platforms. Course-specific resources are available to students and faculty in Blackboard Learn organization sites, LibGuides, and Electronic Reserves.

Ashland University Library Faculty Resources became available to users starting spring semester 2017. The site features library services provided to all faculty members with an emphasis on courses using Blackboard Learn. It features general library information, components of information literacy, library instruction opportunities, and faculty research resources.

3.D.5. The success of Ashland University students in presenting and authoring scholarly work, and the involvement of a significant proportion of faculty as mentors for these student projects, provides evidence for the University’s emphasis on providing students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Various classes in multiple disciplines are specifically dedicated to teaching the process of research and guiding students through actual research projects. The Library provides library instruction sessions available to students both in the library and online. Reference help is offered in person with drop-in services and scheduled appointments, and online via Blackboard Collaborate. Library circulation staff and students manage daily inquiries and answered over 1500 questions between August 2015 and February 2017. The Instructional Resource Center provides basic reference services and equipment and resource instruction in-person and online via chat and text; over 3,961 reference questions were recorded in the IRC between April 2015 and February 2017. Library reference librarians offered 71 instructional sessions to 1008 students for a total of 86 hours of contact time during the 2016-2017 school year.
Sources

- AS Academic Support Center Retention Methods 2017
- AS Center for Academic Support _ Administration _ Ashland University
- AS FAQs for Accessibility Center 2017
- AS Freshman Advising Model SHARED 2013-14
- AS Freshman Success Seminar Executive Summary
- AS Freshmen Success Seminar description 2018
- AS Newsletter Center for Academic Support 2013
- AS Professional Academic Advising 2018
- AS Student Accessibility Center Stats 2017
- AS Student Accessibility Center website 2018
- AS Tutoring Programs 2017
- AS University Writing website 2018
- CAS Ashland University Science Scholars Program 2018
- CAS ENG and other Placement Guidelines 2017
- CAS ENG Placement Guidelines
- CAS Foreign Language Placement practice
- CAS MATH 100 Placement
- COAS Admissions Program Training Binders 2017
- COAS Graduate, Online & Adult Advising Center for Academic Support 2018
- COAS Online Orientation on Blackboard 2018
- COAS Support Resources Within LMS and via Links in Courses 2017
- FS Academic Advising, Support, & Retention Committee 2017
- FSCE FSCE Donation of $1 Million to Establish Military Veterans Resource Center at Ashland University _ Ashland University News Center
- FSCE Veteran Services _ Founders School of Continuing Education _ Ashland University
- IE AU Retention and Graduation Rates_Fall 2017
- LIB AU LIBGuides HomePage and Research 2017
- LIB E-Reserves 2018
- LIB Library Faculty Resources
- LIB Library Student Orientation BbLearn 2018
- LIB OneSearch
- LIB REFERENCE ANALYTICS & STUDENT RESEARCH 2017
- LIB STUDENT ORIENTATION BLACKBOARD LEARN 2017
- PRES Foundations & Govt. Relations Office Policies.Procedures
- PROV Honors Capstone Projects 2012-17
- PROV HonorsProgramActivities 2016-2017
- PROV Master Syllabi of Various Research Courses across Campus
- PROV New Blackboard LMS Email and Announcement 2014
- REGIS Veteran Student Support 2017
- SEM 2016-2017 Seminary Academic Catalog
- SEM 2016-2017 Seminary Academic Catalog (page number 33)
- SEM Library Technology Advancement 2018
3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

The student educational experience at Ashland University is guided by the Mission, Vision, Core Values, and defined learning outcomes. Through a curriculum developed and assessed by highly qualified faculty, the goal is to offer all students, both undergraduate and graduate, at every location and in every delivery modality, a transformative learning experience. Through a Core Curriculum, undergraduate students are taught practical learning and critical thinking skills along with being taught the importance of diversity among peoples and cultures. Through study in their major, students have opportunities to apply core skills and acquire disciplinary knowledge as well as develop close relationships with faculty through advisory interactions and research. Co-curricular activities are designed to allow students to apply their knowledge to the betterment of their world at local, national or international levels. Effective support programs and staff are in place to help assure that student needs are met both in and out of the classroom.

Sources

There are no sources.
4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Argument

4.A.1 Academic program review is conducted in two processes at Ashland University: a full academic review and an annual academic review.

Full Academic Review

Prior to 2010, all academic departments underwent a comprehensive review every seven years. This process was revised in 2010 to move to an annual review process (described below). The comprehensive review process was reinstated in a revised manner in fall 2017. All academic departments/programs are now reviewed on a five-year rotating cycle on one of two tracks. Departments/programs that are externally accredited pursue Track A, which utilizes existing Academic Review documents and accreditation results. Departments/programs that are not externally accredited pursue Track B, which includes a self-study, outside reviewer, site visit, and visitor’s report. If a Department holds an accreditation that does not include all programs housed in the Department, the Provost, after consulting with the Dean and Chair, will determine which track to assign. All review materials are submitted to the Provost and the Provost completes a final report, which upon completion will be placed on the University portal.
Annual Academic Review

In Fall 2010 an annual academic review process was implemented. Department Snapshots depicting the previous three academic years are produced by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and sent to department chairs. Department chairs review the data and complete a Dimensions Survey, with sections of alignment with the University mission, internal profile of the department/majors, outcomes of the department/majors, external demand for department majors, economic productivity of the department, resources of the department, and other contributions of the department. The Academic Program Review Committee reviews all academic departments Snapshots and Dimensions Surveys and issues a brief Summary Report on each area to the Provost. The Provost then responds back to the departments with conclusions and recommendations for improvement. The annual review process was suspended during AY 2015 and AY 2016 as the University underwent a Board of Trustees mandated program prioritization process. The annual review process was re-instated in fall 2016.

In addition to the regular academic review process, chairs were provided with data from the Austen Group Study and the Delaware Cost Study in spring 2017 and asked to submit a “Score Sheet and Summary” for each department along with the Dimensions Survey. Ashland University’s participation in the Austen Group Study was a one-time activity, but the University has committed to continuing to participate in the Delaware Cost Study. In fall 2017 the Office of Institutional Effectiveness began including data from the Delaware Cost Study in the Department Snapshots.

4.A.2. Ashland University considers credit for transcription in three categories:

1. Credit earned by successful course completion
2. Credit awarded for the transfer of courses from other institutions
3. Credit awarded for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning

Credit earned by successful course completion is determined by the faculty of record. Oversight to ensure course activities and outcomes meet expectations, given the number of credit hours transcripted, is provided through the faculty curriculum evaluation process discussed in 3.A.1.

Credit awarded for the transfer of courses from other institutions follows the transfer credit policies detailed in the course catalog and in the Ashland Theological Seminary Academic Catalog. Oversight of the evaluation of transfer credits and the posting of those credits is completed by the Office of Records and Registration.

Prior learning credit is accepted from recognized institutions and organizations based upon standard policies and practices in higher education. As outlined in the University Catalog, a maximum of 32 semester hours of credit may be granted for prior learning credit. All prior learning credit is reviewed, approved, and entered by the Office of Records and Registration. The Seminary does not award credit for experiential learning.

4.A.3. Ashland University has policies to assure the quality of transfer credits acceptable toward a degree at both undergraduate and graduate levels of enrollment.

Undergraduate level: Details for standard transfer credit awards are articulated in the course catalog Advanced Placement (AP) Exam credit is recognized by Ashland to be a valuable instrument that allows high school students to master university-level subject matter and to document those achievements. Score requirements are clearly stated in the catalog as well as on the Ashland.edu
Admissions Requirements web page. International Baccalaureate (IB) coursework and College Level Examination Program (CLEP) credit are also acknowledged in Ashland’s transfer policies, with grade requirements. The University also has policies regarding acceptance of PSEO/CCP credits following recent Ohio rulings.

Ashland outlines additional policy details for evaluating transfer credit in the Undergraduate catalog. Initial determination of equivalency with specific Ashland courses is based on course syllabi in conjunction with Ashland department chairs and the college that oversees the course. The University Core Director reviews transfer credit to determine if the course meets core requirements. Transfer credit review is augmented by strict placement practices in the composition, mathematics, and foreign language (via Webcape testing) areas of the undergraduate core. Meeting minutes from the Core Advisory Council show adherence to policy and their oversight roles in such matters.

In 2011, a faculty committee, the Academic Task Force ATF reviewed these practices and worked to make credit transfer practices more consistent. The task force concluded that students should be able to transfer credits earned at regionally accredited institutions with as few requirements to repeat courses or take additional courses as would be consistent with sound academic policy, while also preserving Ashland faculty’s desire to assure that students complete enough coursework from expert faculty at the University to attain an Ashland University degree. While the University does not formally participate in Ohio’s "Statewide Articulation and Transfer Policy", the Transfer Module is one basis for evaluating course equivalencies when transferring general education courses to meet institutional baccalaureate requirements. The University Core Director has periodically reviewed U-Select and Transferology software for consistency along these lines. A further recent task force (2015) has generated a policy for the new Adult and Online College to accept institutional credit awards in transfer.

Ashland also has articulation agreements with several two-year institutions. These agreements allow students to begin their careers in higher education at a two-year institution, and if approved through the agreement, transfer those specific course credits toward a four-year Ashland University degree.

Graduate level: Details for standard graduate transfer credit practices are articulated in the 2017-2018 Academic Catalog. The catalog spells out specific transcript and transfer requirements for all graduate programs, at the doctorate and masters levels, including specific conditions and exclusions, and transient student policies. Enrollment Management works to assure a final transcript evaluation process was in place to assure accuracy and timeliness of this process. The Office of Admissions evaluates academic credentials of applicants outside of the United States through TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and IELTS (International English Language Testing System) scores. The Seminary reviews transfer credits in all programs. The Doctor of Ministry program transfer of credits is reviewed by the Dean of Intensive, Online, and Off-Site Learning and admissions staff. The registrar reviews all the transfers of credit for all degrees.

4.A.4. Prerequisites for Courses, Rigor of Courses, and Expectations for Student Learning: The University faculty maintain authority over the prerequisites for courses, the rigor of courses, and the expectations for student learning through the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee.

Course prerequisites are clearly identified in the University Catalog and in WebAdvisor, the University’s electronic advising system, for each academic program. Course prerequisites are first approved by departmental and college faculty and then the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee reviews the appropriateness of prerequisites and approves them. One example of the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee’s oversight and approval of prerequisite coursework is documented in the
December 4th and 11th 2017 meeting minutes where approval was granted for the undergraduate public health program.

The rigor of courses is ensured through faculty and administrative processes. The Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee approves both new programs and new coursework to assure that appropriate rigor is reflected in the activities and outcomes. An example of the review of a course, HS180, Lifetime Wellness, demonstrates the attention to rigor through the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee review process. The department was requesting a change in the course from a two-credit course to a three-credit course. The Curriculum Committee reviewed the course to assure that appropriate rigor for the increase in credit hour was justified. Syllabi are submitted each semester for review by the department chairs. Additionally, chairs and deans have access to online courses for periodic review to ensure quality and rigor of online instruction.

Access to Learning Resources: The University maintains and has authority over the learning resources available for students. The University is committed to assuring that all students, regardless of campus location, have access to the resources needed to promote success. Some of these resources are described in Core Component 3D. The Center for Academic Support is designed to be a central location where students can focus on the social, personal, and academic adjustments to college. Additionally, the Center for Academic Support coordinates the University’s retention strategies. The Center strives to administer proactive strategies to make the transition to college life easier and initiates early interventions to ensure student success. Other resources are listed below:

Accessibility Services collaborates with students enrolled at the University who have disabilities, coordinating accommodations and services that enable equal access to education and university life. Accommodations can include the following: Assistive Software, Classroom accommodations, Sign Language Interpreters, Testing Accommodations, Textbooks in Alternative Format, etc. Students requesting accommodations contact Disability Services. Students may be asked to provide documentation from a third party such as Primary Care Provider, and/or Psychologist/High School Psychologist (IEP & ETR).

Library services at the University seek to encourage, support, and enable teaching, research and learning in a positive environment that values self-worth and intellectual inquiry. The Library provides the collections, services, and physical environment to encourage curiosity and reflection, and to satisfy information needs as students are challenged to develop intellectually and ethically in accordance with the mission statement of the University. The library provides access to the Ohio Library and Information Network (OhioLINK), a consortium of 90 college and university libraries, the State Library of Ohio, and 21 Ohio public libraries. The library seeks to enhance the academic experience by providing patrons with the resources and confidence to access, evaluate and synthesize information. The Ashland University Seminary provides library support on the main campus, with partial libraries at each center, and a more extensive library at the Detroit Center. There are electronic provisions with commentaries available to all students at all locations.

The Writing Center is a resource for undergraduate students to collaborate with consultants who are voices of experience for writing across the curriculum. Writing Assistants (WAs) are peer tutors who meet with undergraduate students writing papers for courses the WAs have taken. During the first appointment, the student and WA discuss the assignment and generate ideas and writing goals; during follow up meetings, the WA guides the process of writing a highly skilled paper. Writing Assistants can collaborate with all writers because they, themselves, are skilled writers representing a variety of Ashland University majors/minors.
The tutoring program available in the Center for Academic Support is designed to supplement the information presented by the University’s faculty at no additional cost to the student. The mission of the tutoring program is to support both faculty instruction and student learning in various content areas using both traditional and advanced methods. Tutoring assistance is offered in a variety of academic subjects at the University. Tutors are full-time Ashland University students, recommended by faculty with demonstrated excellence in the specific content area. Tutors are trained to assure their ability to foster academic success in others.

The University's counseling services include career counseling and related services to further address a variety of students' needs. Such services include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accelerated learning</th>
<th>Speed reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alcohol &amp; drug awareness</td>
<td>Test anxiety &amp; relaxation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career testing</td>
<td>Test preparation: MCAT, GRE, PRAXIS, LSAT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Time management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counseling for personal concerns</td>
<td>Training for improvement of study skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decision-making strategies</td>
<td>Workshops and skills enhancement programs</td>
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<td>Guidance for professional school</td>
<td>Depression management</td>
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<td>Human sexuality information and counseling</td>
<td>Proper sleep hygiene</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memory improvement</td>
<td>Grief counseling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Premarital &amp; marital decision making</td>
<td>Relationship building</td>
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The goal of Ashland University Counseling is to accent individual student development and to assist with any personal, private or professional concern. Students’ personal concerns are treated with complete confidentiality within the parameters of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and the Licensure Board of the State of Ohio.

Faculty Qualifications for All Programs: As outlined in Ashland University’s Faculty Rules and Regulations, all full-time and part-time faculty at the University are required to have the appropriate degrees for their field of study, publications, creative or scientific accomplishments, participation in learned societies, and teaching expertise. Additionally, faculty are expected to support the mission of the University. For more information on the faculty hiring and qualification process, see 3.C.2.

Dual-credit and per course instructors are required to have the same qualifications as full-time, part-time and adjunct faculty. Each College maintains files of vitae and transcripts from each dual-credit instructor and/or per course instructor. The department chairs and deans review vitae and transcripts of dual-credit and per course instructors to ensure appropriate credentials. Transcripts for adjunct faculty are maintained in the Dean’s office. Full-time faculty transcripts are housed in the Provost Office. Seminary faculty qualifications are reviewed through a submitted CV and transcripts for
masters and doctoral degree. The CV and Transcript Files are kept electronically for each full-time and adjunct faculty member.

Dual Credit Courses: Dual credit courses, in Ohio, once known as Post Secondary Education Option (PSEO), and now known as College Credit Plus (CCP), allow high school students to take college credit courses offered through Ashland University. These CCP courses maintain assured rigor through a one-on-one faculty mentoring process. Individuals who teach the dual-credit courses are provided course syllabi and individual faculty mentors. Faculty mentors provide information and support regarding course content and delivery, and they monitor the quality of instruction through site visits and classroom observations. Further, faculty mentors ensure that dual-credit courses provide the same learning outcomes and levels of student achievement expected in sections of those courses offered on campus.

4.A.5. Ashland University has several accredited programs who utilize the accreditation process for continual program improvement. The following programs are accredited by specialized accrediting agencies.

Athletic Training - The Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to define, measure, and continually improving AT Education. The vision of the organization is to improving health by assuring and recognizing excellence in AT education. The University AT program was reaccredited on January 28, 2015 with renewal scheduled in the 2024-2025 academic year. In March 2017, the program received Notice of Negative Accreditation Status Requiring Immediate Action. The program accepted the accreditation status of Probation and developed a plan that was sent to CAATE and accepted. The program director is planning to move the degree to master’s entry program according to the requirements of the CAATE organization.

Business - The College of Business and Economics (COBE) received its initial professional accreditation for its degree programs (BA, BSBA, and MBA) at all sites from the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) in June 1993. The ACBSP granted the BSBA with a major in accounting, the MBA with a specialization in accounting, and the accelerated BSBA/MBA in accounting specialized accreditation in 2013, the eighth school in the U.S. and the first school in Ohio to be so recognized. These certifications serve to assure the public that the business education at the University meets nationally recognized standards of quality in terms of professors, curriculum, methods of instruction, and financial support. Additionally, the 2015 QA report for specialized accreditation in Accounting is included. The most recent QA reports for both overall College of Business and Economics, and Accounting were received on February 17, 2017. A request was submitted with anticipated removal of both the condition and the note, based on changes made since 2015.

Chemistry - Ashland University's chemistry program has been "approved" by the American Chemical Society (ACS) for more than 35 years. The ACS requires submission of annual reports as well as periodic reports for the purpose of a full reevaluation, which typically occurs every 5-6 years. The University's last periodic report was submitted in 2013. Feedback from the ACS Committee on Professional Training (CPT) was provided in 2015. The ACS CPT found that the frequency of course offerings to be out of compliance with the updated 2015 Guidelines. The program was asked to provide additional documentation by 2018. Program status as an ACS-Approved Program remains active during this period of review.

Dietetics - The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics is the accrediting
agency for education programs preparing students for careers as registered dietitian nutritionists or nutrition and dietetics technicians. ACEND® serves and protects students and the public by assuring the quality and continued improvement of nutrition and dietetics education programs. ACEND® is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a Title IV gatekeeper. This recognition affirms that ACEND® meets national standards and is a reliable authority on the quality of nutrition and dietetics education programs. ACEND® is also a member of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors and abides by its code of good practice. The last reaccreditation occurred in July 2014 and granted full approval of the program until fall 2020.

Education - The College of Education (COE) is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) which is now part of Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). CAEP reviews departments, schools, and colleges that prepare teachers and other educators. This accreditation indicates that the College of Education has met quality assurance standards set by representatives of the academic community, professionals and other stakeholders and demonstrated through an external peer review. Individual programs can achieve national recognition by meeting the specific standards set by their Specialized Professional Associations. The University’s teacher licensure programs with national recognition include Biology/Life Science, Chemistry, Earth Science, Integrated Science, Physical Science, Mathematics, Middle Childhood Education, Special Education: Intervention Specialist, and Technology Facilitator. The College of Education had an accreditation site visit by the CAEP team in November 2017. Following this visit, the CAEP site team sent their report for a factual check prior to submission. This report acknowledged issues which the College will need to address in the upcoming year. The Commission will provide their final recommendation in April 2018. In addition to CAEP standards for the entire College of Education, individual educator licensure programs are reviewed and approved by the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) to assure that they meet state standards for licensure. These programs must be revised to meet any mandates issued by the state. At this time, the University is approved by ODHE to conduct 17 teacher licensure and 5 administrative licensure programs and 6 educator endorsement programs.

Music - The Department of Music holds full institutional accreditation for all programs through the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). This accreditation is good through 2022. The ten-year reaccreditation was awarded July 8, 2014, following the March 2012 site visit. NASM reviews compliance with curricular standards for all major programs, faculty qualifications, faculty loads, student achievement, facilities, equipment, procedures, record keeping, planning, operations, and considers music in general education. Curricular standards are in the form of outcomes, and allow considerable institutional autonomy regarding delivery formats and specific courses and content. For reaccreditation, an extensive self-study is followed by a 2-day site visit, visitors report, progress reports as required, and the commission action.

Nursing - The undergraduate and graduate programs in nursing are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The undergraduate program was accredited for a 10-year period ending in 2018. A site visit was held in fall 2017 with initial findings by the team on their exit interview of meeting all the standards. The final accreditation outcomes report will be received in May 2018, with approval, if granted, starting from the date of the site visit. Graduating from an accredited program is a requirement to sit for the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Examination and for entrance into graduate studies at most institutions of higher education. The Doctorate of Nursing Practice program received initial accreditation in fall 2015, with a five-year full accreditation granted. CCNE ensures the quality and integrity of baccalaureate and graduate programs in nursing, serving the public interest by assessing and identifying programs that meet
their standards of effective educational practices.

The seminary counseling program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). CACREP accreditation is both a process and a status and denotes a commitment to program excellence. Certification implies recognition that individuals have met minimal professional standards to practice independently as a counselor. In order to be certified, counselors must meet certain levels of education and training in counseling, they must follow the code of ethics, and they are held accountable to show competent and ethical performance in practice.

Social Work - The undergraduate social work program at the University is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation (COA) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The program received reaccreditation in June 2010 which is in effect through June 2019. The CSWE COA is responsible for developing accreditation standards that define competent preparation and ensure that social work programs meet them. In accordance with the requirements of CSWE's recognition body, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the CSWE Office of Social Work Accreditation (OSWA) administers a multistep accreditation process that involves program self-studies, site visits, and COA reviews. The accreditation standards are centered on competency-based education with competencies being measured during students' field placement. The four parts of the study for accreditation include; 1.) Program Mission and Goals; 2.) Explicit Curriculum; 3.) Implicit Curriculum; and 4.) Assessment.

4.A.6. Ashland University recognizes its responsibility to deliver its mission in efforts to produce graduates suited for employment and/or continued graduate work. Tracking information on employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs and participation in internships, and special programs such as Peace Corps and Americorps allow for the determination of student attainment of this goal the University has for its students.

The Career Services Center provides multiple resources to current students and alumni to help them realize their career aspirations. Some of these services, such as the Four-Year Career Development Plan, the SOAR Program, and major and career exploration resources, are intended to help individuals determine a career path and to develop skills and experiences to prepare for that career. Other services, such as resume assistance, job and internship search assistance, and resources focused on preparing for graduate or professional school, are focused on helping individuals obtain employment and/or pursue further education.

The Career Services office has been utilizing the Outcomes Survey platform GradLeaders system since December 2013, to gather information about students’ post-graduation activity (e.g., employment, additional education, service work, etc.). The Outcomes Survey is administered for the first time prior to graduation and then four more times during the first year following graduation. The survey focuses on the student’s current employment/education status, their engagement in activities to prepare them for their career, their opinions on the helpfulness of various resources to obtain employment, and their satisfaction with their post-graduation employment. Findings from the surveys received from 2015-2016 graduates (posted on the website under Career Services/about us/Graduate Status Survey Results), show that 74% of the survey participants were employed or were pursuing additional education. An additional 14% were employed part-time. This information is available on the Career Services website and is shared with administration and academic leaders.

The four academic colleges conduct surveys of graduates to determine job placement, plans to attend graduate school, and programmatic outcomes. The Seminary reviews the Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ) each year. The GSQ is a survey produced by The Association of Theological
Schools and distributed to all seminary graduates annually. It shares success of the graduates in the learning process, along with employment data upon graduation. The Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness, the Executive Director of Career Services, and the Senior Director of Alumni Giving are currently collaborating on a process to improve the data collection process with new graduates as well as with Alumni five years after graduation.
Sources

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- AS Academic Support Center Retention Methods 2017
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- AS Student Accessibility Center Stats 2017
- AS Student Accessibility Center website 2018
- ENROLL Final Transcript Evaluation Process.2017
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- FS Department Snapshots Examples 2016-2017
- FS Dimensions Survey examples 2016-2017
- FS Score Sheet and Summary.2016-2017
- LIB Services for Students, Faculty and Staff 2018
- PROV Accredited Programs Documentation
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- PROV Program Review Process 2017
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- REGIS Catalog 2017-18
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- REGIS Graduate Level Transfer Credit 2017-2018
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- REGIS Ohio Transfer Module equivalencies 2018
- REGIS PSEO.CCP credits 2017-2018
- REGIS Transfer Credit Policies Course Catalog 2017-18
- SA Career Services Center 2018
- SA Counseling Center year-end report 2014-17
- SEM Ashland Theological Seminar Academic Catalog.transfer course policy 2017-2018

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

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

Argument

Ashland University is committed to fostering a culture of assessment and continuous improvement throughout the campus environment with the goal of enhancing programs, student learning, and student development. The University’s assessment model is designed to ensure that academic and co-curricular programs are clearly aligned to mission and ISLOs.

Programs are actively involved in the collection and analysis of student learning data at every level, at all sites, and across all delivery modes. Co-curricular units developing student learning outcomes as appropriate and are represented within the Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee. Ashland has made significant strides toward accomplishing a culture of assessment and continues to evolve in its institutional assessment practices, procedures, and infrastructure.

The period 2008-2013 marked an institutional effort to address concerns regarding assessment that the Higher Learning Commission visiting team communicated in their final report in 2008. This effort included the appointment of the first University Assessment Director, the establishment of the Assessment Advisory Committee, and the generation of the first comprehensive institutional assessment report 2008-2009. Included in this endeavor was the University’s Assessment Roundtable Team that attended the North Central Association’s workshop on assessment in 2009, and returned to campus with a master plan. Every aspect of that plan has subsequently been built-upon, expanded, and regularized into more mature frameworks that have constituted a major shift in assessment consciousness for the institution.

Building from an inaugural August 2009 Faculty College Assessment Day that included dozens of faculty and staff, this period included the commitment to regular institutional reports, the formalization of processes across all colleges and academic units, including the Seminary, which was a particular area of inclusion effort; the commitment to routine NSSE and CLA testing; and the development of institutional student learning outcomes approved by the Board of Trustees and manifested in subsequent strategic planning processes. These years saw a rapid expansion and routinization of assessment and measurable outcomes-discourse through all curricular processes, evidence for the maturity of which came with the conclusions of the HLC focused visit acknowledging Ashland’s progress along these lines.

During the Institutional Comprehensive Review 2013-2015, all assessment activities continued with the exception of the generation of institutional assessment reports. These annual institutional reports...
have been subsequently completed in arrears.

With budget stabilization beginning to manifest in 2015, to support continued institutional effectiveness and assessment efforts, the University hired an Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and a part-time Assessment Coordinator in summer 2016 and then hired a full-time Director of Assessment and Accreditation in summer 2017. Current efforts, in line with a focus on institutional effectiveness, are targeted toward establishing assessment processes that are institutionalized across all campus functional areas as discussed in Criterion 5.C.2.

4.B.1. Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) are articulated in the Assessment Handbook, and in the course catalog. The ISLOs reflect the current mission and span curricular and co-curricular activities. Following the approval of the new mission in 2016, faculty worked to develop new ISLOs to align with the University mission. The Faculty Senate Academic Assessment Committee, the Academic Council, and the Board of Trustees approved these ISLOs in the Fall of 2016. Stakeholders determined that the revised ISLOs were more consistent with the new institutional mission, more succinct, and more measurable.

These Institutional Learning Outcomes guide college and all program-level as well as Core and co-curricular student learning outcomes. Alignment between program-level outcomes and ISLOs are indicated in assessment plans and reports. Program-level student learning outcomes are articulated in the course catalog for undergraduate and graduate programs, and course-level outcomes are listed on course syllabi.

During the spring of 2017, program faculty and academic administrators engaged in a curriculum audit to identify where in their programs they are teaching and assessing according to the new ISLOs. Following the curriculum audit, program coordinators, assessment coordinators, department chairs, and deans reinforced the need to teach, reinforce, and assess the ISLOs along with the student learning outcomes for each program.

Each academic program and co-curricular unit has a plan for the assessment of student learning. These plans are included in a combined plan and reporting template. The assessment plans include:

- defined student learning outcomes
- documentation of alignment of defined programmatic learning outcomes with the Institutional Student Learning Outcomes
- a curriculum map
- defined targets for attainment
- when data is collected
- who is responsible

The reporting section of the template includes:

- conclusions and implications based on collected data/information
- evidence of communication of results with stakeholders
- closing the loop – evaluate the effectiveness of previous year’s action plan
- use of results - develop an action plan for next academic year

University-wide assessment efforts are currently overseen by the University Assessment Committee which reports to the Provost. Two academic assessment committees exist; the Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (LOAC) oversees academic and co-curricular program level assessment as
well as the assessment of institutional student learning outcomes, and the Faculty Senate Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) that serves in an advisory role for all academic assessment. Each college has an assessment coordinator who serves on the LOAC which is chaired by the Director of Assessment and Accreditation. Core curriculum assessment is overseen by the Core Advisory Council (CAC) chaired by the Core Director.

A student learning assessment handbook describes the purpose of assessment, gives an overview of the assessment process, and discusses roles and responsibilities of various constituents in the process. For academic programs, annual program assessment reports are submitted to the Director of Assessment and Accreditation by the assessment coordinators. All program reports are reviewed and feedback is provided on five best practices using a rubric. The Director of Assessment and Accreditation sends the reviewed reports back to the assessment coordinators. Assessment Coordinators share findings with the program chair.

Core assessment is conducted by the members of the Core Advisory Council. Since 2009, the Undergraduate Core Curriculum (UCC) has followed a two-tier path of assessment. The internal path has been conducted through direct assessment of student work, by way of committee review of select UCC course assignments deposited in e-portfolios or assessment bins using the Angel/Blackboard LMS. All core areas were articulated according to outcomes derived from approved master syllabi. This language was approved by department chairs, and rubrics were fashioned for each set of SLOs. Every semester beginning in spring 2010 two subject areas in the core were selected for assessment by the Core Advisory Council. During this “assessment semester,” faculty in designated core sections were asked to submit materials manifesting core outcomes as indicated in their core syllabi. The committee then reviewed statistically representative samples of those assignments to evaluate them with regard to stated core outcomes. On the basis of this committee review, the Core Director generated a report and had follow-up meetings with the respective chairs to discuss the findings and 'close-the-loop' on the assessment process. The Chair, the Director of Assessment, and the Dean of the College each receive a copy of this report.

Since 2016, an evaluation of Core assessment practices has taken place. Perceived difficulties experienced with the current system involve issues associated with a group of faculty of the CAC being non-experts in some areas where student work or performance need to be assessed. Also, a lack of consistency in student work and rubrics and/or instructions from core faculty to the CAC members make assessment of artifacts a challenge. With the arrival of a new Core Director and a new Director of Assessment and Accreditation in the fall of 2017, the assessment practices of the Core have been evaluated and changes are currently being implemented:

- The Core Director and The Director of Assessment and Accreditation are meeting with faculty of departments to discuss revising core outcomes (reduction in some cases and/or focusing on alignment with guiding questions and perceived "most important" learning; this action should address the issue of variability in artifacts submitted for assessment
- The Core Director and Director of Assessment are also discussing the use of AAC&U's Value Rubrics to assess artifacts of student work sent to the CAC for evaluation. This would replace the variability in rubrics used to assess student work submitted for review.

4.B.2. As stated in 4.B.1. All undergraduate and graduate academic programs submit annual program-level assessment reports that focus on student achievement of learning outcomes. The following examples highlight this work.

College of Business and Economics (COBE): Assessment results for COBE programs are
documented each year in each department’s report within the COBE Annual Assessment Program Report (AAPR). Other College-wide assessments of undergraduate students, such as the ETS Major Field Test, written and oral communications assessments, internship supervisor assessments, and surveys of graduating seniors are reported in the initial section of the COBE AAPR.

The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS): Programs and departments in the College of Arts and Sciences have planned and implemented student learning outcomes assessment. The programs and departments primarily interpret their assessment findings by determining whether or not the students are meeting certain expected standards. This is the standards-based perspective for interpreting findings. All departments interpret data using this perspective as it is what the University Assessment Committee has required. Some departments also incorporate benchmarking by comparing their students to peers through nationally standardized exam scores, while others interpret data from the value-added perspective, which distills and compares student achievement over time. Several programs/departments additionally interpret data using a longitudinal perspective, and some further use multiple assessments for at least one outcome.

A wide range of evidence to demonstrate student achievement collected by departments and programs in the College of Arts and Sciences is demonstrated in the CAS Assessment Report. This report is informed by student work: papers, course exams, presentations, pre-posttests, evidence from internships/field experiences, standardized exams from professional organizations, documented observations, major portfolios reviewed by department faculty, exhibitions or recitals, and acceptance rates to graduate school or for presentation at national meetings. The Assessment Handbook specifies that each SLO be assessed using a direct measure.

Programs/departments collect evidence at various points during the students’ enrollment. Each program/department determines their individual and group standards following CAS guidelines which included the requirement that the standard for students to exceed the outcomes must be based on higher scores rather than more students meeting the criteria.

The College of Education (COE): Data from the state, unit, and program assessment instruments are used to assess the progress of individual students in the programs and the effectiveness of the programs overall. Each semester, faculty are provided the data from unit and program assessments. On a yearly basis, faculty are provided with the Ohio Assessments for Educators results. All data are analyzed by department and program teams of faculty. Teams complete a Data Analysis and Action Report which is given to the department chairs, program team leaders, and the College of Education director of quality assurance and accreditation for review, action, and monitoring.

Seminary: A self-study report was conducted in 2015. The assessment protocols for the seminary were evaluated. The report revealed weaker areas within the process involving the documentation of changes or closing the loop in the department minutes. Although faculty were engaged in assessment and making changes to improve student learning, these actions were not faithfully documented in department minutes. As a result, Seminary departments began documenting all changes to curriculum, SLOs, and assessment issues in the department minutes in 2016. This documentation included measures of “continued improvement in student learning and closed the loop of assessment in this area of the curriculum.

The counseling department continues to rank high in the nation with the assessment on national exam scores. The counseling department assessed student learning through a variety of methods found in the Annual Assessment Report 2015-2016. ATS is currently in a review of all degrees and programs, including certificates and diplomas that are offered through the seminary.
The Division of Student Affairs began the integration of assessment of student learning into their programming and training of student leaders. The Diversity and Inclusion office conducts two programs, Diversity Scholars and Pathways, that strive to increase graduation rates for our minority students. Residence Life works to train and develop their students. Through programming that takes place within the halls students begin to develop skills that enhance their experiences within their living environment. Resident Assistants are required to participate in a 2 week long training each year to develop them as leaders and prepare them for the possible emergency situations they could encounter. Evaluations of the training has taken place which includes post and pre-assessments. Residence Life staff also do self-evaluations once a year and along with their supervisors, who conduct an evaluation of their RA’s. Other co-curricular units within student affairs have developed assessment plans that include student learning outcomes that are aligned with the ISLOs.

4.B.3. Information gained from assessment at all levels is used to improve student learning. In terms of the assessment of the ISLO’s the University Assessment Committee approved NSSE surveys which revealed a lacuna with regard to global outcomes and competencies for the institution as a whole. In the fall of 2009 the Provost called for an institutional effort to internationalize the University’s curriculum utilizing all available existing resources to provide core-credit. A series of groups, such as the Global Competencies Task Force (2009-2010), the GPS (Global Passport Stratagies) Implementation Committee (2010-2011), the Senate GPS Implementation Committee (2011), and the Academic Initiatives Task Force (ATF) (2011-2012) all deliberated cultural and language outcomes and implementation logistics for this expansion of the undergraduate core.

Core Curriculum: Major revisions and initiatives have occurred as a result of assessment, including the launching of the GPS initiative, the revision of the social sciences, and the development of performance-specific outcomes in aesthetics, and the call for increased performance tasks in the core. Beginning with the 2015-2016 assessment cycle primary disciplines for each area of the Core report how they used the Core Advisory Board Assessment report and findings to the Core Director for inclusion in the annual Core assessment report.

Core assessment has been conducted through administration of the Collegiate Learning Assessment tasks of students. The CLA test is an assessment test for students designed to evaluate general analytical reasoning and measure value-added critical thinking skills. Ashland tested 100 freshmen and 100 seniors in each of three rounds of CLA testing (2009-2010, 2012-2013, and 2015-2016). The Annual institutional reports indicate Ashland’s CLA results and the conclusions drawn from those reports.

As a result of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) results from 2012-2013, there was an initiative to incorporate greater levels of performance task assignments in core courses. Core assignments were called upon to include greater frequency of 'critical thinking' components, requiring students to make-an-argument, or critique-an-argument. A well-attended faculty college session on Performance Tasks in the Liberal Arts Core was conducted during Faculty College fall, 2013.

The University closes the loop by using student learning outcome data to make decisions about courses and programs.

The College of Business and Economics (COBE): Data collected during the assessment process indicating the need for changes to improve student learning are identified by faculty who then plan and implement those changes. Each department reports how assessment results will be used to
improve student learning in the individual department reports within the AAPR. Frequently, student performance is strong enough to be judged as having met or exceeded expectations, and no action is taken. For example, the COBE AAPR Internship Assessment demonstrates that student intern supervisors have consistently rated our students very highly in all categories, including the Ethics outcome. COBE AAPR Accounting/IS report provides evidence that the students in the Business Spreadsheets course have achieved a 98.1% pass rate on the Microsoft Excel Certification exam for the past six years.

In some cases, the recommended action is to monitor future results to determine if there is a consistent pattern of student performance. In other situations, specific modifications to pedagogy, assigned instructors, course prerequisites, relative emphasis on topics within a course, and overall curriculum structure are enacted. For example, the Economics program recommended a change in emphasis of topics in the Intermediate Microeconomics course, to improve student performance on three microeconomics outcomes based on the COBE AAPR Economics/Finance 2012-2013 findings. Findings from the COBE AAPR Economics/Finance 2010-2011 report led the Finance program to implement changes to how investments were managed over the summer. A revised review process for selecting stock investments was informed by the COBE AAPR Economics/Finance 2012-2013 report. The Accounting program modified an assessment in the Federal Income Taxation of Businesses course to break a single, large project into several smaller, more focused projects.

Some programs have looked to add external, industry-standard certification exams for student assessment purposes. For example, the Hospitality Management program added the ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification Examination and the ServSafe Alcohol Certification Examination as assessments following a curriculum redesign in 2013, and plans to add additional certifications from the National Restaurant Association’s ManageFirst Professional (MFP) credentialing process. The Finance program added the Bloomberg Aptitude Test (BAT) in 2013-2014.

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS): Curricular changes that occurred as a result of assessment follow. In the pre-licensure nursing program, students struggled to successfully complete a predictor examination to meet minimum threshold standards. As a result, program course content exams through Assessment Technologies Incorporated (ATI) were changed to count toward the final grade. Additionally, an ATI Capstone program was integrated into a final semester senior nursing course to provide more comprehensive review of general areas and specialties of nursing to be tested on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). Communications between ATI and undergraduate faculty produced a comprehensive list of areas of identified challenges and subsequent opportunities for nursing students within the weekly testing and review. Based on these identified challenges, course changes were made to improve knowledge and testing skills, such as the order of topics taught in the management/leadership course so students were better prepared for the testing.

Licensure pass rates of the Athletic Training, Dietetics, and Nursing graduates are monitored. Nursing faculty reviews of Mountain Measure Reports from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing have enhanced faculty knowledge and ability to coach students on needed skills and information. Nursing faculty discuss curriculum at meetings and periodically review reports for areas of concern based on graduate testing performance. The addition of ATI work, faculty reviews, and responsive course changes have contributed to greater success as first-time NCLEX pass rates have improved from 83.49 % in 2010 to 92.05% in 2016. This improvement in NCLEX scores is indicative of better mastery of content. In addition, the dean and faculty leaders facilitate several Advisory Boards for feedback regarding quality activities, including an annual luncheon with
the various agencies at which students perform clinical experiences.

Conversely, in the Athletic Training program, a recent decline in the percentage of first time pass rates for the Board of Certification (BOC) was noted, placing the program on probation by CAATE. Actions taken to improve the percentage of first-time pass rates included curricular review, changes in course assignments, and attendance at the ACES preparatory course to assist with test success. **Curricular changes are also discussed with the Athletic Training Advisory Board** to determine best practices for BOC success.

College of Education (COE): Overall, the University’s students are meeting and/or exceeding expectations on the Ohio Assessments for Educators-Assessment of Professional Knowledge (OAE-APK) Content Assessments, and University measures. Passage rates on the OAE-APK have been as high as or higher than the State average for the past three years (OAE Assessment of Professional Knowledge). **The Internship Assessment** and **Impact on Student Learning** results are at or above the Meets Expectations level for all measures.

Data were analyzed further and results were compared across instruments to identify the standards that represented areas of excellence and areas of challenge. InTASC Standard 10-Leadership and Collaboration was identified as an area of excellence on both the OAE-APK and the Internship Assessment. The same three InTASC standards were identified as areas of challenge on the OAE APK, Internship Assessment, and Impact on Student Learning Assessment: Standard 6-Assessment, Standard 7-Planning for Instruction, and Standard 8-Instructional Strategies.

Course syllabi were reviewed in light of the findings. As a result, three courses taken early in students’ programs have been revised to include more emphasis on lesson planning: EDFN 130-Introduction to Teaching, EDFN 202-Teaching and Learning Process, and EDCI 232-Introduction to the Principles of Instructional Technology. Faculty will continue to monitor assessment data and to sample lesson plans to determine if these changes have been successful in improving candidate performance in assessment and instructional planning and delivery.

**The Initial Licensure Committee** considered assessment and where assessment is taught within initial licensure coursework. A review of syllabi for courses that are included in all programs showed that different aspects of assessment appear in most of them. Faculty discussion revealed that while classroom and informal assessment are emphasized, standardized testing is not. Faculty are in the process of deciding whether this deficit can be remedied more effectively by emphasizing to instructors that formal and standardized testing must be included or by creating a stand-alone assessment course. This is part of a larger discussion of the redesign of the courses that are common to all teacher licensure programs.

The Ohio Assessments for Educators Content Knowledge Assessments (OAE-CKA) are used by program teams to monitor candidates’ mastery of the content they will be teaching. Passage rates for this group of assessments indicate that candidates have mastered the necessary content. Program teams also use the OAE-CKA to map competencies to identify any areas not being covered by the curriculum. Program changes have been made based on the analysis of the OAE- CKA and Specialty Professional Association (SPA) standards. In 2015, the Middle Grades and AYA 7-12 English/Language Arts, Math, and Science programs made changes in the required content courses within the programs to better include all of the competencies for their given programs.

The Seminary is currently in a review of all degrees and programs, including certificates and diplomas that are offered through the seminary. This shows the ongoing process of review and
improvement of ongoing assessment of student learning and programming.

4.B.4. Ashland University strives to follow best practices for effective assessment. Examples of how assessment at the University reflects best practices and the principles of effective assessment of student achievement include:

- Assessment of student learning is aligned with our mission and pillars of the strategic plan as discussed in Criterion 3.
- Representatives from across the institution are involved in assessment activities as seen in the composition of the UAC.
- Student learning outcome assessment takes place in academic as well as co-curricular units, and is planned, going forward, where appropriate, in non-academic units.
- Evidence is collected that informs the institution of the wider student experience, both within and outside of the classroom. This is also evidence of attending to a larger set of conditions that promote student retention and development.
- Evaluation of student academic performance is supported by clearly stated student learning outcomes at all levels (course, program, college and institutional); varied measures, both direct and indirect are used to assess attainment of outcomes, and benchmarks or targets are set to drive meaningful conclusions.
- Assessment is visible across the span of the curriculum as seen in the curriculum maps provided by each program.
- Assessment is continuous (reported annually), dynamic (assessment of the assessment process), and systematic (process follows timelines and is being driven toward the use of standardized templates) and soon to be aided by the LiveText software system. To advance assessment at the institutional level, this software system will allow for greater efficiency in assessment data collection, analysis, and use of information to inform planning and resource allocation. The LiveText repository will help organize assessment data, provide sophisticated analytics, and make it easier to use assessment data to inform decision-making.

Taken together, all of these actions inform the University’s continuous improvement efforts, which help the institution to fulfill its obligations to its students and to the public.
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4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

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

Argument

4.C.1. Ashland University places great emphasis on the importance of each individual student, which is embodied in our motto, “Accent on the Individual.” As part of this focus, the University is committed to continually reviewing and striving to improve the retention and graduation of students. The University has historically maintained a freshman to sophomore retention rate above 70% for traditional first-time, full-time undergraduate students. However, the senior leadership of the University determined this was too low for an institution with a purported focus on the individual. Thus, improving student retention became one of the major focal points of the University starting in the 2010-2011 Academic Year, as evidenced in the meeting minutes from the President’s Cabinet Retreat in July, 2010. At this time, the President began purporting a retention goal above 80% to the University community. A retention rate of 80% was actualized for the first time in fall 2016 for the first-time, full-time freshmen entering the institution. As seen in the University’s Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), the institution is focused on achieving a retention goal of 82% by Fiscal Year 2021. In addition, the institution experienced the highest six-year graduation rate in recent history when 63% of the first-time, full-time freshmen from the 2010 cohort graduated by August of 2016. The six-year graduation goal portrayed in the KPIs is now 65%.

While the primary focus of the retention and graduation data has been first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students, the University has also begun to track the retention and graduation rates of incoming transfer students, which has been a growing population over the past five years. As seen in the Freshmen vs. Transfer Student Comparison chart, entering transfer cohorts have traditionally had a higher average retention rate than entering freshmen cohorts, though this has changed for the last three cohorts. In addition, transfer students have been more likely to graduate with a baccalaureate degree within four years.

Nearly a third of the enrollment at the University comes from graduate education. Thus, tracking the retention and completion of graduate students has become an important aspect for the University.
However, this tracking does not necessarily follow the methodology utilized with traditional undergraduate cohorts. In addition, data issues within the system of record make tracking retention and completion of graduate students difficult. The University is currently working on establishing reliable data sets and exploring different methodologies for tracking the success of students in our graduate education programs. The University is also working with the College of Online and Adult Studies and GOAS Admissions to begin tracking retention and graduation rates of incoming online program students. It is the goal of the University to establish retention and graduation goals for these groups in the strategic plan by December 2018.

4.C.2. Prior to 2014, the Assistant to the Provost annually produced a University Fact Book that was made available to all University constituents. The Fact Book included data and information on important student information, such as enrollment demographics, grade distributions, degrees awarded, and retention and graduation rates. The focus of the retention and graduation data was strictly on undergraduate students, and primarily focused on the IPEDS definition of first-time, full-time freshmen. Much of the information in the Fact Book was provided at both a university-wide and program-specific level.

In 2014 the Assistant to the Provost retired and the university utilized the open position to create the position of the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment. At that time the focus of the office was directed towards the compilation of data for the prioritization process being conducted on the campus. For the following two years no program retention and graduation reports were produced or disseminated across the campus. In spring 2016 the university recognized the need to improve data compilation and use across the campus and changed the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. A new Executive Director position was created to replace the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment position and additional staff were hired to support data reporting needs. Beginning in fall 2016, reports detailing the retention and graduation of first-time, full-time freshmen at the university, college, department, and program level were created and were disseminated across the campus. Recognizing the growth of the transfer student population at the University, the reports also reported the retention and graduation of first-time transfer cohorts. In spring 2018, the reports were expanded to focus on key demographic variables including gender, ethnicity, and first-generation status. All retention and graduation data are disseminated to each academic college and are discussed within the Academic Council and also within the Enrollment Management Committee.

The University has traditionally utilized the IPEDS methodology and definitions when tracking and reporting retention and graduation rates. Entering first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen cohorts are tracked to determine if they re-enroll the following fall term and if they complete their degree within 4, 5, or 6 years. Using the IPEDS guidelines allows the University to do direct comparisons of retention and graduation rates with peer institutions. Among the 49 Ohio private universities reporting to IPEDS, Ashland University had the 18th highest retention rate and the 18th highest graduation rate based on the latest IPEDS report. Among the University’s ten operational peers, Ashland had the 4th highest retention rate and the 5th highest graduation rate.

4.C.3. While Ashland University has done a good job historically of collecting and reporting retention and graduation data to the campus community, the University does not have a long-standing track record of documenting changes based on such information. The creation of the Center for Academic Support is a good example of an action the University took to try to improve retention and graduation rates based on data at the institutional level. The Academic Advising and Student Retention Committee (AASRC) submitted a proposal for the creation of a Center for Academic Support.
Support in 2011, which was approved by the Provost. Being able to document similar actions in the future, particularly at the sub-category level, is a high priority for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The inclusion of retention and graduation rate goals in the university’s strategic plan and Key Performance Indicators highlight the importance of being able to track improvements in performance moving forward.

The University submits retention and graduation rate data to third party surveys for their purposes. For example, the retention and graduation of first-time, full-time freshmen is a major factor in the annual U.S. News and World Report Best Colleges rankings, accounting for 25% of the overall ranking. Starting in 2016 the University began utilizing Academic Insights to benchmark the various factors utilized in the US News rankings, including retention and graduation rates. This benchmarking information is currently being explored to determine what improvements may be warranted.

Recognizing the need for a dedicated focus on student success, the President created the Retention and Completion Committee in spring 2018. This committee is charged with reviewing the University’s retention and completion data and creating an annual action plan with specific recommendations focused on various sub-populations. These sub-populations include under-represented minority, low income, first-generation, and military students, as well as student-athletes, graduate students, and participants in the correctional education program. In addition, the committee is charged with keeping up-to-date on national research on retention and completion and enrolling this research into the annual plan and key performance indicator goals.

4.C.4. In 2010, the Hanover Research Council generated a report titled, Best Practices in Student Retention. The report cited two specific surveys of retention practices at four-year private colleges and universities across the country. The University is engaging in many of the practices identified in the report as being most effective in supporting student retention.

Center for Academic Support

The Center for Academic Support was initially comprised of a Director and a Retention Coordinator and the focus was on retention initiatives. Eventually, the advisors from each College were moved into the Center and all new student advising was centralized. In addition, tutoring and disability services were housed under the Center. The Center for Academic Support oversees a number of services directly related to student success, including the advising process for all freshmen, the College Student Inventory, the Early Alert System, the Freshmen Seminar Course, the Academic Probation Support Program, and tutoring.

Academic Advising

Prior to the creation of the Center, all advising at the University was decentralized in the academic units. In 2013, advising was centralized under the Center for Academic Support. All freshmen would meet with a professional advisor in the Center for Academic Support to get registered for their initial courses, and were then transitioned to faculty advisors. In 2014 the process was changed so that the professional advisors helped register the freshmen students for their initial courses and continued to advise them for their entire first semester before assigning them to a faculty advisor. Freshmen were required to meet with their advisor a minimum of two times. Another major occurrence in 2014 involved a change in the registration process for freshmen. Prior to this time freshmen students were being enrolled at 10:00 at night. As a result, these students were unable to access various campus resources to help them answer questions, which was especially problematic for students new to the
process. Based on student feedback the enrollment time for freshmen students was changed to 7:30 in
the morning. The Center for Academic Support also began partnering with the Career Services
Office in 2014 to assist undecided students in selecting a major. In 2015 the advising process was
further expanded so that the professional advisors began to advise students for their entire first year.
Freshmen were now required to meet with their advisor a minimum of four times. In 2016, transfer
student and international student advising was also placed under the Center for Academic Support.
These students are advised by professional advisors for their first semester and are then transitioned
to a faculty advisor.

College Student Inventory

The University began administering the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory in 2010 as part of a
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant awarded to the College of Nursing.
This inventory assesses students’ preparedness for college. Questions on the inventory focus on topics
such as students’ likes and dislikes, social interactions, and receptivity to support on campus. The
inventory was initially administered to conditional admits, but by 2012 was being administered to all
incoming freshmen students. The responses to the inventory assess students’ readiness, both
academically and socially, for college. The responses also help identify where students fit on a
number of risk factors. Students are required to meet with their advisor to go over the results of the
inventory and to identify potential resources that may help them successfully navigate their freshmen
year. These resources include tutoring, counseling, residence life, student affairs, Title IX, and
campus security.

Early Alert System

An early alert system was established in spring 2011. Initially the system was only utilized for
conditional admits. When the process was started an automated e-mail was issued to faculty in week
five of the semester asking them to indicate whether they had any concerns about students in their
courses based on three areas; attendance, grades (C or lower), and behavior. Faculty were also invited
to share written comments. A note was then sent to the faculty advisor and to the student regarding
the concern(s) identified by the faculty. The retention coordinator would then meet with the
conditional admits who received an alert. In 2013 the process was expanded to include all students.
The professional advisors under the Center for Academic Support now meet with all freshmen who
receive an alert. They also meet with sophomores who receive alerts from two or more classes and
juniors and seniors who receive alerts in three or more classes. In 2014 a team was created to help
students receiving an alert. The team included representatives from Residential Life, Student
Conduct, International Student Services, and Disability Services. Athletics was added to the team in
2015. The team discusses how the various offices can help support students experiencing difficulties.
The Director of the Center for Academic Support also reaches out to all faculty advisors that have an
advisee with alerts.

Dedicated Success Course

The university has had a dedicated success course for a number of years. In 2008, the course was a
one-credit hour course called Accent on Success. Completion of the course was a graduation
requirement. The course was taught by faculty and met twice a week for eight weeks. The content of
the course focused on introducing students to university life and to helping freshmen achieve success.
However, the actual content on the course varied by section at the discretion of the instructor. In
2014, the oversight of the first-year course transitioned to the Center for Academic Success. A
uniform curriculum was established and the professional advisors took over the instruction duties.
The course title was changed to Freshmen Success Seminar and the format of the course was changed to a zero-credit course that met for six weeks, with an optional two weeks available. Students were required to take the course to receive registration approval. The primary focus of the course remained to orient students to university life. Topics covered in the course include time management skills, degree planning, navigating university resources, note taking and test taking, and how to select a major. Students also go over the results of the College Student Inventory. In 2015 the course was expanded to an eight-week course with two optional weeks, based on student feedback. The course was further expanded to twelve weeks in 2016.

**Academic Probation Support Program**

Prior to 2015 students on academic probations were highly unlikely to remain enrolled at the University. While services existed to help students on probation, nothing was structured or made mandatory. In 2015 the Center for Academic Support instituted a support program for all students on academic probation as well as previously dismissed students seeking readmission to the university. As part of the program, students are requested to complete a self-assessment identifying what led them to go on probation and the steps they plan to take to make sure they are not put back on probation. The students are also required to attend six mandatory meetings throughout the semester starting the first week of the semester (the other mandatory meetings occur during weeks 3, 6, 8, 12 and 16). During the first meeting the professional advisor discusses the self-assessment completed by the student and the student signs a contract saying they will adhere to the program. In week three the advisor discusses the student’s goals in detail as well as their plans for staying on track. By week six the early alerts have been issued and if the student has any alerts issued, they discuss those with their advisor. The students are also required to go to their instructor and have them complete an academic performance assessment and then discuss the assessment with the instructor. Tutoring needs are also discussed at this time. By week nine midterm grades have been assigned and the students are required to complete an academic performance assessment for any problematic courses. The advisor also goes over the student’s degree plan and discusses the courses the student plans to take the next semester. The focus of the week twelve meeting is to go over updated progress and to determine if there are any courses where the student needs to consider withdrawal. In the final meeting the advisor and student review the semester, discuss where the students had any issues, and determine next steps. As a result of the program, the retention of students on probation has increased from 23% in 2013 to 62% in 2016.

**Tutoring**

Prior to 2013, all tutoring took place at the college level. In 2013 tutoring services were centralized under the Center for Academic Support. By pooling the resources in a central location, the Center was able to hire more tutors and expand the number of available topics covered by tutoring. Undergraduate students referred by a faculty member serve as the peer tutors. Tutoring sessions are offered in convenient locations across the campus, including in academic buildings, the athletic complex, dormitories, and the Center for Academic Support floor of the Library. Tutoring occurs in a number of ways, including one-on-one sessions, online (for both undergraduate and graduate students), small groups, and walk-ins. A number of academic topics are covered, as are soft skills, such as stress management and study strategies. Furthermore, if tutoring is requested for a topic that is not covered, the Center will reach out to faculty to identify a peer tutor for that topic and hire a tutor.

**Summer Bridge**
In August of 2017, the University began a summer bridge program called Fresh Start. This program is a week-long program available for all conditionally admitted students. The program involves English and mathematics faculty as well as personnel from the Office of Disability Services, Counseling, and Health and Wellness. The program is intended to introduce the students to the University and lay the foundation for them to be successful in their college career. The initial cohort included 23 conditionally admitted students.

**Learning Communities**

The University has one Living Learning Community (LLC) for each of the four colleges. Each LLC is led by faculty from the college. The faculty recruit the students and lead the weekly meetings. The students all live on the same floor within one of the dormitories and are placed in at least one common course.

**Office of Institutional Diversity**

The Office of Institutional Diversity (OID) sponsors a program titled Pathways. Pathways is a diversity-focused pre-orientation workshop that is open to all students, though the majority are students of color. Freshmen students move onto campus a day early and are paired with an upperclassman peer mentor. Diversity Scholars, incoming students who received at least a 3.2 high school GPA and a 21 ACT, also participate in Pathways. In addition to Pathways, these students must also attend three diversity/multicultural events, complete a three-hour fall University internship, and present on their internship experience. The OID finds internships for Diversity Scholars and tries to match the internship with students’ intended major. Each freshman student is also paired with a faculty/staff mentor. Students meet with their mentor an hour a week for the first 6 weeks of the fall and spring semester. The Office of Institutional Diversity interviews and hires Pathways Leaders. Pathways Leaders have to have at least a 2.5 GPA and have previously gone through Pathways as a participant.

The purpose of the Pathways program is to increase the retention and persistence rate for students of color. In addition, a critical goal is to increase cross-racial interactions (CRI). According to Denson and Chang (2009), CRI is the most widely studied in the literature because it is well documented in reducing prejudice. Throughout the academic year the OID continuously checks with Pathways students to see how they are doing socially and academically. The OID director also serves on the Early Alert Committee. Through this committee, the director is able to get information on students who are struggling academically and able to intervene before it is too late. With the insight gained from student and Early Alert Committee meetings, the director is able to stay abreast of challenges these students are facing, and put forth intervention plans to overcome those challenges.

After the last session of Pathways, students take a six question anonymous survey to evaluate their experience. Student feedback is analyzed and implemented during the following year. Feedback and recommendations have helped increase the Pathways retention rate. For example, students continuously recommend Pathways cohort meeting times throughout the academic year. At least once a month all of the Pathways students eat dinner together. Pathways specific cohorts (for example, 2015-2016 cohort, 2016-2017 cohort, etc.) will eat dinner once a month as well. Students have also recommended more breaks within the schedule, shorter presentation times, better food options and more student-to-student bonding time.

As seen in the Student Affairs KPI Dashboard, the Pathways program has helped participants retain at a rate well above non-Pathways student for each of the past three years.
Athletics

Students involved in varsity athletics comprise over a quarter of the new freshmen at Ashland University. Retention rates for student athletes varies by gender, sport, and scholarship status. As seen in the Athletics Retention and Graduation tables, the retention of female athletes, regardless of sport and whether they are on scholarship or not, is very high (average is above 86%). Furthermore, 100% of first-time female freshmen attending the University on an athletic scholarship in fall 2015 returned to the University in fall 2016. The retention of male athletes is not as high, though this varies by sport and scholarship status. Overall, 71% of male first-time freshmen scholarship athletes return for their sophomore year at the University and 59% of the male walk-on athletes retained.

Each sport has particular practices they follow designed to help the student-athletes in their programs experience success. A description of the practices followed by each sport are summarized in the Athletics Success Strategies.

While the University has engaged in a number of best practice activities to help support student success, the majority of these activities have been geared towards the student body as a whole rather than on the specific needs of sub-populations. The University has recognized the lack of focus on specific sub-populations and the President has charged the newly formed Retention and Completion Committee with reviewing retention and completion data on various sub-populations and generating specific action plans to help students from these populations achieve their success goals. The Retention and Completion Committee will produce the institution’s first Retention and Completion Plan by December 2018.
Sources

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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

Ashland University is dedicated to the evaluation and improvement of our educational and student support programs through effective systems and processes for program review, assessment of student learning, and attention to retention, persistence and completion rates. While we have made great strides in the areas described above, through the building of a sustainable institutional effectiveness infrastructure, continued efforts are focused on further development of the systemic collection, analysis, and most importantly, the use of student and unit outcome data, both programmatic and institutional, to guide decision making, planning, and budgeting.

Sources

There are no sources.
5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Argument

5.B.1. The provisions for membership and procedures of the Board of Trustees are in the Board of Trustees Policy Manual and Reference Book. It is the role of the Board of Trustees to lead the University toward the desired performance and assure that it occurs. The Board’s specific contributions are unique to its trusteeship role and necessary for proper governance and management.

Regular Board meetings are held at least three times a year, normally in the fall, winter, and spring. A review of the Board of Trustees’ minutes demonstrates that the Board approaches its task with a style that emphasizes outward vision rather than an internal preoccupation. Standing committees help the Board be effective and efficient. They speak “to the Board” and not “for the Board” unless otherwise authorized. The Executive Committee is one such empowered committee. This committee acts for the Board between regular sessions of the Board. Other Board standing committees include: Trusteeship, Academic Affairs, Student Life, Institutional Advancement, Enrollment Management & Marketing, and Finance & Facilities. These committees bring motions that are voted on by the full board of trustees.

After election and their acceptance, each Board member participates in an orientation session and is given a copy of the Board Policy Manual and Reference Book. During this orientation, a briefing of the role of the Board, officers, and staff, and an overview of programs, plans, and finances are provided. Also as a part of orientation, a mentor is assigned to each new Trustee for one year. The President communicates University news to Trustees through regular emails, usually sent weekly. Trustees also have access to a secure website portal for the efficient sharing of reports, memos, and agendas. Following Board meetings, the President briefs the campus community concerning updates and Board decisions. These meetings are termed Town Halls and present a forum for both Faculty and Staff to raise questions or seek clarification of communication. The University also sends an
5.B.2. Ashland University is governed by a Board of Trustees and guided by a Constitution, Bylaws, and a Board Policy Manual. The Board Policy Manual provides for faculty representative to the Board. The President and Vice President of the Faculty Senate are invited to observe Board meetings and Executive Committee meetings with voice, but without vote or participation in executive sessions. The President and Vice President of the Student Senate are invited to observe board meetings with voice but without vote or participation in executive sessions.

The Board has established a number of standing committees to provide recommendation and guidance to the Board. The Faculty Senate also may select annually one (1) faculty member without vote but with voice for each of the standing committees except for the Seminary Committee, Ashbrook Advisory Board, Audit and Compliance Committee, Retirement Plan Subcommittee, Executive Committee, Presidential Assessment Committee, and the Committee on Trusteeship. The President selects one student for each committee where appropriate who will have a right to speak but not to vote.

The University has a robust administrative structure, with the President serving as the chief administrative officer, accountable to the Board of Trustees. The President appoints the Provost and Vice Presidents and assigns to them responsibilities and authority over major functional divisions of the University. The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) serves as an advisory committee to the President and is composed of the following: Provost, Associate Provost, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Vice President for Development, Vice President for Student Affairs, Seminary President, and the Vice President of Operations and Planning. This group meets weekly during the academic year and participates in two comprehensive retreats annually.

The Cabinet is composed of the ELT, the academic Deans, and senior administrators. The Cabinet meets on a monthly schedule. This group serves to further develop communication from the President and ELT while providing a level of operational perspective across functional teams. Departments represented in Cabinet include: Admissions, Auxiliary Services, Faculty Senate, Human Resources, Athletics, Diversity & Student Conduct, Public Relations, and Christian Ministry.

The Ashland University Faculty Rules and Regulations is the written agreement between the University Board of Trustees and the Faculty regarding Faculty roles, governance, expectations and rights. This agreement was established in 1982 and was modified most recently for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Faculty members are involved in developing and executing academic requirements, policies and procedures of the institution, primarily through committees of the Faculty Senate.

As expressed in the Ashland University Constitution and By-Laws. The Faculty Senate is the legislative body designated to “study, evaluate and legislate” academic affairs. Therein “academic affairs” is defined to include admission standards, curriculum, degrees, Faculty and academic research, organization and duties of the Faculty and other educationally relevant programs at the University. The Faculty Senate Constitution denotes that Faculty Senate represents the faculty in all matters related to the mission of the university. The Faculty Senate By-Laws set forth that these tasks are carried out by monthly meetings of Faculty Senate acting on proposals and recommendations of Faculty Senate committees as follows:

- Faculty Senate Executive Committee – sets the agenda for monthly meetings, transacts referred
business, coordinates general committee activities, assigns committee tasks and is empowered
to act on behalf of Faculty Senate on urgent matters;

- **Academic Standing Committees include:**
  - Academic Advising, Support, and Retention – conducts ongoing reviews and policy
    analyses of professional and faculty advising, academic support services and retention
    initiatives;
  - Academic Assessment – reviews and revises graduate and undergraduate student
    learning outcomes, evaluates assessment reports from the Colleges, Seminary and non-
    degree programs, and provides feedback and recommendations based on assessment
    data;
  - Academic Program Review – reviews existing academic programs with respect to
    institutional missions, goals, and objectives, studies and makes recommendations on
    academic organizational structure, and implements systematic reviews of academic
    programs;
  - Academic Technology – reviews, recommends, and disseminates to the faculty
    information on instructional technology (IT) services, facilities, policies, and training;
  - Undergraduate Academic Standards – reviews and makes recommendations on
    admission standards, academic programs, graduation requirements, student exception
    requests, academic probation and dismissals, and maintains oversight of the Academic
    Integrity Board subcommittee;
  - Undergraduate Curriculum – acts on all proposals for new, revised and eliminated
    courses, majors, minors and certifications and maintains oversight of the Core Advisory
    Council subcommittee;

- **Other Standing Committees include faculty-centered and institutionally-centered committees:**
  - Faculty Development – reviews and recommends: methods for enhancing teaching and
    professional growth, policies for professional study leaves, and resource allocations for
    faculty scholarship and other faculty development programs;
  - Faculty Welfare – meets with designated administrative personnel to review
    institutional finances and provides recommendations on faculty salary and benefits;
  - Professional Standards and Responsibilities – safeguards academic freedom, reviews
    policies and advises on faculty concerns regarding academic freedom, tenure, promotion,
    retirement, grievances, due process rights and on possible changes to the Faculty Rules
    and Regulations;
  - Institutional Budget, Enrollment Management and Marketing, and Student Affairs and
    Athletics – are three committees that provide opportunities for faculty to evaluate and
    provide input relevant to current policies, proposed changes and long-term vision in
    these institutional matters;

- **Graduate Committees include:**
  - Graduate Academic Standards – conducts ongoing review of graduate standards for
    admissions, probation and graduation and recommends policy changes that require
    legislation;
  - Graduate Curriculum - approves and submits proposals: to create or modify programs
    granting Masters or Doctoral degrees or post-baccalaureate licensure, endorsements or
    certifications, and new, modified or eliminated courses for those programs

5.B.3. The Board of Trustees participates in the setting of academic requirements through its
Committee on Academic Affairs. This Committee has the responsibility to review and recommend policies and monitor compliance for the Board in the following academic areas:

- Academic planning
- Review and affirm full-time faculty member appointments during their first year and prior to issuance of faculty contract for the next year
- Faculty members recommended for tenure
- Faculty welfare (salary and benefits guidelines, rank, tenure, retirement)
- Faculty professional development
- Core curriculum, majors, new degrees, and other academic issues
- Instructional technology
- Student Retention programming

The Faculty Senate of Ashland University represents the faculty in all matters related to the mission of the University with specific legislative and advisory powers. The Faculty Senate is empowered to pass legislation in order to propose, to approve, or to recommend policies that concern the academic programs of the University, and the ethical conduct and well-being of faculty and students. Faculty Senate also participates in the academic requirements, policy and processes in the following way:

- To propose and approve changes related to admission and graduation requirements
- To propose and approve changes related to curriculum and subject matter
- To study, evaluate, and make recommendations on policies concerning standards for conducting faculty and student research
- To study, evaluate, and make recommendations concerning student life policies that are related to the academic program
- To study, evaluate, and legislate on matters relative to all other areas pertaining to academic programs at the University as they arise.

Ashland students are afforded a responsibility to provide a voice to the University administration on issues that interest or concern the student body through participation in Student Senate. The student-elected body meets weekly during each academic semester and offers oversight of student organizations and residential units. Through passed legislation, issues of concern are presented to the President, Executive Leadership Team and BOT for consideration.

The students have many other opportunities to get involved and participate in their programming and engagement activities:

- Campus Activities Board (CAB) is a student board which provides quality, diverse entertainment including an assortment of social opportunities which support campus unity, friendship, personal growth, learning and fun. One of CAB's main objectives is to create a positive environment; for both its members and the students CAB serves, in an effort to enhance the overall Ashland University experience.
- The Office of Christian Ministry provides a wealth of opportunities for students to grow their faith while connecting with others in worship, reflection on Scripture, prayer and service/mission experiences.
- Students that participate in Greek Life at Ashland enhance their personal development by committing to ideals of scholarship, leadership and service.
- Ashland affords students meaningful service opportunities locally, nationally and even globally in an effort to encourage social responsibility, community involvement and thoughtful action. Specifically, the Ashland University Gets Involved with Volunteer Service (AU G.I.V.S.)
program is a student-led organization that provides service opportunities throughout the Ashland area and beyond. Examples of programs include dog walking at the local animal shelter; FEED Ashland – the largest food drive in Ashland County; youth story times; and CROP Walk – a program with local churches to help end hunger.

- The annual Leadership & Service Awards program brings together approximately 400 campus community members each April. The program serves as an opportunity for members of the campus community to nominate students, faculty and staff for a variety of honors.

Sources

- BOT meeting minutes 2015-2017
- Faculty Senate By-Laws (2016-17)
- FIN Bylaws APPROVED 10.16.15
- FIN Constitution APPROVED 05.08.15
- FS Faculty Rules & Regulations 2017-18
5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Argument

Ashland University's resource base supports its current educational and co-curricular programs and will ensure ongoing quality. Under the leadership of President Campo, the University has issued new program initiatives including a College of Online and Adult Studies, new and redesigned academic programs, and various memorandums of understanding. The University’s current strategic plan, Ashland Rising 2020, was created in 2015-2016, is being implemented, and as a result overall enrollment has increased, which has had a positive impact on revenue and available resources to further the mission of the University, as seen in Table 1 below. Additionally, the physical facilities have improved significantly over the past 15 years.

Table 1. Enrollment and Financial Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Headcount</td>
<td>3,716</td>
<td>4,536</td>
<td>4,697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Headcount</td>
<td>1,961</td>
<td>2,043</td>
<td>1,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student FTE</td>
<td>4,280</td>
<td>5,198</td>
<td>5,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Tuition and Fees</td>
<td>$60,428,000</td>
<td>$59,783,000</td>
<td>$64,186,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Auxiliary Enterprises Revenue</td>
<td>$8,965,000</td>
<td>$8,072,000</td>
<td>$9,016,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.A.1. Ashland University is aligned and dedicated to the importance of; fiscal stability and viability, qualified and equipped faculty and staff, required physical facilities, and a healthy and stable technological infrastructure to provide its students with a quality educational and holistic experience.

Fiscal Resources and Improving Financial Viability:

The “great recession” that began in 2007, external and disruptive changes in higher education, and enrollment shifts has caused increased financial pressure on the University. In reaction to the
financial challenges, the University has responded with a number of initiatives to improve financial viability, including fiscal management, debt restructuring, new academic program revenue, expenditure management and controls, academic and administrative prioritization resulting in increased net assets.

New Academic Program Revenue

The Dauch College of Business and Economics has increased its mode of delivery for the Master of Business Administration to include five different formats; 1) traditional full-time on campus classroom in each of the Ohio centers, 2) traditional online, 3) one-year online completion, 4) hybrid classroom and online, and 5) one-year international program which includes two international study tours. Gross program revenue for fiscal year 2016-2017 was $6.1 million, fiscal year 2017-2018 forecast is $8.3 million, and fiscal year 2018-2019 budget is $11.3 million. Additionally, the Dauch College of Business and Economics is in the process to gain accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (“AACSB”).

As a result of assessing the market demand and implementation of new recruitment strategies, the Schar College of Nursing and Health Sciences expanded its Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. Gross program revenue for fiscal year 2016-2017 was $.7 million, fiscal year 2017-2018 forecast is $1.7 million, and fiscal year 2018-2019 budget is $2.8 million.

The University has been offering select academic programs to incarcerated individuals for nearly fifty years and has expanded its offerings through an Obama administration initiative named the Pell Grant Experimental Sites Initiatives Program (ESI) or Second Chance Pell Program. Gross program revenue for fiscal year 2016-2017 was $9.7 million, fiscal year 2017-2018 forecast is $12.0 million, and fiscal year 2018-2019 budget is $17.0 million.

Fiscal Management

Prior to fiscal year 2016-2017, the Business Office developed and provided the President, management and Board of Trustees with a quarterly statement of activities and beginning in fiscal year 2016-2017 the process has been improved whereby monthly statement of activities are generated and distributed.

In early 2018, President Campo appointed a new Vice President and Chief Financial Officer with the directive to enhance monthly financial reporting, development of year-end forecasting models and five-year projection models, program cost modeling, and formalization of the operating and capital budgeting processes, procedures, and monitoring.

Additionally, well defined fiscal and internal control policies and procedures must be appropriately documented, communicated and requiring campus constituents to be properly educated. During the spring 2018, the Business Office will lead the campus community and invest the required time, energy and attention to strengthen the current written documentation.

Debt Restructure

The University refinanced several debt obligations aggregating $56,453,000 during August 2015 through the issuance of Economic Development and Finance Alliance of Tuscarawas County (“EDFATC”) bonds. In connection with the refinancing, the University issued additional debt of approximately $16,102,000. The additional debt funded the following: $5,000,000 for capital
expenditures, $4,998,000 for establishment of a debt service reserve fund for EDFATC bonds, $3,000,000 to retain as working capital, $1,341,000 for payment of issuance expenses incurred, $1,021,000 for accrued interest on refinanced debt and swap termination fees, and $742,000 for an interest reserve to make the first bond interest payment.

The debt refinancing of 2015 eliminated the interest rate risk surrounding the University’s previous variable-rate bank debt. It also retired the non-investment grade rating from Moody’s Investor Services associated with the former 2010 tax-exempt bond debt. The refinancing improved liquidity of the University as noted above, by establishing a $5.0 million of debt service reserve fund and providing $3.0 million of working capital via a 5-year loan from the Huntington National Bank. The refinancing also extended the repayment of the debt and requires certain financial covenants for the University.

In January 2018 the line of credit was increased to $5 million. The new terms reduced the short-term borrowing interest expense from the bank's stated prime rate plus 1% to 30-day LIBOR (London Inter-bank Offered Rate) plus 2% and the expense reduction provides additional debt capacity for future use. The University has not utilized its line of credit since August 2015.

Expenditure Management and Controls and Academic and Administrative Prioritization

In every year since fiscal year 2006, the University has enacted budget controls in an effort to align expenses with declining revenue. As reported in the audited financial statements for FY2015, FY2016, and FY2017 total revenue has exceeded total expenses cumulatively not considering non-operating activities in the amount of $12.7 million, as seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Financial Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY2015</th>
<th>FY2016</th>
<th>FY2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
<td>$91,827,000</td>
<td>$95,331,000</td>
<td>$99,616,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>$87,369,000</td>
<td>$91,486,000</td>
<td>$95,256,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Surplus</td>
<td>$4,458,000</td>
<td>$3,845,000</td>
<td>$4,360,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to evaluate and improve operational efficiency, the University completed an Academic Prioritization and Administrative Prioritization during the 2015 fiscal year. This entailed a comprehensive review of all academic programs and all administrative departments. Subsequently, the University engaged the Austen Group to review the cost effectiveness of all academic programs for academic years 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 and provide a comprehensive report. The University also participated in the Delaware Cost Study review for the fiscal years 2015 and 2016 in order to benchmark the financial performance of its academic programs against similar institutions. This review was previously conducted for the 2008 fiscal year.

Increasing Net Assets

The University increased its net assets in 11 of the last 13 fiscal years: 2005 to 2008, 2010, 2011, and 2013 to 2017. Net assets have grown from $97.9 million as of June 30, 2005, to $138.5 million as of May 31, 2017. As reported in the audited financial statements for FY2015, FY2016, and FY2017, cash and investments have increased to $75.2 million and property, plant, and equipment, net of
accumulated depreciation, has remained steady at $143 million as of May 31, 2017, as seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Financial Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY2015</th>
<th>FY2016</th>
<th>FY2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and Investments</td>
<td>$49,024,000</td>
<td>$63,344,000</td>
<td>$75,195,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property, Plant and Equipment</td>
<td>$143,126,000</td>
<td>$143,071,000</td>
<td>$143,293,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets</td>
<td>$128,215,000</td>
<td>$130,638,000</td>
<td>$138,491,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The University’s Composite Financial Index (CFI) and Debt Service Ratio has improved over the past three years, as seen in table 4 below.

Table 4. Financial Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY2015</th>
<th>FY2016</th>
<th>FY2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composite Financial Index (CFI) (goal is &gt; 3.00)</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt Service Ratio (requirement is &gt; 1.25)</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The University is aggressively addressing its challenges and recognizes it must continue to effectively and efficiently utilize its resources, increase net tuition revenue, identify opportunities to leverage its infrastructure and deliver its quality education to new and diverse student populations, identify partnerships that will generate additional net auxiliary revenue streams, and manage its cost structure in this rapidly changing and disruptive environment. The campus community is engaged and committed to executing the strategic plan, Ashland Rising 2020, and has made significant progress to regain its financial strength.

Human Resources

As of the fall of 2017, the University has 183 full-time faculty, 235 part-time faculty, 157 administrators, and 205 staff. The University is committed to recruiting and retaining qualified faculty, administrators and staff. Approximately 60% of the University's operating expenses are allocated for employee compensation and benefits. Additionally, the University offers its employees a comprehensive employee benefits package which includes a retirement plan, health insurance plans, dental insurance, life insurance, vision insurance, disability insurance, and other products.

Based on available resources, the operating budgets for administrative departments includes funding to permit the administration and staff to receive training by attending conferences and purchasing books and periodicals. Also, staff are encouraged to participate in vendor provided webinars to increase and broaden their knowledge base. Funding is provided in the Provost’s operating budget for faculty to attend conferences and travel to conduct research during Faculty Study Leave. The University maintains funding in its annual operating budgets to cover the cost of institutional memberships for numerous professional associations that permit faculty, administrators, and staff to remain current in their fields.

Several of the University's academic Colleges and administrative departments have seen some reorganization in recent years in order to better align staffing with specific needs of students. The
Academic administration has been restructured and augmented to provide academic support (advising, tutoring, and assessment) for students and enhance the online program offerings as noted in previous sections. Additionally, the College of Education has reduced its four department structure to two and the Master of Business Administration program has taken a more active role in recruitment of prospective students. The Student Affairs Division was reorganized to empower the professional staff to be more engaged in directing the efforts of their departments. The Registrar’s Office reporting line has been moved from Enrollment Management to the Provost and reorganized to provide improved services to students by combining the efforts of academic record retention and student registration.

Physical Infrastructure:

The Ashland University main campus is located within the city limits of Ashland, Ohio. The 135-acre campus is comprised of 42 buildings totaling just over 1.4 million square feet of building space referencing the Master Property List 17 10 31. The Ashland Theological Seminary campus is adjacent to, but not contiguous with the University main campus, and is comprised of 23 buildings (145,000 square feet) on roughly 35 acres. In addition to these main campuses, the University owns and maintains the 18-acre College of Nursing campus in Mansfield, Ohio consisting of an academic building and two residence halls (90,000 square feet). Several center locations throughout the state offer courses of study and support to non-traditional students. These center locations include Columbus, Massillon/Stark, Elyria/Cleveland, Southwest/Cincinnati in Ohio, and a Detroit center in Michigan for the Seminary. The 65,000 square foot Columbus Center is owned and managed by the University, while the other centers are operated out of leased facilities. Additionally, the University owns and manages approximately 210 acres of nature preserves (all in Ohio) with the largest being the 128 acre Blackfork Wetlands Nature preserve located 6 miles south west of campus.

The vast majority of University structures were built in the late 1950’s through early 1970’s. As a result, many of the buildings are at, or are approaching 50 years in age. Further building expansion took place in the 2000’s totaling $75 million with major construction for the College of Business and Economics, the College of Education, the College of Nursing & Health Sciences, The Science Center, a recreation center and a major athletic complex.

The University prepared a Facilities Master Plan in 2013 to help prioritize and budget for infrastructure. The ongoing maintenance and capital renewal of the campus grounds and facilities has presented significant functional and financial challenges. Based on national benchmarks, the deferred maintenance backlog could approach $120 million. Financial challenges in the last 10 years have limited the resource dedication to addressing this backlog. Also, the 2015 debt refinancing included approximately $5 million in funds dedicated to addressing the most critical/beneficial elements of this backlog. Moving forward, the proposed 5-year budget does include an increasing budget line for capital and deferred facilities expenses beginning with $750,000 in FY2018 growing to $2 million in FY2021.

Technological Infrastructure:

Ashland University’s Office of Information Technology (OIT) is managed by a Chief Information Technology Officer (CITO) reporting to the Associate Provost. OIT works closely with faculty, staff, and administration to provide a broad range of systems, services and facilities, including computer and network support, enterprise applications, portal management, and technical support complements and furthers student learning regardless of instructional mode of delivery. The University has established four committees with campus wide representation that provide input on
University technology needs: 1) Technology Governance Committee (Executive Level), 2) Infrastructure & Security Committee, 3) Data Standards & Governance Committee and 4) Educational Technology Committee. The input from these groups is used to develop budgets, policies, and procedures in alignment with the Strategic Plan.

The OIT has developed and the Executive Leadership Team approved the Centralize Computer Purchase Program (C2P2) in February 2018. C2P2 is designed to provide a streamlined process for purchasing computers for University full-time faculty and staff.

OIT services include hardware and software support for 1900 computers (1750 PC & 150 Mac), walkup/phone helpdesk, VoIP telephony, network support (wireless and wired), and backend services (security, identity management and server services). The Local Area Network (fiber to buildings) provides centralized file, library, web and class management resources via the internet twenty-four hours a day. The University utilizes Ellucian Colleague as the primary platform for transactional functions of student services, financial aid, finance, and basic human resources. Hobson’s Retain and Connect are used for student recruitment, retention and admission processes. A continuous backup system has been implemented for emergency disaster recovery scenarios.

LearnAU provides support for the University’s Learning Management Systems (LMS) Blackboard (Bb) and Lantern (Corrections Program LMS serving 25 sites), Kaltura media management, Respondus, and Qwickly+ and attendance; all are hosted off-site either via SaaS or Bb Hosted. The Bb LMS offers an interactive discussion board, group area, and faculty training portal as well as course pages that allow faculty to use a variety of instructional tools.

Academic resources through WebAdviser are available via the network to all instructors, students and advisors. These resources include document submission, class/roster attendance monitoring, email, and connectivity to the Library. Additionally, MyAU Portal is a web-based system offering tools to students, faculty and staff for quick access to personalized services and information. Students have immediate access to personalized information.

OIT provides support for classroom technologies, a variety of computer labs, and printing across campus. All classrooms have internet connectivity and multimedia presentation and projection capabilities. Faculty can schedule, access and utilize smart boards and/or Epson smart projectors in the classroom all hooked up via Extron connections for ease of use. Selected classrooms have additional features, such as fixed cameras, document cameras, DVD playback and audio systems. LearnAU and the Center for Teaching Excellence maintain a state of the art experimental classroom to allow faculty the opportunity to try new and experimental technologies. LearnAU maintains a videographer, video capture and production capability and support. Synchronous video conferencing through Blackboard Collaborate Ultra and Google Hangouts enable both campus and online faculty to connect to students, involve guest speakers, and provide online office hours. Additionally, the Blackboard Collaborate tool provides advisors an effective digital means to connect with students.

5.A.2. Resource allocations are based on the strategic plan which informs the annual budget process. As stated in 5.A.1., the University completed a comprehensive review of all academic programs, entitled Academic Prioritization, and all administrative offices, entitled Administrative Prioritization. The results of these year-long reviews were used to help inform the reallocation of University resources.

The University’s strategic plan, Ashland Rising 2020, and its five pillars are the basis of the allocation and distribution of resources for the 2018-2019 operating and capital budget. The
University's operating revenue and expense budget for the 2018-2019 fiscal year is approximately $107.9 million and $103.1 million, respectively. In fiscal year 2017, the Provost created an Institutional Budget Committee (“IBC”). The IBC utilizes the strategic plan and input from various operational and academic units across the campus to develop the annual budget. The membership of the IBC consists of: the Provost and the CFO who co-chair the Committee, a Faculty Senate representative, the Vice President for Operations and Planning, the Vice President for Student Affairs, a representative of the Academic Deans, the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness, and a staff representative appointed by the President. The Budget Director serves as the staff liaison to the Committee. The IBC meets throughout the year to provide input for the development of the annual operating budget. After hosting open forums for the University community, the Committee utilizes that information to finalize the draft budget for submission to the Executive Leadership Team and President for review and approval. The budget is submitted by the President to the Board of Trustees for their review and approval at its January meeting.

The University has been offered the opportunity to participate in the Pell Grant Experimental Sites Initiatives Program (ESI) or Second Chance Pell Program. An Obama administration initiative, offering incarcerated individuals in federal and state correctional institutions the opportunity to be eligible and participate in the Pell Grant program as a means of financial support and access to a postsecondary education. Incarcerated students are eligible to enroll in a limited number of colleges and universities that the US Department of Education approved to offer academic programs. Given its long-standing commitment to the education of incarcerated individuals, Ashland University was approved to participate in the program and authorized to enroll as many as 1,040 students and has since increased to over 1,500 students. The University’s investment in this program has enabled students to enroll in undergraduate level courses on a full-time basis in an effort to prepare them for gainful employment upon their release from prison. This program aligns well with the University’s mission statement of providing these students with the opportunity to receive a transformative learning experience that will shape them to be leaders with integrity in their communities. The program to date has provided positive cash flow for the University, in excess of $1.0 million that allows the University to invest in other academic programs.

5.A.3. The Strategic Plan includes five pillars under which there are numerous goals and objectives intended to propel the University forward. The five pillars include: Academic Excellence; Our Unique Christian Identity; Exemplary Fiscal Stewardship; A Healthy, Safe and Supportive Campus Environment; and Enhanced Community Engagement.

The University's President and Executive Leadership team are focused on linking the strategic plan with budget resources. The overarching goal of the strategic plan is to advance the University in the years ahead by focusing our efforts and resources on providing the best educational experience and value possible for our students at an affordable cost while holding true to our values. The University is striving to provide an education of the whole person so that our students will find their life calling while enrolled and graduate with a sense of purpose and be well prepared to face the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for them.

The future growth of the University will be dictated by the goals and objectives of the Ashland Rising 2020 Strategic Plan. Pillar 1 of the Strategic Plan calls for the creation of the most personalized, transformative educational experience possible. Combined with the recruitment, retention and development of exceptional faculty the University will become a nationally recognized academic institution with a focus on exemplary teaching and extraordinary faculty-student engagement.

In 2010, the University acquired the MedCentral College of Nursing. Subsequently, a $15 million
capital campaign was launched to facilitate the construction of a new state-of-the-art College of Nursing & Health Sciences building, located in Mansfield, Ohio. By December 31, 2012, $15.3 million had been raised. To maximize dollars raised gift agreements offered donors to pay their pledge over a three to five-year period. Significant gifts included a $6.5 million gift from alumnus Dwight Schar, a $1.5 million federal grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, a $1M capital gift from the State of Ohio, and several five and six figure gifts from corporations, foundations, and individuals. Classes began in August 2012, and the Dwight Schar College of Nursing & Health Sciences was dedicated October 2012.

During 2014, the Advancement and Alumni offices continued to engage and steward critical stakeholders and the alumni community. With the changing environment, Advancement focused on building a $1 million sustainable annual giving program and increasing endowments to the University.

Since 2010, total gifts received averaged $6.4 million annually. In 2017, the University had 3,289 donors with a 56% retention rate. While focused on capital campaigns, the donor count declined significantly, and the average gift increased. By 2020, the goal is to increase annual donors by 5% each year with a retention rate goal of 62%. Seven bequests were created with a value of $4.2 million. Additionally, 72 major gifts, ($10,000 and above) were made in 2016-2017.

The University’s endowment fund, as of May 31, 2017, is $39.3 million with an additional $4.1 million in expectancies. The newly launched President’s Circle recognition society, for donors who contribute $1,000 or more annually, has 42 members. In 2017, a board of trustee member and alumna was recognized for $1 million in lifetime giving by entering the Order of the Eagle Society. She donated $.25 million for the renovation and addition to the Tennis Complex which allows Ashland to host tournaments. Men’s Tennis has been added as a result.

In preparation for a comprehensive campaign, the University completed a campaign feasibility study in May 2017. The strategic plan, Ashland Rising 2020, has provided the framework for Advancement to work with the Institutional Advancement Committee, President Campo, Administration and Faculty in creating a two-year $15.2 million campaign. The objectives of the campaign are focused on our belief that philanthropy will ensure we meet the needs of our students with an unfailing commitment to Accent on the Individual. In the next two years, this campaign will ask donors who are committed to our values to support our vision for the future.

The three fundraising “buckets” identified are comprehensive and include all facets of Ashland:

1. Rising to Advance our Mission ($4.2 million) – Annual programs and operations.

2. Rising to Enhance Academics ($4 million) – Creating Academic Programs, such as Life Calling and the Innovation Fund.

3. Rising to Support Students ($7 million) – Increase access to scholarships, faculty endowed chairs and programs, and capital projects.

The Advancement Office was allocated additional resources in the FY2017 budget in preparation for this emerging comprehensive campaign. The funds were spent for an Executive Director of Operations, and two major gifts officers that are fundraising and working within the colleges and marketing. The primary objective is to re-engage previous donors and to build relationships with new prospects.
The Foundation and Government Relations office was created in late 2012 with the initial designation of “University Grants and Sponsored Programs,” changing to its present title in 2016. Before formation as a unit within Institutional Advancement, grant-seeking activities were funneled into two areas: Institutional Advancement (Development) for grants related to capital campaigns and other fundraising activities, and the Office of the Provost for sponsored programs and other, faculty-related applications. With the consolidation of grant-seeking support into a single administrative unit, the University has experienced a steady rise in non-capital grant funding, from less than $.5 million in FY2013 to over $1 million in the first fiscal quarter of 2017. Recent grants have supported STEM education scholarships, career exploration paid internships, and capacity building teaching grants in the fields of pre and post-licensure nursing.

In alignment with the mission of the University, the Strategic Plan incorporates realistic goals in light of the institution’s organization, resources and opportunities. The University has pursued opportunities by developing new academic programs and expanding its student base. Coupled with enhanced recruitment efforts, this strategy has resulted in increased tuition revenue. The focus on fundraising efforts and successful grant initiatives have also contributed to the resources needed to fund the goals of the Strategic Plan. With this growth, the leadership team has realigned and directed the resources needed to support the organizational structure and capacity and positioned the University for future success.

5.A.4. The Executive Leadership Team of the University consists of the President, the Provost, the Associate Provost, the Vice President for Institutional Advancement, the Vice President for Operations and Planning, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the President of the Ashland Theological Seminary, and the Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. All of these individuals are seasoned professionals with years of experience in higher education.

The administrative team that reports to the Executive Leadership Team is also well qualified and provides the support that enables the Executive Leadership Team to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. The University’s organizational chart provides the reporting structure. The Academic administration has been restructured and augmented to provide academic support (advising, tutoring, and assessment) for students and enhance the online program offerings. The Student Affairs Division was reorganized to empower the professional staff to be more engaged in directing the efforts of their departments. The Registrar’s Office was reorganized to provide improved services to students by combining the efforts of academic record retention and student registration. The University provides funding within the budgets of the administrative departments that affords opportunities for administrators and staff to participate in professional development activities both on and off-campus training as documented in Section 5.A.1. Examples of employee training and relationship development in 2016 consisted of the following:

- Faculty College; this was open to all faculty members:
- New hire orientation:
- Lunch and Learn:
- Periodic Manager and Supervisor training:
- Annual all institutional meeting:
- Presidential Town Halls:
- Participation in Local and Regional industry specific meetings:

5.A.5. As stated in 5.A.2., during fiscal year 2016-17 the University revised its organization and created an Institutional Budget Committee (IBC) to serve as the primary budget advisory
committee. In addition to this committee, the Faculty Senate maintains a budget committee consisting of members of the faculty and the committee chair sits on the IBC as the faculty representative. During the fall 2017 semester, the IBC prepared a recommended budget for fiscal year 2018-2019 that was submitted to the Executive Leadership Team and President for review and approval. Prior to that, the IBC held an open meeting to gather input on the draft budget which was used to finalize the recommended budget. The budget was reviewed, revisions considered, and approved by the Executive Leadership Team and President prior to submission to the Finance and Facilities Committee of the Board for their review and approval prior to approval with final approval by the Board of Trustees at their January meeting. The budget will be adjusted, if necessary, at the start of the 2018-2019 fiscal year to reflect actual enrollment.

The University’s budget process was designed to provide an opportunity for those accountable for budgets to offer input into the development of the budget and to ensure that adequate funding is provided for the departments to fulfill their responsibilities based on available resources. Since the date of the last HLC visit, the University has faced some challenging times due to declining traditional undergraduate enrollment. As a result, the focus was to implement budget reductions required to provide for a balanced budget while preserving the integrity of academic programs. While this has been challenging, the University is in a better financial position for it and is focused on increasing enrollment, increasing alternative revenue sources, increasing the value of its endowment, and controlling operating costs.

The budget monitoring process is performed by the Budget Director with oversight by the Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. Executive Leadership Team, Deans and Department Heads. Budget managers have the ability to monitor their budgets on a daily basis by accessing the University's ERP system, Ellucian’s Colleague. During calendar year 2017, Business Office staff began to implement a budget building, modeling and monitoring software package, XLerant's BudgetPak product. Full implementation will begin in early 2018. This software will provide budget managers with real-time access to financial information and the ability to monitor, plan and control financial operations.

On a monthly basis, the University's Budget Director reviews budget performance and shares the data with the respective budget managers who are responsible for budget performance. The Controller and Budget Director prepare financial reports for each of the University’s three Board of Trustee meetings. In addition, the Controller prepares monthly financial statements that are provided to Huntington National Bank, the University President, Executive Leadership Team, and members of the Finance & Facilities and Audit & Compliance Committees of the Board of Trustees.

It was noted in the 2008 HLC Report that there is a need for the University to have a fully allocated cost study completed for the University and the Ashland Theological Seminary. In the fall of 2008, the University participated in the Delaware Cost Study. More recently, the University participated in the Delaware Cost Study for fiscal year 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 and engaged the services of the Austin Group to analyze operating cost data for years. The University intends to participate in the Delaware Cost Study in future years to monitor progress and benchmark its operating expenses. The results of these studies were utilized and addressed in the Annual Program Review reports prepared by department chairs for academic programs across campus. Examples of changes included minimizing low enrolled courses and improve capacity utilization in other courses by increasing course sizes. That has resulted in improved utilization of faculty resources and improve financial efficiency.

Another challenge noted in the 2008 HLC Report was a concern about repeated revenue shortfalls
and mid-year budget cuts. While this occurred as recently as fiscal year 2013-2014 when the University administration was faced with the need to make mid-year budget cuts, the annual operating budget for 2014-2015 was based on more conservative revenue projections. Moreover, during that fiscal year the University adopted a Board level policy statement that mandates that annual operating budgets may not be developed on traditional undergraduate enrollment projections that are greater than the current year’s actual enrollment. Other Board level policy statements were adopted to limit the amount of endowment fund spending. As previously stated, these and other conservative budgeting practices resulted in the University generating an increase in net assets from operations in fiscal years 2015, 2016, and 2017 as well as improving its cash position.

Sources

- FIN 2018-19 Operating Financial Budget - Complete Budget Packet
- FIN Ashland University Master Plan Book 2013
- FIN Audited financial statement 05_31_2016
- FIN Audited financial statement 05_31_2017
- FIN audited financial statement 05-31-2015
- FIN IBC meeting minutes 2017-18
- HR Employee Benefits 2018
- IA Memberships 2018
- IE Austin comprehensive report merged grad & undergrad FY14-15 FY15-16
- IT Centralized Computer Purchase Program Policy_6Feb2018 (6)
- PRES AU_Rising_booklet Revised
- PRES Campus Announcements - Institutional Budget Committee Formed IBC 2018
- PROV Merged Prioritization Reports 2015
5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution’s sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

Planning at the University happens at all levels of the institution. From the Board of Trustees, to the Executive Leadership team, to the President’s Cabinet, and to the various divisional planning committees, plans and actions ultimately connect into the strategic Plan, Ashland Rising 2020.

5.C.1. As stated in 5.A.2., and 5.A.5., the University has implemented an Institutional Budget Committee (IBC), to serve as an advisory committee to the Executive Leadership Team and the President. Their focus is the mission of the University and fiscal stewardship, as outlined in the strategic plan, Ashland Rising 2020.

5.C.2. In fiscal year 2017-2018, the Business Office developed a working draft 5-year budget model based on strategic plan that permits the assumptions to be changed so that various scenarios may be modeled. The model is a tool for long-range planning and will be updated at least annually to reflect changes to the assumptions that drive the model.

In collaboration with the Institutional Budget Committee (IBC) in October the Budget Director sends out a request to all departments for their budgets for the following year. Departments are expected to consider their assessment results and their unit plans, as well as the Strategic Plan when submitting their budget requests. The operational budget requests are compiled, reviewed, and approved by the Institutional Budget Committee (IBC). The Institutional Budget Committee also prioritizes the Strategic Plan Budget requests. The comprehensive budget for the University and the Strategic Plan budget priorities are then submitted to the Executive Leadership Team and President for final review and approval. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness has recently made a change to the Assessment Plan template to include an analysis of budget implications based on the assessment of student learning outcomes to help facilitate the budget process described above. In addition, the following question has been added to the annual program review process: “What professional development, travel, equipment, personnel, facilities, etc., are necessary based on your student learning outcome assessment results and what are the budget implications?”
5.C.3. The Strategic Plan, Ashland Rising 2020, incorporated input from the campus community via the Ashland Rising 2020 planning teams and Strategic Planning Core Team. The University established a Community Engagement Task-Force which increased community involvement and input. The Board of Trustees provided direction in the development of the Strategic Plan through their involvement in planning teams, review and comment sessions, and ultimately adoption of the Plan.

A Campus Facilities Master Plan was developed in 2013. The plan looked at the entire University main campus to analyze the general land use for the next 25 years, including future facility locations, campus gateways, green space, infrastructure, and vehicular circulation. This dynamic plan will be reviewed and updated every 5 years to include actual campus improvements and any changes in plans or priorities. The plan was shared with the Ashland community leadership and continuous collaboration as elements of the plan are implemented or changed. In the summer of 2017 a collaborative gateway intersection project replaced aging infrastructure, improved pedestrian and traffic safety, and enhanced the campus gateway aesthetics by leveraging both city and University resources. Similarly, a major road widening project on Trimble Road in front of the College of Nursing & Health Sciences in Mansfield, Ohio included collaboration between the city and the University to improve safety and accessibility for both students and the community.

In 2014, the Scion Group, a student housing consulting firm was engaged to develop a comprehensive Student Housing Master Plan. Their detailed report and recommendations identified that the majority of room configurations and residence hall amenities do not align with student preferences or national trends. In order to improve the University's market position among competitors and strengthen retention efforts, we should offer policies and facilities that allow students access to increasing levels of independence and privacy as they progress during the college experience. The Facilities Planning Committee and a more focused Housing Planning Committee has developed a housing plan that will incrementally address this strategic need in the next five to 10 years. The plan will look at physical facilities, but it also must consider strategic enrollment objectives and potential housing policy changes. There is a clear intersection between the long-term housing plan and our Strategic Plan, Ashland Rising 2020 as well as the comprehensive fundraising campaign. We are working closely with Institutional Advancement and University leadership to ensure that our student housing needs are placed among our institutional priorities.

5.C.4. The University plans for attainable incremental increases in student population. These plans are individualized by academic program and the plans serve as guides for attaining the goals. One example is the goals that have been developed for the Second Chance Pell program which resulted from the University being authorized to educate 1,040 full-time incarcerated students through this 3-year program initiative of the Obama Administration. As a second example, during fiscal year 2016-2017, University officials analyzed the feasibility of adding additional apartment units to campus in light of student feedback on housing options and the recommendations of the Scion Campus Housing Master Plan Study. And third, during fiscal year 2015-2016, University officials began the process of restructuring the online program offerings. During fiscal year 2016-2017, a concerted effort was made to market online program offerings with the intention to growing the enrollment in the various program offerings.

5.C.5. The Ashland Rising 2020 Strategic Plan anticipates technological changes including the growth of online program delivery that will meet the needs of diverse students. For example, the traditional MBA program has been enhanced to provide students with a number of delivery options. Students in the traditional MBA program have the option to take classes in person, a virtual format,
and online. A specialized 1-year MBA in person and 1-year MBA online program have also been
launched to serve the changing demands of the students.

The Strategic Plan prescribes enhancements for technology on campus and in the classroom. These
include:

- Learn AU – Blackboard management system and Mediasite are in place – adequate for now
- Servers were replaced; equipment purchase in 2018-2019 that constitutes a significant upgrade
  and is upgradeable
- Future – move to solid state drive with multi-thread multi-processor controllers
- Security improvements in the summer of 2017; Trend anti-virus on every computer; endpoint
  security capability
- Professional development – video and off-site learning for staff; training for office staff
- Wireless upgrades to dorms are coming in the next three years with triple the access points;
  upgrades to open spaces on-campus and buildings in the next three to five years.
- Phone system upgraded in June 2017 to voice over internet protocol

Beginning in fiscal year 2013-2014, the University developed new programs to meet needs of the
region – Master of Arts in Health and Risk Communication, subsequently renamed to the Master of
Arts in Corporate and Strategic Communication, Doctor of Nurse Practitioner, 1-Year International
MBA and 1-year online MBA programs. Finally, the Strategic Plan stipulates enhanced
globalization through increased growth of international students on campus and focus on
globalization in the AU Core.

*** The text below has been merged from Core Component 5.D ***

In higher education, much like other industries, those that stand still get left behind. Ashland
University is always looking to improve its performance through growth, transformation and
innovation. All three methods of improvement require a systematic assessment of current and past
performance as well as a thorough evaluation of proposed enhancements. The result is a dynamic
University that knows where it has been and can articulate where it is going for the betterment of the
students it serves.

5.D.1. In June of 2016, the University expanded the role of the Office of Institutional Research to the
Office of Institutional Effectiveness. What was previously a haphazard approach to data collection
became a more systematic attempt to collect and document data elements throughout the University
that are critical for decision-making. Since June of 2016, the University has hired an Executive
Director of Institutional Effectiveness, a Research Analyst, a Director of Assessment and Accreditation and two student assistants. The additional staff facilitate program review data, course evaluations, the fill rate of classrooms, retention data and graduation data, and University KPIs.

To help facilitate this systematic collection and documentation of data, the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness is leading a Data Standards Committee to review data issues and make recommendations to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) for policy and procedure. Data Standards sub-committees have been formed to consider the following issues:

- Data Warehouse - evaluate Blackboard Analytics and make purchase recommendation. This tool would store data throughout the year and allow the University to go back to any date-in-time to drill down and analyze data for past terms or years.
- Document Management and Imaging - evaluate document management products and make purchase recommendation
- Training and Consulting - determine training requirements and develop curriculum and materials
- Reporting/Data Dictionary - establish policies on who can write reports in Informer and clean data within Colleague
- Duplicate Identification and Resolution - resolve duplicate records in Colleague
- Student Planning - evaluate student planning module and make purchase recommendation
- Administrative PC Refresh - evaluate the life cycle of PCs on campus, prioritize and budget for replacement
- Data Retention – review existing policies on data retention and revise/establish policies

The University administers several national student surveys on a three-year rotating cycle including the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The University also participates in the National Study of Instructional Cost & Productivity (aka the Delaware Cost Study), which measures faculty productivity compared to benchmark institutions. The University also conducts a benchmark study of the U.S. News & World Report data. Additionally, the University is looking to require a survey at graduation that would measure student satisfaction regarding their experience at Ashland and capture employment and graduate school information. Currently, the Career Services Center captures some of this information, but only for about a third of graduating students.

The strategic planning process calls for continuous assessment and measured progress towards stated strategic objectives. This has led to the development of key performance indicators that document performance in University operations. Many of these indicators have been incorporated into a dashboard that will provide key data metrics on the health of the University on a consistent basis. This dashboard data will provide the Board of Trustees with a better idea of how the University is doing over time and provide data for key decisions that are to be made. The data will also be used by the Executive Leadership Team and department heads to drive decision making and assessment.

The University Business Office documents the fiscal evaluation of the University through annual audits conducted by an external independent certified public accounting firm. The Business Office reviews budget performance on a monthly basis in addition to the review performed by budget managers. As previously discussed, the Business Office prepares monthly internal financial statements and as part of the month-end process and reporting are in the development stage of incorporating financial projections of year-end operating results in an effort to monitor financial performance. On at least an annual basis, the Business Office staff calculates and evaluates a series of key performance indicators including financial ratios.
Facilities Management and Planning maintains reports on all work orders submitted for repair, replacement, custodial and vending/laundry. In the fiscal year 2015-2016 there were 1080 closed tickets. The average ticket was open for 7 days. Facilities Management and Planning also maintains a list of all updates/improvements made throughout campus each year.

5.D.2. Over the past few years the University has engaged in significant self-evaluation of both academic and non-academic functions. The University engaged in a comprehensive review of all academic and non-academic programs beginning in the spring of 2014 which resulted in a comprehensive report and many recommendations. The University engaged the Austen Group to review cost effectiveness of all academic programs for fiscal years 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 and participated in the Delaware Cost Study review for fiscal years 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. This comprehensive review informed the development of the Ashland Rising 2020 Strategic Plan with the establishment of a well-defined strategy to address the results of these studies.

The University also learns from its regular process of annual program review and assessment. Academic programs are reviewed annually and more intensively on a 5-year basis. Programs in the College of Business, College of Education, and College of Nursing and Health Sciences all do regular self-study to maintain the accreditation from their specialized accrediting bodies. Some programs in the College of Arts and Sciences maintain similar specialized accreditations as discussed in 3. This self-study activity informs the Colleges and changes are made in the programs as a result.

Through these processes, the University has recognized the need to make changes in curriculum. The Core Curriculum was revised to focus curriculum on traditional liberal arts disciplines and require students to take a Cultural Inquiry course. The University recognized the need to adapt to changing technology and improvement in classroom delivery. In the spring of 2017, an innovation grant offered by the provost’s office facilitated the development of an active learning and instructional technology training classroom. The space will feature state of the art technology, flexible furnishings, and vibrant finishes to enhance the active learning pedagogy. This prototype classroom will serve as a training space and be evaluated for deployment in future classroom upgrades and development.

The University responded to the need to increase enrollment and revenue by revising and developing innovative academic programs. As a result, the University has experienced significant enrollment growth in the 2016-2017 academic year in the areas of correctional education and the MBA programs. The executive MBA programs have seen great success in recent years as new and improved programs have been created to better serve the needs of students. The International one-year MBA program was offered in Columbus, Ohio with a cohort that began in 2017. The program includes study tours to Prague, the Czech Republic and Lisbon, Portugal. The first cohort goal to enroll 10 students was exceeded when 18 students enrolled. A second cohort started in March and a third cohort was offered in Cleveland, Ohio in August 2017. Additionally, a one-year, on-line MBA started in the Fall Semester of 2017.

As the University continues to improve its institutional effectiveness, by responding to the needs of potential students, additional new academic programs are being considered, which include:

- Master of Corporate Communication
- MED in Educational Leadership
- Professional Development Workshops for teachers being expanded
- Expanded endorsement opportunities for teachers
- Master of Arts in Criminal Justice
Doctorate in Business

Recruiting and advising efforts for the Graduate, Online, and Adult Studies area have been centralized and streamlined. Additional staff are in place for recruiting and advising efforts and steady growth is expected in the years ahead. New undergraduate programs are under consideration and only approved after a feasibility study has been completed. The Provost is leading the Deans of the colleges in developing an Academic Master Plan that calls for the Deans to evaluate the programs within their college and determine strategies to grow enrollment.

The University has been providing correctional education since the 1960s. Federal and state financial aid programs provided the funding for these programs. However, in 1994, federal and state funding for incarcerated students in federal and state prisons ended. Ashland University continued to offer a significantly scaled back certificate program for correctional students through a grant offered by the Ohio Department of Corrections. In fall 2015, the University leveraged a relationship with J-Pay and the correctional administration in Louisiana to develop an on-line associate degree curriculum that would be offered to students at local or county prisons in Louisiana. Students at local or county prisons were still eligible for Pell Grants. A 2014 Rand Study found that the recidivism rate for incarcerated individuals decreased by 43% when they were enrolled in educational programs.

In July 2015, the Obama Administration approved a 3-year pilot program that would allow prisoners at federal and state prisons to receive Pell Grants. The University applied and was approved as one of 68 higher education institutions in the country to participate. The University began participating in the fall of 2016 educating about 405 students through the Second Chance Pell program. In the 2017 spring semester, the University taught 637 students in the SCP program. These students are served through an innovative online delivery system using the Canvas LMS and individual tablets. This innovative approach has allowed the University to deliver quality academic programs to an under served population while enhancing University revenue. Through the 2017 spring semester the University has educated Second Chance Pell students at over 20 sites in Louisiana, West Virginia and Ohio. In the 2017 spring semester the University also educated 190 correctional students, not part of the SCP, at 5 locations in Louisiana.

The University established the Graduate, Online & Adult Studies unit in 2015. While silos for these programs existed previously within the colleges, the naming of this division formally began the strategic plan to provide centralized enrollment, advising and curriculum development to these populations. In 2013-2014, the University evaluated the admission and advising silos that existed in a variety of centers and colleges and it was determined that students would be better served going to a single on-line point to apply for admission on applications that had a consistent theme. The need for efficiency and consistency dictated the elimination of the silo approach to admission throughout the University, a single office would facilitate the admission process – the Office of Enrollment Services. After extensive evaluation, it was also determined that academic advising for all programs could be more effective and accurate by providing these services through one central advising office.
Sources

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- FIN Ashland University Master Plan Book 2013
- FIN Business Office Financial Reporting Package Jan 2018
- FIN Finance Dashboard 2017
- FIN Working Draft 5 Year Model
- IE Austen Group Grad and Undergrad 2014-15
- IE Austen Group Grad and Undergrad 2015-16
- IE BOT Dashboards 2017
- IE Delaware Study (Art) 2015
- IE Dimensions Survey 2018
- IE First Destination Report 2016
- IE Institutional Prioritization Final Recommendations 2015
- IE NL SSI Summary 2017
- IE Non-Academic Unit Assessment Report Template 2018
- IE NSSE Snapshot 2015
- IE US News Report_2018 Fall 2017
5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

Ashland University is guided by its strategic plan, Ashland Rising 2020, whereby strategically allocating resources to achieve its mission. Through focused efforts, new revenue opportunities have been identified and the strengthening of its fiscal management policies and procedures, the University has gained resources that are reinvested in faculty and staff, technology, and campus facilities to support our mission and values and achieve the desired academic quality of its comprehensive educational offerings both curricular and co-curricular.

The University has developed an inclusive committee framework structure that allows for the development of policies and practices, the collection of data to drive decisions, and encourages effective communication across constituency groups.

Ashland University is well aware of the challenges and disruptions that it faces and its leadership and campus community has intentionally responded to improve and plan for its future.

Sources

There are no sources.