



**Mission & Core Themes Self-Evaluation Report
Fall 2019**

**Prepared for
The Northwest Commission
on
Colleges and Universities**

September 16, 2019

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Institutional Overview

The University of Providence has a rich history extending back to the 1800s, being founded by the Sisters of Providence in Great Falls, Montana. Fulfilling the mission developed by the Sisters, the University of Providence now has two schools defined within it:

- The School of Health Professions (SHP) and
- the School of Liberal Arts and Science (SLA&S).

The School of Liberal Arts and Science (SLA&S) offers a well-designed liberal arts curriculum, graduating approximately 110 students annually. The School of Health Professions (SHP) was created during the summer of 2017, graduating 120 students from the Bachelor of Science Nursing program (BSN) in 2016. Both schools offer undergraduate and graduate programs.

The University has entered into an exciting new era through collaboration with its corporate sponsor, Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH). As part of the PSJH organization, the University maintains complete authority in university operations to provide excellent academic programs and to develop more innovative programs meeting the needs of new generations of students. The financial sponsorship in this team effort puts the University on a path of growth and sustainability through its attention to assessment data collected through an institution-wide strategic plan. New technology infrastructure and building projects have resulted in a stronger technology base, greater opportunity for distance learning and better service for students through new and remodeled physical plant.

Academic Excellence

Program prioritization completed in 2018 – 2019 resulted in stronger, more focused offerings of leading-edge programs in the SLA&S. The SLA&S expanded with new offerings including a new BS in Sports Management degree in 2019 and concentrations in exercise science. The SLA&S continues to maintain high quality programs in mathematics, the sciences, counseling and the Core Curriculum based on the Catholic intellectual tradition. Within the SHP, the BSN remains a distinctive program for the University with steadily increased enrollment, providing larger numbers of nurses at the BSN level. A 2010 study from the Institute of Medicine made a strong recommendation that 80 percent of the nursing workforce have a baccalaureate degree by 2020 (Institute of Medicine Study: Initiative on the Future of Nursing) supporting this growth. An additional success of this program is that “Seventeen percent of the graduates attend graduate school within two years of graduation and 35% of graduates are promoted within two years of graduation” as reported in the “RN to BSN Program Annual Report” from 2016 and from 2017. New concentrations for existing programs also provide needed certifications for working professionals. In addition, healthcare management education includes a new Executive Master’s in Health Administration in partnership with the professional organization “The Health Management Academy,” which is “a network of executives from the nation’s largest integrated health systems.” (Health Management Academy Overview)

Student Experience

The University remains committed to its mission to provide a path through higher education for many who otherwise may not have the resources to further their educations and enter meaningful careers. The whole-person transformative experience offered through a strong liberal education prepares students for a life of service to their communities and meets the mission of learning to live and make a living. Having stability in leadership, the University is emerging stronger with a renewed vision and

refreshed image through rebranding with a growing reputation for providing a meaningful value proposition for students and families.

Mission Fulfillment

The University's transition through presidential leadership changes, acquisition of new leadership in key areas, the elimination of several programs, launch of new programs, a new strategic plan, meaningful partnering with University's corporate sponsor (PSJH) and other professional entities, and new construction on campus places it in a very positive position for improved experiences for students. The University's strategic plan aims at achieving significant enrollment growth through investment in enrollment marketing, more productive recruitment and retention strategies, a stronger value proposition for our students through the Argo Advantage, and program prioritization and new program offerings that makes the student experience stronger. Each of these are key elements of Core Themes achievement that leads directly to mission fulfillment based on the institution's strategic plan.

Organizational Effectiveness

In 2017, the University moved into a new era after rebranding as the University of Providence. Through the "Year of Mission" with PSJH, the university participated in training as PSJH is updating their organizational mission. By fall 2018, to identify and align the University more closely with its corporate sponsor, (PSJH), the University submitted new Core Themes to replace the 2014 Core Themes. The new Core Themes were based on the University's strategic plan (board approved December 1, 2017) and approved by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) on January 15, 2019. Assessment and the culture of assessment has grown exponentially with this marriage of strategic plan to core themes. These specific measures providing current actual achievements and targets for pragmatic goals for which to reach sets the institution on a path of continuous improvement.

Market Positioning

The University has experienced enrollment challenges in recent years similar to many small, private universities and colleges. Focused efforts to support enrollment and retention is a major part of the Strategic Plan approved by the Board on December 1, 2017 and, as it is a living document, revised May 3, 2018. Greater support toward success for students in a timely and fiscally responsible manner is promised through the Argo Advantage:

"... our exceptional commitment to affordability, value and student success. It ensures that University of Providence students graduate on time and career-ready, as skilled and ethical leaders ready to help shape a better world."

The University of Providence faces many challenges similar to the financial environment smaller not-for-profit private institutions face nation-wide. Financial considerations for families have challenged enrollment since the economic downturn of 2008. Coupled with the growing negativity regarding the value of higher education itself today, the University addresses financial as well as cultural challenges through strengthened enrollment management and recruitment strategies, focused retention strategies, and attention to traditional Catholic educational offerings so needed by young adults in today's world.

This learning community embraces that opportunities that are before us are far greater than what lies behind us. And, with God, everything is possible.

PREFACE

1. Institutional changes

The University of Providence has been on a course of rapid change for the past couple of years. The following is a brief update of institutional changes since the last report in 2018:

- a. New provost – the institution acquired Dr. Matthew Redinger as Provost in August 2018
- b. A new Director of Human Resources, Kila Shepherd, was acquired on January 21, 2019
- c. New Vice President of Enrollment Management - The institution acquired Tracey Dysart Ford as the interim Vice President of enrollment in April 2019
- d. New CFO/COO/EVP – Dr. Gaby Hawat was acquired by the institution in March 2019 as the new Executive Vice President/Chief Financial Officer/Chief Operating Officer. His responsibilities on campus include overseeing strategy, risk and compliance, finance, physical plant, enrollment management, IS, HR, and marketing and communications.
- e. Dr. Anthony Aretz retired in July, 2019, and the [Board approved](#) the Vice President of Mission Integration, Very Reverend Oliver J. Doyle, as interim President on July 24, 2019.
- f. Twila Croft, Director the Academic Success Center, was placed as Director of Student Affairs in August 2019.

2. Response to topics previously requested

- a. The following were approved by NWCCU on January 15, 2019:
 - i. Probation was lifted with the approval of the Fall 2019 Special Report addressing Eligibility Requirement # 20 and 21
 - ii. The Fall 2018 FRR was approved by NWCCU January 15, 2019
 - iii. The Major Substantive Change proposal for a change in form of control
 - iv. The Major Substantive Change proposal for a change in Mission and Objectives (Core Themes)
 - v. Approval of the Executive Master of Healthcare Administration degree program
 - vi. The Spring Ad Hoc approved for Recommendations # 3, #6 and #11 was submitted on March 1, 2019, and later approved on July 12, 2019.
 - vii. The NWCCU Annual Report was submitted on May 22, 2019.
- b. Future request responses being developed:
 - i. Fall 2019 Ad Hoc report regarding Recommendations #1, #2, #6, and #9 due September 16,2019
 - ii. Mission and Core Themes Self-Evaluation Report due September 16, 2019
 - iii. Fall 2019 on-site Ad Hoc visit on October 9, 2019
 - iv. The Fall 2019 Financial Review Report due on November 11, 2019
 - v. Spring 2020 Ad Hoc report without an on-site visit regarding Recommendations #4, #5, #7 and #8

Executive Summaries of Eligibility Requirements #2 and #3

- 2. AUTHORITY:** The institution is authorized to operate and award degrees as a higher education institution by the appropriate governmental organization, agency, or governing board as required by the jurisdiction in which it operates.

The University of Providence, under several names over time, is [incorporated](#) under the laws of the State of Montana.

The University has been empowered to grant diplomas and confer academic honors and collegiate degrees since 1932. The University was founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Providence until ownership was transferred to Providence Health Systems a few years ago. The University's corporate sponsor is now Providence St. Joseph Health who has a formal systems board for the various ministries it administers. The University maintains complete authority of its regarding educational decisions. The University operates within the jurisdiction of the Catholic bishop of Great Falls-Billings. The University of Providence has the necessary [authorization from the Board of Regents](#) (State of Montana University System) to offer post-secondary degree programs in the state of Montana. The University of Providence is [accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities](#). The past year marks the 85th commencement ceremony in the University's history, graduating students in Bachelor's and Master's Degrees.

- 3. MISSION AND CORE THEMES:** The institution's mission and core themes are clearly defined and adopted by its governing board(s) consistent with its legal authorization, and are appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education. The institution's purpose is to serve the educational interests of its students and its principal programs lead to recognized degrees. The institution devotes all, or substantially all, of its resources to support its educational mission and core themes

As an expression of the teaching mission of Jesus Christ, the Mission of the University of Providence is to provide a high-quality liberal arts education opportunity for students to have a whole-person transformative experience preparing them for a lifetime of service to their communities with genuine attention to the poor and needy among us having learned deeply to ***live and making a living.***

The University of Great Falls was founded through the collaborative efforts of the Sisters of Providence, the Ursuline Sisters, the Catholic Bishop of Great Falls and the civic community all of whom recognized societal need for higher education. Its educational mission, sponsored by the Sisters of Providence, continues to be the shared endeavor of dedicated people.

After development and full review, the University of Providence's Core Themes are taken from the institution's strategic plan that was approved by the Board on December 1, 2018. The Core Themes are taken directly from strategic plan and thoughtfully support the University's pillars of Academic Excellence, Student Experience, Mission Alignment, Market Positioning and organizational Effectiveness, leading to recognized degrees. With Mission central to the Strategic Plan, it is also central to the achievement of the Core Themes. The institution devotes all of its resources in support of its education mission and Core Themes as shown in its [Institutional Financial Statement 2018](#).

Mission, Core Themes and Expectations

1.A.1 The institution has a widely published mission statement, approved by its governing board, that articulates a purpose appropriate for an institution of higher learning, gives direction for its efforts, and derives from, and is generally understood by, its community.

Mission Statement

The [Mission Statement](#) of the University of Providence is “As an expression of the teaching mission of Jesus Christ, the mission of the University of Providence is to provide students with the opportunity to obtain a liberal education for living and making a living.” The university’s focus on mission fulfillment is to provide a high-quality liberal educational opportunity for students to have a whole-person transformative experience preparing them to provide a lifetime of service to their communities with genuine attention to the poor and need among us, having learned deeply to live and make a living.

This mission statement has been used by the university for decades having been clearly articulated in a proclamation by the Sisters of Providence. In later years, the pages-long proclamation evolved into the mission statement that captures the quintessence of the proclamation, and was formally approved. It has remained the driving purpose behind the development of high-quality liberal education programs, open to all especially the poor and vulnerable who might not otherwise achieve higher education opportunities, to prepare students for a lifetime of service to their communities in their chosen fields.

The mission statement is widely published throughout the university in marketing, advertising, the Academic Catalog, posters, co-curricular and student support services. The mission and [Core Themes](#) have been included in professional development for faculty and staff, board meetings and agendas, and the onboarding process for new hires.

1.A.2 The institution defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations. Guided by that definition, it articulates institutional accomplishments or outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.

Interpretation of Mission Fulfillment

The **PURPOSE** of this mission is to provide opportunity for the poor and vulnerable among us to obtain a liberal education through a transformational student experience that emphasizes knowing how to truly live life and for making a living. This is apparent through the preparation students achieve a successful career and a lifetime of service to their communities. The University of Providence’s founders recognized the great social need for higher education. The educational ministry that is the University of Providence continues to be the shared endeavor of dedicated people to that end.

The **CHARACTERISTICS** of the mission meet the expectations of NWCCU in both its scope and detail in how the university pursues evidence of mission fulfillment. This is best demonstrated through the Core Themes as expressions of its dedication to whole-person transformational experiences. Fulfilling the university’s mission requires steadfast dedication to the ideals of the Core Themes:

- **Academic Excellence** - The primary pursuit for all students, faculty and staff is to uphold the highest academic standards across all programs, as measured through graduation rates, placement rates, and student performance on a variety of assessments.
- **Student Experience** - Students undergo a distinctive and transformative experience that prepares them to pursue their lifetime calling and make the world a better place, as measured through retention rates, student satisfaction assessments, and student development through study abroad and other co-curricular experiences.
- **Mission Effectiveness** – Driven by our Mission, the university pledges to provide life-changing educational experiences and programs while focusing on operational efficiency to sustainable growth, measured through student surveys, enrollment growth, and systematic program assessment.

The **EXPECTATIONS** of mission fulfillment are evident in continual assessment and analysis to maintain focus on the University’s mission. This includes examining emerging markets and the institution’s distinctive and timely market position, available resources, and existing capacity to capitalize on these markets. Further, the institution is making every effort to be good stewards of its resources and assets to be sustainable now and far into the future.

Articulation of Acceptable Threshold

Thresholds are given as expectation targets leading to mission fulfillment. The acceptable threshold for mission fulfillment is taken directly from the assessment of the Core Themes, which derive from the institution’s strategic plan. Assessment focused on baseline historical data, current data, and realistic expectations (targets) of continuous improvement, all of which constitutes the evidential data from the Core Themes. Each Core Theme undergoes regular, systematic assessment and analysis to maintain focus on the University’s plan for fulfilling the mission. This includes examining emerging markets and the institution’s School of Health Professions’ distinctive and timely market position, available resources, and existing capacity to capitalize on these markets. Further, the institution is making every effort to be good stewards of its resources and assets to be sustainable now and far into the future. Other objectives from the strategic plan are used to inform the fulfillment of the mission as well.

What does mission fulfillment look like through [Core Theme 1 - Academic Excellence](#)?

University of Providence faculty are trained in comprehensive course development and assessment to provide high quality, effective learning. Faculty assess student achievement of program objectives for ongoing program improvement. The university’s Strategic Plan supports deployment of high-quality programs to produce well-informed, productive citizens prepared for a lifetime of service to their communities. Quality program assessment, faculty development, and student-faculty interaction combine to demonstrate that Academic Excellence is a foundation for fulfillment of its Mission

What does mission fulfillment look like through [Core Theme 2 – Student Experience](#)?

Students are provided excellent opportunities for a transformative learning experience through

- engagement in high-quality learning opportunities
- access to high quality, well-planned and implemented academic programs
- numerous co-curricular programs providing distinctive learning experiences

- cohesive student academic support throughout their UP experience
- a continuous educational experience through the Argo Advantage which provides:
 - 4-year completion plans
 - financial aid and career placement information and assistance
 - LRAP – Loan Repayment Assistant Program

Both experiential learning and the measure of a distinctive and transformative experience are assessed through the [co-curricular programs for effectiveness](#) (composite of all reports) and alignment to the mission and also through clearly defined indicators in the strategic plan.

What does mission fulfillment look like through [Core Theme 3 – Mission Effectiveness](#)?

The University of Providence has taken decisive steps to achieve and maintain the sustainability of high-quality programs of value recognized by students, faculty, and staff to provide programs that intend to cultivate thoughtful, positive living and opportunities that lead to successful, productive careers (“**living and making a living**”).

Focus on the Catholic intellectual tradition through the Core Curriculum, and assessment results gained through CIMA, support and reinvigorate the distinctive culture of the university as a Catholic institution. Focused recruiting is driven by enhanced options such as the Argo Guarantee (the four-year guarantee); the Banner software package that includes [RECRUIT](#), [DegreeWorks](#), and [ADVISE](#); and a revised career center. This multifaceted suite equips the university and its students, like never before, with a clear advantage in providing support to students from initial inquiry, to enrollment, completion, graduation, and paths to advanced educational opportunities and careers. Finally, cutting-edge programs in the School of Health Professions offer practicing professionals unprecedented access to professional development opportunities.

Operationally, through Core Theme 3, the university is regenerated through focus on efficient operational practices and processes that benefit the students with strong, sustainable programs and the effective, data-informed functioning of the university.

Conclusion Standard 1A Mission

Taken together, Core Theme 1 - Academic Excellence, Core Theme 2 - Student Engagement, and Core Theme 3 - Mission Effectiveness (which combines assessment efforts in the three strategic areas of Mission Alignment, Market Positioning, and Organizational Effectiveness) strengthen the university for a bright future based on meeting the mission of creating a whole-person transformative experience by providing a high-quality liberal education for **living and making a living**.

Core Themes

1.B.1 The institution identifies core themes that individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission.

1.B.2 The institution establishes objectives for each of its core themes and identifies meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes.

The Core Themes of the University of Providence (UP) are all essential having been taken from the institution's [Strategic Plan](#), of which Mission Alignment is central. All roads may lead to Rome, and at UP all metrics lead to Mission.

To better understand, it was suggested that we move our language from NWCCU Core Theme terms to the Institution's Strategic Plan language. The following chart will be helpful:

NWCCU Terminology	University of Providence Terminology
Core Themes	Pillars
Objective	Outcome
Indicators	Metrics
Thresholds	Results & Expected Targets

The following will describe each of the Core Themes of the University of Providence in regard to:

- Pillar
- Outcomes
- Metrics
- Results & Expected Targets

The University developed three Core Themes directly from its Strategic Plan. The first two are completely from their own Pillars while Core Theme 3 has outcomes, metrics and expected targets taken from three distinct pillars and was praised by NWCCU for its targeted inclusiveness when they were submitted September 24, 2018, and [approved April 29, 2019](#). A separate letter for Core Theme approval was provided April 29, 2019.

Pillar #1

Title: Academic Excellence - Academic excellence is the primary pursuit for all students, faculty and staff. Without exception, we uphold the highest academic standards across all programs.

Outcome #1: University of Providence students develop the critical thinking and reasoning skills to excel in their post-graduation pursuits

Metrics:

- #1 - % of students who meet program outcome objectives
- #2 CLA+ Senior Mean Score rank (Campus undergraduates)

Outcome #2: University of Providence provides world-class, student-centric teaching

Metrics:

- #1 - Percentage of faculty trained on course development, outcomes, and assessment
- #2 - [The National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE) Student-Faculty Interaction Score and Effective Teaching Practice (Mean Score; undergraduate)

Rationale:

Outcome #1

To assess the progress of students, metric #1 led to the development of a [Continuous Assessment Cycle](#) for academic program level assessment. This one-year cycle is as follows:

1. The Academic Affairs Office (AAO) provides results of aggregated data and analysis of [Program Objective Assessment Reports](#) (POARs) to faculty at fall Faculty Development session.
2. Faculty revise Assessment Plan (AP) via an Action Plan with Action Steps, as appropriate, by first the week of October and begin program assessment.
3. Provost and the DIE review revised APs by second Friday in October.
4. Faculty continues assessment per revised plans.
5. POARs are turned in to Program Leads on the Friday after grades are due and then to DIE.
6. POAR results are aggregated and analyzed by the Institutional Researcher (IR) from POARs before end of contract May 15.
7. The IR provides aggregated result to the AAO and Division Chairs.
8. The AAO and Division Chairs analyze POARs over the summer and prepare for returning to faculty at Faculty Development.

And the cycle continues annually with results used for program and curriculum improvement.

Critical thinking and reasoning skills are both highly desired by employers and advanced educational experience coordinators. For the university to understand how students are doing in these two areas, assessment of program outcome objectives from all programs on campus will provide information on student progress as well as areas in need of support. Both freshmen and seniors take the [Collegiate Learning Assessment \(CLA+\)](#). The freshman results can be used by students and faculty alike to support student in writing and critical thinking. Seniors who excel at CLA+ can receive a digital badge to use on employment applications as well as applications for advanced learning programs. Further, the CLA+ offers support to students via video to know how to use the results of their own exam results to improve where they need to improve. Both program objective assessment and the nationally normed CLA+ exam provides feedback to students at critical junctures in their educational journey.

Outcome #2

To provide the best student-centric teaching, faculty is engaged in professional development on course development, outcomes and assessment through numerous means. Faculty have been trained in Quality Matter (QM) which supports the development of online course planning with the advantage of having the courses being QM certified. The skills faculty learn doing QM is transferrable to on-campus courses. The Director of Teaching and Learning Excellence (DT&L) provided professional development for faculty on writing student learning outcomes, developing well-designed program objectives, determining how the objectives are to be consistently assessed within programs and providing the results through the [Program Objective Assessment Report \(POAR\)](#) each spring. Further, the results of the POARs are used in the fall to improve assessment planning for the coming year. This [cycle of continuous improvement](#) places the university on a path to continuous improvement in instructional best practices. Another assessment is conducted bi-annually through the [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#) through two chosen metrics of

Student-Faculty Interaction and Effective Teaching Practices as perceived by students. A goal is for the University to outrank those institutions in their comparison groups and/or the entirety of NSSE responses nationally.

The selected metrics for Academic excellence are the core of the academic experience of students:

- Academic achievement within programs
- Academic achievement in critical thinking and writing skills across the curriculum
- Well-trained faculty with professional growth mindsets
- The strong academic relationships exemplified by the student-faculty relationship
- Effective teaching practices from the students’ point of view

Pillar #1

Outcomes	metrics	Results & Targets
University of Providence students develop the critical thinking and reasoning skills to excel in their post-graduation pursuits	% of students who meet program outcome objectives	Program established 2018 – 2019, including faculty training Baseline Year 2019 – 2020
	CLA+ Senior Mean Score rank (Campus undergraduates)	2017-2018 expected – 1075 2017 – 2018 actual – 1178 2018 – 2019 Target: 1080
University of Providence provides world class, student-centric teaching	% of faculty trained on course development, outcomes, and assessment	Fall 2018 Actual: 79% Winter 2019 Day 1 SHP & SLA&S Faculty PD: 89% Winter 2019 Day 2 SLA&S only PD: 73% 2019 – 2020 Target: 80% 2020 – 2021 Target: 85% 2021 – 2022 Target: 90%
	NSSE Student-Faculty Interaction Score and Effective Teaching Practice (Mean Score; undergraduate)	NSSE 2014 1 st Year: 20.8 Seniors: 21.1 NSSE 2016 1 st Year: 25.5 Seniors: 21.2 NSSE 2018 1 st Year: 28.5

		Seniors: 31.9 2020 Target: UP means will be greater than comparison institution means
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What does accomplishment of Academic Excellence look like at this institution through its Core Themes?

Students at the University of Providence work with faculty trained in comprehensive course development and assessment to provide high quality, effective learning. Faculty assess student achievement of program objectives for ongoing program improvement. The university’s Strategic Plan establishes a goal of deploying high-quality programs to produce well-informed, productive citizens prepared for a lifetime of service to their communities. Quality program assessment, faculty development, and student-faculty interaction combine to demonstrate that Academic Excellence is a foundation for fulfillment of its Mission.

Title: Pillar #2 - Student Experience: Students undergo a distinctive and transformative experience that prepares them to pursue their lifetime calling and make the world a better place.

Title: Student Experience

Outcome #1: University of Providence retains students at a rate that demonstrates its value to peers and prospective students

Metrics:

- Retention rates, fall-to-fall, all undergraduate students
- Retention rates, first time freshmen (undergraduate)
- Retention rate (SHIP undergraduate and graduate)

Outcome #2: Students are supported to pursue relevant and meaningful experiential learning opportunities, which are enabled through organizational partnerships.

Metrics:

- **Metric #1:** Percentage of eligible undergraduate students who engage in student internships
- **Metric #2:** UP Senior students’ mean score in Reflective and Integrative Learning as measured through NSSE every two years. With significant numbers of Senior students participating (n=> 130), the data is valid. Senior mean scores are as follows:
 - a. 2014 – 34.5
 - b. 2016 – 40.7
 - c. 2018 – 35.9

Targeted scores (thresholds) for seniors in this indicator for the next administration in 2020 is projected to be 41 and for 2022, 45.

Rationale:

Outcome #1:

Retention rates – The university determined that its tactic for retaining students “is to demonstrate its value to peers and prospective students.” The university closely tracks retention rates from three perspectives:

- a. Retention rates, fall-to-fall, all students (undergraduate)
- b. Retention rates, first time freshmen (undergraduates)
- c. Retention rates, School of Health Professions (undergraduate and graduate)

Per data gathered for the Strategic plan and with reasonable projections, this shows these three areas as currently assessed (reported in metrics by fiscal years 2017 – 2018) with targets for 2018 – 2019 and 2019 – 2020 consistent the targets determined.

2018 – 2019 and 2019 – 2020

8-Year Undergraduate and Graduate Retention Percentages		
	Undergraduate	Freshman
8-Year Mean	72.66%	60.90%
8-Year Mode	74.94%	none
8-Year Median	72.54%	54.48%
8-Year range/difference	77.16% - 54.17% = 23.24%	68.48% - 52.17% = 16.31%

Outcome #2:

The internship program continues to be developed under a new Director of [Career Services](#) in spring 2019. Foci in the program includes outreach to the local community, the McLaughlin Research Institute, and Providence St. Joseph Health facilities. The new director envisions a 4-year “career pathways” plan which includes development of vital career skill development for students.

Regarding the meaningfulness of student experience, satisfaction surveys provide a view into experiential learning. Whether through the [Student Satisfaction Inventory](#) (Ruffalo Noel Levitz), Study Abroad, internships, field experiences, or through the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) for Reflective and Integrative learning.

Experiential learning and its importance is also reflected in the High Impact Practices measured by NSSE. The indicators show that in 2018, freshmen exceeded all comparison groups, albeit slightly, in service learning experiences. Seniors exceeded only one of the comparison groups. The current work of the Director of the Career Center to provide experiential learning opportunities included summer employment opportunities on campus. The 2018 NSSE indicators for internship opportunities exceeded only one of 3 comparison groups. It is in this area the Career Center is working the hardest for fall 2019 and beyond.

The university also provides students with distinctive co-curricular programs for service learning opportunities, including [Providence Formation Program](#), Athletics and the [Corps of Discovery](#). The Corps of Discovery has been determined so vital to the freshman experience that it is being offered as a for-credit course beginning in fall 2019.

Efforts to grow in the areas as measured with the senior mean by NSSE for Reflective & Integrative Learning include adding the Core Curriculum in 2017, which was not fully implemented until the cohort to graduate in 2022. It is this cohort which will fully benefit from the Core Curriculum’s increased reflective practice and focus on the Catholic intellectual tradition, as manifested in expanded philosophy and theology offerings.

According to NSSE, “Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Colleges and universities promote student learning by challenging and supporting them to engage in various forms of deep learning.” Reflective and Integrative Learning is one of four areas assessed in the Academic Challenge portion of NSSE. The University of Providence recognizes that it has work to do in this area as shown below.

NSSE Senior Mean Scores for Reflective and Integrative Learning		
University of Providence	Rocky Mountain Private Comparison Group	All NSSE 2015 - 2016
2016 mean score: 40.7	2016 mean score: 40.4	2016 mean score: 38.7
2018 mean score: 35.9	2018 mean score: 38.1	2018 mean score: 38.3
2020 mean Target: 41		
2022 mean Target: 45		

To provide support to meet these needs, the university revitalized student support services in 2018 – 2019 by creating a one-stop, full-service student support center in the library including the [Academic Success Center](#), [TRiO Center](#), [Writing and Critical Thinking Center](#), and the [STEM \(Mathematics\) Center](#) all under one roof. To support university efforts to develop evidence-based innovative models and strategies to support development of STEM educators through the acquired NSF Noyce Capacity Building Grant, the Mathematics Center will become the STEM Center to more fully support the sciences as well as mathematics. In Fall 2019, the university will also begin utilizing EdReady in both Mathematics and English to support student needs in these cross-curricular subjects.

What does the accomplishment of high-end Student Experience look like at this institution through its Core Themes?

Students are provided excellent opportunities for a transformative learning experience through

- engagement in high-quality learning opportunities
- access to high quality, well-planned and implemented academic programs
- numerous co-curricular programs providing distinctive learning experiences
- cohesive student academic support throughout their UP experience
- a continuous educational experience with the [Argo Advantage](#) providing
 - 4-year completion plans
 - financial aid and career placement information and assistance
 - LRAP – Loan Repayment Assistant Program

Both experiential learning and the measure of a distinctive and transformative experience are assessed through the co-curricular programs for effectiveness and alignment to the mission and also through clearly defined indicators in the strategic plan, especially those indicators selected for the new Core Themes.

Pillar #2

Outcomes	Indicators	Results & Thresholds
University of Providence retains students at a rate that demonstrates its value to peers and prospective students	Retention rates, fall-to-fall, all undergraduate students	2017 – 2018: 71% actual 2018 – 2019 Target: 72% 2019 – 2020 Target: 73% 2020 – 2021 Target: 74% 2021 – 2022 Target: 75%
	Retention rates, first time freshmen (undergraduate)	2017 – 2018 Actual: 68% 2018 – 2019 Target: 62% 2019 – 2020 Target: 64% 2020 – 2021 Target: 66% 2021 – 2022 Target: 68%
	Retention Rate (SHIP undergraduate and graduate)	2017 – 2018 Actual: 94% 2018 – 2022 Target: 85%
Students are supported to pursue relevant and meaningful experiential learning opportunities, which are enabled through organizational partnerships.	% of eligible undergraduate students who engage in student internships	Spring 2019 - Program in development with new Career Center Director
	NSSE Reflective & Integrative Learning (Senior Student Mean Score; undergraduate)	Mean scores: NSSE 2018 Actual: 35.9 NSSE 2020 Target: 41 NSSE 2022 Target: 45

What does the accomplishment of high-end Student Experience look like at this institution through its Core Themes?

Students are provided excellent opportunities for a transformative learning experience through

- engagement in high-quality clinicals, service-learning and internship opportunities
- access to high quality, well-planned and implemented academic programs
- numerous co-curricular programs providing distinctive learning experiences
- cohesive student academic support throughout their UP experience by one-stop academic support programs
- a continuous educational experience with the Argo Advantage providing
 - 4-year completion plans
 - financial aid and career placement information and assistance
 - LRAP – Loan Repayment Assistant Program

Both experiential learning and the measure of a distinctive and transformative experience are assessed through the co-curricular programs for effectiveness and alignment to the mission and also through clearly defined indicators in the strategic plan, especially those indicators selected for the new Core Themes.

Title: Core Theme #3 from Pillars #3, #4, #5 – Mission Effectiveness: Driven by our Mission, we will provide world-class liberal arts and health professions programs while focusing on operational efficiency to deliver on our vision for sustainable growth.

Note: The purpose of the university’s Mission is to focus on the delivery of a liberal education that provides students the opportunity **to live and to make a living**. To provide the philosophical, fiscal, and strategic infrastructure to facilitate the pursuit of this Mission, the third Core Theme or Pillar combines metrics from the Strategic Plan’s three remaining pillars: Mission Alignment, Market Positioning, and Organizational Effectiveness. This was well-received by NWCCU in the institution’s substantive change proposal that was submitted on September 24, 2018, and [approved on April 29, 2019](#).

Outcome #1: The University of Providence’s integrated student formation program promotes whole-person transformative experiences, preparing students for a lifetime of service to their communities (Mission Alignment).

Metrics:

- **#1:** [Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities](#) (ACCU) Catholic Identity Mission Assessment CIMA 22 survey
- **#2:** Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) Catholic Identity Mission Assessment CIMA Question #23

Outcome #2: Our student recruitment strategy meets enrollment goals by targeting traditional and underserved populations and emerging markets (Market Positioning).

Metric:

- **#1:** Enrollment growth, net full-pay full-time equivalents (undergraduate and graduate) (though combined, it is two metrics: graduate and undergraduate)

Outcome #3: All university programs are evaluated annually for financial viability and excellence (Organizational Effectiveness).

Metric:

- **#1:** Percentage of programs reviewed annually against program objectives, with specific evidence that any substandard findings will be corrected within 2 years
- **#2:** Programs receive a full evaluation on a scheduled 7-year rotation

Rationale:

Outcome #1:

In alignment with our mission for students to engage in a liberal education for opportunities for a whole-person transformative experience in preparation for a lifetime of service to their communities, the [Catholic Identity Mission Assessment](#) (CIMA) is used to measure student growth in the essential tenets of catholic intellectual tradition. The question groups used, #22 and #23, focus on the following:

Question #	Focus of questions
Question #22	Social justice Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal conduct - Future career Personal impact on environment Choosing courses of action

	Expressing views when in minority Contributing to broader community
Question #23	Depth of spirituality Hunger for learning Prayer life Compassion for others Curiosity about people's motivations Knowledge of Catholic teachings Appreciation for other faiths Curiosity about other cultures Hopefulness about the world Hopefulness about my future

Measuring student growth in these tenets of the Catholic faith is a measure of meeting the mission in regard to personal growth in matters of faith, morality and ethics.

Outcome #2:

The university experienced transitions in the summer 2019, and is searching for a new Vice President of Enrollment Management to be hired for Fall 2019. An interim was hired in May 2019. This individual had immediate responsibility for establishing a plan for growth, which was begun prior to her departure in August by:

- Securing a 3-year contract with EAB to develop a robust inquiry and application campaign not contingent upon only senior inquiries but on sophomores, juniors and seniors
- New admission counselors were hired and trained in key actions to increase enrollments:
 - The importance of relationship building contacts with student and parents
 - Sending regular document tracking letters to students with incomplete files, not having filed for financial aid, incomplete verifications, etc.
 - Use of other communication to contact students via phone by partnering with *Cadence* to allow texting to individual or large groups for both recruitment and enrollment needs
- Financial aid personnel are following a new campaign to:
 - Promote early filing
 - more timely information to students regarding cost
 - Financial aid will be awarded earlier in October

Based on preliminary results from these actions, the university's conversion rate shows marked improvement, going from 18% in 2017, 32% in 2018 and in early returns for fall 2019 (though enrollment is typically low in July) is already at 42%.

8-Year Average Enrollments Fall-to-Fall Data			
	Undergraduate	Graduate	Combined
8-Year Mean	960	82	1,043
8-Year Mode	None	73	None
8-Year Median	980	74	1056
8-Year range/difference	1048 – 859 = 189	136 – 70 = 66	1048 – 859 = 189

Outcome #3: Over the last two years, the university has undertaken a variety of program reviews and evaluations with an ultimate goal of establishing a list to be used for program prioritization. The Program and Resource Optimization (PRO) process deployed in the 2017-2018 academic year provided a thorough analysis of all academic programs in the School of Liberal Arts & Sciences. In the spring of 2019, based in part on the PRO data, the university decided to close some academic programs on campus to allow the institution to invest in more sustainable programs. The provost submitted a notification through an appropriate Teach-out Narrative and Samples to NWCCU on May 2, 2019.

With the change of the Provost office in 2018, a review of previously accomplished program reviews was evaluated. Further, the PRO Team recommendations for program prioritization was brought to a conclusion by spring 2019. These actions set the stage for Fall 2019 to begin annual program “health check-ups” by the office of the Provost which are intended to maintain focus on program optimization. The 7-year cycle for full program review will continue in the fall as scheduled. The program review policy in the [Faculty Handbook \(Search for Section 5.6.12.8\)](#) will be utilized for all reviews. Programs for those in the School of Health Professions will be included within both the annual health check-ups and within the 7-year cycle as appropriate for the stage of program development.

Core Theme 3: Pillars 3, 4, and 5

Outcomes	Indicators	Results & Thresholds
The University of Providence’s integrated student formation program promotes whole-person transformative experiences, preparing students for a lifetime of service to their communities (Mission Alignment).	Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) Catholic Identity Mission Assessment CIMA 22 survey	2017 – 2018 Actual: CIMA 22: 22.35% favorable 2018 – 2019 Target: CIMA 22: 39 - 41% favorable 2019 – 2020 Target: CIMA 22: 42 - 46% favorable
	Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) Catholic Identity Mission Assessment CIMA Question #23	2017 – 2018 Actual: CIMA 23 – 23.9% favorable 2018 – 2019 Target: CIMA 32: 34 - 36% favorable 2019 – 2020 Target: CIMA 23 – 50 - 46% favorable
Our student recruitment strategy meets enrollment goals by targeting traditional and underserved populations and emerging markets (Market Positioning).	Enrollment growth, net full-pay full-time equivalents (undergraduate and graduate)	2017 – 2018 (fall): 42.9% actual 2018 – 2019 Targeted: 45.9% 2019 – 2020 Targeted: 44.4%
All university programs are evaluated annually for financial viability and excellence (Organizational Effectiveness).	Percentage of programs reviewed annually against program objectives, with specific evidence that any substandard findings will be corrected within 2 years	AY 2018 – 84% Actual AY 2019 – 100% Targeted AY 2020 – 100% Targeted

	<p>Programs receive a full evaluation on a scheduled 7-year rotation</p>	<p>2011-2012: 4 programs 2012-2013: 4 programs 2014 – 2015: 2 programs 2015 – 2016: 2 programs 2016 – 2017: no programs 2017 – 2018: 6 programs 2018 – 2019: Target 4 programs, but none completed 2019 – 2020: Target of 3 programs 2020 – 2021: Target of 4</p>
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What does accomplishment of Mission Effectiveness look like at his institution through its Core Themes?

The University of Providence has taken decisive steps have been taken to achieve and maintain the sustainability of high-quality programs of value recognized by students, faculty and staff and peer institutions that provide students programs that intend to cultivate thoughtful, positive living and opportunities that lead to successful, productive careers (“**living and making a living**”).

Focus on the Catholic intellectual tradition through the Core Curriculum, and assessment results gained through CIMA, support and reinvigorate the distinctive culture of the university as a Catholic institution. Focused recruiting with enhanced options such as the Argo Guarantee (the four-year guarantee), the Banner-suite including [RECRUIT](#), [DegreeWorks](#), and [ADVISE](#), and a revised [Career Center](#) give the university an edge in providing support moving students from inquiry, to enrollment, completion, graduation, and paths to advanced educational opportunities and careers like never before. Finally, cutting-edge programs in the School of Health Professions offer practicing professionals unprecedented access to professional development opportunities.

Operationally, through Core Theme/Pillar 5, the university is regenerated through focus on efficient operational practices and processes that benefit the students with strong, sustainable programs and the effective, data-informed functioning of the university.

Conclusion

Taken together, the Pillars, outcomes, aligned metrics, results and expected targets have placed the university on a clear, measurable, realistic and ongoing path of assessment of its Core Themes / Pillars for mission fulfillment.

Pillar 1 Academic Excellence provides students a rigorous, current and well-choreographed path to attainment of academic achievement, from thoughtful enrollment through to completion and graduation in an economic and time-wise manner through the Argo Advantage and well-designed curriculum. Assessment of student achievement informs the ongoing improvement of programs as does regular, thorough program reviews.

Pillar 2 Student Experience offers exciting, fresh co-curricular activities and programs to engage students in their aspirations with their talents, aligned to the mission. In coordination with academic excellence and a robust system of student support, UP students can experience the whole-person transformative venture of their young lives to prepare them for a lifetime of service to others and their communities wherever their paths may take them. With a foundation of the Catholic intellectual tradition, they will be able to think for themselves in an ethical and well-educated manner to live the life for which they are called, fully prepared in their chosen fields.

The final and central Pillar, Mission Effectiveness (which combines assessment efforts from the three strategic Pillars of Mission Alignment, Market Positioning, and Organizational Effectiveness) leans on practical planning and application of the three areas of which it is composed. The three objectives of Core Theme/Pillar 3 are to strengthen the university through maintaining all efforts toward the mission and not lose sight of this strategic underpinning of everything that is the University of Providence. The institution rebranded two years ago and is now refocusing itself for a bright future based on leveraging its strengths as a major provider of healthcare programs in the United States, being the right institution at the right time in the right place strategically to capitalize on these strengths. It can do this while maintaining a flexible liberal education foundation in the Catholic intellectual tradition that is capable of meeting traditional and non-traditional students as it always has. Further, it is engaging its faculty and staff to greet emerging market conditions to broaden its scope to new areas of cybersecurity and leading-edge healthcare needs and concepts for America's ever-changing population's needs. Partnering with PSJH assists in keeping abreast of the new and challenging influences in the healthcare for the medical and non-medical needs of tomorrow.

Recent updates and changes within the university shows a readiness and willingness to maintain the highest organizational effectiveness possible with the unwavering desire to do even more. The institution's close relationship with regional and disciplinary accreditation exemplifies its desire to be a beacon to others that this is the place to be, the place to become what you were meant to become, as the institution continues to fulfill the mission of creating a whole-person transformative experience by providing a high-quality, cost-effective, timely liberal education for **living and making a living**. Now.

Academic Excellence.

Student Experience.

Mission Effectiveness.

University of Providence.