Assurance Argument

St. Ambrose University - IA

8/24/2017

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Argument

1.A.1: The purpose of St. Ambrose Seminary, as stated in the 1883 Catalog, was to impart to students a thorough mental culture to enable them to fulfill any chosen position in life. This very mission, though worded differently, guides the institution today. According to the mission, St. Ambrose is an independent, diocesan and Catholic university that enables its students to develop intellectually, spiritually, ethically, socially, artistically and physically to enrich their own lives and the lives of others. The holistic essence of "thorough mental culture" from 1883 is evident in the comprehensive development of students noted in today's mission.

While the institution has grown considerably in the 135 years since its founding, the mission continues to focus on enabling students to enrich lives through academic and co-curricular programs within the context of Catholic and liberal arts traditions. This mission, along with the vision, core values and guiding principles, are broadly understood by the campus community and guide institutional activities, decisions and operations.

The mission serves as a foundation for institutional planning and decision-making and is regularly reviewed, approved and adopted by the Board of Trustees at the beginning of each strategic planning cycle. The latest revisions to the mission statement, approved by the Board of Trustees in April of 2006, were based on recommendations made by the Strategic Planning Committee from input gathered from the campus community and stakeholders though campus workshops and surveys. In 2007, the Strategic Planning Committee began reviewing the institution's vision statement. Again, the committee sought input from the campus community and stakeholders. In the fall of 2008 the current version of the institution's vision was added.

The mission documents were most recently revisited in 2014 at the beginning of the drafting phase for the current Strategic Plan launched in 2015. The review entailed a mission survey administered to faculty, staff and trustees. The Strategic Planning Committee reviewed results from 237 respondents and found evidence of a broad understanding of, and strong commitment to, the institution's mission. The three items respondents agreed with most were:

- *The mission is important* (89.5% agreed or strongly agreed)
- *I understand the mission of the University, even if I cannot recite the exact words* (91.1% agreed or strongly agreed)
- *The mission is meaningful* (81.0% agreed or strongly agreed)

In addition, the Strategic Planning Committee evaluated student perception of the mission. The committee reviewed findings from a 2012 Mission Perception Inventory developed by the Catholic Colleges & Universities consortium. Using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree), 367 first-year students and seniors responded to nine survey items designed to measure sense of mission. Results indicated first-year (median score 4) and senior (median score 3.88) students had a sense of the mission. While the Strategic Planning Committee did not find evidence to support changing the mission, there was room for growth. To support this growth the Committee for Integrated Learning Experiences established *Mission Week* to encourage student reflection on the institution's history, mission and core values. Mission Week is discussed further in response to Criterion 1.B.2.

Measuring understanding of and support for the mission documents is a natural part of institutional evaluation processes. The mission documents continue to be revisited as a first step in the strategic planning process. The current strategic plan, adopted in 2015, is intended to guide the institution until 2020, when St. Ambrose will again engage in a review of its mission documents.

1.A.2: The mission of St. Ambrose University guides the institution's operations, beginning with the Board of Trustees. "Safeguarding the integrity of the Mission of the University" is a major responsibility of trustees, accomplished through review and discussion of the mission at board orientation sessions. The mission documents are also integral to the academic programs, student support services, and the enrollment profile of the institution.

Academic programs are regularly evaluated to ensure alignment with the institutional mission as part of the Educational Policies Committee program review process. This is typically evidenced by the alignment of program mission statements with the institution mission or by program activities with aspects of the institutional mission documents and strategic plan (e.g., Sociology and Women and Gender Studies). Proposals for new academic programs must describe the relationship between the proposed program and the institutional mission and planning objectives (e.g., Doctor of Occupational Therapy and Business Sales).

To ensure student support services are consistent with the institution mission, the Academic Support and University Life committees are charged with reviewing student- and faculty-focused policies developed by the offices of: Admissions, Bookstore, Campus Ministry, Campus Recreation, Career Center, Counseling Services, Financial Aid, General Accounting, Health Services, Information Technology, International Student Services, Library, Records and Registration, Residence Life, Security, Student Accounts, Student Activities and the Student Success Center. In addition to this faculty and staff-led review, the Student Affairs office publishes an annual review of its programs including mission statements, priorities and evidence of fulfillment.

The enrollment profile is consistent with the mission to enable its students to develop holistically within an independent, diocesan, Catholic environment. The profile demonstrates a commitment to serve a variety of learners with a student-faculty ratio suited to enrich students' lives. Demonstrating the institution's core value of diversity in enrollment, the percentage of first-year minority students has increased from 13% in 2012 to 23% in 2016. In addition, St. Ambrose has hired a bilingual Hispanic admission counselor poised to address language barriers that may prevent future students and their families from accessing the institution.

1.A.3: The mission of St. Ambrose University is broadly understood and foundational to strategic planning and budgeting processes. The process of revisiting the mission documents at the beginning of each strategic planning cycle ensures that planning and budget priorities align with and support the mission. This is evident in the current plan as the mission, vision and core values of SAU are discussed as a foundation to the current Strategic Plan and are central to its three themes — *Leading the Community*, *Leading Learning* and *Leading Presence* — and three strategic initiatives. Further discussion of strategic planning and budgeting can be found in the response to Criterion 5.C.1.

Sources

- BOT Statement of Responsibilities
- Enrollment Profile
- EPC Guidelines for New Programs 2012
- EPC New Program Proposal Business Sales and Healthcare Sales
- EPC New Program Proposal Business Sales and Healthcare Sales (page number 2)
- EPC New Program Proposal OTD 2.17.15
- EPC New Program Proposal OTD 2.17.15 (page number 6)
- EPC Program Review Sociology
- EPC Program Review Sociology (page number 15)
- EPC Program Review Template 2017
- EPC Program Review Women and Gender Studies
- EPC Program Review Women and Gender Studies (page number 4)
- FA Academic Support Committee End of Year Report 2016-2017
- FA Faculty Handbook -May 2017
- FA Faculty Handbook -May 2017 (page number 24)
- FA Faculty Handbook -May 2017 (page number 26)
- Mission Documents 2006
- Mission Perception Inventory - NSSE 2012
- Mission Revision Process Summary Documents 2005
- Mission Statement Values and Guiding Principles Approved 2006
- Mission Survey Results 2014
- Strategic Plan 2015
- Strategic Plan 2015 (page number 3)
- Strategic Plan 2015 (page number 5)
- Student Affairs Year in Review 2015-16
- Visioning Process Summary 2008

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

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

Argument

1.B.1: The St. Ambrose University Mission Documents are articulated in public sites and documents, including the St. Ambrose website, Faculty Handbook, Employee Handbook, Student Handbook and Strategic Plan. The Mission Statement is also included on printed materials such print material as departmental and program brochures and on the back of employee business cards. Mission and Vision certificates, bookmarks and notepads are periodically distributed at faculty/staff assemblies, strategic planning meetings, and new employee orientations and are available to others upon request from the Communications & Marketing Office. More than 30 Mission and Vision certificates are displayed in public spaces around campus.

The St. Ambrose's mission has been further articulated and publicized through the Scene Magazine, the institution's flagship periodical publication with a circulation of about 30,000. To ensure that both internal and external stakeholders are kept up to date with how these Core Values and Guiding Principles are being lived out, past issues focused on explaining and demonstrating the Core Mission Values and Guiding Principles: Life-Long Learning (summer 2014), Catholicity (fall 2014), Diversity (spring 2015), Integrity (summer 2015), and Liberal Arts (fall 2015).

1.B.2: As noted in Criteria 1.A.1., the mission documents remain current through review and discussion by the St. Ambrose community. In 2014, the provost, with his academic leadership team, convened a focus group of 24 faculty, staff and students to re-examine the Core Values and Guiding Principles for clarity. This work informed the Strategic Planning Committee as it prepared to draft the new plan. The Committee hosted strategic planning workshops, in which faculty and staff discussed how the institution could better fulfill the mission. In February 2016, these discussions were broadened to include students and alumni through a series of events collectively titled Mission Week. The purpose was to encourage reflection on the institution's history, mission and core values and how curricular, co-curricular and community involvement contribute to one's identity as an Ambrosian. This reflection included a discussion about leveraging the liberal arts, the thoughts of an alumnus about how the St. Ambrose mission has impacted his life, the role of business in ensuring a just society, a celebration of Chinese New Year, a presentation of Casual Classics and a Mission Fair featuring a conversation about core values, information on service activities and opportunities and "I am an Ambrosian because…" elevator speech contest. Based on the success of Mission Week, it was repeated in spring semester 2017.

1.B.3: The St. Ambrose University mission documents remain relevant in identifying the nature,

scope, and intended constituents of institutional programs and services. This is explained in the preamble to the Strategic Plan.

St. Ambrose University works to serve the educational needs of the Diocese as well as the greater Midwestern region within the Carnegie classification of Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs. As such, St. Ambrose offers both graduate and undergraduate degrees, including three doctoral programs, 13 masters programs, and more than 50 undergraduate programs in traditional liberal arts majors as well as professional and initial licensure programs. Serving residential and commuting traditional-age and adult students, St. Ambrose strives to support life-long learners through curriculum delivery modes that are traditional, accelerated and online, as well as through opportunities for professional development.

Governance documents also demonstrate the alignment of institutional expectations with the mission. The Faculty Handbook provides clear guidelines for the evaluation of faculty based on teaching, scholarship and service, and the Employee Handbook addresses conduct in the workplace and grievance procedures.

Sources

- Core Values Study Summary 2014
- FA Faculty Handbook -May 2017
- FA Faculty Handbook -May 2017 (page number 9)
- FA Faculty Handbook -May 2017 (page number 55)
- Mission Week Calendar 2017
- Scene Core Value Publications 2014-2015
- Staff Handbook 2017
- Strategic Plan 2015
- Strategic Plan 2015 (page number 2)
- Strategic Planning Workshop Agendas 2014
- Student Handbook 2017
- Student Handbook 2017 (page number 2)
- Universal (Employee) Handbook 2017
- Universal (Employee) Handbook 2017 (page number 4)
- Universal (Employee) Handbook 2017 (page number 34)

1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Argument

1.C.1: Diversity is a core value of St. Ambrose University. St. Ambrose "believes in the inherent God-given dignity and worth of every person. St. Ambrose strives to develop an understanding of human cultures, achievements, capabilities and limitations to promote justice and peace and use our talents in service to others and the world." Since St. Ambrose's last HLC reauthorization visit in 2007, the institution has challenged itself to move the core value of diversity from documentation to action and impact within the institution and to expand its role in a multicultural society.

The St. Ambrose University Diversity Work Group established in 2006, consists of faculty and staff from campus. The DWG believes that, "…to achieve the fullest measure of human potential, St. Ambrose needs to develop a broad awareness of human cultures, achievements, capabilities and limitations, and to learn specific skills so that we might use our talents in the service of other people and the world in which we live." The DWG has been instrumental in guiding St. Ambrose and its actions as related to its core value of Diversity. In 2010, the DWG developed the Decade of Diversity, identifying pragmatic steps to enhance diversity at St. Ambrose. Using the DWG strategic priorities, 101 initiatives were generated to guide the campus for a 10-year period. Discussion of the initiatives and accomplishments are noted in section 3.B.4.

The St. Ambrose University Board of Trustees adopted a Statement on Diversity in 2006. This statement publicly affirms St. Ambrose's commitment to diversity.

The St. Ambrose University Strategic Plan set a strategic benchmark for increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of students, faculty and staff to better reflect the diversity of the region and local community. To help meet this benchmark, the Enrollment Management division, in consultation with Royall and Co. enrollment services, has strategically targeted Hispanic students through enrollment campaigns and added a Spanish speaking admission counselor to serve Spanish speaking families. To complement this strategy and reduce barriers to enrollment such as affordability, the Freedman Pollard Minority Student Scholarship program was revised in the fall of 2016. The award become automatic to incoming first-year students who self-identify as minorities. Before this change, students were required to attend an all-day on-campus event, complete an interview, and submit a writing sample in order to receive the award. This change expanded the reach of the aid from $160,000 annually to more than $600,000 for the incoming class of fall 2017.

The institution continues to focus on increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of faculty and staff. In spring of 2017, the Student and Academic Affairs Leadership Team developed a plan with short- and long-term strategies to achieve a goal of "20% racial and ethnic diversity at mid and upper level management positions, faculty within each academic college and staff positions throughout St. Ambrose." In the short term, protocol for new hires has been adjusted, as well as plans for implicit bias training of employees. Long-term work includes securing financial resources to develop diverse

candidates from within the institution as well as make competitive offers to attract candidates outside St. Ambrose community.

1.C.2: For the past nine years, the College of Arts & Sciences has led across-campus efforts to use faculty expertise, local and international speakers, texts, and most importantly students and regional community members to explore annual themes, enhancing student learning both in and out of the classroom. Known as the Project Series, these efforts have provided yearlong teaching and learning opportunities centered on the investigated of topics such as race, justice, gender, migration, work and sustainability. The 2016-2017 theme is Faces of Globalization. Efforts will be made to highlight the worldwide interconnectedness of important aspects of human life, from religion, music and art to trade, migration and war. In alignment with St. Ambrose's core values of diversity and lifelong learning, this investigation will deploy a variety of events highlighting differences as a way to more clearly understand the various aspects of globalization and increase awareness of globalization on campus, regionally and nationally in our global communities.

As noted in the Strategic Plan, St. Ambrose is committed to increase opportunities for students to travel abroad, as well as to provide a welcoming and supportive campus for international students. Both the College of Business and College of Health & Human Services have Internationalization Committees consisting of college faculty committed to identifying and designing study abroad opportunities for their majors. For example, the COB has designed a Summer in Canada program for marketing majors hosted with partner school, Kings College, as well as Spring Break in Italy for all majors to study and engaging in the European business market, as well as the Roman Catholic history of St. Ambrose. In 2013, St. Ambrose added an admission counselor focused entirely on international student enrollment with the goal of enrolling at least 100 international students annually. St. Ambrose has met this goal and is now focused on the long-term needs to sustain this enrollment target. As such, opportunities to expand the impact of a St. Ambrose education includes the assessment of countries on many factors such as ESL demand, program demand at undergraduate and graduate levels, funding and scholarship opportunities for students, and regional connections.

Initiatives to support international students include the Interlink Language Center for prospective students and International Student Services for enrolled students. Both initiatives allow St. Ambrose to welcome diversity on campus. Begun in January 2017, St. Ambrose partnered with Interlink, an intensive English program, in order to serve students who do not meet St. Ambrose's minimum English language proficiency standards, dramatically expanding the scale and the scope of international recruiting efforts. International students may enroll for conditional admission through Interlink. Upon successful completion, students have the option of transitioning to degree-seeking status at St. Ambrose. Likewise, International Student Services are available to address international student issues, as well as advocate for students on campus. This includes such services as Student Ambassadors, applying for a Social Security number, taxes, driving licenses and apostilled (verification) documents, as well as orientation programs before the start of the academic year.

Sources

- CAS PROJECT Faces of Globalization 2017
- Decade of Diversity Webpage
- International Education Country Assessment 2017-2018
- International Education Student Orientation 2017
- ROYALL Summary Contracts
- SP 2015 Leading the Way - Benchmarks Internal with Divisonal Work - Complete 2-14-17

- SP 2015 Leading the Way - Initiative #1 Fac Staff Diversity Plan 2017
- Statement of Diversity Approved April 2006

1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

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

Argument

1.D.1: St. Ambrose University remains committed to enriching students' lives through education. From its inception, the institution has provided an education grounded in the liberal arts that prepares students to enter a variety of professional fields and continue their education. By aligning educational offerings with regional demands, St. Ambrose University invests in its students and the communities they serve.

St. Ambrose University is a diocesan university. While financially independent from the diocese, the institution was founded to serve the educational needs of the Diocese of Davenport. In collaboration with the diocese, and in the spirit of our historical partnership, St. Ambrose offers a deacon preparation program to support local parishes and a scholarship program to support high school students who go on to enroll at St. Ambrose.

Importantly, in the spirit of being "in and of the community," St. Ambrose has expanded its allied health sciences programs through partnerships with Genesis Health Systems, Unity Point Trinity and many other systems, which serve as sites for clinical education, internships and fieldwork. Through the efforts of both St. Ambrose and Genesis Health Systems, a new SAU Center for Health Education at Genesis West was built to support our growing health programs. These partnerships have produced nurses regionally and supported the education of physical therapists, physician assistants, occupational therapists and speech language pathologists.

Beyond educating graduates with highly valued skills, St. Ambrose University is also proud of its work in directly serving the needs of regional communities. The St. Ambrose University Occupational Therapy Department has an assistive technology program that is a resource for students, as well as health care providers, clinicians, teachers, potential clients, caregivers and community members so they may help others in need improve function in their life roles. This includes Jim's Place, a home showcasing adaptations for independent living. Jim's Place is committed to occupational justice and service as a regional and national resource in assistive technology solutions for therapists, organizations and individuals, and to provide knowledge, services and opportunities that assist in enhancing the quality of lives through assistive technology. Through assistive technology outreach, occupational therapy faculty, staff and students have quietly helped thousands people with disabilities, to live lives of meaning and independence locally, regionally and internationally. The assistive technology lab has long been the Quad Cities' "secret jewel," and Jim's Place gives this community treasure a physical home.

In 2016, St. Ambrose University premiered an Interprofessional Health Clinic to provide student-led interprofessional health care services to underserved populations, emphasizing on compassionate care, empowerment of the individual, management of health conditions and overall wellness. While the clinic addresses the immediate needs of patients, the care focuses on empowering patients to work on long-term management of their health conditions. The clinic stresses prevention and education, ensures all patients are treated with the respect they deserve, and serves patients with physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech language therapy and social work needs.

Rooted in the liberal arts tradition, St. Ambrose philosophy faculty and students piloted a mediation program in 2013 with the Davenport Public Schools and Quad City Mediation Service. This program has grown into a semester long opportunity for St. Ambrose students to become trained in mediation and conflict resolution and then assist to middle school students to adopt various perspectives for a just outcome. The St. Ambrose students model the importance of clear communication in the face of conflict. This program provides an opportunity for St. Ambrose students to hone their mediation skills while also supporting the conflict resolution and diversion curricula of Davenport middle school students.

1.D.2: As a 501.(c)(3) nonprofit organization, St. Ambrose University is diligent in maintaining its fiscal strength and investing in teaching and learning to ensure its financial sustainability. This commitment to teaching and learning is evidenced by the most recent 5-year report of institutional revenue and expenses per FTE student. As reported in IPEDS, 47% of institutional resources are allocated to instruction with an additional 27% allocated to student support services. St. Ambrose does not generate financial returns for investors, contribute to a related or parent organization, or support external interests.

1.D.3: St. Ambrose University strives to remain engaged with its stakeholders and the local community and to respond to their needs in a way that serves its mission and students. St. Ambrose recognizes its impact on the region as an economic contributor, an intellectual resource and an organization committed to Catholic ideals of service and justice.

In 2014, St. Ambrose took strategic steps to engage alumni, learning how graduates were prepared to further their education or found successful careers, and how to continue to improve the student experience whether graduate or undergraduate. This work is known as the Alumni Advisory Council Program and acknowledges the uniquely Ambrosian imprint alumni are making in the communities in which they live and work. The membership of the council includes alumni who are influential community leaders, business professionals, advocates and educators. Currently six different alumni advisory councils serve the academic colleges, student affairs and the President's Office by meeting regularly and providing insight and recommendations on curricular and co-curricular programs, as well as larger strategic initiatives of institution. For example, in the spring of 2017, the College of Health & Human Services Alumni Advisory Board met for the annual spring meeting. Consisting of alumni currently serving as school administrators, nonprofit directors, therapists and researchers in the Midwest, CHHS advisory board members provided insight on high impact practices they experienced as students and the connection of those experiences to professional fields and life-long learning. The advisory board reviewed the latest CHHS plan created in response to St. Ambrose's Strategic Plan calling for increased levels of student engagement and academic persistence and success. The CHHS board will continue to review the progress of the plan annually as reported by the CHHS chairs and directors.

Bringing stakeholders to campus for insight and guidance is not enough. To be Ambrosian, outreach is key, and service is a key component of the St. Ambrose Community. This is evident from Staff Assembly annual service projects, to faculty service requirements for promotion and tenure, to the

active service of the president and her Cabinet of administrators on a variety of leading community boards. In all these instances, St. Ambrose representatives share their talents and the institution's core values built upon peace and justice.

Committed to respond to and address the needs of the local community, St. Ambrose University served as a nonpartisan official site for the presidential primaries of 2016. Upon reflection of Faithful Citizenship and as noted in its policy, St. Ambrose University does not endorse any political party, its platform or its candidates. Rather, St. Ambrose provides a setting where civil and respectful debate about substantive issues can take place. With respect for the political and election processes, St. Ambrose served as a host and venue that endorse the engagement of citizens and their right to vote. Committed to democracy and justice, a student and faculty member also provided open forums designed to teach persons with disabilities how to exercise their voting rights. This provides further evidence of an institutional commitment to address the needs of the community in a relevant and timely manner.

Sources

- CHHS Advisory Board Agenda Spring 2017 FINAL
- CHHS Advisory Board Notes 2017
- CHHS High Impact Practices - May 2, 2017
- Faithful Citizenship 2015
- IPEDS Expense per FTE Student and Distribution of Core Expenses
- MEDIATION News - In Perspective, There Are Ethics
- Planning for HIPs - Academic Programs
- Political Activity Policy
- President Cabinet
- QC Chamber Talent Development 2017
- Staff Assembly Service Project Summary 2013-2016

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

St. Ambrose University clearly articulates its mission and relevant mission documents to the campus, prospective students, stakeholders and the general public. The mission guides both ongoing operations and planning for the future.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

Argument

Guiding policies and processes for St. Ambrose begin with four key documents: the bylaws for the Board of Trustees, Faculty Handbook, Staff Handbook and the Universal Handbook.

The St. Ambrose University Board of Trustees is governed by its bylaws outlined in the Board Manual. The bylaws note the size, qualifications, powers, roles and duties of the Trustees. To help ensure adherence to the bylaws, the board manual contains a new member orientation documenting the organizational structure of St. Ambrose, the board mentor program, the roles and responsibilities of the trustees, committee and roster descriptions, and compliance requirements including the Form 990, financial audit, and conflict of interest and self-review. The Board Manual, bylaws, and guiding documents constitute the foundation of integrity from which institutional oversight and mission safe-guarding begin. The handbook is reviewed by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees.

The Faculty Handbook notes policies and procedures to guide fair and ethical behavior within the academic functions including personnel and components of St. Ambrose. The handbook identifies academic structures, including the roles of academic administrators and 12 faculty governance committees to address, monitor, evaluate and plan for areas connected to academics through the tenure process, research, curriculum development and student support. In addition to these governance committees, faculty personnel policies outline procedures for faculty review, academic freedom, tenure, dismissal, leave and retirement, and recognize types of faculty who serve St. Ambrose such as clinical, graduate, librarian, and part-time faculty. The handbook is reviewed by the Handbook Committee of the Faculty Assembly.

The Staff Handbook contains policies to guide the fair and ethical treatment of staff at St. Ambrose in areas related to benefits, wage and salary administration, performance evaluations, Family Medical Leave Act rights, job descriptions and terminations. The handbook also contains the establishment of the Staff Assembly, a complement to the Faculty Assembly, with a mission to facilitate discussions of common concerns and provide mechanisms to promote staff development, collegial spirit, and facilitate closer ties with faculty, students and administration. The handbook is reviewed by the Human Resource Committee.

In addition to the Faculty and Employee handbooks, in 2015 St. Ambrose established a Universal Handbook consisting of policies and procedures to guide faculty and staff in relation to university operations. The Universal Handbook provides guidance concerning employment policies, work rules

and benefits, as well as policies to guide fair and ethical behavior of faculty and staff. In addition to the organizational structure, the handbook notes policies and procedures compliance with Title IX, Equal Opportunity, Harassment and Nondiscrimination laws, conflict of interest policies, security, safety and health, and the Employee Assistance Program. The handbook is maintained by the Human Resources Department and reviewed by University counsel.

In 2015, St. Ambrose hired a director of compliance to develop, and maintain an effective and broad-based compliance program designed to prevent, monitor and detect areas of noncompliance and recommend corrective action, when necessary, to fully meet compliance requirements. In 2017, the director developed the SAU Compliance Committee to promote institution-wide understanding of obligations to internal and external constituencies and to build commitment to fulfilling these obligations. This committee meets quarterly to review institutional obligations and accountable departments and individuals, and develop strategies and tactics for removing deficiencies.

Sources

- BOT Statement of Responsibilities
- BOT Trustee Manual Table of Contents and List of Documents
- BPT By-laws Revised October 2012
- Compliance Committee
- Director of University Compliance
- FA Faculty Handbook -May 2017
- Staff Handbook 2017
- Universal (Employee) Handbook 2017

2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

Argument

While a variety of print and media materials are used to clearly and completely inform the students and public about St. Ambrose University, the institutional website makes information, standards and policies widely available to prospective and current students, staff, faculty and community stakeholders as part of the institutional commitment to integrity.

The Communications & Marketing Office has primary responsibility for public presentation of the institution. This office has a twofold purpose: to keep the campus and greater community informed and engaged, and to promote the image of St. Ambrose. This is accomplished through institutional publications, advertising, the website, special events and media relations; and through helping other departments with these kinds of projects. While St. Ambrose provides print material to the public — especially prospective students — much of this material is shared through St. Ambrose's website. By continually directing prospective students, current students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, employers, donors and community members to the website, St. Ambrose strives to present a consistent brand and information. The Brand Manual and Attribute Messages help communicate what St. Ambrose stands for: our brand and our values.

The website (www.sau.edu) provides clear and complete information with regards to programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, controls, and accreditation in a consistent format. Webpages for academic programs are readily accessible from the main landing page and share a common layout, enabling students to explore a chosen program, learn its requirements, consider associated careers, and become acquainted with the faculty of the program by viewing their qualifications and fields of interest. The Financial Aid Office webpage provides information on program costs and fees as well as policies for refund and withdrawal. In addition, a Net Price Calculator is available to estimate out-of-pocket expenses for students in addition to published tuition, room, board and fees.

St. Ambrose University currently has eight programs with specialized accreditation. In addition, the College of Business contains several programs accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools & Programs. These programs are noted on the web and are all in good standing with both state regulators and national specialized accrediting bodies. In addition to its status with accrediting bodies, St. Ambrose University also publically shares outcomes data related to a variety of university aspects associated with both its mission and institutional assessment plan. These outcomes, along with Right to Know Data and the Common Data Set can be found on the Assessment & Institutional Research webpage.

Sources

- SAU Brand Attribute Messages
- SAU Brand Manual

2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Argument

2.C.1: The St. Ambrose University Board of Trustees provides leadership to the institution through discernment and decision-making consistent with the institutional mission, vision and values. As the ultimate governing body of the institution within the ever-changing landscape of higher education, the Board of Trustees must be fully informed of the institution's status and goals. A review of board education topics, as well as the agendas and minutes of the board meetings (available in President's Office) reflect institutional needs and priorities. As a standard component of every Board of Trustees meeting since 2008, these topics have focused on key issues and key student programming related to the long-term stability of the institution. These topics include master planning, enrollment management, university finances, First Year Experience, athletics, Campus Ministry, diversity and Title IX. These topics also align with key trustee responsibilities to safeguard the integrity of the mission of St. Ambrose and to provide fiduciary oversight for St. Ambrose. The time and interest that the Board of Trustees has placed on these issues directly reflect the priorities of the Board and the University in their commitment to both preserve and enhance the education St. Ambrose provides to its students.

2.C.2: In addition to discussing board education topics presented to the Board of Trustees as a whole, trustees are required to actively participate in the work of on one or more of the 10 Board committees identified in Article III of the Bylaws. In addition to the 10 standing committees, special committees can be called into existence on an ad hoc basis to investigate and report to the Board of Trustees on special issues not covered by one of the standing committees. This work requires trustees to review and consider reasonable and relevant interests of the institution to inform decision-making. In addition to trustees, faculty and staff contribute (as nonvoting members) to the information presented and discussed during the committee meetings. For example, the Committee on Academic & Student Affairs consists of trustees; the provost/vice president for Academic & Student Affairs; academic deans; administrators from Assessment and Institutional Research, Information Resources and various student service offices; and faculty and student representatives. This committee regularly reviews Faculty Handbook changes, reviews and approves proposed academic program additions and closures, reviews student government updates, and reviews strategic planning and program prioritization. The committee also discusses programming directly related to serving students such as Title IX, housing, drug and alcohol education, and faculty promotion and tenure processes.

2.C.3: The governing board maintains its independence from undue influence when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution. St. Ambrose University is a private, nonprofit Catholic university affiliated with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Davenport. While St. Ambrose University is affiliated with the diocese and the bishop serves as the chair of the Board of Trustees, the institution is financially independent of the diocese and functions as its own corporation. This balance provides for both a strong affiliation and alignment, as well as independence. All trustees must adhere to Article VI of the Bylaws that addresses conflicts of interest. A trustee is considered to have a conflict of interest if such trustee has an existing or potential financial or other interest which impairs or might reasonably appear to impair such trustee's independent and unbiased judgment in the discharge of his or her responsibilities to St. Ambrose. In addition to complying with the Bylaws, trustees must complete an Annual Conflict of Interest Questionnaire as well as an Annual Self Review. Ex Officio members of the board include the President's Cabinet. Board membership is self-perpetuating, thus helping to balance the chance of any undue influence of ex officio members.

2.C.4: The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the president, who in turn delegates responsibilities to appropriate administrators, faculty and staff. As stated in the Bylaws Article IV, "the University President shall be the chief executive officer of the institution, responsible to the Board of Trustees." While it is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to select and employ the president, the Bylaws clearly state that president holds the necessary authority and responsibility to operate St. Ambrose. Additional authorities and responsibilities can be found in the Bylaws, as well as, in the institutional organizational chart and the primary functions noted on the president's job description.

Through the oversight of the provost/vice president for Academic & Student Affairs, the governing board also expects faculty, through the Faculty Assembly, to oversee academic matters through policies detailed in the Faculty Handbook. Academic policy decisions are ultimately approved by the governing board. The Faculty Handbook notes that "the Faculty Assembly is, the President of the University and the Board of Trustees concurring, the legislating and negotiating body in the areas of primary faculty concern." This acknowledges the Faculty Assembly as having primary responsibility for curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and aspects of student life relating to the educational process. The Handbook also acknowledges faculty status and related matters are primary faculty responsibilities including appointments, reappointments, decisions not to appoint, promotions, the granting of tenure, and dismissal.

Sources

- BOT Conflict of Interest 2013-14
- BOT Education Topics 2008 to Present
- BOT Self Review 2013-14
- BOT Statement of Responsibilities
- BPT By-laws Revised October 2012
- BPT By-laws Revised October 2012 (page number 6)
- BPT By-laws Revised October 2012 (page number 13)
- FA Faculty Handbook -May 2017
- FA Faculty Handbook -May 2017 (page number 4)
- Organizational Chart 2017
- President Job Description 2014

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

St. Ambrose University identifies integrity as one of its core values. Ambrosians believe individuals are capable of living in the fullest measure when their lives are freely based on values that acknowledge a loving God and a life-affirming moral code. Therefore, faculty, staff and students are committed to teaching, learning and working in a climate of mutual respect, honesty and integrity where excellence and academic freedom are cherished in the pursuit of truth. This commitment is evident in Section III of the Faculty Handbook, which explains faculty personnel policies and commits to academic freedom and responsibility in accordance with the 1940 Statement of the Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretive Comments of the American Association of University Professors. The Student Handbook directly connects St. Ambrose's policy on Academic Integrity with the institution's mission and core values.

Sources

- FA Faculty Handbook -May 2017
- FA Faculty Handbook -May 2017 (page number 4)
- Mission Documents 2006
- Student Handbook 2017
- Student Handbook 2017 (page number 11)

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

Argument

2.E.1: St. Ambrose University provides oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students. The federally registered Institutional Review Board utilizes federal regulations to define research as "a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge." University policy requires submission to the IRB of all activities involving human subjects, whether the activity is regarded as research by the federal definition or if the activity involves the collection of any sensitive information, including but not limited to implications for criminal or civil liability, employability, damage to the subject's financial standing or reputation, or gender identity or sexual orientation. It is the policy of the institution that no research conducted under the jurisdiction of St. Ambrose expose persons who participate as participants or respondents to unreasonable risks to their health, general well-being or privacy. Therefore, all research activities involving the use of human participants are submitted for prior review by the University Institutional Review Board to (1) ensure that the above conditions are met, and (2) encourage and promote a high level of campus awareness and communication regarding University research projects. Primary responsibility for ensuring the rights and welfare of the individuals involved are protected continues to rest with the principal investigators conducting research involving the use of human participants. This responsibility is shared by others engaged in the conduct of the research. Faculty or staff who assign or supervise research conducted by students have an obligation to consider carefully whether those students are qualified to safeguard adequately the rights and welfare of participants. Principal investigators and faculty sponsors are responsible for Institutional Review Board policies. Failure to apply for and receive permission for human participants research from the Institutional Review Board, or altering the research process in a substantive manner after securing Institutional Review Board approval, violates Institutional Review Board policy and may result in sanctions.

2.E.2: St. Ambrose University students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources. All undergraduate students are required to successfully complete a course on Information Literacy (IL 101) or to transfer in equivalent work. This course covers an introduction to techniques of information retrieval, critical evaluation of that information, and ethical use of information. **Course assessments** show that engaged students who attend class, participate, and who undertake and complete all assignments leave this course with the skills necessary to locate and critically evaluate information, develop effective research strategies, and to ethically apply these concepts to undergraduate research using Library resources and the internet.

2.E.3: As noted previously, St. Ambrose University is committed to its core value of Integrity. As

such, the institution enforces its policy on academic honesty and integrity. The [policy](#), maintained by the Registrar's Office, is available in both the [Cource Catalog](#) and the office website. Students are also provided a copy of the policy in the [Student Handbook](#). This policy defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance, multiple use, falsification or fabrication, complicity or abuse of academic materials. The policy also notes both consequences, as well as procedures to be followed in instances of violation. Specifically, notices of first infraction are initiated by the faculty member and students work with the Student Success Center in areas of remediation of understanding. Subsequent infractions require a hearing by the [Board of Studies Committee](#) with consequences of either probation, suspension or expulsion. Students have due process to appeal this decision to the provost/vice president for Academic & Student Affairs. Records of violations are maintained by the Office of Records & Registration.

Sources

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Human Subjects Federal Definition
- IRB Policy
- SAU Catalog 15-17
- SAU Catalog 15-17 (page number 31)
- SAU Catalog 15-17 (page number 95)
- Student Handbook 2017
- Student Handbook 2017 (page number 11)
- Student Handbook 2017 (page number 49)

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

In demonstrating integrity as a core value and guiding principle, St. Ambrose University has established and implemented policies and procedures to guide operations to ensure the ethical and responsible treatment of faculty, staff and stakeholders.

Sources

There are no sources.

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

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Argument

3.A.1: Expectations for student performance are articulated through student learning outcomes. To communicate course-level expectations, the Educational Policies Committee requires all syllabi list SLOs along with grading criteria. These course-level SLOs are regularly evaluated by EPC through the program review process and are archived in course summary sheets. Though technically a faculty governance committee, EPC's membership includes faculty, staff, students and administration. To assist in the assessment process, the Office of Assessment hosts workshops to help faculty write clear, appropriate, student-focused SLOs.

Program-level expectations are communicated through program requirements, essential functions and program-level SLOs. Program requirements published in the Catalog, outline the courses and standards students must meet for program admission, progression and completion. Essential Functions and Technical Standards, developed in conjunction with the director of Accessibility Resource Center (formerly Student Disability Services) and shared in the SAU Portal, document essential non-academic criteria for program participation. Program-level SLOs, annual assessment forms, and academic program websites, communicate the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values expected of students as a result of completing an academic program.

As an example, the Catalog describes the 29-month Master of Physician Assistant Studies program, listing admissions requirements, prerequisite courses and curricular requirements. The program's website explains technical standards (e.g., sensory function and behavioral attributes) for admission, progression and graduation. The program's assessment form articulates SLOs to communicate expectations for student performance. These materials, along with course syllabi, help students and faculty gain a shared understanding of performance expectations.

Academic programs have long been required to articulate program-level SLOs. Since 2011, these SLOs have been documented in online assessment forms (shared Google drive) for each program. The Assessment & Evaluation Committee initially evaluated these SLOs in 2012 using a rubric that set expectations for clarity, focus and appropriateness. Programs used feedback from this initial

evaluation to improve their outcomes.

Program-level SLOs continue to be evaluated and improved as part of the program review process, in which each program explains how its outcomes are appropriate to its mission and students. For example, in a review of the proposed business sales major, EPC found the program- and course-level SLOs too vague. EPC recommended faculty work with the assessment coordinator to clarify and strengthen the SLOs. Within a month, these course- and program-level SLOs were rewritten and approved by EPC.

The review process also requires programs to reflect on the relevancy, currency and appropriateness of curricular requirements. For many professional programs, evidence of this is provided by maintaining specialized external accreditation. For example, in order to maintain accreditation with the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education the Nursing Program must demonstrate curricular requirements are aligned with relevant, current and appropriate SLOs. Specifically, CCNE requires the Nursing Program to document:

- Expected student outcomes are revised to reflect professional nursing standards (Standard 1-B).
- The curriculum is developed to reflect relevant professional nursing standards and guidelines (Standard 3-B).
- The curriculum considers the needs and expectations of the identified community of interest (Standard 3-F).
- The curriculum is evaluated at regularly scheduled intervals to foster ongoing improvement (Standard 3-H).

Impressive pass rates on licensure and certification exams for graduate professional programs — such as the 97-100% first time pass rate for students in the Master of Occupational Therapy program from 2011-2016 on the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy exam or the 96% first time pass rate of students in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program on the National Physical Therapy Exam — provide further evidence that curricular requirements and expectations for student performance are appropriate.

Several academic programs without specialized external accreditation ensure relevancy and currency by seeking feedback from advisory groups or by aligning program expectations with recommendations from professional organizations. The Chemistry Department, for example, checks for relevancy and currency through regular alumni surveys and by aligning its curriculum, training in analytical instrumentation and assessment to recommendations from the American Chemical Society. The Kinesiology Department evaluated the relevancy and currency of its curriculum against recommendations from professional organizations. This led the department to update its program-level SLOs and propose significant curricular changes.

To further document the relevancy and currency of SLOs, EPC recently approved a new program review template that requires every academic program to "provide evidence that outcomes align with best practices, professional standards/recommendations, and/or outcomes from similar programs at other institutions" and to "provide evidence that the outcomes are appropriate for an undergraduate/graduate program."

3.A.2: While the new program review template requires all programs to justify the appropriateness of their SLOs, graduate-level programs have had to address this since 2012. Graduate programs typically demonstrate the appropriateness of their SLOs by aligning outcomes to higher-order thinking skills or by benchmarking outcomes against professional standards. For example, the Master of Social Work program aligns its SLOs with standards from the Council on Social Work Education, the Master of

Education in Educational Administration program aligns with the Iowa Standards for School Leaders, and the Master of Accounting program aligns with CPA certification standards.

A comparison of SLOs from the undergraduate Criminal Justice program and the Master of Criminal Justice provides evidence of differentiated outcomes. While SLOs from both programs address similar areas (e.g., communication, research methodologies, ethics), outcomes for the graduate-level program represent higher levels of cognitive achievement. While the undergraduate program expects students to "identify and explain" (verbs representing lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy) theories underlying the criminal justice system, the graduate-level program expects students to "identify, evaluate and interpret" (higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy) these theories.

The Catalog also documents differentiated expectations for undergraduate and graduate programs. This is reflected in separate catalog sections describing requirements for undergraduate, master's and doctoral programs. Course numbering also reflects differentiated expectations for undergraduate courses (numbered 000-499) and graduate courses (numbered 500-999). For courses open to both undergraduate and graduate students, course SLOs are differentiated. For example, the Teacher Education Program offers Elementary Content Reading to both undergraduate (as EDUC 459) and graduate (as EDUC 559) students. The course description differentiates prerequisites and course requirements for each type of student, explaining that graduate students are required to complete a literacy coach module.

St. Ambrose University offers a post-professional certificate program: the Clinical Residency in Orthopedic Physical Therapy. The SLOs of this program, such as "Demonstrate advanced orthopedic physical therapy patient management skills, emphasizing patient safety, intervention effectiveness, and efficiency" clearly differentiate it from other types of programs. St. Ambrose also offers a graduate Youth Ministry Certificate offering coursework designed for those desiring specialized knowledge and skills in youth ministry.

3.A.3: To ensure program quality and learning goals are consistent across modes of delivery and locations, all programs are held to the same requirements and expectations through common annual assessment and program review processes and templates. To ensure consistency of course-level student learning outcomes, programs complete a single summary sheet for each course, regardless of location or mode of delivery.

In addition to the main campus in Davenport, St. Ambrose maintains 10 additional locations across the state of Iowa. This is documented in the Multi-Location Visit Peer Review Report, which followed an HLC visit in November 2015. This peer review report describes how "all processes, including admissions, enrollment, curriculum development, faculty and staff hiring, budgeting, and planning are managed at the institution level, rather than the local (additional location) level." This centralized planning helps ensure consistency in program quality across locations. The Peer Report also describes how this centralized planning ensures all locations have adequate facilities, staffing and student support services, and how St. Ambrose maintains consistency in curriculum across locations.

Over time, the part-time adult-focused ACCEL program became more self-contained as ACCEL staff became responsible for academic program reviews for ACCEL-based programs. When the current provost/vice president for Academic & Student Affairs took office in 2008, he ensured academic departments provided direct oversight for ACCEL-based programs. For example, the Management Department now provides oversight for the Bachelor of Business Administration degree program and the Accounting Department now provides oversight for the Bachelor of Business Administration – Accounting degree program. These moves have strengthened faculty accountability for these programs and more full-time faculty now regularly teach in ACCEL-based programs.

To ensure consistency across modes of delivery, the Center for Instructional Design and Technology maintains a Distance Education Manual outlining policies related to online, hybrid, and web-enhanced teaching and learning. The manual provides guidance to faculty as they convert traditional courses to other modes of delivery. The Manual states: "Remember, course-level student learning outcomes must remain consistent across modes of delivery. If you are revising an existing course to be taught online, do not modify the student learning outcomes."

St. Ambrose has been a member of the Online Consortium of Independent Colleges and Universities national course exchange, managed by New Ventures of Regis University, since 1995. This membership was reaffirmed in 2015. Through this consortia arrangement, St. Ambrose students have had access to online courses offered by other regionally accredited, independent, not-for-profit institutions that students can use when needing to take a course not currently offered by St. Ambrose to help ensure timely degree completion. To ensure the quality and consistency of coursework offered through the OCICU, St. Ambrose faculty review course content for equivalency.

Sources

- 1253 20150602 Multi Location Visit - Letter
- CCNE Standards 2013
- Distance Education Manual 2015
- DPT Student Success
- EPC Assessment Crim Justice GR Outcomes 2016
- EPC Assessment Crim Justice UG Outcomes 2013
- EPC Assessment Workshop for Academic Programs 2014-2015
- EPC Course Summary Sheet 2017-2018
- EPC Graduate Program Review Guidelines 2014-2015
- EPC Guidelines for New Programs 2012
- EPC KIN Assessment Letter 2015
- EPC MSW Assessment Letter 2012
- EPC Program Review CHEM 2016
- EPC Program Review CHEM 2016 (page number 21)
- EPC Program Review KIN 2015
- EPC Program Review KIN 2015 (page number 14)
- EPC Program Review MSW 2012
- EPC Program Review MSW 2012 (page number 14)
- EPC Program Review Template 2017
- EPC Program Review Template 2017 (page number 2)
- EPC Syllabus Requirements and Statements 2016
- EPC UG Program Review Guidelines 2014-2015
- Essential Funcions Technical Standards by Progam 2017
- Essential Functions Technical Standards Guide 2013
- MOT Student Success
- MPAS Assessment Form SLOs
- MPAS Techincal Standards on Web
- Multi-Location Visit Inst Report 2015
- OCICU Membership
- OCICU Partnership St. Ambrose University 2015
- Sales SLOs Approved
- Sales SLOs Proposed

- SAU Accreditation Disclosure 2017
- SAU Annual Assessment Rubric
- SAU Catalog 15-17
- SAU Catalog 15-17 (page number 19)
- SAU Catalog 15-17 (page number 35)
- SAU Catalog 15-17 (page number 82)
- SAU Catalog 15-17 (page number 133)
- SAU Catalog 15-17 (page number 140)
- SAU Catalog 15-17 (page number 173)
- THEO SLO Improvements

3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

Argument

Throughout the past decade, faculty members have evaluated and revised the General Education program to better align with the institutional mission and culture. St. Ambrose offers a requirements-based General Education program rooted in the tradition of the liberal arts. Students complete the program by successfully passing courses chosen from a set of requirements. While faculty had, in the 1990s, developed SLOs to align with these course requirements, the outcomes did not allow for meaningful assessment. In fact, an analysis of the SLOs found that the General Education program claimed to fulfill 88 outcomes. Recognizing this was an unmanageable and unrealistic number of outcomes, the General Education Committee rewrote the SLOs in 2009.

In spring of 2010, St. Ambrose faculty approved a revised set of 22 General Education outcomes in an attempt to provide a more efficient and coherent manner of defining and assessing the General Education program. While the number of outcomes was significantly reduced, it became apparent that the 22 SLOs did not align perfectly with the existing General Education curriculum. Students were able to complete their General Education course requirements without the opportunity to address all of the General Education outcomes.

Based on discussions with faculty, results from General Education surveys, and a Strategic Plan that called for the development of a "signature General Education program," faculty approved the current, more focused, outcomes-based General Education program. This signature General Education program aligns course requirements with four SLOs, allows for useful assessment of student learning, and better aligns with our institutional mission, vision and culture.

3.B.1–3.B.2: The St. Ambrose mission, vision and core values demand a General Education program grounded in both the liberal arts and Catholic Intellectual Tradition that enables students to develop "intellectually, spiritually, ethically, socially, artistically and physically to enrich their own lives and the lives of others." Most recently revised in 2012, the vision of the General Education program is to

produce graduates who will "possess fundamental skills and knowledge rooted in the liberal arts and Catholic intellectual tradition needed to live in a rapidly changing and global world, as well as the ability to critically explore complex issues and solve complex problems."

More specifically, the General Education program has been designed to produce students who:

1. Develop fundamental skills and knowledge necessary to flourish in a rapidly changing world.
2. Develop competencies that produce liberal arts perspectives in order to influence culture.
3. Evaluate truth claims derived from philosophy and theology to scrutinize the relationship between faith and reason.
4. Critically explore complex issues using knowledge and skills from the liberal arts and Catholic intellectual tradition.

To fulfill the fundamental skills outcome, students complete up to 18 credit hours of coursework to develop skills in: oral communication, written communication, research, quantitative reasoning and information technology, health and fitness, and a second language. In completing these courses and participating in co-curricular activities, students also have the opportunity to develop skills in critical thinking, teamwork, globalization, diversity and creative expression. These fundamental skills are then reinforced throughout the rest of the General Education curriculum. All General Education courses — including courses not specifically targeted to the fundamental skills outcome — are required to demonstrate alignment of course-level SLOs with the fundamental skills outcome. This alignment, documented in course summary sheets, is evaluated by the director of General Education as part of the program review process.

Although students can complete a variety of courses to fulfill General Education requirements, student attainment of the fundamental skills outcome is assessed through Association of American Colleges & Universities VALUE rubrics and externally-benchmarked assessments, such as the CLA+ and HEIghten assessment suite. These assessment methods, discussed as part of Criterion 4.B, provide a common language and an appropriate set of expectations for General Education courses designed to address the same fundamental skill. For example, faculty used a common Quantitative Literacy rubric to assess student achievement across the mathematics, statistics, and computer science courses designed to address the same fundamental skill.

Within the liberal arts General Education outcome, students complete up to 16 credit hours of coursework across the humanities, creative arts, natural sciences and social sciences. These curricular requirements establish a breadth of study to develop students who will be able to identify themselves as heirs to culture and advance it through the exercise of their own intellectual curiosity. VALUE rubrics inform common expectations for student performance across these courses. For example, faculty in the Theatre and Music Departments assessed student achievement via the Creative Thinking rubric. Results from these rubrics, along with in-class assignments and course grades, indicated that students develop these competencies.

To fulfill the Catholic Intellectual Tradition outcome, students complete up to 12 credit hours of coursework in philosophy, theology, Catholic studies, and/or justice and peace (with at least credit hours at the 300-level). As a diocesan institution, St. Ambrose thus ensures that students will be able to reflect critically on core truth claims, as well as the ethical and spiritual values derived from philosophy and theology, especially those that emanate from the Catholic intellectual tradition. Likewise, it ensures St. Ambrose graduates will value diversity of perspectives, be active in the pursuit of justice and peace, and engage in service to their communities locally and globally. Rubrics, like those summarized by the Theology Department, are used to inform common expectations for student performance across courses designed to address this outcome.

Through participation in the General Education curriculum, as well as through courses within a major and co-curricular experiences, undergraduate students address the integrative learning General Education outcome. This outcome is designed to ensure students continue to develop skills and integrate knowledge across the liberal arts and Catholic Intellectual traditions in order to shape for themselves a coherent, if always tentative, vision of the world through which they will enrich their own lives through enriching the lives of others. To define expectations for this outcome, faculty teaching 300-level philosophy and theology courses use a common rubric to consistently assess student attainment of this outcome. These courses were selected because they operate as upper-level, General Education courses with a capstone quality.

The General Education vision, purpose, content, learning outcomes and requirements are articulated online and in a one-page advising worksheet. The requirements, which can be completed within 46 credit hours, provide a breadth of study appropriate to an institution grounded in the liberal arts and serve as a strong foundation for professional programs. The Department of Engineering and Physical Science, for example, notes the importance of the General Education program in its self-study reports to their specialized accrediting agency.

St. Ambrose mechanical engineering students are educated through a carefully engineered curriculum, designed to build students' skills through Math and Basic Science, Engineering Core, ME Concept Introduction, ME Concept Reinforcement and ME Concept Application. These curricular areas support both the mechanical and thermal systems of Mechanical Engineering. Students also take a breadth of General Education courses to support the development of the student as a whole person. The curriculum culminates in a Senior Design experience where students essentially work as consultants on a significant project for a local company, incorporating appropriate engineering standards and constraints to propose a solution.

3.B.3: Degree programs offered at St. Ambrose University engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments. Undergraduate students are engaged in these activities through General Education courses focused on communication, quantitative reasoning, creative arts and integrative learning, and through major requirements. General Education requirements in quantitative reasoning, oral and written communication, social and natural sciences, and integrative learning all address these key skills. Students are also engaged at the program level. Art majors are engaged through research and concept exploration in coursework, portfolios and signature assignments, as well as statements of intent accompanying projects and portfolios. Students are taught to be creative and flexible in their thinking to solve problems, to take risks in exploration of ideas, and to develop openness to various viewpoints. In order to recognize human and cultural diversity, the department invites to campus visiting artists whose work represents issues of justice and diversity. Finance major outcomes align with and guide curriculum in areas of information analysis and communication, as well as mastery of modes of inquiry through individual and team-based projects based on real-time financial problems, the global economy, and the appropriate use of technology.

Graduate program curricula include opportunities for students to collect, analyze and communicate research. The Doctor of Business Administration requires students to work one-on-one with a dissertation chair to develop a topic into a detailed research proposal. Once approved, students collect and analyze data, write a report of their results, and discuss their research and findings in the dissertation defense. DBA coursework, including research methods and statistics, provides the training and tools necessary for students to complete the dissertation. Similarly, the Master of Speech Language Pathology program requires students to complete research methodology coursework prior to a three-semester research project in which methods are implemented and ethical data collection

procedures are completed with guidance of a faculty research mentor, ultimately resulting in the presentation of a research paper.

The VALUE rubrics used to assess General Education outcomes also show that students are engaged in these areas. For example, the Quantitative Literacy rubric allows faculty to assess student ability to explain, convert, analyze and communicate information. The Inquiry and Analysis and Creative Thinking rubrics allow for the assessment of modes of inquiry and creative work. The Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving rubrics assess skills adaptable to changing environments.

Engaging students in these activities and high-impact practices is a focus of the institution's Strategic Plan. To collect evidence of student engagement, the program review process, updated for fall of 2017, explicitly asks programs to describe how their program-level SLOs align with these areas.

3.B.4: With diversity as a core value, a St. Ambrose education recognizes the diversity of the world in which students live and work. Results from the National Survey of Student Engagement indicate that while understanding of diversity can still be improved, significant gains have been made over the past decade.

Results from the 2006 NSSE administration revealed that St. Ambrose students scored significantly lower than students from other NSSE institutions on diversity-related items. These results indicated students were given too few opportunities to engage with diverse individuals and ideas. By the spring 2016 NSSE administration, results had improved on every one of these NSSE items. In fact, St. Ambrose students scored similar to the norming group in all but item 8a. It should be noted that St. Ambrose respondents to both the 2006 and 2016 NSSE surveys were similar to the comparisons group on both response rates and demographic characteristics.

In 2006, the Diversity Work Group was formed, comprised of faculty, staff, students and alumni. By 2010, members of the DWG developed the Decade of Diversity, a document to capture pragmatic steps to enhance diversity at St. Ambrose. The DWG generated 101 initiatives to provide long-term guidance for diversity-related efforts. In 2012, these aspirations were summarized in six strategic initiatives.

Major accomplishments from these initiatives include:

- The College of Arts & Sciences annual theme for 2012-13 was Race Matters, highlighted with presentations by Cornel West, Joe Feagin, Lula Washington Dance Theatre, Callie Crossley and Bryan Massingale. This was followed by the Exploring Gender theme in 2014-15, which featured programming from influential leaders, filmmakers, authors, journalists and performers. CAS also completed themes on justice in 2015-16 and Shakespeare in 2016-2017. Faces of Globalization is the theme for 2017-18.
- Joining the Intercultural Allies in Higher Education, a regional consortium of higher education institutions dedicated to advancing and supporting diversity and multicultural programming.
- The creation of a director of diversity position in 2013, charged with developing and communicating a collective understanding of diversity and its benefits across campus.
- A 2016 Diversity Student Forum, in which 40 students provided feedback to evaluate institutional performance in diversity-related issues. Students attending this forum rated St. Ambrose 4 out of 5 in "in-classroom experience discussing topics of diversity."
- The Multicultural House, first opened in 2015, which serves as a campus wide resource to facilitate and promote a learning community of multicultural understanding and exchange through collaboration, dialogue and action
- Campus survey to all instructors in spring 2017 to assess how much St. Ambrose faculty report

including diversity into different elements (e.g., goals, content, foundations/perspective/pedagogy; etc.) of their courses.

- Proposal for achieving racial and ethnic diversification goals (Strategic Plan Initiative #1) for faculty and staff, noting short term, midterm and long term strategies and resource needs for achievement.
- Partnership with Davenport Community Schools and the Project SEARCH High School Transition Program to provide eight district students with a one-year school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the St. Ambrose. The immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration and hands-on training through worksite rotations. It also supports the continued diversification of student and staff populations. The pilot year is planned for 2017-2018.

Additionally, St. Ambrose has enhanced diversity on campus through:

- Intercultural Life, a division of the Student Activities Office dedicated to the appreciation and understanding of cultural differences through diverse experiences, such as the Civil Rights Celebration events in 2017. This division is coordinated by a full-time coordinator of intercultural life and leadership position created in 2008.
- Multicultural Affairs Community Action, a student-led organization with the mission to promote cultural, spiritual, educational, and social growth by providing opportunities to develop organizational and leadership skills and coordinating campus wide activities and events.
- The University Life Committee, a faculty committee, which reviews student and faculty policies developed by offices under Student Affairs, and reviews and evaluates annual reports of these offices. Recently, this Committee has focused on issues of diversity, hosting focus groups related to results from the NSSE surveys.
- The Safe Hive student organization transitioned into The Safe Zone campus wide organization to address education and advocacy of issues of sexuality and gender identity, as well as to seek resources to better advise or assist those in need. The Safe Zone symbol is displayed by understanding, supportive, and trustworthy individuals who are allies to members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual community.

The Interlink Language Center represents another institutional effort to engage students with diversity. This Center, described in more detail in response to criterion 3.D.2., involves recruiting and housing students who do not meet the institution's minimum English language proficiency standards into an Intensive English Program. These international students will be integrated with domestic students in university housing, events and activities.

In addition to institutional efforts, many academic programs directly address diversity within the curriculum. For example, descriptions of 9 of the courses offered by the Nursing Department include learning about diversity or working with diverse individuals. As another example, the mission statement of the Doctor of Occupational Therapy program focuses on developing professionals "dedicated to optimizing the occupational participation of others in a diverse and global society." The history program provides breadth in its course offerings to develop in students the ability to place the classical period, the pre-modern era, and the contemporary world into historical perspective so that they can acquire a better understanding of the world and their place in it, ultimately stimulating student interest in the human condition to inspire them to both lead and serve their communities.

3.B.5: St. Ambrose faculty and students are actively engaged in scholarship, creative work and professional activities. This begins with tenure-track faculty who must demonstrate involvement in three of the four following activities: activities of professional societies, scholarly research and publication; civic affairs and public service; development of new courses and programs, in

institutional support projects; and in preparation of grant proposals for promotion and tenure. Boyer's Model for Scholarship, approved by the Faculty Assembly, is the working definition of scholarship for faculty that allows a broad definition of scholarship to align with the broad array of faculty disciplines. To support faculty engagement in these activities, each faculty member is eligible for professional development funding each year. All faculty are eligible to request $500 per year for development.

The College of Arts & Sciences provides additional funding for research through three discipline-specific initiatives to encourage and fund faculty research. The Baecke Faculty Research Award and Faculty Fellowship Grant supports research endeavors of faculty conducting research in areas related to the humanities. The list of award recipients demonstrates the scholarly work resulting from this funding. The Stoffel Fund for Excellence in Scientific Inquiry, established in 2016, supports the advancement of scholarly activity in STEM fields by providing funds to faculty interested in starting or enhancing research to contribute to their field of study. Finally, the Bioethics and Humanities Initiative fosters interdisciplinary collaboration across the liberal arts in order to investigate and reflect on the ethical, cultural and social dimensions of medical science, human health, health care and medical research.

Beginning in the fall of 2016, faculty within the College of Health & Human Services and College of Business also provide competitive grants totaling $40,000 annually in faculty scholarship grant funding to support scholarly work. The CHHS awards grants in the range of $2000 to $5000 annually. The intent of this funding is to support pilot projects and position faculty to seek external funding. Applications are reviewed by a college-appointed committee comprised of faculty members with substantial research grant and publication experience using a rubric. This committee then makes funding recommendations to the dean, who awards the grants. Feedback is provided to applicants who are not funded to help them in future application cycles. Similarly, in the COB, three programs were developed in the summer of 2016 to provide for faculty development consistent with COB mission and to provide 'seed' funds for larger Scholarly projects, and/or minimal 'matching' funds for scholarly projects of high priority to the faculty member or COB. These programs include summer research grants, summer research salary and reassigned time. Similar to the CHHS, the dean of the COB considers recommendations from a faculty committee and department chairs when awarding funds. In the first year of the program, the COB awarded eight faculty members reassigned time, $6,280 in summer research grants, and $7,500 in summer research salary. Also in the summer of 2016, St. Ambrose established the Office of Research, Grants and Sponsored Programs to support and assists faculty, staff, and students with seeking out grant opportunities and reviewing human participant research.

The Faculty Development Committee provides grants for conference presentations or research initiatives to encourage faculty to conduct scholarly research or engage in creative activity to broaden perspectives and promote a greater understanding of issues and concerns in a discipline. This committee also oversees the sabbatical process for faculty as noted in the Faculty Handbook. Eligible faculty members must present a written application to the Committee by October 1 of the year preceding the semester(s) of sabbatical requested including a description of the project objectives and projected outcomes, and the project contribution to professional development as well as benefit St. Ambrose. The recommendations from this committee are provided to the president who makes the final decision in consultation with the Provost. Over the past five years, 27 sabbaticals were granted and five were denied.

With a focus on student development, St. Ambrose students are also actively engaged in scholarship and creative work. Students in graduate programs conduct research as part of the curriculum, for example the research project requirements in the Master of Criminal Justice, Master of Accounting,

Master of Physician Assistant Studies, Master of Social Work, Master of Speech Language Pathology, Doctor of Occupational Therapy, and Doctor of Physical Therapy programs; the capstone projects in the Master of Early Childhood Education and Master of Organizational Leadership; and the dissertation requirement in the Doctor of Business Administration. As an example, the 17th Annual Master of Occupational Therapy Student Research Poster Presentations provides abstracts of six student research projects completed by students in 2016. The Doctor of Business Administration also publicly announces all dissertation defenses invites the campus community via email to review the dissertation (on reserve in library) and attend the defense.

St. Ambrose also encourages research opportunities for undergraduate students. The College of Arts & Sciences, for example, hosts an annual Undergraduate Scholars Conference, where students present scholarly work in poster format. From 2010-2014, more than 200 students and 90 faculty participated in sessions representing 165 projects. Beginning in 2010, the Undergraduate Summer Research Institute has provided opportunities for students to work with faculty for six weeks on research projects. In its first five years, 76 students collaborated with 25 faculty to work on projects such as:

- The relationship between social media activity and social, cognitive and physiological outcomes.
- The political philosophy of George Orwell.
- The impact of therapy dogs on stress levels in hospital waiting rooms.
- The development of a simple, affordable, neural-controlled upper-limb prosthetic.

Specific examples of faculty and student research tied directly to the mission of St. Ambrose and the local community include:

- Criminal justice professor Chris Barnum's research on racial disparity in police traffic stops
- The development of a marketing strategy for the Hilltop Campus Village by Management students

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Argument

3.C.1: To fulfill its mission, St. Ambrose University needs permanent, full-time, qualified faculty to design, develop and evaluate curriculum; teach courses; articulate and assess student learning outcomes; advise students; engage in scholarly activity; and provide service to the institution and the community. Section 5.1 of the Faculty Handbook specifies the teaching and related duties of faculty, including: teaching no more than 24 credit hours per year, maintaining at least five office hours per week, developing curricula, assisting in administrative duties, being willing to serve on at least one committee per year, advising up to 25 students per year, attending all faculty assembly meetings, and cooperating with recruitment efforts. These core functions of full-time faculty are supplemented and enhanced by strategic assignment of part-time faculty whose qualifications enrich the curriculum and increase learning opportunities for students.

A measure of St. Ambrose University's sufficiency and continuity of faculty members to serve students is its average class size of 20. At this level, faculty can provide individual student focus, while also having a large enough group of students to provide for thoughtful and diverse interactions. From 2007 to 2016, the number of full-time faculty increased from 205 to 212 in conjunction with growth in student enrollment, peaking during high enrollment years. NSSE results show that compared to students at other institutions, St. Ambrose students indicate higher-quality interactions with faculty. Graduation survey results also indicate students have been generally satisfied with faculty interest in their academic development, faculty interest in their personal development, and communication with faculty.

As discussed in response to Criterion 5, St. Ambrose strategically monitors staffing levels in response to anticipated changes in student enrollment and academic program demand. This is evidenced by trends in staffing levels, staffing compared to enrollment, and in the percent of tenure-track faculty.

The work of faculty governance committees further evidence of a sufficient number and continuity of

faculty. Faculty oversee curriculum and set expectations for student performance (via the Educational Policies Committee, General Education Committee and Board of Studies) and establish academic credentials for instructional staff (via the Promotion, Tenure & Standards Committee). As described in response to Criterion 4B, participation in the annual assessment process and program review process demonstrate sufficient faculty are actively involved in the assessment of student learning.

Staffing patterns are continually evaluated in light of strategic planning priorities of accessibility, affordability and quality, as well as the call for high-demand programs. To evaluate staffing levels, St. Ambrose participated in the Delaware Study of Costs and Productivity from 2010 until 2014. This allowed academic program staffing levels and costs to be compared with national norms. Because the Delaware Study didn't provide enough actionable data, St. Ambrose switched to the Revenue and Expense Allocation report described in response to Criterion 5.C. This new, more comprehensive, process better fit the institution and provides actionable data. As an example, the Teacher Education Program has used this data to strategically staff its programs. Faced with retirements, the School of Education replaced retiring teacher education faculty with backgrounds in English and social sciences with new faculty with backgrounds in both ESL and STEM education.

3.C.2: In response to the Higher Learning Commission's revisions to Assumed Practice B.2., Faculty Roles and Qualifications, St. Ambrose adopted a minimum qualifications policy for faculty. The policy, developed by a committee established by the vice president of Academic & Student Affairs and chaired by the dean of Graduate Education, was presented to the faculty assembly on 11/12/15 and approved via Blackboard vote on 2/21/17. The policy provides guidelines to determine minimum faculty qualifications at St. Ambrose.

The Office of Human Resources maintains documentation of faculty qualifications and all types of faculty are held to these minimum qualifications. Section 3.3 of the Faculty Handbook defines the types of faculty employed at St. Ambrose: probationary/tenure-track, tenured, clinical, visiting, non-tenure track, librarian, part-time and adjunct. Further definitions are provided for graduate faculty, part-time and adjunct faculty, and clinical faculty. Developmental plans have been implemented for any faculty found not in compliance with the policy. For example, the provost/vice president for Academic & Student Affairs and deans use this policy when approving new faculty hires. If a faculty members does not meet the minimum qualifications by academic or tested experience, a development plan with timeline is developed.

To ensure new positions are filled with highly-qualified, diverse faculty, hiring committees follow guidelines provided in the Protocol for Faculty Searches and Tips for Recruiting a Diverse Faculty documents.

St. Ambrose does not offer dual-credit or contractual programs. St. Ambrose is a member of the Online Consortium of Independent Colleges & Universities, managed by New Ventures of Regis University in Denver. St. Ambrose accepts in transfer credits earned through online courses offered by accredited members of the Consortium. Typically acceptance is contingent upon the approval of the chair of the corresponding department at St. Ambrose University.

3.C.3: Section 2.2.2.3 of the Faculty Handbook describes, the Promotion, Tenure and Standards committee as a standing committee of the Faculty Assembly that conducts evaluations of full-time, tenured and tenure-track faculty. These evaluations are used to make recommendations for decisions related to promotion, reappointments, non-reappointments, granting of tenure, and all policy matters related to professional standards and ethics. As the handbook states, "improving the quality of the academic program at the institution is the main reason for these procedures."

The PTS outlines procedures for the evaluation of probationary faculty, faculty eligible for tenure, faculty eligible for promotion, and tenured faculty who are up for five year reviews. These procedures, described in detail in the PTS Procedural Guidelines and Current Practices document, reflect the fact that the faculty of St. Ambrose are responsible for setting and maintaining professional values and standards. Section 3.7 of the Faculty Handbook describes these standards.

The Handbook also includes lists of "possible behaviors" and "possible evidence" that could be used by faculty to document that the standards have been met. Faculty scheduled for PTS reviews submit statements of self-evaluation regarding the standards, all materials from one course, a current CV, and other supporting evidence; along with an independent letter of evaluation from the chair of the faculty member's department, and a letter from the dean of the college. Once PTS has reviewed the materials, the faculty member receives a completed feedback form, as well as a letter indicating the PTS committee's recommendation made to the administration.

PTS end-of-year reports, submitted to the faculty assembly, document the recommendations made by the committee each year. For example, in 2015-16, PTS reviewed 85 faculty (40 pre-tenure, 20 eligible for promotion, 11 eligible for tenure, 18 post-tenure, and six emeritus). Part-time and visiting faculty are evaluated by Department Chairs or Program directors and college deans.

All instructional faculty are evaluated in the classroom using the SIR II™ Survey published by ETS. The SIR II is administered once each semester for non-tenured faculty and annually for tenured faculty. The PTS Committee considers results from this course evaluation survey when making recommendations for promotion and tenure decisions. Institutional SIR II summary reports are available on the Institutional Research and Assessment website.

Results from the SIR II, along with results from Graduation Surveys, indicate the vast majority of students are satisfied with the teaching competency of St. Ambrose instructors.

3.C.4: St. Ambrose University has processes and resources to support all instructors. All new faculty are supported through a yearlong orientation program hosted by the Center for Teaching Excellence. This orientation familiarizes new faculty with institutional expectations for, and resources in support of, teaching effectiveness. The CTE also offers ongoing development opportunities throughout the year to all faculty.

The Faculty Development Committee also provides support for instructors to remain current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles. The FDC partners new, full-time faculty with experienced mentors to provide support during the transition to St. Ambrose. The FDC also promotes faculty development with workshops, grants, sabbaticals and faculty recognition. The focus of the FDC is to increase teaching effectiveness by working with individual faculty members and with the faculty as a whole. Each year, the FDC hosts a Faculty Recognition Reception to acknowledge faculty who have brought recognition to themselves and to St. Ambrose through contributions to their disciplines. The FDC also reviews sabbatical applications and recommends to the president approval of sabbaticals as noted in 3.B.3. A summary of the FDC budget shows the institution's continuing commitment to faculty development.

St. Ambrose is a member of the Quad City Professional Development Network. The mission of the QCPDN is to share resources and to create professional development opportunities for faculty and staff that meet the common needs of the seven member institutions. The QCPDN offers an Excellence in College Teaching Certificate Program "designed to help new and experienced faculty pursue teaching excellence through a series of courses focused on sound pedagogy, principles of effective instruction, and techniques to meet the needs of 21st century learners." A total of 77 St. Ambrose

instructors have participated in this program since 2009, with 11 completing it in the last five years.

The Center for Instructional Design and Technology also supports faculty in the use of technology in teaching, learning and research. The CIDT provides one-on-one instruction in online teaching and the use of technology, such as Blackboard, Collaborate and mobile technology.

3.C.5: To promote student inquiry, learning and development, full-time faculty are required to be available to students a minimum of five hours per week. The schedule of such hours must be posted on the faculty member's door, course syllabus, or other clearly visible location at the start of each semester. The Promotion, Tenure and Standards Committee describes the following behaviors of faculty who are available to students: maintains office hours; provides multiple means of contact; varies office hours to meet departmental needs; returns calls and correspondences in a timely manner.

Results from the National Survey of Student Engagement indicate seniors at St. Ambrose rate student-faculty interaction higher than seniors at other institutions. Likewise, results from the Student Satisfaction Survey show a relative strength of St. Ambrose is "Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours."

Examples of student research experiences, such as the Undergraduate Scholars Conference and the Undergraduate Summer Research Institute discussed in response to Criterion 3.B.5. provide evidence of instructor availability for student inquiry. Graduate students in physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech-language pathology are required to present their scholarship/research projects at evidence-based symposiums and research events sponsored by their programs. Graduate students in social work present their findings during their research during the annual Social Justice Conference. Faculty advisers are available to support students in developing presentations and posters.

3.C.6: Qualified, well-trained staff support student development outside of the classroom to enrich their academic lives. To ensure all staff positions are supported with qualified personnel, individuals are evaluated annually by direct supervisors, appropriate vice presidents and the president, in accordance with the qualifications and duties stated in the position description, which is updated annually. The template used for annual staff performance evaluations shows that staff are evaluated on goals and expectations set in collaboration with their department heads. In addition, all posted positions, as well as current job descriptions, note the general classification requirements of the position including education and related areas of experience, as well as specific job requirements (skills or knowledge) necessary for the position.

All staff are members of the Staff Assembly. The Staff Assembly is committed a "mechanism to provide for and promote staff development." To advance this mission, Staff Assembly has made staff development awards to 199 staff members, totaling nearly $40,000 from 2012-2017. Awards averaged $200 each. These funds have been used to cover costs of attending conferences and presentations. The Staff Assembly also hosts an annual Professional Development Day in the spring. The day includes a variety of breakout sessions relevant to both personal and professional growth.

Staff are also supported through formal training programs, such as the Professional Supervisor Certificate program (completed by 30 staff members since 2010) and the Administrative Professional Certificate program (completed by 11 since 2014) as part of the QCPDN noted previously in response to Criterion 3.C.4. All staff participate in the New Employee Mentoring Program, in which new employees are paired with experienced mentors for support and development. In addition, offices like the Office of Financial Aid trains new staff one-on-one and uses FSA Coach, a suite of training courses developed by the Department of Education focused on federal student aid and program administration. The office also encourages and funds state conference attendance and training that

enables staff members to keep current and interact with financial aid advisers from other institutions.

Student Affairs personnel possess appropriate experience and education in related student personnel areas such as counseling certificates and master's degrees in student affairs. Staff are initially trained on the standards adapted from guidelines set by the Council on the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. In 2012 Student Affairs programs conducted a self-evaluation of their programs in relation to the Council standards. These were reviewed again in 2017 when the Student Affairs Strategic Operational Plan was drafted. Student Affairs staff also utilizes the Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs at Catholic Colleges and Universities, which outline a framework of behavioral expectations and best practices for serving the institution and its students. Annually, Student Affairs staff are sent to professional organization conferences for continued development and networking. Recent professional development activity includes participation in: the AACU Integrative Learning Conference (2016), Association of Student Conduct Administrators Conference (2017), National Behavioral Intervention Team Association Title IX investigation training (2015), every fall Upper Midwest Region-Association of College and University Housing Officers (Housing), every spring National Association for Campus Activities (Campus Activity staff and students), annually National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association (Wellness & Recreation), Emergency Communication System preparedness training (2016), in addition to meeting continuing education unit requirements met for counseling staff to maintain licensure.

The Advising Center is staffed with four professional advisers trained to develop students' ability to self-advocate; to think critically about their roles and responsibilities as students; and to achieve their educational, career and life goals. Upon being hired, professional advisers are trained by experienced advisers in the office. The advisers also closely with personnel from academic programs such as nursing and education to ensure up-to-date knowledge of program requirements. The team is informed by the National Academic Advising Association, and their work is guided by the ethics, assumptions and practices noted in the Advising Manual. The staff are also tasked with training faculty advisers. Faculty are trained first to advise incoming first year students during summer orientation. This allows faculty to understand student advising from a traditional students' point of entry. Once familiar with the advising philosophy, process and resources, faculty take on their own advisees within their department. In addition, the Center for Teaching Excellence holds annual presentations on Advising as Teaching for interested faculty. Graduate programs use professional and faculty advisers within their program.

The Accessibility Resource Center (formerly Accessibility Resource Center) is staffed with qualified disability specialists. The specialists are trained in cognitive (learning) and physical disabilities, as well as spectrum disorders, and also work to serve as supplemental academic advisers.

St. Ambrose is also committed to the training of temporary student workers. As described in response to Criterion 3.D.2., academic tutoring services are primarily provided by peer tutors the Student Success Center. Consistent with institutional commitment to quality, however, the tutors are trained by the College Reading and Learning Association. St. Ambrose is certified as a Stage 3 institution — the highest program certification an institution can receive by the CRLA. Student Success Center staff supporting these peer tutors include the dean of Student Academic Services, the director of Reading and Study Skills, and the assistant director of the Student Success Center.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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

Argument

3.D.1: St. Ambrose serves a variety of students: undergraduate and graduate; first-generation and legacy; full-time and part-time. To meet the diverse needs of these student populations, St. Ambrose provides a wide range of support services. The annual Student Affairs Year in Review documents student services accomplishments in the context of the Student Affairs and institutional missions, along with the oversight of the Academic Support Committee (discussed in response to Criterion 4.B.2).

3.D.2: St. Ambrose provides support for learning throughout each student's academic career. Before arriving at St. Ambrose, incoming students are made aware of admissions requirements, especially those for competitive professional programs. Once admitted to the institution, students are invited to an Admitted Student Day, during which students are introduced to learning support services provided by the Advising Center, Student Success Center and Accessibility Resource Center.

Incoming first year and transfer students attend summer orientation on campus. Orientation occurs over two days, and students return home registered for courses and informed about various university offices and educational opportunities. To ensure incoming students are placed into appropriate courses, St. Ambrose employs a variety of placement methods. In mathematics, students are placed into appropriate courses based on their intended major and ACT mathematics scores. This placement strategy is the result of an analysis of four years of assessment data linking student success to both internally- and externally-developed placement exams. English, similarly, moved from an internally-developed and scored placement essay to a combination of ACT English scores, ACT reading scores, and high school grade-point average to place students in either English 100 or 101. The Biology and Chemistry departments also switched from the CAL diagnostic exam to a combination of ACT scores and high school GPAs. The Department of Modern Languages places students based on the foreign language courses completed in high school and an online placement test. Placement test participation and results are summarized annually in a Placement Testing Annual Report. Transfer students follow placement and course requirements noted in formal articulation agreements.

Designed to enhance student success, the First Year Experience programming consists of learning communities designed around a variety of majors and interest areas, and inclusive of essential

coursework such as English, communications, information literacy and mathematics. Within learning communities, as well as standalone courses, first year students are enrolled in New Student Seminar. The course is built upon three outcomes directly related to student academic success and campus enculturation. As an extended orientation, provisionally admitted first year students are required to take NSS. All other students are strongly encouraged to enroll in New Student Seminars. Students enrolled in the Honors Program or an introductory major course fulfill the intent of NSS outcomes.

Graduate programs also provide support to incoming students. As an example, the Master of Speech Language Pathology program holds a two-day orientation each year before classes begin. This orientation provides an overview of the program, copies of the MSLP Student Handbook, and information regarding clinic policies and procedures. The Master of Educational Administration connects incoming students with current students or alumni to discuss the program and answer questions. Incoming students also complete an introductory course, EDAD 500, to meet other students in the entering cohort to learn how to navigate through the program.

Within the College of Business, the Master of Organizational Leadership provides orientation sessions each semester to help new students learn about program expectations, policies and procedures. Students are also given flash drives with the MOL program handbook, sample degree plans, instructions on our registration and course management systems, and important campus contacts.

Within the College of Arts & Sciences, the Master of Pastoral Theology provides an initial 12-classroom-hour, not-for-credit course that includes an orientation to the study of theology. As part of this orientation, students are given a campus tour and take photos for student IDs.

The Interlink Language Center and its Intensive English Program provides another example of institutional support for student preparatory instruction. The IEP, established in January 2017, enables St. Ambrose to recruit students who do not meet the institution's minimum English language proficiency standards to enroll for conditional admission to our IEP. Upon successful completion of the IEP, students have the option of transitioning to degree-seeking status at St. Ambrose.

Undergraduate students found to be under-prepared are offered remediation through the director of reading and study skills in the Student Success Center. These remediation opportunities include the course Learning Skills 099: College Reading and Study Skills, which is designed to improve students' ability to study at the college level. English 100: Introduction to Writing, is also offered to students who may need additional development before enrolling in the General Education-level written communication courses. The Department of Mathematics and Statistics stopped offering remedial mathematics courses once analyses confirmed remediation was not helping students pass college-level mathematics courses. In place of remedial courses, the department offers on-demand remediation of skills within its General Education quantitative reasoning courses.

The SSC supports student learning and development by providing tutorial sessions, supplemental instruction and study groups to all undergraduate students. The SSC provides small-group, student-led tutoring and study group sessions for 100- and 200-level courses. The program designed to train peer tutors is certified by the College Reading and Learning Association. The SSC also offers supplemental instruction, in addition to tutoring in general study skills, one-on-one tutoring, and face-to-face and online writing tutorials. SSC staff include the dean of Student Academic Services, the director of reading and study skills, and the assistant director of the Student Success Center. During the 2016-17 academic year, the SSC served at least 735 students who visited at least 9,145 times. Surveys administered by the SSC indicate students find the tutoring sessions useful, as they report increased comfort levels with course content as a result of the sessions. The SSC also administers the

Link Program designed to help students on academic probation be successful in subsequent semesters. Link students meet regularly with SSC staff to monitor progress, examining five-week grades, work with instructors regarding student progress, coordinate with athletic coaches or faculty advisers, and collaborates as needed with Students Disability Services staff. Of the 2016-17 probation students, 67% (75) continued on at the institution the following semester. Of the 75 who remained at Ambrose, 48% met with their Link adviser on more than one occasion.

Appointments with students are designed to help them understand what it means to be on academic probation and the changes needed to be academically successful. This includes: taking personal responsibility, increasing their motivation as well as developing such skills as time management, test taking and study skills. Also discussed is the required grade-point average to be removed from probation status.

Students on academic probation are often difficult to reach but staff members have increased their efforts to reach out to and work with these students. Link advisers make various attempts to address this long standing challenge. When emailing students, copying their academic advisers, coaches and other members of the success team has resulted in a better response from students. Since fall 2015, Link staff have encouraged students to set and write down an academic goal for the semester. This also involves identifying needed changes in behavior to reach their goals. This formalization of their academic success plans helps students take personal ownership of their education.

Accessibility Resource Center (formerly Student Disabilities Services), dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and personal development of all St. Ambrose students, offers support in areas related to academic advising, advocacy, assistive technology, accommodations, note takers and sign language interpreters. The office works with local and state agencies such as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Department for the Blind to refer students for help with funding or to receive services that are not available on campus. The Accessibility Resource Center publishes student and faculty handbooks explaining processes and providing contact information for support. The Accessibility Resource Center is staffed with learning disabilities specialists who provide one-on-one skills instruction in strategies to compensate for learning disabilities as noted in response to Criterion 3.C.6.

3.D.3: St. Ambrose provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its graduate and undergraduate students. Graduate students are advised by either professional staff or faculty within the academic program. Some are cohort programs, and student advisement and registration are handled accordingly. Undergraduate students (both first year and transfer including adult) are assigned advisers in one of three ways as noted in the advising manual by either a professional adviser or a faculty adviser. Students interested in programs that require additional admission requirements such as teacher education and nursing remain with professional advisers until fully admitted into the program to ensure that students who fail to enter the program receive timely and informed guidance.

Aligned with work of the Quality Initiative Project, the Advising Center piloted the Student Planning Tool in the spring of 2017, with full implementation in the summer of 2017 beginning with summer orientation. The Student Planning tool is a single sign-on and interactive web application that enables faculty and students to view advisee or individual information contained in the institution's Colleague® databases though the MySAU Portal. The tool allows students to electronically plan an entire four-year sequence of courses and easily communicate with advisers. Advisers have the ability to archive communication and plans with students, as well as approve or deny courses for registration. Ultimately, the tool allows students and families the freedom to plan a course of action, creating time for important, future-focused advising conversations. St. Ambrose will be monitoring student and adviser use of the tool as well as persistence and graduation rates.

3.D.4: St. Ambrose provides students and faculty the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning. This includes technology infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries and museum collections, performance space and clinical practice sites.

There are three computer labs on campus. Two are located in the Library. The other is a recently renovated 24-hour computer, multimedia and cyber lab in Cosgrove Hall. There are seven classroom computer labs designed for faculty and student use. Two of the labs are Mac labs. Faculty may schedule these classrooms periodically, or for use throughout the entire semester. The Information Technology Department also provides students and employees support services including network storage, wireless access, MySAU portal, print management programs and the IT help desk. Enhancements and user satisfaction/usage are part of the institutional strategic plan, and progress is ongoing.

The mission of the St. Ambrose Library is to select, organize and maintain print and electronic resources that support the curricula and information needs of the campus community. The library is home to a physical collection of more than 180,000 books, media and serials, and a digital collection of more than 460,000, including access to over 100 databases. The Library has a total circulation of 3.5 million. Growth in the collection has been in the digital collection, supporting ease of access to affordable texts and databases, as well as supporting growth in online programs.

In 2013, St. Ambrose expanded science labs in Lewis Hall to respond to increased and planned demand in health sciences. One lab was expanded and fitted with new whiteboard technology allowing students to view textbook manual pages on the large-screen monitors, rather than referring to open books during experimentation, and allow professors to diagram long-term lesson plans without needing to erase. An additional lab was created from a former classroom, providing another 1,000 square feet laboratory space needed to meet students' program demand needs. A third lab was converted from a small animal anatomy lab into additional human gross anatomy space. The expansion provides access to 10 cadavers, up two from previous years.

St. Ambrose opened the door to the Health Sciences Center in 2010. The building houses occupational and physical therapy, nursing and physician assistant programs, as well as up-to-date technologies for health fields. The center offers faculty and students state of the art simulation labs for skill development, and large classrooms equipped for distance education and demonstration. An interprofessional health care clinic provides students the opportunity for interdisciplinary experiences. This clinic offers free services to uninsured or underinsured members of the community through a medical and rehabilitation clinic. Students and faculty staff the clinic, gaining the opportunity to practice and to develop proficiencies with electronic medical records.

The Galvin Fine Arts and Communication Center is home to the Art, Communication, Music and Theatre Departments. Within Galvin, the Allaert Auditorium provides faculty and students a main stage venue with more than 1,000 seats. Productions of the Performing Arts Series are delivered by the award-wining Theatre Department and free to students. Small productions are produced in the Studio Theatre. The Music Department also utilizes the Allaert Auditorium for performances. Madsen Hall serves as both a classroom and performance space for music faculty and students. Faculty offices in Galvin are spacious and also serve as studio space for private music lessons. The award winning Communication Department is housed on the lower level of Galvin. Students completing the television and radio major utilize the KALA radio and SAUtv studios for hands-on training for operating audio and video equipment and reporting broadcast news. Multimedia journalism majors gain firsthand experience crafting news stories, in-depth features, sports reports, and advertising content for all areas of print, electronic and digital media along with research, interviewing and

reporting skills through The Buzz campus newspaper and departmental social media.

In 2002, St. Ambrose reconfigured the 1985 Catich Gallery; an intimate gallery dedicated to Rev. Edward M. Catich, founder of the St. Ambrose College Art Department in 1939 that hosts contemporary art exhibits featuring regional and national artists. The gallery also host faculty work and the Senior Honors Exhibition, featuring the work of honor students graduating with majors in painting, graphic design and book arts. Along with the gallery, St. Ambrose allows faculty and students digital access to the Catich Collection, placing the work of one of the world's finest calligraphers, international authority on stone incising, typography and stained glass fabrication, and the foremost authority on the Roman alphabet, its origin, nature and history on their desktops. Additionally, the Morrissey Gallery, established in 2000 as a professional exhibition space for visual arts and named in honor of the Morrissey family who serve as longtime supporters of St. Ambrose University, provides a showcases of a wide spectrum of media artwork from regional emerging artists, including Art Department majors. Painting faculty and students also have 24-hour secure access off-campus at Black Lodge Studios, an individual studio space that accommodates up to 14 students. Graphic design faculty and students utilize the Galvin iMac computer lab fitted with up-to-date design software, Wacom tablets, scanners, color and black & white laser printers, and a large-format inkjet printer. Finally, Book Art faculty and students have access to a papermaking studio, complete with a Hollander beater, paper press, and more than a dozen moulds and deckles.

As noted in response to Criterion 5.A.1, St. Ambrose will open its new Wellness and Recreation Center in the fall of 2017. This center, at the heart of the institution's mission, will contain classrooms, weight rooms, and fitness areas to support the large number of Kinesiology majors and general education students, in addition to serving student recreational activities and athletic competitions.

3.D.5: The opportunity to learn from, and participate in, research provides another way in which St. Ambrose supports student development. Undergraduate students who enter St. Ambrose with fewer than 60 credits must demonstrate proficiency in research by successfully passing the 1-credit hour IL 101: Information Literacy course or by successfully passing an information literacy test-out. Both the course and test-out are managed by library staff. The course provides an introduction to techniques of information retrieval, critical evaluation of that information, and the ethical use of information. In completing the course or test-out, the intended outcome is that students gain the ability to locate and critically evaluate information, develop effective research strategies, and to ethically apply these concepts to undergraduate research using Library resources and the internet.

Graduate and undergraduate students have access to the Institutional Review Board, which defines human subject research, explains the process, and imposes sanctions for not following the policies. From 2013-16, IRB approved 99 research proposals for students.

Sources

- Academic Support Committee End of Year Report 2016-2017
- Accessibility Resource Center
- Accessibility Resource Center Faculty Handbook 2017-2018
- Accessibility Resournce Center Student Handbook 2017-2018
- Admitted Students Day
- Advising Manual 2015-2016
- Advising Manual 2015-2016 (page number 10)

- CHHS Field Placement Utilization 2012-2014
- Classrooms and Equipment Inventory 2017
- Health Sciences Building 2010
- Information Literacy Test-Out
- Interlink 2017
- Iowa Illinois Community Colleges Articulation Agreement 2014
- IRB Data 2013-2016
- IRB Policy
- Learning Communities and Honors Program 2016
- Lewis Lab Expansion Summary
- LS 099 Syllabus 2016
- MISO Summary 2016
- NSS Program Review April 2014
- NSS Program Review April 2014 (page number 10)
- Placement Testing Annual Report 2016-2017
- QI Report St. Ambrose University IA 2017
- SSC Annual Report 2016-2017
- SSC Annual Report 2016-2017 (page number 11)
- Strategic Plan 2015
- Strategic Plan 2015 (page number 8)
- Student Affairs Year in Review 2015-16
- Student Planning Pilot Summary and Recommendations 5.22.17
- Student Planning Student Manual 2017
- Student Success Center Link Report 2016-2017
- Student Support Services
- Supplemental Instruction
- Wellness Center 2017

3.E - Core Component 3.E

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

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

Argument

3.E.1-3.E.2: The Office of Student Affairs provides oversight and guidance for co-curricular programming. These programs fall under the offices of Campus Recreation, Career Center, Counseling, Residence Life, Security and Student Activities.

Beginning in 2011, Student Affairs has published an annual Year in Review report highlighting accomplishments within each strategic priority identified for the academic year. For example, the 2014-15 Year in Review report highlights 21 accomplishments within four strategic priorities: (1) Documenting the integration of holistic wellness into the campus culture monthly, (2) using the bystander intervention model to influence community engagement, (3) conducting comprehensive program reviews within each department, and (4) conducting focused training and development on the effective use of technology. The report also includes mission statements, vision statements and highlighted accomplishments of each office within the Division of Student Affairs. These accomplishments include service summaries that show the number of students served or number of activities provided, as well as learning outcomes and assessment data.

In the 2014-15 Year in Review report, the Career Center highlighted its activities, including a Career Boot Camp with the participation of 182 students and 28 employers, and on-campus recruiting opportunities involving 159 students and more than 30 companies. The Career Center further summarizes data related to the assessment of its intended learning outcomes:

- Collaborative effects with the Office of Alumni Relations and NSS instructors led to an increase of 80% more students utilizing and participating in the BEEConnection, an online resource that connects students with alumni and friends of St. Ambrose while enhancing student knowledge of careers and goal setting.
- 98% of students attending ProFair indicated that they submitted a resume or intended to follow up with one or more companies present.
- Staff made 94 career-related classroom presentations to a total of 1,815 students.
- Staff presented in 98% of the New Student Seminar classes.
- In fall semester, 645 students were eligible for college work-study financial aid; 611 of those students were placed in a work study job. Another 401 were placed in temporary student employment.
- Of students who participated in the Career Counseling group during the spring semester, 90% indicated that they felt more confident in their career decision at the end of the group than when they did at the beginning.

The assessment of co-curricular programming, including student learning outcomes for the Division

of Student Affairs, is discussed in greater depth in response to Criterion 4.B.2.

In collaboration with the Office of Student Affairs, St. Ambrose students lead and participate in more than 80 student clubs and organizations aligned with the institutional mission and core values. These organizations include:

- Academic and professional clubs (e.g., the Biology Club, Student Physical Therapy Association, and Women in Science and Engineering)
- Cultural organizations (e.g., Model UN Society, Multicultural Affairs Community Action, and Military & Veterans Organization)
- Honor societies (e.g., Alpha Chi, Phi Eta Sigma, and Triota for women and gender studies)
- Service and advocacy organizations (e.g., Ambrosians for Peace & Justice, Habitat for Humanity, and Sexual Assault Awareness Team)
- Special interest organizations (e.g., Campus Activities Board, Graduate Student Government Association, Green Life)

St. Ambrose students also have many opportunities for leadership development. Throughout the academic year, students are given opportunities to attend regional and national conferences, such as Destination: Leadership and the Iowa Women's Leadership Conference. With recommendation from faculty or staff, first-year and transfer students can be elected to Students Emerging as Leaders. Students in SEAL participate in weekly discussion-based workshops and work on a project, such as the Iowa and St. Ambrose University Civil Rights presentation in 2013. Ambrosians Collaborating Together provides another opportunity for students to develop leadership skills. The purpose of ACT is to promote leadership, friendship and community among members by providing an organization whose core values of truth, honor and selflessness are depicted through the "collaboration" of joint efforts. Students develop within these core values by participating in ACT workshops and engaging in community service activities.

Other co-curricular programming offered to St. Ambrose students also aligns with aspects of the institutional mission and core values:

- Campus Ministry aligns with student spiritual development (as stated in the mission), the core value of Catholicity, and the vision that Ambrosians are committed to social justice and service. Service opportunities for students include service trips, such as the 2016 Spring Break trip to the Hubbard House in East St. Louis to work at a shelter for families escaping domestic violence, and service activities such as Bee the Difference Day, when students spend the day helping community neighbors with fall outdoor cleanup tasks. In 2015-16, Campus Ministry recorded 159,639 service hours for students, faculty and staff. This dedication to service earned St. Ambrose recognition with distinction by the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.
- Athletics aligns with student physical development, as stated in the mission. St. Ambrose athletics measures success in academic excellence, leadership and athletic success. In 2016-17, St. Ambrose ¬tied for ¬first in the NAIA with 20 Scholar-Teams (teams with cumulative grade point averages above 3.0). In total, 23 varsity teams had cumulative GPAs of at least 3.0. Three student-athletes were chosen as College Sports Information Directors Academic All-Americans, with 64 junior and senior student-athletes earning NAIA Scholar-Athlete recognition for GPAs above 3.50. At the conference level, 131 varsity student-athletes earned academic all-conference honors. The outstanding academic success of St. Ambrose student-athletes results from the priority academics are given by the coaching staff and athletic administration, close monitoring of student-athletes' academic progress throughout the year, and the ability to successfully recruit high-quality student-athletes. To develop leadership skills, the Leadership

- Academy challenges student-athletes to participate in a minimum of three community outreach experiences and engage in four personal growth and leadership seminars. In 2016-17, these activities included seminars related to social justice and positive life choices. Athletic success is evidenced by one conference championship, nine national championship appearances, and two national championships in 2016-17.
- Creative arts programming, housed within the Galvin Fine Arts Center, aligns with student artistic development and the core value of the Liberal Arts. Students have the opportunity to develop musical talent in seven ensembles and a marching band, which will perform on the sidelines by 2018. Students also gain a greater appreciation of the arts through the availability of the Catich and Morrissey galleries, as well as the annual Performing Arts Series.

To help guide students through the all the academic and co-curricular experiences available to them, St. Ambrose has developed effective first and second year programs. This begins with Urban Plunge, an annual service event in which hundreds of first-year students participate, and emphasizes the list of 68 Things Every First-Year Ambrosian Should Do.

Student Affairs recently completed a 2016-2019 Strategic Operational Plan. Noted in the plan is the alignment of the Student Affairs mission statement with the institutional mission and vision. On this foundation, strategic operational goals and strategies have been designed to continue to enhance comprehensive student development opportunities across St. Ambrose, provide an environment that promotes holistic student wellness, and support the diverse identities of each student. This work will guide the continued efforts of St. Ambrose to fulfill its commitment to providing students an enriched educational environment.

Sources

- Athletics 2016-17 recap
- Clubs and Organizations for 2014-15 list
- FYE 68 Things
- Marching Band
- Music Ensembles
- Performing Arts Series 2017-2018
- Presidents Honor Roll for Service 2015
- SAU Student Affairs Offices
- Student Affairs Strategic Operational Plan 2016-19
- Student Affairs Year in Review 2015-16
- Student Leadership Opportunities
- Year-in-Review-2014-15
- Year-in-Review-2014-15 (page number 3)
- Year-in-Review-2014-15 (page number 5)

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

St. Ambrose University offers more than 60 degree programs at the bachelor, master and doctoral levels. Consistent with its mission documents, St. Ambrose University enriches lives through educational programs taught in the context of Catholic and liberal arts traditions. This is highlighted in a General Education program that emphasizes the integration of fundamental skills, liberal arts perspectives, and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition in an environment that celebrates and supports diversity. Each academic program is evaluated regularly through a program review process coordinated by the Educational Policies Committee and an annual assessment process coordinated by the Assessment & Evaluation Committee. These internal review processes, informed by external benchmarks, generate feedback to continuously evaluate and improve the appropriateness, consistency and quality of academic courses and programs. Student support services are staffed by trained, qualified, accessible faculty and staff. All faculty are supported in professional development and are regularly evaluated through the Promotion, Tenure and Standards Committee, which ensures faculty remain current in their disciplines and adept at teaching.

Sources

- EPC Program Review Template 2017
- General Education Proposals to Faculty Assembly 2012
- General Education Proposals to Faculty Assembly 2012 (page number 6)
- SAU Assessment Plan 2017
- SAU Assessment Plan 2017 (page number 15)
- SAU Bachelor Degree Programs
- SAU Doctorate Degree Programs
- SAU Master Degree Programs

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

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

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

Argument

4.A.1: For at least four decades, St. Ambrose University has evaluated and improved the quality of its educational programs through a comprehensive program review process coordinated by the Educational Policies Committee. Though technically a faculty governance committee, EPC's membership is inclusive to stakeholders. Membership includes faculty, staff, students and administration. Following a schedule maintained by the chair of EPC, every academic major, minor and concentration is reviewed approximately once every five years. Some programs with exceptional reviews have been granted additional time between reviews to better align with external specialized accreditation cycles. Other programs that have not fully met EPC expectations have been scheduled for subsequent reviews in only one or two years.

EPC decisions, summarizing all program review decisions from 2000 until present, shows that from 2000-2012, every program review was either accepted for five years or postponed for one year. Postponements were granted to programs with inadequate reviews to give faculty time to gather additional evidence of program performance. Since 2012, however, EPC has rejected 10 program reviews (e.g., the Master of Organizational Leadership program in 2013-14) and has scheduled 13

subsequent program reviews for less than five years (e.g., the philosophy program review accepted for three years in 2014-15). All program review documents completed since 2007 are available on the EPC Blackboard website, along with minutes from EPC meetings going back to 1996.

The program review process provides an opportunity for faculty to synthesize, reflect and act upon assessment data generated since the previous review. This reflection is captured in a self-study template submitted to EPC through the dean of college overseeing the program. From 2013-2017, the self-study template, required faculty within each academic program to:

- Provide course syllabi and summary sheets.
- Describe progress made toward goals from previous program review.
- Reflect upon data concerning program viability and productivity.
- Evaluate the sufficiency of resources.
- Set goals for the next review, based on a SWOT analysis.
- Evaluate alignment of the program with its department and the institution.
- Reflect upon program evaluation evidence (e.g., surveys, course evaluations, advisory boards).
- Provide evidence of program SLO appropriateness and alignment.
- Provide evidence that faculty share responsibility for student learning and that assessment data are used.
- Propose evidence-based improvements.

This self-study document is supported by letters submitted from the offices of General Education, Writing Across the Curriculum, and Assessment. The dean of the college housing the program also writes a letter of transmittal, addressing the quality of the program review along with challenges and opportunities.

Prior to the scheduled program review, EPC members review the self-study document and submit clarifying questions (typically from the Guidelines and Possible Questions document). Programs can address these questions before or during the scheduled review with EPC. The Committee includes faculty from each college (on three-year rotations) and ex-officio members representing the offices of the college deans, General Education, Assessment, Writing Across the Curriculum, Records & Registration, and the vice president of Academic & Student Affairs. During the scheduled review, program faculty present their self-study and answer questions. At the beginning of the next scheduled EPC meeting, EPC members vote on whether to accept the program review. After this vote, EPC provides each program with a Final Response Form summarizing the decision. The form also schedules the next program review and lists commendations, questions and suggestions for the program to consider prior to the next review.

As an example, a 2015 review of programs within the Department of Kinesiology included the self-study, course summary sheets, course syllabi; letters of support from the dean, General Education director, WAC director, the assessment coordinator, and chairs of contributing programs; and a memorandum on essential functions and technical standards. Kinesiology responded to 11 clarifying questions posed by EPC members, ranging from questions about student learning outcomes to credit requirements to program goals for the next five years. The Final Response Form for the Kinesiology program review provided two commendations for the current review and two suggestions for consideration prior to the next review (scheduled five years later).

This program review process has led to significant improvements in student learning. For example, the Department of Mathematics and Statistics has made significant changes to its placement standards and curriculum as a result of the reflection necessary for program reviews in 2004, 2011 and 2016.

These changes contributed significantly to the improvements the department has seen in major field test scores (with scores increasing from the eighth percentile to the 79th percentile during this time).

This review process has also contributed to decisions made to close academic programs. For example, the Department of Kinesiology recommended closure of its physical education programs due to outdated curricula, low enrollment and a desire to reallocate resources toward sport management, another growing major offered by this department. EPC also recently approved the recommendation to close the Master of Education in Teaching due to low actual and anticipated enrollment. All decisions regarding recommendations for program closure are made in correspondence with the Criteria and Process for Academic Program Closure approved by the Board of Trustees in 2013.

EPC also reviews proposals for new programs in accordance with the Guidelines for New and Revised Programs. Through these guidelines, EPC evaluates the curricular requirements, internal/external demand for the program, capacity to support the program, and overall impact on the institution. Recently, EPC approved recommendations to beginning programs such as the Bachelor of Arts in business sales and the Master of Public Health.

EPC constantly evaluates and improves upon the program review process. Recent improvements to the program review process include: (1) the development of the self-study template in 2013, (2) the development guidelines, and (3) the decision to include annual assessment documents within program reviews. Most recently, EPC approved new program review, program proposal changes, and course summary templates on October 4, 2016. These new templates were developed in coordination with the Assessment Committee in response to limitations of the previous process. EPC members noticed, for example, that many programs lacked external benchmarks for student learning outcomes, curricular requirements and assessment results. The new templates which will be piloted in 2017-18, is designed to:

- Focus on academic programs, instead of departments.
- Focus on program improvement, instead of compliance.
- Focus on evidence collected since the previous review before proposals for the future.
- Highlight points of distinction and high impact practices for student engagement.
- Compare SLOs, curricular requirements, and program effectiveness with external benchmarks peers.
- Focus the dean's statement of support on program capacity, viability and effectiveness.
- Require a tighter integration of the annual assessment process with the program review process.
- More clearly display necessary information for the offices of Admissions and Records & Registration.

Co-curricular programs — Admissions, the Bookstore, Career Center, Financial Aid, General Accounting, Information Technology, Library, Records & Registration, Student Accounts and the Student Success Center —are reviewed through a process coordinated by the Academic Support Committee, a faculty governance committee. Members of the ASC include faculty from each college and two staff members appointed by the vice president for Academic & Student Affairs. These programs are evaluated on a cycle, similar to the one used for academic program reviews. The reviews focus on the purpose of the program, volume of service provided, types of services provided, evaluation of the adequacy of services provided, and plans for the future.

Other programs that influence student learning —campus ministry, campus recreation, counseling services, health services, international student services, residence life, security and student activities — are evaluated by the University Life Committee. These evaluations focus on the quality of services provided and typically involve a review of annual student services reports and data from surveys and

focus groups.

Processes for evaluating co-curricular programs are described more fully in response to Criterion 4.B.2.

4.A.2–4.A.3: Each year, St. Ambrose welcomes approximately 350 transfer students. Policies regarding the transcription of credit for transfer courses are maintained by Records & Registration and explained in the Catalog. Students can earn up to 90 credit hours from four-year colleges and universities and up to 64 credits from two-year colleges by completing college-level courses (corresponding to courses offered at St. Ambrose) with a grade of C or better. Department chairs and program directors determine course correspondence and whether a transferred course may substitute for a major requirement, typically by reviewing course descriptions of the transferred course. Current transfer course equivalencies are available for review on the Records and Registration website.

Articulation agreements with Palmer College of Chiropractic, Eastern Iowa Community College (Scott, Clinton and Muscatine Community Colleges) and many other Illinois/Iowa Community Colleges help students from those institutions make smooth transitions into St. Ambrose University. These articulation agreements are available online through the Transfer Admissions webpage.

In addition to accepting transfer credits from regionally accredited institutions of higher education, the policy outlines, "Credits from other colleges may be transferable in whole or in part, and are evaluated on a course by course basis. Likewise, courses successfully completed through the United States Armed Forces may be transferable and applicable to a bachelor's degree at St. Ambrose University." At St. Ambrose non-regionally-accredited transfer requests typically come from courses offered by art institutes. To determine equivalency, department chairs and program directors serve as content experts to review syllabi and portfolios.

St. Ambrose students can also earn credits in addition to traditional transfer credits from other postsecondary institutions. Descriptions of each of these nontraditional transfer methods are described in the Catalog. In each of these cases, faculty determine the appropriateness and equivalency of transfer credits. The process for earning credit through the assessment of prior experiential learning is described on a website maintained by the dean of Student Academic Services and Community College Relations. To earn credit, students must complete a non-credit course, PLA 201: Prior Learning Assessment, in which a course instructor guides students to identify and evaluate prior learning experiences and outcomes. As a result of this course, students develop a portfolio, which is then evaluated by a faculty member (using a common rubric) for college credit.

Credits earned through nontraditional processes are transcripted as credits earned and are not computed in the grade-point average. The nontraditional credits do not replace grades for traditional courses in computing student GPAs.

St. Ambrose University permits a maximum of 60 equivalency credits for non-classroom learning to be applied to a degree or the equivalent of 90 semester credits for a combination of classroom and non-classroom learning done elsewhere.

4.A.4: As stated in the Faculty Handbook, "The Faculty Assembly is, the President of the University and the Board of Trustees concurring, the legislating and negotiating body in the areas of primary faculty concern." These areas of concern include:

- Primary responsibility for curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and aspects of student life relating to the educational process.

- Faculty status and related matters, including appointments, reappointments, decisions not to appoint, promotions, the granting of tenure, and dismissal.

The handbook further states, "The Faculty Assembly shall exercise its rights and fulfill its responsibilities in these manners through itself and, subordinately, through Faculty Governance Committees." Thus, authority over course prerequisites, course rigor, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and qualifications of faculty are demonstrated by the actions of faculty governance committees.

The program review and proposal processes described in response to Criterion 4.A.1. provide evidence that faculty determine prerequisites (listed on course summary sheets), rigor (described in course syllabi), expectations for student learning (student learning outcomes), access to learning resources (course summary sheets and program review self-study narratives). Any substantive changes to courses or programs are submitted for approval by EPC before being forwarded to the Records & Registration Office to be updated in the Catalog.

Compliance with course prerequisites is monitored through the Records & Registration Office, as students are not allowed to register for a class without completion of the prerequisites. Prerequisites can be waived by course instructors.

Course rigor and expectations for student learning are monitored by faculty and EPC. Higher course numbers typically correspond with higher levels of rigor, so EPC evaluates the appropriateness of course SLOs for the level of the course. Likewise, EPC reviews the appropriateness of grading criteria and lists of assignments and readings for each course. The Undergraduate and Graduate Grading Systems, published in the Catalog, describe the meanings of student grades (thus ensuring some standardized expectations for student performance). The Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements, also listed in the Catalog, also sets expectations for student performance at the institutional level. Courses designated as writing intensive are monitored for rigor by the director of Writing Across the Curriculum in accordance with WI-standards.

Learning resources, including the Student Success Center and the Library, are staffed by St. Ambrose faculty and staff. The adequacy of these resources is evaluated as part of the program review process. Offices providing these resources are evaluated by faculty as part of the co-curricular review process described in response to Criterion 4.B.2.

Faculty qualifications, responsibilities and evaluation procedures are described in response to Criterion 3.C., along with a description of the St. Ambrose minimum qualifications policy for faculty. The Promotion, Tenure and Standards Committee exercises authority over faculty qualifications.

St. Ambrose offers no dual credit courses or programs.

4.A.5: St. Ambrose University takes pride in its strong standing of professional programs recognized with the status of specialized accreditation.

4.A.6: The mission of St. Ambrose University demands an evaluation of the success of its graduates. To this end, the Career Center and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment coordinate the tracking, assessing, and reporting of the success of St. Ambrose graduates. At an institutional level, this is accomplished primarily through surveys of graduating seniors and alumni.

St. Ambrose has surveyed graduating seniors for more than 20 years. The surveys, managed by the Career Center, were designed to measure student satisfaction, perceived learning gains while at St.

Ambrose, and intended post-graduation activities. Examples of the information obtained from these surveys include employment and graduate school admissions data from a 2010 survey; and satisfaction and perceived learning data from a 2015 survey.

While the Career Center administered these institution-wide surveys, some academic programs reported results from their own surveys and exit interviews through the program review process. For example, the Psychology Department's program review included results from exit interviews and an alumni survey to measure student engagement and learn of student plans after graduation. The Department of Computer and Information Sciences supplemented its program review with results from an alumni survey showing 90% of computer science alumni were working in a field related to their degree.

To improve response rates, more effectively manage data, and benchmark results to national standards, St. Ambrose began administering the National Association of Colleges and Employers First Destinations Outcomes Survey in 2014, in partnership with Grad Leaders. The survey, administered to students one month prior to graduation and then three-, six-, and 12-months after graduation tracks student activities, such as employment, continuing education or volunteering.

As of December 2016, the survey has tracked the first post-graduation destination of 530 (83%) of the 640 students who graduated in December 2015 and May 2016. Within six months of graduating, 61% of these students were employed or volunteering, 19% were continuing their education, 14% were seeking employment, and 4% were seeking continuing education (with 1% not seeking employment or continuing education). This compares favorably with the most recent available national summary of First Destination data, which show that of the 2015 graduating class, 64.5% were employed or volunteering, 17% were continuing their education, 11% were seeking employment, and 3.2% were seeking continuing education (with 1.9% not seeking employment or continuing education).

Student success measures also represent key benchmarks for the institutional Strategic Plan. To measure progress toward Strategic Initiative #2, the following benchmarks were set:

- Increase student employment and graduate school admission rates of undergraduate students. Currently, 80% of St. Ambrose graduates are employed or continuing education six months after graduation. The goal is 100%, with 75% employed in their field.
- Increase job attainment, advancement and satisfaction rates of graduate and adult students. The goal is for graduate program completers to obtain initial professional employment or perceive higher rates of job advancements or job satisfaction as result of program completion.

St. Ambrose also tracks salaries of recent graduates and alumni through The Outcomes Survey and other external benchmarks, which indicate that St. Ambrose graduates earn more than expected. The Center for Education and the Workforce at Georgetown reports that St. Ambrose graduates are expected to earn $39,200, annually. The actual median earnings were found to be $44,800. Likewise, The Economist found that St. Ambrose graduates earn $44,800, compared to an expectation of $43,974. A study from The New York Times found that St. Ambrose is among the highest selective private colleges in median incomes and proportion of graduates who end up in the top 20% of income levels.

At the program-level, accredited professional programs evaluate the success of their graduates via licensure/certification exams and job placement rates. For example, 100% of students with a Master of Occupational Therapy from 2011-2015 passed the National Board Certification in Occupational Therapy exam. The program also reports that over the past three years, 85% of graduates accepted positions as occupational therapists in their first choice practice settings and geographic regions

within four weeks of graduation. The Doctor of Physical Therapy program reports that over the past three years, the first-time National Physical Therapy Examination pass rate is 97%, with 100% ultimately passing the exam. The program also reports the average starting salary of graduates from 2014 was more than $62,000. Similar student success data are posted online for the Master of Speech Language Pathology and Master of Physician Assistant Studies programs.

Sources

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- EPC Decisions 2000-2017
- EPC Guidelines for New Programs 2012
- EPC KIN Assessment Letter 2015
- EPC KIN Biology Support Letter 2015
- EPC KIN Clarifying Program Review Questions 2015
- EPC KIN Course Summary Sheets 2015
- EPC KIN Dean Support Letter 2015
- EPC KIN Decision 2015
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- EPC Program Review Schedule 2016-2017
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- EPC UG Program Review Guidelines 2014-2015
- FA Faculty Handbook -May 2017
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- First Destination Outcomes Survey Results 2015-2016
- Iowa Illinois Community Colleges Articulation Agreement 2014
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- NACE First Destination Results 2015

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- NYTimes
- Prior Learning Assessment 201 Course Summary
- Published and Online Transfer Policies
- SAU Catalog 15-17
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- Writing Across the Curriculum Guidelines

4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Argument

4.B.1: St. Ambrose has clearly stated goals for student learning at the course, program, and institutional levels. As described in response to Criteria 3.A. and 3.B., course and program level student learning outcomes, developed by faculty and evaluated as part of the program review process, are documented in course syllabi, online assessment forms, program webpages and program review documents. Institution-level goals for student learning take the form of the four General Education outcomes described in response to Criterion 3.B.1 – 3.B.2.

The Institutional Assessment and Evaluation Plan describes how these institutional learning goals are assessed. The plan, updated regularly by the University assessment coordinator, provides historical context, states the purpose of assessment and articulates values statements:

The plan also describes the model to assess institutional outcomes. In this model, the General Education program consists of educational activities mapped to curricular requirements designed so that students attain the four institutional outcomes for undergraduate students. To determine the effectiveness of this General Education program, the plan describes four areas of assessment: (1) alignment among curricular requirements, educational activities and intended SLOs; (2) student engagement with educational activities; (3) student satisfaction; and (4) student attainment of institutional outcomes.

As part of the program review process, faculty document the extent to which course SLOs align with the institutional General Education SLOs. This alignment, required for every General Education course, is documented in course summary sheets and evaluated by the director of General Education. As an example, in a review of the Theatre program, the director of General Education described how faculty demonstrated alignment of course outcomes with General Education outcomes in the areas of the humanities and creative arts. Courses do not earn General Education designation until they have demonstrated alignment between course and institutional level SLOs.

VALUE rubrics developed by AAC&U are used to assess the alignment between educational activities and General Education SLOs. As part of the process to assess student learning (described later), faculty teaching General Education courses identify the extent to which their course content, activities, and outcomes align with components of VALUE rubrics. For example, faculty in the English Department questioned the alignment of the "content development" aspect of the Written Communication VALUE rubric during a 2014 General Education assessment cycle.

If educational activities, curricular requirements, and intended institutional SLOs are in alignment, it's important to assess levels of student engagement with these educational activities. The plan notes that student engagement is primarily assessed through the National Survey of Student Engagement. The NSSE, administered at least once every three years since 2006, provides information to assess the effort students put into educational activities and effort the institution puts into encouraging students to participate in high-impact activities. NSSE reports, available online, show trends in engagement over time. NSSE results are published online and discussed at faculty assembly meetings.

If students are engaged with educational activities aligned with institutional SLOs, it's important to measure student satisfaction with those activities. SIR II course ratings provide evidence of student satisfaction with General Education courses. The office of the dean of University Academic Programs manages the SIR II administration of the rating tool and disseminates results to faculty and college deans. Comprehensive Results from the SIR II are used as a source of information by the Promotion, Tenure & Standards Committee to evaluate the teaching effectiveness of faculty for promotion and tenure decisions.

The Student Satisfaction Inventory and the Adult Student Priorities Survey also provide information to assess and improve student satisfaction with academic and co-curricular activities. Results from these assessments, administered on a three-year cycle, are summarized and published online. The 2016 administration of ASPS and 2013 administration of the SSI showed overall student satisfaction within their academic program, but highlighted a need to address security and parking. With the expansion of available parking due to new construction on campus, St. Ambrose also expanded the availability of security escorts to students. Financial aid and affordability were also noted in both surveys as areas of weakness for students. The 2014 Strategic Plan initiative #1 calls upon St. Ambrose to find strategies to make an Ambrose education not only affordable, but also accessible. These strategies are discussed in response to Criterion 5.

After documenting procedures to evaluate the alignment among General Education outcomes and curricular requirements – and procedures to assess student engagement and satisfaction with educational activities – the institutional assessment plan documents procedures to assess student attainment of General Education outcomes. These procedures include a combination of externally-benchmarked assessments, common rubrics and internally-developed measures.

Over the past 20 years, St. Ambrose has administered a variety of externally-benchmarked assessments of General Education outcomes. These assessments include the Academic Profile (published by ETS, administered in 1996), the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (ACT, 2002), the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (ETS, 2004), the ETS Proficiency Profile (ETS, 2007), and the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CAE, 2012-14). St. Ambrose has also piloted the HEIghten Written Communication assessment in 2016. Score reports for all these assessments are available on the Office of Assessment webpage.

Results from these institutional assessments have led to improvements. For example, results from the 2012 administration of the Collegiate Learning Assessment indicated St. Ambrose seniors scored lower in integrated performance tasks than what should be expected (based on ACT scores and comparisons to other institutions). This led to discussions about the importance of integrative learning, which contributed to the development of the signature General Education program discussed in response to Criterion 3.B.1 and 3.B.2.

While these assessments provide valuable data for external benchmarking, no externally-developed measure aligns perfectly with St. Ambrose General Education outcomes. Because of this, St. Ambrose

also employs common rubrics embedded within General Education courses to assess student learning. At the end of the semester, faculty teaching General Education courses are asked to assess student performance using the VALUE rubric they believe is most appropriate for their course. For example, instructors in the History Department chose to assess student learning using the Reading VALUE rubric in 2015. Faculty in the Theatre and Music Departments chose to assess students with the Creative Thinking VALUE rubric in 2016.

Faculty use their chosen VALUE rubric to report the number of students attaining each level of performance and identify the evidence they used to assess students. As described earlier, faculty are also asked to evaluate the usefulness of the rubric and the alignment of the course with the intended General Education outcome. Example report from the 2014 assessment of written communication and quantitative literacy demonstrate the information yielded from this embedded assessment process.

To assess student attainment of the fourth General Education outcome — integrative learning — the Office of Assessment worked with faculty in the Philosophy and Theology departments to develop an integrative learning rubric. Faculty first used this rubric in 2016 to assess student learning.

The Institutional Assessment and Evaluation Plan, in articulating the purpose, values, logistics, and processes of assessment, provides evidence of the effectiveness of institutional assessment practices. More importantly, examples of how this assessment evidence has been used demonstrates an effective institutional assessment system. In addition to the uses described earlier (e.g., using CLA results to develop the signature General Education program; using ASPS results to develop strategies to better address the needs of adult learners), institutional assessment results have been used to improve student learning. As an example, the Department of Mathematics and Statistics assessed student learning in its General Education courses using VALUE rubrics, internally-developed tests and externally-normed assessments. Based on results from these assessments, the department proposed to eliminate its remedial course offerings, modify pedagogy in General Education courses (to offer just-in-time remediation), and modify the content of courses to focus more on quantitative reasoning (in addition to formal mathematics). Since these proposals were approved by EPC, results from VALUE rubrics show the quantitative reasoning skills of students have improved.

4.B.2: Every academic major and certificate program at St. Ambrose formally assesses achievement of student learning outcomes through annual assessment and program review processes. While the program review process (described in response to Criterion 4.A.1.) has long required academic departments to submit assessment-related information – and academic programs have been required to articulate assessment plans since 1995 – it wasn't until 2006 that St. Ambrose began developing a systematic, sustainable process to document the assessment of student learning. In the summer of that year, academic programs were encouraged to submit a simple form documenting assessment activities for the year. The form asked department chairs to document:

- Assessment or evaluation activities engaged in during the academic year
- Changes made during the academic year as a result of assessment or evaluation activities
- Changes anticipated during the next academic year as a result of assessment or evaluation activities
- Evidence of improvements from changes made as a result of assessment or evaluation activities
- Resources needed, based on assessment or evaluation evidence, for improvement

The process intended to: (1) encourage faculty to recognize assessment as an ongoing process, (2) allow the institution to track and evaluate assessment activities, and (3) encourage the use of assessment results for planning. Unfortunately, this process was suspended in 2008 due to low participation (with nine academic departments participating that year).

To meet increasing internal and external expectations for assessment, a new annual assessment process was proposed in 2011. To encourage participation, EPC agreed that programs could substitute results from the annual assessment process for the more onerous assessment section of their five-year program review. This new annual assessment process received a statement of support from the Educational Policies Committee in spring 2011.

By the end of the 2011-12 academic year, 36 (86%) of the 42 academic departments at St. Ambrose participated in the annual assessment process, with 32 (76%) departments meeting at least some of the expectations for assessment. The University assessment coordinator shared the results of this annual assessment process with the Assessment & Evaluation Committee, the academic deans, and faculty within each college. Criterion 4.B.3 summarizes the expansion of participation in the assessment process to date.

In discussing annual assessment results with the campus community, the process was once again updated in 2012 to reflect best practices and increasing institutional expectations for assessment. The most significant change was requiring all major and degree programs to submit annual assessment information, instead of requiring academic departments to participate. The updated process also expected academic programs to seek out external benchmarks, to develop curriculum maps aligning outcomes with curricular requirements, and to condense their schedule of assessments to ensure all program-level SLOs were assessed at least twice within each program review cycle.

The current annual assessment process requires each academic major and certificate program to maintain an online assessment form. Each form, accessible to faculty within the program, college deans, Educational Policies Committee members, the Office of Institutional Research & Assessment, and the vice president of Academic & Student Affairs, contains separate tabs to document:

1. (info) General information about the program, including the name of a contact person for assessment-related questions.
2. (plan) An assessment plan, including student learning outcomes, assessment instruments/methods to be used, evidence of the quality of those instruments/methods, assessment logistics, and criteria to determine if assessment results meet faculty expectations.
3. (map) A curriculum map displaying the alignment between program-level outcomes and required courses or activities.
4. (results) Space to provide links to results from annual assessment activities.
5. (evaluation) A rubric used in 2016 to evaluate academic program assessment and provide feedback for improvement.

Once a program has documented student learning outcomes, a curriculum map and an assessment plan, assessment results must be submitted by July 1st each year. Then, following this deadline, the assessment coordinator evaluates each assessment form according to institutional expectations as described in the rubric and Institutional Assessment and Evaluation Plan. These evaluations are stored and summarized in a "state of assessment report" sent to the vice president of Academic & Student Affairs and the Assessment & Evaluation Committee. The report makes up the Committee's first agenda item of the year, with a goal of identifying ways to support programs that face particular challenges in developing and implementing assessment plans (such as interdisciplinary programs with no faculty members).

Supporting this annual assessment process, the program review process (described in 4.A.1.) also documents and evaluates academic program assessment activities. While annual assessment results can be synthesized to fulfill some program review requirements, the program review process requires

faculty to reflect on the assessment evidence collected, analyzed, and used since the previous review (typically a period of five years).

Each year, EPC members retreat to review and modify program review standards. Most recently, EPC approved a new program review template that requires each academic program to:

- articulate program-level student learning outcomes and include course-level outcomes on syllabi
- provide evidence that outcomes align with external standards/ recommendations
- reflect on assessment and evaluation evidence since the previous program review, identifying trends or relative strengths of the program and its students.
- demonstrate how changes since the previous program review have led to improvement
- explain changes that may need to be made based on assessment results

The template also includes an evaluation (conducted by the Assessment & Evaluation Committee) of the program's assessment activities, along with a dean's reflection on program effectiveness.

Whereas academic programs assess student learning through the annual assessment and program review processes, co-curricular programs assess their performance through annual Student Affairs reports and review processes overseen by the Academic Support and University Life Committees.

Beginning in 2005, the Academic Support Committee began requiring co-curricular offices or departments to submit evaluation plans. These evaluation plans were expected to contain:

- A mission statement
- Goals and objectives
- Specific plans for evaluating or assessing the goals and objectives
- A timeline for implementation
- A letter from the supervising vice president of record indicating that he or she has reviewed and supports the plan

The ASC evaluates annual reports and meets with directors of these co-curricular offices at least once every five years to review the evaluation plans. During these meetings, the ASC addresses concerns regarding the policies and procedures of the co-curricular offices raised by members of the campus community. The ASC then makes policy recommendations to the appropriate directors and to the Faculty Assembly. The ASC submits regular reports to the University assessment coordinator as part of the institution's on-going assessment of academic support services to help ensure organizational excellence and accountability to the Higher Learning Commission and other external agencies. Procedures for submitting reports to be considered by the Committee can be found on the ASC pages of the webpage of the provost/vice president for Academic & Student Affairs. After Committee review, a file of these reports can be found on the Faculty Assembly Blackboard.

The 2015-16 annual report from the ASC provides evidence of these co-curricular reviews. The report summarizes reviews of General Accounting Office, Records & Registration, Accessibility Resource Center (formerly Student Disability Services), Student Accounts and Bee Central.

As noted in 4.A.1 co-curricular programs—campus ministry, campus recreation, counseling services, health services, international student services, residence life, security and student activities — are evaluated by the University Life Committee. These evaluations focus on the quality of services provided and involve a review of annual student services reports and data from surveys and focus groups.

Within the Division of Student Affairs, co-curricular programs frame their student learning outcomes and program evaluations by standards from the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. Council standards have influenced the Standards of Excellence and intended student learning outcomes adopted by the Division of Student Affairs. These standards and outcomes drive assessment and evaluation efforts, which culminate in annual Student Affairs Year in Review reports. The University Life Committee reviews these annual reports.

In addition to internal assessment and evaluation processes for co-curricular programs, St. Ambrose has employed externally-benchmarked assessments, including:

- Linking Institutional Policies to Student Success. The LIPSS provided norms on institutional policies that might be leveraged to increase student engagement. Results from the LIPSS supported first-year program efforts and contributed to further review and revision of student advising models.
- The Outcomes Survey. As described in response to Criterion 4.A.6., The Outcomes Survey tracks student activities following graduation.
- MAP-Works. This comprehensive student retention and success program included four surveys throughout each student's first year at St. Ambrose. Results from these surveys were used to identify at-risk students and intervene effectively. Results were also used to predict retention rates.
- Measuring Information Services Outcomes. The MISO was first administered to students, faculty, and staff in 2014 to measure their view of library and computing services. Results are used to inform IT planning.
- National College Health Assessment. The American College Health Association's NCHA was first administered to 308 students in 2011 to assess health habits, behaviors, and perceptions. Results are published online.
- AlcoholEdu®. This survey was first administered to 333 students in 2011 as part of an online alcohol prevention program.
- Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI). In 2010, the St. Ambrose Center for International Education administered the GPI at the beginning and end of the semester to 155 residential students and 46 students who studied abroad. Results provided clear evidence of the impact of study abroad experiences on the global perspectives of St. Ambrose students.

4.B.3: Like many institutions, St. Ambrose focused in the late 1990s and early 2000s on developing a culture of assessment. Assessment requirements were developed, followed by templates, forms and standards. While those efforts may have been necessary, they were too focused on compliance. Assessment was conducted and evaluated, but most of the improvements resulting from assessment were to the assessment process itself. Faculty were educated to help them write better SLOs, develop more specific rubrics, and report results more efficiently.

Since that time, St. Ambrose has been trying to move from a culture of assessment to a culture of learning. The goal is no longer to simply have exemplary assessment; rather, the goal is to have exemplary improvement in student learning. To that end, communicating, using, and documenting improvements from assessment are vital.

Formal communication of assessment results occurs primarily through online reports and presentations. The Office of Assessment and Institutional Research publishes current results from institutional assessment instruments on a campus-wide assessment reports webpage. Historical reports dating back to 2003 are located on the portal. Results from the major institutional assessments, such as the NSSE, CLA, SSI and NCHA are also shared through faculty assembly meeting presentations,

informing such work as the Strategic Plan and Student Affairs Operational Plan.

Results from institutional assessments have been used to advance student opportunity and learning. Results from NSSE administrations showed a need for more widespread commitment of high impact practices across the undergraduate experience, especially after the first year experience. As such, the University Strategic Plan now calls for greater engagement of students. Strategies were developed to address this through the Quality Initiative Project, focusing on HIPS in the second year of college, as well as college level alignment of HIP opportunities for all academic programs, including graduate programs. Revisions to the EPC five-year review process also ensures programs directly addressing HIPs in their curriculum. Results from CLA+ administered to undergraduate students identified challenges students had with critical thinking. Coupled with NSSE results, the General Education Committee revised the General Education outcomes to align course outcomes more directly with critical thinking, as well as integrative learning.

4.B.4: Evaluated against guidelines articulated by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment and the New Leadership Alliance for Student Learning and Accountability, processes and methodologies to assess student learning at St. Ambrose reflect best practices. These best practices, documented in the Institutional Assessment and Evaluation Plan, include:

1. Setting clear, appropriate, student-focused, measurable goals for student learning;
2. Aligning intended student learning outcomes to curricular requirements and student activities;
3. Gathering evidence of student learning systematically through sustainable assessment plans employing multiple high-quality assessment instruments (ideally with external benchmarks) at multiple points throughout each academic program; and
4. Communicating, interpreting, and using assessment results to make recommendations for improvements to student learning (and assessing the effects of those improvements).

To ensure alignment with these best practices, academic program assessment activities are evaluated as part of the annual assessment process. Most recently, in the summer of 2017, the assessment coordinator evaluated each program's documented assessment activities using a comprehensive rubric of best practices. This evaluation reveals improvement in almost all factors associated with program assessment, from participation to measures of quality:

- 59 of 66 academic programs fully participated in the annual assessment process during 2016-17, compared with 55 of 66 programs during 2015-16.
- 94% of programs had appropriate, student-focused learning outcomes, compared with 90% in 2016. The percentage of programs with clearly observable and measurable outcomes also grew by 4%, from 70% to 74%. 32% of programs had outcome aligned with external benchmarks or standards. As an example, outcomes for the Exercise Science program were aligned with standards set by the American College of Sports Medicine's Certified Exercise Physiologist examination.
- 81% of programs had good or exemplary curriculum maps, aligning curricular requirements with student learning outcomes, compared with 74% in 2016. More than a third of these programs had exemplary curriculum maps, showing a sequential progression of learning throughout the curriculum. As an example, the sociology program displays how students progress from introductory to developmental to mastery attainment of each outcome.
- 54% of programs were assessing each SLO with multiple instruments (including at least one direct measure per SLO), compared with 45% in 2016. These instruments included assignments embedded within courses, such as papers (46 programs), tests (29 programs), and presentations (20 programs). These instruments also included capstone projects or portfolios (25 programs), externally-developed assessments (18 programs), and surveys or interviews (12 programs).

- 43% of programs had either documented or were working to document evidence regarding the quality of their assessment instruments, representing no change since 2016. 82% of programs were using multiple raters and/or rubrics to help ensure scoring consistency. For example, the Doctor of Physical Therapy program uses standardized surveys and nationally benchmarked clinical performance instruments to assess student learning.
- 74% of programs had committed to assessment schedules that would ensure all learning outcomes were assessed multiple times between program reviews, compared with 72% in 2016. 43% of programs clearly explained the logistics of which assessments were administered by whom to which students at what times.
- 28% of programs had developed exemplary models of assessment that would ensure students are given feedback and opportunities to develop increasing sophistication within each outcome as they progress through the curriculum. The curriculum map for the Doctor of Business Administration provides an example of this.
- 55% of programs had specified clear criteria for which results they desired when reporting assessment results, compared with just 25% in 2016. For example, the Master of Education in Education Administration program uses clearly defined rubrics (informed by professional standards) to evaluate student performance.
- 57% of programs had thoroughly reported assessment results for the year, with an interpretation of the results, compared with 39% in 2016. 31% of programs provided ideas for improving student learning based on the results. Assessment reports from the Biology, Occupational Therapy, and Women and Gender Studies departments exemplify this.

This evaluation provides a baseline for assessment at St. Ambrose University. Based on this evaluation, the Assessment & Evaluation Committee is working with programs to improve the reporting and use of assessment results. The Committee will consult with the academic deans to determine timelines and strategies for continued improvement. One way to do this is by setting clear criteria for each student learning outcome and assessment. To model this to the campus community, the Assessment & Evaluation Committee and University Life Committees collaborated to develop criteria for NSSE results. These criteria include getting at least a 40% response rate and, on each NSSE benchmark, scoring above the average of the top 50% of NSSE schools.

The successfully completion of the program review and annual assessment processes requires faculty involvement. In fact, as part of the program review process, academic programs must describe how faculty within the program share responsibility for student learning and its assessment.

This substantial participation of faculty in the assessment process is also documented by participation in assessment workshops. From 2013-2015, 31 department chairs and program directors (representing 60 academic programs) attended a series of five workshops to develop skills in writing student learning outcomes, developing assessment plans, constructing curriculum maps, reporting results and evaluating assessment activities. At the end of the final workshop, attendees were asked to complete a rubric evaluating their assessment activities and the attitudes their faculty have toward assessment. Of the 26 department chairs and program directors who completed the rubric, 24 indicated that multiple faculty participate in the assessment process (with 14 indicating a majority of faculty actively collaborate on plans, assessment tools and results). Other results indicate a majority of faculty are fully aware of program-level assessment activities and believe those activities are useful.

Sources

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- SAU VALUE Rubric Creative Thinking MUS 2015
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- SAU VALUE Rubric Written Communication 2014
- SSI Results 2013
- St. Ambrose Action Plan Alcohol.edu 2014-2017
- Standards of Excellence Student Affairs
- Student Affairs Program Eval & CAS Standards
- Student Affairs Year in Review 2015-16

4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Argument

4.C.1: St. Ambrose has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion. These goals are defined and monitored by the Cabinet as approved benchmarks and utilized by the Strategic Planning Committee and the Retention Committee as measures of success. The goals are based off of institutional trends, aspirant and comparative institutions, and outcomes research based on admissions standards of St. Ambrose. Outcome results are also reviewed via stakeholder reports (such as College Scorecard, IPEDS Data Feedback Report) at a national level.

St. Ambrose's current strategic plan addresses student success (retention, persistence, completion rates for all students) and affordability. No one person or department is solely responsible for the success of our students; rather, retention, persistence, completion and affordability are the responsibility of each person, program, department and office on campus. Demonstrating this belief, the institution-wide Retention Committee consists of faculty and staff representatives across campus to analyze data and identify targets for improvement.

To ensure students are offered a competitively-priced education, the institution conducts an annual review of all programs and operations. This process is described in response to Criterion 5.C.

4.C.2–4.C.3: The Office of Institutional Research collects and analyzes data on retention, persistence and completion. These data are shared with the institution via the SAU Stat Pak on the IR Blackboard site. This allows access to the data for all faculty and staff. In addition, these data are reviewed regularly by the SAU Retention Committee and the First and Second Year Advisory Boards. Both use as a benchmark, the goal of a 5-year running average of 80% retention rate for FY to SY students (currently 78%) and a 5-year running average of 64% graduation rate for FTFR (currently 61%).

As first year and sophomore retention rates dipped in 2011-12, St. Ambrose created a number of programs to enhance outcomes for those populations, including the creation of FYE programming and data tracking using the MapWorks tools. The MapWorks tool served as an excellent source of information for students and advisers to help attend to student needs during their first year. As

suspected, the tool helped to identify through systematic analysis that male, minority students were at risk for greater attrition rates than their non-minority counterparts. Likewise, first year students who did not live on campus were also at a greater risk for attrition than their peers who lived on campus. In response, outreach programming was enhanced to engage minority students, especially male students, and Welcome Week orientation activities were designed to incorporate students not enrolled in a new student seminar, as well as those not living on campus. Unfortunately, MapWorks was bought out and failed to work for the 2015-2016 academic year. As such, FYE staff and faculty reviewed the latest in retention and advising software. The committee concluded that it was in the best interest for St. Ambrose to adopt the Student Planning tool to enhance the adviser-student relationship and allow students to more easily plan a four-year sequence of courses. The advising process has also been revamped to ensure students are being advised in the advising office or by faculty in the student's major as data supports connecting with faculty on a meaningful level early in a student's college career is a high impact practice leading to increased student retention levels. Changes and enhanced resources in our student success center have lead to increased opportunities for academic tutoring and writing assistance. The Athletic department has also provided additional student study groups and tutoring to address retention and persistence issues among the Athletic population. With the success of the FYE program, St. Ambrose designed its Quality Iniative Project on the design of an evidence informed Second Year experience.

In the interest of addressing affordability issues St. Ambrose not only systemically reviews programs and services to assess costs and feasibility issues, the institution is also dedicated to developing new funding streams through the development of new revenue opportunities including those related to new degree offerings and majors. Some of the most recent additions include graduate programs in Speech Pathology and Physician Assistant, as well as undergraduate programs in Mechanical Engineering and Business Sales. In the interest of competitive advantage, St. Ambrose is also transitioning the MOT to a doctorate in Occupational Therapy to keep pace with national trends. Continuing to add enhanced, in demand programming across several college allows St. Ambrose to grow the revenue stream and keep costs affordable for all students. Institutional tuition increases and cost of living adjustments remain some of the lowest in the Midwest.

4.C.4: St. Ambrose University collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs on an annual basis and shares these reports with the campus community and stakeholders. Per industry standard and IPEDS guidance, the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research collects census data twice a year (fall and spring semesters) and reports those numbers to the Cabinet, Board of Trustees, campus community, and public stakeholders. Whenever possible, IPEDS reports are used to communicate historical data as well, showing trends in institutional outcomes. The Common Data Set is used to comply with agreed upon data definitions and shared via the webpage. In addition, St. Ambrose participates in more than 30 public requests for institutional outcomes, primarily in the form of surveys.

Beyond annual reporting of institutional measures of retention and persistence, detail retention analysis reports prepared by the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research and shared with the University Retention Committee to determine institutional recommendations and next steps for interventions. In conjunction with the Retention Committee, the First Alert Committee comprised of Student Affairs and Student Success personnel work directly with identified students at risk of attrition. Annual completion rates beyond those reported to IPEDS, are also researched in greater detail through the use of the Outcomes Survey discussed in response to Criterion 4.A.6. This survey and reported findings are aligned with the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) standards for reporting first destination outcomes.

Sources

- Admissions Standards Outcome Research 2014
- Benchmark enrollment comparison schools 2015-16
- Cabinet Enrollment Report - Fall 2016 Census
- Cabinet Enrollment Report - Spring 2017 Census
- CDS 2016-2017
- College Scorecard
- Fall 16 to Spring 17 Retention - Student Characteristics
- IPEDS Data Feedback Report 2016
- Leading the Way - St Ambrose Univ Strat Plan 2015 - Benchmarks Internal with Divisonal Work - Complete 2-14-17
- NACE Outcomes Survey 2015-2016
- QI Report St. Ambrose University IA 2017
- Retention Recommendations 2017
- Stat Pak as of 8.10.17
- Stat Pak as of 8.10.17 (page number 13)

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

St. Ambrose University promotes continuous improvement of its educational programs, learning environments and support services through feedback produced by rigorous evaluation processes. In this way, St. Ambrose demonstrates a responsibility for ensuring high quality educational programs that enrich lives. St. Ambrose University demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through a rigorous annual assessment and program review processes. Following best practices and principles outlined in the Institutional Assessment and Evaluation Plan, the institution and its programs follow a process of articulating intended student learning outcomes, mapping student experiences to those outcomes, assessing student learning with multiple measures, and using evidence of students learning to guide improvements. This assessment process, which traces its roots back to the National College Sophomore Testing Program in 1947, fits the institutional culture and has led to improvements in student learning. Information about institutional assessment processes, along with assessment reports dating back to 2003, are available in the Office of Assessment portal.

Sources

- SAU Assessment Plan 2017

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Argument

5.A.1: St. Ambrose University operates from a position of strength due to suitable fiscal and human resources, as well as sufficient physical and technological infrastructure. St. Ambrose University leverages these resources and support wherever and however programs are delivered.

St. Ambrose benefits from a solid financial position, which it has maintained for more than 35 years. Over the last decade, St. Ambrose's net assets increased from $105 million in 2006 to $187 million in 2016, while total assets grew from $172 million to $279 million. The institution's endowment has grown from $44 million in 2007 to $127 million in 2016.

The Council of Independent Colleges provides the Financial Indicators Tool as an annual financial benchmarking report to member colleges and universities. The report presents a clear assessment of an institution's financial performance over time with comparisons to similar institutions. The Composite Finance Index included in the FIT report is a measure of an institution's overall financial health based on the sufficient and flexible of resources, the management of debt, the performance of assets and the results of operations. A score of 3.0 is considered the threshold for financial health. St. Ambrose's index score of 7.5 compared to the national and regional median score of 4.1 over time provides evidence of consistent resource management over time. The FIT report of July 2016 for St. Ambrose University clearly defines its position of fiscal strength.

Other specific financial indicators provide further evidence of the financial health of the institution. The institution's Primary Reserve Ratio (ratio of net assets to total expense that indicates financial strength and flexibility) is 1.743. This value significantly exceeds the advisable reserve level of 0.40 and is well above the top quartile of Iowa Private Colleges and Universities (0.908) reported in FY

2016. The Viability Ratio, a measure of expendable net assets to long-term debt, should fall between 1.25 and 2.00. The University's Viability Ratio is 1.982, also in the top quartile of Iowa Private Colleges and Universities during the same period. As described below, St. Ambrose has leveraged its position of financial strength to invest in new academic buildings, residential facilities, and fields and facilities for sports, wellness and recreation. Long term debt is approximately $61 million.

Revenue has exceeded expenses in each of the last 10 years and adjustments are made to operations annually to continue this record. No cash flow challenges have been experienced. Two important factors impacting operating revenue are enrollment and institutional aid provided to students. St. Ambrose obtains 68-69% of the operating revenue from tuition and fees, and the institution's discount rate has risen to meet the need to attract prospective students. The overall undergraduate tuition discount rate grew from 39.7% in 2012 to 46.1% in 2016. The first-year discount rate for students entering in fall 2017, currently at 54.4%, is expected to be near the median reported by other Iowa private schools but high compared to public two- and four-year institutions. In 2016, 7 of 15 private colleges and universities in Iowa reported a first-year discount rate of more than 60%.

In recent years, St. Ambrose has experienced a decline in full-time undergraduate students and part-time graduate students. Compared to a record high of 582 new first-year students entering in fall 2012, St. Ambrose experienced a decline in this population for the next four years with classes of 562, 524, 448, and 453. At the same time, St. Ambrose has experienced significant reductions in adult students, part-time students and non-cohort part-time graduate students. The resulting reductions in net tuition revenue have been offset, in part, by increases in full-time health sciences graduate students. Over the last three years, reductions in operating expenses totaling $6.3 million have been made across all divisions of the institution. These reductions in personnel and other expenditures were necessary to ensure a balanced budget. Fortunately, several personnel reductions were coincident with retirements and some open positions were left unfilled in areas experiencing reduced demand. A total of 8 non-voluntary staff reductions (7.0 FTE) occurred across the institution during the last three years. With changes in senior search, recruitment strategies, and the distribution of financial aid, St. Ambrose expects to exceed projected net tuition revenue while welcoming its largest incoming first-year class in the past three years to campus in fall 2017.

To keep an Ambrose education affordable and annual tuition increases low, efforts have also been made to reduce operating expenses through a number of cost-saving plans. Examples include out-sourcing services such as housekeeping and the bookstore, reducing events expenses, and implementing a new procedure to review open staff positions. When an opening occurs, positions are held open for 30 days, and time is taken to consider alternative strategies to the position. In some cases, the duties of the position have been reassigned or the position has been modified and reclassified to reduce expenses.

This sound financial management during the past decade resulted in an upgraded "A- bond rating" (stable outlook) from Standard & Poor's Global Ratings compared to BBB+ rating assigned at the time of the last comprehensive evaluation. The current Standard and Poor's Report noted solid available resources (expendable resources) relative to the medians equal to 128% of operating expenses and 207% of pro forma debt; consistent full-accrual operating surpluses, which is expected to continue into 2017 as St. Ambrose seeks to actively manage expenses; and a stable and experienced management team that is proactively managing enrollment pressures by evaluating programs and cutting expenses where appropriate. The stable outlook awarded to St. Ambrose reflects Standard and Poor's expectations that during the next two-year outlook period, operations will "remain break-even to positive," on a full accrual basis even with declines in enrollment. Furthermore, Standard and Poor's expects St. Ambrose's financial resources will "remain solid for the rating," and that the institution will, "maintain adequate liquidity support for its direct purchase debt."

Directly related to the careful management of financial resources, St. Ambrose is able to provide human resources as well as physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support quality educational offerings. This can be seen in the growth of qualified faculty not only for the institution, but for high demand programs, the establishment of a new campus master plan and steps towards fulfilling it, and on-going support for technological infrastructure.

Many new facilities and major renovations have occurred at St. Ambrose since 2007. These include:

- The purchase and renovation in 2009 of the Center for Communication and Social Development (Pleasant Street Property) that houses the Master of Speech Language Pathology and the Master of Education in Educational Administration programs;
- Construction in 2008 of McCarthy Hall, additional classroom and residence hall space;
- Purchase in 2011 of the Ambrose Dome – an indoor practice facility in North Davenport;
- Construction in 2012 of North Hall, a new residence hall;
- Construction of the Center for Health Sciences Education on the Genesis West Medical Center Campus, Phase I in 2010 and Phase II in 2014;
- Exterior renovation in 2013 and 2014 of Ambrose Hall;
- Ongoing renovation, begun in 2015, of laboratories in Hayes Hall for Engineering and Kinesiology; and
- Ongoing construction of the Wellness and Recreation Center.

In 2011, St. Ambrose revised its Campus Master Plan based on year-long collaborative work among students, faculty, staff, trustees, and community members. The plan is a 10-year facilities development strategy to support the mission of St. Ambrose, its academic programs, and its students through its existing and future building and grounds. Specifically, the plan noted areas of needed improvement. Among those areas noted is Ambrose Hall, the original campus building built in 1885 and one of the most cherished building on campus where generations of students have made lasting memories central to their time at St. Ambrose. Also noted for improvement were the PE Center (built in 1981) and athletic fields. As is true for many independent university, athletics and wellness opportunities are key components to attracting and retaining students, but more importantly for fulfilling St. Ambrose's mission and commitment to enable students to develop physically, in overall health and wellness, so they may enrich their own lives and the lives of others. Committed to the fulfillment of the 2011 Campus Master Plan, St. Ambrose has invested $5.65 million in the exterior renovation of Ambrose Hall, has invested $6.2 million to develop the St. Vincent's Athletics Complex, a 32 acre complex blocks from campus serving as a practice and competition site for Fighting Bee programs, and in the fall of 2017 will open its doors to a new $20.5 million 80,000 square foot Wellness and Recreation Center that includes the renovation of the existing 44,000 square feet of the Physical Education Center. The capital campaign underway for the Wellness and Recreation Center has raised $17.3 million as of the close of fiscal year 2017.

The 2011 Campus Master Plan, its noted goals, and on-going progress informed the 2015 Strategic Plan. Specifically, Strategic Initiative #3 focuses on the leading presence of St. Ambrose in the community, with a commitment to develop facilities and campus infrastructure to facilitate teaching, learning, growth, and success. While a benchmark of this initiative is to advance progress of the Campus Master Plan, other benchmarks include an increase in technology usage to transform teaching and enhance student learning. Drawing from the Strategic Plan, the Information Technology Department established an Information Infrastructure Plan for 2016-2019, operationalizing the technology infrastructure needs for the institution. This plan identifies infrastructure needs on an annual basis, as well as anticipating future infrastructure needs. During the past 10 years, $6.3 million has been invested in technology upgrades including IT infrastructure and a full remodeling of the IT

Data Center in the basement of the library.

Also related to technology is the Strategic Plan's first initiative to improve the accessibility of an Ambrose education. Accessibility is defined, in part, as the expansion of online educational offerings and programs to meet current and future students where they are, while providing a quality educational experience. St. Ambrose has attempted during the past five years to build and sustain a robust online educational programming. Institutional costs and expertise have posed as a challenge to sustained growth. With the establishment of the position of a senior instructional designer for online learning, St. Ambrose now has the human resources needed to provide direction and manage the sustainability of online education growth. St. Ambrose has also signed an agreement to partner with The Learning House to help manage and grow the institution's development, recruitment, enrollment, delivery, retention and technical support of its online educational programs through research based and proven practice. This careful work is poised to expand the reach of St. Ambrose, its quality programs, excellent faculty and mission.

St. Ambrose University has a history of developing academic programs to meet regional demands, as well as understanding its market share of traditional age college students. This strategic growth demands attention to the quality of human resources, in particular, quality faculty. Acknowledging the expectations and standards for earning tenure as a measure of quality, 83% of current faculty are either tenured or tenure-track.

During the significant enrollment growth between 2010 and 2015 63 new tenure-track faculty were hired at St. Ambrose. Although this figure includes some retirement replacements, most represent new faculty lines in the College of Arts & Sciences and the College of Health & Human Services, to support and grow science and allied health programs. Adjustments to demand, as well as decline, can also be seen with overall employee trends in fulltime and part-time positions.

5.A.2: St. Ambrose University is an independent, non-profit, diocesan institution that serves the educational needs of the regional diocese while remaining financially independent of the Diocese of Davenport. No subordinate entities are associated with the institution.

The institutional resource allocation process engages stakeholders ranging from faculty and student services staff through the academic and student affairs leadership team and the president's Cabinet. Informed by the president and the Cabinet, the Board of Trustees is responsible for exercising fiduciary oversight of the financial well-being of the institution and its mission. In addition, the Finance and Investment Committee, as well as the Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees have oversight of financial process, expenditures and revenue.

With input from Enrollment Management, Academic & Student Affairs, Finance and Advancement, the president and the Cabinet establish an annual budget in alignment with short- and long-term strategic initiatives. This budget is approved in the spring by the Board of Trustees and implemented July 1 of the new fiscal year. Academic & Student Affairs accounts for 50% of the budget, inclusive of the teaching and learning foundational to the St. Ambrose mission. With such a significant proportion of the operating budget dedicated to teaching and learning, the provost/vice president for Academic & Student Affairs works with his leadership team who, in turn, work with their respective chairs and directors to identify needed resources and areas of allocation aligned with short- and long-term strategic initiatives and respective division/college operational plans. Beginning in early fall and ending in April, the provost's leadership team works to prioritize areas of need (ranging from the hiring of additional faculty, student counselors and administrative support staff to programming funds). The team collaborates to allocate new funds and reallocate existing funds to determine a final budget recommendation to the Cabinet and ultimately the Board of Trustees. In instances of budget

reductions, a similar process is utilized where the provost's leadership team prioritizes funds that can be reallocated, reduced or eliminated (ranging from surplus funds to surplus staffing) to ensure the support of educational program purposes and avoid adverse effects of resource reduction. For example, fall enrollment in both undergraduate and graduate programs has declined at some point over the past three years (FY 16, 17 and 18). As such, budgets have been reallocated and in some cases reduced, but resources to add or replace nursing, engineering, sales and physician assistant faculty have been achieved, and resources to hire a grant writer for academic programs, student services administrative assistants, a student counselor, and senior instructional designer for online education have been found. This provides evidence of a careful and collaborative process of planning and budgeting.

5.A.3: The institutional mission and core values focus on the goal of providing a holistic education that enriches the lives of our students who then enrich the lives of others, thus earning St. Ambrose recognition as a leading Midwestern institution. These goals are not only realistic for St. Ambrose in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities; they are a reality.

St. Ambrose works diligently and collaboratively to allocate appropriate fiscal and human resources to ensure a quality education is delivered to its students. Because of this integrated planning process, the institution is able to support a stable and growing physical and technological infrastructure that allows St. Ambrose to fulfill its mission and goals. In addition, as the institution and market grow, so does St. Ambrose's budget through the use of an overall, modified incremental budgeting process. As the institution grows, so do budget lines. This includes payroll and benefit lines as well as programming lines to accommodate market increases in things such as health care expenses, commodity and maintenance expenses, as well as changes to accreditation and membership fees and classroom technologies and tools.

In addition to the intentional process of planning and resource allocation, examples of how the mission and core values are not only realistic, but also a reality can be seen through a series of pieces written in the University's Scene magazine discussed in Criterion 1. The St. Ambrose Communications & Marketing Office highlights real stories and real individuals that exemplify Ambrosian Core Values. A piece on the liberal arts highlights St. Ambrose's commitment to the richness of the liberal arts tradition through development of a broad awareness of humanity in all its dimensions. Entrepreneurial alumni attribute their success directly to the problem-solving, respect for diverse ideas, creativity, and service to others that grow from that awareness. Another piece, speaks directly to St. Ambrose's faith tradition of Catholicity embodied in our teaching and learning. Here, faculty alongside campus ministry staff and students share an institutional commitment to social justice through faith and service to others. Campus Ministry programming provides a community where students have an opportunity to engage with one another in exploring and sharing faith. As Rev. Charles "Chuck" Adam, University chaplain until spring 2017, explained, "In many ways, what we are doing is drawing the faith out of the students. It is in them. They have those convictions. It is just helping them find their path."

5.A.4: The staff of St. Ambrose University are appropriately qualified and trained. The Human Resources Office maintains the Universal Employee and Staff Handbooks that provide policy and guidance to ensure staff are appropriately qualified and trained. The Universal Handbook includes policies related to employee selection procedures and classifications, as well as training and development. The Staff Handbook also notes guidelines for job descriptions that are reviewed annually as part of the annual performance process. Performance evaluations, along with employment application information, letters of commendation or other recognition of excellent performance, and all notices of suspension, disciplinary action or termination are all reviewed and maintained by the Human Resources Office.

The Staff Handbook also includes policies regarding the Staff Assembly. As noted in response to Criterion 2, the mission of the Staff Assembly includes promoting staff development. The Staff Assembly holds monthly meetings to promote staff development and collegial spirit among offices. In addition to monthly meetings, annually the Assembly hosts an all-day development workshop open to all staff. In addition, Universal Handbook Section 34.000 encourages every employee to improve his or her education and skills, and to take steps to achieve personal and/or career goals. This is supported through tuition remission in undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as non-credit programs, and up to $200 in staff development grants. St. Ambrose is also a member institution of the Quad Cities Profession Development Network. The QCPDN mission is to share resources and to create faculty and staff development opportunities that meet the common needs of member institutions. St. Ambrose staff are eligible to participate. In 2014, St. Ambrose implemented a mentoring program for new staff parallel to the mentoring program for new faculty. Committed to the on-going development of staff, the program strives to foster a cooperative network among full-time staff, and to cultivate a sense of community on campus.

5.A.5: St. Ambrose University has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and monitoring expense. As noted in 5.A.1, the institution's strong financial ratios are a result of its well-developed and monitored budgeting process. Operating budgets, which are required to be balanced, are set annually. As noted in 5.A.3, this process includes a review of the previous year's financials, accountability to the current fiscal year budget, and the establishment of enrollment projections to inform planning for the next fiscal year. To set enrollment goals, consultants from Royall and Hardwick-Day assist the Cabinet in setting targets based on enrollment trends, the regional market, and Free Application for Student Financial Aid data. Initial projections are shared with academic deans to discuss viability of projections and to continue to shape enrollment targets that inform the planned budget and planning for class sections.

Throughout the fiscal year, budgets are monitored regularly on a variety of levels. At the Cabinet level, institutional finances are reviewed quarterly and reported to the trustees at three meetings. The reports are closely examined by the Finance and Investment Committee of the Board in addition to the annual review of the institutional audit. At the level of management (deans and chairs/directors), the General Accounting Office provides monthly reports noting individual budget lines, available funds and percent of usage/remaining funds available for current year. The reports allow administrators to monitor program rate of spending and determine any need for reallocation within thier budgets. Department chairs and directors are provided access to real-time budgets, where they are able to account for expenditures and allowances.

Sources

- BOT Statement of Responsibilities
- BPT By-laws Revised October 2012
- BPT By-laws Revised October 2012 (page number 9)
- BPT By-laws Revised October 2012 (page number 11)
- BPT By-laws Revised October 2012 (page number 14)
- Cabinet Enrollment Report - Fall 2016
- CIC FIT 2016
- CIC FIT 2016 (page number 11)
- CIC FIT 2016 (page number 27)
- Employee Count FT and PT as of 2016

- Faculty by Tenure Status 2006-2016
- IHELA Ratio Report 2016
- Information Technology 2016
- Master Plan Areas of Attention 2011
- Master Plan Overview 2011
- Mentoring Program
- Program Demand Additional Faculty Additional Enrollment
- SAU Audit Findings 2007
- SAU Audit Findings 2007 (page number 4)
- SAU Audit Findings 2016
- SAU Audit Findings 2016 (page number 5)
- SAU Audit Findings 2016 (page number 26)
- Scene Core Value Publications 2014-2015
- Scene Core Value Publications 2014-2015 (page number 123)
- Scene Core Value Publications 2014-2015 (page number 125)
- Staff Handbook 2017
- Staff Handbook 2017 (page number 5)
- Staff Handbook 2017 (page number 18)
- Standard and Poors Global Rating 2016
- Strategic Plan 2015
- Strategic Plan 2015 (page number 8)
- Universal (Employee) Handbook 2017
- Universal (Employee) Handbook 2017 (page number 5)
- Universal (Employee) Handbook 2017 (page number 39)

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Argument

5.B.1: The Board of Trustees has the key responsibility to safeguard the integrity of the mission and to provide fiduciary oversight for the financial integrity and health of St. Ambrose. The strong board mentoring (available in President's Office) and education programs ensure trustees are knowledgeable about the institution, capable of providing oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices, and are in compliance with legal and fiduciary responsibilities as they apply their wealth of knowledge and diverse backgrounds to this oversight process.

Over the last decade board education topics have ranged from the Campus Master Plan and adult learning to Title IX and the First Year Experience. Each trustee serves on at least one board committee. Committees make recommendations to the full board. The vice presidents and additional representatives from the administration, faculty, staff and student body meet with board committees providing further opportunities for the board to gain knowledge about the institution.

The Board of Trustees delegates authority over the day-to-day operation of St. Ambrose to the president. The president works with the Cabinet and delegates to Cabinet members the authority to manage their parts of the institution. This structure is clearly outlined to trustees at their Board orientation and is continually reinforced through the various Board education topics presented at each Board meeting. In April of 2009, the Board shifted to a paperless environment using Blackboard, the institution's e-learning software. In addition to maximizing their time in preparing for meetings, trustees now have the ability to remain engaged with St. Ambrose with 24/7 access to all Board materials.

Appointments to the Board of Trustees are vetted through the Board of Trustees Governance and Nominating Committee and recommended for approval as full voting members of the Board. All new trustees attend an orientation provided by the president. They are provided with a Board of Trustees manual, which highlights the roles, responsibilities and expectation of trustees. This includes assignment to one or more of the committees outlined in the Bylaws. Each of the committees is staffed by the president or a vice president, who communicates regularly with his/her committee chair. As a Catholic, diocesan institution, the Bishop of the Diocese of Davenport serves as ex-officio chair of the Board of Trustees. The Bylaws provide for up to 36 voting and six non-voting members on the Board. The non-voting members represent various constituencies, including students (Student Government Association, Graduate Student Government Association), faculty, staff, alumni and

priests' council. The non-voting members attend and participate in Board of Trustees committee meetings and general sessions of the Board. Faculty and staff assemblies are represented by the chairs of the faculty and staff assemblies, who also serve on Board committees.

5.B.2: St. Ambrose University has a strong practice of engaging internal constituencies in its governance. This practice begins at the highest level of decision-making with the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees meets in January, April and October as noted in meeting minutes located in the President's Office. These meetings span two days, including all committee meetings, and General and Executive Sessions of the Board. Internal constituencies, including Faculty Assembly, Staff Assembly, and undergraduate and graduate student organizations, are present at committee and general sessions as non-voting members. In addition, direct reports to the vice presidents are present at the vice president board committee to provide support and input. In addition to participation at these meetings, the president reports out to the campus community at an open forum after each Board meeting to update the campus community on Board decisions and actions. Additional examples of collaboration and engagement of internal constituencies can be noted in the Faculty Handbook that identifies the roles of ex officio (administrative and staff), as well as graduate and undergraduate students for faculty governance committees. Membership to presidentially appointed committees also serves as an example of engaging internal constituencies. This includes such committees as the Human Resources Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, HLC Steering Committee and Assessment & Evaluation Committee.

5.B.3: St. Ambrose University's administration, faculty, staff and students are all involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes. The Educational Policies Committee of the Faculty Assembly serves as an effective structure for contribution and collaborative effort. Though technically a faculty governance committee, EPC's membership is inclusive of stakeholders. Membership includes faculty, staff, students and administration. As noted in Criteria 3 and 4, EPC formulates, interprets and coordinates curricular policy, as well as make recommendations and proposals to continue or close a program to the provost/vice president for Student & Academic Affairs as part of the five-year review process. EPC also maintains policies and procedures regarding the addition of new academic programs and their curricular fit with the mission of St. Ambrose. Recommendations for opening or closing programs are brought forward to the Board of Trustees, through the president and Cabinet, for final approval.

Sources

- BOT Education Topics 2008 to Present
- BOT Statement of Responsibilities
- BPT By-laws Revised October 2012
- BPT By-laws Revised October 2012 (page number 1)
- BPT By-laws Revised October 2012 (page number 10)
- FA Faculty Handbook -May 2017

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

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

Argument

5.C.1-5.C.5: The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning. In 2007, upon the reaffirmation of accreditation review by the Higher Learning Commission, the institution was advised to engage in a process to broaden the scope of its strategic plan beyond a budgeting process to include greater transparency, operationalized objectives and organizational awareness of the relationships among educational quality, future students and a complex global society. With a new president, time spent from 2008-2010 focused on learning about the strategic planning process. The president worked with the established Planning Committee and the greater campus community to create a vision statement. In a similar fashion, the Planning Committee drafted the 2010 Strategic Plan noted below. Over the years, St. Ambrose has worked diligently to develop a Strategic Plan that incorporates these suggestions and guides decision-making at all levels of the institution. Learning from planning challenges and shortfalls, as well as external forces, required St. Ambrose to review and rework its planning process continually to its current form.

In 2010, St. Ambrose attempted its first Strategic Plan beyond a simple budgeting process. Campus-wide planning workshops were held to review the institutional mission and prioritize strategic initiatives. Faculty, staff, students, trustees and external community leaders collaborated in this effort. Twelve initiatives stretching across the scope of the institution were drafted with operationalized objectives. In the end, the institution developed its 2010-15 Strategic Plan that was shared widely across campus in print and digital form. In an attempt to separate planning from budgeting, however, these was no budget tied to the 2010 Strategic Plan. At that time, revenue was strong and resources were solid. After the housing crisis in 2008, however, markets performed poorly and tuition, and student loan debt pushed to the forefront of public conversation. St. Ambrose continued to strive to achieve a great deal of the plan, but attempts to keep tuition costs down impacted funding for the plan. By the conclusion of the plan in 2015, the institution had moved to a model of providing both new funds and reallocated funds to achieve the goals of the plan.

As the 2010 Strategic Plan drew to an end, work for the institution's next plan began. In the fall of 2015, St. Ambrose launched its most current strategic plan. Utilizing a continuous improvement process, the Strategic Planning Committee, now under the direction of the president, took time to assess both the process and achievement of the 2010 Plan. It was noted that the 2010 plan — while

focused on the future, operationalized, and inclusive in its process —still struggled to provide institutional flexibility to address significant market shifts in the economy and enrollment, to provide clear benchmarks to identify measures and impact of success, and to remain influential in the decision-making processes on campus. In short, strategic university initiatives needed to be so essential to the institution that they could live on in the absence of any "cheerleader," had to be measurable so the return on investment in work could be understood, and had to position the institution for strength in an ever-changing economy, this required flexibility.

The 2015 Strategic Plan is currently in place until 2020. Following the success of the 2010 strategic planning process, work on the 2015 plan began with campus-wide surveys of faculty, staff and students to review the institutional mission, vision and core values. St. Ambrose's strongly-rooted traditions from its diocesan heritage to serve and lead the region shone through in this review.

Next, campus-wide workshops with faculty, staff, students, trustees, alumni and external community leaders were held to review and brainstorm the value of an Ambrose education and identify areas for needed change, all with a focus on the future. Findings from the workshops were reviewed by the Planning Committee, and surveys were conducted to build consensus around what would become the strategic initiatives. All the while, participants were challenged to identify benchmarks St. Ambrose could look toward to measure and assess the success of the initiatives and the plan.

For 12 months, St. Ambrose University engaged in drafting its next strategic plan, reflecting upon past events and traditions, and carefully considering possible future trends. Such reflection and consideration required the engagement of faculty, staff, students, alumni, trustees, friends and external community leaders in acknowledging institutional strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, traditions and heritage, as well as the appreciation for changing times and stakeholder expectations for higher education.

The result was a strategic plan that operates within a framework of "leading the community, leading learning and a leading presence," with three focused yet flexible fundamental initiatives that guide decision-making and resource utilization. Each of the three initiatives has three external and three internal benchmarks to determine success. The benchmarks were informed by regional and national data trends, as well as standardized measurements both comparative and independent.

Strategic Initiative #1 states, "St. Ambrose University will improve the accessibility of an Ambrose education." Institutional understanding of enrollment trends among racially and ethnically diverse students, as well as the University's core values of diversity and justice align with this initiative to ensure that those who want it can achieve an education from St. Ambrose inclusive of race, ethnicity, age, income or location. Measureable benchmarks for success were developed based on a review of regional market demand, population trends, and institutional persistence and graduation. In addition, St. Ambrose began developing a Strategic Enrollment Plan in 2016 that provided segmented analysis of enrollment populations to establish enrollment targets and strategies for sustained graduate and undergraduate enrollment. Development of a comprehensive Strategic Enrollment Plan was an important process for St. Ambrose and the efforts to improve the accessibility of an Ambrose education. Several action items/benchmarks have been completed or have resulted in significant progress toward that end. The departure from the institution of the Strategic Enrollment Plan Committee chair, as well as the vice president for Enrollment Management, did slow the implementation of some plan elements, but has been embraced by current staff members as an opportunity to reassess and rededicate themselves to initiatives intended to achieve greater accessibility.

Strategic Initiative #2 states, "St. Ambrose University will ensure high-quality mission and market-

driven programs that deliver effective educational experiences." St. Ambrose has a rich heritage of service and social justice that creates a strong foundation for teaching and learning. As such, the institution must lead in areas of teaching and learning that exemplify justice and excellence, while also strategically addressing regional educational needs. The National Survey of Student Engagement results highlight the need for on-going commitment to the quality of the student experience by engaging students with high-impact practices. Assessments of the First Year Experience at St. Ambrose show significant engagement with high impact practices. Analysis suggested, however, the need to continue to support student research, service learning, internships and study abroad within a student's major. Analysis of alumni data suggested increasing internship opportunities may help with post-graduation employment. Internal data from the Career Center and Advancement Office also noted great interest among alumni to engage with current students, especially around areas of job success. As such, the plan calls for high demand programs coupled with high impact teaching and learning practices, and leads to the career attainment, career advancement or advanced studies sought by St. Ambrose students.

Strategic Initiative #3 states, "St. Ambrose University will develop facilities and campus infrastructure to facilitate teaching, learning, growth and success." Planning for the future includes advancing the mission and values of St. Ambrose University, maintaining its physical presence as a part of the community in a way that can sustain quality teaching and learning, and embracing opportunities for growth. The 2011 Campus Master Plan (noted in 5.A), articulated the need to renovate existing structures to accommodate new teaching and learning space, as well as a vision for the development of new structures beyond the current footprint of the institution. These plans are informed by both future enrollment goals and past enrollment trends. In addition, an internal financial review of deferred maintenance has resulted in major upgrading of Ambrose Hall at a total investment of $5.65 milion, and the development of an outline for addressing other deferred maintenance over the next five to eight years.

The 2015 Strategic Plan sets the framework for detailed operational plans across the campus. This includes operational plans by the Cabinet, Enrollment Management, the colleges, International Education, Diversity Work Group, Student Affairs and academic departments. These operational plans align with the framework of the Strategic Plan and are reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee.

The current Strategic Planning Committee meets monthly during the academic year, retreating during the winter and summer breaks to assess accountability structures and measure plan progress. The committee includes all five vice presidents, the dean of students, the university chaplain, faculty and staff. Additionally, the committee consistently includes guests who are key to the initiatives and work discussed at the meetings. Planning meetings include divisional updates from the vice presidents regarding work aligning with the plan. Meetings also include sessions on initiating education and strategy and recommendations for future work. The committee evaluates progress on strategic initiatives. Existing committees, offices and employees are utilized to ensure that work is done. For example, the Diversity Work Group , along with the Human Resources Office, met with the Strategic Planning Committee to identify strategies for increasing the number of racially and ethnically diverse faculty and staff. The committee reviewed challenges and opportunities with the DWG and HR, as well as provided direction for future work that aligns with the plan.

The 2015 Strategic Plan does not have a separate planning budget. The institution operates from the belief that all budgeting should be strategic. As noted earlier in response to Criterion 5, annual budgets set by the Academic & Student Affairs Division, which makes up half of the total budget, aligns its requests with the framework of the plan. In times of budget reductions, careful attention is paid to ensure work associated with the plan is not harmed. The institution is seeking ways to secure

additional funds for new ideas. At this time, however, work on the strategic plan brought forward by the vice presidents from their respective divisions has not included the request for additional funds. Work is being funded through divisional priorities or reallocation, a strong sign of the integration of the goals of the strategic plan with the use of institutional resources.

The 2015 St. Ambrose Strategic Plan both guides the direction of the institution and is influenced by the work of the institution. This is exemplified by the integration of the Strategic Plan with processes on campus. As another example, in 2011 the Assessment & Evaluation Committee (appointed by the president) developed the annual assessment process for academic programs. While all programs had student learning outcomes, and assessment was occurring, a more organized, systematic process needed to be formalized. This process provided the institution a comprehensive look at student learning by academic program. This process continually challenges academic programs to refine and measure student success. It also informed critical conversations around demonstrable program quality among academic programs. Today, this information is a part of the EPC program review process. Assessment results are considered as part of the decision making process by deans and the provost/vice president for Academic and Student Affairs for additional resource requests.

In 2012 St. Ambrose engaged in a prioritization process as it recognized oncoming financial instability in the regional higher education environment. At that time, the institution was (as it remains today) financially stable. St. Ambrose's commitment to this financial stability and planning for anticipated market fluctuations led the Cabinet to evaluate the offerings of the institution and look for ways to reallocat resources to high demand programs. With support from the Board of Trustees, the president assembled a team of interested representatives to engage in a prioritization process. The Institutional Prioritization Committee worked to help the institution achieve excellence in the quality of its programs and in the stewardship of its resources for the future. Faculty and staff were engaged in gathering data from academic and nonacademic programs. As a result, the Prioritization Committee identified areas of high and low demand across academic programs and student support services and recommended enhancements and reductions in related areas. While any official reduction in academic programs must follow official institutional processes and be approved by the Board of Trustees, the Faculty Assembly requested that the Cabinet table the recommendations from Prioritization Committee. Seeking to maintain stability and careful stewardship of institutional resources, the president announced in early 2014 a suspension of using the Institutional Prioritization Report as a document to drive future discussions, A committee consisting of three members of Faculty Assembly, three members of Staff Assembly, and a member of the Cabinet would be formed to develop a new structure and process to review University programs.

In the spring of 2014, the provost/vice president for Academic and Student Affairs and vice president for Finance led this new committee to develop a Resource Allocation Process aligned with institutional mission, priorities and processes. The committee was charged with identifying $1.5 - $2 million in short-term savings and to develop a long-term process to streamline programs and fund new initiatives. The RAP Report was approved by Faculty and Staff Assemblies December 2014. The recommendations in the report include:

1. A new program proposal process that addresses financial viability and market demand;
2. A data-driven financial review model that connects program offerings with direct costs and revenues that can be reviewed by the provost, deans and department chairs/directors;
3. An Academic Performance Solutions tool to identify departmental and institutional savings possible through course offering frequencies, sections sizes and sequencing; and
4. Greater engagement of Faculty Finance Committee in decision making as related to academic offerings and review of financial viability of existing programs.

The process of drafting the 2015 Strategic Plan began the following academic year. Faculty, staff, administrators and trustees — having spent nearly two years asking critical questions about allocation of institutional resources, indicators of program quality and sustainability — were keen on the impact of higher education trends on the institution. As such, it is no surprise that new ideas regarding enrollment, program quality and infrastructure and technology came to the forefront of strategic initiatives for the future.

With a focus on shifts in the economy, demographics, state and national politics, and the regional higher education landscape, the president began collaborating with presidents from five other Catholic universities in 2014. This Iowa Catholic Collegiate Association, formerly the Iowa Catholic Colleges Partnership, is committed to Catholic higher education values and the long tradition of serving diocesan regions and religious orders. The ICCA meets regularly to confer on current challenges and opportunities for Catholic higher education in Iowa and to anticipate emerging challenges and opportunities. In addition, the president collaborated with other college and university presidents in the Quad City area. While these universities are competitors in some sense, the group meets regularly to address opportunities for leadership of higher education to advance the QC region, and to anticipate the highly competitive market for higher education enrollment in the region. Finally, the president, the Cabinet and the director of government and community relations meet regularly with local, state and federal officials and legislators to understand and anticipate stakeholder needs, and to connect St. Ambrose to the community and greater Midwest region as a leading Catholic university.

Sources

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- CHHS Plan 2017
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- EPC Program Review Template 2017
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- Mission Documents 2006
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- Resource Allocation Process Report 2014
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- Strategic Plan 2010
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5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

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

Argument

5.D.1: St. Ambrose University works to systematically to improve its performance. Among the ways in which the institution systematically documents, reviews and improves its performance, St. Ambrose has recently established two new financial review tools for academic programs (mentioned in response to Criterion 5C) that are at the center of resource revenue and expense, an important measure of institutional performance.

The first financial review tool was the Cost of Education/Financial Review Model. This model was developed in consultation with Strategic Business Advisory, LLC. The model focused on measuring and enhancing institutional efficiency and productivity. St. Ambrose attempted to use the findings from the model to enhance institutional efficiency, reallocate resources, realign program priorities, and support program and process reinvention needed to establish long-term financial sustainability. Under the direction of the vice president of Finance, critical examination of the model led to unanswered and undefined data abnormalities. Unwilling to make decisions based on uncertain financial data using the Cost of Education model, St. Ambrose attempted to create its own similar model. The St. Ambrose comptroller, with representatives of the faculty, staff and Cabinet, formed the Revenue & Expense Allocation Committee explored appropriate allocation of revenue and expense across the institution to various academic and ancillary programs for greater effectiveness and efficiency. In short, every tuition dollar generated by a student is tied to a credit. Each credit is then tied to a department, a course, and a course section and instructor paid out of a departmental budget. This detail of accountability for the allocation of all revenue and expenses on campus resulted in the Revenue & Expense Allocation Model. This model has been shared with faculty and staff associated with the academic programs. These programs are given the opportunity to review the model and address any errors or misconceptions.

Coupled with this tool and data, St. Ambrose also uses the Academic Performance Solutions tool from EAB to more carefully examine course offerings at the program level. Here academic programs can drill down in course offerings to understand factors driving expense such as course offerings, capacity and completions, and discover opportunities for enrollment growth. As a proprietary product, a committee was not formed to do this work. The very recently received data will be shared by EAB experts on campus with the trustees, Cabinet and administrators, as well as department chairs and directors to identify ways to enhance institutional efficiency through program delivery models and curriculum design such as adjusting course offering patterns to ensure timely student progression as well as limiting/adjusting under-enrolled sections. To date, data from five years (2012-2016) have been exported to this program. Additional value is anticipated as more recent data are integrated, and the comparison data grows for benchmarking by discipline and with peer institutions.

With these two tools in play, the Faculty Finance Committee, working closely with both the provost and the vice president for Finance, now has a systematic approach and comprehensive data to

effectively review and make recommendations to the faculty, the Cabinet and Board of Trustees that will help St. Ambrose continue to achieve excellence in the quality of its programs and in the stewardship of its resources. This process began in 2012 and has become an integrated component of the 2015 Strategic Plan, as well as a vital factor in improving future performance as an organization. Situated within faculty governance, the Faculty Finance Committee (whose purpose it is to review issues of budgeting, finance and expenditures as they relate to academic programs and faculty interests, including but not limited to faculty salary, fringe benefits, compensation issues, University budgets and expenditures, program startups and closures, and tuition) has the information it needs to review and improve the very core of the institution's performance, that of academic programs.

5.D.2: St. Ambrose learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities and sustainability. Several examples of changes made over the last decade are summarized here.

Alignment of Academic Programs: In 2009, a study of the alignment of academic programs and college structure of the University was conducted by an appointed committee of faculty and administrators. The committee systematically considered the alignment of all majors and programs, and input was sought from faculty as changes were considered. Several recommendations arising out of this study were implemented, such as moving Engineering and Computer Science from the College of Business into the College of Arts & Sciences, moving the School of Social Work to the renamed College of Health & Human Services, creating a School of Education within the CHHS, and moving the Communication Department from the COB to the CAS.

Neighborhood Relations Council: Formed in 2008 in response to concerns expressed by the neighborhoods surrounding campus, the Council brings together St. Ambrose representatives, city staff and concerned neighbors to forge common understanding and effective solutions to problems. Neighbors expressed concerns about lack of communication between St. Ambrose and neighbors, poor student behavior in the neighborhoods, changing demographics within the neighborhoods, and lack of understanding about what city services existed and how to access these services. Membership includes representatives from surrounding neighborhoods, city resource staff, and St. Ambrose personnel committed to building positive relationships among the city of Davenport, St. Ambrose and neighbors directly surrounding the main campus. Goals include management of the institution's growth and improvement of the quality of life for the surrounding neighborhoods. In 2012, St. Ambrose applied for Planned Institutional District zoning by the city of Davenport. The PID (intended for all major educational and medical campuses) fosters a comprehensive approach to development by encouraging the adoption of a land use plan, rather than a piecemeal review of individual development proposals through the special use permit process. The district is also intended to further the policies of the Davenport's Comprehensive Plan; encourage the preparation of a land use plan that enables the community to understand the levels of development being proposed, their likely impacts and appropriate mitigation measures; permit appropriate institutional growth within boundaries of the campus while minimizing the adverse impacts associated with development and geographic expansion; and balance the ability of major institutions to grow and adapt to changing needs while protecting the livability and vitality of adjacent areas.

In 2016, as it matured, the Neighborhood Relations Council developed into a neighbor-managed organization. University staff attend meetings as requested, but no longer plan the meetings or set the agenda. St. Ambrose does hold two neighborhood update meetings each year, one in the spring and one in the fall. In addition to an update on current campus activity, members of the Davenport Police Department and city staff attend these meetings to answer questions and provide feedback to neighbor questions and concerns.

The PID has been helpful as it provides St. Ambrose a 10-year development window. Any new construction included in the approved PID only requires an administrative review and approval by the city staff. This allows the institution to create a realistic capital improvement plan. It also provides feedback from elected officials, city staff and local residents about any concerns with future development. These concerns can be mitigated by agreeing to various conditions to the plan. As an example, the current plan requires the construction of additional parking spaces before new residence halls can be built.

Advancement and Alumni: In 2012 St. Ambrose noted a lower-than-expected percentage of alumni giving and engagement. While half of all donations come from alumni, fewer than 8% of alumni give. The vice president of Advancement, in coordination with major gift officers and the alumni director, developed strategies for increased alumni engagement and donation. Alumni advisory councils were created for the president, three colleges, and other key areas such as Student Affairs. While still trying to advance alumni engagement, volunteering and giving, in 2016 more than 500 alumni participated in signature alumni events from Arizona to Chicago. The #50K2day social media fundraising event raised more than $70,000 in just one day. The #50k2day project is part of the annual spring Day of Giving. It began in 2014 as a #10k2day event targeting current students and employees. In subsequent years, the fundraising goal was increased to #20K2day in 2015, #50k2day in 2016. All of these goals were achieved. In 2017, coinciding with the 135th anniversary of St. Ambrose and "All in for Ambrose" – a regional drive for the Quad City Area seeking new donors for the Wellness and Recreation Center – the goal was set at #135K2day. The event was successful, securing at total of $195K.

Contract Coordinator Position: Since 2007, St. Ambrose has seen a significant increase in both programs and enrolled students requiring clinical placement sites. In particular, allied health profession programs found it challenging to monitor contracts for clinical placements, as well as monitor specific requirements for students completing such placements. The decentralized model meant information was collected and stored in a variety of ways and often with duplicated effort. With the addition of the Master of Physician Assistant Studies, program planning and existing program funds were allocated to create a contract coordinator position. The contract coordinator has since centralized essential contract information into a single database, allowing program personnel easy access to centralized information and required forms for placements. The database currently includes more than 1,150 active contracts with health care systems, clinics and agencies. The contract coordinator serves as a single point of contact with legal for reviewing new and revised contracts. The coordinator also serves as a resource for instructing students in requirements for immunizations, health records and completion of criminal background checks, while also supporting the orientation efforts of programs. The database now supports eight university departments, which completed more than 1,450 placements in 2015, and includes contracts with clinical partners in all 50 states. The contract coordinator also monitors the requirements for state authorization related to clinical placement. These combined efforts have provided program personnel with more time to make clinical placements and help students select experiences to meet their career goals.

National Survey of Student Engagement: St. Ambrose has systematically utilized NSSE to measure undergraduate student engagement since 2006. Acknowledging the research surrounding high impact practices and the relatively flat engagement trend of students, St. Ambrose integrated a student engagement initiative and benchmark into its strategic plan. Targeted strategies associated with this benchmark were discussed in response to Criterion 4.B.3. Supplemental NSSE reports related to diversity showed St. Ambrose students were less likely to engage with diverse others or ideas than students at peer institutions. The University Life Committee reviewed these findings and conducted focus groups to better understand reasons or perceptions behind the rating. The committee presented a recommendations to the Faculty Assembly and the Diversity Work Group to address diversity in

course curriculum, as well as implicit bias on campus.

Enrollment Management: As St. Ambrose experienced first year student enrollment decline from fall 2014 to fall 2016, the institution sought enrollment guidance from Royall Co. & Hardwick Day to examine admissions and recruitment procedures, as well as to respond to issues of affordability and student debt to reverse the three-year trend. Modifications to institutional processes were made to enhance recruitment and enrollment in the first-year population, including modifications to strategies for awarding financial aid and scholarships, increasing the volume in senior searches, and building a larger underclass pool of perspective students for the future. As of August 17, the Fall 2017 undergraduate enrollment exceeded forecasted targets.

Sources

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- Revenue and Expense Allocation Summary 2016
- Univ Life Committee Diversity Findings 2017

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

St. Ambrose University's resources, structures and processes allow it to fulfill its mission while continually enhancing the quality of its educational offerings, and simultaneously plan for future challenges and opportunities. During the past 10 years, St. Ambrose University has deliberately planned for the future, carefully yet swiftly responded to significant market changes, and consequently remains an institution of high academic quality and financial stability.

Sources

There are no sources.