



UNIVERSITY OF
PROVIDENCE

Great Falls, Montana

Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report

Prepared for

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

For a March 27 – 29, 2018 Visit

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Introduction

Having completed the [Year 3 Evaluation](#) in March of 2014 for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), the University of Providence, formerly the University of Great Falls, submits this Year Seven Comprehensive Self-Evaluation Report in preparation for a review scheduled for March 27 - 29, 2018. This report is submitted February, 2018.

Though the school has changed throughout the decades, its mission is the same today as it was in 1932: "As an expression of the teaching mission of Jesus Christ, the mission of the University of Great Falls (now the University of Providence) is to provide students with the opportunity to obtain a liberal education for ***living and for making a living.***"

For the full Mission Statement, please see Standard 1.A. of this document.

Institutional Overview

The University of Providence 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 Health Professions was created during the summer of 2017. Also delineated that year was the School of Liberal Arts and Science. Both schools are housed within the University and offer undergraduate and graduate programs. In 2016, SHP graduated 120 students from the Bachelor of Science Nursing program (BSN). The School of Liberal Arts and Science offers a well-designed liberal arts curriculum, graduating approximately 110 students annually.

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 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 both the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) and the [University of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#) ("pro forma"). New technology infrastructure and building projects have already begun through this "big, bold, fast and excellent" collaborative plan.

There is a stability in undergraduate student populations in diversity, and out-of-state student population has grown slightly since 2014. First generation students attending as freshmen experienced a slight decline in 2015 from 2014, but rebounded in 2016 to 44%, a typical average for incoming freshmen. The most enrolled majors in 2016 were Biology and Business Administration, followed by Criminal Justice, Health and Human Performance, and Psychology. Though the University has experienced enrollment challenges in recent years, similar to many small, private universities and colleges, efforts to support enrollment and retention is a major focus of both the [Operational Improvement Plan](#) (OIP) sun setting in FY 2018 and the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) was approved by the Board on [December 1, 2017](#).

The BSN in the School of Health Professions remains a distinctive program for the University. The program has steadily increased enrollment and continues to provide 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](#)). 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](#).

In 2014, the University approved three Core Themes which clearly aligned with the University’s Mission, Core Values, and Three Cs (Character, Competence, and Commitment). They clearly identified the University, its academic calling as aligned with the mission and identifies who the University seeks to serve academically and socially. Moving into a new era after rebranding in 2017 as the University of Providence, Great Falls, the [“Year of Mission”](#) has begun to update both the Mission and Core Themes of the University by fall of 2018 to identify and align the University more closely with its corporate sponsor, Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH), both in mission and Catholic ministry for the 21st Century while embracing the diversity of others who strengthen the University to do more together than it could do solitarily.

The University of Providence has faced many challenges similar to the financial environment smaller not-for-profit private institutions have faced nation-wide. Economic considerations for families have also challenged enrollment since the economic downturn of 2008. Coupled with the challenging attitude regarding the value of higher education itself today, the University addresses financial as well as cultural challenges through strengthened enrollment management, focused retention strategies, and attention to traditional Catholic educational offerings so needed by young adults in today’s world. Please see Standard 2.F for detailed financial planning, and Standard 1.B for Core Themes.

Following the [Operational Improvement Plan 2016](#), the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) couples more closely with PSJH to maintain the programs that provide a path through higher education for many who otherwise may not have the resources to further their educations and enter meaningful careers. The University experienced leadership transitions from 2015 through 2016. With stability in leadership, the University is emerging stronger with a renewed vision and refreshed image through rebranding.

Though the future has challenges, and the University has prepared to meet them. The next section of this report highlights the accomplishments of the University since its last report in 2014 which are setting the institution on a path of continuous improvement. This path is based on measures included in the Strategic Plan’s [metrics](#) with [target explanations](#) presented to the Board which anticipate, among other goals:

- The fall headcount to grow from 615 in the 2017-2018 school year to 985 by the 2021-2022 academic year,
- enrollment growth from 281 to 400, and
- enrolled students (graduate and undergraduate) indicating that the University is their choice to grow from 48% to 55% during the same timeframe.

[Enrollment](#) overall at the University of Providence declined 4.8% between fall 2014 and fall 2017. Campus undergraduate enrollment had the biggest decline, dropping 22% during that period, while the RN to BSN program grew 43% during the same period. The University experienced a great deal of transition during that time: presidential leadership changes, the elimination of several JV athletic programs, athletic scholarship restructuring, and a new strategic direction established by the University’s corporate sponsor, Providence St. Joseph Health. Application numbers and yield were affected by a search strategy that favored senior search and high initial response over the development of a broader inquiry pool over multiple years and stronger engagement with applicants. The University’s new strategic plan aims at

achieving significant enrollment growth through new program offerings in the newly established SHP, investment in enrollment marketing, a stronger value proposition, and new athletic teams. A vital new market is the PSJH employee base of more than 110,000 and their dependents.

The University knows these are substantial, yet realistic, goals based on data with determined focus on the execution process for the strategic plan.

The Basic Institutional Data Form

Please refer to Appendix 2 at the end of this document for the complete Basic Institutional Data Form.

Preface

Institutional Changes Update

Welcome to the [University of Providence](#) located in Great Falls, Montana. Great Falls is considered the heart of Big Sky Country. Thank you to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) for the opportunity to prepare this self-evaluation with the Commission's guidance, support, and helpful example documents to better provide a picture of the progress made and understandings determined by such self-reflection. If one word could be used to describe the University of Providence and its progress, it would be "change". Well-planned, proactive, "big, bold, fast, and excellent" change.

The University has deep roots in Montana history, especially with the Sisters of Providence and its modern day health care corporation, Providence St. Joseph Health.

In the late 1800s, the Sisters of Providence brought their big ideas and bold action plans to Montana and surrounding areas with the mission of helping the poor, the needy, and the children. They understood hard work and the importance of timing and working with urgency as the situation might demand. Woven through it all was a drive for excellence in word and deed and faith. They understood the value of education and the path to a better life it could bring. They were, and still continue to be, amazing people in amazing times as Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH) has become one of the largest health care providers in the western United States and Canada.

Today, the University continues the Sisters' mission and spirit of service, education and faith. Throughout the journey it has undertaken following its mission, the University will continue to provide rigorous liberal arts education leading to numerous professional options with the added advantage of innovative health professions education. All opportunities provided through the University are entry points for students' chosen professions or to continue with advanced education, for living and making a living. This journey for the University began in 2015, with the decision to look deeply at itself with renewed commitment to strive for excellence in service to its students and its community. As with the work and spirit of the Sisters who founded the University, the process on which the University has embarked is decidedly "big, bold, fast and excellent" too.

Through that self-reflection nearly three years ago, the liberal arts university has found itself to be in a situation unique to any other in the country. It is the only liberal arts university owned by a major health care provider with programs already producing highly qualified, well-educated health care professionals during a time of high need for quality personnel across the country. This university is also poised to provide high-quality innovative programs now, and is also in the process of developing new, cutting-edge health care programs to meet future demands in this exciting professional field. This change is here and happening now and includes traditional liberal arts education foundations for students to enter these high-demand career tracks or to follow their chosen path to advanced educational opportunities.

The story this report is intended to tell is about changes that have been thoughtfully brought about through self-reflection, taking stock of the present and honoring the past, but moving with vision, intention, planning, measured outcomes, and faith into the future. This university was always destined to be as stated in its [mission](#): an institution for providing a liberal arts education for living and making a living.

“Go Big”

The University has moved in big ways due to its unique position of having PSJH as its corporate sponsor - the only major health care provider in the country that owns its own liberal arts university. The University is the provider of excellent health care professionals for PSJH during a time when the industry is growing and the demand for such professionals is high. The University is also developing campus technology through major updates, software, and hardware to support students, faculty and staff. The University will be breaking ground for a new University Center in March 2018, providing one-stop student services, technology classrooms, and a student Welcome Center. The University is also developing sports programs for its scholar athletes. New building facility improvements include an updated gymnasium and recently started construction of a new wrestling practice facility are other big projects with expected big benefits and outcomes for students.

Since the institution's last NWCCU reports of [2014](#) and [2015](#), numerous changes have occurred in accordance with NWCCU requests, and any of a substantive nature were reported to NWCCU. The changes which have been made are based on data and strategic planning, being forward-looking for the University. These changes include:

“Be Bold”

The University is following the Sisters in its bold action planning that will grow the University through a strong collaborative relationship with our corporate sponsor. The University is expanding both its liberal arts programs and health care programs to meet the growing needs and provide new and innovative programs for students. These innovative programs provide students with a great point of entry to educational paths that lead toward exciting careers and higher educational pursuits.

A Strategic Plan was initially deemed to be necessary in 2015. Further review of the institution's status at that time indicated a need to begin with an [Operational Improvement Plan](#). This plan was instituted in 2016, and included reiteration of the University's Mission, Core Themes, Core Values, University “3 Cs” and seven Improvement Initiatives.

The seven initiatives of the OIP were to:

1. develop the personnel, infrastructure, and a culture of planning and assessment
2. enhance a foundation of a faith-based education and community in the Catholic heritage
3. prioritize the academic mission and focus on student learning outcomes
4. transform operations to support financial health and responsibility and optimize resource opportunities
5. build facilities and infrastructure for growth and sustainability
6. build a culture of open communication and an environment that meets the needs of the community
7. develop a strategic enrollment and retention plan to help guide University operations and decision making

By Summer 2017, the indicators for each of these seven initiatives of the OIP were completed, including the following from 2016 -17:

- [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education \(CCNE\) 10-year accreditation \(2015\)](#)

- PSJH collaboration through [name change, rebranding and new web site](#) as well as financial commitment. Please see Standard 2.F in this report for Financial information
- [Core Curriculum](#) emphasis on traditional Catholic Theology and Philosophy teachings
- [Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs](#) (CACREP) accreditation for the Master's counseling program
- [Montana Office of Public Instruction accreditation of education program](#)
- [American Bar Association accreditation of Legal and Paralegal program](#)
- [Addition of Women's Wrestling](#)
- [Addition of Men's and Women's hockey](#)
- Creation of two schools within the University: The School of Health Professions and the School of Liberal Arts and Science
- Information Services (IS) Upgrades – Please see Standard 2.G in this report
- [Theatre and Business Arts program approval; NWCCU approved January 22, 2018](#)
- [School of Health Professions](#) programs
 - [Infection Prevention - approved January 22, 2018](#)
 - [Master of Health Administration proposal approved by Board of Trustees to begin in 2018; NWCCU approved on December 22, 2018](#)
- Policy Revision through the [Stevens Group](#). This included [policy charge](#) for review teams.
- Compensation Study

With the conclusion of the OIP, a University of Providence Pro Forma was developed to provide financial planning in collaboration with PSJH.

In August 2017, at the conclusion of the OIP, the Leadership Team convened in retreat to begin work on a strategic plan for the University. August 14, 2017, a draft of the 5 Pillars of the [5-year Strategic Plan](#) was shared with faculty and staff, and were also presented during Convocation on August 16, 2017. This viable Strategic Plan continues through 2027 which includes strategic improvements in curriculum, developing a culture of data gathering and use for decision making and long-term financial planning. The 5 pillars of the new Strategic Plan are:

- Academic Excellence
- Student Experience
- Mission Alignment
- Market Positioning
- Organizational Effectiveness

“Go Fast”

In their history, the Sisters often moved with urgency to bring their activities to fruition. Recognizing that timing is often everything in important ventures, the University is responding quickly and working with a determined sense of urgency to meet the opportunity of providing health care professionals during a time of great need in our country. The University provides innovative new programs that are distinctive and recognized as timely through research regarding trends in education and professional health care. In addition, the University is creating the student-centered and technology-enhanced environment to assist students in completing their educational goals in planned, timely programs. The University is committed to valuing students' time and recognize financial needs through providing a 4-year path to graduation so that they may move into the fast pace job markets of today or the challenges of advanced degrees through meaningful time commitments, planning and support. The following strategic actions were completed to move with purpose and urgency:

Leadership – In 2016, the University experienced a leadership change with the acquisition of Dr. Anthony J. Aretz as the University’s 9th President. Dr. Aretz has provided stability and ethics-based leadership. Dr. Steve Langdon joined the University in August 2017 as an interim Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA). A search for a full-time VPAA will be conducted during the 2018 academic year. Collaborative leadership with PSJH was strengthened by having Dr. Debbie Burton as Vice President of the School of Health Professions and Dr. Justin Crowe as Vice President and Executive Officer – Strategy and Administration, oversee the efforts of the University’s Strategic Plan. Doctors Burton and Crowe and others serve [dual positions](#) with PSJH and the University of Providence which strengthen the collaborative nature of leadership.

Rebranding - Under this new leadership, input was sought through surveys and focus groups, resulting in a determination to rebrand the University of Great Falls as the University of Providence, Great Falls. This motion was made and [approved by the Board of Trustees](#). After initial work had begun, [an announcement](#) regarding the decision was made on January 13, 2017. Following much work University wide, a full announcement and transition process was publicly celebrated on July 13, 2017. The rebranding effort had as its major goal to make the University of Providence more attractive to existing and potential students thus attracting and retaining students both on campus and in existing distance-learning opportunities. Further, the collaboration between the University and Providence Health Services (PHS) was strengthened and an exciting air of change invigorated the University and strengthened the University’s mission as a Catholic institution. Providence Health Services underwent a merger with St. Joseph Health Care to become Providence St. Joseph Health Services (PSJH). The University is seen by PSJH as a significant part of their mission and viewed as “their” University. The University of Providence is targeted to be the provider and creator of learning and education for PSJH in a mutual partnership for creating the workforce that Providence needs. As the University of and for PSJH, a closer relationship for recruiting and job placement is expected to emerge.

Financial – Moving the University toward financial stability with the [University of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#) also developed in collaboration with and approved by PSJH is the basis for strategic planning. It was approved in May 2017. The development of the Pro Forma followed a strategic process.

An overview of this process:

On January 25, 2017, Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH) and University executive leadership convened in Renton, Washington, to discuss and align on the strategic vision to expand the existing School of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to create a School of Health Professions. Meeting participants discussed the key assumptions underlying the strategic vision for growth including the financial commitment required.

Development of Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan

Following the January 25th executive meeting, PSJH leadership requested a formal financial pro forma to delineate the impact of a range of investment options. A [pro forma planning team](#) convened in February 2017, and built the pro forma over a two-month period carefully detailing capital expense assumptions and operating revenue and expense assumptions required for strategic growth. The pro forma was finalized in April 2017.

Presentation of pro forma to PSJH executive leadership and PSJH investment decision

The pro forma was presented to PSJH executive leadership on May 2, 2017. PSJH leadership reviewed and considered four investment options:

- Option 1: No investment in the [School of Liberal Arts and Science \(SLA&S\)](#) or the [School of Health Professions](#); funding limited to required campus repairs and maintenance
- Option 2: Complete investment in the School of Health Professions; no investment in the School of Liberal Arts and Science
- Option 3a: Complete investment in the School of Health Professions and limited investment in the School of Liberal Arts and Science
- Option 3b: Complete investment in the School of Health Professions and complete investment in the School of Liberal Arts and Science

PSJH leadership concluded that a complete investment in the School of Health Professions and the School of Liberal Arts and Science (option 3b) was necessary to achieve the strategic vision for growth. Option 3b was approved with two tasks:

- University Leadership must look for ways to improve operating performance (including, but not limited to, philanthropy, planning for non-traditional students, to include PSJH caregivers, and online programs)
- Funding will be released in tranches based on executive reviews to ensure that the pro forma assumptions (including but not limited to retention, enrollment, and discount rate) are met

Pro forma revisions

The pro forma was revised in June 2017 and again in October 2017 to account for additional and improved data, refined assumptions, and [finalized](#) fall 2017 enrollment.

Next steps (2018 and beyond)

Going forward, PSJH will release tranches of funding to the University over a 5-year period. Performance metrics based on the financial pro forma will be reviewed annually by the [University of Providence Steering Committee](#) prior to the release of funds.

An overview at Convocation of financial status and planning was presented to staff and faculty in order for everyone to see the direction the University intends to move as an institution.

IS and Banner updates – A need for technology updates was determined through Initiative #5 of the Operational Improvement Plan to build infrastructure for growth and stability. This process includes physical plant development as well. In the new University Center, two state-of-the-art technology classrooms are planned to provide student-focused upgrades. To enhance University operations, an update to our student information system (Banner platform) continued through the fall of 2017 and is ongoing as it is moved to a hosted environment with the next major upgrade in March 2018.

New Building Plan – Numerous planned repairs and detail-oriented maintenance continues throughout the University. In Fall 2017 a new [master plan](#) was developed that led to these construction projects. There is a five-year capital plan to start realizing the master plan. Remodeling of the Student Center was started in late fall 2017. Design of a new [University Center](#), which will [include](#) a Student Welcome Center, two technology classrooms, distance education center, and conference area, was unveiled fall 2017 for completion in 2019. Plans for a new [wrestling practice facility](#) began in the summer 2017, and ground was broken for the project in December 2017.

The Argo Advantage – This is a program of commitment to affordability, value, and student success through:

- Loan Repayment Assistance Program
- Four-Year Graduation Guarantee
- Providence IMPACT for timely career counseling assistance
- The Corps of Discovery
- “*Lumen de Lumine*,” the rich [Core Curriculum](#)

Policy Review - Another change undertaken was a review and revision of all University Policies with the assistance of the [Stevens Group](#), a consulting firm. The eight University policies are:

- Volume I Governance and Administrative Policies
- Volume II Campus Community Policies
- Volume III General Institutional Employment Policies
- Volume IV Faculty Personnel Policies
- Volume V Academic Policies (includes Registrar and Admissions policies)
- Volume VI Student Policies (includes Financial Aid policies)
- Volume VII Business and Financial Affairs Policies
- Volume VIII Public Relations and Institutional Advancement Policies

The policy revisions are still under advisement and in draft form at the time of this report’s preparation with completion dates of February through May, depending upon Board approvals.

“Bring Excellence”

Excellence in thought, deed, and faith are hallmarks of the Sisters’ lives as both history and PSJH’s work today shows. These qualities are valued by the University as well, through its mission to gain a liberal education to live and make a living that is central to the 5-Year Strategic Plan. The University continues strives to align with the highest standards in higher education for a student-centered educational experience. The five primary pillars - Academic Excellence, Student Experience, Mission Alignment, Market Positioning, and Organizational Effectiveness - are the foundational blocks the University will use to build a bright future for the citizens and leaders of tomorrow. The University’s Pro Forma and 5-Year Plan and the [metrics](#) developed to monitor and provide accountability for the Strategic Plan place the University on a sustainable pathway to continue its service to students and community into the future with its “big, bold, fast and excellent” journey of change.

NWCCU Accreditation Actions - In March of 2014, a [Year Three Peer-Evaluation Report](#) was provided to NWCCU. The responses to recommendations 1, 2, and 7 were provided to NWCCU through the University’s Review Team [Ad Hoc Report](#) of March 2, 2015. A [letter of acceptance](#) was received by the University on July 23, 2015, for Response #1. Updates for recommendations 2 and 7 were also requested and are found within the Addenda for this Year Seven Report, as well as responses addressing Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8.

With efforts toward completion on so many goals, plans, and actions, the University endeavored to meaningfully prioritize its work. It is the intent of this report to reflect the University’s achievement of meeting the recommendations as previously presented as it has moved forward on its “big, bold, fast and excellent” journey.

Addenda

Spring 2018

Response to Recommendations – Spring 2014

1. **Resolved** per NWCCU [letter dated July 23, 2015](#).
2. **Due to the absence of evidence of Board involvement with the University's core themes and an informal process of Board review completed at the end of Board meetings, the evaluation committee recommends that the Board establish a formal process and timeline for review of institutional policies including those regarding its own organization, operation and performance to ensure its duties and responsibilities are fulfilled in an effective and efficient manner (Standard 2.A.6 and 2.A.8).**

For details regarding the Core Themes, please see Standard 1.B in this report.

The Board received a summary of the Core Themes by Dr. Timothy Laurent on Friday, October 24, 2014, with a unanimous vote and approval by the Board. In part due, to subsequent leadership changes in 2014, 2015 and again in 2016, the Core Themes were infrequently disseminated or used as a key feature in planning compared to the wide spread focus on the University mission and core value statements. Beginning in fall 2017, the Core Themes were more widely discussed with faculty and included in the University's strategic plan. They have also been included in the assessment plan (Please see Standard 4.A.3 in this report.) as it began in early 2017 with the use of an accountability management tool from [Taskstream/TK20](#). Please note: Taskstream/TK20 is a part of "[Watermark](#)" systems as of January 21, 2018, but will be referred to as Taskstream/TK20 throughout this report.

The Board is active in reviewing itself and institution policy. In 2009, the Board revised and approved a new set of [University Bylaws](#) and Articles of Incorporation. The [Amended Articles of Incorporation](#) were approved in 2016. Beginning in 2012 and continuing through 2014, the Board committees reviewed their charge to ensure that they are operating in the most efficient manner for the Board. The [Employee Policy Manual](#) is part of the policy renewal undertaken in 2017. The Board reviewed and approved the previous Employee Policy Manual in 2013. In October 2013, the Board approved a revised Academic and Faculty Affairs Committee (AFAC) charge. The AFAC is a subcommittee of the Board. In February, 2014 the Board approved [Section I of the Faculty Handbook](#). [Section II of the Faculty Handbook](#) was approved in April 2014.

During quarterly Board meetings, members planned to evaluate their roles and the Board's direction. This evaluation was conducted in executive session so there is no evidence to share. Beginning in the fall 2012, the subcommittees of the Board began reviewing their charges to ensure duties and responsibilities of the Board are being fulfilled in an effective and efficient manner.

In 2015, in a response to Recommendation #2, the Board established a standing agenda item for Board review and evaluation of its performance, answering critical questions regarding its performance and improvement. The [Board Self-Assessment Form](#) was developed for that purpose. While the intent of this self-evaluation was purposeful, during the numerous and large changes (changes in leadership in 2014 through 2016, Board

membership, the magnitude of all-campus changes during rebranding the development of both the [University of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#) and the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#)), action was not taken until under new University leadership. The Board is in an ongoing reflection about their University of Providence role and relationship to PSJH in trying to understand their charge. The self-reflection and the Board's role during change has been a topic either in open or executive sessions for the past several Board and Executive Committee meetings.

- 3. The evaluation committee recommends that the University review and refine its academic policies with particular focus on an institution-wide assessment of student learning outcomes and application in the online learning environment. In addition, the committee recommends that these policies are clearly communicated to faculty and students (Standard 2.A.12, 2.A.29, 2C.1, and 2.C.2)**

Institution-Wide Assessment

The University, as part of the [Operational Improvement Plan's](#) Initiative #1, acquired a Director of Institutional Effectiveness (DIE) whose goal was "Construction and support of feasible and measurable long-term plans aligned with the overall strategic priorities, mission, and/or program goals, enabling assessment of the progress and outcomes of a plan, resulting in data-driven changes." Hiring for this position was a significant commitment to ameliorate this concern in a sustainable way. Please see Standard 4.A.3 within this report for the academic assessment plan developed by the DIE in collaboration with the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Academic Dean and through consultation with [Taskstream/TK20](#) to address the institution-wide assessment of student learning outcomes. This plan, starting in spring 2017, begins the move to a culture of assessment and planning based upon updated program objectives whose indicators of success drive student learning outcomes at the course level.

A [Taskstream Goals Assessment](#) was completed in September of 2016 by the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) which stated that at that time:

"We have no University wide assessment collection system. My goal for the next 6 months is to have a small group of people understand what Taskstream can do and how we can implement this tool into our data collection and reporting. By 12 months, I want the entire campus to have a basic understanding of Taskstream."

An initial training was held in the fall of 2016 with 6 individuals, two of whom went on to develop assessment programs using Taskstream with one of these being selected as a "stand-alone pilot" of this instrument in that year's special accreditation process for Council for [Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs](#) (CACREP).

Through change of leadership, this process was not revisited until April 28, 2017, when 19 individuals – administration, faculty and staff – received on-site training on acquiring the data needed at course, program and institutional levels. Having completed this preliminary training, the DIE worked in collaboration with the Academic Dean to design an August 17, 2017, training for the remaining faculty, a group of 40 individuals. This training was focused on the concept, development and need for establishing a culture of assessment within an institution-wide assessment plan targeting student learning outcomes. The intent was for faculty to understand the concept of institutional assessment "[Toward a Culture of Assessment](#)" and then be given time to become fluent in the use of Taskstream/TK20 to facilitate gathering, analysis, reporting and the use of data as an ongoing foundation for university assessment. An additional Fall

Semester 2017 training session completed the cycle of planning, alignment, instruction, assessment, and reporting course assessment to the program level. In early 2018, program level training will also occur leading to institutional data availability.

As the School of Liberal Arts and Science began their journey into this process, the [School of Health Professions](#) resolved to participate in this process in late fall 2017. The School of Health Professions has developed an implementation plan to start training in January 2018, and continue in May 2018, with the goal of initiating the use of Taskstream/TK20 in the fall of 2018. The decision of the SHP to participate brings the entirety of academics into the institution-wide process.

The development of such an institution-wide assessment plan will take time to come to full fruition. Considering the process of providing the cultural development as well as the learning curve involved with a tool such as Taskstream/TK20 across the University, the development of such an institution-wide assessment plan will take patience and attention to the assessment plan. By spring 2019, a goal for the University is to turn the focus on the accountability management tool to provide assessment data on quasi-academic programs such as the six distinctive programs ([Corps of Discovery](#), [Providence Formation Project](#), the [Academic Success Center](#), the [Writing and Critical Thinking Center](#), the [Mathematics Center](#), [TRiO](#)), athletics, [Veteran Support Center](#), as well as non-academic processes and programs such as Library Services, Enrollment, and Student Services, Physical Plant, IS Services, etc.

Online Learning Environment

In the several years since the recommendation to review and refine the focus on institution-wide assessment of student learning outcomes and application in an online learning environment, the University has been researching different approaches towards addressing this challenge. The University began by comparing several systematic approaches including Learning Resources Network (LERN), Online Learning Consortium (OLC), and Quality Matters (QM). A committee of faculty members with experience teaching online met during the summer of 2016 and selected [Quality Matters](#) based on its evidenced-based standards, extensive professional development opportunities focusing on quality assurance, and clearly articulated best practices regarding peer evaluation of courses.

In the fall of 2016, the University became a full subscriber to Quality Matters, organized a campus QM committee, and sent three committee members to the national QM conference held in Portland, Oregon. The committee members returned with a wealth of information regarding the benefits Quality Matters brings to course development in online, hybrid and traditional classroom environments.

The committee began designing and offering monthly faculty "Lunch and Learn" workshops based on conference topics and resources made available to subscribers on the Quality Matters Web site. Workshops are conducted in meeting rooms specifically equipped to include off-campus faculty members as participants as well. Topics covered in the spring of 2017 include an overview of Quality Matters' approach to course design and peer evaluation; a discussion of QM Standard 8 focused on the significance of meeting ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessibility and usability requirements; and QM Standard 2 covered the importance of leveling and aligning program, course, and module learning objectives in designing or revising online courses.

Several weeks prior to the start of Fall Semester 2017, the QM committee organized face-to-face workshops for faculty on the "Applying the Quality Matters Rubric" (APPQMR). Workshops were held for on-campus faculty and those who teach distance education courses from the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the School of Health Sciences. Combined with faculty members who had already completed an online version of the same workshop, the University now has 52 faculty members who have successfully completed QM training. Five have subsequently pursued the next level of training to become certified peer reviewers. One faculty member has completed a self-review of one of the online courses using the Quality Matters "Course Review Management System" (the same system used for formal review of courses for external certification). Another faculty member has been asked to participate as one of three certified participants in an external review of an online course for another institution.

The QM committee again sent three faculty members to the 2017 Quality Matters national conference in Fort Worth, Texas. The University's goals are to continue offering monthly "Lunch and Learn" QM development sessions for faculty, encourage additional faculty members to earn peer reviewer certification to facilitate internal reviews of our online courses, and to promote a culture of continuous quality improvement and collegial support for all the University's program offerings.

Please also see Standards 2.A.12, 2A.29, 2.C.1 and 2.C.2 for more information on academic policies, presenting scholarship, appropriate program content and rigor, and the publishing of expected learning outcomes.

4. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the University's faculty be involved in a consistent and intentional assessment analysis process for curricular programs and educational resources based on data identifying student learning impact (Standard 2.C.5 and 2.C.10)

Faculty are directly involved in curriculum design, revision, approval, and implementation, through governance committees, academic divisions' vote and academic programs. Faculty also have considerable involvement with the process of hiring other faculty, planning with program directors to replace vacated and participate on search committees. These activities are covered in the [Faculty Handbook Section I](#) (Part 2.2.2.1.4) and in the bylaws and procedures of the Curriculum committee. Please see Standard 2.C.5 and 2.C.10

Institutionally, the [Collegiate Learning Assessment](#) (CLA) (third link on informational homepage) is used at the university-level for assessing critical thinking while Integrated Learning Communities (ILCs) provide the opportunity for assessment at the course level. (example: [Integrated Learning Communities](#) (ILCs))

Currently, as indicated previously, the School of Liberal Arts and Science is developing a course-to-program and program-to-institution level assessment using an accountability management tool called Taskstream/TK20. Once in full implementation, this will provide course level assessment that will inform program level assessment, and ultimately institution-wide academic assessment data. In the spring of 2018, the School of Health Professions has committed to joining this institution-wide plan of assessment in the spring of 2018. By fall 2018, the entire university's academic programs will be wholly involved in this assessment plan using common assessment language and achievement goals.

For more detail on this institution assessment plan currently underway, please see Standard 4.A.3 for more information.

5. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the University of Great Falls develop a system of regular, systematic evaluation of advising programs and co-curricular programs for effectiveness and alignment with the mission and core themes of the institution (Standard 2.D.1, 2.D.10, and 2.D.11)

During the 2014 – 2015 academic year, following the hiring of a new Vice President of Student Development a comprehensive review of co-curricular programs began. Following a review of the spring [2014 National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE) results, informal surveying and targeted student focus groups, a new mission statement (see below) was developed for Student Development as well as organizational changes in staffing to better service students.

Throughout 2014 – 2016, a new philosophy for the co-curricular programs was started with a major focus on intentional student programs and activities, and a revamped student discipline process. Internal assessment was centered on focus groups, student surveys, and general quantitative data on programs. To fully assess and evaluate the co-curricular program as well as general student services, the [Student Satisfaction Inventory](#) (SSI), administered by Ruffalo Noel Levitz, was utilized for the first time in the spring of 2015. The SSI will be administered annually as part of our current strategic plan beginning spring 2018. The chief campus initiative for 2016 – 2017 was the development of the campus retention and success team that targeted five strategic areas: Academic Advising, Student Engagement, Institutional Promise, Intervention Strategies, and Student Profile. A draft plan was composed and introduced to campus in the fall of 2017 with the intent of using the draft plan and action items to support the development of the University's strategic plan.

Student Development Mission Statement

The Student Development staff focuses on fostering experiential and personal development opportunities that engage and empower students in becoming life-long learners and responsible citizens. The mission of Student Development is to facilitate student engagement in learning and personal development by providing exceptional services, distinctive co-curricular programs, engaging and innovative leadership opportunities, and fostering a safe and diverse living/learning community. The program and services offered create opportunities and experiences that support students to achieve academic, career and life goals. The Student Development Staff will work to facilitate high levels of student engagement and transformational learning by:

- Promoting an environment for active and collaborative learning
- Creating enriching and intentional educational and social experiences
- Fostering a supportive campus environment and inclusive community
- Serving together to meet the social, spiritual, emotional and physical needs of our students

6. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the decision made regarding planning for the library and information resources be guided by feedback from users including faculty and that the feedback be collected regularly and systematically to assure that resource is of quality adequate and utilized (Standard 2.E.2 and 2. E 4)

The University library has numerous means to gain feedback on services, materials and access. The library staff states that the resources are “of appropriate depth, breadth, and currency” (Standard 2.E.1). “...electronic books numbering more than 150,000 and greater than 100 separate electronic databases” are accessible for faculty, students and patron at all hours with a student ID @ number. All students in the [School of Health Professions](#) have access to

the PSJH library resources through [Elsevier®](#). These resources will also be available eventually to the [School of Liberal Arts and Science](#) (SLA&S). The Library collection is also available to all students of the School of Health Professions, with a collection and timely additions pertinent to their special needs.

Feedback to the University to develop such a collection results in many curriculum offerings which are recommended by the director, library staff, faculty and University staff through a request line located on the library Web page, either by faculty through their own request option, or by any patron through a suggestion box. The acquisition process for requests and recommendations includes approval by the Academic Dean, and library staff arranges the purchase.

Faculty reflection on program resources during program review also can lead to recommendations and purchases. An [annual Library Services Survey](#) of library usage provides feedback on library resources and materials as well.

For more detailed information about the University Library, please see Standard 2.E within this report, and also visit the [Library Web site](#).

7. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the University develop and adopt a financial plan to eliminate the expendable restricted net asset deficit and identify the adequate level of restricted reserves to provide a level of insulation to the University form unanticipated enrollment shifts or capital expenditure needs (Standard 2.F.1)

The University currently relies on broader Providence St. Joseph Health system support as a stopgap for recurrent operational losses. With the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) and its [metrics](#), University leadership is targeting positive operating income by 2021 and positive free cash flow by 2022. This positive cash flow is driven by increased enrollment in both schools, decreased discount rates, increased retention, and a diversified revenue source from multiple programs, both traditional and non-traditional.

Providence St. Joseph Health has also agreed to invest significantly in the [campus real estate infrastructure](#) including [building a new University Center](#), adding on to Emilie Hall, building a new dining hall, renovating the student center, [building a wrestling practice facility](#), and adding additional parking. The investments are highlighted in the overall investment schedule above. The goal is to ensure that University of Providence has the facilities to recruit high caliber students and faculty and deliver the highest quality teaching using state of the art technology.

To hold ourselves accountable, we have created a set of operational and financial metrics to gauge success.

8. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the University move from its existing single year budget process to one that project multiple years. This would also enable the University to better plan for the impact of emerging trends and create strategy to support the financial strengthening of the University (Standard 2.F.2)

The University, in collaboration with the corporate sponsor Providence St. Joseph Health, has developed [the University of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#) approved by the board of trustees of the University and the board of trustees for Providence St. Joseph Health. It is consistently monitored by the finance teams of both institutions. As the document is a working

document for future years, adjustments can be made in response to unanticipated enrollment changes.

Eligibility Requirements #2 and #3

Eligibility Requirement #2: Authority

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 sponsorship board for the entire system. The University operates within the jurisdiction of the Catholic bishop of Great Falls-Billings. The University of Providence is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. The past year marks the 83rd commencement ceremony in the University's history, graduating students in [Bachelor's and Master's Degrees](#).

Eligibility Requirement #3: Mission and Core Themes

As an expression of the teaching mission of Jesus Christ, the Mission of the University of Providence [University of Great Falls], found in Standard 1.A of this report, is to provide students with the opportunity to obtain a liberal education for ***living and for 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 were approved by the [Board of Trustees in October 2014](#) (see minutes for "Academic Affairs" section). The Core Themes thoughtfully support the University's curriculum leading to recognized degrees and are located in Standard 1.B of this report. The institution devotes all of its resources in support of its education mission and Core Themes as shown in its [Institutional Financial Statement 2016](#) in the Basic institutional Data From 2017 within the Addenda of this report.

Mission

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

As an expression of the teaching mission of Jesus Christ, the mission of the University of Providence [University of Great Falls] is to provide students with the opportunity to obtain a liberal education for *living and for making a living*. The Mission of the University is widely publicized in our literature, promotional materials, in our Academic catalog and on the University Web site. Though the school has changed throughout the decades, its mission is the same today as it was when the University was founded in 1932.

The University of Providence 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.

The University cooperates with both private and public institutions to attain goals consistent with its educational purpose and values.

The University continually and responsibly evaluates its operation and programs. It develops professional and career programs and continuing education courses designed in view of society's present and future needs as well as traditional academic degrees in numerous fields.

The University offers students a foundation for actively implementing Gospel values and the teachings of Jesus within the Catholic tradition; it serves students of all beliefs who wish to take advantage of its programs.

The faculty and staff of the University join with students in a cooperative and enthusiastic search for truth, so that students may develop:

Character - have a positive impact on the world and to the communities in which they live and work, particularly by recognizing and accepting personal accountability to themselves, to society, and to God;

Competence - further their ability to live full and rewarding lives by becoming competent working members of society who know the basics of their professional field and have access to future learning;

Commitment - find meaning in life which enables them to participate effectively in society while transcending its limitations, by living according to their own moral and religious convictions, as well as by respecting the dignity and beliefs of other people.

The [full version of the University mission statement](#) contains language about direction and language about history of the institution. The commonly cited shortened version of the mission statement 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 for making a living*.

2. Interpretation of Mission Fulfillment

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.

Dealing with life's tough questions is central to our University. They are the important questions we want our students to tackle again and again. The curriculum of the University is reflected by our three Core Themes:

1. Seeking to Understand,
2. Living in Community, and
3. Searching Together

However, the themes are bigger than our curriculum. We want students to take these questions with them after graduating. We want students to reflect repeatedly on these themes knowing that their perspective, experience, and, ultimately, answer will shift.

Searching for truth is at the heart of what we do. Finding truth is not an easy task, requiring us to reflect, with consideration of who we are as human beings mixed with contemporary events and insights. We don't expect a 20-year-old University student and that same person as a 50-year-old alumnus to view life and living through the same lens. We expect some overlap through time when our perspective is that of a well-informed person, but what we know and who we are also changes through time. This means we should have the Core Themes integrated throughout the curriculum, activities and assessment in order to immerse students in these life-changing themes as they grow to productive, independent human beings, learners and citizens. Because the University teaches the importance of finding truth, seeking together with reason and faith, to become independent people living in community, we seek, embrace and celebrate opportunities for mission implementation and living our mission as a way of determining how we fulfill our mission. In determining the extent to which we are living our mission, we ask ourselves three questions:

- 1) What are we doing to provide opportunities for our community to practice our Core Themes?
- 2) What data do we have to show our progress in living our core Themes?
- 3) What more can/should we do to facilitate continued movement within our Core Themes?
What are the Next Steps?

This approach keeps the Mission and Core Themes as a living document and project. Examples of University opportunities to practice Core Themes aligned with the Mission Statement for "living and making a living" include:

Theme #1 "Seeking to Understand"

- Rigorous Core and Program Curricula
- Development and implementation of traditional Catholic Theology and Philosophy Curriculum to merge reason and faith
- [Corps of Discovery](#) (CoD) for student self-understanding
- [Providence Formation Program](#) is a co-curricular, service-learning program that helps students to reflect, learn, and live lives of integrity and compassion.

- Integrated Learning Courses – (ILCs) – courses taught by a team of professors with different areas of expertise, offering students a multifaceted learning experience (Please see the [Academic Catalog](#) page xxix, xli, and for 92 for more ILC information.)
- [Collegiate Learning Assessment](#) (CLA) – freshmen and seniors are provided the opportunity to show progress in critical thinking and writing skills on annual [CLA assessments which are tracked](#) and used by the university
- [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE) - students participate in this survey every two years as part of the student experience which reflect critical thinking attainment

Theme #2 – "Living in Community" (formerly "Living Independent and Countercultural Lives")

- [Corps of Discovery](#) to identify one's strengths and areas of growth
- [Providence Formation Program](#) for understanding one's ability to make a difference and to think independently to problem solve
- [University advising](#) to keep students on track for their chosen career or advanced education to independent in thinking and making a living
- [High Impact Projects](#) (HIPS) as reported by NSSE indicate student commitment and engagement within the community in service to others.

Theme #3 – "Searching Together" - Support for student success through special programs for academic excellence:

- [Corps of Discovery](#)
- Opportunities to work with peers as well as faculty and within the community through service learning projects [Corps of Discovery](#) and [Providence Formation Project](#)
- [Study Abroad](#)
- [Providence Formation Project](#)
- [Trio Program](#)
- [Academic Success Center](#)
- [Writing and Critical Thinking Center](#)
- [Mathematics Center](#)
- Commitment to quality [advising to a timely completion](#)
- Alumni networking through the [Alumni "Stay Connected"](#) page and the alumni newsletter "[Argo Connections](#)"

The following are means to monitor the progress of the Curricula and distinctive programs relevant to the Themes:

- Alignment of Core Themes within [Taskstream/TK20](#) for assessment
- [Corps of Discovery enrollments](#) for 2016 – 17
- Community contacts ([Whittier Elementary](#) and [Eagle Mount](#)) through service learning projects [Providence Formation enrollments](#)
- [Integrated Learning Courses](#) (ILC) enrollments and program [data](#)
- Success of advising through student survey responses shown through [End-of-Course data 2016-2017](#) and supported through the [Advising Handbook](#)
- [Study Abroad enrollments](#)
- [TRiO](#) serves on averages 230 students per year
- [Academic Success Center](#) service-to-student averaged of 75 students per week in Spring of 2016 and 90 students per week in the fall of 2017
- The [Mathematics Center](#) serves approximately 20 students per week

- The [Writing and Critical Thinking Center](#) service-to-student during 2016-2017 showed 176 individual appointments for 68 different students which does not include group workshops in the Center or in classes
- [Alumni data](#) – Where do they go from here? Career? Advanced education? Gift giving etc.

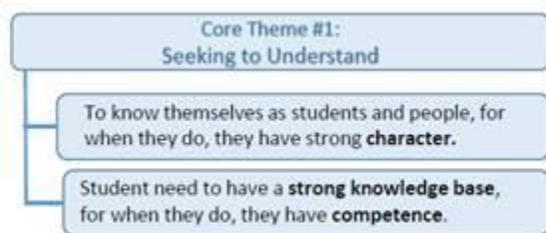
Core Themes

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

In accordance with Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities accreditation standards the University also holds the following three Core Themes to help it determine mission fulfillment:

- Seeking to Understand
- Living in Community
- Searching Together

Core theme #1 – "Seeking to Understand"



Description: “As an expression of the teaching mission of Jesus Christ,” our University brings together reason and faith to seek the truth. We are a faith-based learning community, dedicated to encouraging and assisting our students in seeking to understand and searching for truth.”

Theme #1 Objectives:

1. In seeking to understand, students should:
 - understand themselves well, to develop strong **character** enabling students to have a positive impact on the world and on the communities in which they live and work, particularly by recognizing and accepting personal accountability to themselves, to society, and to God.
 - have a strong knowledge base for **competence** that allows them to further their ability to live full and rewarding lives as working members of society who know the basics of their professional field and have access to future learning.

The University’s two objectives that help us determine if we are satisfying our core theme of “Seeking to Understand” are:

1. Students need to understand themselves as students and people.
2. Students need to develop a solid knowledge base.

Indicators of Achievement Core Theme #1A: Students need to understand themselves as students and people

1. **Academic Excellence** - Annual reviews of curricula and programs, national accreditation for programs, [advising to a timely completion](#), increased student recruitment and retention driven by the [Argo Advantage](#), being the primary workforce development and recruitment source for Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH) are successful indicators of academic

success. Academic excellence is also forefront in the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#): Pillar #1 - Academic Excellence is the primary pursuit for all students, faculty and staff.

2. **The Corps of Discovery** (CoD) is a signature program for new students at the University. The purpose of the program is to foster emotional, spiritual, and physical development within the many dimensions of university life through a shared cohort bonding experience. The University offered 7 sections with 172 freshmen enrolled in the Corp of Discovery from Fall of 2016 – Spring of 2017. [Corps of Discovery End-of-Course evaluations](#) showed that students reflected upon their personal and cohort experiences. Enrollment in the fall of 2017 was 105 students. Response to the CoD program is positive and fosters the Mission through individual students knowing himself/herself, as well as understanding the concepts of Themes #2 and #3. The CoD program will be expanded and continued.
3. [High Impact Practices](#) (HIPs) are reported within [The National Survey of Student Engagement 2016](#). HIPs provided opportunities for students to participate in: engage in Learning Communities, Service Learning through [Providence Formation Program](#) and Corps of Discovery, Research with Faculty, Internships or Field Experiences, [Study Abroad](#), and Culminating Senior projects.
As reported in NSSE:

- 2016 - 73% of first-year respondents participated in at least one HIP, and
- 2016 - 73% of senior respondents participated in at least 2 HIPs. (NSSE 2016, p3 HIPs)

HIPs will also continue, setting a goal of 100% of seniors participating in at least two of these high impact practices. Efforts for removing barriers such as cost and availability of local experiences as possible is a focus.

Indicators of Achievement for Core Theme #1B: Students should be able to develop a solid knowledge base.

1. [Core Curriculum](#) requirements in both Philosophy and Theology - added across the curriculum in Fall 2017 to support development of general and deeper knowledge through traditional Catholic education steeped in both reason and faith.
2. [The National Survey of Student Engagement 2016](#) (NSSE) – a student survey offering insight over time about four distinct characteristics of student academic engagement. Academic Challenge specifically covers students’ consideration of knowing and growing in themselves as well as the attainment of general and deep content knowledge. Information on Academic Challenge, such as High Order Thinking Skills, Reflective and Integrative Learning, Learning Strategies and Quantitative Learning are valuable to University improvement efforts and directly support Theme #1.

A few highlights from NSSE 2016:

First-year student engagement responses were significantly higher in Quantitative Reasoning with a mean score of 34.0 in relation to the institutional comparison group responders, which had a mean score of 28.7 (**p* value < .05 and effect size of .34).

Senior responses to engagement were significantly higher in Learning Strategies with a mean score of 43.4 and the comparison institution group’s response mean score of 37.8 (***) *p* value <.001 and effect size of .38).

The University will participate in the NSSE in 2018, encouraging greater participation across the first-year and senior students by clearly communicating the value the University places on the student voice for University improvement.

3. [The End-of-Course Student Surveys 2016 - 2017](#) - The surveys provide students the opportunity and voice to provide feedback to faculty and the University, the data has been collected or used. In the fall of 2017, a new implementation process is being considered to encourage more authentic responses from to support University improvement efforts. The University will continue using End-of-Course Surveys, but has plans to enhance student participation through:

- a) Early communication
- b) Multiple sources of communication
- c) Feedback on outcomes from previous surveys.

The process will obtain clearer, more focused information from students to provide:

- a) the positive impact the course has had on them
- b) feedback to faculty for reflection for continued best instructional practices, and
- c) feedback to administration and faculty members to collaboratively pursue a professional growth goal to review/revise/refresh course planning and implementation

Using information from these indicators, university-wide data is planned to be included on the University's new website on a regular basis beginning fall 2018 to inform and encourage students, staff, and faculty.

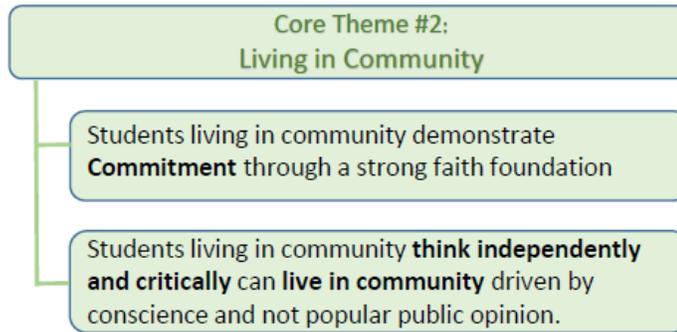
5. Rationale for the selection of the respective indicators of achievement. Why they are assessable and meaningful measures of achievement of the associated core theme objectives.

Each of the input indicators supports Core Theme #1 and fosters improvement in the chosen output indicators. All input indicators provide evidence of what the University is doing to support Core Theme #1 of "understanding themselves as students and people" and having "a solid knowledge base". All output indicators provide a level of evidence of our effectiveness in supporting our Core Theme #1. As NSSE and Corps of Discovery have been in place longer with consistency than the process for more authentic engagement in End-of-Course Evaluations and new Core Theme Objectives, they provide more information across time.

As the new emphasis on the value of student voice in University improvement efforts and information on the Core Curriculum comes to bear, more reliable data streams will inform courses and the Core Program. The University needs trend data to understand "normal," and what specific data to obtain at appropriate times. Without this perspective over time, the University may overreact or underreact to data from any single year. However, the University wants the output indicator to improve. The next steps provide ways to improve based on feedback from input and output indicators.

Core Theme #2: "Living in Community" (Formerly "Living independent and Counter-Cultural Lives")

Description: The University believes a liberal education with traditional Greek foundations prepares students with an education for a free, independent people to in community with others, which is living through use of one's own moral judgement and religious convictions rather than relying only on public opinion or popular trends. Strong faith and academic preparation allows students to live in this manner with a special concern for the poor and vulnerable.



Theme #2 Objectives:

In living in community through an independent and counter-cultural life, a student should:

- have a **strong faith foundation** based on the Gospel values and the teachings of Jesus within the Catholic tradition
- demonstrates **commitment** by finding meaning in life to participate effectively in society while transcending society's limitations
- be able to **think critically** emphasizing independent thinking in order to live a life driven by conscience and not popular public opinion.

Indicators of Achievement Core Theme #2A: Students should develop a strong faith foundation.

1. [Core Curriculum](#) requirements of Theology have been added to freshman and sophomore years. As a Catholic university, some would consider only one facet of faith. However, the University has embraced ecumenism and other faiths in student, staff and faculty populations, resulting in a diverse population of believers. The University will be offering four courses per semester, including a senior seminar, beginning fall 2017 which will generate new data (both quantitative and qualitative) from [End-of-Course Surveys](#) and academic achievement data. The new Core Courses will be a platform to maintain the diverse theological and academic conversation. Planned curriculum will assist students in becoming more self-aware, garnering respect for those with differing views and faith, and modeling the strength of their beliefs through their actions and responses. Those who do not espouse a particular faith may find the courses and discussions provide the knowledge base to determine their own particular path.
2. [Providence Formation Program](#) - Preparing students to engage in service learning, builds the development of getting comfortable with being uncomfortable (i.e. – resiliency) and the emerging uncommon courage from deeply rooted faith. Students developing a commitment to a life of service reflecting faith and counter-cultural thinking. Providence Formation Program will be supported as the liaison to the community for experiential learning. The program partners with [Whittier Elementary School](#), a low-income public school with 100% free and reduced lunches. There is also a partnership with [Eagle Mount](#), an agency that does recreational activities with those who have disabilities.

3. A Culture of Faith embodies the University which offers a daily Catholic Mass and beyond in speakers and presentations. New [Core Curriculum](#) Theology courses will enhance this culture. In Fall Semester 2017, 96 students were enrolled in Theology courses. NSSE 2016 data supports the diversity of the University's Culture of Faith in which 67% of first-year and 75% of senior responses indicated they had conversations with individuals of a faith other than their own. Catholic Mass will always be offered on campus both daily and weekly as an individual decision, and while not formally tracked, attendance has grown on Sunday evening mass from only a few to around 30 attendees.
4. [Catholic Scholarships](#) are awarded to meet the Mission of the University. It is a basic tenet of the faith to assist those in need. Providing such scholarships models the grace of giving for our students, especially those who receive. Catholic Scholarships will continue to be a focus. In 2014, the University offered a \$1000 Catholic Parish scholarship in addition to other aid a student was receiving if they provided documentation from their local parish of their active membership. The University also had a competitive Catholic High School scholarship based on academics and leadership for graduates of Catholic high schools, regardless of the students' religious affiliation, offering 3 to 5 of these in amounts ranging from \$16,000 to full tuition. In 2015 the University eliminated the Catholic Parish scholarship and changed the Catholic scholarship to be awarded to practicing Catholics only and required involvement in campus ministry. In 2016 and the current year, the University awarded one full tuition Catholic scholarship.
5. [5 - Year Strategic Plan](#) Pillar #2 - Student Experience - Students undergo a distinctive and transformative experience that guides them to discover and pursue their lifetime calling to make the world a better place.

Indicators of Achievement Core Theme #2B: Students must focus on developing personal commitment.

1. [Core Curriculum](#) requirements of philosophy have been added to freshman and sophomore years. With foundations in a traditional liberal arts education, philosophy is considered a means to understand one's self, but also to understand others and our world. The University offers two courses per semester in philosophy beginning Fall Semester 2017, generating new data, both quantitative and qualitative, from End-of-Course Surveys and academic achievement data. The total number of students in philosophy classes was 76 in Fall Semester 2017. The new Core Courses in philosophy will be a platform to maintain the diverse academic conversation about living. Planned curriculum will assist students in becoming more self-aware, garnering respect for those with differing backgrounds, ideals, and traditions.
2. [Providence Formation Program](#) - Giving of self through service is a tenet of the Catholic faith requiring a personal commitment. The Providence Formation Program is a co-curricular, service-learning program based on the Providence mission and core values of respect, compassion, justice, excellence, and stewardship. With the help of student officers, the director uses a three-pronged approach of service, fellowship, and spiritual formation to realize the program mission. There are 49 students participating with [Whittier Elementary School](#) and [Eagle Mount](#) through Providence Formation in the fall semester of 2017. In the fall semester 2017, 49 students were participating in Providence Formation – 14 freshmen, 12 sophomores, 10 juniors and 13 seniors.
3. The University provides opportunity for service-learning Projects, Mission Trips and [Study Abroad](#) such as 2008- 2012 trips to China, England & France, Japan, Australia/New Zealand, Belize, Italy/Greece, Peru, Puerto Pinasco in Mexico in spring 2014 and a Mission trip to Guatemala in 2017 through Providence St. Joseph/Faith in Practice, with plans to return to Guatemala in 2018. Other examples of recent Study abroad include:

- May 2013: Coordinator of Study Abroad took 6 graduate and undergraduate student to England, France, and Italy. Education First Educational Tours was the 3rd party provider who managed the trip. The spring semester of 2013, the Coordinator also offered a course that supported the trip including architecture, art, music, history of the places we would attend.
- May 2013: Chemistry faculty took students to Belize for a science-based trip. The 3rd party provider was [Kaya Responsible Travel](#).
- May 2015: Accounting faculty and Coordinator took 13 graduate and undergraduate students on a Scandinavian/Arctic Circle tour.
- May 2016: Chemistry faculty took 11 students on a Scandinavian/Arctic Circle tour.
- May 2017: Biology graduate participated in a dental clinic service learning project through [International Studies Abroad \(ISA\)](#), one of our 3rd party providers.
- May 2018: Chemistry Faculty plans a biology based mission trip to Peru/Cusco/Machu Picchu. She will use [Kaya Responsible Travel](#) as the 3rd party provider.
- May 2016 and 2017 – Dean of Students travelled to Morocco with student teams

Recognized barriers do exist for service learning, study abroad and mission-oriented activities and the University is committed to removing barriers when possible to provide students opportunities to live out the mission in service.

Indicators of Achievement Core Theme #2C: Students must be able to think critically.

1. **Thought-provoking speakers and presentations**, such as [Theology on Tap](#), are a tradition providing opportunities for students to engage in new experiences with diverse others. Numerous presentations and speakers are offered through TRiO, health services, Providence Formation Program, and University of Providence theater throughout the year, including Symphony Concert, Speaker John Hittinger “The Living Legacy of Saint John Paul” (11/2016), Career Dinner, Shakespeare in the Park (annual), and the University Presidential Inauguration (2016).
2. The University [Core Curriculum](#) is designed to teach students to think critically. Within the core curriculum, Integrated Learning Community (ILC) courses have a specific focus on critical thinking and are discipline-integrated, team-taught courses. Undergraduates at the University take 12 credits in their Core Curriculum in integrated learning community (ILC) courses. The [Academic Catalog](#) has information on ILCs on pages xxix, xli, and 92. As part of the OIP, course and program data will be gathered, analyzed and used more consistently to inform decision making and planning.
3. Speakers and presenters offer challenge to students’ thinking. Speakers and presentations include Life Issues Forum, [Hyde Park Forum](#) and annual [winners](#), Math Colloquium, and [Career Development Seminars](#). A goal is to continue to encourage academic discussions and presentations on campus. Examples of support for students include [The Career Center's](#) Job and Career Fair September 27, 2017, announced via email and the hosted three seminar-style lunch programs on career development each semester. The Math Colloquium was active through 2016 and is currently determining new student leadership.
4. [The Collegiate Learning Assessment \(CLA\) Institution Report Spring 2017](#) and [CLA summary chart](#) provides evidence that our students improved their critical thinking ability as entering students have, on average, scored in the 23rd percentile, with our students actually improved in critical thinking more than students at other schools over a four-year span, placing them in the 32nd percentile. Spring 2017 results were similar, and the University intends to continue CLA use.

5. [5 - Year Strategic Plan Pillar #2](#) – Students undergo a distinctive and transformative experience that guides them to discover and pursue their lifetime calling to make the world a better place.

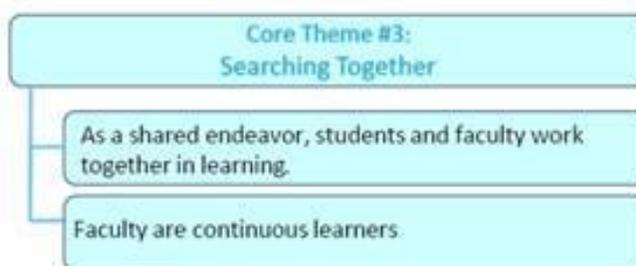
Rationale for the selection of the respective indicators of achievement. Why they are assessable and meaningful measures of achievement of the associated core theme objectives.

Each of our input indicators points directly to the Core Theme #2 of living lives in community through learning about and understanding the diversity within our world and being able to think critically about what one is learning.

Output indicators directly measure attention to these indicators through [End-of-Course Surveys](#), specific assessment reports, and a national survey of comparison with similar institutions. One area on which to expand and maintain data would be a thoughtfully planned schedule of speakers and presentations to discuss important topics of the times through the lens of faith and reason.

Core Theme #3: "Searching Together"

Description: Searching together: "...the faculty and staff of the University join with students in a cooperative and enthusiastic search for the truth..." We learn together, we search together, we seek to understand together. We live and learn in community.



Theme #3 Objectives:

Living and learning in community is what motivated the Sisters of Providence, the Ursuline Sisters, the Catholic Bishop of Great Falls and the civic community to found the University of Providence. In order to continue this shared endeavor, faculty, staff, and students work together to facilitate learning. All education focuses upon creating life-long learners.

The University's Core Theme #3 addresses this through a desire for:

1. Students and Faculty to work together in learning, and
2. Faculty are continuous learners.

Indicators of Achievement Core Theme #3A: Students and Faculty to work together in learning.

1. The University uses faculty as advisors to facilitate the student faculty partnership. Students are assigned faculty advisors to assist them in progressing through their 4-year programs. Advisors are also available to help students use DegreeWorks to make informed decisions about any program changes. The importance of advising as part of the student/faculty relationship is also an integral part of the work of the Retention Team. Considerations include consistent use of the 4-year plans, student planners, and [DegreeWorks](#) to assist in the advising process. Faculty training for freshman advising was provided during Orientation 2017.
2. On the [Beginning College Student Survey of Student Engagement 2017 \(BCSSE\)](#) implemented with incoming freshmen, 64% of respondents (n = 79) indicated they would

“seek help with coursework” from faculty members “often or very often.” Of the 70 respondents, 79% indicated they would “seek help from Academic advisors often” or “very often.” Further, 56% of respondents indicated they would “seek help from learning support services (i.e. tutoring, writing center, success center coaching, etc.)” Continuing with proposals for improved advising with training to assist students in meeting their 4-year plans and providing the Argo Guarantee will be of benefit to the University.

3. **University Integrated Learning Communities (ILCs)** - These courses combine two or more academic disciplines. The courses are all built around a single focused theme and consider ethical as well as discipline-specific issues. ILC courses are a required component of the University Core Curriculum but may also be offered in different disciplines for major requirements. They are described in the [Academic Catalog](#).
4. **Faculty-led Study Abroad** is offered by the University. See Core Theme 2B above.
5. **Research with Faculty** is offered for undergraduates to facilitate students and faculty working together. The [National Survey of Student 2016 \(NSSE\)](#) data shows our average Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI) mean scores are 25.5 and 21.2 for freshman and senior responders, respectively. Our peer institution SFI freshman and senior scores are 17 (**p value .001 with .63 effect size) and 22.3 respectively. The University’s mean scores declined from four years ago sparking discussions as how to best increase meaningful student-to-faculty interactions beyond advising and classroom interactions. The next administration of NSSE will be Spring 2018. A goal is to determine means to increase the availability of student-faculty interaction in other areas than the classroom, such as research with faculty and support for internships locally.
6. **5-Year Strategic -Pillar #2** - Student-centered learning, meaningful experiential learning

Indicators of Achievement Core Theme #3: Faculty are continuous learners.

1. **Faculty Opportunities** - The University offers the opportunity for faculty and staff to participate in Convocation, faculty development, attend conferences and participate in meaningful sabbaticals. In spring 2017, two faculty members, Professor Aaron Parrett and Professor Julia Becker, presented to staff and faculty regarding their meaningful sabbatical events that refreshed the continuous learning commitment to all present. The University is committed to continue to provide opportunities when possible for Faculty to grow professionally in various ways beyond the University.
2. **Faculty Development** - Faculty participates in on campus faculty development at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. Faculty has access to faculty development funds administered by the Faculty Resource and Development Committee (FRDC), Faculty Merit Development Grant and Sister Mary Wilson Grant. These funds can be used to attend and participate at professional conferences.

A new strategy for a new faculty development program has been developed to take effect in July 2018. This strategy has specific outcomes determined for FY 2019 with expectations for two goals per faculty. This plan is identified in the 5-Year Strategic Plan with detail in the [metrics](#) under “Organizational Effectiveness.”

Over the past four years, \$29,000 has been funded yearly for FRDC. In [2016 - 2017, numerous awards](#) were made to faculty. Each faculty member also receives \$1,000 for professional development. Application criteria and process for awards are in the [Faculty Handbook Section II](#). The Vice President of Academic Affairs hosts faculty lunches each month to address a topic of interest. This action has come about to satisfy the need for individual faculty development and support the effort on campus to increase student engagement. The University is willing to continue to provide FDRC funding as is made

possible within budgetary parameters, and to provide time for faculty lunches for information sharing.

3. **Culture of Assessment** – training for use of Taskstream/TK20, acquired in 2016, as a management tool for program planning and assessment. Training for faculty that is to assist the development of a culture of planning and assessment was recently conducted in April 2017, utilizing a Management Assessment tool acquired in 2016. Two faculty members were already using the tool from 2016. In August 2017, faculty training was provided in both assessment culture and Taskstream/TK20 to begin to bringing consistent student-to-course-to-program-to-institution aggregate data into a reality. A follow-up training with the Assessment Management Tool for non-academic program assessment management is being planned for 2018. This training will also assist the entire University to enter into a culture of assessment for the benefit of students, staff and faculty planning and decision making.
4. [5 - Year Strategic Plan](#) Pillars #1 and #2 - continuous faculty development and national best instructional practices

Rationale for the selection of the respective indicators of achievement. Why they are assessable and meaningful measures of achievement of the associated core theme objectives.

Each of the input indicators directly respond to Core Theme #3: Faculty members are continuous learners. The University fully supports all input indicators. Output indicators clearly show evidence of the University's ongoing support for continuous learning of faculty and a commitment to improvement. As the merger with Providence Health Services and St. Joseph's continues, there will be financial issues to be dealt with to continue funding, training and sabbaticals, but ongoing improvement will continue for faculty development and support.

Executive Summaries of Eligibility Requirements 4 – 21

The mission 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 for making a living.* The responses below both support our mission and satisfy eligibility requirements.

4. Operational Focus and Independence - The institution's programs and services are predominantly concerned with higher education. The institution has sufficient organizational and operational independence to be held accountable and responsible for meeting the Commission's standards and eligibility requirements.

The University is predominantly concerned with higher education and has sufficient organizational and operational independence to be held accountable for meeting the Commission's Standards and Eligibility requirements. As per the [Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation](#), the purpose of the University is to educate people through the provision of quality curricula in liberal and general education. As a private institution, the University does not have a "system" in the way public institutions operate. Governance of the University is clearly delineated between Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH) and the University Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the health and well-being of the University. As per the [Amended and Restated Bylaws 2016](#), the President is charged with the responsibility and vested with the authority for coordinating the activities of all segments of the University. The University monitors its compliance with the commission's standard for accreditation through its liaison officer, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the President of the University. The President serves as the University's single voice in communicating with the commission.

Please see this Year 7 Self-Evaluation response to Standards 2.A.2, 2.A.3 and 2.A.7 for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

5. Nondiscrimination- The institution is governed and administered with respect for the individual in a nondiscriminatory manner while responding to the educational needs and legitimate claims of the constituencies it serves as determined by its charter, its mission, and its core themes.

The University does not discriminate against individuals and responds to claims of its constituencies. As per policy and process, multiple individuals are involved with the review of employee candidates and students. This involvement of many individuals helps ensure that the University does not discriminate in regard to student admission and hiring of personnel. The University publishes the Faculty Handbook ([Parts 1 and 2](#)), [Employee Policy Manual](#), [Student Handbook](#) and [Academic Catalog](#) to inform constituents of University policies and individual rights and responsibilities. Each of these documents also contains procedures for constituents who feel wronged. Additionally, the [Academic Catalog](#) contains contact information for the Montana Department of Justice and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities if the complainant feels the concern is beyond the scope of the University.

Please see our Year Seven Self-Evaluation response to Standards 2.A.15, 2.A.16, 2.A.18, and 2.A.19 for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

6. Institutional Integrity - The institution establishes and adheres to ethical standards in all of its operations and relationships.

The University establishes and adheres to ethical standards in all of its operations and relationships. The University publishes and follows the [University Philosophy, Catholic Identity Statement](#) (also from [Faculty Handbook](#) Section 1 part 2.1.3), the [Providence St. Joseph Code of Ethics](#), and the [Faculty Code](#) to ensure institutional integrity. Through position descriptions, the [Employee Policy Manual](#) and the [Faculty Handbook \(Section1\)](#), employees are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, and rights and responsibilities. Employee personnel records are locked and only the employee and administrators have access to personnel files. The University conveys accurate information to all its publics.

Please see our Year Seven Self-Evaluation response to Standards 2.A.19, 2.A.20, 2.A.21, and 2.A.22 for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

7. Governing Board - The institution has a functioning governing board responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution and for each unit within a multiple-unit institution to ensure that the institution's mission and core themes are being achieved. The governing board has at least five voting members, a majority of whom have no contractual or employment relationship or personal financial interest with the institution.

The University has a functioning community board responsible for the quality and integrity of the University to ensure achievement of the mission and core themes. The Providence St. Joseph Board is our systems board, with the University community board acting as the governing board for local matters. As per the [Amended and Restated University Bylaws 2016](#), the Board can operate with as many as 35 members. The current Board of Trustees is comprised of 22 members including the President. The President and faculty representative are the only board members with contractual, employment, or financial interest. The student member has no contractual or employment interest but could be deemed as having financial interest because he/she pays tuition. The Board acts as a body of the whole with no individual member acting alone.

Please see our Year Seven Self-Evaluation response to Standards 2.A.4 and 2.A.23 for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

8. Chief Executive Officer - The institution employs a chief executive officer who is appointed by the governing board and whose full-time responsibility is to the institution. Neither the chief executive officer nor an executive officer of the institution chairs the institution's governing board.

As per the [Amended and Restated University Bylaws](#), the President is appointed by the CEO of PSJH in consultation with the University of Providence Board, with responsibility for managing the University. The President serves as an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees but may not serve as board chair.

Please see our Year Seven Self-Evaluation response to Standards 2.A.7 and 2.A.10 for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

9. Administration - In addition to a chief executive officer, the institution employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators who provide effective leadership and management for the institution's major support and operational functions and work

collaboratively across institutional functions and units to foster fulfillment of the institution's mission and achievement of its core themes.

As verified by organizational charts ([administration](#), [faculty](#), and [athletics](#)), position descriptions (examples: [President](#), [VP Finance](#), [VP Student Development](#), [Psychology position](#)), and vita upon request which are housed in the office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs office, the University employs sufficient qualified administrators who provide effective leadership and management for support and operational functions. The University leadership consists of the President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Finance, Vice President of Student Development, Vice President of Enrollment Management, Vice President of Athletics and Vice President School of Health Professions, Vice President/Executive Officer of Strategy, and Administration and Vice President of Mission Integration.

This group is charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution along with assessing its achievements and effectiveness.

Please see our Year Seven Self-Evaluation response to Standards 2.A.9 and 2.A.11 for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

10. Faculty - Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution employs and regularly evaluates the performance of appropriately qualified faculty sufficient in number to achieve its educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs wherever offered and however delivered.

Reviews of faculty qualifications, faculty workload, and number of course sections offered confirm that the University employs sufficient, appropriately qualified faculty to achieve its educational objectives, establish and oversee educational policies, and assure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs. Faculty are evaluated by students through student opinion surveys, the Vice President of Academic Affairs each year with the Faculty Performance Review and Goals Inventory, and every five years by peers as part of the promotion, tenure, and post tenure review process.

Please see Standards 2.B.4, 2.B.6, 2.C.5, and 2.C.8 for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

11. Educational Program -- The institution provides one or more educational programs which include appropriate content and rigor consistent with its mission and core themes. The educational program(s) culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes, and lead to collegiate-level degree(s) with degree designation consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.

The University offers associate, bachelor, and master degrees connected to our mission. Requirements for each degree and program are published in the [Academic Catalog](#). The faculty, through the curriculum committee, reviews each program at the inception of the program, each time a program is modified, and on a regular cycle with a full program review to ensure that all programs

- 1) contain appropriate content and rigor,
- 2) culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes,
- 3) lead to a college level degree with designators consistent with program content in recognized fields, and

4) are consistent with our mission.

Please see our Year Seven Standards 2.C.1, 2.C.12, 2.C.15, and 2.D.6 for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

12. General Education and Related Instruction The institution's baccalaureate degree programs and/or academic or transfer associate degree programs require a substantial and coherent component of general education as a prerequisite to or an essential element of the programs offered. All other associate degree programs (e.g., applied, specialized, or technical) and programs of study of either 30 semester or 45 quarter credits or more for which certificates are granted contain a recognizable core of related instruction or general education with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes. Bachelor and graduate degree programs also require a planned program of major specialization or concentration.

The bachelor (56 credits) and associate (45 credits) degree general education or core curricula are built to help students explore the Core Themes (Please see Standard 1.B for Core Themes in this report.) and help students develop the depth and breadth of intellect for living and for making a living. The baccalaureate and associate core includes courses that integrate basic knowledge and methodology of humanities and fine arts, mathematics and natural sciences, and social sciences. To facilitate depth of knowledge, bachelor's students must complete multiple levels of courses in English, math, and University our signature courses, Integrated Learning Community courses (ILCs). Associate degree students complete two levels of English and math courses. To facilitate breadth, bachelors and associate degree seeking students must take at least one course in each of fine arts, humanities, social sciences, and physical sciences. Core Curriculum requirements are published in the [Academic Catalog](#), and ILC information is available in the Academic Catalog on pages xxix, xli, and 92

Please see Standards 2.C.9 for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

13. Library and Information Resources - Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution maintains and/or provides access to library and information resources with an appropriate level of currency, depth, and breadth to support the institution's programs and services wherever offered and however delivered.

All library policies including basic use policy and interlibrary loan are published on the [Library Web page](#). The University library grants access to printed materials and computer equipment to all enrolled students and members of the public during normal operating hours. On and off campus students use their University issued ID number to access electronic databases. As per the [Library Collection Statistics 1](#) and [Library Collection Statistics 2](#), which shows the number of holdings by date and subject area, the library resources are of appropriate depth, breadth, and currency. Further, the library is an active partner in consortiums, including [TRAILS](#) (Treasure State Academic Library & Information Services). Access to library collections is open to all students in the School of Health Professions as well.

Please see our Year Seven Self-Evaluation response to Standards 2.A.13 and 2.E.1 for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

14. Physical and Technological Infrastructure - The institution provides the physical and technological infrastructure necessary to achieve its mission and core themes.

Maintenance of physical facilities is the responsibility of the Director of the Physical Plant. The University meets local safety inspections through compliance with the Great Falls City Fire Department. Americans with Disabilities (ADA) requirements are also the purview of this department (Two Sets of certificates cover both [Safety](#) and [ADA requirements](#)).

In 2015, Providence St. Joseph Health funded a safety review of the plant for “Red Flag Safety Improvements” which prioritized safety and maintenance projects at the time.

Maintenance and cleaning is a 24 hours, 7 days per week availability, and pride is taken in maintaining all facilities and the park setting grounds on a year-round basis. Detailed scheduling for both cleaning and maintenance is verified through regular inspection. Staff and faculty are aware and encouraged to contact the Director and the custodial staff to report situations through a [Physical Plant Work Order Form](#). The Director communicates directly to the Vice President of Strategy and Administration.

For more detailed information about Physical Infrastructure, please see Standard 2.G within this document.

IS ServiceDesk (email: servicedesk@uprovidence.edu) hired one additional support technician, a network/UCC analyst, and increased two additional student workers to provide support for end users. Policies of standardization for both hardware and software have been implemented to provide a more manageable and consistent campus-computing environment. Significant financial investment has been made by Providence St. Joseph Health to improve the University’s IS infrastructure.

A new Orientation Program for hiring and onboarding Faculty and Staff has been developed at the University and approved by the leadership team. The plan will be reviewed by the Campus Advisory Committee (CAC) for final approval January 29, 2018. This program includes:

- streamlining processes and documentation,
- Single Sign On services for user accounts has simplified account management and user experience,

IS Services worked with UP leadership on improvements in communication and training for faculty, staff, and students. Whenever possible new or upgraded software systems on campus has included:

- training from the vendors whenever new or upgraded software systems have been included on campus, and
- the Director of Instructional Design position was created and located in the Faculty Office Suite in order for direct and accessible assistance to the university’s faculty.

Please see the Year Seven Self-Evaluation response to Standards 2.G.5, 2.G.6, 2.G.7 and 2.G.8 for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

15. Academic Freedom - The institution maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and independence exist. Faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the academic/educational community in general.

The University supports the principles and concepts of academic freedom. The University publishes an Academic Freedom (Section 3.2) and a Faculty Grievance Procedure Policy (Section 6) in the Board approved [Faculty Handbook](#). These statements help protect academic freedom that protects individuals from internal and external influences, pressures and harassment. The University promotes an environment that supports independent thought in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge by providing funds for faculty and staff to conduct research and attend conferences to share their conclusions.

Please see Standards 2.A.27, 2.A.28 and 2.A.29 for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

16. Admissions - The institution publishes its student admission policy which specifies the characteristics and qualifications appropriate for its programs, and it adheres to that policy in its admissions procedures and practices.

As per the Admissions Policy published in the [Academic Catalog](#) and the [University Web page](#), students are admitted to associate, bachelor and master programs. The University admits students to the associate degree programs and bachelor degree programs based on a completed application that includes evidence of successfully completing high school including home schooled and GED completers. Students admitted to master's degrees must show completion of a bachelor's degree via official transcripts. The University admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs

Please see our Year Seven Self-Evaluation response to Standards 2.A.16 and 2.C.13 for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

17. Public Information - The institution publishes in a catalog and/or on a website current and accurate information regarding: its mission and core themes; admission requirements and procedures; grading policy; information on academic programs and courses; names, titles and academic credentials of administrators and faculty; rules and regulations for student conduct ; rights and responsibilities of students; tuition, fees, and other program costs; refund policies and procedures; opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and the academic calendar.

The University publishes an [Academic Catalog](#) in print and an online version. The [Academic Catalog](#) contains: mission and core themes; admission requirements; names, titles, and academic credentials of administrators and faculty; rules and regulations for student conduct; rights and responsibilities of students; tuition, fees, and other program costs; refund policies and procedures; opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and the academic calendar. The University Academic Catalog includes the [Graduate Catalog](#) in print and as a separate site on the Web site. The University also publishes a [Student Handbook](#) that is available online which expands upon students' rights and responsibilities of student conduct.

Please see our Year Seven Self-Evaluation response to Standards 2.A.12, 2.A.15 and 2.D.5 for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

18. Financial Resources - The institution demonstrates financial stability with sufficient cash flow and, as appropriate, reserves to support its programs and services. Financial planning reflects available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and appropriate risk management to ensure short-term solvency and long-term financial sustainability.

As specified in the position description, the University's business functions, including finance and accounting, are consolidated under the Vice President of Finance. The annual audit is performed by [Douglas Wilson and Company, PC](#). The University currently relies on broader health system support as a stopgap for recurrent operational losses. With our new [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) we are targeting positive operating income by 2021 and positive free cash flow by 2022. More broadly, Providence St. Joseph Health has agreed to invest significant capital (real estate and IS infrastructure) and operating income in the University of Providence, with targeted funding areas and release dates.

With the support of Providence St. Joseph Health for both financial and human resources, the University is currently making several investments in IS infrastructure and our ERP, Banner (an Ellucian product). This effort will require substantial investments each year as the University continues to automate many current manual functions over the course of [the University of Providence Pro Forma and 5-Year Plan](#); licensing costs will increase accordingly. With the growth of online learning programs, it is imperative that a high performance LMS be used to deliver the quality programs that students expect. Other additional IS related investments include:

- A staff/faculty/student life cycle computer replacement schedule that supports the higher education environment.
- Increased bandwidth to support additional students both online and on campus.
- Support for a cloud hosting agreement with Ellucian for Banner.

For the sake of accountability, the University has created a set of operational and financial metrics to gauge success. Please see Standard 2.A.30 and Standard 2.F within this report for more detailed evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

19. Financial Accountability - For each year of operation, the institution undergoes an annual external financial audit by professionally qualified personnel in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. The audit is to be completed no later than nine months after the end of the fiscal year. Results from the audit, including findings and management letter recommendations, are considered annually in an appropriate and comprehensive manner by the administration and the governing board.

As specified in the position description, the University's business functions, including finance and accounting, are consolidated under the Vice President of Finance. Following the conclusion of the fiscal year, June 30, Douglas Wilson and Company, CPA, conducts an annual financial audit. The audit verifies that the University follows generally acceptable accounting practices. The Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees traditionally reviews the audit in advance of the October Board of Trustees meeting when the Board approves and acts upon the audit findings per the [Amended and Restated Bylaws 2016](#). In 2017, this was completed at the December Board meeting.

Please see our Self-Evaluation response to Standards 2.A.5, 2.A.30, 2.F.2, 2.F.4, 2.F.4 and 2.F.7 for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

20. Disclosure - The institution accurately discloses to the Commission all information the Commission may require to carry out its evaluation and accreditation functions.

This report contains accurate and complete answers to questions so the commission can carry out its evaluation and accreditation functions.

Please see our entire Year Seven Self-Evaluation report for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

21. Relationship with Accreditation Commission - The institution accepts the standards and related policies of the Commission and agrees to comply with these standards and policies as currently stated or as modified in accordance with Commission policy. Further, the institution agrees that the Commission may, at its discretion, make known the nature of any action, positive or negative, regarding the institution's status with the Commission to any agency or members of the public requesting such information.

In completing the Year Seven Self-Evaluation, the University made adjustments to show compliance with Commission Standards. The University made adjustments because we accept the Standards and related policies of the Commission and agree to comply with these standards and policies as currently stated or as modified in accordance with Commission policy. The University agrees that the Commission may, at its discretion, make known the nature of any action, positive or negative, regarding the institution's status with the Commission to any agency or members of the public requesting such information.

Please see Standards 2.A.25, and Response to Commission Recommendations from 2015 (Addenda) within this report for further elaboration and evidence of compliance with this eligibility requirement.

Standard 2 – Resource and Capacity

By documenting the adequacy of its resources and capacity, the institution demonstrates the potential to fulfill its mission, accomplish its core theme objectives, and achieve the intended outcomes of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered. Through its governance and decision-making structures, the institution establishes, reviews regularly, and revises, as necessary, policies and procedures that promote effective management and operation of the institution.

Introduction to Standard 2

The University of Providence has, through the self-reflection and evaluation through the “big, bold, fast, and excellent” planning and actions undertaken, have looked deeply at its resources and capacity. Through this self-reflection of the [Operational Improvement Plan \(OIP\)](#), the University recognized there were both great challenges and great opportunities.

Challenges that were met in “big, bold, fast and excellent fashion included:

- a need to renew its image while maintaining its link to its roots with the Sisters of Providence, leading to rebranding the University from the University of Great Falls to the University of Providence
- The physical plant also needed renewal to meet the needs of students, faculty and staff leading to a master plan for physical growth and renewal of the physical plant.
- To provide for the influx of students who have grown up with technology always with them, there was a need to upgrade and improve technology on campus for students, faculty and staff.
- Personnel were acquired who have the skills and knowledge to assist with planning for financial sustainability, redesigning curriculum for a more traditional and robust Core Curriculum, and for providing institution-wide assessment
- In collaboration with the corporate sponsor, Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH), a “Year of Mission” will more closely align the University’s mission with the newly developing PSJH mission.
- Involving constituents in the entire endeavor of change undertaken led to surveys, town hall meetings, and a review of university policy by the Stevens Group greatly opening up communication across the University and with constituents
- Committing to live our mission in a student-centric manner, strategic enrollment and retention planning was also instituted

As these challenges were met, [the University of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#) was developed in collaboration with PSJH for carefully designed growth and sustainability goals. [The 5-Year Strategic Plan](#) was developed based on the needs remaining to be addressed while also looking not at the challenges but the unique time and place the University finds itself to be able to continue to provide the means to obtain a liberal arts education for living and making a living while also capitalizing on direct ties to the unprecedented growth in the needs of the health care industry through ties with PSJH and the University’s [School of Health Professions](#).

Now, the University has an [Execution Plan](#) to bring the planning to life. Through working together, the University, Providence St. Joseph Health, students, faculty, staff and community have the resources and capacity available to provide paths for students to enter productive careers and enter into more advanced educational endeavors as they choose.

Please note that the [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\) correlations](#) to Standard 2 “Resources and Capacity” are evident and utilized.

2.A Governance

2.A.1 The institution demonstrates an effective and widely understood system of governance with clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Its decision-making structures and processes make provision for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest.

The University of Providence is a private, nonprofit institution granted authority by the state of Montana through the University [Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation 2017](#) to further higher education of men and women. The University has an effective system of governance, which allows for input from administration, staff, faculty, and students. As prescribed by the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation, Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH) is the sole corporate member of the University. As the sole corporate member of the University, PH&S appoints a member to the University Board of Trustees.

In accordance with [University Bylaws](#), the institution board of Trustees manages all business affairs of the University although the PSJH Board remains the University's legal fiduciary board. While the institution board is the final institutional authority regarding academic and programmatic matters, policies and procedures, granting all degrees awarded by the University at the recommendation of the President, the PSJH Board maintains authority for budget, capital projects and legal matters. Its primary responsibility is the articulation of University Policies and Procedures. It is obligated to protect the financial resources of the University, to plan and direct the financial resources, and to relate them to the needs of the present and future. While maintaining a general overview, the Board entrusts the conduct of administration of the University to the President and through the President to other administrative officers of the institution.

The Board entrusts to the Faculty the conduct of teaching, scholarship, research, and recommending and [advising on the curriculum](#). Faculty conducts its business and exerts its authority through the executive committee, faculty standing committees, administrative council, and academic divisions. The Faculty Handbook serves as the guide for the functioning of each committee. Faculty are represented directly to the Board of Trustees through the faculty representative who serves as a member of the Board of Trustees. Faculty is represented through the Vice President of Academic Affairs to the President and to the Board of Trustees.

Staff is represented through their respective Vice Presidents and the President to the Board of Trustees. Staff conduct and governance is guided by the Employee manual. Organizational charts for each area (academic, athletic, student development and human resources) show the authority structure. Position descriptions define roles and responsibilities of each leader except our Student Senate (SS) president who represents the students on this Board.

The [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) helps direct University decisions. The Strategic Plan was developed with input from a variety of constituents and requires action from faculty, staff, administrators, and students to successfully implement. The University governance structure is published in the organizational charts. Roles, and responsibilities of PSJH, the Board of Trustees and the President are published in documents pertinent to each group. This is to ensure wide understanding of the University governance structure. For example, the responsibilities of the Board in relation to faculty is published in the [Faculty Handbook Section I](#) Part 2.

The University demonstrates widely understood decision making and implementation of its governance system via meeting minutes of the various governing units.

2.A.2 In a multi-unit governance system, the division of authority and responsibility between the system and the institution is clearly delineated. System policies, regulations, and procedures concerning the institution are clearly defined and equitably administered.

The University and PSJH are united by a common history with the Sisters of Providence founding both organizations. As a private institution, the University does not have a “system” in the way public institutions operate. Governance of the University is divided between PSJH and the Board of Trustees with PSJH as the sole corporate member. In this sense, the University operates under multi-unit governance, PSJH and the Board of Trustees. In exercising its authority, as prescribed in the [Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation](#), PSJH appoints a representative to the Board of Trustees. Working in concert with the Board, PSJH is responsible for final approval for: 1) changes to the mission, philosophy, and values; 2) amendments to the Articles of Incorporation; 3) adjustments to the number of trustees and removal of a trustee; 4) acquisition of assets and incurrence of debt; 5) liquidation or dissolution of the University; and 6) adopting the annual operating and capital budgets. Appointment and removal of the President of the University is now the decision of the CEO of PSJH.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the health and well-being of the University. In conjunction with the President and faculty, the Board sets policies, regulations, and procedures. These policies and procedures are published in the [Faculty Handbook](#) and [Employee Policy Manual](#). System policies, regulations, and procedures concerning the institution are clearly articulated in the [Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation](#).

2.A.3 The institution monitors its compliance with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation, including the impact of collective bargaining agreements, legislative actions, and external mandates.

The University monitors its compliance with the commission’s Standard for Accreditation through its liaison officer, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the President of the University. The President serves as the University’s single voice in communicating with the commission. The Leadership Team consisting of the President and the Vice Presidents as well as the Vice President of Athletics, monitors legislative actions that might affect the University. External mandates, other than legal mandates, come from specialty accrediting agencies. The [Montana Office of Public Instruction \(OPI\)](#), accredits our elementary, secondary and special education programs. The [American Bar Association](#) approves our Legal and Paralegal Studies bachelor’s program. [The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, \(CCNE\)](#), accredited the University’s Bachelor of Science nursing program for the next ten years in 2016. The [Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs \(CACREP\)](#) accredited the counseling program in the spring of 2017 to 2025 upon completion of a 2-year interim.

Education and Legal and Paralegal Studies completed reviews for their respective accrediting agencies. Each of these organizations has an accreditation/approval process that conveys external mandates. To ensure continuous compliance with the standards of these agencies, the University assigns a faculty member, in the pertinent department, as the liaison with appropriate administrative authority and responsibility.

The University does not have any collective bargaining agreements with its employees. All employment contracts are negotiated individually. Information about the contractual expectations are found in [the Employee Policy Manual](#).

2.A.4 The institution has a functioning governing Board consisting of at least five voting members, a majority of whom have no contractual, employment, or financial interest in the institution. If the institution is governed by a hierarchical structure of multiple Boards, the roles, responsibilities, and authority of each Board – as they relate to the institution – are clearly defined, widely communicated, and broadly understood.

The Board of Trustees is comprised of 22 members including the President, as ex officio member, a faculty member, and a student member. In accordance with the [Amended and Restated University Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation](#), the Board may not exceed 31 members. Each member has voting rights. The President, faculty representative and student representative are the only members with contractual, employment, or financial interest. The student member has no contractual or employment interest but could be deemed as having financial interest because he/she pays tuition. The roles and responsibilities of the Board are clearly articulated in the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation and the Amended and Restated University Bylaws and communicated to Board members through the [Board of Trustees New Member Manual](#).

The University is not governed by a hierarchy of Boards with the exception of the relationship between PSJH and the University Board. This relationship is explained in Standards 2.A.1 and 2.A.2 above.

2.A.5 The Board acts only as a committee of the whole; no member or subcommittee of the Board acts on behalf of the Board except by formal delegation of authority by the governing Board as a whole.

As required in the University [Amended and Restated Bylaws](#), *the presence in person of a majority of the members of the Board of Trustees shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, a simple majority vote of those present, that is, more than one-half of the number present, shall be sufficient for election of trustees or for any other decision.* With these guidelines, Board members only act as a committee of the whole and no subcommittee or member may act on behalf of the Board without appropriate approval of the Board. As guided by the Bylaws, the Board operates with five committees

- The Academic and Faculty Affairs Committee (AFAC)
- Finance Committee
- Enrollment and Student Development Committee, and
- Development Committees - which make recommendations to the Board as a whole
- Mission Committee

The Executive Committee of the Board, who can act for the full board when the authority has been delegated by the full board, can make recommendations to the full Board for action.

2.A.6 The Board establishes, reviews regularly, revises as necessary, and exercises broad oversight of institutional policies, including those regarding its own organization and operation.

The Board is active in reviewing itself and institution policy. In 2009, the Board revised and approved a new set of Amended and Restated [University Bylaws](#) and [Articles of Incorporation](#). Beginning in 2012 and continuing through 2014, the Board committees are reviewing their charge to ensure that they are operating in the most efficient manner for the Board. The Board reviewed and approved the [Employee Policy Manual](#) in 2013. In October 2013, the Board approved a revised Academic and Faculty Affairs Committee (AFAC) charge. AFAC is a subcommittee of the Board. In February, 2014 the Board approved [Section 1 of the Faculty Handbook](#). [Section 2 of the Faculty Handbook](#) was approved September 25, 2015.

The Board is the final approval for our new policy manual that is in development, and has a strong history of review and revision as necessary:

- 2009 - the Board revised and approved a new set of University Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation
- 2012 -2014 - the Board committees are reviewing their charge
- 2013 - The Board reviewed and approved the Employee Policy Manual and a revised Academic and Faculty Affairs Committee (AFAC) charge
- 2014 - The Board approved [Section 1 of the Faculty Handbook](#)
- 2015 – The Board approved [Section 2 of the Faculty Handbook](#)
- 2016 – The Board approved the [Amended and Restated University Bylaws](#) of the University of Great Falls, now University of Providence
- 2017 – [The Board approved the name change](#) to the University of Providence (page 4 of board minutes)

2.A.7 The Board selects and evaluates regularly a chief executive officer who is accountable for the operation of the institution. It delegates authority and responsibility to the CEO to implement and administer Board-approved policies related to the operation of the institution.

Providence Health and Services (PSJH) in conjunction with the Board of Trustees hired President Tony Aretz in 2016. The Board evaluates the President on a regular basis within executive session during Board meetings. Because the evaluation is conducted in executive session, there is no public record of the evaluation. Through the [Amended and Restated University Bylaws 2016](#), the Board entrusts the President to be the *chief administrative officer of the University and as such shall be accountable to the Board for the management of the University. The President is evaluated through PSJH in consultation with the community board. The Board Chair provides regular feedback to the President. The President shall be charged with the responsibility and vested with the authority for coordinating the activities of all segments of the University into a cohesive entity for the accomplishment of its purposes. The President shall prepare and establish such regulations, plans and long-range objectives as may be appropriate to carry out the responsibilities of the office.*

2.A.8 The Board regularly evaluates its performance to ensure its duties and responsibilities are fulfilled in an effective and efficient manner.

The Board evaluated and revised the existing bylaws to the [Amended and Restated University Bylaws](#) and Amended [Articles of Incorporation in 2017](#). During quarterly Board meetings, members evaluate their roles and the Board direction.

It was determined that the Board would annually conduct a self-evaluation as indicated in the 2014 response to Recommendation #2. There appears to have been movement in this direction with the development of a [Board Self-evaluation Survey](#). As this was to be adopted during the three years of leadership change at the University and is currently in a discussion about its roles and responsibilities. An evaluation is planned for some time in 2018.

2.A.9 The institution has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of responsibility and accountability, who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness.

The [University leadership](#) consists of the [President](#), Vice President of Strategy and Administration (new position November 2017), Vice President of Academic Affairs ([Provost 2018](#)), [Vice President of Finance](#), [Vice President of Student Development](#), Vice President of Enrollment Management, [Executive Director of Marketing and Communications](#) and [Vice President of Athletics](#). As evidenced by vita (available in the Office of Academic Affairs) and position descriptions above, each of these individuals has appropriate qualifications and experience to serve the needs of the roles of the institution. As evidenced by organizational charts each leader has appropriate responsibility and accountability. This group is charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution along with assessing its achievements and effectiveness. The leadership team meets with the President each week to discuss issues pertinent to the University. Each of these leaders also meets individually with the President each week to discuss issues pertinent to his or her area. The leadership team also has a Board of Trustees committee responsible for his or her area. This allows the trustees to be directly involved in each of the leadership areas.

2.A.10 The institution employs an appropriately qualified chief executive officer with full-time responsibility to the institution. The chief executive officer may serve as an ex officio member of the governing Board, but may not serve as its chair.

The University, in accordance with its [Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation 2017](#) and the [Amended and Restated University Bylaws 2016](#) and as verified by the President's position description and vita, employs a full time, qualified chief executive officer. The President serves as an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees but may not serve as Board chair.

2.A.11 The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators who provide effective leadership and management for the institution's major support and operational functions and work collaboratively across institutional functions and units to foster fulfillment of the institution's mission and accomplishment of its core theme objectives.

The University employs a President, five Vice Presidents, Executive Director of Communications, and the Vice President of Athletics who comprise the University leadership team (Please see 2.A.9 for position descriptions). The leadership team, along with the Academic Dean and Division Chairs, provide effective leadership and management for the institution's major support and operational functions. This leadership team meets weekly to discuss issues pertinent to each area and the University as a whole. The Vice Presidents and those in their charge work collaboratively across institutional functions and units to foster fulfillment of the institution's mission and accomplishment of its core theme objectives. Each administrator has a number of employees assigned to him/her to ensure all University functions

are completed. As evidence by vita (housed in the Office of Academic Affairs) each administrator is appropriately qualified to fulfill his/her duties.

2.A.12 Academic policies – including those related to teaching, service, scholarship, research, and artistic creation – are clearly communicated to students and faculty and to administrators and staff with responsibilities related to these areas.

Academic policies pertinent to students are clearly communicated via syllabi ([graduate template](#) and [undergraduate template](#)), the University Web site academic policies, and the [Academic Catalog](#). Faculty members, advisors, the Registrar and other University personnel are available to provide additional clarification and apply policies to specific situations. Examples of academic policies directly related to students are academic misconduct, credit transfer policy, and graduation requirements.

Academic policies pertinent to faculty are communicated through the Faculty Handbook [Section 1](#) and [Section 2](#). Policies specific to expectations of teaching, service, scholarship, research, and artistic creation are part of our promotion and tenure policies and processes. These policies are articulated in the Faculty Evaluation, Advancement, and Tenure (FEAT) Bylaws 5.0 in the Faculty Handbook. Administrators, such as the, Vice President of Academic Affairs and the President do not have teaching responsibilities. The Academic Dean and Associate Deans are full-time faculty members with reduced teaching loads. Teaching administrators adhere to all academic policies as specified in the Faculty Handbook and FEAT bylaws.

We have a few staff members with teaching responsibilities. Promotion and tenure policies are not applicable to them. Academic policies, e.g. drop add period, pertinent to staff teaching classes are also pertinent to students and are published in the Academic Catalog. Staff teaching classes follow the standard syllabus format. Staff members teaching classes also have the Adjunct Faculty Handbook to guide them.

2.A.13 Policies regarding access to and use of library and information resources – regardless of format, location, and delivery method- are documented, published, and enforced.

All library policies including: basic use policy, and interlibrary loan are published on the [Library Web page](#). The University library grants access to printed materials and computer equipment to all enrolled students and members of the public during normal operating hours. Hours of operation are published on the Library Web Page. Electronic databases are accessible off campus only to enrolled students. Students use their University issued ID number to access electronic databases. Basic instructions for accessing resources off campus are located on the Library Web page, in LibGuides web tutorials, and are emailed to any new student to help with orientation to library use. Library LibGuides are online tutorials linked from the library home page that assist students with several library functions, e.g. finding an article. On campus library staff is responsible for enforcing proper use of materials, including on campus computers, and making sure that physical materials are properly charged to student or public patrons. The Ezproxy server grants off-campus access of electronic material through recognition of valid ID numbers. Access to the PSJH library is available for SHP students. We are looking into the cost to make these resources available to all the students.

2.A.14 The institution develops, publishes widely, and follows an effective and clearly stated transfer- of- credit policy that maintains the integrity of its programs while

facilitating efficient mobility of students between institutions in completing their educational programs.

As per the Credit Transfer Policy published in the [Academic Catalog](#) and on the [University Web site](#) under Academic Policies, the University accepts transfer credit from regionally accredited institutions, as well as internationally recognized foreign institutions. Any challenges or exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Academic Dean. The University will not accept remedial or developmental coursework, experiential learning not associated with formal training, coursework with a grade of C or lower (Grades of C- are not acceptable unless such a grade carries quality points of 2.0), challenge course credits, or repeated coursework (only the most recent course is accepted). Students must complete the last 30 of 40 credits at the University.

As per academic policies ([Academic Catalog](#), p. xxiv), the University accepts CLEP credit in accordance with ACE guidelines. Specifically, this policy provides for credit for CLEP scaled scores of fifty or above. In addition, the University accepts Advanced Placement (AP) credit in accordance with the recommendation of The College Board. At present, the policy provides general elective credit for scores of 3. A score of 4 may be used to fulfill core requirements where appropriate and a score of 5 may be used to fulfill major requirements where applicable. DANTES credits are also accepted according to ACE recommendations. International Baccalaureate (IB) credit is awarded for students receiving a 4 or above on Higher Level (HL) exams or a score of 5 or above on Standard Level (SL) exams. Four semester credits are awarded for lab based courses and up to 5 semester credits for all other HL exams. SL exams are worth 3 semester credits. A chart detailing the specific correlation between CLEP, DANTES, IB and AP credits and University requirements is available online. The University limits the total number of CLEP, DANTES, and IB credits and how they apply toward a degree. No more than 15 semester credits may be applied to a major, 9 semester credits for a minor. Any exception to this policy must be approved by the Academic Dean.

The University has articulation agreements ([Elementary](#) and [Secondary Education, Criminal Justice, Business Administration, Accounting and Psychology](#)) with area two-year colleges which are updated regularly. These agreements are designed to assist students with curriculum planning prior to enrolling at the University. Articulations are maintained in the Office of Academic Affairs. The [renewal of articulation agreements](#) with Montana State University – Great Falls College are prepared to be signed in January 2018.

2.A.15 Policies and procedures regarding students' rights and responsibilities – including academic honesty, appeals, grievances, and accommodations for persons with disabilities – are clearly stated, readily available, and administered in a fair and consistent manner.

All academic policies are clearly stated, readily available, and administered in a fair and consistent manner. Academic policies including appeals and grievances are published on the [University Web page](#), in the University [Academic Catalog](#) under Academic Policies and in the [Student Handbook](#). Additionally, policies regarding academic misconduct and accommodations for students with disabilities are published on the syllabus for each course. To ensure fair and consistent administration of policies all policy questions are directed to the Academic Dean. Students with disabilities are notified on the course syllabus that if they need accommodations, students need to see the disabilities coordinator. If a student has a documented disability and would like the professor to make accommodations, students are to meet with the Disability Coordinator, Kay Seilstad, in the [TRiO Center for Academic Excellence](#). The entire

Accommodations for Disabled Students policy is published in the Academic Catalog (page xvii and xxxii - xxxiv) and on the Web page under Academic Resources

Two policies were modified as a result of this self-study process: the student grade appeal process and the suspension policy. The Faculty Academic Environment Committee rewrote the grade appeal policy and channeled the policy through to faculty approval. The new policy is part of the Academic Catalog Update. The Suspension policy needed to be revised to ensure that the Academic and Financial Aid Suspension policies were compatible. The Academic Suspension policy was revised with input from the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Academic Dean, Registrar, Director of Financial Aid, and Vice President of Finance and Human Resources. The policy was approved by the faculty in accordance with University process. The newly revised policy provides greater clarity and direction to students and administration. The revised policy is published in the Academic Catalog and became effective fall 2014.

2.A.16 The institution adopts and adheres to admission and placement policies that guide the enrollment of students in courses and programs through an evaluation of prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to assure a reasonable probability of student success at a level commensurate with the institution's expectations. Its policy regarding continuation in and termination from its educational programs – including its appeals process and readmission policy – are clearly defined, widely published, and administered in a fair and timely manner.

The University invites [applications for admission](#) from students seeking a quality education and who are interested in an educational experience with a focus on the whole person. Admission depends upon careful review of all credentials presented by the applicant. The University reserves the right to request additional information from any applicant. *The University of Providence, mindful of its mission to be a witness to the love of Christ for all, admits students of any age, race, color, disability, national or ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, citizenship status, status as a veteran, or any other characteristic that is protected by applicable state or federal law to all rights, privileges, program and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the University.*

As per the Admissions policy published in the [Academic Catalog](#) and the [University Web page](#) students are admitted to certificate, associate, bachelor, and master programs. The University admits students to the associate degree programs and bachelor degree programs based on a completed application that includes evidence of successfully completing high school including home schooled and GED completers. Students admitted to master's degrees must show completion of a bachelor's degree via official transcripts. The University has admissions provisions for transfer, international, non-degree, readmitted, dual credit, lifelong learner, and veteran students. See Admission requirements in the University Academic Catalog for the specifics for each category of student.

Students who are dismissed from the institution are dismissed because of violation of student development, academics, or financial aid policies. Students who stay in good academic and financial aid standing, as per the Academic Warning, Probation and Suspension Policy published in the University Academic Catalog, may continue progress toward degree completion. Graduate students who stay in good academic and financial aid standing as per each program's continuation policy as published in the [Graduate Academic Catalog](#), may continue their studies. Both undergraduate and graduate students who fail to meet academic or financial aid standards may appeal their standing. The process for appealing their academic standing is published in the Academic Warning, Probation, and Suspension policy. Appeals are

heard by a committee representing academics, financial aid, student development, admissions, and registrar. This policy is currently published in the University [Academic Catalog](#) and will be included in the 2017-2018 Academic Catalog. A student may also be removed from progressing toward degree completion if he/she violates the University Code for Student Conduct.

Students may appeal an academic, financial aid or student development suspension as per the Academic Warning, Probation, and Suspension Policy and the University Code for Student Conduct.

A student who was suspended due to a Financial Aid policy violation must first win his/her appeal before taking classes. A student may reapply for admission following an academic suspension following one or two semesters away from the University as specified by the Academic Warning, Probation, and Suspension policy. Students may or may not be eligible to reapply after a student development suspension depending on the specific language in the student's suspension letter. The student's suspension letter provides information regarding appeal and readmission process.

2.A.17 The institution maintains and publishes policies that clearly state its relationship to co-curricular activities and the roles and responsibilities of students and the institution for those activities, including student publications and other student media, if offered.

Clubs and communities, and service projects, as published on the [University Web page](#) under Student Life, are available to students. A list of athletic teams is published on the University Athletics web page. Students may participate in athletics as long as they meet the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) [athletics eligibility requirements](#) as stated on the [PLAYNAIA Web page](#) and verified by the Registrar through the eligibility participation verification process. Athletic eligibility standards are published on the PLAYNAIA web page linked from the University Athletics web page.

Students in good academic standing, as per the Academic Warning, Probation, and Suspension policy, and not otherwise in violation of the University Code of Student Conduct, as published in the Student Handbook, may participate in co-curricular activities. General roles and responsibilities of students are published in the Student Handbook. Specific roles and responsibilities of each group are conveyed to students by that group.

The University's Code of Student Conduct, contained within the [Student Handbook](#) (Page 5), outlines the written expectations for student behaviors and student conduct procedures for students enrolled at the University. The University code applies to conduct that occurs on University premises and at University sponsored activities, and to off-campus conduct that adversely affects the University community and/or the pursuit of its objectives. Each student is responsible for his/her conduct from the time of application for admission through the actual awarding of a degree, even though conduct may occur before classes begin or after classes end, as well as during the academic year and during periods between terms of actual enrollment (and even if their conduct is not discovered until after a degree is awarded). The University Code applies to a student's conduct even if the student withdraws from school while a disciplinary matter is pending. The Vice President of Student Development decides whether the University Code is applied to conduct occurring off campus, on a case-by-case basis, in his/her sole discretion.

Once registered for courses, students are expected to attend all classes and complete all assigned work. The specific attendance and grading policy for each class is determined by the instructor and is listed in the course syllabus. Students who miss classes due to participation in University sanctioned events (co-curricular activities) are required to make up any work or assignments they have missed in an equitable manner determined by the instructor and should not have their grade affected by the absence itself.

Faculty members arranging for student trips, meetings, research, or other out-of-class experiences should minimize conflict with classes or other required academic functions through communication with professional colleagues.

The University Academic Catalog and all syllabi clearly state the roles and responsibilities of students regarding University sanctioned, co-curricular activities and class attendance.

Human Resources

2.A.18 The institution maintains and publishes its human resources policies and procedures and regularly reviews to ensure they are consistent, fair, and equitably applied to its employees and students.

The University publishes its human resource policies and procedures in the [Employee Policy Manual](#). Every employee is provided a hard copy of the manual upon hiring, and signs a receipt of acknowledgment. The manual is available in electronic form on the network. Faculty can access the manual electronically through the Faculty Drive. The Employee Policy Manual is reviewed regularly to ensure consistent, fair, and equitable application to employees, and is currently being reviewed as part of the University's policy review project. The employee manual was reviewed and rewritten in its entirety and approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2010. Policy 501 Tuition and Fee Remission was revised and approved in Fall 2013.

Student rights are addressed in the [Academic Catalog](#) and the [Student Handbook](#). Policies pertinent to human rights include academic policies, policies regarding students with disabilities, and FERPA. The Academic Catalog is reviewed annually to ensure policies are consistent, fair, and equitable. The Student Handbook is updated regularly.

2.A.19 Employees are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination.

Employees are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination initially through the position announcement and subsequently throughout the [new hire process](#). Rights, responsibilities and promotion and tenure guidelines are published in the [Employee Policy Manual](#) and/or the [Faculty Handbook Section I](#). During the interview for employment, employees are apprised of their specific work assignments, rights, responsibilities, and criteria for advancement. During new hire orientation, new employees meet with a Human Resources representative to review the specifics of each position. Faculty are also apprised of their promotion and tenure calendar in their appointment and reappointment letters. All policies are available in the Employee Policy Manual and the Faculty Handbook. The University follows a specific set of guidelines regarding evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination as outlined in the faculty handbook.

2.A.20 The institution ensures the security and appropriate confidentiality of human resources records.

The University ensures the security and appropriate confidentiality of human resources records by securing employee records in the Human Resources Department and the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Staff files are secured in locked cabinets in the Human Resources Department. Only the Vice President, Executive Officer/of Strategy and Administration and the Director of Human Resources have access. Faculty files are secured in locking cabinets in the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs with keys available to the Administrative Assistant and the Vice President of Academic Affairs. As per Employee Policy # 204 in the [Employee Policy Manual](#), the University may maintain a personnel file for each employee. Personnel files are owned by and are the property of the University. By appointment with the Human Resources Department or the Vice President of Academic Affairs, for faculty, an employee may view his/her employee contract, performance evaluations, letters of reprimand, letters of commendation, and any tax or benefit documents. Employees may not view the personnel file of others. Administrators at the Vice President level or above may view files as needed.

Institutional Integrity

2.A.21 The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently through its announcements, statements, and publications. It communicates its academic intentions, programs, and services to students and to the public and demonstrates that its academic programs can be completed in a timely fashion. It regularly reviews its publications to assure integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.

The University communicates to prospective students, enrolled students, and the public through its [Web site](#), [Academic Catalog](#), and individual publications. Information is presented clearly, accurately, and consistently in all publications. The University recently launched a new Web site as part of a major rebranding initiative, and steps are being taken to ensure that all content is clear, accurate, and consistent throughout. The new Web site is mobile responsive and can be updated regularly to better communicate with students and key audiences.

[Program planning and advising sheets](#) can be found on the Web site for every program, (undergraduate and graduate) indicating that through the [Argo Advantage](#) programs can be completed in a timely fashion. When program completion may take longer (e.g. education) than the anticipated four years, faculty advisors speak directly with the student about his/her individual plan. During the 2015 - 2016 academic year, the Vice President of Enrollment and the Academic Dean reviewed all publications for consistency and accuracy of information.

2.A.22 The institution advocates, subscribes to, and exemplifies high ethical standards in managing and operating the institution, including its dealings with the public, the Commission, and external organizations, and in the fair and equitable treatment of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and other constituencies. It ensures complaints and grievances are addressed in a fair and timely manner.

In November 2017 the University adopted a [Code of Conduct](#) that truly demonstrates our high ethical standards in managing and operating the institution. Our Code of Conduct explains the expectations we have of our employees and the critical importance of being both honest and just in all of our interactions with our students, colleagues, and vendors. It also details how to report a violation or concern about potential illegal or inappropriate actions. There is a PSJH

integrity hotline that is operated by a 3rd party and provides for anonymous complaints which is only accessible to internal caregivers.

The University advocates, subscribes to, and exemplifies high ethical standards in managing and operating the institution. Evidence of the high ethical standards subscribed to by the faculty are the University Philosophy (Faculty Handbook 2.1), Catholic Identity Statement Section 2.1.3) and the Faculty Code which are published in the [Faculty Handbook](#) (Section 1, Clause 3.1). Faculty complaints and grievances are addressed within two days as per the [Faculty Handbook](#) (Grievance Policy 6.0). Employee grievance procedures are initiated within 5 days of the complaint being filed as per the [Employee Policy Manual](#) (#800).

Student grievance procedures are articulated in the [Academic Catalog](#) and [Student Handbook](#). As per the Grade Appeal Policy, student grade appeals are acted upon within 14 days of students submitting an appeal. If a student, public, or employee concern is beyond the scope of the institution to manage, the University publishes contact information for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) (see page xxx of the Academic Catalog) and Montana Department of Justice in the Academic Catalog.

2.A.23 The institution adheres to a clearly defined policy that prohibits conflict of interest on the part of members of the governing Board, administration, faculty, and staff. Even when supported by or affiliated with social, political, corporate, or religious organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose and operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy. If it requires its constituencies to conform to specific codes of conduct or seeks to instill specific beliefs or world views, it gives clear prior notice of such codes and/or policies in its publications.

Following PSJH's policies, the University adheres to policies and practices that limit [conflict of interest](#) of the Board, Administrators, Faculty, and Staff. With education as its primary mission, the University embraces its Catholic heritage. Administration, staff and faculty are informed of their expectations through the employment contract and the [Employee Manual](#) and the [Faculty Handbook](#) (Section 1).

The University has an extensive conflict of interest policy and requires that each Board member completes a Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Disclosure form. The [Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Disclosure form](#) is borrowed from Providence Health St. Joseph (PSJH). Following this process helps align the University with PSJH.

As specified in the [Code of Conduct](#), "Employees may not partake in any activity or association that creates or appears to create a conflict between the employee's personal interests and the University's interests. In addition, an employee must not allow any situation or personal interest to interfere with the exercise of the employee's independent judgment or with the employee's ability to act in the best interests of the University. If an employee has any question whether an action or association would violate this policy, the employee must contact the employee's supervisor to obtain advice on the issue."

The faculty protect themselves from conflict of interest on committees with the Conflict of Interest and Elections clause 2.2.2.3 in the [Faculty Handbook Section 1](#). In the event that a potential conflict of interest is discovered or develops after-the-fact, the individual who identifies the situation informs the chair of the committee in question, the Faculty Chair, and the Academic Dean. The chair of the committee in question and the Faculty Chair investigate the situation and determine whether a conflict of interest actually exists. If it is determined that a conflict of

interest exists, the committee member in question will be asked to resign his/her position on the committee, after which a replacement election will be held. Alternatively, the committee member in question may resign any alternate position(s) that resulted in the conflict of interest.

Faculty autonomy is safeguarded through the Academic Freedom policy in the [Faculty Handbook Section 1](#) (clause 3.2). University autonomy is protected through clearly defined roles and responsibilities of Providence Health and Services, the University Board of Trustees, and the President through the [Amended and Restated University Bylaws](#) and [Articles of Incorporation](#).

2.A.24 The institution maintains clearly defined policies with respect to ownership, copyright, control, compensation, and revenue derived from the creation and production of intellectual property.

Response

As identified in the [Employee Manual](#) #604 Confidentiality, Work Product, and Media, the University maintains clearly defined policies with respect to ownership, copyright, control, compensation, and revenue derived from the creation and production of [intellectual property](#). The faculty is currently reviewing Intellectual Property Policies of other Institutions to develop a policy specific to faculty intellectual property. Work to update the Employee Manual is set to begin in February 2018.

2.A.25 The institution accurately represents its current accreditation status and avoids speculation on future accreditation actions or status. It uses the terms “Accreditation” and “Candidacy” (and related terms) only when such status is conferred by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

The following statement occurs in the [Academic Catalog](#) and on the [University Web page](#): *The University is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. Accreditation of an institution of higher education by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities indicates that it meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of institutional quality evaluated through a peer review process. An accredited college or university is one which has available the necessary resources to achieve its stated purposes through appropriate educational programs, is substantially doing so, and gives reasonable evidence that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Institutional integrity is also addressed through accreditation.*

Accreditation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities is not partial but applies to the institution as a whole. As such, it is not a guarantee of every course or program offered, or the competence of individual graduates. Rather, it provides reasonable assurance about the quality of opportunities available to students who attend the institution. Inquiries regarding an institution’s accredited status by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

*Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
8060 165th Avenue N.E., Suite 100
Redmond, WA 98052 (425) 558-4224 www.nwccu.org*

2.A.26 If the institution enters into contractual agreements with external entities for products or services performed on its behalf, the scope of work for those products or services – with clearly defined roles and responsibilities – is stipulated in a written and approved agreement that contains provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution. In such cases, the institution ensures the scope of the agreement is consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, adheres to institutional policies and procedures, and complies with the Commission’s Standards for Accreditation.

The University has a contractual agreement with a variety of external entities. Each contract defines products, services, and scope of work with clearly defined roles and responsibilities to ensure integrity of the institution. Contracts of a material nature are handled through Providence St. Joseph Health’s legal department to ensure the integrity of the institution and are in line with the mission of the university and the greater system as a whole.

Possible new contracts could be forthcoming as we are in discussions with the health management academy (HMA) for a joint program and are currently soliciting proposals for an instructional design partnership.

2.A.27 The institution publishes and adheres to policies, approved by its governing Board, regarding academic freedom and responsibility that protect its constituencies from inappropriate internal and external influences, pressures, and harassment.

The University supports the principles and concepts of academic freedom and faculty governance as expressed in the American Association of University Professors *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*. This policy statement may be viewed [here](#).

The University publishes an Academic Freedom and a Faculty Grievance Procedure policy in the Board approved [Faculty Handbook](#), Section 1, Clause 3.2 and 6.0 respectively. These statements help protect academic freedom that protects individuals from internal and external influences, pressures and harassment. A faculty member who feels that his/her academic freedom is violated may pursue recourse through the Faculty Grievance policy.

2.A.28 Within the context of its mission, core themes, and values the institution defines and actively promotes an environment that supports independent thought in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. It affirms freedom of faculty, staff, administrators, and students to share their scholarship and reasoned conclusions with others. While the institution and individuals within the institution may hold to a particular personal, social, or religious philosophy, its constituencies are intellectually free to examine thought, reason, and perspectives of truth. Moreover, they allow others the freedom to do the same.

The University promotes an environment that supports independent thought in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge by providing funds for faculty and staff to conduct research and attend conferences to share their conclusions. Policies, such as the one on academic freedom, support independent thought and dissemination of knowledge. Faculty are encouraged to share their scholarship and reasoned conclusions with others at faculty development sessions and are recorded in Faculty Development Agendas ([August 2017](#) and [January 2018](#)).

Students, such as science students, share their scholarship and reasoned conclusions through class projects such as those in the example syllabus: [Syllabus BIO 490 Research in Biology](#). There are no policies or practices preventing individuals from freely examining thought, reason,

and perspectives of truth stated in [Faculty Handbook](#) (Section 1, Clause 3.2). If faculty/staff have concern that their freedom is infringed, they may pursue the matter through the grievance process in the Faculty Handbook 2014 – Faculty Grievance Procedures Clause 6.0 or through the [Employee Manual](#) – Grievance Policy #800.

2.A.29 Individuals with teaching responsibilities present scholarship fairly, accurately, and objectively. Derivative scholarship acknowledges the source of intellectual property, and personal views, beliefs and opinions are identified as such.

The University desires to create an intellectual environment whereby creative efforts and innovations are encouraged, while still retaining reasonable access to, and use of, the intellectual property for whose creation the University has provided assistance. Materials developed by University personnel in direct support of an academic course is jointly owned by the University personnel and the University. The University understands that part of the scholarship necessary for the development of an effective personnel includes the ability to conduct research and produce materials not directly related to course work. This type of scholarship allows the University personnel to stay current in and contribute to the field of knowledge within their discipline.

The University understands that work of this type enhances both the University personnel and the University; hence this form of scholarship is actively encouraged. University personnel producing materials in pursuit of this type of scholarship retain ownership and freedom to publish or otherwise disseminate these materials. Because the University has contributed to the production of such materials in a manner defined below, the University has, at a minimum, the following rights/privileges as stated in the [Employee Manual](#) for Intellectual Property Policy (#604):

- a. To be notified of potential publication or other form of dissemination.
- b. To require or bar the University personnel to identify themselves as an employee of the University of Providence in any publication or dissemination.
- c. To make use of excerpts/abstracts of these materials, or the notice of publication/dissemination in advertising, fund raising, alumni outreach or other similar efforts.

The University contributes to a member's ability to produce traditional works of scholarship in a variety of ways and the intellectual property ownership is effected by the degree of university support provided. As the amount of university support increases, so do their intellectual property rights. In such instances University personnel must enter into an agreement with the University and detail the expected use of university resources (in the case of expected substantial use) and the ownership (or co-ownership) of the products or results of the research activity.

Special works are those materials produced by University personnel in direct response to a request or tasking by the University, but outside of work produced for any specific course or duties. Because these works are produced as a consequence of employment and direct request or tasking whether the personnel are compensated or not, the University would retain all intellectual property rights and have exclusive rights to publish or disseminate such work. The University personnel producing the work can request permission to publish or otherwise disseminate the work independently.

2.A.30 The institution has clearly outlined policies, approved by its governing Board, regarding oversight and management of financial resources – including financial planning, Board approval and monitoring of operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, fundraising, cash management, debt management, and transfers into borrowings between funds.

As specified in the position description, the [Vice President of Finance](#) has the responsibility for all finance and accounting functions of the University. The Vice President of Finance reports directly to the President and works with the Finance Committee of the Board regarding financial planning, monitoring of operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, cash management, debt management, and transfers into borrowings. The investment policy is published in the [Board of Trustees New Member Manual](#) and overlaps with PSJH. Both capital and investment decisions are determined through PSJH with capital allocations at the University determined the PSJH capital allocation committee. As per the [Amended and Restated University Bylaws 2016](#), the Board is responsible for approving the annual budget. Fund raising is the responsibility of the [Director of Advancement](#), the [Vice President of Athletics](#), and the [President](#). The University Community [Board](#) recommends a budget to the PSJH board that approves it. The Director of Advancement reports directly to the Vice President/Executive Officer of Strategy and Administration.

Standard 2.B – Human Resources

2.B.1 The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified personnel to maintain its support and operations functions. Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated. Job descriptions accurately reflect duties, responsibilities, and authority of the position.

In 2017, Human Resources was placed under the Vice President of Strategy and Administration. In fall 2017, the University enrolled 1,063 students and 182 benefit eligible faculty and staff. The 6:1 ratio of students to benefits-eligible employees ensures sufficient number of personnel to maintain University support and operations functions. The count for benefit eligible faculty and staff from 2013 could not be verified due to personnel changes over time with flux in both employment and student headcount therefore the ratio reported in 2014 is not considered reliable. Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of employees are included in position announcements which are published on the [University Web site](#) and in pertinent professional publications. Job descriptions accurately reflect duties, responsibilities, and authority of each position.

To ensure University procedures are followed, Human Resources is involved with each hire from developing the position description through the orientation of new hires following the [New Hire Process](#). The request for hire must be approved and signed by the appropriate supervisor and administrative Vice President. It then must be approved by the Vice President of Finance and subsequently approved and signed by the Vice President/Executive Officer of Strategy and Administration. If the position is not in the budget, final approval must be obtained from the President. This helps ensure that appropriate financing is available and pertinent tasks are included in the job. Each position description must be approved by the appropriate Vice President to ensure the description accurately reflects the duties, responsibilities and authority of the position. The pertinent supervisor develops a position announcement which contains the qualifications needed to succeed and the procedures for applying for the position. Human Resources approves the announcement before the position is posted to ensure duties, responsibilities, and authority structure are clearly communicated. The University places position announcements on the Web site and in pertinent publications such as the Chronicle of Higher Education for faculty positions.

Candidates for staff positions submit their application material directly to Human Resources through the Web site. Supervisors coordinate off and on campus interviews. Human Resources makes the position offer.

Faculty candidate materials received by Human Resources are submitted to the Academic Dean, who forwards information to the committee assigned to the search. The search committee, made up of faculty, screens applications, checks references, and conducts an initial telephone interview. Final candidates come to campus for a face-to-face interview following an Interview Itinerary ([Example](#)). Human Resources makes the offer to the selected candidate in collaboration with the Vice President of Academic Affairs. All offers are contingent upon successful completion of a background check, degree verification, and reference checks.

Human resources has developed a new hire process checklist to provide guidance in hiring which is within the New Hire Process form. The Vice President of Mission Integration is also involved in hiring to ensure mission fit.

2.B.2 Administrators and staff are evaluated regularly with regard to performance of work duties and responsibilities.

The University uses a system of continuous informal evaluation of all employees and a more formal periodic evaluation process with individual meetings. Supervisors evaluate staff on a regular informal basis through daily interaction and verbal feedback. Supervisors meet with staff/faculty to share commendations and concerns. After the meeting, the supervisor writes a follow up letter that reflects the commendations/concerns. The Vice Presidents receive feedback each week from the President in their weekly meetings. The President and Vice Presidents also receive feedback from the Board of Trustees through quarterly meetings.

The University changed its staff evaluation process in 2017. The University improved on the open-ended Staff Self-Assessment Evaluation form to expand on goal-setting and a focus on specific accomplishments and professional development. The intent was to expand the conversation between employee and supervisor that focus on topics pertinent to both employee and supervisor, but also to create attainable goals that could be tracked throughout the year. The current form allows for attention to individual strengths and weaknesses while addressing training and other needs that employees have in order to succeed in their positions. Each Vice President or Director is responsible for implementing the [staff evaluation form](#) in his/her area based on the instructions provided by the Director of Human Resources

Although not a direct evaluation of an individual, the University employees evaluated University functions and supervisors using the University Employee Experience Survey. This survey was completed in conjunction with the Providence St Joseph Health (PSJH) employee survey and is conducted annually to show progress for individual, team and overall organizational engagement. The [2017 University Employee Experience Survey](#) is being used in a formative process with leadership.

2.B.3 The institution provides faculty, staff, administrators, and other employees with appropriate opportunities and support for professional growth and development to enhance their effectiveness in fulfilling their roles, duties, and responsibilities.

The entire University faculty, staff, and administrators are invited to participate in Convocation each year to facilitate professional growth and development around the University mission and individual roles, duties, and responsibilities pertinent to the chosen topic. Administrators coordinate their own personal professional development with funds from their area budgets. The University facilitates staff development by providing staff development funds in the budget. Staff request funds for their development from their supervisors. Staff also have access to professional development funds through the Sister Mary Wilson professional development funds. Recent examples of individual staff development include accounting and student development staff attending conferences for finance and first-year experiences, respectively.

Faculty members participate in on-campus faculty development at the beginning of the fall and Spring Semesters. Faculty members also have access to faculty development funds administered by the Faculty Resource and Development Committee (FRDC), Faculty Merit Development Grant, Student Engagement Grants, and Sister Mary Wilson Grant. These funds can be used to attend and participate at professional conferences. Over the past 4 years, the FRDC has awarded on average \$22,400 annually over the last 4 years to 10 – 12 to faculty and/or staff. The Vice President of Academic Affairs hosts faculty lunches each month to address a topic of interest. Benefit-eligible employees and their dependents, through the University Tuition Remission Policy contained within the [Employee Policy Manual revision](#), have

the opportunity to attend classes at the University without tuition and fees. Benefit-eligible employees may receive up to the IRS allowable tax exemption to apply toward master's degree courses. The Tuition Remission Policy contains all the details for the employees. Additional professional development funds were provided in the 2016 - 2017 academic year. Each full-time faculty member received \$1,000 in their program budget. These discretionary funds are for computer hardware or software, texts, conferences, other travel, etc. Faculty members apply through their Associate Deans. These funds have also been provided for 2017-2018.

The [School of Health Professions](#) (SHP) has allocated professional development funding within its 5-year budget for all full-time online faculty and staff with a longer history for nursing faculty. The rationale was that nursing and clinical industries change at warp speed and therefore, faculty must maintain their competencies, national certifications and other skills to effectively teach online and in the profession. This is also a requirement for the nursing [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education \(CCNE\)](#) accreditation.

Funding is allocated in program budgets for benefit-eligible faculty to ensure the University retains high quality faculty in clinical and health-related fields. Adjunct faculty members participate in quarterly online program meetings and participate in the annual in-person faculty development meeting that focuses on online pedagogy and other relevant SHP topics.

2.B.4 Consistent with its mission, core themes, programs, services, and characteristics, the institution employs appropriately qualified faculty.

Reviews of faculty qualifications, faculty workload, and number of course sections offered confirm that the University employs sufficient, appropriately qualified faculty to achieve its educational objectives, establish and oversee educational policies, and assure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs. The Academic Dean, Associate Deans, and Vice President of Academic Affairs conduct annual reviews of faculty qualifications student to faculty ratios, advising load, teaching load, and number of course sections offered. (Please see following sections) This ensures that credentialed faculty address the educational objectives assigned to the course and program.

As part of their orientation and printed within the [Adjunct Faculty Handbook](#), adjunct faculty is given course and program objectives to follow. The appropriate faculty committee oversees academic policies. For example, the curriculum committee approves new course proposals. This committee is comprised of faculty in each division.

Faculty members are trained on our Learning Management System (LMS) and new faculty members complete a year-long faculty development program to ensure all faculty members understand policies and procedures for maintaining the academic integrity of the University.

Review of Faculty Qualifications

In fall 2017, the University employed 53 full time faculty members and approximately 73 part-time faculty members who are appropriately qualified. The faculty qualifications review shows seventy-five percent (40/53) of the full time faculty are terminally degreed. Three full-time faculty members are expected to defend their dissertations in the 2017-2018 academic year. This will bring our terminally degreed professors to 81% (43/53). Based on our part time faculty qualifications review, 14% (10/73) have terminal degrees, 64% (47/73) have a master's degree, and 22% (16/73) have a bachelor's degree with additional qualifications.

To ensure an appropriately credentialed faculty, position announcements specify minimum and acceptable qualifications ([position announcement example](#)). The typically expected academic qualification for full time faculty is a doctoral degree in the area. The typical expectation for adjunct faculty teaching undergraduate courses is a master's degree. It is expected that faculty members teaching graduate courses must hold a terminal degree. Candidates who do not meet the expectations of terminal degree or master's degree must have other significant experience to qualify them to teach. Faculty qualifications are reviewed as part of the interview process. Promotion and tenure eligible faculty follow a review process that ensures continued advancement of qualifications.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Academic Dean, and the Associate Deans review the qualifications of all part-time faculty annually. For the School of Health Professions, review of qualifications is conducted by the Dean for Clinical and Nursing Programs.

Review of Faculty Workload

Faculty workload is a composite of teaching load, advising load, and student to faculty ratio. The University maintains a current student to faculty ratio of 11:1. This ratio allows the University's faculty to use high engagement activities such as student writing, student presentations, discussion/reflection, small group activities, and real world experiences as teaching. Based on our faculty advising review, advising load is currently at 16 students per faculty member. This advising load serves the University and the students well. Faculty advisors, not staff advisors, allow the faculty to get to know the dreams and aspirations of our students.

The Academic Dean and Associate Deans have made a concerted effort in the last few years to manage faculty teaching loads by re-defining the workload and restricting the teaching load to no more than 18 credits/semester and 12credits/summer. The University also require at least three students in a course before the course can be offered. Additionally, faculty members are now limited to teaching a single ILC course/semester. This is to bring our full-time faculty members back to teaching in their disciplines. To make these processes work, the University is offering courses on a regular rotation so faculty and students can plan. The result has been over 95% of faculty teaching at contract load or over 3 credits on average in overload. We have realized a significant reduction in overload with these efforts from 60% in 2014-2015 to 35% in the current academic year.

An additional indicator of faculty workload management and course offerings is indicated by average class sizes. We have been able to maintain an average class size of 12.1 students per class for the last five years (i.e., fall 2012 to fall 2017).

Faculty workloads have been further reduced by a more efficient management of course scheduling and rotations. The University functions on a multi-year course schedule with regular course offering rotations. The Associate Deans receive the upcoming term schedule from the Registrar and the faculty review and make minor changes to the schedule.

As prescribed in the [Amended and Restated University Bylaws](#) and organized in faculty committees, faculty is responsible for developing and implementing the curriculum. As per the position description, the Academic Dean is responsible for overseeing academic policies which assures the integrity and continuity of the academic programs.

2.B.5 Faculty responsibilities and workloads are commensurate with the institution's expectations for teaching, service, scholarship, research, and or artistic creation.

Faculty responsibilities and workload for teaching, service, and scholarship are communicated in the Faculty Handbook and through offer and reappointment letters. Expectations are commensurate with the University's mission and expectations as defined in the Faculty Handbook. The University, through hiring practices, and promotion and tenure guidelines, conveys the expectation that faculty members are primarily teachers.

Position announcements and the interview process focuses on teaching as the primary job responsibility. Faculty appointment and reappointment letters make direct reference to the University Faculty Handbook, regarding work responsibilities.

As per promotion and tenure guidelines, teaching performance counts as 70% of the evaluation value. Promotion and tenure processes outline the expectation of faculty regarding teaching, service, scholarship, research, and artistic creation. See the [Faculty Handbook Section 1](#) (Part 4.0) (Part 4.0) for a complete explanation of faculty work expectations.

2.B.6 All faculty are evaluated in a regular, systematic, substantive, and collegial manner at least once within every five-year period of service. The evaluation process specifies the timeline and criteria by which faculty are evaluated; utilizes multiple indices of effectiveness, each of which is directly related to the faculty member's roles and responsibilities, including evidence of teaching effectiveness for faculty with teaching responsibilities; contains a provision to address concerns that may emerge between regularly scheduled evaluations; and provides for administrative access to all primary evaluation data. Where areas for improvement are identified, the institution works with the faculty member to develop and implement a plan to address identified areas of concern.

Faculty members are evaluated by students through student opinion surveys, the Vice President of Academic Affairs each year with the Faculty Performance and Goals Inventory, and every five years by peers as part of the promotion, tenure, and post tenure review process. This process guarantees that multiple indices of effectiveness are considered and ensures a plan to address identified areas of concern.

All faculty members are evaluated in class through student [End-of-Course Surveys](#) at the end of the semester. The academic administrative assistants compile a student end-of-course survey packet for each course and deliver the packets to each faculty member's office. Faculty members ask students to complete the survey and then leave the room. One student collects the surveys and returns the packet to the administrative assistants. Administrative assistants scan the data and type the comments. Course data are compared to department data and University data. Evaluations are then posted on the Faculty Evaluation Survey drive for faculty and administrators to review. Faculty members can view [their own data](#) and comments but not that of others. Administrators can see all faculty data.

Faculty members also complete an [Faculty Performance and Goals Inventory](#) and meet with the Vice President of Academic Affairs in the fall. This provides an opportunity for the faculty to share their teaching, service, and scholarship agenda with the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Vice President of Academic Affairs reviews the Faculty Performance and Goals Inventory, student opinion surveys, and course syllabi as a guide for the conversation. The Vice President of Academic Affairs follows the meeting with a personalized letter that includes

commendations and suggestions. In fall 2016, reviews and follow up letters focused on student engagement as a pedagogy strategy. Faculty members were asked to share engagement strategies of writing, speaking, discussion/reflection, small group activities, and real world experiences. The faculty was asked how they implemented these activities within the class, outside the class, across the curriculum, and how engagement was connected to program objectives and critical thinking.

Faculty members seeking promotion, tenure, or completing post tenure review complete a specified review process that requires self-review, peer review, student evaluations, and Vice President of Academic Affairs or Academic Dean evaluations. The timeline and criteria for the review are published in [Faculty Handbook Section 1](#) (Section 5). A committee of peers (Faculty Evaluation Advancement and Tenure) reviews the candidate's dossier in comparison to the Faculty Handbook published criteria and forwards its recommendation to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Vice President of Academic Affairs then forwards a recommendation with rationale to the President who does the same to the Board of Trustees.

When a faculty member needs more direction for improvement than the annual review letter provides, the Vice President of Academic Affairs develops an individualized plan for that faculty member.

Standard 2.C Education Resources

2.C.1 The institution provides programs, wherever offered and however delivered, with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission; culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes; and lead to collegiate – level degrees or certificates with designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.

As per the [Faculty Handbook](#), the Board of Trustees entrusts to the faculty the conduct of teaching, scholarship, research, and recommending and advising on the curriculum. The faculty, through the curriculum committee, reviews each program at the inception of the program, each time a program is modified, and on a regular cycle with a full program review to ensure that all programs: 1) contain appropriate content and rigor; 2) culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes; 3) lead to a college level degree with designators consistent with program content in recognized fields; and 4) are consistent with our mission. Please see the [Faculty Handbook Section 2](#) for curriculum committee information. Look here for a [sample of curriculum committee meeting minutes](#). Please see the [Faculty Handbook Section 2](#) (Part 6.9 Program Review) for program review procedures, program review rubric, and cover sheets ([Levels 1](#), [2](#), [3](#), and [4](#)).

The mission of the University drives the undergraduate, and graduate programs in preparing students for living and for making a living. Rooted in the Catholic Tradition, the purpose of the undergraduate core curriculum is to be transformational in the lives of our students by fostering intellectual, social, personal, and spiritual excellence.

In redesigning the foundation of the undergraduate curricula in the 2016-2017 academic year, the faculty framed student learning outcomes in terms what the ideal graduate would look like. The undergraduate degree requirements frame and support the undergraduate programs. The “ideal” graduate will:

1. Cultivate intellectual skills and dispositions in the pursuit of truth and the common good.
2. Communicate effectively through active listening and excellent command of oral, written, and technological skills, maintaining dignity for all.
3. Learn and engage with the living Catholic Intellectual Tradition
4. Engage with a variety of diverse cultures and consider the inherent value of all creation.
5. Demonstrate familiarity with major moral and ethical theories in order to act with sound ethical judgement in contemporary contexts.
6. Reflect, learn, and live lives of integrity and compassion

All graduate programs prepare students to be reflective practitioners. The learning outcomes that sustain graduate programs are: Reflective Scholarship, Reflective Learning, and Reflective Practice.

As per the syllabus format, all programs, undergraduate and graduate, require faculty to publish an assessment grid on each syllabus, regardless of the delivery mode, to show the relationship among the learning outcomes, program objectives, course objectives, and course assignments. Each major publishes student learning outcome program objectives in the [Academic Catalog](#).

To help ensure appropriate content, rigor, and student learning objectives consistent with fields of study, some programs participate in specialty accreditation/approval. [The Legal and Paralegal Studies](#) program participates in the American Bar Association approval process. Elementary, secondary, and special education programs [Montana Office of Public Instruction Standards](#). The RN-BSN Nursing program complies with the [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education standards](#). The MSC program is accredited through the [Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs \(CACREP\)](#).

As specified in the Program Review Procedures in [Faculty Handbook Section 2](#), all programs, including those with specialty accreditation, participate in a program review every seven years to ensure appropriate content, rigor, and student learning outcomes. The program review includes: 1) examination of the structure and scope of program in relationship to the University's mission and to professional standards in the recognized fields of study; 2) audit of program enrollments; 3) review of graduation numbers; 4) audit of syllabi for objectives; 5) review of faculty; 6) review from a professional in the field but outside of the University; 7) analysis of connections to the core curriculum and other programs; 8) projection of program outcomes; and 9) recommendations for program improvement.

2.C.2 The institution identifies and publishes expected course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Expected student learning outcomes for courses, wherever offered and however delivered, are provided in written form to enrolled students.

Undergraduate degree learning outcomes, are recorded in the Academic Catalog. Graduate degree learning outcomes, published as Core Learning Outcomes, are listed on page 8G of the [Graduate Catalog](#). Undergraduate and graduate program learning outcomes are published in the Academic Catalog as part of each program description. As per the required [syllabus format](#), course student learning outcomes are published on each syllabus. Regardless of the delivery format, each course syllabus is available to students electronically on our Learning Management System (LMS) and/or physically. Each syllabus provides an assessment grid that shows the connections among the foundation, questions/reflection learning outcomes, program outcomes, course objectives, and course assignments.

2.C.3 Credit and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, are based on documented student achievement and awarded in a manner consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted learning outcomes, norms, or equivalencies in higher education.

The University awards academic credit for student achievement in accordance with the University Credit Hour Policy. The University Credit Hour Policy follows the guidelines set forth by the Federal government and endorsed by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. Two other policies that guide credit assignment, Transfer Policy and Experiential Learning Policy, are consistent with the overall University Credit Hour Policy. Each of these policies is published in the [Academic Catalog](#). All courses, regardless of their delivery mode, comply with the Credit Hour Policy.

The curriculum committee process of course approval and program review ensure that student achievement and awarding credit is consistent with institutional policies, reflect generally accepted learning outcomes, norms, and equivalencies.

The criteria for earning a degree are published in the [Academic Catalog](#) under Degree Completion Requirements page xxxvii for bachelor degree seeking students, page xl for

associate degree seeking students, and on page 25G for graduate students. See Degree Completion Requirements for a complete listing of requirements that must be met for the University to award a degree. Student achievement of graduation requirements are recorded on academic transcripts that are updated each semester. To ensure that students have completed all degree requirements, students must apply for graduation using the [Application to Graduate](#) for either graduate or undergraduate level. The Registrar completes an audit and notifies students of any deficiencies. The University awards degrees with approval from the Board of Trustees after the Registrar verifies that a student has met all degree requirements.

2.C.4 Degree programs, wherever offered and however delivered, demonstrate a coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth, and sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning. Admission and graduation requirements are clearly defined and widely published.

The University offers associate, bachelor, and master degrees. All degree programs, wherever offered and however delivered, have been designed to ensure appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning. Associate degrees and bachelor degrees are designed around our vision of the ideal graduate. Masters degrees are designed around Reflection.

Associate degree seeking students and bachelor degree seeking students must complete a core curriculum rich in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition that includes a variety of courses from foundational skills, traditional liberal arts areas, to theology and philosophy synthesis. The core curriculum is designed to provide breadth, depth, and synthesis of learning. As outlined in each program description in the [Academic Catalog](#), majors in both associate degree programs (p. xl) and bachelor's degree programs (p. xxxviii – xxxix) are sequenced from introductory content to intermediate content with prerequisites to a capstone experience that requires synthesis of learning.

Graduate degree programs are designed to educate reflective practitioners. Each graduate program is designed with a program specific core and advanced courses found in the Academic Catalog. This design helps ensure that students have appropriate base knowledge before attempting to use advanced knowledge. The curriculum is sequenced to ensure appropriate breadth and depth in the content area. The curriculum culminates in a project designed to require the student to synthesize information.

Admission criteria, for both undergraduate and graduate students, are clearly defined on the [University's web site](#) and in the [Academic Catalog](#). Graduation requirements are clearly defined in the catalog and degree planners. Students must apply for graduation using the appropriate [Application to Graduate](#), and receive confirmation from the Registrar that all degree completion requirements have been met. The University assists students with understanding this structure by assigning faculty advisors to each student using [advising planning sheets](#) that are located on the University's Web site.

2.C.5 Faculty, through well-defined structures and processes with clearly defined authority and responsibilities, exercise a major role in the design, approval, implementation, and revision of the curriculum, and have an active role in the selection of new faculty. Faculty with teaching responsibilities take collective responsibility for fostering and assessing student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.

Faculty, through academic programs, academic divisions, and the Curriculum Committee [Faculty Handbook Section 1](#) (Curriculum Committee 2.2.2.1.4), exercise major roles in curriculum design, approval, revision, and implementation. Faculty play an active role in hiring faculty by developing the list of positions to include on the hiring plan and by participating on search committees. Faculty assess student achievement in classes based on student learning outcomes identified on their syllabi and entered into Taskstream/TK20.

In following Curriculum Committee procedures, faculty initiates curriculum modifications within their academic program. The proposing faculty member then forwards the curriculum modification to the Curriculum Committee for undergraduate issues and the [Graduate Council](#) for graduate curricular issues. Minor revisions require approval from the Curriculum Committee/Graduate Council only. These changes are then reported to the faculty as a whole during the monthly faculty meetings. Moderate curriculum revisions need approval from the Curriculum Committee/Graduate Council and the academic divisions (we have three divisions on campus – Science & Math, Humanities & Social Sciences; and Professional Studies). Major changes, e.g. new program or elimination of a program, need approval from the program, Curriculum Committee/Graduate Council, full faculty, administration, and Board of Trustees.

The Faculty plays a major role in the hiring of new faculty. (See the [New Hire Process Check List](#)). Proposals for hiring originate with the faculty and are brought forward in Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council. After the President approves the hire, job announcements are posted on the University Web page and in the appropriate professional publication, e.g. Chronicle of Higher Education. The Academic Dean forms a search committee for each position. A faculty member in the hiring discipline chairs the search committee. Four other full-time faculty members and the Academic Dean also serve on the hiring committee. The committee is involved in all phases of the hire - initial application review ([Sample Position Announcement](#)), phone interviews, on-campus interviews and making the final recommendation on a candidate.

Faculty have developed the major/minor program objectives for all degree programs and the course-specific learning outcomes for each of their courses. The syllabus for each course offered includes the course objectives. All syllabi ([Sample Syllabus](#)) are required to provide an assessment grid that connects the degree requirements to program objectives and then to course-specific objectives. Faculty members devise various assessment tools for the course objectives that range from pre-test – post-tests to minute papers.

2.C.6 Faculty with teaching responsibilities, in partnership with library and information resources personnel, ensure that the use of library and information resources is integrated into the learning process.

Through the work of the Library Committee (recently renamed the Learning and Information Commons Committee), teaching faculty ensure that the use of library and information resources are integrated into the learning process. The library responds to faculty requests for books, journals, periodicals, multimedia resources, and databases. Library staff, working with faculty, continually evaluate and enhance the print and electronic holdings.

Library staff readily provides on-site training for individual students and classes. Many courses (e.g. foundation courses in English, education, and theology) provide tutorials on use and access of library resources at the beginning of each term.

Library collection statistics (Parts [One](#) and [Two](#)) show that our resource collection spans our curriculum areas. Library spending by department shows the partnership of the library and faculty in providing educational resources for students. Evidence of integration of library and information resources within the learning process includes:

- 1) The Library Committee comprised of library staff, faculty, and information technology staff;
- 2) The development of the Technology Enhanced Classroom, located in the library, integrates information resource access in the classroom environment;
- 3) The library director serves as an ex-officio member of the Curriculum Committee, the faculty committee responsible for curriculum oversight and development; and
- 4) Program Reviews ask faculty to evaluate program resources including library resources.

2.C.7 Credit for prior experiential learning, if granted, is: a) guided by approved policies and procedures; b) awarded only at the undergraduate level to enrolled students; c) limited to a maximum of 25% of the credits needed for a degree; d) awarded only for documented student achievement equivalent to expected learning achievement for courses within the institution's regular curricular offerings; and e) granted only upon the recommendation of appropriately qualified teaching faculty. Credit granted for prior experiential learning is so identified on student's transcripts and may not duplicate other credit awarded to the student in fulfillment of degree requirements. The institution makes no assurances regarding the number of credits to be awarded prior to the completion of the institution's review process.

As part of the Non-Collegiate Learning Experiences Policy published in the [Academic Catalog](#) (p. xxvii), credit toward a degree may, with acceptable documentation of student achievement, be granted for experiential learning. Formal training such as professional workshops, law enforcement, military training, or other non-academic learning experiences may be accepted after thorough review. Application for this type of credit is made through the Registrar's office. The Registrar confers with the appropriate faculty to verify that the experience is appropriate for University credit and meets minimum required contact hours to meet our institutional definition of a credit hour. The Army 27D AIT program is an example of experience that is not part of a regionally accredited institution that is accepted by the University ([Army JAG Agreement](#)). No other experiential learning is routinely accepted for credit. As per the Non-Collegiate Learning Experiences policy, the maximum number of non-collegiate credits that can be applied toward a bachelor's degree is thirty-two or 25% of the 128 credits required for graduation. Students with prior experiential learning are encouraged to challenge courses through CLEP and/or DANTES exams to receive credit. The University does not grant graduate credit for experiential learning ([Academic Catalog – Graduate](#)– Experiential Learning p. 19G).

2.C.8 The final judgment in accepting transfer credit is the responsibility of the receiving institution. Transfer credit is accepted according to procedures which provide adequate safeguards to ensure high academic quality, relevance to the students' programs, and integrity of the receiving institution's degrees. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that the credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic quality, and level to credit it offers. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements between the institutions.

In accordance with the Credit Transfer Policy published in the [Academic Catalog](#) (p. xxiii), the University accepts transfer credits from regionally accredited institutions. Acceptance of transfer

credit from institutions lacking regional accreditation requires considerations which can be found on the [University web site](#) under Registrar forms.

In accordance with the Credit Transfer Policies in the [Academic Catalog](#) (p. xxiii), the University will not accept:

- Credit for coursework that is remedial or developmental, usually courses below the 100 level, from any institution.
- Credit for experiential learning not associated with a formal training program.
- Credit for coursework in which a student earned a grade below “C”, any grade designation below “P” (Pass), or audit grades.
- Credit for coursework which is repeated; only the last course taken is eligible for transfer.
- Challenge course credits from other institutions.

The Registrar receives and reviews transfer credit requests. The Registrar has authority to make decisions on requests that are articulated through agreements. If a transfer request is unique, the Registrar forwards the request to the appropriate program director or dean for review.

The University has several articulation agreements to facilitate enrollment from institutions. Please see Standard 2.A.5 regarding the status and updating of articulation agreements.

2.C.9 The General Education component of undergraduate programs (if offered) demonstrates an integrated course of study that helps students develop the breadth and depth of intellect to become more effective learners and to prepare them for a productive life of work, citizenship, and personal fulfillment. Baccalaureate degree programs and transfer associate degree programs include a recognizable core of general education that represents an integration of basic knowledge and methodology of the humanities and fine arts, mathematical and natural sciences, and social sciences. Applied undergraduate degree and certificate programs of thirty (30) semester credits or forty-five (45) quarter credits in length contain a recognizable core of related instruction or general education with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes.

The bachelor and associate degree general education or [Core Curriculum](#) help students develop the depth and breadth of intellect for living and for making a living. The baccalaureate and associate core includes courses that integrate basic knowledge and methodology of humanities and fine arts, mathematics and natural sciences, and social sciences. To facilitate depth of knowledge, bachelor’s students must complete multiple levels of courses in English, math, theology, philosophy, and our signature courses, Integrated Learning Community courses (ILCs). Associate degree students complete two levels of English and math courses. To facilitate breadth, bachelor and associate degree seeking students must take at least one course in each of literature, global history, social sciences, and physical sciences. Core curriculum requirements are published in the [Academic Catalog](#).

The bachelor’s [Core Curriculum](#) was revised in the 2016-2017 to include:

1. Corp of Discovery (2 credits) is a two semester experiential program designed to assist students in discovering themselves and the world around them as well as fostering professional, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual growth.
2. Foundation Skills (14-15 credits) include competencies in essential subject areas of writing, statistics, communications, computer skills, math, philosophy, and theology.

These courses introduce students to the practice of critical thinking and creative expression.

3. Ethics, Theology, and Integrated Learning Communities (ILC) (4 credits) As juniors or seniors, students explore ethics and the Christian life. The ILCs are specifically designed to illustrate the interconnectedness of knowledge, foster critical thinking and creative expression, explore ethical issues, and aid students in the acquisition of methodology and content knowledge. Descriptions of ILCs can be found in the [Academic Catalog](#) (pp.92 – 92).
4. Upper Division Writing (3 credits) if not fulfilled by designated writing course in major program.
5. Arts and Sciences (16 credits) includes courses which provide students with additional opportunities to examine the methods, contents and relevance of the liberal arts through purpose designed courses that showcase specific disciplines and demonstrate their connections to daily life. One course from each of fine arts, global history, social sciences, and experimental sciences is required if the student does not fulfill in the major program.
6. Additional Requirements must be met through designated course in the major programs in the areas of service learning, global awareness, sustainability, and communications.

Transfer students must also complete the core curriculum through transfer equivalence courses or by completing University core requirements.

The University has one certificate program in Applied Health Informatics. This program is a total of 12 credits. The University does not offer any applied degree programs.

Academic advisors work with students to plan for their degrees using common [Advising Planning Sheets](#) which can be found on the University Web site ([Examples 1 and 2](#)). Degree requirements are found in the [Academic Catalog](#) as follows:

- Degree Completion Requirements p. xxxvii
- Bachelor's Degree Requirements p. xxxvii
- Associate Degree Requirements p. xl

2.C.10 The institution demonstrates that the General Education components of its baccalaureate degree programs (if offered) and transfer associate degree programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that are stated in relation to the institution's mission and learning outcomes for those programs.

The General Education Core curriculum is designed to help students improve their critical thinking. As published in the [Academic Catalog](#) (p. xxv), the University definition of critical thinking includes: mastery of complex and varied knowledge base, the ability to ask questions, the ability to find and evaluate evidence, the ability to synthesize information, the ability to be creative and innovative, the ability to appreciate alternate explanations, the ability to transfer knowledge and skills, and the ability to communicate clearly and effectively. The individual components of this definition are the identifiable and assessable learning outcomes. Critical thinking is assessed at the University level with the [Collegiate Learning Assessment \(CLA\)](#), at the program level through the Integrated Learning Communities (ILCs), and at the course level with each class. Descriptions of ILCs can be found in the [Academic Catalog](#) on pages xxxix, xli and 92.

CLA is a valuable tool that measures critical thinking and written-communication skills of students in higher education. Institutions use the CLA to estimate institutional and individual student growth of these essential skills, measure the efficacy of curricular and other programs, and demonstrate individual, class, and institutional proficiency. CLA results give individual students an opportunity to better understand their strengths and areas for improvements in order to master the skills necessary for post-collegiate success. [CLA results are a tool to measure growth](#) on these skills and determine how your institution compares to other colleges and universities that also use the CLA.

In the spring of 2017 the University had a freshman total CLA score of 1000; this score is greater than or equal to the average freshman score at 38% of CLA schools. A score of 1000 demonstrates basic mastery of the critical-thinking and written-communication skills measured by CLA. The University's senior total CLA score is 1077, which was better than or equal to the average senior score at 20% of CLA+ schools. A score of 1077 signifies basic mastery of the skills measured by CLA. Given the mean CLA performance of the University's freshmen and the entering academic ability of its seniors, the University's value added was near what would be expected relative to schools testing similar populations of students.

In the spring of 2015 the University had a freshman total CLA score of 970; this score is greater than or equal to the average freshman score at 24% of CLA schools. A score of 970 demonstrates basic mastery of the critical-thinking and written-communication skills measured by CLA. The University's senior total CLA score was 1076, which is better than or equal to the average senior score at 20% of CLA+ schools. Again, a score of 1076 signifies basic mastery of the skills measured by CLA. In the spring of 2015, the University's value added was near what would be expected relative to schools testing similar populations of students.

2.C.11 The related instruction components of applied degree and certificate programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes. Related instruction components may be embedded within program curricula or taught in blocks of specialized instruction, but each approach must have clearly identified content and be taught or monitored by teaching faculty who are appropriately qualified in those areas.

The University has one certificate program in [Applied Health Informatics](#). The Applied Health Informatics (AHI) Certificate Program is an academic-industry partnership program between the University of Providence (UP) and Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH). This prepares students to understand and leverage the power of informatics and help transform healthcare delivery and create healthier communities at every level.

More specifically, students will learn:

- About health informatics: the leading edge, inter-professional field where healthcare meets information technology
- How to positively influence the impact of health information technology on health and healthcare
- Professional development to grow your knowledge with online learning.

Information about Informatics program is found in the Academic Catalog and on the University Web site.

Graduate Programs

2.C.12 Graduate programs are consistent with the institution's mission; are in keeping with the expectations of their respective disciplines and professions; and are described through nomenclature that is appropriate to the levels of graduate and professional degrees offered. They differ from undergraduate programs by requiring greater depth of study and increased demands on student intellectual or creative capacities; knowledge of the literature of the field; and ongoing student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression, and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.

The mission of the Graduate programs is to prepare reflective practitioners. This is consistent with the University mission of providing an opportunity to obtain a liberal education for living and for making a living. As evidenced by the curriculum and syllabi in the [Academic Graduate Catalog](#), our two graduate programs Master of Science in Counseling (MSC) and Master of Science in Organizational Leadership (MSL), are consistent and in line with their respective disciplines, require appropriate depth of study, use current knowledge in the field, and provide opportunities for high-level professional practice.

Over the 2015-2016 academic, the Master of Science in Organizational Management program was evaluated and revised into the Master of Science in Organizational Leadership (MSL) program. This entailed in-depth evaluation of program objectives and the core courses. Program objectives were revised to foster the graduate mission of preparing reflective practitioners. Core course objectives were articulated at a graduate level and assignments were revised to enhance intellectual capacity. In addition, a concentration in healthcare administration was developed within the program in line with the mission.

The Master of Science in Counseling (MSC) prepares students to work as professional counselors in a variety of settings and requires practice and internships to ensure reflective practice. The [MSC program is accredited](#) by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and is designed to ensure appropriate depth of study and knowledge of the literature in the field. The required internship/project and thesis in both the MSL and MSC programs ensure that students interact with the literature in the field, engage in reflective practice, and address the expectations of the disciplines.

2.C.13 Graduate admission and retention policies ensure that student qualifications and expectations are compatible with the institution's mission and the program's requirements. Transfer of credit is evaluated according to clearly defined policies by faculty with a major commitment to graduate education or by a representative body of faculty responsible for the degree program at the receiving institution.

Per the [Graduate Academic Catalog](#) program descriptions (p. 26G - 44G), students wishing to gain admission (p. 10) to the University Graduate programs submit an application, transcripts, letters of recommendation, personal statement, and GRE scores if their undergraduate GPA is below 3.0 (p. 10G). Our graduate faculty review completed application files and reserve the right to request additional information from any applicant. All applicants are considered regardless of race, religion, sex, or national origin. Applicants must possess a minimum 3.0 GPA and an undergraduate degree for graduate admission. Admission requirements are published in the Graduate Catalog and on the University Web page.

Additionally, all prospective Master of Science in Counseling (MSC) students must submit a Statement of Purpose, which addresses: a) an applicant's interest in graduate counseling

studies in relation to the applicant's desire to become a counselor and why the University MSC program is suitable for the applicant; and b) an assessment of applicant's personal and professional strengths and experiences, which would contribute to success in gaining a graduate counseling degree. After the application file is complete, the MSC faculty interviews applicants to determine their appropriateness for training as counselors.

To remain in good standing, graduate students must maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher. Only two grades of C or below are accepted for degree completion. Students must earn a grade of B or better in each of the three foundations classes for each program.

As per the Transfer Credits policy published in the [Graduate Academic Catalog](#) (p. 28 G), upon admission to degree candidacy, a student may submit up to six semester credits for the MSL program and up to 12 credits in the MSC program of appropriate graduate coursework with grades of B (3.0) or better from accredited graduate schools to satisfy the degree requirements. The University, upon the advice of the faculty, may accept transfer credits. Acceptability of transfer credit rests on its relevance to the course of study being pursued by the student and on the date of the instruction. Coursework older than six years at the time of graduation is not accepted (See [Graduate Academic Catalog](#), Graduate Credit Aging Policy p. 18G). Students may petition to transfer three additional credits if degree completion within six years is interrupted by military commitments.

2.C.14 Graduate credit may be granted for internships, field experiences, and clinical practices that are an integral part of the graduate degree program. Credit toward graduate degrees may not be granted for experiential learning that occurred prior to matriculation into the graduate degree program. Unless the institution structures the graduate learning experience, monitors that learning, and assesses learning achievements, graduate credit is not granted for learning experiences external to the students' formal graduate programs.

As noted in the [Graduate Academic Catalog](#), all graduate degree programs require the completion of an integration project. The project must be completed at the conclusion of course requirements as its purpose is to utilize the degree plan (pp. 31G, p. 37G, 40G, 43G), learning theory, content, and experience outcomes in a professional application. Students in the MSC program must be admitted to Advanced Candidacy before undertaking the Integration Project. This project may be an internship, project, or thesis.

The clinical practicum course undertaken near the end of the Master of Science in Counseling (MSC) program is designed to facilitate development of higher levels of counseling skills. As described in the program description, before enrolling for practicum credits, students must complete a practicum application, for approval by the Program Coordinator, and have completed a minimum of 40 credit hours. These 40 hours must include the MSC core courses. The student must provide proof of professional liability insurance prior to enrollment in the clinical practicum.

As published in the [Graduate Academic Catalog](#) in the Experiential Learning policy (p. 19G), in accordance with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities accreditation guidelines and with the University Experiential Learning policy, graduate credit may not be granted for experiential learning.

2.C.15 Graduate programs intended to prepare students for research, professional practice, scholarship, or artistic creation are characterized by a high level of expertise,

originality, and critical analysis. Programs intended to prepare students for artistic creation are directed toward developing personal expressions of original concepts, interpretations, imagination, thoughts, or feelings. Graduate programs intended to prepare students for research or scholarship are directed toward advancing the frontiers of knowledge by constructing and/or revising theories and creating or applying knowledge. Graduate programs intended to prepare students for professional practice are directed toward developing high levels of knowledge and performance skills directly related to effective practice within the profession.

As published in the [Graduate Academic Catalog](#), the mission of Graduate Studies is to prepare reflective practitioners ([p. 8G](#)). The Master of Science in Counseling (MSC) degree program prepares students to work as professional counselors in a variety of settings. The MSC Core and Advanced Area courses are augmented by elective coursework chosen by the student and academic advisor depending on the student's area of interest and professional goals. The program consists of sixty (60) semester hours of courses specific to counseling, and includes required practicum and internship experiences. The content, course sequence, and contact hours of the degree program are structured to prepare students for the Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor examinations offered through the Montana Board of Social Work Examiners and Professional Counselors.

Graduate Program goals and objectives, which show evidence that the graduate programs are designed to prepare reflective practitioners, are published in the [Graduate Academic Catalog](#) (p. 26G and 33G).

The specific MSC curriculum components are designed to embrace not only the broader University mission, but actively incorporate the Providence Leadership Covenant, licensure law standards, and professional counselor preparation guidelines, especially the criteria set forth using the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards: 1) professional orientation and ethical practice; 2) social and cultural diversity; 3) human growth and development; 4) career development; 5) helping relationships; 6) group work; 7) assessment; and 8) research and program evaluation.

Graduate coursework for the Master of Science in Organization Leadership (MSL) degree is designed for practitioners in a wide variety of management professions. The curriculum provides opportunities for students to prepare for a career as an executive in their profession or to enhance careers.

Continuing Education and Non-Credit Programs

2.C.16 Credit and non-credit continuing education programs and other special programs are compatible with the institution's mission and goals.

The University offers occasional continuing education courses but does not offer any continuing education programs. Please see our [Academic Catalog](#) and the response to 2.C.17 below to understand our continuing education course process.

2.C.17 The institution maintains direct and sole responsibility for the academic quality of all aspects of its continuing education and special learning programs and courses. Continuing education and/or special learning activities, programs, or courses offered for academic credit are approved by the appropriate institutional body, monitored through established procedures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and assessed with

regard to student achievement. Faculty representing the disciplines and fields of work are appropriately involved in the planning and evaluation of the institution's continuing education and special learning activities.

In following course delivery and approval processes, the University maintains direct and sole responsibility for the academic quality of all aspects of our continuing education and study abroad courses. A continuing education course is a partnership between an agency wanting the course (e.g. Great Falls Public Schools) and our faculty. In working together, the agency and University faculty develop the syllabus following our standard [syllabus format](#). The faculty vets the course within the department. The faculty then completes a [course addition form](#). The Registrar completes a [Continuing Education quick application](#) for students to register. The sponsoring faculty serves as the faculty of record. The faculty grades assignments and submits the grade to the Registrar. This close faculty involvement assures that the course is monitored and students are assessed as all University courses. This process follows the [Continuing Education Checklist](#). Please see a sample continuing education syllabus [here](#). For more information on Study Abroad, please see Standard Standards 1.b and 3.B.2 for more information about the University's study abroad opportunities.

In following Study Abroad course delivery and approval processes, the University maintains direct and sole responsibility for the academic quality of all aspects of our study abroad courses. Faculty Led Study Abroad courses follow the Curriculum Committee process for course approval. Other study abroad opportunities are treated like transfer courses with the experience and credit coming from a host school. The study abroad application packet provides all pertinent information for students studying abroad. (See 2.C.18 below)

2.C.18 The granting of credit or Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for continuing education courses and special learning activities is: a) guided by generally accepted norms; b) based on institutional mission and policy; c) consistent across the institution, wherever offered and however delivered; d) appropriate to the objectives of the course; and e) determined by student achievement of identified learning outcomes.

Continuing education and study abroad courses are developed using the University [standard syllabus format](#). The University follows our Credit Hour Policy as described in the [Academic Catalog](#) (p. xxiii) in awarding credit for continuing education courses ([Study Abroad Approval Form](#)). Students receive a [letter of acceptance](#) to study abroad. To monitor continuing education and study abroad, the Director of Continuing Education and Study Abroad reports directly to the Vice President of Academic Affairs (Organizational Chart for UP). These measures ensure that continuing education and study abroad are a) guided by generally accepted norms, b) based on institutional mission and policy, c) consistent across the institution, d) appropriate to course objectives, and e) determined by student achievement of learning outcomes.

2.C.19 The institution maintains records which describe the number of courses and nature of learning provided through non-credit instruction.

The University does not transcript non-credit courses. The only noncredit courses we offer are science labs. Science labs are listed as separate non-credit courses to allow students to register for space sensitive lab sections. The lab grade is part of the course grade. Please see the Course Offerings including labs in the [Academic Catalog](#).

Standard 2.D Student Support Services

2.D.1 Consistent with the nature of its educational programs and methods of delivery, the institution creates effective learning environments with appropriate programs and services to support student learning needs.

The University has a student-centered approach as directed by its mission. However, students at the University are less likely to graduate than students nationally. Two effective interventions with proven impacts on retention and completion, advisement and Early Warning systems, are inefficient at the University. Student service offices are located at different parts of the campus, adding a hurdle to use of these services.

In 2015, the University applied for a [Title III grant](#) through the Department of Education. The purpose of the grant is to augment the University's student-centered approach so that students will achieve their educational goals and graduate. The University was awarded the grant in October of 2015.

The grant objectives are three-fold: 1) increase the first-year, on-campus retention rate from 54% to 80% by 2020; 2) reduce the average number of days between an academic alert notification from faculty to referral from seven to two days by 2020; and 3) increase the Personal Education Plans completed by academically underprepared non-TRiO students from 0% to 50% by 2020. These plans are specifically for students who are on academic alert or considered at risk. Information on the [Academic Early Warning System](#) is found on the website. The following grant activities are designed to achieve the above objectives:

- Enhance advisement by streamlining advising processes and adding comprehensive advising through Personal Education Plans.
 - Enhance Academic Alerts through software and assigned retention specialist for high-need non-TRiO students.
 - Create special section of Corps of Discovery freshman orientation for non-TRiO academically underprepared freshmen.
 - Create an [Academic Success Center](#) (located in the library), staffed by Academic Success Counselors and a licensed mental health counselor.
 - Create a centralized core student services (admissions, registrar, financial aid, and business office located in the Student Center).
 - Create a Retention Team to oversee Title III implementation, evaluation, and institutionalization. The Retention Team reconvened in spring 2017.
- In sum, the \$1,628,234 of Title III funds (over the next five years and beyond) will allow the University to fulfill its mission through: 1) investment in advising and student intervention software; 2) hiring retention specialists, responsible for student engagement and success; and 3) investment in two capital projects both designed to centralize student services, advising, and engagement. As of fall 2017 census, the freshman retention for the fall 2016 cohort is 68% exceeding our goal.

In association with the Academic Success Center (above), the University supports student learning needs through additional programs. The Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) office located in Sullivan Hall offers a federally funded, University supported, [TRiO Student Success Services](#) program. The TRiO staff includes counselors for disabilities, minorities, literacy, and math. Students can arrange tutoring from the CAE as well as from the [Mathematics Center](#) and

[Writing and Critical Thinking Center](#). The library also provides library research support to students.

To ensure students have proper textbooks, the University publishes the textbook requirements on the Registrar Web page so on and off campus students can access textbook requirements.

The University support student learning through an [Academic Alert System](#). This system identifies students who may be exhibiting behavior that might work against their success (e.g. missing class) and guides them to appropriate resources. Once a warning is filed, the Academic Success Center follows up with the student and identifies resources (e.g., tutoring, mental health counseling, athletic intervention, etc.) The ultimate goal of the Academic Alert system is to develop a plan for success.

The faculty serves as student advisors, hold regular office hours, and follow a syllabus format that helps assure consistency of information for students. The faculty also has access to faculty development funds and participate in faculty development throughout the year to learn how to best support students. The Vice President of Academic Affairs' Experiential Learning Report, which resulted from our National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data, conveys expectations of engaging students in their learning. Faculty reported their engagement activities in their Faculty Performance and Goals Review meetings, which are personal discussions with the Vice President of Academic Affairs and result in a personalized results letter to faculty.

Distance students have a web page dedicated to them. Military students in the Legal and Paralegal Studies program have a specifically designed web page to meet their needs. Online and on campus students also have access to tutorials published on the University web page that helps them understand how to use our Learning Management System (LMS), our online platform. We use Lync for the Nursing program and these students get a tutorial in how to use Lync when they are on campus in the summer. Distance students also have faculty advisors available via telephone and email to assist students. Both distance and on campus students can identify their textbook needs directly from the Registrar's web page.

In creating effective learning environments, the University has renovated and enhanced technologies to facilitate collaboration and interactivity, face-to-face or online.

2.D.2 The institution makes adequate provision for the safety and security of its students and their property at all locations where it offers programs and services. Crime statistics, campus security policies, and other disclosures required under federal and state regulations are made available in accordance with those regulations.

As per the [Student Handbook](#), the University attempts to keep students safe by providing advice to students regarding safety. In 2017, the University hired its own private security. The University employs a [Chief of Security](#), who is generally available during regular business hours, and its own Security Guards who are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. See Standard 2.G.1 for details regarding campus security.

Additionally, Campus Residence Halls are staffed by three live-in professional hall directors (HD) comprised of a Director, Assistant Director, and a Housing Coordinator. Security officers conduct a campus walk or drive through every hour and monitor the campus via video between physical checks. Security officers record their findings on our incident report. The professional staff is supported by twenty-five Resident Assistants (RA) living in the residential facilities.

Residential students are issued key fobs, and/or keys, and/or key codes to access the secured residence halls and individual rooms. As per the guest visitation policy, guests are expected to sign in and must comply with all University policies. The University administers an emergency response protocol including e-mail, voicemail and text message alerts to inform the campus community of an emergency situation including a campus lock down. Evacuation and lock down procedures are posted in each office and classroom across campus.

Other security/safety offerings include annual Fire Department inspections and drills; defibrillators strategically located across campus; emergency phones with emergency contact information in all campus buildings. The University uses text message alerts to notify the campus community of emergency situations.

The University publishes a [campus safety report](#) which includes campus security policies and procedures along with the [annual crimes statistics](#) as required by the Clery Act. The reports are made available online through the University catalog, student handbook and campus safety report. A printed copy of the policies, procedures and reports are made available upon request as are incident report forms.

2.D.3 Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational offerings. It orients students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information and advising about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.

Based on student demographic information (2016-2017 [freshman](#), [sophomore](#), [junior](#), [senior](#) profiles), the University recruits and admits students primarily from Montana and the northwest. Approximately 46% of our students are from Montana with the majority of the remaining students coming from California, Oregon, and Washington. To help ensure a good fit between the University educational offerings and student interests, the enrollment staff and coaches share information with prospective students about the programs we offer.

Prospective students who visit the University Web page can complete a virtual tour. This helps students understand University culture and what is expected even before they arrive on campus. Prospective students are encouraged to visit campus to gain an even better understanding of the University. While on a campus visit, students often experience a class and spend time with current students and faculty. Each strategy is designed to help students understand the University and to help the University identify students with the potential to benefit from our educational offerings.

As per admission criteria published in the [Academic Catalog](#), the University considers a variety of criteria when determining admissions including grades, ACT/SAT scores, and letter of recommendation. For graduate student admission, the University considers undergraduate grades, GRE scores, recommendations, and a personal statement. Each criterion is designed to identify students with the potential to benefit from our educational offerings.

Recent analysis of data of returning and non-returning students has prompted the University to reflect on the connection between the entering undergraduate GPA and success at the University. For the class starting fall 2014, the admissions office reviews applications very carefully if the student has a high school GPA of 2.5 or lower.

Students complete an [orientation program](#) that helps them understand what the University has to offer. During the orientation, students meet with their faculty advisors to get to know each other and to make adjustments to their schedules. The University also hosts a faculty dinner to help connect students to faculty.

Incoming transfer students receive transfer evaluations once they have submitted their official transcripts to the University. All students are provided planning sheets which clearly outline the requirements of their chosen field of study and are given documentation to help them understand how their coursework has been accepted in transferring to the University and how they can determine how that coursework meets institutional degree requirements.

All students are required to meet with a faculty academic advisor to get their student PIN to register for classes each semester. Through this process the University ensures students are monitored on their progress toward degree completion. All relevant policies, as well as graduation requirements and deadlines, are provided to students in the Academic Catalog which can be accessed physically and online. The Registrar notifies students at least two weeks prior to graduation deadlines and reminds them of the procedures to apply for graduation.

2.D.4 In the event of program elimination or significant change in requirements, the institution makes appropriate arrangements to ensure that students enrolled in the program have an opportunity to complete their program in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.

The University's philosophy is not to penalize students for any changes made to programs. Beginning in the fall 2010, the University initiated a new [Core Curriculum](#) which was reviewed and revised in during 2016-2017. It was placed into effect in fall 2017 with incoming freshmen. The University has, at various times, removed programs from the curriculum when deemed appropriate by faculty and administration. Following a review of the Graduate Council in spring 2013, the University decided to put the Master of Arts in Teaching program on hold due to low enrollment. As a result, the MAT does not appear in the 2013-2014 Academic Catalog. In this instance, there was a single student in the program. The University arranged for the enrolled student to complete the program through independent study courses. The University could not use course substitutions to fulfill degree requirements due to teacher licensure requirements. The University would follow this process at the Undergraduate and Graduate levels. Such arrangements have been successful for both the University and students.

For changes in core curriculum or program requirements, students are given the option to continue in their entering curriculum or adopt the revised requirements by moving to the new Academic Catalog. In 2010, the University changed its core curriculum. At that time, returning students selected the curriculum that was to their advantage. Incoming students were put on the new curriculum. Individual curriculum plans with course substitutions were maintained and monitored by the Registrar until all students completed their core studies. For any eliminated courses, students work with academic advisors and faculty in each discipline to identify appropriate course substitutions within our curriculum.

The University uses petitions for course substitution, waiver, and special consideration posted on the [University web page](#) under Registrar forms to process and grant exceptions to the curriculum.

The University will work closely with impacted students and assist them in program completion provided they maintain continuous enrollment at the University as outlined in the Academic Catalog.

2.D.5 The institution publishes in a catalog, or provides in a manner reasonably available to students and other stakeholders, current and accurate information that includes:

- a) Institutional mission and core themes;**
- b) Entrance requirements and procedures;**
- c) Grading policy;**
- d) Information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion based on normal student progress and the frequency of course offerings;**
- e) Names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty;**
- f) Rules, regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities;**
- g) Tuition, fees, and other program costs;**
- h) Refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment;**
- i) Opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and**
- j) Academic calendar.**

The University publishes an Academic Catalog annually which includes both [Undergraduate Academic Catalog](#) and [Graduate Catalog](#) information reflecting all current policies and programs at the University. The catalog is made available to students via electronic means on the University website. Institutional Mission and Core Themes are published in the Academic Catalog Update. Admissions requirements (p. viii & 10G for first time, transfer, non-degree and international students) are also clearly laid out within the Academic Catalog and updated as necessary. The academic grading policies (p. xxv and on syllabi for each course) are contained within the Academic Policy and Procedures section of both the Undergraduate and Graduate catalogs. Academic program requirements (p. 4 – 113 and 25G – 53G) are clearly established in the catalog and students are provided full course descriptions for courses.

Information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion based on normal student progress and the frequency of course offerings are published in the Academic Catalog. A [stand-alone rotation document](#) is available for students on the University website which provides information on course availability and offerings.

These rotations have been designed by faculty to assist students in completing within four years of enrollment. Transfer students are advised by faculty members in their discipline to assist them in making their way through their chosen degree program in the shortest time possible based on rotation, course availability, and courses deemed equivalent to University courses.

A complete listing of administrators and full-time and part-time faculty is published in the [Academic Catalog](#), (p. xlii). Tuition, fees and refund information (p. xv & 14G) is also provided for students as is information on Financial Aid awarding policies and types of aid that are available for students.

The catalog and the University Code of Conduct, published in the Student Handbook, provide information regarding students' rights and responsibilities pertaining to appeals and conduct. Withdrawal policies and financial aid opportunities (p. xi and xvi & 15G) are published in the

academic calendar. The annual academic calendar (p. ii) is published in the catalog each year and included online. All these policies are made available to students in the physical and electronic University catalog.

2.D.6 Publications describing educational programs include accurate information on:
a) National and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered;
b) Descriptions of unique requirements for employment and advancement in the occupation or profession.

The University published professional licensure requirements in the Academic Catalog with each applicable program description. For example, the catalog references the Montana Code in the MSC description. Similar information is shared with students desiring to be Certified Public Accountants, p. 35G, and teachers, pp. 21 and 42. Students in all University majors are provided professional guidance regarding careers through their faculty advisors. It is through these individual advising sessions that faculty and students talk about qualifications for employment and advancement in a particular field.

Montana requires that all applicants for teacher licensure hold at least a bachelor's degree and meet the institutional requirements in a teachable major and minor or in a single major-in-depth. The state also requires that each program certify that all candidates take and pass a Praxis test for a minor area. Finally, the state requires institutions to use multiple measures to recommend candidates for licensure that includes GPA, test scores, and content recommendations. Official requirements for [Montana teacher licensure](#) are found on the [Montana Office of Public Instruction](#) Web site. The process and forms by which all University education majors navigate that system is explained in the [Education Handbook](#).

To [comply with laws and American Bar Association standards](#), the description of the [Legal and Paralegal Studies](#), program p. 33, specifically states that paralegals cannot practice law.

The Nursing Programs in the School of Health Professions is [accredited through the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education \(CCNE\)](#) which is a national accreditation agency, and is officially recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. The Commission ensures the quality and integrity of baccalaureate, graduate, and residency programs in nursing.

2.D.7 The institution adopts and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student records, including provision for reliable and retrievable backup of those records, regardless of their form. The institution publishes and follows established policies for confidentiality and release of student records.

The University Registrar's Office is tasked with ensuring that the University complies with necessary requirements and guidelines relative to student records and retention. The University recently transferred aging microfilm documents to PDF files to enable faster retrieval for students but also as a tested means to securely maintain and store those records. Those files are accessible only from the University network and are password protected by the Registrar's Office.

Permanent, hard copy University records, such as student transcripts, are secured in fire safe filing cabinets to ensure their safety and retention. The Registrar's Office is an active member of American Association of Registrars and Admission Officers (AACRAO) and relies on that membership to assist in being updated on any necessary changes and recommendations for

record retention. All files are kept in locking filing cabinets and in areas with locking doors to ensure their security outside of normal business hours.

To ensure a broad understanding of Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements, the Registrar's Office provides [FERPA training](#) for all new faculty and student lab instructors as outlined in the Faculty FERPA Training and Student Worker FERPA Training. As part of the orientation process coordinated by the Human Resources Office, faculty and staff complete FERPA testing and acknowledge they have received this orientation with a signature on the Hiring Checklist. The FERPA test is kept in the employee file as evidence of completing FERPA training. Area specific training is done by the appropriate supervisor of that area in conjunction with the Registrar's Office. The University policies for confidentiality and release of student records are posted annually in the Catalog and on the University Web site. The University formally notifies all new students, in writing, of their FERPA rights and responsibilities at the beginning of every semester.

The Registrar's Office works closely with the IS Staff to ensure that database transmissions and student portal functions (ArgoExpress) are also secure for our students and faculty to utilize.

Each semester the Registrar notifies students of their rights under FERPA by sending them the Student [FERPA Notification Letter](#). Records are released as per the Disclosure of Education Record published in the Academic Catalog p. xxxiii. A student who wants to give permission for the University to share confidential information (most often a communication with parents) completes a Request to Release Personally Identifiable and Confidential Information form found on the University Web site under Registrar Forms. A student who want his/her transcript released complete a transcript request form available on the Registrar's Web site under forms or they order online at www.studentclearinghouse.org where they can securely place their order and credit card information and we then process the request.

2.D.8 The institution provides an effective and accountable program of financial aid consistent with its mission, student needs, and institutional resources. Information regarding the categories of financial assistance (such as scholarships, grants, and loans) is published and made available to prospective and enrolled students.

The University publishes information regarding [financial aid on the University Web site](#) under Prospective Students. Links take students to Internal Scholarships, External Scholarships, Loans and Grant, Federal Work Study, Eligibility Requirements, Veteran Benefits, Family Plan Benefits, PH&S Benefits, Net Price Calculator, Financial Aid Forms, "What if I Stop Attending," and Contact Information. Students and parents are encouraged to contact the financial aid office directly to learn about all the financial aid options.

2.D.9 Students receiving financial assistance are informed of any repayment obligations. The institution regularly monitors its student loan programs and the institution's loan default rate.

The financial aid office ensures that all students complete [Student Loan Entrance Counseling](#) after they are admitted and before disbursement of loans, per government requirements. The financial aid office balances student loans received with the Common Origination and Disbursement system to ensure all loans are disbursed correctly. If a return in Title IV funds is required due to student withdrawal or unsatisfactory semester, the financial aid office sends a certified letter to the student detailing the return and repayment of such funds. As part of the Loan Information on the University Financial Aid web page, students are provided a link to the

Master Promissory Note (MPN) which must be signed with each loan. The link takes students to StudentLoans.gov where additional information is provided regarding repayment of student loans.

2.D.10 The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates a systematic and effective program of academic advisement to support student development and success. Personnel responsible for advising students are knowledgeable of the curriculum, program requirements, and graduation requirements and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Advising requirements and responsibilities are defined, published, and made available to students.

As per the [Faculty Handbook Section 1](#) (Part 2, section 2.2.1.1), faculty members serve as the primary student advisors. The [Advising Handbook](#) requires that the registrar provide advisor training during new faculty orientation.

The Academic Dean and Registrar update the Handbook annually and store it on the faculty drive for faculty access. The Handbook contains information on the curriculum, program requirements, and graduation requirements. The Registrar provides ongoing advisor training during the August and January Faculty Development sessions and at monthly faculty meetings.

Each student is assigned, at minimum, one full time faculty advisor to assist with navigation through their curriculum. Students who major in more than one content area are assigned an advisor from each of those areas. The Registrar generates original PIN every semester and assigns a number to each student account. Faculty retrieve their advisees' PINs from our student information system, Argo Express. Students see the faculty for advising and to receive their PIN. The PIN allows students to register for classes. This process helps ensure that students are aware of their career and educational options, understand course rotations, and prerequisite requirements.

Students and faculty have access to forms and tutorials which are available on the University Registrar web page. Advising information is also available for students in the online catalog. The University Registrar sends out reminders to students prior to registration periods giving them the name of their advisor and their advisor's contact information. Students must seek advisement and obtain a registration PIN to enroll in courses. Students can request a change of advisor if needed.

To ensure all advice to students is accurate, the Registrar serves as the University authority on degree requirements.

This Year Seven Self-Evaluation revealed a need to continue to evaluate our advising program, which was begun with the Retention Team work in spring and summer 2017. Freshmen responses in the 2017 Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) indicate that 65% of incoming freshmen expect to "seek help with coursework from Academic Advisors," and 64% indicated they expect to "seek help with coursework from Faculty members."

2.D.11 Co-curricular activities are consistent with the institution's mission, core themes, programs, and services and are governed appropriately.

Co-curricular activities include University sponsored athletics, clubs and organizations. All co-curricular programs are placed within athletics or student development. Athletics is led by our

Vice President of Athletics who reports directly to the President. Student Development is led by the Vice President of Student Development who reports to the President.

2.D.12 If the institution operates auxiliary services (such as student housing, food service, and bookstore), they support the institution’s mission, contribute to the intellectual climate of the campus community, and enhance the quality of the learning environment. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators have opportunities for input regarding these services.

The University auxiliary services include housing, food services and the bookstore. The auxiliary services support the mission of the University by helping provide the services students want and expect of a residential community. Each auxiliary service helps to enhance the quality of learning by providing services that would draw students away from the University if the auxiliary services were not available. Informal impromptu student, faculty, and staff discussions occur in the dorms and in the dining commons. The [campus bookstore](#) is an online service that provides a convenient means for students to obtain their course materials by identifying and obtaining text books online. A “Spirit Store” is planned to be in the McLaughlin Center for Argo Wear and student supplies in the future. Auxiliary services support the mission, contribute to the intellectual climate on campus, and enhance the quality of the learning environment by providing funds to the operating budget. In fiscal year 2013, auxiliary services provided \$196,000 to the University operating budget. Now, in FY 2017, Auxiliary enterprises brought in \$2,280,912 in revenue.

In spring 2016, the University hired a [Coordinator of Auxiliary Services](#). The management of auxiliary services under a single coordinator will allow for growth of auxiliary services while supporting the mission of the University.

2.D.13 Intercollegiate athletic and other co-curricular programs (if offered) and related financial operations are consistent with the institution’s mission and conducted with appropriate institutional oversight. Admission requirements and procedures, academic standards, degree requirements, and financial aid awards for students participating in co-curricular programs are consistent with those for other students.

The University offers seventeen intercollegiate athletic teams. To ensure that intercollegiate athletics are operated consistent with the institution’s mission and conducted with appropriate institutional oversight, athletics is led by our [Vice President of Athletics](#) who [reports directly to the President](#). As is illustrated in the [Academic Catalog](#) and on the [University Web site for admissions](#), athletes must meet the same entrance, curriculum, and graduation requirement of all students. The University athletics web page contains a link to [PLAYNAIA](#) to allow all student athletes and prospective student athletes to review [NAIA eligibility requirements](#). As per the Academic Warning, Probation, and Suspension policy in the [Academic Catalog](#), student athletes are held to the same academic probation and suspension policy as all students.

Athletic scholarships follow a separate structure from non-athletes, and are offered by each coach with approval of the Vice President of Athletics and the VP of Enrollment Management. Athletic scholarship levels are full ride (tuition, fees, room and board), full tuition (tuition only), \$17,000 or \$12,000 a year. Each team has quotas for their roster for each level of scholarship that are aligned with NAIA rules and assure overall management of institutional discounting. Athletes offered the \$12,000 scholarship level are eligible for need based grants according the

same criteria as non-athletes. Athletes may be considered for other premium scholarship such as the S-STEM scholarship program, Catholic Scholarship or other merit-based awards. If selected, they would receive the higher of the athletic offer or the academic/merit-based offer. Coaches may request approval for different scholarship amounts to respond to particular student or team needs as long as the overall discount and headcount are maintained. Athletic scholarship offers are communicated from the Athletic Department to the Financial Aid Office and incorporated into overall financial aid awards. Scholarship and grant opportunities are available on the [University website in the financial aid section](#). Students may view their financial aid award details and accept or reject each element of their package through the student portal, [ArgoExpress](#)

2.D.14 The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in the distance education course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy and that students are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.

Upon application to the University, each individual is assigned a unique student identifier code that is used to identify and access their records from that point forward. Internally we refer to this as their “at (@) number” because each number begins with @. When peripheral documents such as transcripts from previous colleges are received, the students are matched by a variety of identifiers such as name, date of birth, address, and gender. Once we can ascertain the records are the same, based on matching several of these identifiers, the peripheral documents are tagged with that unique student ID number so they can be properly routed to the student file and included in the student record.

After the application is processed, students are sent an electronic notification of their Student ID number and given instructions for how to access their [ArgoExpress](#) (online student record) account through the [University Web site](#). Upon initial login, the student is required to change their password so it is known only to them. University personnel cannot retrieve that password. It must be reset to a new password in the event the student is locked out of their account.

Standard 2.E Library and Information Resources

2.E.1 Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution holds or provides access to library and information resources with an appropriate level of currency, depth, and breadth to support the institution's mission, core themes, programs, and services, wherever offered and however delivered.

The [University Library](#) is responsive to both the Mission and the Core themes regarding access. Access to the library is carefully managed for optimum access.

The University Library is open daily during the school year Monday through Thursday 7:30 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. On Friday it is open 7:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Saturday the Library is open 9:00 to 5:00. On Sunday the Library is open 1:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. Extended hours are used during finals time. The library is staffed by a director, a reference/information services librarian, and an evening and weekend staff-member. Student workers provide assistance during morning openings and during evening and weekend shifts. There is always at least one staff person working in the library.

As per the Library Collection Statistics ([Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)) which shows the number of holdings by date and subject area, the library resources are of appropriate depth, breadth, and currency reflecting the intent of the Core Themes and Mission. The library currently has more than 50,000 print items accessible during open hours and more than 150,000 electronic books and greater than 100 separate electronic databases that are accessible at all hours to those with a student ID (@) number, providing access to a broad range of views on subject for student, faculty and patron inquiry addressing Core Themes #1 and #2. The university is now a member of the statewide academic consortium [TRAILS](#) (Treasure State Academic Library & Information Services), which has expanded the library's electronic database collections. In addition to academic items, the library also includes a collection of popular fiction in both electronic and audio format through Montana Library2Go. The University Library participates in the [LVIS \(Libraries Very Interested in Sharing](#) - MZD listed as "University of Great Falls") and [NAPCU](#) (Northwest Association of Private Colleges & Universities) interlibrary loan service consortiums.

All library materials are accessible by students in the School of Health Professions.

2.E.2 Planning for library and information resources is guided by data that include feedback from affected users and appropriate library and information resources faculty, staff, and administrators.

As evidenced by the Library Collection Statistics, the library holdings represent our curriculum offerings. Purchases can be generated by the director, library staff, faculty, and University staff. Faculty can submit a request on line from the library web page by clicking on the faculty request link. The library staff arranges the purchase. The Academic Dean approves all library purchases. Academic programs are allocated a portion of the library budget (See Summary of Statistics for [Library Spending by Area](#)) . As part of the program review, faculty reflect on program resources including library resources. The yearly survey of library usage ([2014](#) and [2015](#)), provided through SurveyMonkey®, provides feedback on library resources and materials. Patrons can also register a suggestion through the library web page suggestion box.

2.E.3 Consistent with its mission and core themes, the institution provides appropriate instruction and support for students, faculty, staff, administrators, and others (as

appropriate) to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in obtaining, evaluating, and using library and information resources that support its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered.

Consistent with Core Themes #1 and #3, instruction on how to access and use library resources is offered to students, faculty, and staff via the web and in person. Library staff invite faculty to bring their classes to the library for instruction. As evidenced by the library orientation schedule, faculty accept the invitation for orientation to library services. Bibliographic instruction sessions, primarily completed by the Information Services Librarian, are one of many basic services offered by the library. Instructors can make prearrangements to have a session geared to the needs of their particular class. The library has a computer lab with projecting capabilities or staff can go to the instructor's classroom for a session. Similar orientation lectures are provided for summer sessions of the University's nursing program.

The library is fully air-conditioned and has a large array of chairs and couches creating an atmosphere for students to congregate. Three study rooms added in 2011 provide the opportunities for students to work with groups or study in a quieter surrounding. In fall 2013, the library added a technology-enhanced classroom named the Jorgensen Wylder Classroom that also allows students to access high-end video and image editing software.

Online patrons get help by working with a librarian through email, viewing frequently asked questions and responses, and through library LibGuides tutorials found on the [main library web page](#), which are pathfinder tutorials to different topics very helpful in distance education and provides access to materials.

2.E.4 The institution regularly and systematically evaluates the quality, adequacy, utilization, and security of library and information resources and services, including those provided through cooperative arrangements, wherever offered and however delivered.

The library has now transformed to a learning commons, which includes offices for counseling and academic assistance. The writing and math centers provide tutoring assistance during the school year and the academic success center provides personal and academic counseling to all students. As part of the planning process for an integrated learning commons, printed library information and tutoring and information literacy instructions are located in one building. As part of the transformation process, and due to the realities of evolving modes of information access, the library has downgraded its print holdings and has moved primarily to electronic resources. This is an ongoing process that involves careful thought and planning. Evaluating the value of current holdings, identifying weaknesses and researching feasible solutions to those shortcomings is at the core of the library's mission. The library staff has included faculty in the process of both acquisition and de-accession. The library uses [circulation statistics](#) to judge which areas need the most purchasing support and which materials are the most liable to de-accession.

Faculty, students, and patrons can make requests through the library staff, and the library seeks regular feedback for collection needs from University faculty and staff and students and records of inter-library loans. A yearly user survey (See "survey of Library Usage" above), provided through Survey Monkey, assesses the needs of both library services and material. Suggestions are contained within monthly email information.

Security for the collection is provided by a 3M contract and two security gates. Patrons must exit the library through the security gates. The library is locked when closed and only staff and building maintenance and security have keys to the library. The University employs a [Chief of Security](#), who is generally available during regular business hours, and its own Security Guards who are available 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Standard 2.F Financial Resources

2.F.1 The institution demonstrates financial stability with sufficient cash flow and reserves to support its programs and services. Financial planning reflects available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and appropriate risk management to ensure short-term solvency and anticipate long-term obligations, including payment of future liabilities.

The Statement of Cash Flows included in the annual audit, performed by [Douglas Wilson and Company, PC](#), shows the University's ability to draw on a short term line of credit through Providence Health and Services. Typically, the University draws from the line of credit in December and June and repays the funds in the February and September. Short-term solvency is achieved by controlling expenses within the confines of the operating budget. Payments of short-term and long-term obligations are included in the University's operating budget and are paid with current tuition revenue. In 2016, Providence Health and Services forgave all outstanding line of credit draws and absorbed two bank loans, thus freeing the University of any outstanding debt. Strategic financial planning and control of expenses has allowed the University to achieve a surplus and strengthen the financial position going forward. The following audits are provided as well as [2016 Financial Statements: 2015 Final Audit](#) and [2014 Final Audit](#).

Further, the University worked collaboratively with the corporate sponsor, PSJH, to develop a path to sustainability through the [University of Providence Pro Forma and 5-Year Plan](#). The corporate sponsor is currently funding the University's operating deficit.

2.F.2 Resource planning and development include realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and responsible projections of grants, donations, and other non-tuition revenue sources.

The University adjusts its budget based upon objectives set by the budget committee, which includes the leadership team and delegates from the faculty and staff. The University budgets tuition revenue based upon the prior fiscal year projection after spring semester, and assumes no growth in the general enrollment. Growth is budgeted for the RN to BSN program according to the enrollment numbers agreed upon with Providence Health & Services. Anticipated grant funds are not included in the University's operating budget. Contributions and sponsorships account for approximately 2% of the total revenue budget. Auxiliary budgets are based upon the prior fiscal year to correspond with tuition budgeted for enrollment, plus any increase in housing rates. The University believes this is a realistic and sound approach.

Institutional aid, or discounting, is based upon the GPA and financial need of new and transferring students. Students with stronger academic backgrounds receive higher discounting than those with lower entering GPA's. As the University succeeds in attracting more high achieving students, institutional aid expense increases. The University finances most of the institutional aid and endowment funds contribute based upon earnings and the spending rate set by the Board of Trustees in the Investment Policy. Institutional aid fluctuates based upon enrollment each semester.

The University also works in cooperation with PSJH who is funding the University's current operating deficit. Please see the University of [University of Providence Pro Forma and 5-Year Plan](#). This plan provides a path to sustainability for the University.

2.F.3 The institution clearly defines and follows its policies, guidelines, and processes for financial planning and budget development that include appropriate opportunities for participation by its constituencies.

The University constituents are represented by the budget committee, which includes the leadership team and delegates from faculty and staff. The [Vice President of Finance](#) works with the budget committee in correlation with the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees. Per the [Amended and Restated University Bylaws](#), the budget is reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees and Providence St. Joseph Health Services (PSJH). The process ensures appropriate opportunities for participation by all responsible parties.

2.F.4 The institution ensures timely and accurate financial information through its use of an appropriate accounting system that follows generally accepted accounting principles and through its reliance on an effective system of internal controls.

Our annual audit, conducted by Douglas Wilson and Company, ensures that the University follows generally accepted accounting principles. Accounting systems processes and internal controls for cash receipts, cash disbursements, fixed asset transactions, investment transactions, payroll transactions, debt transactions, net asset transactions, tuition and fees revenue, and student allowances transactions are documented and are reviewed and approved by the auditors annually. Accounts Payable procedures and check request procedures are also documented and require supervisor approval for purchases over \$100.

2.F.5 Capital budgets reflect the institution's mission and core theme objectives and relate to its plans for physical facilities and acquisition of equipment. Long-range capital plans support the institution's mission and goals and reflect projections of the total cost of ownership, equipment, furnishing, and operation of new or renovated facilities. Debt for capital outlay purposes is periodically reviewed, carefully controlled, and justified, so as not to create an unreasonable drain on resources available for educational purposes.

Capital expenses, such as facility renovation, acquisition of equipment, and construction of new facilities, are now handled through the PSJH Real Estate group. Most of the funding comes from PSJH and is supplemented with donations. The University does not pursue loans although PSJH might use bonds to help fund the PSJH total system capital budget. Large capital expenditures are reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees and Providence Health & Services to ensure not only that debt levels are controlled, but also that projects reflect the University Mission and Core Theme objectives.

The student commons area was renovated in the summer 2012, financed by a donor. In the summer of 2013 Jorgensen Wylder Classroom was constructed, a technology-enhanced classroom (TEC) in the library, also with donor money. In 2014 compact shelves in the library were installed, which provided enough floor space to add the Critical Thinking and Writing Center and a Math Center, all of which was funded with donations. In 2015 the University constructed a new residence facility that was placed into service in July of 2016. The funds for this construction came from a loan financed by a bank with a guarantee from PSJH, of which Providence later absorbed from the University.

Future plans include constructing a new [University Center](#) in 2018 with state of the art classrooms and community space to bring in additional auxiliary revenue as well as several renovations and updates throughout campus, which will be funded by Providence Health and Services. Ground was broken in December 2017 for a [new wrestling facility](#) and renovation of

the student center also began in December 2017. In July of 2018, the University will separate the [School of Health Professions](#) from the School of Liberal Arts and Science to further meet the growing need of health profession program training both for Providence and external customers. The School of Health Professions plans to open a satellite campus in Renton, WA, in 2018, with additional satellite campuses being considered if the program growth warrants. These will be funded by Providence Health and Services.

2.F.6 The institution defines the financial relationship between its general operations and its auxiliary enterprises, including any use of general operations funds to support auxiliary enterprises or the use of funds from auxiliary services to support general operations.

Auxiliary services include housing, campus store, theatre, and food services. Auxiliary services are self-supporting and contribute to the general operations of the University. After direct costs are applied to each auxiliary enterprise, 42% of the operating expenses of the Physical Plant department are allocated to the Auxiliary Enterprises Program.

2.F.7 For each year of operation, the institution undergoes an external financial audit, in a reasonable timeframe, by professionally qualified personnel in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Results from the audit, including findings and management letter recommendations, are considered in a timely, appropriate, and comprehensive manner by the administration and the governing board.

The University's fiscal year ends June 30, and the external audit begins in late August or early September. The Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees reviews the audit in advance of the [October Board of Trustees meeting](#). The audit is presented to the Board of Trustees and administration by the independent audit firm, including the management letter and findings. The Board of Trustees and the representative from the audit firm then excuse management and convene in executive session. This process ensures that an external, professional audit is conducted in a timely manner by qualified professionals.

Each audit report includes current year findings and the University's response. Prior audit findings are also included in the report along with the auditor recommendations and the status of the University's action in regard to the findings.

2.F.8 All institutional fundraising activities are conducted in a professional and ethical manner and comply with governmental requirements. If the institution has a relationship with a fundraising organization that bears its name and whose major purpose is to raise funds to support its mission, the institution has a written agreement that clearly defines its relationship with that organization.

No fundraising organization exists outside the University that bears the University name and whose major purpose is to raise funds to support its mission.

The University of Providence solicits current and deferred gifts from individuals, corporations, foundations, and awards from government agencies. The University is developing a new Institutional Advancement Policy Manual within the [Stevens Group](#) policy review to govern the solicitation and acceptance of gifts made to the University and to provide guidance to prospective donors and their advisors when making gifts to the University. This Policy is administered by the Director of Advancement. Exceptions to this policy require the approval of the Director of Advancement and the President and may involve the Vice President of Finance

and Human Resources, as well as the Advancement Committee of the Board of Trustees, at the President's discretion.

All gifts and grants must support the University Mission. In addition, the University is sensitive to the interests and capabilities of its donors and donor prospects and must not burden them with excessive or inappropriate solicitations. With the increasing competition for contributions in higher education, it is essential that the University make every contact with prospective donors meaningful and appropriate.

On a regular basis, gifts are recorded in the advancement database and acknowledgement letters are produced and/or signed by the appropriate staff member in the Advancement Office or the President's office. In addition, the department receiving the gift may, and is expected to, express appreciation and gratitude for the gift. The Advancement Office will also coordinate further acknowledgement through the issuing of reports, visits and appropriate recognition.

The University of Providence is undergoing a philanthropy audit conducted by CCS Fundraising. The audit was sponsored by the Providence St. Joseph Health's Office of Philanthropy. The Office of Philanthropy administers PSJH's 42 foundations, developed system wide initiatives, and established a fundraising goal of \$360 million by 2022. In addition, the Office of Philanthropy provides support the foundations and the University of Providence to attain current and future goals.

Standard 2.G Physical and Technology Infrastructure

2.G.1 Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution creates and maintains physical facilities that are accessible, safe, secure, and sufficient in quantity and quality to ensure healthful learning and working environments that support the institution's mission, programs, and services.

As per the position description, the [Director of the Physical Plant](#), who reports directly to the President, is responsible for maintaining the physical facilities of the campus. The Great Falls City Fire Department inspects the University campus each year for safety and to ensure a healthful environment. A clear inspection allows the University to operate as a business in Great Falls. Items not meeting the fire department's standards must be fixed before the University is granted its safety certificate ([Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)). As part of this inspection, the city ADA Coordinator inspects facilities. There is only a report generated if there are ADA compliance concerns. To ensure that facilities are accessible, safe, and secure, custodial workers clean buildings on a regular basis. The cleaning schedule and maintenance position descriptions verify that cleaning and inspection occur regularly. Maintenance and custodial staff scheduling provides availability 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. If a concern is identified during cleaning, custodial staff report the situation to the Director of the Physical Plant using a [Physical Plant Work Order form](#). The Director executes the work order. If the concerns are beyond the Physical Plant budget, the Director of the Physical Plant communicates the concern with the President.

Part of the fire department inspection is a check on the occupancy of each room. Also fire alarms, sprinkler systems, kitchen fire suppression and all fire extinguishers have been serviced. Desks and chairs serve as the physical indicator of the number of students who can be in a room. With a student to faculty ratio of 13 to 1, large class size is not routinely a problem.

The [Chief of Security](#) is ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate) trained along with the Dean of Students. In fall 2017 numerous ALICE trainings and simulations for [faculty](#), [staff](#) and [students](#) were conducted on campus.

ALICE ([Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate](#)) training instructor led classes to provide preparation and a plan for individuals and organizations on how to more proactively handle the threat of an aggressive intruder or active shooter event. Whether it is an attack by an individual person or by an international group of professionals intent on conveying a political message through violence, ALICE Training option-based tactics have become the accepted response, versus the traditional "lockdown only" approach. [ALICE Posters](#) and [infographics](#) are found prominently around campus.

Protection and safety must be the priority in an Active Shooter event or Terrorist Attack. Circumstantial and operational concerns vary in every new situation. [ALICE Training](#) provides options and classes that address the unique challenges specific to Police/Law Enforcement, K-12 Schools, healthcare Facilities, Higher Education, Business, Government, and Houses of Worship.

The University's five trained ALICE instructors are the Chief of Security, Dean of Students, Director of Residential Life, Director of the Physical Plant, and a professor of criminal

justice. They offer trainings to all faculty, staff, and students. The University is planning ALICE drills for each semester of the academic year beginning in the fall of 2017.

Please see Standard 2.D.2 for information on campus security.

2.G.2 The institution adopts, publishes, reviews regularly, and adheres to policies and procedures regarding the safe use, storage, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials.

The University of Great Falls adheres to Hazardous Material Policy policies and procedures (What Not to Put Down the Drain) regarding hazardous or toxic materials, both located within the federal [Occupational Safety and Health Administration Manual](#). As a private institution, the University falls under Federal OSHA's jurisdiction. The link provided is for the general industry standards per the Montana Department of Labor and Industry Office. The current policy was reviewed and updated in the fall of 2013. This policy is posted visibly in every laboratory on campus. As stated in our policy, all chemicals and chemical preparations will be used in a manner to fully conform to the directions on the manufacturers' label. Hazardous or toxic materials are stored in the appropriate cabinets, flammable material storage cabinets, etc. Materials must be returned for safekeeping after use; for short-term use they may be stored in a fume hood. We do not have the capability to dispose of our own hazardous materials. We are a relatively small institution that, by comparison, does not generate large amounts of hazardous or toxic materials. As such, we contract with a third party company specializing in hazardous waste management and disposal for our waste disposal needs. Our current cycle of disposal is every five years (spring of years ending in zero or five). All chemicals are disposed of through a 3rd party contract with [Mountain States Environmental Services](#).

Flammable substances held by our physical plant are locked in a flammable materials cabinet.

2.G.3 The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a master plan for its physical development that is consistent with its mission, core themes, and long-range educational and financial plans.

The University adopted a master plan in fall 2016. We have adhered to that master plan, most notably with the placement of new housing and the creation of a fitness center. As we have moved from mostly non-traditional and part-time students to full-time residential students, the University has invested considerably in upgrading technology, creating community spaces, and classroom renovations. We have added a new building that houses 146 students. The library is complete. We are now planning to add more housing for sophomores and juniors and to transform the library into a learning and information commons.

2.G.4 Equipment is sufficient in quantity and quality and managed appropriately to support institutional functions and fulfillment of the institution's mission, accomplishment of core theme objectives, and achievement of goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services.

The physical plant owns equipment that maintains the physical campus. Examples of such equipment are University vehicles. Prior to a vehicle being released for University travel, the maintenance department inspects the vehicle ([Vehicle Inspection Form](#)). Additionally, vehicles are inspected on a regular schedule every month regardless of use. To maintain vehicles, the University uses a local Exxon station or dealership. All vehicles are checked in and out with the

person using the car for travel. Cars are not loaned out for personal use. The station invoices the University for gas, oil changes, and other vehicle maintenance.

Educational equipment includes science equipment and IS equipment. The University uses [ENV Services](#) to certify its seven fume hoods and two biosafety cabinets. ENV Services has been used every year, but service was not performed in 2016 due to scheduling conflicts.

The University uses [Precision Microscope Sales](#) to calibrate our microscopes. The University has also been trying to purchase two microscopes each year to replace the outdated ones which can no longer be repaired due to parts unavailability. Parts for the microscopes are being scavenged for the time being.

Information technology equipment is addressed below in Standard 2.G.5.

2.G.5 Consistent with its mission, core themes, and characteristics, the institution has appropriate and adequate technology systems and infrastructure to support its management and operational functions, academic programs, and support services, wherever offered and however delivered.

Significant improvement has been made in physical infrastructure and computing resources. Fiber optic cabling has been installed to connect all building and internal switch locations on campus and all campus intelligent switching locations are up to date with a new Cisco power over Ethernet standard. Included in these networking upgrades is the tie-in of two campus resident apartments and a new dorm building onto the campus network, providing secure high-speed internet access and Wi-Fi service to resident students. Internet redundancy and fail-safe was achieved by installing a second internet pipeline onto campus from another provider. These improvements have enabled the campus to implement a new VOIP/UCC communication system, phasing out the obsolete analog telephone system.

IS ServiceDesk hired one additional support technician, a network/UCC analyst, and increased two additional student workers to provide support for end users. Policies of standardization for both hardware and software have been implemented to provide a more manageable and consistent campus-computing environment.

2.G.6 The institution provides appropriate instruction and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators in the effective use of technology and technology systems related to its programs, services, and institutional operations.

The faculty receives additional technology instruction through new faculty orientation, Learning Management System (LMS) Training, and TEC Training. Faculty Development includes the employee instruction as above and instruction specific training. Learning Management System training has been included in several faculty development sessions. Learning Management System videos are also available on the web page to faculty and students. IT also responds to individual faculty member requests for assistance.

First Day Orientation for Faculty and Staff has been improved by streamlining processes and documentation. Single Sign On services for user accounts has simplified account management and user experience. IS Services has been working with University of Providence leadership on improvements in communication and training for faculty, staff, and students. Whenever possible, new or upgraded software systems on campus has included training from the

venders. The position of Director of Instructional Design was created and located in the Faculty Office Suite in order to provide more direct and accessible assistance to the University's faculty.

2.G.7 Technological infrastructure planning provides opportunities for input from its technology support staff and constituencies who rely on technology for institutional operations, programs, and services.

The University has sought faculty, staff, and student collaboration as well as externally commissioned input for technology infrastructure planning. The Director of Informational Technology Services meets weekly with the Academic Dean to review faculty concerns, and holds open roundtable discussions with students on occasion. During the planning phase of the Technology Enhanced Classroom (TEC) the faculty participated in selecting desired equipment, programs, and function. The Director of Informational Technology Services meets weekly with other department directors in a staff meeting to ensure communication and collaboration.

The University has also received input from Eduserve and Providence Health and Services. The reports generated by these groups have served as the foundation for the University IS Status Report 2010-2013.

2.G.8 The institution develops, implements, and reviews regularly a technology update and replacement plan to ensure its technological infrastructure is adequate to support its operations, programs, and services.

IS Services has continued with the previously scheduled lifecycle – replacing between 50-100 systems per year. At this rate, all systems will be replaced within a five-year cycle. Network infrastructure, including switches, cables, and servers, are replaced or expanded based on required need, technology changes, and/or equipment failures.

Standard 3 - Planning and Implementation

The institution engages in ongoing, participatory planning that provides direction for the institution and leads to the achievement of the intended outcomes of its programs and services, accomplishment of its core themes, and fulfillment of its mission. The resulting plans reflect the interdependent nature of the institution's operations, functions, and resources. The institution demonstrates that the plans are implemented and are evident in the relevant activities of its programs and services, the adequacy of its resource allocation, and the effective application of institutional capacity. In addition, the institution demonstrates that its planning and implementation processes are sufficiently flexible so that the institution is able to address unexpected circumstances that have the potential to impact the institution's ability to accomplish its core theme objectives and to fulfill its mission

3.A– Institutional Planning

The University of Providence used a process of self-reflection based on data and previous NWCCU responses to guide action planning. This allowed the University to identify both strengths and areas needing attention. While a strategic plan of action was the initial goal, the Leadership Team determined that an [Operational Improvement Plan \(OIP\)](#) was necessary as the foundation for future planning.

The initiatives of the OIP were completed in the summer of 2017, and planning moved to providing financial stability and sustainability for the University through the [University of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#) designed in collaboration with the University's corporate sponsor, Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH). As the [Expansion Roadmap](#) shows, the progression of planning covered numerous issues brought to light during the work of the OIP and led the University forward in action planning into the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) which has [specific metrics](#) designed for assessment and accountability throughout implementation of the Strategy Execution.

Throughout this process, a [University-wide academic assessment plan](#) was also being implemented with faculty through Taskstream/TK20 to provide consistent academic data stream for course, program and institutional assessment. This in turn is [aligned with the Strategic Plan Pillars](#).

3.A.1 - The institution engages in ongoing, purposeful, systematic, integrated, and comprehensive planning that leads to fulfillment of its mission. Its plans are implemented and made available to appropriate constituencies.

In August 2015, the University launched a study to pick up where its sun setting Strategic Plan was ending in order to evaluate the reality of both its success and challenges, and also to decide upon the logical and necessary next steps for its desired future. A successful Strategic Plan must be built on a strong foundation with identified success measures and accountabilities in order to provide data-informed direction to the University. Prior to creating a Strategic Plan, the University developed a [2-year Operational Improvement Plan \(OIP\)](#) to provide such a foundation. This OIP sets in motion the priority work ahead for the University, its Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students work needed before a strategic plan could be designed. Through prioritization of immediate direction and efforts for the University by the

[Strategic Planning Committee](#), seven initiatives within the OIP intended to target action steps toward specific university, program and service outcomes were determined:

1. Develop the personnel, the infrastructure and a culture of planning and assessment
2. Enhance a foundation of faith-based education and community in the Catholic heritage
3. Prioritize the academic mission and focus on student learning outcomes
4. Transform operations to support financial health and responsibility, and optimize resource opportunities
5. Build facilities and infrastructure for growth and sustainability
6. Build a culture of open communication and an environment that meets the needs of the community
7. Develop a strategic enrollment and retention plan to help guide University operations and decision making

Instituted in 2016, the management of the OIP provided information on progress through monthly updates on quarterly action steps which were shared with the University. A [summary of the OIP updates](#) through spring 2017 was maintained until a change of leadership within the office of Academic Affairs. Long-term planning continued evidenced by the [University Expansion 2017 Roadmap](#) which guided and recorded the University's progress.

Leadership met with Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH) and developed a [University of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#) detailing the collaboration between the two entities for financial stability and sustainability. This plan was approved by PSJH in May 2017. In Summer 2017, the seven Initiatives of the OIP were completed, and the Leadership Team began meeting in August to begin work on the University's [5-Year Strategic Plan](#).

Five Pillars for this plan developed in August provide specific strategic intent through a macro outcome for each with specific outcomes. These outcomes have identified [metrics](#) for accountability. The Strategic Plan was approved by the [Board on December 1, 2017](#). The five Pillars and their strategic intents are:

1. Academic Excellence - Academic excellence is the primary pursuit for all students, faculty and staff. Without exception, we uphold the highest standards across all programs.
2. Student Experience - Students undergo a distinctive and transformative experience that guides them to discover and pursue their lifetime calling to make the world a better place
3. Mission Alignment - Mission is the lifeblood that inspires and propels us forward together
4. Market Positioning - We are recognized as a world class Catholic university, known for both an innovative, relevant liberal arts curriculum as well as a top tier health professions school
5. Organizational Effectiveness - The University is operationally efficient, financially healthy, and delivering on sustainable growth

The highest priority of the Strategic Plan is that it is student-centric: the students are the main focus of the University. This is reflected in the students' University of Providence experience, their learning, their spiritual growth, and the relationships they develop and maintain for a lifetime of learning.

The Strategic Plan clearly defines Mission alignment, financial planning and sustainability, organizational effectiveness, higher retention and graduation rates, and closer collaborations between the two schools (SLA&S and SHP). This plan sets a clear and obtainable path for the

University for the foreseeable future. Both the OIP and the 5-Year Strategic Plan highlight the Mission by the very nature of the Core Themes.

Please refer to this report's section on Standard 1.A and 1.B, "*Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations*," for detailed information on Mission and Core Theme integration.

Also, see Standard 3.B.1 for details on the alignment of Core Themes to the 7 Initiatives of the Operational Improvement Plan and to the 5 Pillars of the 5-Year Strategic Plan.

3.A.2 The institution's comprehensive planning process is broad-based and offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies.

Providing opportunity for all members of the University of Providence community to participate in institutional planning is a priority. Both the OIP and the 5-Year Strategic Plan outlined in Standard 3.A.1 had numerous focus groups, teams, committees, the staff and faculty, students, alumni, the local community and the Board of Trustees all have participating roles with focus on the broad-based planning of the University.

Other university teams and committees may vary in size (typically around 15 members) with the optimum size supporting completion of the tasks set before them and providing communication links to their respective groups. Chairs and heads of committees are also typically members of the Leadership team whose responsibility it is to distill the many voices of the institution's committees and teams into workable communication and plans for improvement.

During his first year, the President held town hall meetings with faculty, staff and students to both solicit feedback on pertinent institutional events and changes, but also to keep constituents apprised of improvement efforts. Town Hall meetings are intended to continue as are [periodic updates from the President \(example\)](#). The flow of communication and open-door policies have provided improved understanding across campus of the direction new leadership was guiding the institution. The President actively engages with the local community and Providence Health St. Joseph, promoting the University locally and internally to be the University of the local community and PHSJ.

Work on the 5-Year Strategic Plan approved by the Board on December 1, 2017, involved a wide range of constituents for guidance, input and support. The Strategic Plan included the following:

- The local community was involved through presentations during rebranding events about the "big, bold, fast and excellent" changes coming to the University.
- The [University of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#) was designed for an obtainable path to growth and sustainability.
- In the Fall 2017, a draft version of a [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) was produced with five pillars of action covering academic excellence, student experience, market positioning and organizational effectiveness, all centered on the University's mission. This draft was presented at the fall 2017 Convocation.
- At least seven Strategy and Organizational Direction Sessions were held throughout the fall for faculty and staff to provide feedback regarding the Strategic Plan.
- On October 26, 2017, the Chamber of Commerce was hosted to an event highlighting the building projects for the University that will also play a central role within the community of Great Falls.

- The completed 5-Year Strategic Plan was [presented to the Board](#). It was [approved by the board on December 1, 2017](#). Implementation is to be coordinated by the University Strategic Implementation Group consisting of both UP and PSJH members. The University Expansion Group was disbanded with the approval of the Strategic Plan. An [announcement](#) was shared university wide regarding the approval.
- During December, six public [Strategy Execution Forums](#) and numerous separate meetings were held by the [Vice President – Strategy and Administration, University of Providence](#) to give more information regarding the Strategic Plan as [approved by the Board on December 1, 2017](#), and still offering opportunity for staff and faculty to provide feedback, ask questions and make comments.
- The [metrics](#) of the new Strategic Plan cover improved recruitment and retention growth, improved graduation rates, sustainable financial planning based on partnering with PHSJ, infrastructure development and capital investments.
- Throughout this process, numerous town hall meetings, information sessions, university and community presentations, and email updates were held or provided to faculty, staff, and the community about the development and now the execution of the strategic plan, the pro forma and the metrics.

The collaborative nature of the planning includes PSJH/UP in:

- [Pro Forma Planning Team](#) – development of the Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan for financial growth and stability
- [PSJH Steering Committee](#) – oversees the investment
- [5-Year Strategic Planning team](#) was a collaborative work between PSJH and the University, many of the participants with [dual roles](#).
- [Strategy Implementation Team](#) –members are comprised of both PSJH and University personnel
- The [metrics](#) are a means to maintain accountability throughout this collaborative effort

Other active committees and Teams include:

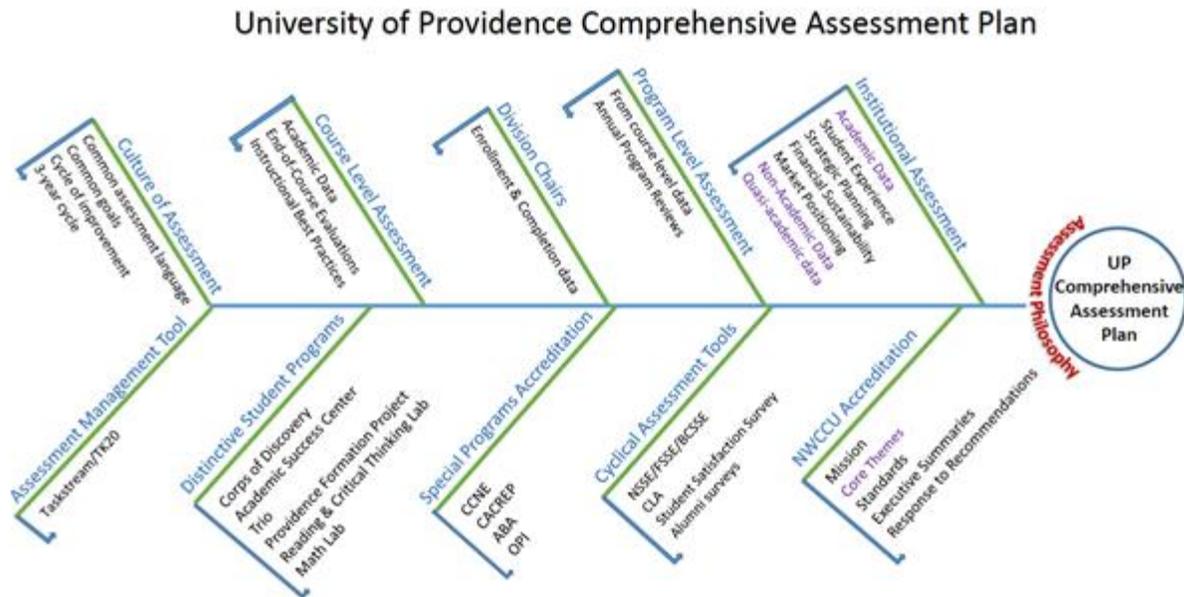
- The Leadership Team
- The Curriculum Committee
- The Campus Advisory Committee
- The Staff Advisory Committee
- The Faculty Committee

As part of institutional improvement, the [Stevens Strategy](#) group, working in collaboration with [numerous review teams](#) with a [specific charge](#) providing an opportunity for concepts to be shared, reviewed and is revising all institutional policies. The process will provide effective policies to serve the university well, including governance, personnel, campus community, Faculty, academics, students, business and finance, and public relations.

With consistent leadership after three years of change, the University now has an updated and recognized brand, consistent messaging about goals and expected outcomes, continuity in traditional Catholic education while embracing cutting edge professional career paths in the medical field, and forward-looking strategic and financial plans in place to guide the University into the next decade. Work is underway to also more closely align the School of Liberal Arts and Science with the School of Health Professions to strengthen the University as well as a comprehensive assessment plan to inform decision making more clearly.

3.A.3 - The institution’s comprehensive planning process is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate fulfillment of its mission.

A variety of assessment tools have been used regularly by the University over time. Each has a specific focus and use. Results from these assessments were utilized to inform the development of both the [Operational Improvement Plan](#)’s development and the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#).



Central to all Core Themes, the University uses and reports data from these numerous assessments and tools. These various tools indicate how the University supports student progress through their chosen majors, the development of their qualities as accountable individuals, and student progress toward career or continued advanced degrees, special accreditation progress and more recently, institution-wide assessment of course, program and institutional academic outcomes. A goal for the University is to have a more holistic approach to gathering, using, sharing and reporting assessment data as currently, this practice is not university wide.

Regarding mission fulfillment, the following are regularly used for evaluating fulfillment of our Mission:

- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), i.e. - cyclical self-assessments, peer review reports and annual reporting
- [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System \(IPEDS\)](#), i.e. – admissions, enrollment, retention, transfer, graduation rates, demographics, financial aid, etc.
- [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE), i.e. – Academic Challenge, Learning with Peers, Experiences with Faculty, Campus Environment, and High Impact Projects
- University [Program Review](#) which includes financial viability of programs

Evaluation also includes University-designed assessments such as:

- [Student Satisfaction Surveys](#)
- [Employee Experience Survey](#)
- [End-of-Course Evaluations](#) – qualitative and quantitative information with qualitative data evaluated through [Leximancer®](#) showing emergent concepts and themes depicted in a social network.
- Recruiting schedules as well as numerous smaller studies of data as needed utilizing Banner information
- [Alumni engagement](#) through alumni surveys, tracking, and an Alumni Directory
- Alumni and philanthropy activities through projects, correspondence and mailings as well as distinctive events such as "[Taste of Montana](#)", the "[Phonathon](#)" and other alumni and [philanthropy activities](#)
- [Taskstream/TK20](#) development of a university-wide Assessment Plan (Standard 4.A3) and training on the development of a culture of assessment for use by faculty to organize, align, assess and report course and program level data was developed through Initiative #1 of the Operational Improvement Plan with 2017 being a transitional year as faculty learns to use these tools. Use of an accountability management tool with status reporting and a learning assessment tool will provide data for University planning as it moves from the Operational Improvement Plan of 2016 – 2018 and into the Strategic Plan of 2018 – 2022.
- Financial data and information are prepared regularly for financial statements and audits. The University has moved to a long-term model based on financial data with PSJH. This, too, will provide information for both support and fulfillment of the Mission. Please see Standard 2F for financial planning and implementation.

Looking toward future sustainability of the University, leadership from both UP and PSJH have worked closely to develop a comprehensive plan, both for finance and expansion of the University. The [University Expansion Roadmap](#) was developed and continues to be used to monitor and guide comprehensive planning.

The [University of Providence Pro Forma Five-Year Financial Plan](#) has been provides financial guidance through 2022. This document is updated continuously through the Vice President of Finance office. Financial goal setting for sustainability include data on:

- Student and institution recruitment, enrollment, tuition, fees, and profiles
- facilities and infrastructure investment
- ability to conduct capital investment
- career track projections from Providence Health Services
- a philanthropy strategy for sustainable endowment for student scholarship and capital needs.

The direction of this plan includes the University's Core Themes throughout toward fulfillment of UP's mission. (Please see Standard 3.B.1 for Core Theme alignment details to both the OIP and the Strategic Plan). The Core Themes are integrated in the [metrics](#) to gauge attainment of "learning to live and make a living" as they measure the University's' progress through the stages of strategic planning that have been developed with the mission at its center.

To enhance the gathering, analysis and use of data, the Ellucian Banner Cloud and Revitalization project to update the University's Banner system was undertaken in May of 2017 as part of Initiative #5 of the Operational Improvement Plan. Numerous major work streams were undertaken in this project provides new tools such as DegreeWorks and Touchnet to

support students, improve the students' experience and make data more accessible across the University. For more information, please access the [Ellucian Banner Update Report](#).

Physical plant and IS services used feedback from students, staff and faculty to energize the need for updated facilities, student housing and technology infrastructure. As part of the rebranding efforts and the investment of PSJH in the University, a building program has begun which includes a new University Center with a Student Welcome Center and state-of-the-art technology classrooms. In fall 2017, the University continued a technology upgrade across the university.

Please see Standard 2G within this report for more detailed information on the resources and capacity of both the Physical Plant and Infrastructure.

3.A.4 The institution's comprehensive plan articulates priorities and guides decisions on resource allocation and application of institutional capacity.

Please see Standards 2.A through 2.G for details on Resource and Capacity.

The University has managed resource allocation and evaluation of capacity differently under new leadership. Throughout, strategic resource allocation was critical in light of declining enrollment and varying retention rates. In summer 2017, the University completed the action steps for the seven Initiatives of the [Operational Improvement Plan](#) (OIP) begun in 2015. The two-year OIP was started under interim leadership to prepare for a strategic plan which would include accountabilities and [metrics](#) to measure success over a five-year period. The [5-year Strategic Plan](#) completed in July 2017 articulates a clear vision, strategic intent, and outcomes across five academic pillars (academic excellence, student experience, mission alignment, market positioning, and organizational effectiveness).

Long-term planning under current leadership has set both resource allocation and application of capacity on a specific plan in coordination with PSJH for the University to become self-sustaining within three years provided fall-to-fall retention rates are realized, enrollment growth in net full-time students occurs and expansion with the School of Health Professions in 2018 is achieved. In spring 2017, plans to target recruiting out of state became fundamental as the University competes locally with other smaller colleges and universities in the state for the small numbers of Montana students that are not attending larger state institutions. The University exceeded its anticipated retention rate to begin the 2017 – 2018 academic year, and felt this a success in that it signals a renewed interest in students remaining with the University.

In Spring 2017, plans to target recruiting out of state became fundamental as the University competes locally with other smaller colleges and universities in the state for the small numbers of Montana students that are not attending larger state institutions. A recruitment strategy was also determined to offer an incentive to families of PSJH and its affiliates.

Supporting these critical goals necessary for success, the Strategic Plan integrated the three Core Themes. The plan also included metrics and targets by year for the university as a whole and for the two schools – the [School of Health Professions](#) and the [School of Liberal Arts and Science](#). The [metrics](#) and targets serve to hold the leadership, faculty and staff accountable for shared strategic commitments. Examples include targets for net operating income, retention, graduation rate, and engagement.

The [University of Providence Pro Forma and 5-Year Plan](#) was designed in 2017 with the corporate sponsor, PSJH, to provide financial guidance. The [5 - Year Strategic Plan](#) went through a rigorous faculty and staff review period from August – October 2017. This plan with measurable outcomes is the central comprehensive plan for determining application of resources and capacity applications. is

A new [Strategy Implementation Team](#) provides rigorous project management support in both Primary work streams, based on the 5-Year Strategic Plan pillars, as well as infrastructure needs for IS, Real Estate, and policies. This team is the application engine that ensures the strategic commitments are met and resources are allocated appropriately. The 5-Year strategy [metrics](#) and targets highlighted above provide the measures for success for this group.

3.A.5 The Institution’s planning Includes emergency preparedness and contingency planning for continuity and recover of operations should catastrophic events significantly interrupt normal institutional operations.

Response

Both short and long-term catastrophic events are planned for by the University. The current plans on file will remain in force until they are replaced by the new Crisis Management Plan that is being developed through [Stevens Strategy](#), a consultant group, as part of our University-wide policy review and revision.

The current Crisis Management Policy is stated as follows.

“The policy director on the University of Great Falls [University of Providence] Campus is the President. The policy director (or designee) has ultimate responsibility for decisions that reference campus evacuations, campus closure, postponements and resumptions. Designees are appointed by the President.”

For consistent information, a “Facing Specific Emergencies” information flip-book was designed in 2015 and intended for dissemination across campus in classrooms, although from year to year with a leadership change this was not sustained.

The current [Emergency Response and Evacuation Procedures](#) were developed in August 2016 and were designed to be continually updated. The University tests the emergency response and evacuation procedures randomly through the academic year. Announced ALICE drills are conducted once each semester in conjunction with the Great Falls Police Department. The University ALICE procedure is outlined in the [Campus Crime and Security Report Fall 2017](#) (Page 43). ALICE procedures and records of training attendance are available through the security office. Alice [Posters](#) and [infographics](#) are posted throughout campus. Announced or unannounced fire drills are held in conjunction with the Great Falls Fire Department. Emergency response and evacuation procedures are posted near the exits of all classrooms, offices, and common areas.

Documentation of emergency response drills are available through the Office of the President, the Chief of Security, and the Student Development Office. Up-to-date certificates for Campus Security, emergency response drills, and emergency response training are maintained by the Office of the President and the Chief of Security.

The University of Providence employs a [Chief of Security](#) who is normally available during regular business hours, and employs its own security guards that provide twenty-four-hour

security coverage. Security guards are available on campus at all times and can be contacted by phone at 406-791-5911. The security office is located in the McLaughlin Center. University Security cooperates with the Great Falls Police Department or proper authorities in the case of informing the community of off-campus situations that may warrant an emergency response. Our Campus Security Office provides updates and security training such as the 2017 ALICE (Alert/Lockdown/Inform/Counter/Evacuate) training in case of such incidents as an active shooter on campus. Fire preparedness, including training to use fire extinguishers properly were also conducted in 2017.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, timely warnings are required in the case of an immediate threat to the health and safety of students or employees occurring on campus, or within the vicinity of the University, if it is determined that the incident may pose an ongoing threat. Timely warnings are posted on the University's website, and disseminated to faculty, staff and students through the [Campus Alerts Emergency Notification System](#) and through the University Email system. Our Campus Security Office provides updates and [security training](#) such as ongoing [ALICE](#) (Alert/Lockdown/Inform/Counter/Evacuate) training in case of such incidents as an active shooter on campus. See also Incident [Report Form](#) and [ALICE posters](#) distributed campus wide.

The University carries Continuity of Business Insurance itself and with coverage through PSJH, so that the financial necessities will still be in place. In the case of campus closure for an emergency, plans have been made to return to normal campus activities as quickly as possible through:

- continued academics through our Learning Management System (LMS)
- provided Health and mental support through the on-campus licensed counselor's office
- FERPA protocol regarding parental contact regulations during an emergency for students under age 18

Under the proposed model from the [Stevens Group](#), the information provided is more organized and more detailed. The proposed plan covers other specific emergency situations and provides improved communication plans, all which will serve to provide a safer, better prepared environment to return more smoothly and quickly to normal institution operations.

Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 22 and 23

Eligibility Requirement 22 – Student Achievement: The institution identifies and publishes the expected learning outcomes for each of its degree and certificate programs. The institution engages in regular and ongoing assessment to validate student achievement of these learning outcomes.

Institutional planning for student achievement expects student learning outcomes to be aligned with course and program objectives, the Core Themes as applicable, and degree/certificate requirements where indicated. The University publishes the expected student learning outcomes for each degree and certification program in the catalog and on the [University Web site](#). Degree requirements including Core Curriculum expectations are provided. The University's [4-Year Plans](#) within the [Argo Guarantee](#) provide a clear pathway to completion of programs. Information for the [Argo Advantage](#) is available on the Web site. This alignment is also built into the [Taskstream/TK20](#) accountability management and learning assessment programs.

With the advent of the [Operational Improvement Plan](#), Initiative #1, it follows that the University would develop an Assessment Team. The purpose of the proposed Assessment Team is to optimize the University assessment plan for the efficacy of University programs. This proposal has been made. Time being a crucial element, the introduction of a [culture of assessment](#) along with instituting the use of an accountability management tool through Taskstream TK/20 took precedence. Training for Taskstream/TK20 was begun in 2016, and continued throughout the 2017 – 2018 academic year. Through this assessment focus, the institution is entering into a culture of regular and continuous assessment to validate achievement of student learning outcomes for use in planning and improving programs.

Through gathering, analysis, use and reporting of student learning outcome data and program data from across both schools within the University, and eventually from quasi- and non-academic programs, the University's planning and decision making will be more informed. (See Standards 2.C.9, 2.C.10, 2.C.11, and 4.A.3)

Eligibility Requirement 23. Institutional Effectiveness - The institution systematically applies clearly defined evaluation and planning procedures, assesses the extent to which it achieves its mission and core themes, uses the results of assessment to effect institutional improvement, and periodically publishes the results to its constituencies. Through these processes it regularly monitors its internal and external environments to determine how and to what degree changing circumstances may impact the institution and its ability to ensure its viability and sustainability.

The University uses a range of assessments to estimate the extent to which it achieves its Mission and Core Themes. More recently, the mainstay of assessment, other than the accreditation process, included a university [Student Satisfaction Survey](#), [Employee Experience Survey](#) conducted by Willis Towers Watson, and the use of the [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#). The first use of the [Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement \(BCSSE\)](#) instrument was in fall of 2017. For the first time since 2011, the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) will be conducted in the spring of 2018. Program reviews that were conducted on a rotating schedule will be conducted annually beginning in the 2017-2018 academic year. [End-of-Course Evaluations](#) are used regularly to inform faculty individually and collectively.

While it has been unclear to what extent the results were routinely shared in the past, the Assessment Plan (Standard 4.A.3) includes the feedback of data to appropriate constituents. A goal is to make feedback a habitual part of the assessment process through events such as Convocation, faculty meetings, leadership meetings, Board meetings, Division meetings and eventually in assessment team meetings. Use of the University Web site to share data highlights is a goal of the Assessment Plan.

What follows in Standards 3.B, 4.A and 4.B will provide more defined information on Core Themes, assessment and Improvement planning.

3.B - Core Theme Planning

3.B.1 Planning for each core theme is consistent with the institutions comprehensive plan and guides the selection of programs and services to ensure they are aligned with and contribute to accomplishment of the core theme’s objectives.

Note: Regarding the Core Themes, it is apparent that they overlap and intertwine throughout this report and across the University, appearing to be repetitive. To mitigate repetitive response, various examples of the Core Themes in planning have been used to give a broader view of their application and are not the only example of Core Themes in each area. Each standard in 3.B, 4.A and 4.B has its initial information followed by Core Theme alignment descriptions as requested.

Please see Standard 1A and 1B of this report for detailed information on the Mission and Core themes.

The University concluded its two-year [Operational Improvement Plan](#) which has as its foundation the [Mission, Core Themes, Core Values, and the 3 Cs](#) of the University in summer of 2017. There were seven Initiatives within the OIP, each reflecting the Core Themes, which were:

1. Develop the personnel, the infrastructure, and a culture of planning and assessment
2. Enhance a foundation of a faith-based education and community in the Catholic heritage
3. Prioritize the academic mission and focus on student learning outcomes
4. Transform operations to support financial health and responsibility, and optimize resource opportunities
5. Build facilities and infrastructure for growth and sustainability
6. Build a culture of open communication and an environment that meets the needs of the community.
7. Develop a strategic enrollment and retention plan to help guide University operations and decision making

The alignment of this planning with the Core Themes is evident:

Operational Improvement Plan (OIP) Initiative Alignment to Core Themes		
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 <i>living and making a living.</i>		
Core Theme # - “Seeking to Understand	Core Theme #2 – “Living in Community”	Core Theme #3 – “Searching Together”
Initiative #2 - Enhance a foundation of a faith-based education and community in the Catholic heritage	Initiative #2 - Enhance a foundation of a faith-based education and community in the Catholic heritage	Initiative #1 - Develop the personnel, the infrastructure, and a culture of planning and assessment
Initiative #3 - Prioritize the academic mission and focus on student learning outcomes	Initiative #4 - Transform operations to support financial health and responsibility, and optimize resource opportunities	Initiative #4 - Transform operations to support financial health and responsibility, and optimize resource opportunities

Initiative #7 - Develop a strategic enrollment and retention plan to help guide University operations and decision making	Initiative #7 - Develop a strategic enrollment and retention plan to help guide University operations and decision making	Initiative #5 - Build facilities and infrastructure for growth and sustainability
		Initiative #6 - Build a culture of open communication and an environment that meets the needs of the community.

The five Pillars of the [5-year Strategic Plan](#) also draw directly from the Core Themes and continued to be developed with Core Theme planning in mind. Centered in the Strategic plan is the University of Providence Mission alignment which is built upon the Core Themes, the University Values and the 3Cs of the University. (For more detail, please see Standard 1.B of this report.) The five Pillars are:

1. Academic Excellence - Academic excellence is the primary pursuit for all students, faculty and staff. Without exception, we uphold the highest standards across all programs
2. Student experience - Students undergo a distinctive and transformative experience that guides them to discover and pursue their lifetime calling to make the world a better place
3. Mission Alignment - Mission is the lifeblood that inspires and propels us forward together
4. Market Positioning- We are recognized as a world class Catholic university, known for both an innovative, relevant liberal arts curriculum as well as a top tier health professions school
5. Organizational Effectiveness. - The university is operationally efficient, financially healthy, and delivering on sustainable growth

The macro outcomes of the Pillars of the [University's 5-Year Strategic Plan](#) provide the main information regarding alignment within the plan. The specific outcomes detailing these macro outcomes are support and monitored through the aligned [metrics](#) of the plan, providing continued focus, measures and accountability throughout implementation.

The following paragraphs describe the alignment of the Pillars with the Core Themes:

Pillar #1 - Academic Excellence: *“Academic excellence is the primary pursuit for all students, faculty and staff. Without exception, we uphold the highest standards across all programs.”*

Academic Excellence is at the heart of Core Theme #1: “Seeking to Understand.” The objectives of this theme speak to academic and personal growth for student development. First, as a learner in pursuit of academic excellence, students strive to attain a strong knowledge base. Through gaining knowledge in this pursuit, students develop competence to further their ability to live full and rewarding lives in order to become productive members of society.

Second, on a personal level, academic excellence guides students on the journey of knowing themselves, and in doing so, students develop the personal quality of character, recognizing and accepting personal accountability to themselves, to society and to God. This two-fold

pursuit, academic and personal, brings together reason and faith to meet the mission by obtaining an education for living and making a living.

Further, Core Theme #2: “Living in Community” is a natural outgrowth of Academic Excellence as students with strong academic and character foundations are independent thinkers and not followers of popular opinion or trends.

Core Theme #3: “Seeking Together” is also addressed as Academic Excellence in enhanced through student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction. Learning is frequently a shared endeavor; and faculty who seek professional and personal growth are role models for life-long learning.

Pillar #2 – Student Experience: *“Students undergo a distinctive and transformative experience that guides them to discover and pursue their lifetime calling to make the world a better place.”*

The students learning experience is central to the University. Core Theme #1: “Seeking to Understand” is the main reason students are at a university, whether it is to understand themselves, others, the world, a career choice, or to decide what their personal calling is, based on their learning direction. The programs offered at the University of Providence provide a transformative experience through development of the key qualities of character, competence and commitment.

Core Theme #2: “Living in Community” is most often addressed in the student experience at the University of Providence through High Impact Projects and Service Learning as found within courses, but also in distinctive programs such as the Corps of Discover and Providence Formation Project.

These projects also reflect Core Theme #3: “Seeking Together” occurs as students form life-long bonds with peers, faculty and community with whom they share these unique experiences.

Pillar #3 – Mission Alignment: *“Mission is the lifeblood that inspires and propels us forward together.”*

All three Core Themes lead directly to the Mission: *“As an expression of the teaching mission of Jesus Christ, the mission of the University of Great Falls [Providence] is to provide students with the opportunity to obtain a liberal education for **living and for making a living.**”*

The University brings together reason and faith through the three Core Themes to seek truth via a foundation of Academic Excellence (Core Theme #1) provided through a distinctive Student Experience (Core Theme #2) and also through learning together with faculty and staff (Core Theme #3). By “seeking together,” “living in community,” and “searching together,” students develop the personal qualities of commitment, competence, and character - all traits that will serve them well as they learn about who they are and their purpose in life lived as an expression of the love of Jesus Christ through a lifetime of service to their communities – the Mission of living and making a living.

Pillar #4 – Market Positioning: *“We are recognized as a world class Catholic university, known for both an innovative, relevant liberal arts curriculum and a top tier health professions school.”*

Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH) set out to become *the* provider of career seekers for PSJH and the Catholic Health Association community. To do so, Core Theme #1: “Seek to Understand,” has many layers. The *university* seeks to understand how its planning must provide the best academic structure to prepare individuals for this market. *Program* planning is developed for *students* to more fully understand the integration of learning for either a career path or toward advanced degrees. Understanding market positioning requires full knowledge of the other four pillars of the Strategic Plan for mission fulfillment.

Core Theme #2: “Living in Community” is reflected in the University’s relationship with PSJH to become the premier academic pipeline for the Catholic Health Association community. Through much thought, planning and partnering with PSJH, the University has not waited for someone else to become this provider, but has developed its own trend in tandem with PSJH to develop a career path model for student success.

This close relationship between the University and PSJH is the epitome of Core Theme #3: “Searching together.” Together, the educational entity and the health career entity are searching together to provide a high quality educational experience for the benefit of students, faculty, and communities to further fulfill its mission.

Pillar #5 – Organizational Effectiveness: *“The university is operationally efficient, financially healthy, and delivering on sustainable growth.”*

Core Theme #3: “Searching Together” is reflected throughout the strategic outcomes of Pillar #5 for Organizational Effectiveness. The magnitude of such a Strategic Plan involves everyone at all levels, moving together to achieve the outcomes. Orchestrating the various aspects of Pillar #5 will require transparency of decisions based on data derived from within the organization and shared through honest, open communication. We all seek together when we are open to change for continuous development and improvement. The University will engage alumni who benefitted from their University of Providence education to support those future students with philanthropic legacies, and also encourage those who are currently at the University through alumni support. Further, for the entire organization to work together to accomplish this, we must also embrace Core Theme #1: “Seek to Understand” by being open to change (which is inevitable) while participating in continuous development and improvement. All must be willing to embrace Core Theme #2: “Living in Community” by courageously taking the next steps to the University’s future.

Core Theme Alignment

Core Theme 1: “Seeking to Understand”

Prior to the OIP and Initiative #1, the Core Themes were not widely distributed. While this is understood, the fact remains that the author of the Core Themes knew that they would be widely applicable. In “Seeking to Understand,” the central concept of student learning is what the university experience is all about. As a Catholic university, the University of Providence accepts and embodies “the teaching mission of Jesus Christ” through student learning and professional development of faculty. The measurable indicators of Core Theme 1 identify how students learn to know themselves and to develop a strong knowledge base academically.

The Core Themes were reintroduced in 2017, in the August 2017 training for [Taskstream/TK20](#) by including a means to align instructional planning with them, allowing for assessment of meeting the Core Themes in program planning, course planning and assessment of student learning outcomes. Further, the Core Curriculum planned for development of a strong knowledge base with Theology and Philosophy returning to the Core Curriculum in 2017 as the traditional Catholic education elements to further enhance students' learning about themselves and through character and faith.

Recognizing the deeper need for understanding by faculty and staff of the Core Themes, the new [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) was developed with the Mission and Core Themes embedded within the plan. Central to the Strategic Plan is Mission alignment from which the Core Themes flow. Pillar #1 of this plan places student learning first through Academic Excellence with [metrics](#) designed to provide a rigorous and measurable curriculum within a continuous cycle of development and improvement as the assessment plan unfolds.

Core Theme #2 – “Living in Community”

The University plans opportunities for students to meet life head on, thinking critically to live a life driven by informed thinking and conscience, not simply popular public opinion. This is defined in Standard 1.B as “living through use of one’s own moral judgement and religious convictions rather than relying only on public opinion or popular trends.” Living contrary to conventional norms of the times challenge one’s faith and reason, compelling the independent person to follow their moral judgement and educational foundation to make up their own minds. Albert Einstein, recognized as a very learned individual, is credited with the quote, “What is right is not always popular and what is popular is not always right.”

It is through living with conscience that students see beyond themselves and consider the plight of others, especially the vulnerable and the poor. It is through living in service that one becomes aware of self, and more fully aware of others. Programs at the University, such as [Corps of Discovery](#) and [Providence Formation Program](#), provide opportunities for students to engage life with its challenges and discomfort. Experiential learning involves thinking critically while also developing the commitment to those things in which a person believes and has learned, even if it is counter to popular public opinion.

Core Theme #3 – “Searching Together”

In planning for Core Theme #3, it is inherent for faculty and students to seek together to learn together. This is also true for staff to learn together within the learning community. This foundation comes from the Sisters of Providence – we all work together to facilitate learning.

The University has shared governance and appreciates the opportunity to hear the voice of staff, faculty, students and community on issues of the University. The President is involved in outside organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce. The University has numerous committees, councils and groups described in the [Faculty Handbook Section 1](#) Part 2.2.2 [as well as others](#) that are operating for a variety of purposes.

3.B.2 Planning for core theme programs and services guides the selection of contributing components of those programs and services to ensure they are aligned with and contribute to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of the respective programs and services.

Programs

Academic Programs

The University offers rigorous programs in the School of Health Professions and the School of Liberal Arts and Science. All academic programs follow a course development process from initial concept through implementation to ensure they meet academic and mission quality and align with the Core Themes appropriately. Further, the faculty is trained in [Quality Matters](#) to also provide certified online courses to meet expectations of rigor and quality to provide the student learning experience expected by the University. Great care has been taken to correctly write student learning outcomes with targeted assessment aligned with program objectives. The University has undertaken a comprehensive institutional assessment plan (Please see 4.A.3) to further inform course, program and institutional level regarding academic development, planning, implementation and review. The Core Themes are woven throughout the process to provide excellent academic programs and courses that results in high value student experiences.

Athletic Programs

Athletics at the University play an integral part in our learning community. The University is adding new opportunities through programs such as [Women's Wrestling](#), and future endeavors such as bringing [ice hockey](#) to the University [Argos](#) in the future as well. Leadership in the Athletics department supports a philosophy that the role athletics play in the University setting is a means to an end and not an end in itself. While community pride in the Argos and their athletic accomplishments are certainly part of Providence pride, we are also proud of our graduating student athletes, who overall have a [higher completion rate](#) than non-athletes. The athletics program transcends sports as a focus and becomes the catalyst for student athletes to understand that learning is about and for life. The bottom line of the Athletic Program is to grow responsible individuals congruent with building the 3 Cs of the University within each student athlete: Commitment, Character, and Competence. The 3 Cs are underscored in the indicators of the three Core Themes: "Seeking to Understand," "Living in Community," and "Searching Together."

For more details about the Core Themes and the 3 Cs of the University, please see Standard 1.B in this document.

Core Theme Alignment

Core Theme #1 – "Seeking to Understand"

As part of the ongoing effort to provide excellence in education through Core Theme #1 "Seeking to Understand," the University has a developed Core Curriculum, "*Lumen de Lumine*", or Light from Light, which has Core Curriculum objectives clearly aligned with the Mission of the University and common assessment of core objectives at course and institutional levels. Rooted in the humanities, science, philosophy, theology, history, and literature, this curriculum will challenge students to consider the world's most pressing questions. The Core Curriculum is common for all majors, campus-based and distance learning. The new Core Curriculum was developed by a faculty committee and approved by the faculty and the Board in early 2017, being implemented in 2017.

“*Lumen de Lumine*” is the entirety of the [Core Curriculum](#) following goals for all University of Providence graduates as students will:

1. Explain and apply the methods of inquiry in the disciplines of the liberal arts (humanities, sciences, and social sciences);
2. Demonstrate proficiency in active listening and communication to include oral, written, and technology;
3. Understand how Judeo-Christian thought develops through dialogue with a variety of cultures and philosophies;
4. Actively and respectfully engage with other persons, disciplines, cultures, religions and the environment;
5. Identify, evaluate, and apply knowledge of major moral and ethical theories;
6. Display skills and dispositions of “servant leadership.”

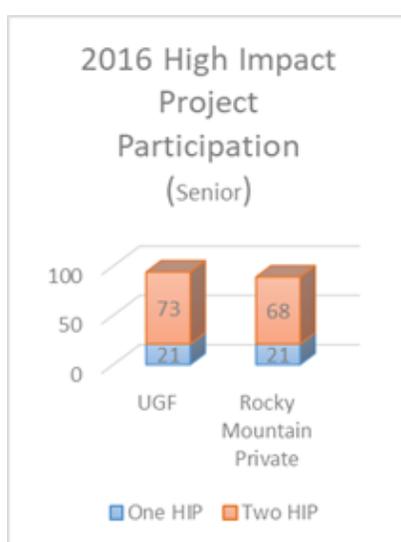
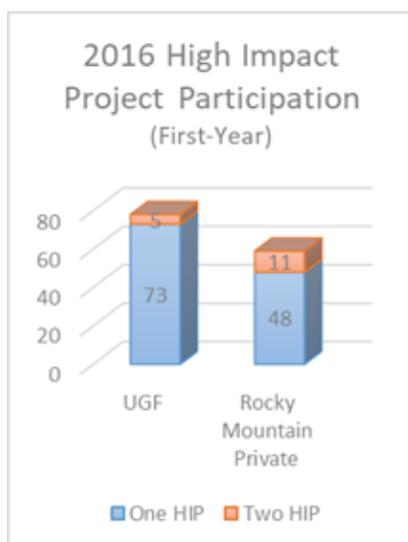
More information is available on the University Web site about this exciting addition to the [Core Curriculum](#).

Core Theme #2 – “Living in Community”

Both schools also address Core Theme # 2 – “living in community” by developing independent thought through a strong faith foundation, developing commitment in one’s thinking as one also learns to think critically in order to make up one’s own mind and not simply “go with the flow” of public or peer opinion. Combining faith and reason, students develop the capacity to live independent lives driven by conscience.

Core Curriculum in Theology and Philosophy

As part of the ongoing effort to align programs to the Core Themes, the University has developed Core Curriculum offerings in Theology and Philosophy, steeped in traditional Catholic education roots. Both program areas are intended to assist students in learning about themselves in terms of their own humanity and faith. The goals of these programs align with Core Theme #2 – “Living in Community” in both introspective and external views. This can often place an individual outside of the popular path of public opinion, through leading an independent life, of making thoughtful, conscientious decisions about how to live one’s life.



High Impact Projects (HIPs)

High Impact Projects are defined by the 2016 [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#) as “enriching educational experiences that can be life changing.” As part of the academic experience at the University, NSSE data indicated that student respondents in 2016 at the University valued and participated in local projects prompting the determination of

a goal that 100% of student respondents by senior year have participated in at least two High Impact Projects, of which Service Learning is only one.

Requiring additional time and commitment, such projects help students understand themselves (Core Theme #1) and commit to helping others (Core Theme #2), and ultimately work collaboratively to accomplish their goals (Core Theme #3). While “Study Abroad” programs have provided many students the opportunity to see life through the eyes of others, another High Impact Project in which the University could advance is “Research with Faculty”.

Faculty-Led [Study Abroad](#)

Faculty-led Study Abroad provides opportunities for all Core Themes, and is a challenging one as students and faculty enter into challenges abroad together. NSSE considers travel abroad to be High Impact Projects (HIPs) that “represent enriching educational experiences that can be life changing” and “require meaningful interactions with faculty and other students, (and) encourage(s) collaboration with diverse others.” It is recognized that engaging with others from different countries and cultures with different languages and customs strengthens learning in a way that no other opportunity can provide. The University provides opportunity for both service-learning Projects, Mission Trips and [Study Abroad](#) such as 2008- 2012 trips to China, England, France, Japan, Australia/New Zealand, Belize, Italy/Greece, Peru, Puerto Pinasco in Mexico in spring 2014 and a Mission trip to Guatemala in 2017 through Providence St. Joseph/Faith in Practice, with plans to return in 2018. Examples of recent Study Abroad opportunities include:

- May 2013: Coordinator of Study Abroad took 6 graduate and undergraduate student to England, France, and Italy. [Education First Tours](#) was the 3rd party provider who managed the trip. The spring semester of 2013, the Coordinator also ran a course that supported the trip including architecture, art, music, history of the places we would attend.
- May 2013: Chemistry faculty took students to Belize for a science-based trip. The 3rd party provider was [Kaya Responsible Travel](#)
- May 2015: Accounting faculty and Coordinator took 13 graduate and undergraduate students on a Scandinavian/Arctic Circle tour.
- May 2016: Chemistry faculty took 11 students on a Scandinavian/Arctic Circle tour.
- May 2017: Biology graduate participated in a dental clinic service learning project through [International Studies Abroad \(ISA\)](#), one of our 3rd party providers.
- May 2018: Chemistry Faculty plans a biology based trip to Peru/Cusco/Machu Picchu. She will use ay Responsible Travel again as the 3rd party provider.
- Faculty led trips to Morocco were provided in 2016 – 2017.

Core Theme #3 – “Searching Together”

The following three distinctive University program provide opportunities steeped in Core Theme #3 to partner with others in the learning experience as students, faculty, staff and community search together:

Distinctive University Programs

In today’s society, students often come to university-level education experiences without being fully prepared for the higher education experience and require support for success. Several programs within the University, aligned with Core Theme #3 – “Searching Together” by providing support for a variety of student needs. These programs are:

- [TRiO](#) – a federally funded program with the goal to increase college retention and graduation rates for income eligible students, first generation college students, Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search Students, and students with documented disabilities. Support for eligible students is provided through:
 - Academic support services
 - Tutoring
 - Cultural enrichment such as Native American activities
 - Financial aid counseling
 - Computerized self-assessments
 - Workshops
 - Disability services
 - Computer assistance
 - Leadership opportunities and
 - Supplement grant aid

- [The Writing and Critical Thinking Center](#) and the [Mathematics Center](#) provide individualized support for improved writing and mathematics achievement. Through scheduled or volunteer assistance or through an Academic Alert requirement, students have multiple formats for support. Transfer students and athlete students are scheduled for assistance automatically upon enrollment

- The [Academic Success Center](#) (ASC) connects students with the resources they need in order to thrive at the University. Students can be assigned to the ASC for assistance, but students can self-select to receive services. Certified counseling services are also available to support students. Support services include:
 - Stress management
 - Time management
 - Test Anxiety
 - Goal Setting
 - Transitioning from high school or another college/university
 - Campus referrals
 - Developing good study habits

- The [Core Curriculum, “Lumen de Lumine,”](#) Light from Light, furthers the exploration in the Core Curriculum through Integrated Learning Community (ILC) classes, a standout program for learning together. The University’s ILCs are courses which combine two or more academic disciplines. The courses are all built around a single focused theme and consider ethical as well as discipline specific issues. ILC courses are a required component of the University Core Curriculum but may also be offered in different disciplines for major requirements.

ILC courses are taught by professors with different areas of expertise, offering students a multifaceted learning experience. Course titles include “Magical Mystical Universe” (biology and theology), “Religion as a Business and Business as a Religion” (theology and business), and “Fraud, Lies and Deceit” (law and accounting). Students are encouraged to learn a subject with a broader perspective to draw more meaningful conclusions from the world around them.

Information on ILCs can be found in the Academic Catalog on pages xxix, xli, and 92. Please click the link, [examples of ILCs](#), for more details from three examples.

- The [Providence Formation Program](#) is a co-curricular, service-learning program based on the Providence mission and core values of respect, compassion, justice, excellence, and stewardship. With the help of student officers, the director uses a three-pronged approach of service, fellowship, and spiritual formation to realize the program mission. New to the Core Curriculum objectives are Service Learning, Global Awareness, Sustainability and Stewardship, Writing, and Communication, all supporting Core Theme #3 of “Searching Together.”
- [The Corps of Discovery](#) is a signature program required for all new full-time, first-year students who are pursuing their degrees on campus. The purpose of the program is to foster emotional, spiritual and physical development and a shared cohort bonding experience throughout many dimensions of university life.
- [The Veterans Support Center](#) is open to all veterans to assist with questions about Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) benefits, helping map out a course of study and a place to meet with other veterans. The office’s goal is to develop and grow relationships between the University of Providence and local veterans, National Guard, Malmstrom Air Force Base, active duty personnel and their families, and engage with area military and veteran organizations for connecting prospective veteran and active duty students and their dependents to educational opportunities at the University. The Veteran Support Center is located in Argo Central.

Academic Advising

As part of work by the 2017 Retention Team, academic advising is a critical element for student success. Advising must be accurate, timely, and consistent no matter who is doing the advising. This reflects Core Theme #3 – “Searching Together” in that all University members play a role in assisting learners to stay on the correct pathway of their academic journey. Faculty is trained in advising, and apprised of the most accurate resources in order to assist students. DegreeWorks through Banner can be used to accurately inform students at registration and when time students are considering a change that would impact their 4-year guarantee toward degree attainment. An [Advising Handbook](#) is also available for support.

Corps of Discovery

As a part of the [Corps of Discovery](#), students in fall 2017 began developing an individual e-portfolio highlighting their educational activities and success throughout their time at the University. This portfolio can in turn grow into their professional portfolio as they approach graduation to assist them in following their chosen career path or path to advanced academic pursuits. Further, the University, in tandem with Taskstream/TK20, will maintain the e-portfolio for longevity of the document to support alumni.

Enrollment Management

Through the efforts of the Retention Team reconvened in 2017, the Registrar’s office took under advisement suggestions to streamline the registration and enrollment processes for incoming students, reflecting the commitment for Core Theme #3 – “Searching Together.” The concept of

“one stop” registration included the training of academic advisors to provide an accurate and consistent message of advising to students.

3.B.3 Core theme planning is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate accomplishment of core theme objectives. Planning for program and services is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data that are used to evaluate achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of those programs and services.

Of the assessments that are conducted at the University, none will provide academic data as clearly and as thoroughly as the assessments that will result from the institution-wide academic Assessment Plan currently underway and in development. This goal began in 2016 with a [Taskstream Goal Assessment](#), and continues now with development of strongly written student learning outcomes that will be assessed in courses. Program assessment in an ongoing assessment cycle for continuous improvement is in its beginning stages with training in February 2018.

One stand-alone pilot was completed in 2015 – 2017 assisting a program toward specialized accreditation. The School of Liberal Arts and Science entered information during an implementation cycle the fall of 2016 and into 2017. In spring 2018, the School of Health Professions will join this culture and cycle of assessment.

The planning at course levels allows for mapping back for alignment to the Core Themes to develop consistent data streams. Seeking to Understand (Core Theme #1), “Living in Community” (Core Theme #2) and “Searching Together” (Core Theme #3) are all addressed through this endeavor to assess student learning outcomes across the University. Degree/certificate requirements, Program Objectives and Course Objectives are also available for mapping back for alignment in Taskstream.

Every two years, the School of Liberal Arts and Science conducts the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) and has since 2012, with freshman and senior students. Most recently it was completed in 2016, and the University will participate again in spring 2018. Many of the indicators and results of NSSE are directly aligned to the Core Themes and many are [aligned with NWCCU standards](#). The University also conducted a [Student Satisfaction Inventory \(SSI\)](#), the first time in 2016, with plans to continue this in spring 2018. The School of health professions regularly participates in [Educational Benchmarking, Inc.](#), with Health Professions students.

Core Theme #1 – Seeking to Understand

Program and Institution Assessment Cycles

The University is entering an era of a culture of assessment and data use based on a model of an Assessment Cycle for Continuous Improvement. Whether for academic or non-academic uses, the common language of assessment will be used whenever data informs planning or decision making. Please see Standard 4.A.3 in this report for detailed information on the institutional assessment philosophy and plan.



The Office of Academic Affairs completed a [goals assessment through Taskstream](#) in September of 2016, stating “We have no university-wide assessment collection system.” Having recognized this, a plan was instituted in Fall of 2016 to begin implementation of Taskstream for academic assessment and for specialized accreditation purpose. Goals established for implementation by Fall 2016 by the Vice President of Academic Affairs at that time were:

- Easy understanding of the entire assessment process
- Routine entry of data
- Routine analysis of data
- Routine reporting of data
- Compilation of sub-data into macro-data

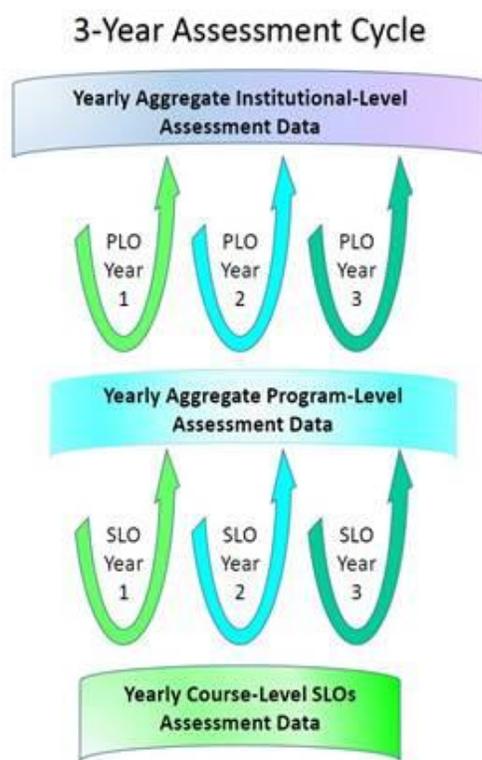
It is clearly recognized that an assessment cycle and common language is needed in both schools within the University. Thus, 2017 was an emergent year for training and implementing this need recognized in 2016. Through support from Taskstream/TK20, the first areas to address were faculty engagement and understanding, and special student support programs, which was accomplished during trainings in 2016 and 2017. For this emergent year, understanding the culture of assessment and learning the use of technology to implement institution-wide assessment began.

The assessment cycles for faculty to use are based on Program Objective Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) across a 3-year cycle of assessment, which include indicators for the Core Themes as well as degree/certificate requirements, program objectives and course objectives. Faculty determine Program Objectives and SLOs for focus for each of the three years of the cycle.

Learning to reverse designing key assessment tools to measure student achievement, including writing, projects, presentations and tests, students were assessed regularly beginning in fall semester 2017 in a “one course – one assessment” learning process for faculty. This will continue in Spring Semester 2018 with faculty selecting 20 3 courses to assess. Assessment data will be reported to the assistant deans for aggregating data into program level data at the end of Spring Semester 2018. This in turn informs aggregate institutional level assessment data. This process will be repeated annually with aggregated data pulled at the end of the academic year.

As academic year 2017 – 2018 was the emerging year for this process and the School of Health Professions will be included during spring semester, academic year 2018 – 2019 will be the benchmark year for this type of academic assessment.

Moving forward, information from all levels of assessment outcome reviews will inform planning for courses and programs, and will be used to assist the University in decision making about



program planning, course rotations and offerings. Highlights of instructional best practices will be celebrated, and areas for improvement will be supported.

Assessments for non-academic processes and programs are ongoing, but are housed in a variety of places. A goal beginning in fall 2018 will be to consolidate the locations for non-academic data within the accountability management tool for better accessibility through the development of self-study accounts to be used for monthly and annual reporting on activities and progress on projects. During this same time, the goal includes self-study accountability measures to also be started for quasi-academic programs such as Core of Discovery, TRiO, the Academic Success Center, Writing and Critical Thinking Center, etc.

The goal of the institution-wide assessment plan is first and foremost about student learning outcomes. To enhance this, it is important that University data and information is generated, recorded, analyzed, accessible, shared, and reported in a familiar, meaningful and regular manner. This is the goal of the University's institution-wide assessment plan.

Core Theme Alignment

Core Theme #1 and #3 – Seeking to Understand and Searching Together

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

[The National Survey of Student Engagement 2016](#) (NSSE) has numerous areas that address Core Theme #1 “Seeking to Understand” as highlighted in the Academic Challenge and Experiences with Faculty sections. The 2016 University of Providence [First-Year and Senior results](#) compared with the top 50% of the Rocky Mountain Comparison Institutions group are below.

- **Academic Challenge:** In 2016, First-Year and Senior UP respondents exceeded the “Rocky Mountain Private” comparison groups in all areas of Academic Challenge by Institutional Comparison with 2016 First-Year Quantitative Reasoning being statistically significant with $*p < .05$ and a medium effect size (.34) compared to the “Rocky Mountain Private” group. The differences in the 2016 Senior subsets of “Higher-Order Learning” and “Learning Strategies” were statistically significant in both 2014 and 2016 with $***p < .001$ and had medium effect values in all but “Higher-Order Learning” in 2016 with $*p < .01$.
- **Learning with Peers:** In 2014, UP [UGF] First-Year respondents’ mean scores lagged behind or nearly met the “Catholic C & U” comparative group, but by 2016, UP (UGF) respondents outpaced its “Rocky Mountain Private comparative institution group in both subsets. The 2016 subset of “Discussion with Diverse Others” was statistically significant with a $**p < .01$ and a large effect size. In 2016 “Collaborative Learning” continues to be an area for UGF improvement as compared to the “Rocky Mountain Private” group, and is important with a $**p$ value of $< .001$ and a small negative effect size. UP [UGF] Senior mean scores have considerably surpassed the “Rocky Mountain Private” comparison group in “Discussion with Diverse Others” by +6.2 mean points with a $***p$ value $< .001$ and a near-large effective size.
- **Experiences with Faculty:** In 2016, the mean score difference between UP [UGF] First-Year respondents and the “Rocky Mountain Private” group is compelling with a $***p$

value and .63 (large) effect size. For 2016 University Senior respondents, the difference when compared to 2016 “Rocky Mountain Private” is marginal for “Student-Faculty Interactions.” However, the 2016 UP [UGF] “Effective Teaching Practices” mean scores for Senior respondents are higher than the “Rocky Mountain Private” comparison group.

Theme #2: Living in Community

[High Impact Projects \(HIPs\)](#): UP has strong first year participation with 73% of First-Year respondents participating in at least one HIP, in comparison to 48% by the comparison institutions in 2016 comparisons of UP [UGF] with the “Rocky Mountain Private” group. UP [UGF] Senior respondents reported having 73% participated in at least 2 HIPs in 2016 compared to the “Rocky Mountain Private’s” 68% in 2016.

Other areas of strength recognized are the University’s Study Abroad Program and opportunities for participation in Service Learning Activities through Providence Formation Program and the Corps of Discovery. Please see other areas in Standard 1.B Core Theme #2 Part B discussing both [Corps of Discovery](#) and [Providence Formation Program](#) enrollments for participation in Service Learning and High Impact Projects.

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

The University consistently reports data to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) through the Registrar’s office and the Academic Affairs office through the annual Council of Independent Colleges [CIC Kit](#) and end of year report. It is through IPEDS reporting that the decision was made to reconvene the Retention Team to address recruiting, enrollment and retention issues. The University did achieve its projected [retention rate](#) for Fall 2017, and a continued focus will be to maintain enrollments to degree achievement.

Student Satisfaction Inventories

The first [Student Satisfaction Inventory](#) was completed in 2016 and are anticipated to be completed by the University office of Student Development every other year. Responding to the top issues of the 2015 SSI, new housing was built and opened for students in the fall of 2016.

End of Course Surveys (EOCSs)

[End-of-Course Surveys](#) are conducted and compiled through the Office of the Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Science. The data is collected and shared with faculty, individually and collectively, in a timely manner. Through the Math Center, beginning in the spring of 2017, qualitative data was analyzed using [Leximancer®](#) software to capture the essence of the students’ voices regarding their educational experiences. The intent is to develop an annual view of commonly occurring themes as viewed through the student lens to inform the faculty and University in a meaningful way. Used in conjunction with quantitative data from the same student end-of-course evaluations will provide a more fully developed understanding of student experiences.

Student Profiles

As part of the activities of the Retention Team beginning in spring of 2017, the Profiles Group began developing student profiles to inform recruiting and retention efforts. The Profiles will include demographic, enrollment, financial aid, and program data collected after fall enrollments

each year for first-time first-year freshman as well as all [freshman](#), [sophomore](#), [junior](#) and [senior](#) students. Transfer-in and transfer-out information will be included in the latter three. An institutional profile is currently developed through the office of the Vice President of Enrollment Management.

Financial Information

Please see Standard 2F and Standard 5B for updated financial information regarding current status, adaptability and sustainability.

Student Loans, Grants and Scholarships

Students are assisted with student loans, grants and scholarships through [Argo Central financial aid support](#).

4.A – Assessment

4.A.1 - The institution engages in ongoing systematic collection and analysis of meaningful, assessable, and verifiable data—quantitative and/or qualitative, as appropriate to its indicators of achievement—as the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of its core theme objectives.

The University systematically participates in several assessment processes which speak to the accomplishment of Core Theme objectives for meaningful data over time. These include:

- [The National Survey of Student Engagement 2016](#) (NSSE)
- [Faculty Survey of Student Engagement](#) (FSSE - Spring 2018)
- [Employee Experience Survey 2017](#)
- [Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement](#) (BCSS)
- [Student Satisfaction Inventory \(SSI\)](#)
- [Nursing Program Educational Benchmarking, Inc.](#) (EBI)
- [Corps of Discovery](#)
- [Providence Formation Program](#)
- [End-of-Course Survey Faculty Summary](#)
- Student Exit Surveys
- [Senior Exit Surveys](#)

The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSS) was conducted in Fall 2017 for the first time. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) will be conducted in Spring 2018 as part of its regular two-year cycle. The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) will be conducted for the first time since 2011. This triad of related assessments provide a broad range of data related to the Core Themes from 3 perspectives: incoming freshmen, students, faculty.

The University has consistently and systematically participated in numerous assessments and reported the results in timely manner Through the 2015 University self-review, an institution-wide assessment plan was a recognized need determined by the OIP. The OIP's Initiative #1 for Institutional Effectiveness was a response to this need. A common culture of assessment needed to be developed in coordination with an institution-wide assessment plan for academics and non-academic programs. Please see 4.A.3 for this plan.

Training for faculty and staff “Toward a Culture of Assessment” and Taskstream/TK20 was conducted over time with allowances for faculty to learn to use the Accountability Management and Learning Assessment Tools. These trainings were for specific groups of faculty and staff followed up with videos of the training provided by Taskstream/TK20 on the following dates:

- September 4, 2016 – first training
- April 28, 2017 – second training
- August 17, 2017 – full faculty training
- January 15, 2018 – Learning Assessment Tool Training
- February 15, 2018 – Program Level Assessment training

Faculty from the School of Health Professions will begin training in May 2018. All faculty will enter a benchmark year in fall 2018.

Core Theme Alignment

Theme #1 – “Seeking to Understand”

The assessments used at UP consistently, offer data and it is used to understand student and faculty perceptions and achievement through different lenses. This includes the nursing graduate programs’ use of EBI to provide assessment in a variety of academic and student services areas. The new institution-wide assessment plan’s purpose is to seek to understand the academic, quasi-academic, and non-academic aspects of the University more holistically.

The academic affairs office has also taken steps to begin having program evaluations every year with a more in-depth, strategic evaluation performed every 2 years to better understand how our programs are performing, what is excelling, and what needs improvement. A suggestion has been made to include a strand within the metrics of the strategic plan for accreditation and Core themes.

Becoming data-rich and data-aware, the results and findings will be shared appropriately with constituents to celebrate successes, to inform, to plan, and to make decisions regarding the Core Themes in relation to academics and the Strategic Plan. Leadership keeps the vision of improvement and growth in everyone’s minds by communicating how the university is doing academically, programmatically, and strategically from the perspective of our students, faculty and staff. This communication will keep the University moving toward the improvements to which the it has committed.

Theme #2 – Living in Community

“Living in Community” per the University’s Core Themes is defined as being well grounded in academic growth in order to make up one’s own mind and in so doing being independent of the waves of public opinion or trend in order to the right things the right way. Our mission to attend to the poor and needy to the extent that this university does is counter-cultural in a materialistic, profit driven society. Utilizing the foundation of faith and reason to guide it, the University continues to follow its mission to provide liberal education for living and making a living. While financial data shows that this mission presents challenges financially to the institution, the means to continue to offer this educational opportunity as it does through our collaborative work with our parent corporation, PSJH, has led to a plethora of innovative programs for nursing to

meet the ever-growing need for qualified health care professionals as well as a renewal of the commitment to liberal education for students to move into chosen career paths or to advanced educational pursuits. Further, the data and information used from the [Operational Improvement Plan](#), the [University of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#), and the [5-year Strategic Plan](#) provides a path of growth and focus not only for student experience and academic excellence, but also for institutional commitment to organizational effectiveness and a clearer understanding of market positioning for meeting the mission while moving into a position of financial stability and sustainability. These vital Pillars of the Strategic Plan are aligned with the Mission and Core Themes. The Office of the President kept faculty and staff informed throughout the work of the earlier Operational Improvement Plan through town hall format meetings and has continued to provide email and meeting updates and announcements throughout the rebranding process and the move into the 5-year Strategic Plan's development and implementation.

Theme #3 - "Searching Together"

Any team is stronger when working together with a common vision. Leadership at the University has included the Providence community in decision making toward change and improvement throughout the process. The assessment plan involves all academic personnel initially, but will also include quasi- and non-academic assessment next year in the form of self-study reports on projects with timely updates. As the assessment plan was being developed, it was communicated to the nursing program who is in the process of becoming a participant in academic assessment for the betterment of their programs, students and graduates.

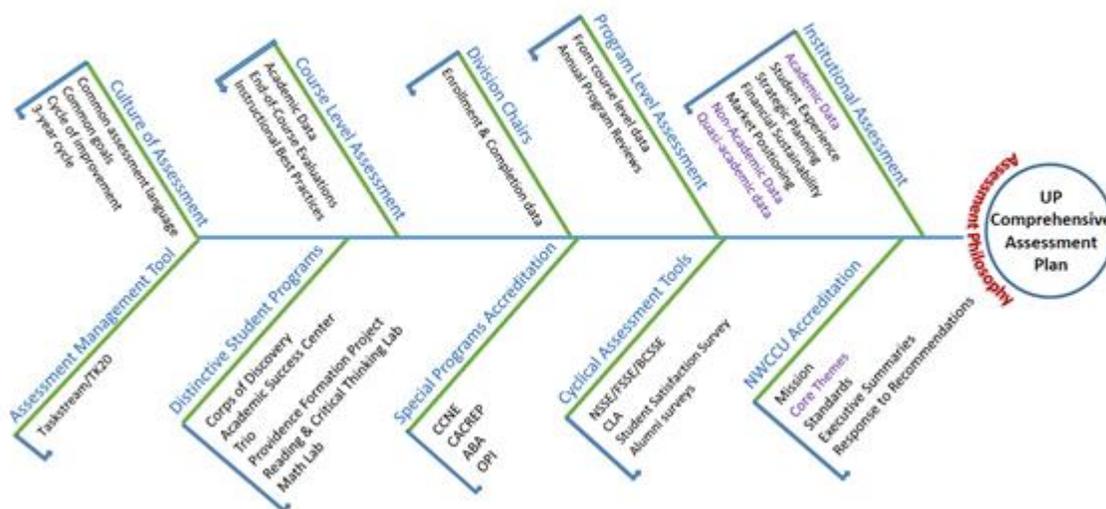
Students and faculty work together in projects such as Corps of Discover and Providence formation when going into the community during service learning projects. Students also provide their voices to the work within the University on improvement through surveys such as National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) as well as through end-of-course evaluations shown through [Leximancer®](#), and a university satisfaction survey consistently completed, aggregated and shared with faculty. Outreach to alumni and military is provided through the Alumni Office and the Office of Military Support Services. Further pride in the University is achieved through outstanding athletic competition for the [Providence Argos](#). Through these opportunities, there is communication to keep everyone informed, showing that the University has been, and continues to be, a learning community that works together for the benefit of our students, faculty, staff and the community.

4.A.2 - The institution engages in an effective system of evaluation of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered, to evaluate achievement of clearly identified program goals or intended outcomes. Faculty have a primary role in the evaluation of educational programs and services.

The University conducts systematic and frequent evaluations of programs and services provided to students. Evaluation prior to fall 2017 was entirely the responsibility of faculty at course level for the purposes of student grading. In September 2016, a [Taskstream Goal Assessment](#) stated that "We have no university-wide assessment collection system." While numerous assessments are conducted, there is no systematic means to analyze and share data, especially academic data in the sense that institutional assessment is now understood.

Some examples of various assessments conducted independent of a system include:

University of Providence Comprehensive Assessment Plan



Steps taken to move toward a system of assessment included:

- Program evaluations were conducted in a rotation in a seven-year plan. Beginning in 2018, this is intended to be moved to a yearly evaluation.
- In prioritizing the University's academic mission, the new [Core Curriculum](#), "*Lumen de Lumine*," was [approved in 2017](#) to highlight Catholic intellectual tradition and will be implemented in fall 2017. Again, individual faculty are responsible for their own course and program assessments, and not institutionally shared.
- Participation in [Taskstream/TK20](#) set up for program assessment revealed to many a need to update their assessment plans for programs and courses in order to align assessments more clearly with anticipated student learning outcomes (SLOs).
- To provide excellence in the University's online learning experience, numerous faculty are trained to create high quality online courses that are certified for credit through [Quality Matters](#).
- In summer 2017, academic programs were requested to provide updated program description and indicators of student learning outcomes (SLOs) in order to provide consistent and accurate information in numerous places, including the Course Catalog, the Web site, course syllabi, and Taskstream/TK20 (In summer 2017, Taskstream merged with TK20) learning outcomes for courses based upon program objectives to assist with preparation for Taskstream/TK20 use.
- Members of the University Education Department assisted faculty in appropriately writing student learning outcomes (SLOs) in preparation for use in courses and program assessment through Taskstream/TK20.
- Services provided to students are assessed through the bi-annual [Student Satisfaction Inventory \(SSI\)](#), first implemented in 2016. It was through the SSI that issues with student housing and variety of food available on campus were addressed as were the need for more streamlined student services in registration – all of which are reflected in the [Nation Survey of Student Engagement 2016 \(NSSE\)](#). In 2016, new student housing was opened and the methods for registration, enrollment and advising are under consideration within the work of the Retention Team and through better processes within Banner.

- [Operational Improvement Plan \(OIP\)](#) Initiative #5 – “Build facilities and infrastructure for growth and sustainability” is addressed through evaluation of the Building Facilities Master Plan. Repairs were made to sidewalks and facilities in fall 2016 - 2017, with ongoing maintenance a priority. Further, ground breaking for a new [University center](#) will be in spring 2018. This new facility will help provide a streamlined student admission experience as well as state-of-the-art technology classrooms and student welcome center.
- As part of the OIP, Initiative #5 also spurred working with Ellucian, to realize two goals of “maximizing overall value” and “aligning improvements with the institution’s operational and strategic plan” to provide necessary change and upgrades to the University’s network infrastructure

Core Theme Alignment

Theme #1 – “Seeking to Understand”

Throughout the move toward an institution-wide assessment plan, the culture of the University needed to change. In order to change, it was vital that personnel understood the need, the process, and the outcomes of such a plan. A journey of this magnitude is not made in a short time. Plus, there were several specific learning curves that must be addressed during the long-term to reach defined, sustainable institutional assessment:

- a. The difference between assessment and scoring/grading, including audience and use.
- b. How the data from assessment would be used to inform the University about courses, programs and processes, and that it was not evaluative for faculty.
- c. Aligning Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) to Core Curriculum objectives, Core Themes, Program Objectives and Bachelor Degree requirements as well as to the key assessment pieces to be used for course assessment to inform programs,
- d. The 3-year cyclical nature of institutional assessment had not been discussed here prior to 2015 at the depth to which it went in 2017.
- e. Understanding the use of an accountability management tool like Taskstream/TK20 is a huge undertaking on its own, and required the rollout for so many to be taken at a relatively slower pace to allow faculty to process the technology they would be using.

Theme #2 – “Living in Community”

To engage faculty in learning the many facets of the assessment plan and where the University would be heading as a learning community challenged many comfort levels and preconceived notions. Many were ready to head in this direction, while others needed additional support.

In April and August 2017, the Office of the Director of Institutional Effectiveness provided training “Toward a Culture of Assessment” as well as Taskstream/TK20 support materials to give the faculty the background information it needed understand the need for institutional assessment. This large change for the University will take time to become an habitual process. In fall 2017, faculty began receiving support and encouragement from each other as well as from the Assistant Deans, and realized that the task being called for was not just to learn how to use Taskstream/TK20, which many found simple to do, and began to see the implications of having the kind of aggregated data of “how we are doing” as an asset. While still a work in progress, the University as a community is moving in the right direction regarding an institutional assessment plan and procedure. In January 2018, faculty had the opportunity to discuss assessment progress, and in February 2018, training in program-level assessment was

provided to the assistant deans to generate program level data from course-level results. Further, in spring 2018, the School of Health Professions is joining the School of Liberal Arts and Science by engaging faculty in course and program assessment to further enhance institutional assessment.

Theme #3 – “Searching Together”

The change that an all-inclusive, institution-wide assessment program (Please see Standard 4.A.3 in this report.) represents involves the activity of searching together, helping one another, understanding where people are in their thinking, and determine what they need to be successful. A professionally implemented Taskstream/TK20 program for faculty was provided to the School of Liberal Arts and Science. Training videos, helpful common assessment language literature direct support phone and email information was provided to faculty and staff. Individuals more comfortable with the process of assessment and utilization of the Accountability Management tool became mentors for colleagues in need of assistance. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness has an open-door, phone call, and email assistance policy to assist anyone who needs assistance. In late fall 2017, discussions began with the School of Health Professions regarding its desire to participate in institutional assessment training which is anticipated to begin in spring 2018. Plans are also being considered to include self-study assessment of non-academic and quasi-academic programs by fall 2018.

4.A.3 The institution documents, through an effective, regular, and comprehensive system of assessment of student achievement, that students who complete its educational courses, programs, and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, achieve identified course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Faculty with teaching responsibilities are responsible for evaluating student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.

Based on a September 2016 [Taskstream Goals Assessment](#), it was stated then by the sitting Vice President of Academic Affairs that:

“We have no university-wide assessment collection system. My goal for the next 6 months is to have a small group of people understand what Taskstream can do and how we can implement this tool into our data collection and reporting. By 12 months, I want the entire campus to have a basic understanding of Taskstream.”

Recognizing this led to the establishment of Initiative #1 in the [Operational Improvement Plan](#) in 2016. A philosophy of assessment is developing at the University based on two basic needs. First, there must be the development of a [culture of assessment](#) common across the institution by having:

1. A continuous improvement cycle
2. Common [assessment language vs grading and scoring](#) student work.
3. For the University, assessment targets have been set by the Academic Dean as:
 - **“Acceptable” target** - 75% of students will meet or exceed 80% on assignment/assessment instruments, and
 - **“Ideal” target** –85% of students will meet or exceed 85% on assignment/assessment instruments.
4. Use of an accountability management tool and a learning assessment tool

The second basic need is to understand the foundational importance of the academic assessment process from course to institutional level, including:

- a. Course to program to institutional levels of assessment
- b. Use of a Program Assessment Plan Time line (PAPT)

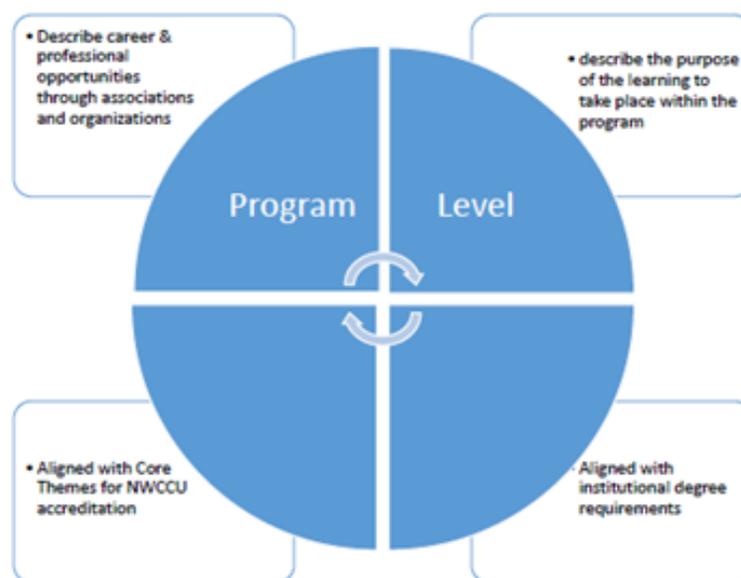
Program Assessment Plan Timeline (PAPT)				
Assessment Cycle	2017 – 2018	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020	2020 - 2021
Assessment Plan	Plan Implementation August 2017	Plan Revisited July 2018	Plan Revisited July 2019	Plan Revisited July 2020
Assessment Findings reported/recorded	July 2018	July 2019	July 2020	July 2021
Improvement Action Plans (IAPs)		October 2018	October 2019	October 2020
Revised IAPs		December 2018	December 2019	December 2020
Status Report based on previous cycle (How did the University do year to year?)	Progress update: December 2017 March 2018 June 2018 September 2018	December 2018 March 2019 June 2019 September 2019	December 2019 March 2020 June 2020 September 2020	December 2020 March 2021 June 2021 September 2021

With both training in the [culture of assessment](#) and [Taskstream/TK20](#), the University has developed and begun implementation of an institution-wide assessment program. With the interim Vice President of Academic Affairs, this program was planned from the bottom up and built from the top down to ensure alignment to the absolute result of improved student learning outcomes (SLOs).

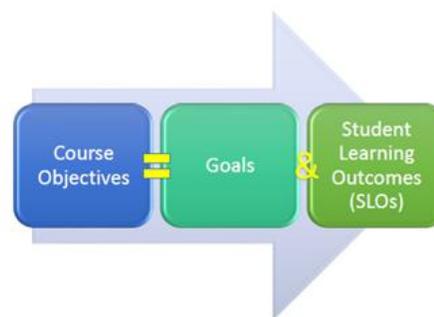
Beginning at the institution level, programs are linked with associations and organizations wherever possible, which provide a source of content. This is evident in the [Education Program](#) with alignment to State of Montana Office of Public Instruction standards and licensing processes as well as with the US Department of Education. [The Criminal Justice Program](#) is aligned with the American Bar Association for its approval process. Meeting the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) documentation provides the basis for the [Master's Degree Program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling](#). The University's [School of Health Professions nursing programs](#) are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. Faculty are encouraged and provided opportunity for professional development within their domain. Institutional assessment is aggregated from program assessment and will include numerous quasi- and non-academic assessments beginning in fall 2018.



Program Objectives are broad statements that describe career and professional accomplishments that a program is preparing students to achieve. It is vital the program objectives are aligned with association and organization norms when applicable and must meet accreditation, degree requirements and, as appropriate, the Core Themes. Program objectives describe the purpose of the learning to take place within the program. Program objectives for the University are published in the [Academic Catalog](#) and on the [University Web site](#). Program assessment is planned to be completed annually for trend analyses with a more in-depth review every seven years.

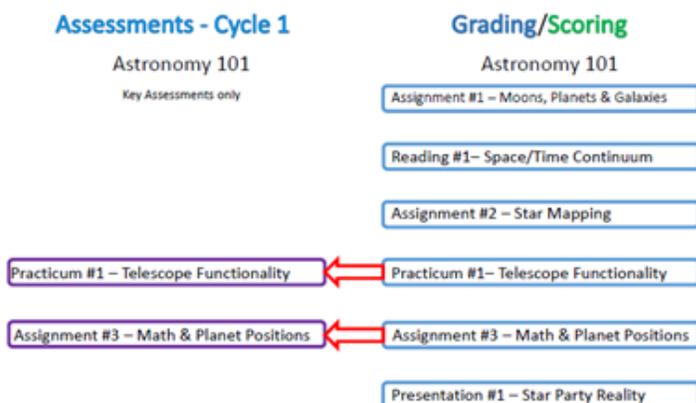


Based on and aligned to program objectives, course objectives provide the goals and outcomes of expected student learning. Student learning outcomes (SLOs) are the absolute bottom line of a rigorous, aligned and comprehensive academic program, and must be written clearly to tell exactly what students are supposed to learn (knowledge gained) and be able to do (skill acquisition) through the instruction in courses aligned with program objectives. Course and program objectives are to be designed and illustrated through program mapping to clearly show progressions and alignment of learning.



Appropriate student learning activities, which include written assignments, projects, presentations, and group collaborations are to be designed by faculty to specifically target the knowledge and skills students are to learn to meet the intended learning outcome. To know how well student have obtained the desired learning outcomes from this aligned curriculum design, well-designed evaluation and assessment tools are used to determine the degree to which the student has captured the intended learning outcomes, whether a knowledge base or skill. Evaluations of numerous student learning activities are used for scoring/grading.

Assessment vs Grading & Scoring



However, only carefully selected assignments, tests, activities, projects, etc., are considered for assessment purposes, as explained in a Taskstream publication defining the difference between assessment and grading/scoring. These selected assessments are the [key determining evaluation tools](#) that will give the faculty the deep understanding of what degree the student has acquired or mastered the intended learning outcome.

This assessment plan is supported by training in the culture of assessment that must become a customary practice within the University. While there are solid pockets and practices of assessment now as the University's Comprehensive Assessment Plan showed, they are yet to be a cohesive program complete with analysis, discussion, sharing and reporting. The use of data from assessment must become habitual in order to inform decision making and planning. It must also include quasi- and non-academic programs, practices and recording for assessment go into the realm of full institutional assessment.

To assist in this process, the University's purchase of Taskstream/TK20 in 2016 as an accountability management tool was intended to bring this process to a reality. Following an initial training with one faculty pilot in the use of this tool and achieving accreditation the following year for a special program, more training with another diverse group was held in April 2017. Full faculty training was held in August 2017 in Taskstream/TK20 AMS. In September, there were no results of planning and assessing, but by mid-November, the [analytic dashboard](#) showed a gain in use. At the end of November, another select group was trained in the

Taskstream/TK20 Learning Achievement Tools (LAT) platform with full faculty to receive video support by January 2018. By the end of December 2017, more faculty were accessing Taskstream for assessment use according to the [end-of-the-month analytic dashboard](#). Training for the assistant deans in program-level assessment work is planned for February 2018.

From September 2016 to November 2017, the University's faculty has grown tremendously in their assessment knowledge and skill development. There are still steps for the University to follow to develop the desired full institution-wide assessment, and the path lies before the University with a solid and supported plan to follow. What will follow is assessment of quasi- and non-academic programs and projects.

Quasi-academic Programs

The university has several distinctive programs for student success that are quasi-academic in that they are not for academic grade, but to enhance the overall success of students. The programs at the University include;

- Corps of Discovery
- Providence Formation Project
- The Academic Success Center
- The Math Center
- The Writing and Critical Thinking Center
- TRiO

Important data derived from these distinctive programs, some of which are tied to grants, include:

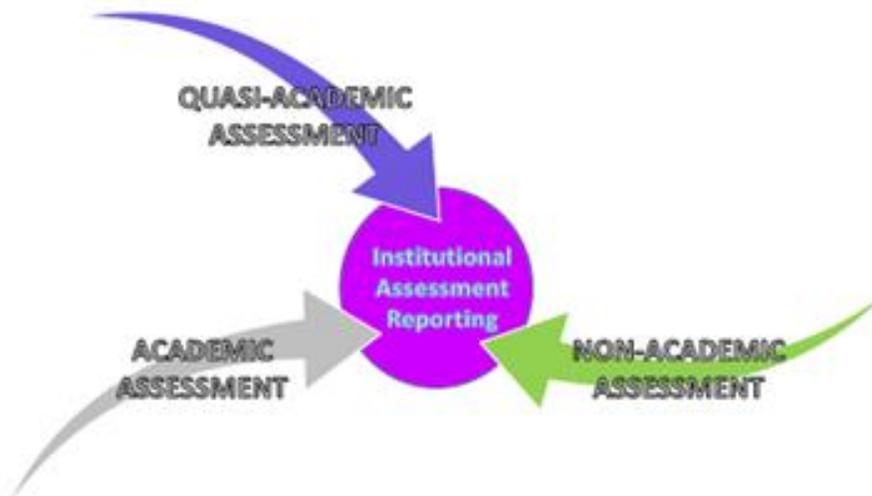
- Number of students served
- Prescribed plan vs walk-ins
- Students entering and leaving prescribed support programs
- Specific academic, social and financial aid topics needing greater support
- Quantitative and qualitative response to surveys
- Faculty referrals to support services

Non-Academic Projects and Programs

Non-academic programs, such as information technology, facility development/maintenance, and enrollment management can also use data for planning, organizing and reporting actions such as:

- Anticipated timelines for action
- Status reports on progress
- Participation tracking
- Athletic participation and university impact
- Alumni networking and philanthropy

Having three major areas of assessment - academic, quasi-academic, and non-academic - will provide robust, full-institutional assessment outcomes comparable over time.



Core Theme Alignment

Core Theme #1 – “Seeking to Understand”

The University clearly defines the degree and certificate requirements necessary for students to achieve to obtain the desired degrees and/or certification. These requirements are published in the [Academic Catalog](#) and are also available on the [University Web Site](#). The move into a culture of assessment has highlighted the need for clear alignment of program objectives, course objectives, student learning outcomes, and the assessment of students to provide a comprehensive understanding of the level of student learning. Also necessary for a cohesive plan was the definition of assessment goals as defined by the Dean in determining whether learning targets are being met.

- **“Acceptable” target** - 75% of students will meet or exceed 80% on assignment/assessment instruments
- **“Ideal” target** – 85% of students will meet or exceed 85% on

As the University has begun to use the accountability management tool, a faculty professional development in January 2018 explored what the minimal data collected during Fall Semester 2017 means as the discussion revolved around:

- What does it mean to the faculty as professional educators if students:
 - a) exceeded the anticipated learning targets?
 - b) met the anticipated learning targets?
 - c) did not meet the anticipated learning targets?
- How does our faculty of professional educators respond to this data?
- What goals might be developed in light of the data?
- How will action steps toward these goals be developed and implemented.

Responses to these questions by faculty during January 2018 professional development revealed an understanding that programs need more information through collecting more data than was collected during a “one course-one assessment” learning process provided in fall

2017. Answering the questions that are born of looking at data develops the desire to seek to understand. Through understanding, aspirations, goals and solutions are developed to support student and faculty growth and achievement.

The development of an analytic culture of assessment will serve the institution well to ensure that the degrees and certificates earned by students solidly indicate the rigor and depth of learning necessary to achieve them.

Core Theme #2 – “Living in Community”

Of great benefit to the University is the approach toward an effective, regular system of assessment as it provides for

- the development of courses
- the planning of programs
- the means to genuinely assess learning
- better understanding of the level of student learning.

Living in a learning community necessarily requires its members to be able to work and communicate with a common language and common ideas about learning and assessment. The Accountability Management System (AMS) and the Learning Assessment Tools (LAT) of [Taskstream/TK20](#) can assist the university to do all these things, while also providing avenues to regularly report results.

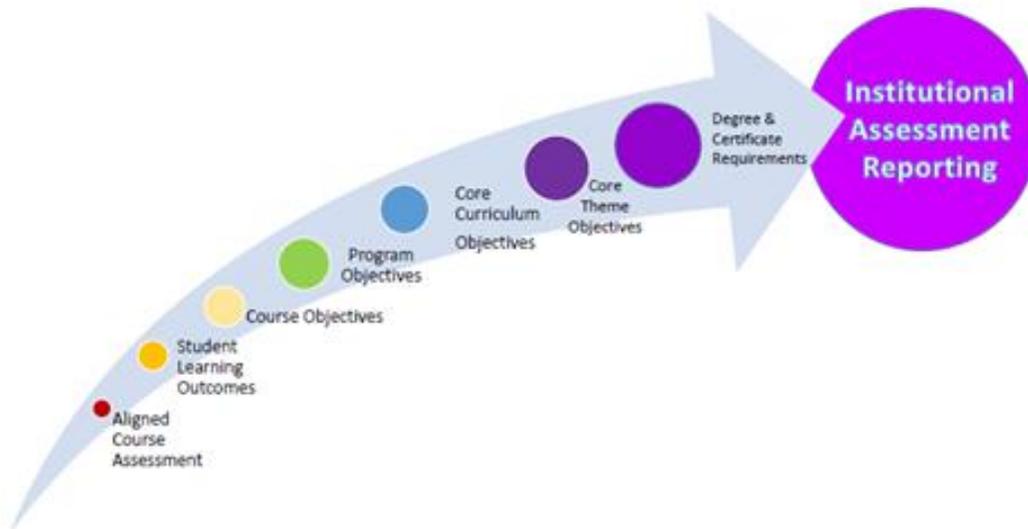
Core Theme #3 – “Searching Together

Coming together as a learning community to analyze and understand what assessment results mean reflects Core Theme #3. As the university comes together to gain understanding, celebrate successes, support one another in improving our programs and courses, and to assist students in their learning journey based on data and an understanding of what is needed for all members to become the best they can be, a true learning community arises as it searches together for all these things.

4.A.4 - The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of programs and services with respect to accomplishment of core theme objectives.

The University of Providence [uses numerous assessments](#) at this time, as seen in the University of Providence Comprehensive Assessment Plan graphic, that holistically views the alignment, correlation and integration of programs and services regarding the Core Themes. These assessments are in accordance with our [Assessment Philosophy](#), which is based upon an understanding of a culture of assessment that is to become habitual – that “This is what we do.” Further, we have an alignment of assessment process from course level to institutional level in which student learning outcomes are aligned with course objectives, program objectives, Core Curriculum Objectives, and degree and certificate requirements with clear alignment to Core Themes.

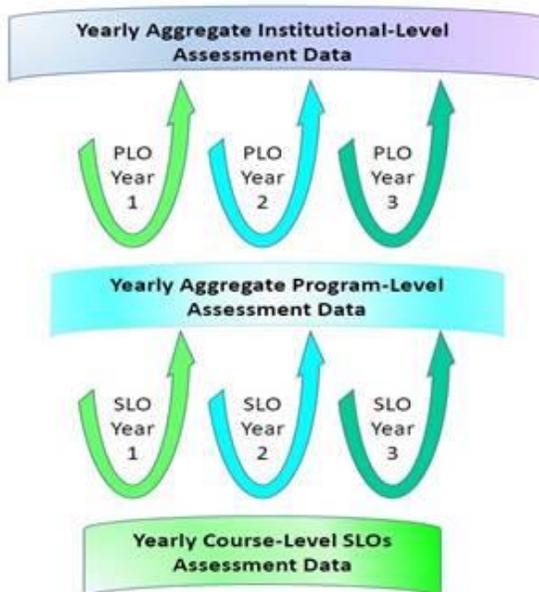
Alignment of Assessment Plan Process



This alignment, as in the above graphic, includes academic assessment in courses and programs.

For grading and scoring, faculty members develop and choose those assignments, projects, presentations, etc.; and utilize them as they determine best to understand student learning outcomes. However, for assessment purposes, [only key assessments](#) that have been designed to provide clear assessment of the student learning outcomes are used [for assessment purposes](#).

3-Year Assessment Cycle



These key assessments are used within the 3-year cycle of the university's assessment plan based on the selected program objectives for each year.

Once cycles of assessment are established and data streams are trackable, reporting out academic data, program data, quasi- and non-academic information will become habitual for the university to accomplish the following:

- Inform decision making
- Monitoring student, program and project progress, and
- Inform administration, staff, faculty, students, community and appropriate constituents.

Core Theme Alignment

Core Theme #1: “Seeking to Understand”

Assessment is about understanding. Data from assessment, whether academic or non-academic or quasi-academic, informs status as a university. Records of assessment informs where one has been, providing good information for reflection about changes that need to be made for improvement and action planning. Thoughtful use of data from the current state can provide understanding regarding possible upcoming trends and pitfalls.

Examples from the University show enrollment and financial data (See Standard 2.F) that informs us of the path ahead in which the University must change to become viable and sustainable financially – resulting in the [University of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#). Other data from enrollment led to the determination of the [Argo Guarantee](#) to assist families in planning financially for four years of college expenses, and not necessarily five or six years.

Other data from focus groups and meetings led to the University’s Operational Improvement Plan and its seven decisive initiatives for improvement necessary prior to planning for a [5-year Strategic Plan](#). Foundational to these changes was the hard look the University took at itself to determine that we indeed needed an institutional-wide assessment plan (See Standard 4.A.3) This led to the purchase and use of Taskstream/TK20 to help develop a culture of assessment. Understanding true institutional assessment leads to understanding that the main goal of assessment is improvement of student learning outcomes. The University also needs such an accountability tool to understand its operations more fully.

To be more competitive, the University is looking at the student experience through the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2016) and [its comparison group](#), the Rocky Mountain Private Comparison group. Through this assessment, the University found that it has a high incident of respondents participating in High Impact Projects which are experiential learning at its best. NSSE is implemented and data used every two years to track the student experience.

Academically, we have relied on the [Collegiate Learning Assessment \(CLA\)](#) annually at freshman and senior levels. While this has shed some light on the academic progress of students, it is not enough and is leading to the implementation of our full institutional-wide assessment plan to truly understand our students’ experience, strengths, and needs. (See Standard 4.A.3)

For the University of Providence, Core Theme #1 – “Seeking to Understand” is about the entire institution, its employees, its students and its community.

Core Theme #2 – “Living in Community”

For students to understand “Living in Community,” they are first part of the University of Providence community, from application, admission, registration, participation and graduation. Throughout their experience, Core Theme #2 anticipates their learning experience to provide a liberal arts education to allow them all to become independent thinking individuals based upon what they have learned. The many opportunities for students to become independent thinkers range from the Montana experience through the [Corps of Discovery](#) to rigorous courses in the sciences, such as chemistry and biology, to the thought-provoking concepts in theology and philosophy. [Integrated Learning Courses \(ILCs\)](#) provide opportunity

for thinking to not be compartmentalized but more all-encompassing opportunities to combine learning across courses and disciplines. For more adventurous learners, opportunities for [Study Abroad](#) and service learning locally through courses and the [Providence Formation Project](#) challenge students' concepts of life and living by offering them opportunities to see life from someone else's point of reference.

The opportunity to think independently and act, or respond, from a learned perspective is nurturing competent, committed individuals to be productive human beings "living in community" in any community in which they will reside.

Core Theme #3 – "Searching Together"

As a university, it is our duty to provide a model of searching together, and through the adoption of a culture of assessment the administration, faculty and staff are doing so for the students to clearly understand. Further, we are including the student voice in many ways in assessment. The University's highest goal in this regard is to complete the cycle of assessment fully by not only using but reporting the information we have gained through that assessment, be it academic or non-academic. Giving students a voice through end-of-course evaluations, [by courses](#) and [institutionally](#), the Health Professions [Educational Benchmarking, Inc.](#) surveys and the [Student Satisfaction Inventory \(SSI\)](#) by reporting the highlights of what students think is vital to [garnering authentic feedback from students](#). This is a goal of the University in its institution-wide assessment plan as well: report what we have learned from our assessments to inform students that we are listening to what they have to say. Additionally the [Employee Experience Survey](#) provides the lens of faculty engagement in University change and activities.

Other areas students and faculty can search together have been addressed earlier in this report in Standard 3B and 4A.

4.A.5 - The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of planning, resources, capacity, practices, and assessment with respect to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of its programs or services, wherever offered and however delivered.

Over the course of years since the last [accreditation self-study in 2014](#) and the [2015 Ad Hoc](#) report, the University used the feedback from these reports to holistically evaluate its planning processes, its resources and capacity, practices and assessment processes. Numerous findings were determined through focus groups and surveys as well as enrollment and retention information. Focused plans of action have been the result. These plans included a two-year [Operational Improvement Plan](#), a plan for [rebranding](#) the University, the development and implementation of an institutional-wide assessment plan (Standard 4.A.3) and a comprehensive [5-year Strategic Plan](#) with specific [metrics](#). All of these plans were completed in collaboration with Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH), the corporate sponsor of the University which is a part of Providence Health Services. This major health care provider and the University are the culmination of the work of the Sisters of Providence who founded the educational institution in the 1800s that has become the University.

An in-depth look at the University's resources necessarily strengthened the sponsorship with PSJH and its desire to maintain the university as the foundation of a pipeline of students into its [School of Health Professions](#). It is clearly recognized that the financial resources of the University requires are tied to PSJH and its commitment to the University through the [University](#)

[of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#) which was determined collaboratively. The University has moved from a year-to-year financial plan to a 5-year plan. Thus it is tied directly to enrollment, retention and completion numbers of the School of Liberal Arts and Science. The latter is the focus of the 5-year Strategic Plan to concentrate deliberately on growing and sustaining the School of Liberal Arts and Science while also maintaining the success of the School of Health Professions as it continues to develop new programs and grow as it is on the cutting edge of providing competent individuals for the burgeoning field of health care.

The growth in both Schools of the University placed strain on the existing physical plant and IT services (please See Standard 2.G within this report.), dictating attention to both. As a result, the University provided and continues to provide changes in physical plant to meet the needs of the University now and as it continues to develop. This includes new student housing in 2015, breaking ground in 2018 for a new [University Center](#) which includes a student welcome center, conference facilities unlike any currently existing in the community, and state of the art classrooms, and also a wrestling practice center under construction to accommodate current and anticipated growth in that athletic area. New facilities are complemented with ongoing and thorough maintenance of classic existing structures of the University. The student center will be upgraded and remodeled as will a student hall that include a new cafeteria facility. The University's gymnasium received upgrades and renewals during the rebranding efforts of 2017.

Regarding IS upgrades (Please see Standard 2G within this report.), the entire University received a full IS upgrade (telephones, computers, servers, systems) in 2017 as well as an update of the Banner informational system through Ellucian. This coupled with new technology classrooms within the new University Center will provide technology accessibility for students at a level previously not existing. The [University Library](#) continues to grow its collection based on current needs expressed by students, faculty and patrons. The University library includes technology-based participation in materials consortiums and language learning modules. An existing technology classroom, a writing center, and a mathematics center within the library make it a learning center for students, faculty, staff and community.

Within the University's Argo Central, practices for admission and enrollment have taken steps to streamline the process for students, including accurate academic advising to assist students in developing their programs of study. This includes the promise of the [Argo Guarantee](#) for a four-year completion process that is determined collaboratively with students. The new welcome center will house the offices for the admissions, enrollment, and registration with the intent of simplifying and streamlining the experience for students.

Athletics plays a major role at the University and students, staff, faculty and the community take pride in the accomplishments of the Argos. The philosophy of the athletic department goes beyond the focus on sports and is intent upon the developing of responsible, capable scholar athletes who see their eligibility to play sports for the University as a stepping stone to their academic achievements that are for living and making a living, the Mission of the University. Academic support for our scholar athletes is required upon enrollment through the [Academic Success Center](#), and reinforces that academic achievement is automatically first and foremost for them. Recognizing the positive growth model role that athletics play in the development of the whole individual and the successful completion of programs and graduation, the University strives to provide athletics for men and women athletes in an expanding repertoire of sports.

In the self-study from 2014 and the University Operational Improvement Plan results, assessment was a definite focus for the improvement plans of the University. As this report has

highlighted, there are [numerous means of assessment](#) conducted within the University with results utilized in various but limited ways. A need to understand the concept of a culture of assessment was recognized. The 2016 [Taskstream Goals Assessment](#) indicated that there was not an institution-wide process for collecting, analyzing, using and reporting data. As expressed throughout this report, beginning in September of 2016 a plan to implement Taskstream/TK20 for use by faculty and staff as an accountability management tool institution wide became a goal. The process for such a program takes time, and since September 2016, the University has moved from one person piloting the use of Taskstream/TK20 as a “stand alone” to all faculty of the School of Liberal Arts and Science becoming involved and learning to use this tool in the Fall Semester of 2017.

Faculty was also introduced to the necessity of a [culture of assessment](#) in fall 2017. Also using this tool, the Corps of Discovery supported development of an e-portfolio for students in fall 2017 which could be expanded for use by faculty as well. In spring 2018, the School of Health Professions will also partner in Taskstream/TK20 use for its programs, so looking ahead to fall 2018 all academic programs will be using Taskstream/TK20 to assess courses and programs providing data for institutional use. The continued plan for use of this accountability tool is intended to be expanded in 2019 to include quasi-academic and non-academic program data through the self-study facet of the tool such as that used to develop this accreditation report. An option to create faculty profiles and qualification records is also being considered.

It is widely recognized that having an assessment plan, tool, and process in place must include the use and reporting of data results for all of this assessment to have any meaning for the University. As meaningful data streams develop through this University process, [metrics](#) determined for the [5-year Strategic Plan](#) for program and course development, and for retention/enrollment endeavors will all rely on the data developed, analyzed and used. Further, the University can then consistently report data results to appropriate constituents and be able to use the information to support its planning, decision making, growth and accreditation responses with a data-informed clarity.

Core Theme Alignment

Core Theme #1 – “Seeking to Understand”

The holistic correlation of assessment, planning, practices, and use of resources and capacity is based on seeking to understand through assessment data. As a recognized need, it was the foundation for the Operational Improvement Plan. Being data informed will give direction to decision making in all areas of operation at the University as more of it embraces the culture of assessment and the use of the chosen accountability measurement tool.

Core Theme #2 – “Living in Community”

As noted above, there are numerous and important assessments and surveys that have been conducted and used over time at the University, but not always in community. Living in community connotes working toward goals together from a diverse knowledge base and a sharing of information. This will be provided by the integration of assessment into academics, administration, financial decisions (which already assess and analyze greatly), non-academic program and project progress statements, and an understanding of current trends and needs. Living in community also involves seeing life from someone else’s point of view, which the University will also undertake with hearing student, faculty and staff voices through surveys that are already conducted, from [the National Survey of Student Engagement](#), [Educational](#)

[Benchmarking, Inc.](#), [end-of-course evaluation](#) with [institutional information](#), [alumni surveys](#), [exit surveys](#), service learning and [study abroad](#) by faculty and students.

Core Theme #3 – “Searching Together”

An aspect of any university experience is that as a learning community, we learn together. As we evaluate ourselves holistically, it is to find those bright spots we do well, as well as those areas in need of support. This NWCCU self-study has provided an opportunity to look at the University in this way – searching together to find those things we do well, recognize that which is in need of improvement, and design an action plan with action steps for improvement in which all members of this learning community can participate. This is currently taking place within the new 5-year Strategic plan with specific [metrics](#) to be met for improving our students experience in Academic Excellence, the Student Experience, and the viability and sustainability the University and PSJH desire financially and in providing educational opportunities, all in accordance with the University’s Mission to which all three Core themes speak.

4.A.6 - The institution regularly reviews its assessment processes to ensure they appraise authentic achievements and yield meaningful results that lead to improvement.

First and foremost, in September 2016, the University began the process of building an institution-wide assessment plan and process utilizing an information structure for staff and faculty to understand the culture of assessment needed and also in the use of Taskstream/TK20 as outlined in Standard 4.A.3 and other sections of Standard 4. This is a large undertaking that will take more than two years to complete and it is an achievement well underway.

Regarding [other common assessments](#) and surveys under review:

Core Themes (Standard 1.B in this document), while not consistently used or assessed at this time, are being built into the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) in order to have them always in consideration. They were also built into the Taskstream/TK20 program for faculty to map back to for course objectives and student learning objects. As the Core Themes are indicative of much of NWCCU accreditation information, it has been requested that NWCCU standards also be notated in the Strategic Plan to facilitate recording and capturing data for accreditation as applicable in the Strategic Plan. Such an achievement will simplify collection of assessment information on Core Themes and accreditation information throughout the years between self-studies

In summer 2017, both the [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#) and the [Collegiate Learning Assessment \(CLA\)](#) were moved from faculty and from the Academic Success Center to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness. These two assessments are the most consistently engaged in at the University with NSSE having a history back to 2012 and the CLA back to 2009. The NSSE data is used regularly by the Academic Affairs office and the office of Student Development, as well as the Leadership Team. The CLA provided a synopsis during the 2014 NWCCU self-study. Not only is NSSE valuable and the results used quite widely, the correlation of NWCCU Standard 2 to NSSE as well as the alignment of most of NSSE to our Core Themes has been helpful to many.

It was determined that in spring 2018, NSSE would be used and the University would revisit the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), which had not been used since 2011. The [Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement \(BCSSE\)](#) was used for the first

time in the fall of 2017. These three surveys provide a combination reports for the University to see student engagement through three lenses: students, faculty and BCSSE provides information on incoming freshman class that was considered important for the efforts of the University's Retention Team which reconvened in spring 2017. A goal for NSSE is to increase the number of both freshman and senior respondents.

The Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) currently is consistently given to freshmen through the Student Development office in coordination with the Corps of Discovery as a required assessment that provides information as entry data. The spring administration of the CLA is given to freshmen and seniors, providing a fall-to-spring evaluation of freshmen and a 4-year assessment for senior student achievement. Seniors are encouraged to provide CLA as part of a resume. The [CLA Total Score](#) will also be used as a metric for a portion of the Academic Excellence Pillar of the 5-year Strategic Plan.

[Education Benchmarking, Inc.](#) information from the [School of Health Professions](#) is available this year for NWCCU although it has been collected and used regularly by the School for numerous years before. While this information is critical to the caliber of the courses in the School, leadership readily recognized the importance of academic assessment of programs. In early 2018, the School will begin the process to join [Taskstream/TK20](#) assessment. With both Schools participating, the University is gaining on its goal of institution-wide academic assessment by the fall semester of 2018.

During 2015-2017, for the Operational Improvement Plan, the University participated in updates on action steps. Updates were given regularly in leadership teams and throughout the final months from the Academic Affairs office in PowerPoint format. To provide a consistent means of accountability for such large undertakings, a goal is to provide training in Taskstream/TK20 to monitor, record, and report the implementation of large non-academic projects, including the 5-Year Strategic Plan once it is approved by the Board and PSJH. This process could be used to provide monthly updates on projects such as physical plant development, further IT upgrades, alumni activities, and all six of the special programs on campus for students: the Academic Success Center, Corps of Discovery, the Writing and Critical Thinking Center, the Math Center, TRiO and the Veteran Support Center. Information can be simply entered, easily stored for historical purposes, and disseminated in print or electronically, ending the danger of losing vital information and the loss of information as employees change/leave positions within the University. This process could also be used by the variety of committees that operate on campus by housing information electronically.

[Program Reviews](#) were being conducted on a rotating 7-year cycle, and it was decided that this was not regularly enough. The Vice President of Academic Affairs determined that every program is to be reviewed every year, with a more in depth review every 2 years. Faculty profiles and qualifications will also be updated on a similar schedule, including updated resumes, biographies, academic endeavors which will benefit faculty in showcasing their accomplishments on the University Web site. Such up-to-date information will also inform faculty evaluations.

[End-of-Course \(EOC\) Evaluations](#) are conducted consistently and have been for many years, providing [individual faculty](#) and [institutional](#) data. The quantitative data and qualitative data is kept in the office of the Dean of School of Liberal Arts and Science. In an effort to "close the loop" by reporting information from the EOCs, there have been discussions about how the EOCs are implemented to garner more authentic responses, and there is a desire to determine common threads of student commentary by analyzing qualitative information through the use of

[Leximancer®](#) text analysis software. Once more, it is possible to collect authentic data and to report data in a manner appropriate for students in aggregated form will provide student voice across the University and inform students that their voice matters and the University is listening to them.

Core Theme Alignment

Core Theme #1 – “Seeking to Understand”

As all assessment is about understanding, assessment is often related to goals that are not academic. Finding a common process for staff, faculty and administration to use to communicate clearly, often, and openly about the status of projects, processes, decision making, and other vital activities is important for the smoother operation of any organization. Of all the assessment that happens currently, it is the communication and sharing of assessment results that is often missing, as is the organization for retrieval of the information. It is a goal for the University to investigate and use Taskstream whenever possible to provide continuity of recording and reporting status of projects.

Core Theme #2 – “Living in Community”

As independently thinking participants in the learning community that is the University, it is understood that ignoring, mitigating or not communicating assessment data and information is something that is done at the organization’s peril. As with all organizations, there are examples of such here and it was often not known at the time, hindsight being perfect. This points directly to reporting/communicating information for it to have value. Having the personnel and the opportunity on a regular basis to do so is critical. Living in community is a prescriptive for communicating and using assessment data to empower change through informed change agents.

Core Theme #3 – “Searching Together”

As a learning community, it is important for all – students, faculty, staff, administration, Board of Trustees, local community – to embrace the culture of assessment and use the information for informing, celebrating, improvement and decision making. Evaluating the information assessment and surveys provide tells the University what it has accomplished as well as what it needs to improve upon, and how to use this information for everyone. It is also vital for the University to evaluate assessment information from outside our learning community - trends in higher education, the community, the nation, economic indicators – and emphasizes the value of being in close communication with our local agencies and commissions about issues that will impact the region, the community, and the University as well.

Our collaboration with PSJH provides an opportunity to gather information about trends and needs across a wider area than our local region as well as those trends that impact the health professions and therefore the programs and courses that could or should be developed in the School of Liberal Arts and Science.

4.B - Improvement

4.B.1 - Results of core theme assessments and results of assessments of programs and services are: a) based on meaningful institutionally identified indicators of achievement; b) used for improvement by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity; and c) made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.

Part a: meaningful institutionally identified indicators of achievement

The University of Providence has meaningful, institutionally identified indicators, whether Bachelor requirement, Program Objectives of academic goals, or Course student learning objectives, Core Themes, or indicators of Operational Improvement Plan achievement. In 2015 – 2016, it was recognized that there was not, and had not been, a systematic, sustained assessment plan or program within the University and the [Taskstream Goal Assessment](#) clearly stated that there was “...no University-wide assessment collection system.” Data derived for [multiple sources](#) such as the Student Satisfaction Survey, Educational Benchmarking, Inc., end-of-course evaluations, CLA, and reported through submissions to IPEDS and within participation of NSSE.

While offering some insight into the status of the University, these tools do not provide the deep, continuous improvement cycles of assessment an institution of higher education requires to truly evaluate itself, its programs and its next steps. The currently utilized assessments may indicate areas of either success or a need for improvement, but not the height of success, nor the depth of an issue, nor indication of action steps necessary to resolve them.

Specific identified indicators of achievement used by the University for [current assessment](#) include:

- [Metrics](#) for monitoring and for accountability to the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) and [University Pro Forma and 5-Year Plan](#)
- [Bachelor Degree Requirements](#) with measurable indicators
- Core Themes with measurable indicators, though the Core Themes were not widely known or understood (Please see Standard 1B of this report for more information)
- Program objectives with specific measurable indicators of student learning outcomes were updated in the Spring 2017 and are published in the [Academic Catalog and online](#)
- [End of Course Evaluations](#) with plans to improve the implementation process to acquire more authentic outcomes in both qualitative and quantitative data
- [Program Reviews](#) – currently on a 7-year rotating cycle with plans to move to a 1-year cycle
- Faculty Evaluations
- Faculty professional development
- [Collegiate Learning Assessment \(CLA\)](#) – consistently applied and results used
- Continued participation in [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#) with revised implementation to garner greater student access and participation – consistently applied
- Re-institution of Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) and a first-time implementation of [Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement \(BCSSE\)](#) in 2017 - 18
- Continued reporting to [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System \(IPEDS\)](#), Council of Independent Colleges ([CIC KIT](#) and [CIC FIT](#)) reporting
- University [Student Satisfaction Survey of 2016](#) by Ruffalo Noel Levitz - 2016

Part b) used for improvement by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity

Results of systematically and formally assessing these areas will be used to determine:

- Maintaining focus through timelines, metrics and financial data to meet the goals of the 5-Year Strategic Plan
- Success in reaching student learning outcomes (SLOs) – Until beginning course to program assessment evaluation fully in fall 2018, each faculty is responsible to review and evaluate
- Success of existing programs in achieving program learning objectives (PLOs) for student learning - Until beginning course to program assessment evaluation fully in fall 2018, each faculty is responsible to review and evaluate
- Success of the university in providing rigorous, complete, and timely educational opportunities for all students –current formal evaluation of these opportunities the responsibility of those providing them
- Planning new areas of instruction to meet student needs and priorities – faculty and curriculum committee develop and approve new programs in both schools: The School of Liberal Arts and Science and the School of Health Professions
- Determining which majors maintain viability – through changing leadership, this is discussed, but not actionable
- Prioritizing decisions to end, maintain, or provide new learning opportunities – through changing leadership, this is discussed, but not actionable

Professional development for faculty and staff on the meaning of a [culture of assessment](#) to improve planning, alignment, decision making and assessment was begun in April 2017, and included:

- Including discussion of academic data in committee meetings, such as the undergraduate committee, etc.
- Monitoring and sharing [Taskstream Analytic Dashboards](#) at least every month

One of the greatest obstacles the University now faces is itself – its ingrained culture and process regarding assessment. It would be safe to say that in the fall of 2017, a new culture is emerging regarding assessment with faculty and staff starting to use common assessment concepts and language. Changing a culture does not happen immediately. It may be gentle and methodical, and at times it may be less than gentle. The success of the institution depends on everyone doing their part to achieve this change. To assist with facilitating change, Providence Health Systems provided training for key identified change makers at the University in spring 2017 in both [Change Acceleration Process \(CAP\)](#) and [Work Out Facilitation Skills \(WO\)](#) training. Already, forms from CAP have been very helpful, as will facilitation skills for training from WO. Working with the Academic Dean, the DIE has developed the [Talking Points](#) and [Business Case for Action](#) forms to provide a consistent message to garner acceptance of the changes needed to acquire a culture of assessment.

With the focus on student learning outcomes, program objectives were updated in June 2017, with specific indicators of success identified and communicated consistently in at least 6 specific places:

- The [Academic Catalog](#)
- The [University Website](#)
- [Course Syllabi](#) (example)

- Taskstream/TK20 programs used by every faculty member
- [The four-year academic plans](#) (template)
- [Advising materials](#) including the [Advising Handbook](#)

Part c) made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner

Providing timely information regarding assessment is vital to its meaningfulness. Following a cyclical plan of assessment as outlined in Section 4.A.3 will provide status updates four times per year, the first in the University's new cycle being in December 2017 through comparison of Taskstream/TK20 [analytic dashboards](#), with planning to include meaningful yearly data each June, action planning from the annual data review in July, mid-year review of the action plan in October, and manageable amounts of Core Theme and Program Objective assessment within a repetitive 3-year cycle that will enhance our NWCCU reporting on a 3-year cycle. The [Program Assessment Plan Timeline \(PATP\)](#) shows anticipated timing of elements in the cycle as this process emerges at the University.

Training in the use of the accountability management tool, [Taskstream/TK20](#), for continuity, was provided through a professionally-designed implementation plan for the University's roll out of Taskstream use. The understanding of the culture of assessment must come first as Taskstream/TK20 is a tool to manage the journey. Action Planning is built within the assessment plan based on assessment results. This Action Planning will be carried out initially at the course level. However, as participants more fully understand the usefulness of action planning, it can be conducted individually at the program level to correspond and align with program action planning, goals, and outcomes.

To provide meaning to this entire venture, the results must be from common measurable indicators of student learning outcomes (SLOs). As indicated by the Dean of the [School of Liberal Arts and Science](#) in fall 2017, these common assessment language goals are:

- **Acceptable - 75% of student will meet or exceed 80% on assignment/assessment instruments**
- **Ideal - 85% of students will meet or exceed 85% on assignment/assessment instruments.**

To use, share, and discuss the results to impact change and move to sustainable improvement, we must set benchmarks. Celebrating successes in meeting our goals as well as developing action plans for improvement will happen regularly with status updates. A change of such magnitude will take more than a year to develop fully, and it is gratifying to see we are moving in the right direction. Please see Section 4.A.3 for information on the institution-wide Assessment Plan, especially the 3-year cycle for sustainability.

Feedback to faculty has not been consistent through leadership change, and efforts to provide this feedback will strengthen the growth of a culture of assessment. Of great importance is the opportunity to acknowledge the students' voice in our improvement efforts through BCSSE, NSSE, and EOCs through appropriate recruitment for participation and feedback of the results. With results reported and feedback supplied to appropriate constituents, support for the changes will be better served. To more consistently provide information, discussions beginning in summer 2017 with the Office of Communication and Marketing included ways to utilize the [University Web site](#) to provide interesting data points about the University in a positive way to

keep the assessment conversation going. The University Web site could provide the means for positive, interesting aggregate (non-identifiable) data about the institution, program progress, course achievement, student profile and co-curricular information.

Core Theme Alignment

Core Theme #1 – “Seeking to Understand”

Again, assessment is about understanding a situation. While multiple forms of assessment are currently underway, there has not been an institution-wide assessment plan before at the University. As we first began to learn about assessment and then implement it in order to understand the status of the University, academic excellence for the student-centered experience was the most appropriate place to begin.

Core Theme #2 – “Living in Community

The process of growing a culture of assessment required understanding, cooperation, learning outside our comfort zones, and supporting one another in the endeavor. The existing culture was being challenged and a new culture would need to be of great enough value to replace what had been. Information to support the change being sought needed to be provided. At the course level where no common assessment was being utilized in spring 2017, by November 2017, across the campus there were 39 outcomes registered in Taskstream with 54 measure having been developed and 20 findings reported at the course level on the November 7, 2017 Taskstream/TK20 dashboard. By [January 2018](#), there were 72 outcomes with 28 findings. This is showing a marked change from spring.

Core Theme #3 – “Searching Together”

By embracing the emerging culture of assessment as shown by the assessment dashboards mentioned above, the majority of faculty have taken on this initiative and are life-long learners in endeavoring to master the use of this tool for the betterment of the University. The goal and hope is that the numbers of participating faculty with reported measure continue to increase as the means to assess more courses supports the assessment of programs in Spring Semester 2018. This can only be accomplished with the University doing this together.

4.B.2 - The institution uses the results of its assessment of student learning to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices that lead to enhancement of student learning achievements. Results of student learning assessments are made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.

As previously stated, the institution did not have an institution-wide assessment plan or program in place before Spring of 2017. Assessment programs are in place for specialized accreditation and other specific purposes. Please see Section 4.A.3 for a description of the plan that is currently being implemented beginning in spring 2017.

CACREP Accreditation

The University gives faculty full responsibility for how it used its results of student learning outcomes at the course level. It was recognized in 2015 that a methodical means for using data to inform practice was required, which led to the purchase of Taskstream in 2016 by leadership of the University. The company did not provide an implementation plan in 2016 for this assessment management tool as a decision was made to use Taskstream as a “stand alone” to

be piloted for the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accreditation process. The University's MS Degree in [Clinical Mental Health Counseling](#) utilized [Taskstream](#) for its accreditation self-study and was accredited in 2017 for a two-year period through October 31, 2019.

Montana Office of Public Instruction Accreditation

The University also used assessment of student learning in the [Education Program to achieve accreditation](#) of the education program August 18, 2014. Granted regular accreditation, the University can recommend teacher education candidates for licensure to the Montana Office of Public Instruction.

American Bar Association Approval

A third approval process requiring use of student learning outcomes is the Legal & Paralegal Program approved through the [American Bar Association](#) (ABA). Last approved in August 2013, the program was to have an interim review in September 2016, which was reported electronically.

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)

Accreditation for a fourth approval process requiring use of student learning outcomes is the [School of Health Professions](#) is through the [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education](#) (CCNE).

End-of-Course Surveys

Students express their learning experiences through [end-of-course surveys](#) every semester. A summary of these surveys provides quantitative and qualitative information about the student learning experience from their point of view. Results are shared individually with faculty regarding their own courses and also with faculty as a group. Using this information helps inform planning and pedagogy for each faculty member. Use of [Leximancer®](#) to evaluate qualitative data from student responses is being started.

Collegiate Learning Assessment

Every year, the [Collegiate Learning Assessment](#) is implemented with freshmen in the fall and both freshmen and seniors in the spring. Results are used in numerous ways, including providing the institution an understanding of incoming freshman skills in critical thinking and written communication, giving individual students a clearer understanding of their needs, and opportunity for supporting students through the Academic Success Center. [Over time](#) either the year-long period for freshman fall to freshman spring scores, or over longer period of a freshman cohort through to the senior cohort, CLA measures growth in critical thinking and written communication skills.

RN to BSN Program Annual Reports

Annual reports ([2016](#) and [2017](#)) highlight Capstone projects, providing information on growth of programs, and announcement of 10-year accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

Institutional Assessment

In spring 2017, through OIP Initiative #1, it was determined that the assessment management tool, Taskstream, needed to be brought to full use within the University to meet the demand of consistently gathering, analyzing and using data to inform academic planning and practice to better meet the academic needs of students and the professional growth of the academic staff. Further, it became obvious that the faculty and staff needed to be apprised of the Core Themes and their alignment to courses, programs, and other institution level activities.

While preparation for faculty implementation was initiated with Taskstream as early as September 2016, providing a professional implementation plan began in earnest in Spring 2017. By September 2017, all faculty plus 6 student support programs were given initial training by Taskstream/TK20. The purpose of this tool is to support the emerging institution-wide assessment plan described in Standard 4.A.3 of this report.

Faculty members have had sole responsibility for use of student academic achievement data to enhance and improve their delivery and to provide scoring and grading for students. As the university-wide assessment program began to develop, [Taskstream analytic dashboards](#) provided through Taskstream showed an increase in faculty participation in providing outcomes and reporting findings that will support decision making and support for student learning outcomes. There is also evidence from this data showing that faculty are exceeding, meeting, or not meeting the academic goals set by the Dean which are:

- **“Acceptable Target”** – 75% of students will meet or exceed 80% on assignment/assessment instruments and
- **“Ideal Target”** – 80% of students will meet or exceed 85% on assignment/assessment instruments

The University is moving toward using course, program and institutional aggregate data with specific goals in mind. These goals are:

- Provide an assessment platform for faculty, special programs, and non-academic needs to inform faculty, programs, and institutional administration regarding strengths and areas in need of attention for optimum performance as well as attaining Mission and Core Theme objectives (Standard 1A and 1B in this report)
- Begin sustained, predictable cycles of data collection, analysis, and use of data to inform action planning for improvement at every level
- Provide assessment progress status reports four times per year, end of course information at the end of each semester and aggregated at program level annually, yearly action planning informed by data, cyclical 3-year process for accreditation reporting
- To develop a sustained 3-year cycle of assessment for planning, decision making and accreditation for the institution and special accreditation needs of special programs
- Provide information for decision making, program and course planning always with Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) as the bottom line for improvement
- To provide constituents, in the very near future, with institutional-wide aggregate assessment data combining the Health Service and Liberal Arts & Science Schools, and
- Ultimately to support academic and non-academic processes to provide support needed for the success in student learning outcomes.

Core Theme #1 – “Seek to Understand”

Assessment is about understanding the status of the University in regard to:

- student learning outcomes
- student areas of meeting and exceeding targeted assessment language goals
- student areas not meeting the targeted assessment goals
- student support services that meet the needs of students

As the University completes this year of an emerging culture of assessment, the anticipation of defining, refining and following the process of assessment to provide the different types and levels of assessment data in regularly planned cycles of gathering, analyzing, sharing, communicating and using the information will certainly help the University to understand student learning in new and more advantageous ways.

Providing periodic status reports per the [Program Assessment Plan Timeline](#) on the process to keep constituents informed, providing time for celebrating successes, evaluating areas of need and developing action plans with specific action steps for improvement. Thoughtful development of other programs for student learning and support will involve the staff, faculty, administration, and students of the University as we give and receive information to seek to better understand ourselves and our roles in this institution.

Core Theme #2 – “Living in Community”

When we consider the learning curve in which this institution is currently involved regarding both the culture of assessment and the processes involved in providing data of this kind for the entire institution, it is requiring all personnel to step up to learn and increase their knowledge base about assessment as never before. Many are willing to embrace this concept right now and have been waiting for it to become an institutional and not an individual endeavor. Others are tentative with changes and so much new to learn and do on top of an already challenging career. Early information in Taskstream analytic dashboards from the fall of 2017 indicates that faculty and our learning community has risen to the occasion. Further participation in the process of assessment is an exciting anticipation for all.

Core Theme #3 – “Searching Together”

Fascinating outcomes of the emerging assessment culture have been noted as more faculty have engaged in self-scrutiny. Some comments from conversations have included a “need to have an assessment plan” for each course or that “my learning outcomes need to be rewritten to be more focused” and “as we plan new courses we must keep the alignment of learning outcomes, assessment and objectives clear.”

Through both [Quality Matters](#) training and [Taskstream/TK20](#) organizational capabilities, faculty members are working toward goals together in more coordinated efforts for an aligned quality of planning and implementation for an enhanced student experience in mind.

Departments have stepped forward to assist faculty with specific needs. The Education Department recognized a need to assist faculty in writing clear, focused student learning outcomes. As faculty and other administration become more proficient in using Taskstream/TK20, many have naturally stepped up to help their colleagues when they can.

Peripheral enhancements about student assessment has come through the holistic view of this self-evaluation to find the ways to use Taskstream to solve many of the issues that stem from having a multitude of ways and formats to produce things. Using the Faculty Qualification portion of Taskstream will produce faculty profiles in a uniform yet customizable format that attends to an issue being dealt with at this time.

As the culture begins to change with attention to detail in planning, analyzing and using data, the communication of data will also become more of “what we do.” It will become easier to communicate with our common understanding and language about assessment, which will help the University move as a whole to assessing quasi-academic and non-academic programs and processes as well.

The in-depth planning of the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) will [incorporate institutional assessment](#) throughout its implementation through use of specific [metrics](#) to monitor progress and report specific information about the 5 pillars of Academic Excellence, the Student Experience, the Mission, Market positioning and Organizational Effectiveness. Benchmarks have been established regarding the strategic intent and anticipated strategic outcomes within this plan.

In essence, assessment is about understanding the University: Where it was, where it is, and where our data-informed planning will take us.

Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirement #24 – Scale and Sustainability

The institution demonstrates that its operational scale (e.g., enrollment, human and financial resources and institutional infrastructure) is sufficient to fulfill its mission and achieve its core themes in the present and will be sufficient to do so in the foreseeable future.

Throughout the process of the University's planning – through completion of the [Operational Improvement Plan](#) and the development of the [5-year Strategic Plan](#), there are specific [metrics](#) the University designed to be met over time. Many complex issues are involved in planning and developing measurements for recruiting, enrollment, retention, new program development and managing the closer relationship with our corporate sponsor, Providence St. Joseph Health.

The University's collaboration with PSJH through the [Pro Forma and 5-Year Plan](#) will assist the University toward financial sustainability. As this is an emerging year for so many of the big, bold and positive steps being taken to improve financial stability and sustainability, it will take time for all elements of this proactive plan to take hold.

A goal of the Strategic Plan reflected in the [metrics](#) is to grow enrollment to 1200 students in 10 years, with a focus on our [Argo Advantage](#), a four-year graduation guarantee that includes:

- Four Year Co-Curricular Career Readiness Program
- Job guarantee (earned through participation and completion)
- Internship accessibility, including at Great Falls and PSJH locations
- Career readiness coursework and seminars
- The Montana Experience - Corps of Discovery First Year Program
- Ethical Leadership Development
- LRAP (Loan Repayment Assistance Program)
- Compelling and Distinctive Academic Programs

The University's focus is to grow the School of Health Professions with new programs designed to meet the ever-growing need for quality health professionals in PSJH as well as other Catholic health providing organizations. The School of Liberal Arts and Science will also grow providing rigorous academic foundations producing students prepared to enter career and advanced degree opportunities within and outside the health professions.

Please see Standard 2B for Human Resources information and Standard 2F for Financial information.

Standard 5 - Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation, and Sustainability

Standard 5A – Mission Fulfillment

5.A.1 The institution engages in regular, systematic, participatory, self-reflective, and evidence-based assessment of its accomplishments.

Having completed the studies leading to the [Operational Improvement Plan](#) and the self-evaluation from that leading to the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#), the University looked deeply at elements that would lead to successful improvement actions having relied on numerous assessment vehicles in an uncoordinated fashion for a long time. These included:

- [The National Student Engagement Survey \(NSSE\)](#)
- [Collegiate Learning Assessment \(CLA\)](#).
- End-of-course surveys ([individual](#) and [full report](#))
- [Exit surveys](#)
- [Satisfaction Surveys](#) ([Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey](#).)
- [Educational Benchmarking, Inc.](#)

These assessment measures were left to faculty and programs to utilize individually, with no comprehensive plan for analyzing and sharing results recognized in the [Taskstream Goals Assessment of 2016](#). It was recognized from this initial assessment that a comprehensive plan was needed. An assessment plan is underway at the University through training on a culture of assessment and TaskstreamTk20. Please see Standard 4.A.3 for more information on the assessment plan.

The University and corporate sponsor Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH) collaboratively created comprehensive planning for regular, systematic, self-reflective and evidence-based assessment through its detailed [metrics](#) planned within the 5-Year Strategic Plan. The 5-Year Strategic Plan provides a metric for monitoring and assessing all programs against specific objectives to provide data-based evidence of the University being “operationally efficient, financially healthy, and delivering on its sustainable growth vision.” Through institutional assessment, the University will gather assessment data to determine “...the percentage of programs reviewed annually against program objectives with specific evidence that any substandard findings will be corrected within two years.” This assessment cycle of gathering data, analyzing it, and determining an action plan for improvement within two years with targeted action steps will be an ongoing cycle of assessment and improvement to move the University toward its goals of efficiency, financial health, and sustainable growth.

These metrics include but are not limited to:

Academic Excellence

- [Graduation rates](#)
- [Collegiate Learning Assessment \(CLA\)](#) senior student mean score
- [NSSE](#) student-faculty interaction scores
- Percentage of faculty trained on course development outcomes and assessment
- Accredited programs through associations and professional organizations ([ABA](#), [Montana OPI](#), [CACREP](#), and [CCNE](#))

- Professional organizations in which programs participate include:
 - **Education:** (AACTE)
 - **MS Counseling:** all students and faculty are members of the American Counseling Association (ACA); in the process to work with the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) to offer the opportunity for our students to take the National Counseling Education (NCE) exam that is a part of the state licensure as a licensed Clinical Professional Counselor
 - **Health Professions:** Association for Professionals in Infection Control (APIC), Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP), and will be seeking accreditation through the Commission on the Accreditation of Health Management Education (CAHME)

Student Experience

- [Retention rates](#)
- [Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory](#)
- Percentage of eligible undergraduates that engage in study abroad and or student internships
- [NSSE/BCSSE](#) questions based on advising and student development baselines (first collection of these are spring 2018)

Mission Alignment

- [Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities \(ACCU\)](#) through [Catholic Identity Mission Assessment \(CIMA\)](#) yearly (beginning in 2018)
- Percentage of faculty/staff attending mission formation during "[Year of Mission](#)" as part of the Strategic Plan

Market Positioning

- Fall headcount, PSJH dependents in both the School of Liberal Arts and Science and the School of Health Professions
- Percentage of students who designate University of Providence as first choice, undergraduate and graduate. In 2017, 58% of [BCSSE](#) responders indicated UP was their first choice.
- Enrollment growth, net full pay full-time equivalents
- Spring semester student headcounts net of attrition

The University publicized and capitalized on the rebranding of the University as the University of Providence which was an historic gesture to the founders, the Sisters of Providence. The rebranding effort was only the beginning as numerous [Convocation fall 2017](#) (excerpted) were highlighted for all faculty and staff during Convocation fall 2017 as a time to reflect and celebrate the accomplishments. These were not only provided by the President during Convocation, but also through:

- Press releases where appropriate
- Weekly email updates by the President
- Faculty meetings
- Numerous committee meetings
- On our Web site as appropriate

The Major 2016 – 2017 accomplishments highlighted at Convocation included:

- PSJH Investment Approval
- New Core Curriculum
- Name Change and Re-Branding
- CACREP Accreditation
- Added Women's Wrestling
- New School of Health Professions
- IS Upgrades
- New Theater and Business Arts Program
- New Masters of Accountancy
- New MSOL Curriculum
- Began Policy Manual Revision
- Compensation Study
- New Web Site
- Building plans including a new [Wrestling Practice Facility](#) and the new [University Center](#).

5.A.2 Based on its definition of mission fulfillment, the institution uses assessment results to make determinations of quality, effectiveness, and mission fulfillment and communicate its conclusions to appropriate constituencies and the public.

Mission fulfillment is realized through the activities of our students while they are students of the University and as alumni of the University. As an expression of the teaching mission of Jesus Christ, the mission of the University of Providence, Great Falls, is to provide students with the opportunity to obtain a liberal education for *living and for making a living*.

Designing [metrics](#) into the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) centered on the Mission which is considered the strategic intent and “the lifeblood that inspires and propels us forward together.” A metric that will determine the degree of mission alignment is to be a yearly assessment through the [Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities \(ACCU\)](#) through the [Catholic Identity Mission Statement \(CIMS\)](#) survey. The 2018 implementation of this survey establishes the baseline for yearly assessment.

Communication of conclusions drawn from this type of self-assessment will include appropriate constituents, specifically the University itself (faculty, staff, etc.) as well as our corporate sponsor, Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH). As progress is made, more public communication of attainment of goals will be made through the University Office of Marketing and Communication which “...uses media including the new website, social media, email, and other channels to communicate fulfillment of these criteria to the public.”

The University will also continue to determine important data from the student voice through appropriate surveys and assessment, particularly the [National Survey for Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#) and [end-of-course student surveys](#).

Also, in determining the extent to which we are fulfilling our Mission, we ask ourselves three questions:

1) What are we doing to provide opportunities for our community to practice our Core Themes? –

a. Core Theme #1- “Seeking to Understand”

- The quality of the University's liberal arts curriculum and its enhancement through the introduction of classic Theology and Philosophy [Core Curriculum](#) requirements provide ample opportunity for students to deeply explore and consider – Core Theme #1 “Seek to Understand” - what a liberal education will produce within them to truly *live* through the development of a strong knowledge base.
- The [Corps of Discovery](#) provides a distinctive opportunity for students to grow personally as they also “Seek to Understand” their physical and emotional limits required to self-define *living*.
- Faith-based education is a hallmark of Catholic education to assist in growth in understanding of one's self. The University offers support for all faiths through connections with the local community and also by providing daily Mass.

b. Core Theme #2 – Living in Community”

- Living in community means to live through use of one's own moral judgement and religious convictions rather than relying only on public opinion or popular trends, and the commitment to do so has its foundation in a strong, traditional liberal arts education.
- Opportunities to learn about living a counter-cultural life are provided by the University through numerous means.
- [Providence Formation Project](#) is a co-curricular, service-learning program based on the Providence mission and core values of respect, compassion, justice, excellence, and stewardship. Meeting members of the community where they are through student-led activities providing 1-2 hours each week for relational service opportunities focusing on those in need in our local community helps students see life through the different lenses of others' lives, often flying in the face of the popular trends and public opinion of an increasingly self-centered and materialistic society.
- Opportunities to [study abroad](#) are also available through the University with a September trip to Guatemala with a Providence St. Joseph Health team to assist with staffing a mobility clinic. Through serving others less fortunate and having definite needs is another lens through which to learn to think critically, independently and act with commitment and compassion.

c. Core Theme #3 – “Searching Together”

- The [Corps of Discovery](#) also provides opportunity to develop camaraderie with others while growing personally.
- Service Learning through Providence Formation and travel abroad, both [NSSE High Impact Projects](#) (HIPs), provides students to *live* the creed of Christ in service to others, developing the qualities of commitment and compassion within themselves.
- Study abroad provides opportunities for students to understand the broad implications of *living* from others' perspectives often spurring students on to problem-solving solutions as a theme in their own education.

2) What data do we have to show our progress in living our core themes?

- a. Results of participant surveys for the [Corps of Discovery](#) indicate that students learn much about themselves, their limits and the opportunities of working with others.
- b. High Impact Project reporting in the [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#) in 2016 for First-Year “Service Learning” (80%) and First-Year “Participation in at least one HIP” (94%) are high in reports for both UP First-Year and Senior students. Seniors

report 21% participating in at least one HIP while 73% participating in at least two HIPs for a total of 94% participating in at least one, putting 100% participation within reach.

Travel in and of itself is an educational experience, one that cannot be fully realized any other way. It is through getting to know and experience the lives of others that we may more fully understand our own. Knowing this is an area of great educational impact. The University is currently planning a Mission Trip to Guatemala in the Summer of 2018. Core Themes #2 and #3 is being provided through Study Abroad. These opportunities have included:

- In May 2013: Dr. Katrina Stark took 6 graduate and undergraduate student to England, France, and Italy. [Education First Tours](#) was the 3rd party provider who managed the trip. In spring 2013, she ran a course that supported the trip including architecture, art, music, history of the places we would attend.
 - May 2013: Dr. Chrissie Carpenter took students to Belize for a science-based trip. The 3rd party provider was [Kaya Responsible Travel](#)
 - May 2015: Prof. Tami Park and Dr. Sonja Bickford took 13 graduate and undergraduate students on a Scandinavian/Arctic Circle tour.
 - May 2016: Dr. Chrissie Carpenter took 11 students on a Scandinavian/Arctic Circle tour.
 - May 2017: Biology graduate Morgan Robinson participated in a dental clinic service learning project through [International Studies Abroad](#), one of our 3rd party providers.
 - May 2018: Dr. Chrissie carpenter plans a biology based trip to Peru/Cusco/Macchu Picchu. She will use Kaya as the 3rd party provider.
 - Faculty-led Morocco trips in 2016 and 2017
- c. The return to traditional western thought in [Core Curriculum](#) Theology and Philosophy underscores the importance of both in maximizing one's humanity, often answering the questions: "What does it mean to be human?" "What does it mean to participate in intellectual inquiry?" "How will these endeavors help me discover who I am? What meaning has my life for myself, those around me, and those who come after me?" Data from fulfillment of the Core Themes will determine its story. The decision to include these courses of traditional Catholic education within liberal arts support their long-term benefits.

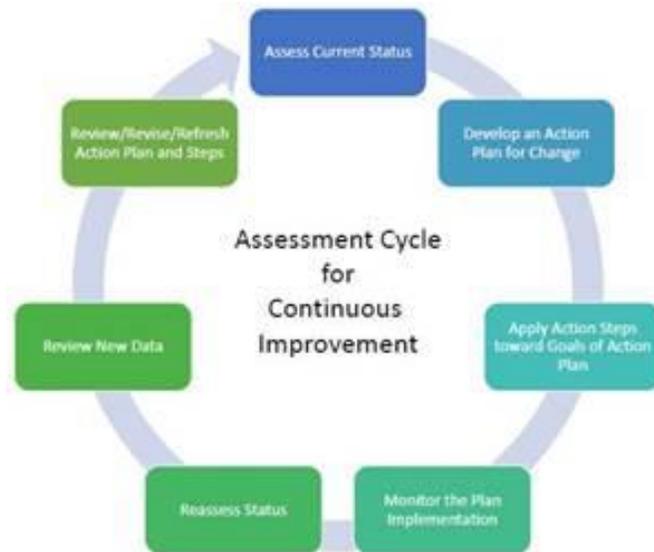
"Over time, liberal arts majors often pursue graduate degrees and gravitate into high-paying fields such as general management, politics, law and sales, according to an analysis by the Association of American Colleges & Universities, a trade group representing more than 1,350 schools. Once people reach their peak-earnings ages of 56 – 60, liberal arts majors are earning an average \$66,185, the association found. That's about 3% ahead of the earnings pace for people with degrees in vocational fields such as nursing and accounting, though it remains more than 20% behind science and engineering majors." (["Good News Liberal Arts Majors: Your Peers Probably Won't Out-earn you Forever"](#))

- d. As our Assessment Plan begins the process of becoming a culture of data, new data streams will justify the concepts of the Core Themes to which we heretofore have only alluded at the course and program levels.

Please see Standards sections 1.A and 1.B for details of our Mission and Theme and 4.A.3 for the University's Assessment Plan for how we align and assess the Core Themes.

3) What more can/should we do to facilitate continued movement of our core themes?

a) The development of a culture of planning and assessment is vital for the improvement of the University. This embodies all three Core Themes as the University as a learning community seeks to understand itself and go forward with a foundation in faith and reason together. The Core Themes will permeate the studies of our students as we model what it is to embrace such a reflective improvement cycle university wide.



b) Communication of assessment outcomes, providing the feedback to “close the loop” is recognized as a missing piece throughout the University. Sharing results at course, program and institutional levels is part of the culture of assessment and planning the University is intent on growing and sustaining. Some concepts being considered to communicate about assessment results include:

- Providing feedback to students regarding aggregate NSSE results, Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) results, and [End of Course Evaluation](#) results so that students are acknowledged and know the University hears and values their achievement, their work and their voice.
 - Utilize the new website that went live in late July 2017 to provide ongoing “bright spots” of positive statistical information about the University, its students, its accomplishments and the meeting of its goals to keep the assessment conversation going.
 - Provide Board, Staff, Faculty and community updates appropriate to the audience that highlight “how we are doing” once the culture of assessment and planning establishes consistent data streams providing the information needed.
 - Utilize data to inform Action Planning for courses and programs for targeted academic improvement.
 - Complete the move to assessing non-academic processes and programs in spring 2018 to assist the University in planning and providing informative status updates on the various projects undertaken to maintain, improve and grow the University.
- c) Providing more opportunities for research with faculty would broaden experience for students to determine a career path or a path to advanced degree attainment.
- d) Working with the local community to develop internships for University students would broaden their classroom experience into real-world work experiences.

5.B – Adaptation and Sustainability

5.B.1 The context of its mission and characteristics, the institution evaluates regularly the adequacy of its resources, capacity, and effectiveness of operations to document its ongoing potential to fulfill its mission, accomplish its core theme objectives, and achieve the goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered.

Response

Overview

The relationship the University has with Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH), is contingent upon the PSJH organizational structure. The Board of the University is a community board within the PSJH system, acting as the local part of the Steering Committee. While the University Board attends to the day-to-day business of the University, it has operational but no legal authority, and it does not act in a fiduciary capacity within the PSJH structure.

This structure is also evident internally at the University as the Leadership Team of the University is comprised of both University and PSJH leadership who are collaboratively developing the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#). The Strategic Plan's [metrics](#) are measurable subsets and are the key drivers of the Strategic Plan, defining each of the five Pillars' strategic intent.

An analysis through this report's Standard 2 "Resources and Capacity" sections indicate that the University evaluates, through the President's Office, the Board of Trustees, and the Leadership Team, the adequacy of each and documents each as they pertain to the fulfillment of the University Mission. As the Core Themes are implicitly tied to the Mission, through the variety of areas reviewed, the University meets the Core Themes as well.

Since the last reports of 2009 and 2014, the University has weathered leadership change, financial struggles, and times of stagnation not unlike other small, private, nonprofit, rural institutions. Through fresh, decisive leadership, a deeply reflective [Operational Improvement Plan \(OIP\)](#) in 2015 evaluated resources, capacity and effectiveness, and reiterated the Core Themes, through town hall meetings and focus groups. As the seven initiatives were completed in 2017, the [5-year Strategic Plan](#) with stronger collaboration within the PSJH family, the University adapted and renewed itself with its big, bold, fast initiatives and rebranding efforts in order to attract, enroll, retain and graduate the next generations of Argos.

Through the efforts that led to the OIP, the capacity of the University to truly fulfill its mission was evaluated. Under new leadership, the University is in the process of building its capacity to fulfill the mission by acquiring the personnel to implement the Strategic Plan. Central to the 5 – Year Strategic Plan is Mission Alignment, stating that "Mission is the lifeblood that inspires and propels us forward together."

The University of Providence in collaboration with Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH) developed the [University Steering Committee](#) composed of both University and PSJH senior leadership. It has developed accountability [metrics](#) within the 5-Year Strategic Plan to monitor progress toward the strategic outcomes outlined in the plan which is monitored through the close collaboration of this committee in monthly meetings, either in person or through teleconferencing.

The task of reviewing resources and capacity reveals that the University is rich in both, with many distinctive features, programs and opportunities at work:

- A vibrant Catholic Christian foundation of faith with an inspiring history
- Challenging curriculum
- Small class sizes where students are part of the action, not part of a crowd
- Opportunities to develop deeper relationships with other students and faculty
- The Corps of Discovery Providence Formation Program
- High participation in service learning
- Close affiliation with military personnel and their unique needs

By evaluating University capacity, University of Providence has realized its ability to:

- Meet the needs of today's traditional and non-traditional students with on campus and online courses
- Continue to assist students who might otherwise not be able to attend the University through exceptional loan guarantees and scholarships
- Provide personalized educational experiences from start to finish
- Guarantee a 4-year graduation in a declared major
- Retain quality faculty prepared to meet the needs of a diverse learning community
- Provide opportunity for personalized educational experiences similar in rigor to larger but impersonal universities
- Support individual academic needs of students to succeed through 5 distinctive student support programs

By evaluating its effectiveness of operations, the University can achieve sustainability through:

- Continuing to be an institution of higher learning with Catholic Christian ethics in operation and in instruction
- Putting first the success of students meeting their learning outcomes
- Continuing to provide educational opportunities to all students, but especially those to whom our mission speaks – those in need – while achieving a balance of both meeting the Mission and providing rigorous educational opportunities for all University students
- Making data-based, strategic and appropriate financial and operational decisions as PSJH's foundational university
- Ensuring rigorous curriculum to meet the demands of both career track and advanced education track students
- Upholding the promise of the Argo Guarantee to be 4-year graduates to those students who continue in majors declared as freshmen

As the University enters the next accreditation cycle, the mission, decisive planning, effective allocation of resources, acquisition and management of resources for capacity, careful financial budgeting and monitoring of these areas will address the identified areas of improvement directly. These efforts in combination with PSJH in a targeted implementation process is placing the University on a focused, stronger path to sustainability and growth.

5.B.2 The institution documents and evaluates regularly its cycle of planning, practices, resource allocation, application of institutional capacity, and assessment of results to ensure their adequacy, alignment, and effectiveness. It uses the results of its evaluation to make changes, as necessary, for improvement.

Please see the responses contained within the Standard 2 “Resources and Capacity” section of this report for detailed information requested in each standard.

Planning

Following the development and completion of the [Operational Improvement Plan \(OIP\)](#), the University completed rebranding culminating in a big, bold, fast new look for the University by summer of 2017. The move into rebranding include the designing of the new [University Center](#) which includes a Student Welcome Center and two state-of-the-art technology classrooms. IT Services upgrades were completed per the OIP including upgrading of telephones to Unified Communication with VoIP handsets and Skype for Business. This involves linking phones and voicemail to mail accounts in the new [UPNET](#). Computer updates include a Surface Hub and a Banner program upgrade. The physical plant and technology upgrades, including the [Ellucian Banner Cloud Hosting and Revitalization](#) project, will positively enhance the University for all students, staff, faculty and administrators. (See Standard 2G for details of physical plant and technology upgrades.)

As the OIP was concluding, under the guidance of sustained leadership, the foundation of the 5-year Strategic Plan began in August 2017. By December 1, 2017, the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) was [approved by the Board](#). The key elements of this plan include:

- Vision Statement: “The University of Providence will provide transformational education programs that develop talent and leadership capability for the Common Good *and* 21st century health care.”
- Five Strategic Pillars
 - Academic Excellence
 - Student Experience
 - Mission Alignment – which is central to the entire plan
 - Market Position
 - Organizational Effectiveness
- Each Pillar is defined through statements defining macro outcomes for strategic intent.
- Beneath each Pillar’s Strategic Intent are specific and strategic outcomes.
- The Strategic Outcomes in turn have measurable [metrics](#) accountability.

Two important facets of the Strategic Plan are the “Argo Advantage” and “Experiential Learning” both which speak directly to the Mission and Core Themes.

The Argo Advantage	Experiential Learning
University of Providence’s commitment to affordability, value and student success that includes: a Loan Repayment Assistance Program; Four-Year Graduation Guarantee for students that declare their major at the beginning of their first semester; Providence IMPACT program that provides additional career counseling and support at no additional charge for students who have not found adequate employment within six months;	Develop knowledge and skills through action and reflection by experiencing opportunities beyond the classroom (e.g., action projects, service learning, research with faculty, travel abroad). Experiential learning strengthens the personal qualities highlighted in our mission and core themes (i.e., commitment, character, competence and faith).

the Corps of Discovery, a personalized Montana experience to help students develop leadership skills and clarify career and life goals; and <i>Lumen de Lumine</i> , a core curriculum designed to emphasize critical thinking, ethical leadership and compassionate citizenship.	
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Within the Strategic Plan, the Mission is center to all. The five Pillars are each defined by Strategic Intent, which in turn are further delineated by Strategic Outcomes. The development of [metrics](#) to reach and measure outcomes are subsets of the outcomes, and are key drivers of the Strategic Plan. These key elements of the Strategic Plan are what the University has committed to and will show its accomplishments when the University hits its metrics.

Among other goals for which the University is planning in 2017 – 18 are improved enrollment and retention processes with a targeted recruitment strategy to recruit more students from outside of the state, possibly in coordination with our parent corporation PSJH. Work of the 2017 Retention team focused specifically on retention not only for freshmen but also for sophomores and juniors.

Practices

Numerous accomplishments of 2016 – 2017 indicate the high impact of the "big, bold, fast and excellent" nature of the direction the University is intent upon. These were celebrated during Convocation 2017:

- [The University of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#)
- [New Core Curriculum](#)
- [Name Change](#) and [Re-Branding](#)
- [CACREP Accreditation](#)
- [Added Women's Wrestling](#)
- [The School of Health Professions](#)
- IS Upgrades – Please see Standard 2G in this report
- [New Theatre and Business Arts Program](#)
- New MSOL Curriculum
- New MHA Program
- Policy Manual Revision
- Compensation Study
- [New University Web Site](#)

To improve the practices and operations of the University, the Stevens Group was contracted to work with the University to review and revise University policies which included:

- Volume I Governance and Administrative Policies
- Volume II Campus Community Policies
- Volume III General Institutional Employment Policies
- Volume IV Faculty Personnel Policies
- Volume V Academic Policies (includes Registrar and Admissions policies)
- Volume VI Student Policies (includes Financial Aid policies)

- Volume VII Business and Financial Affairs Policies
- Volume VIII Public Relations and Institutional Advancement Policies

These policy reviews are not anticipated to be complete at the time of this report's submission.

Other practices reviewed includes the work of the Retention Team in spring of 2017, based on research by David H. Kalsbeek ([Reframing Retention Strategy for Institutional Improvement](#)), designed to improve the University's:

- Profile – “more a function of what the institution is rather than what it does” - resulting in student profile development to be updated annually ([freshman](#), [sophomore](#), [junior](#), and [senior](#)) Institutional profile is available through the Vice President of Enrollment management.
- Promise: connects retention strategies with institutional brand strategies so that marketing and retention become mutually reinforcing - rebranding includes the [Argo Guarantee](#)
- Process: processes that help or hinder the continuous enrollment of all students, not just those “at risk,” such as recruiting, enrollment management, advising etc. - resulting in a streamlined enrollment and advising process
- Progress: “ensuring students make adequate progress through programs” – result being dedicated [four-year plans](#) for students

Determinations of the Retention Team's activities are:

- Clear connection with rebranding efforts include the Argo Guarantee, a common message to prospective students, upgrading campus facilities and technology, supporting co-curricular and Integrated Learning Communities (ILCs)
- Focus on recruiting methods now include closer partnering with PSJH, enrollment processes streamlined for a better student experience, training for advising, and other processes that affect all students, and plans to assess quasi- and non-academic programs by fall 2019 for data-informed operational and strategic use of resources and capacity
- Main focus is on student learning outcomes through an assessment plan that includes clearly written student outcomes and action planning for improvement at course and program levels, the 4-year curriculum plans which thoughtfully and consistently move students to graduation
- Student profiles for each class will be updated annually. While informing about all classes, the data should provide more about the sophomore and junior experience.

Communication is key to progress in any endeavor. The University's new Web site has become a hub of information that was a definite need, and it is being utilized widely across campus. In October 2017, a new “chat” feature was introduced to provide live assistance from Argo Central online.

As the University has numerous committees acting across the University, it is often recognized that there is not an information clearinghouse to communicate the information from multiple sources adequately. Some committees and organizations do not create or disseminate their information on a regularly scheduled basis. Recording and saving documents for future reference is an area in which improvements can be made. Opportunities exist to improve the sharing of information electronically that are not optimally utilized, such as calendars, organizational charts, meetings summaries, etc. This, however, is starting to change with the IS

upgrades completed in 2017 providing greater and easier access to electronic servers, calendars, emails, Skype, etc.

It became apparent that through numerous leadership changes other processes need to be updated and revised for consistent record keeping. Currently, the Academic Affairs office is creating a document for procedures for tracking the program proposal process, including the reporting to institutional accreditation in a coordinated and timely manner.

Resource Allocation

The University, in collaboration with PSJH, developed the [University of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#) for financial assistance from PSJH with yearly reviews of goal attainment and needs in March of each year. Please see Standard 2.F for more detailed University Financial information.

Overall planning at the University greatly improved upon achieving stable, consistent leadership. During this time, both the physical plant and the IS Services of the University were recognized as in need of upgrading. New Student housing:

- Sikora Hall (2009) – houses 36
- Sister Rita Hall (2010) – houses 32
- Argo Hall – (2016) houses 144.

During 2016 – 2017, a technology upgrade was made university wide, including phones (linking phones and voicemail to mail accounts in the new [UPNET](#)), individual stations, computer labs, and technology hardware. On April 12-13, 2017, a year-long onsite work project headed by Ellucian began. Embarking on the [Ellucian Banner Cloud Hosting and Revitalization Project](#) was to upgrade the University's information systems infrastructure and capabilities to dramatically improve its abilities to serve our stakeholders in pursuit of our mission.

Personnel links in top leadership between the University and Providence provides oversight and collaboration including shared resources. Shared resources between the University and PSJH include three important areas at this time:

- IS Services
- Library Services
- Human Resources

Sizable investment was made at the University to update IS infrastructure and services and to provide the Banner information service upgrades through Ellucian. More IS upgrades will continue through 2017-18 with Banner as well as the construction of state-of-the art classrooms in the new University Center. Working with PSJH regarding library and human resource services will provide oversight for compliance to PSJH standards.

Application of institutional capacity

Capacity is defined as an organization's ability to fulfill its plan. The University is planning and building this capacity and considers fulfillment of the Mission the successful application of this capacity. Meeting its mission of providing a liberal education for living and making a living, the University looks for the opportunities for students from all walks of life to do just that.

The University cooperates with both private and public institutions to attain goals consistent with its educational purpose and values. In providing career tracks for education, criminal justice, counseling, and nursing, the University cooperates with the Montana Office of Public Instruction, the American Bar Association, and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. To continue to evaluate its operation and programs, the University consistently participates in reporting to IPEDs, and participates in self-reflection through the use of [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#), [FSSE](#), [Beginning college Survey of Student Engagement \(BCSSE\)](#), and provides academic assessment regularly through the [Collegiate Learning Assessment \(CLA\)](#). A holistic view of the University is obtained through NWCCU self-evaluation reporting.

As the bottom line for the student experience toward the mission at the University is the improvement of student learning outcomes, the institution-wide assessment plan currently emerging completes a compilation of assessments to give the University an understanding of where it has the capacity to meeting the mission versus areas where improvement is needed. This began in 2015 with the beginning studies for the [Operational Improvement Plan](#) and the acquisition of [Taskstream/TK20](#) for an assessment plan. It has continued since in the vision of [rebranding the University](#), close partnering with PSJH, improved infrastructure and IS service (Standard 2.G), [expanding athletics](#) and comprehensive planning within the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) with its accompanying [University of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#).

Assessment

The University has a [history of providing a variety of assessments](#) though has not previously had the intentionality to promote a culture of assessment in a sustainable manner due to challenges and a series of leadership changes over a short span of years. In moving forward with the initiatives of the Operational Improvement Plan, it was critical to begin developing a culture of assessment as well as beginning to use an assessment management tool. At the start of previous plans for assessment, Taskstream/TK20 was as an assessment management tool already acquired, purchased in 2016 and revived and implement in 2017. In fall of 2017, a full assessment plan was developed.

Faculty received training throughout spring and fall in 2017 and began the task of learning the assessment tool chosen in the Fall Semester of 2017. Intent to incorporate the School of Health Professions into this assessment plan will be considered during winter 2017- 2018. As the academic assessment cycle is beginning and momentum maintained throughout the academic year, quasi- and non-academic assessment is planned to begin in the Fall of 2019.

The result of Initiative #1 in 2017 is to sustain the understanding, importance and use of data across the University for academic and program vitality for the benefit of students and their learning outcomes.

Given the time to develop these critical areas and determined to become a data-informed institution, the University will endeavor to communicate openly about and sustain a continuous cycle of improvement:

- assessing current status providing meaningful data streams
- updating plans based on data and feedback
- developing action steps to achieve the goals of the institution
- steadfastly monitoring progress cyclically
- re-evaluating and communicating new data in a timely manner

- determining the obvious next steps to continue growth
- sustaining this continuous cycle of improvement

In doing so, the University will want to expand to offer trained and educated professionals to the Catholic Health Association and other healthcare providers as well. Our potential comes directly from human resource needs for workforce needs over the coming years in an expanding and demanding profession.

Please see the Standard 4.A.3 regarding the Assessment Plan for the University.

5.B.3 The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system it uses those findings to assess its strategic position, define its future direction, and review and revise, as necessary, its mission, core themes, core theme objectives, goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement.

The University has completed an in-depth internal look that became the driving force behind the [5-year Strategic Plan](#) which includes the Mission and thus the Core Themes as central to its planning.

Currently, PSJH is the only external environment to which we have turned as they are our primary customer, repositioning itself to meet PSJH workforce needs and the market for health professionals. The University of Providence has determined a path of growth and development through consistent leadership in:

- Practicing cyclical planning and goal setting based on data for program review and development, budgeting, physical plant and IS development
- review of recruitment, enrollment and retention practices for the benefit of the students' experience with enhanced retention in mind
- thoughtful resource allocation and management, whether financial, physical plant, IT services and hardware, or personnel
- collaborative planning with PHSJ to optimize institutional capacity
- an assessment plan spanning academic, quasi- and non-academic programs and processes

Work has been completed to develop a benchmark group of institutions – the “[Peer and Aspirant and Competitive Group](#)” – to monitor key areas such as retention and graduation rate. Results will drive changes to the University’s strategic approach.

The University’s corporate sponsor, Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH), is currently involved in an initiative “[A Year of Mission](#)” to review and renew its corporate mission statement. This may influence on the University’s mission which is central to the [5-Year Strategic Plan](#), Pillar #3 – “Mission Alignment,” in order for the University’s mission statement to be more aligned with the new corporate Mission of our corporate sponsor, PSJH.

New athletic programs are under consideration and both schools within the University are exploring new academic programs for development.

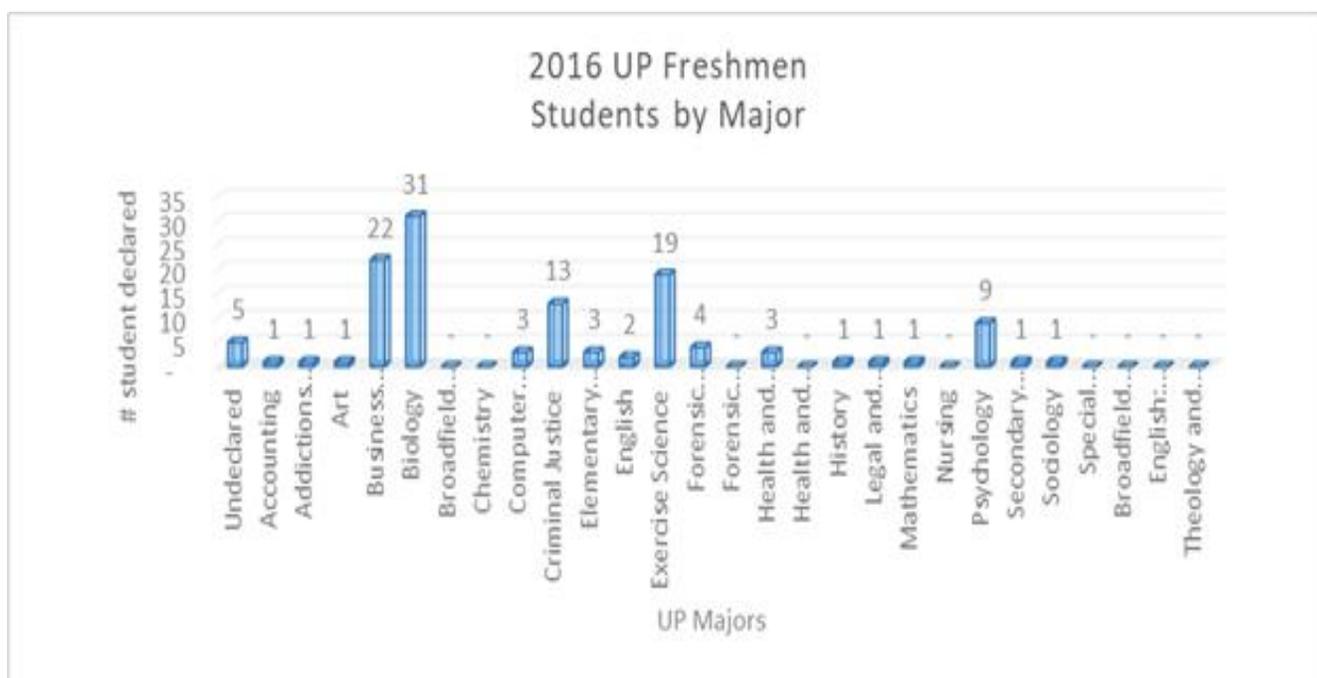
Emerging Patterns:

- Online application is available in a more convenient manner to engage prospective students more readily.

- The challenge to retain students to completion, especially in years 2 and 3, is being felt across Universities of our size and demographics as students look for the best economic answer to their educational needs. The University took steps to understand our process through the work of the 2017 Retention Team work

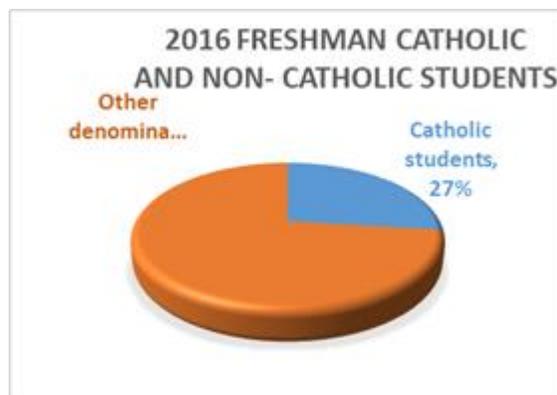
Trends:

- Generation Z – Also called post-millennials. A current trend of students who don't anticipate entering college but rather go directly into professions and entrepreneurship.
- 72% of older members of Gen Z want to start their own businesses. The University's Business Administration Major would be a natural for recruiting those Gen Z who are entrepreneurial.
- Biology and Chemistry continue to support students towards possible health profession careers.



- Digital natives now in higher education are expecting technology to be there for them in their educational settings. The University's technology upgrades meet these expectations, especially within the new classrooms in the Welcome Center.
- Individualistic emphasis as technology allows for it. The University anticipates this with DegreeWorks to assist in decision making regarding programs, emphasis on the student experience in enrollment, and small class sizes

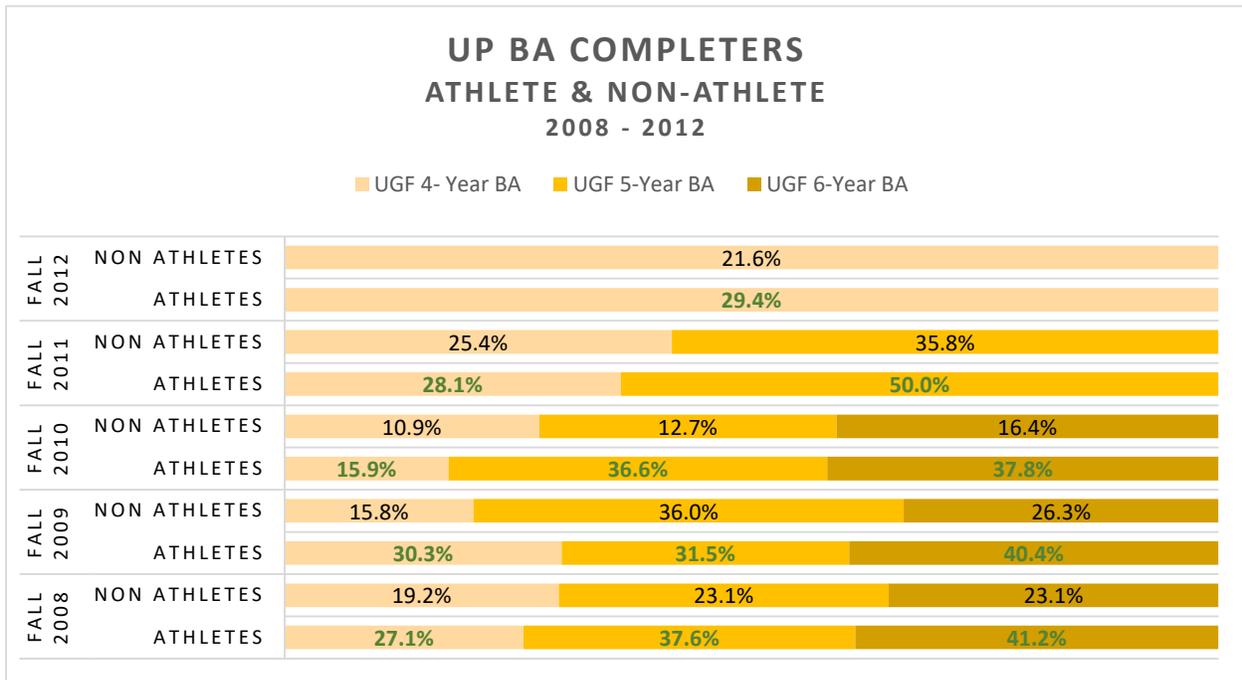
- Gen Z expressing less religious affiliation (29.6% in 2015 vs. 66% in 1966), could substantially represent a challenge for a Catholic university. The University traditionally has a religiously diverse population of various denominations. With the emphasis on traditional western educational offerings in philosophy as well as theology, the University offers a unique blend of courses to help students understand themselves.



- Enrollment decline is not unique to the University of Providence – [The National Student Clearing House Research Center](#) study on enrollment indicates that 4-Year Private Nonprofit institutions in general showed increased enrollments from fall 2012 – spring 2014 while 4-year for-Profit University suffered declines. This trend in declining enrollments began to affect Private Nonprofits in Fall 2014 through Fall 2015. The University of Providence was not immune to this trend, and University records indicate this trend continued into 2017. ("[9 Important Insights about Generation Z](#)") "College and University enrollment in America continued to decline in 2015, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center ... more than four in 10 private colleges and almost three in 10 public ones missed their goals for enrollment and tuition revenue in 2016. ([Inside Higher Ed](#))
- Recruiting - providing tuition incentives; closer collaboration with PSJH for the School of Health Professions

2016 In-State vs. Out-of-State Students 2014 - 2016			
	2016	2015	2014
In-State Average	45.4%	44.3%	47.3%
Out-Of-State Average	54.6%	55.7%	52.7%

- student athletes have a greater chance of completing at UP, although it may not be within 4 years.



- Financial – The University is working in collaboration with our corporate sponsor Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH) developed [the University of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#).
- The School of Health Professions and School of Liberal Arts and Science are both more closely aligned with PSJH.
- Indicators of achievement were set for the first application of assessment as we move into a culture of assessment. After the emerging year of using common assessment goals, an opportunity exists to review/revise the goals for this new plan if necessary.

Expectations

The University understands through its internal review that the journey to self-sustainability will be a long-term work in progress as indicated by its [University of Providence Pro Forma and Five-Year Plan](#). Increased partnering with our corporate sponsor, PSJH, and the upward trending need for professional health care personnel will continue to grow the University. Pillar #4 Market Positioning and Pillar #5 Organizational Effectiveness will also be driven by specific metrics for improvement and sustainability.

The [metrics](#) of meeting our [Strategic Plan's Five Pillars](#) are the benchmark and guidelines for moving the University steadily to a path of increased enrollment, higher retention and graduation rates.

Providing support for the Student Experience as well as Academic Excellence monitored by an institution-wide assessment plan will also guide the University. Already, the [Argo Guarantee](#), has streamlined the enrollment process and use of DegreeWorks and Quality Matters

expresses the commitment the University has to quality and rigor for both Pillar #1 and Pillar #2 of Academic Excellence and Student Experience.

Internal Considerations

- [Argo Guarantee](#) with [4-year plans](#) is a promise
- Relationship with our corporate sponsor PHSJ recruitment will work to increase enrollees from out of state
- New Enrollment Management processes meaning more student friendly process while providing even better service
- Use of [DegreeWorks](#) to make informed program change decisions by students
- Advising changes: keep assigned advisor; advisor training for consistent message, advising log for record keeping (data stream of number of advising meetings) and for commitment to the [Argo Guarantee](#)

Student, Faculty and Institutional profile for:

- Knowing who our students are through yearly student profile updates, and being able to see changes year to year
- Faculty highlighting on website and enhancing student-faculty connections
- Who is University of Providence in light of the upcoming rebranding? Reaffirming what this institution stand for and intends to accomplish through "[Year of Mission](#)"
- Retention Team revived and using meaningful [research](#) to make meaningful university-wide changes to increase retention such as:
 - Consideration to use GPA instead of ACT/SAT for admission
 - Possibly require student written reflection
 - Look to first year PROGRESS not PERSISTENCE
 - Improved recruiting, enrollment and retention rates
 - Advising changes
 - Student Profiles
 - Improved and streamlined Enrollment Management processes

Capitalizing on the uniqueness of University of Providence:

- [Corps of Discovery](#) – signature program providing freshmen a cohort of students for the Montana experience and networking
- [Core Curriculum](#) – rigorous program of academics including traditional philosophy and theology
- Small class sizes – know the instructor, getting more personalized attention
- [The Argo Guarantee](#) – on coordination with planned 4-year programs
- Sports orientation – bringing the philosophy of whole-person development to our scholar athletes

Understanding the University's history, its assets and its unique place in time, the future ahead for the University is bright as it understands the challenges it faces and has planned to face them proactively.

Conclusion

Undertaking this Year Seven Self-Evaluation for Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities has provided a guided opportunity for the University to take a long, deep look at itself as it moves into the next era of its operation. Completing self-studies for NWCCU is not new to the university. The timing for this self-study is at an opportune moment as the University completed its own review in 2015-16 for the Operational Improvement Plan. Plus, it is opportune in that the University is now heading into a new era under strong, consistent leadership in closer, stronger collaboration with its corporate sponsor, Providence St. Joseph Health, poised for the opportunity to look forward with the changes it has undertaken. With the planning, coordinated efforts, support, close monitoring through [metrics](#), and a new culture of assessment, the University of Providence is in a unique position to develop cutting-edge health care programs and continue traditional liberal arts education, providing foundational knowledge for living and making a living.

The [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) shows that the University has long-standing strengths in the curriculum offered in the School of Liberal Arts and Science and the School of Health Professions. Collaborating with such a dynamic corporate sponsor is a unique opportunity to grow and be flexible to meet the changing needs of students. The previous self-studies of the OIP and NWCCU helped generate the concepts toward improvement within the 5-Year Strategic Plan to leverage the strengths the University has. The studies have also shown areas of needed improvement, most decidedly in providing an institution-wide assessment plan which is quickly becoming a reality. The self-studies have shown the University what it was in its history, what it is now, and the possibilities of what it can become with the quality of the 5-Year Strategic Plan. This understanding led to the “big, bold, fast and excellent” plans now being implemented

Lumen de Lumine – Light from Light

As a Catholic Christian university, the University of Providence espouses, teaches and preaches the covenants of the love, grace and peace of God through our Savior Jesus Christ. The Sisters of Providence provided this foundation, and it is alive and well even now as the Mission of the University is the teaching mission of Jesus Himself with specific attention to the poor and needy among us.

Not only does our mission speak to helping students obtain a liberal education for living and making a living, but the Core Themes are truly Biblical. “Seeking to Understand” is not only academic, but for many students it is seeking to understand oneself as a child of the living God. This seeking to understand is also a part of living, working and learning together. If the disciples who left their nets and other work to follow the Christ had not gained the concept of “Living in Community,” they certainly grew together into living lives that went against popular opinion of the day based upon the knowledge foundation of understanding the kingdom of God. And truly as a faith community, whether Catholic or of all other faiths embraced in community at the University of Providence, all within this community are engaged in “Searching Together,” be it for purely academic pursuits, spiritual definition, career choices, athletic development, networking and learning with cohorts/friends and faculty, service to fellow man, or for the sheer, unfathomable delight of learning - just to see how far one can go.

Whether in a student’s chosen field of study, through the traditional teachings in philosophy and theology, through the University’s Integrated Learning Communities, or Study Abroad

opportunities, the student-centered educational experience of the University of Providence provides exceptional experiences for students to understand themselves, the world around them and their relationships with others to *obtain a liberal education for living and making a living*. Everything – all this and more – is possible with God.

Value of our History

And, as everything is possible with God, the humble history that is the University of Providence's history speaks volumes. The presence of the Sisters of Providence throughout the northwestern part of the United States and the western reaches of Canada from 1856 until the passing of the last of the Sisters' stalwart group has not ended. Their message echoes through the halls of the University of Providence today through the Mission statement as the University follows the examples of the Sisters in its "big, bold, fast and excellent" journey.

Two quotes by the Sisters from the book The Bell and the River by Sister Mary of the Blessed Sacrament McCrosson say it well:

"I have always loved my **community**...I do not regret having spent my strength in the works of the institute." ~ Esther Pariseau, in religion Sister Joseph of the Sacred Heart, 1902

"My dear sisters, allow me to recommend to you the care of the poor in our houses as well as those without. Yes, take care of them...and I assure you that you will have no regrets. Never say that such does not concern you...Sisters, **whatever concerns the poor is always our affair**..." ~ Mother Emelie Gamelin, 1847

Today, the University continues to follow the Mission to support access to high quality, rigorous education, opportunity for challenging sports, gateways to fulfilling careers and opportunity to engage those living in community to provide support for those less advantaged. The University does so in collaboration with Providence St. Joseph Health which, as a premier national health care provider, follows the mission in the care of those in need and the poor through its work in health care. Through its ongoing support of the University of Providence in preparing adults for challenging and rewarding health care careers and life-long learning – education for living and making a living - this remains the Mission supported by our Core Themes into the 21st century.

Leadership

Moving such an historic venture into the 21st century has been, as the Sisters often experienced, an arduous and often-changing task. Much as the Sisters had strength in their leadership with a steady focus on the mission and vision of what was possible (...which is everything through God...) leadership of the University of Providence is working this day with a focus on the mission and now a renewed vision of what is available ahead.

Leadership has provided the hard look at where the University was, and having consistent leadership relying on a moral and ethical base as its foundation, the focus on the Mission is as strong as ever. Completion of a thoughtful Operational Improvement Plan created a base from which a well-devised collaborative Strategic Plan for the upcoming years has been developed. Leadership, through this Strategic Plan, embraces the vision of what the University is and was always meant to be. This work with our colleagues in PJSH is setting the stage for growth and sustainability moving forward. This consistent, collaborative leadership ensures that

there is a “vision keeper” to maintain and capitalize on the momentum the institution has thus far gained to move forward in a highly focused and efficient manner – “big, bold, fast and excellent”.

While the University of Providence recognizes its own struggles, and experiences the same issues as many smaller nonprofit private organizations across the country, this University’s strength lies in this focused leadership with the University working in community with Providence St. Joseph Health. Searching together, moving forward, this historic collaboration is redefining the future of the University through this shared vision. Both schools within the University – The School of Liberal Arts and Science and the School of Health Professions - are looking forward to closer collaboration to provide students with a rigorous, high-quality student-centered learning experience of academic excellence for career track and advanced educational opportunities.

Where the University is now is not where it will be.

Acknowledging the humble but strong beginnings of the University of Providence – as a normal school, then a college and now a university – time shows that change is inevitable. Within change, there are times of uncertainty and stagnation that any organization experiences. In hindsight, all organizations will see that what they were is not what they are. History brings that home. Assessment does as well. To know where the University is going, it needs to know where it is on many levels. The University committed to an institutional assessment plan for academic, quasi- and non-academic programs beginning in 2016 to utilize the cycle of assessment to gather, analyze, use and report assessment data across the University to inform decision making to develop action steps to meet goals determined through data use. To maintain focus on the vision, it is assessment and the data it provides that will guide the University.

Vision keepers acknowledge looking back to honor the roots and foundations of an organization. However, true keepers of the vision are not content to only look back. The University of Providence has looked at itself, honors the past, but has thoughtfully looked to the future, embracing big, bold, fast and excellent ventures for the benefit of the students, the community, and beyond. It has been the University’s desire through this Year Seven Self-Evaluation to present information to honor the past, to confirm the Mission, to explore opportunities, to explain its vision and purpose, and to project the sense of urgency that the institution must in order to tell the story of this University – to be **big** in our thinking, **bold** in our planning, **fast** in working with urgency and **excellent** in executing the plans developed. Everyone at the University must remember:

- Why the University exists – its mission and purpose
- What the University does:
 - the excellent things
 - the good things
 - the things in need of attention for betterment, and
 - its 5-Year strategic Plan with its [metrics](#) to become what this University can and ought to be for sustainability, for the future.
- How the University proceeds: The University faculty, staff and students are always:
 - “Seeking to Understand”
 - “Living in Community”
 - “Searching Together”

Always knowing that through Him, all things are possible.

