

# Wichita State University - KS

HLC ID 1304

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OPEN PATHWAY: Mid-Cycle Review

Review Date: 6/14/2021

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## Context and Nature of Review

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### Review Date

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6/14/2021

#### Mid-Cycle Reviews include:

- The Year 4 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Biennial Review for Applying institutions

#### Reaffirmation Reviews include:

- The Year 10 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Review for Initial Candidacy for Applying institutions
- The Review for Initial Accreditation for Applying institutions
- The Year 4 Review for Standard Pathway institutions that are in their first accreditation cycle after attaining initial accreditation

### Scope of Review

- Mid-Cycle Review
- COVID-19 Response Form

## Institutional Context

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Wichita State University (WSU) is governed by the Kansas Board of Regents. Through the eight degree-granting colleges, the institution offers bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees as well as certificate programs. WSU is the most racially and ethnically diverse university in Kansas and enrolled 15,500 students in 2020. The institution has been successful in recruiting and retaining low-income students; approximately 45% of all students are first generation students. The institution employs nearly 4,500 people, including 600 full time faculty of which 86% have attained the highest degree in their field.

The institution's vision "to be one of the nation's most innovative public research universities, known for providing impactful student experiences for the people and the communities we serve" is the focus of many of its curricular and cocurricular programs. Its position in the state's largest urban area serves it well in acting as a major driver of economic development. The Innovation Campus, a collaboration of university, public, and private partners, work together to promote WSU's research and academic mission to be an essential educational, cultural, and economic driver for Kansas and the public good.

WSU responded the COVID challenge by adjusting class schedules, student support services, and teaching methodologies. In keeping with their mission, they also provided personal protective equipment to the surrounding community and conducted COVID-19 testing for South-Central Kansas through their molecular diagnostic lab.

With a 5.48% reduction in fees, likely from decreased enrollments due to COVID, the institution has processes in place to monitor enrollments and ascertain what consequences this will have in the coming year, perhaps beyond the three percent reduction in revenues in the current budget plan.

WSU has sustained momentum and moved forward in the midst of multiple administrative changes. The robust planning process with environmental assessment has led to new and modified goals. WSU is well positioned to achieve the goals and objectives in their new strategic plan.

## **Interactions with Constituencies**

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*There are no interactions.*

## **Additional Documents**

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*There are no additional documents reviewed.*

## 1 - Mission

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

### 1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Wichita State University's mission is to be an essential educational, cultural, and economic driver for Kansas and the greater public good. The development of the mission statement reflects the institutional context as shown by the inclusion of campus and community stakeholders and the focus on serving Kansas and the public good. As noted in the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) meeting minutes the mission statement was approved in 2013 and has been reviewed recently.

The current mission statement was reviewed during the most recent strategic planning process in 2018-2020. The mission is reflected via the institution's learning and research opportunities through partnerships with community, businesses, and factories. This is evidenced, for example, by the Kansas small business development center, partnering with Kansas State for the BSN, and the Shocker New Venture Competition. The mission concepts of instruction and scholarship are demonstrated by service learning courses (i.e. IME 452, SCWK 751), and applied learning experiences in all academic programs as noted in the catalog. Research and creative activities are shown by the steady increase in federal and non-federal awards and the grants received through the Office of Innovation and New Ventures to name a few.

The emphasis on serving the public good was demonstrated during the COVID pandemic via the free testing provided throughout the state by the molecular diagnostic laboratory. Staff and students also

participated in public forums related to testing and vaccinations.

The mission, vision, and values serve as foundational documents upon which colleges, departments, and other units build goals and objectives. The institution's academic offerings, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with the stated mission. WSU works closely with the Kansas community and the Midwest region to provide educational and programmatic venues appropriate to groups in these locations as evidenced by WSU South and McConnell Air Force Base. Recently WSU demonstrated its mission, vision, and values by providing protective equipment to health care workers in the surrounding community and setting up a lab for COVID19 testing in South-Central Kans

In accord with its mission, many students gain experience through educational offerings that provide real-life learning experiences and, in some instances, paid positions with local employers which helps stimulate the local economy. Approximately 70% of the graduates remain in Kansas. Forty-five per cent of the students are first generation students who attend one of the 70 bachelors or 64 graduate programs. Support services such as Student Health Services, TRIO programs, and the First Generation Coordinating Council provide evidence of consistency with the mission.

During the COVID pandemic, WSU added support for students by providing laptops and Wi-Fi devices without charge. The institution also partnered with local food banks to provide resources to students.

The mission, vision, and values are widely published as evidenced on the main website, in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, on social media, and in newsletters. The assurance argument notes that the mission, vision, and values are also posted in every major campus building and athletic facility. The strategic plan is also available on the website documenting goals, plans, and strategic initiatives which are measured on a regular basis and the results made available to constituents.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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As noted in the mission statement and the strategic plan, the university aims to serve the public good. Progress has been made since the last accreditation as shown by the new strategic plan with five goals and specific objectives directed toward serving the public. This is evidenced by partnerships with area schools; the innovation focus such as Woosley Hall (the new home of the business school), the John Bardo Center (an experiential learning environment for bringing engineering fundamentals to life), and the Office of Innovation and New Ventures (where academics and industry converge). Further evidence is the university's response during COVID as noted in 1A. Investment of university resources demonstrating the commitment to the educational role are noted in Criterion 5C

WSU is governed by the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) policies. Chapter 1 of the KBOR policy manual provides a process for disclosing and considering potential conflicts. Policies also prevent the generation of financial returns for external interests not allowed by KBOR policy.

WSU utilized numerous studies, surveys, SWOT analysis, and environmental scans in developing the strategic plan. There was broad campus and community involvement in refreshing the mission, vision, values, and goals. The argument states that external constituents are actively involved in advisory boards although no specific examples of these were provided. The President's communication dated January 21, 2020, announces the creation of multiple university wide taskforces.

Multiple examples of community engagement consistent with mission and capacity are provided, including the Teacher Apprentice program, National Institute for Aviation research, and the Dental and Speech-language-hearing services provided by WSU, in addition to the examples provided above.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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The institution encourages curricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success in numerous ways. This is evidenced by 412 courses that include diversity content which are completed by 95% of the students. Starting in 20121,all first -year students are required to complete a first-year seminar which includes diversity content.

All academic programs require applied learning opportunities. Service Learning, Volunteerism, and study abroad provide additional opportunities. The Community Engagement Model (CEM) adopted in 2020 includes three facets: teaching and learning; research and scholarship; and service within the community. Activities within the CEM include civic engagement, internships, and practicums for example.

The new strategic plan includes a goal "...to reflect and promote the evolving diversity of society". WSU is striving to have the campus community more closely reflect the surrounding city and region. Increasing the number of undergraduate certificates and degrees awarded to underrepresented minorities is a priority goal. The number has increased from a baseline of 291 to 402 in 2019.

Initiatives to recruit, retain, and graduate underrepresented minorities include scholarships, transition programs, and Spanish services. Offices that support diversity services include the Office of Diversity and Inclusion; the Office of Institutional Equity and Inclusion, the Tifford Commission for example.

WSU fosters a climate of respect among members of the campus community and measure this in several ways. Findings from the campus climate survey indicate that overall satisfaction remains high and respondents want to increase efforts to address diversity-related issues. In the LBGT+ survey students stated that they feel safe to express their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in multiple campus environments and they feel resources and support are available to them. In the COACHE survey, faculty responded that the best aspects of working at WSU were the quality and support of colleagues.

Further evidence of the commitment to respect and equity as core values is noted in two goals of the strategic plan (campus culture and inclusive excellence). University policies that demonstrate this commitment include the Student Code of Conduct, Free Expression Policy, Housing and Residence Life Handbook, and the University Service Standards.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



## **1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary**

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

### **Rationale**

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WSU's mission is clearly stated, articulated publicly, and has been reviewed recently as part of the strategic planning process.

The mission guides curriculum and cocurricular activities to prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success as well as contributing to the public good. Numerous opportunities are provided for students to participate in the local community activities and experiential learning in keeping with the mission of the institution.

## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

### 2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Wichita State University's (WSU) mission statement has been adopted by the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) as noted in criterion 1A and by the WSU state-mandated governing body. KBOR oversees the quality and effectiveness of WSU through continuous improvements efforts that focus on accountability, a program review cycle and process, and the adherence to policies and procedures..

The institution has adopted polices that guide the university's practices to ensure WSU operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources, and auxiliary functions. The polices are current, align with KBOR policies, and available online.

Evidence that WSU operates with integrity is included in the Audit Charter policy. The policy provides for an independent and objective assurance activity to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes. The Division of Administration and Finance oversees the development, implementation, and assessment of financial management plans and activities of WSU. The duties, responsibilities, and organizational chart of the division can be found on WSU's webpage. To ensure ethical and responsible behaviors, all purchases from outside contractors must be made through and approved by the Office of Purchasing.

Academic documents provide evidence of policies that address academic appeal procedures, class and office hours, students with disabilities, teaching load, subvention; thesis and dissertation sequestration; chair procedures; procedures and processes for centers, institutes and bureaus; student academic honesty; and the definition and assignment of credit hours.

Research policies address research conducted at or supported by the university, including administration; processes for pre- and post-service awards; research and sponsored program authorization; federal anti-lobbying laws, and resources. All facets of university ownership and

intellectual property policies including patent and copyright management provide further evidenced of operating with integrity. Misconduct in research is also addressed.

WSU has a commitment to ethical hiring and promotion. This is evidenced by policies and statements concerning organizational governance, compliance with FERPA, unclassified professional policies, etc. to name a few. Policy 1.06 outlines the purpose and functions of auxiliary campus corporations. These policies and statements are posted and accessible to the university community.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Wichita State University outlines its compliance with the Kansas Open Records Act and federal regulations in the Policies and Procedures Manual that is available on the institutions website.

Admission requirements are available through the undergraduate and graduate admission webpage. These pages are audited by the Office of Strategic Communications to assure accurate representation. Academic programs and undergraduate and graduate catalogs are updated annually and can be found on the institution's webpage.

Additional evidence of WSU's efforts to ensure accuracy of representations it makes include links to tuition and fee requirements for students on all campuses that be found on the webpage of the Office of Financial Operations and Business Technology. Additionally, faculty qualifications are listed in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs and updated annually by Academic Affairs. Department webpages list profiles detailing credentials of the employees of the department. These details are also accessible through the faculty and staff directories.

Wichita State University states it is "diligent in its effort to ensure that students are empowered to contribute to society during college and upon completion and ready for the workforce or graduate school after graduation". Evidence can be founded in the experiential learning opportunities offered by the university. Opportunities for applied learning and experimental learning are documented in recruitment materials such as the viewbook and visitors guide. In FY 2020 more than 5,000 students participated in an experiential learning experience connected to the Shocker Career Accelerator.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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The governing board is trained as evidenced by the retreat hosted prior to the academic year. These retreats, coupled with campus visits and other activities, are held to increase knowledge related to respective campuses; prepare the board for leadership experiences such as the approval of new academic programs and tuition and fee proposals; as well as selecting new university leaders. These and other legal and fiduciary responsibilities are noted in the KBOR Policy Manual.

KBOR meetings are public, and notice is given in accordance with the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KSA 75-4317 through 75-4320a). Under prevailing statutes, the only time KBOR may go into closed executive session is by a motion to recess an open meeting for an executive session. Furthermore, there are no secret ballots for Regents' votes.

KBOR membership is carefully defined to ensure broad, balanced, and representative viewpoints giving all internal, external, and political constituencies a voice during decision-making deliberations. Two Regents are from the Wichita area and are able to participate in campus life to connect with the campus community they serve.

KBOR acknowledges that integrity, accountability, and openness of financial relationships and other relevant interests are essential to responsible and credible administration of the State of Kansas system of higher education. A process for disclosing and considering potential conflicts and managing actual conflicts enhances transparency and confidence in KBOR actions.

The WSU Policies and Procedures Manual states (1.01): "The board delegates to the university chief executive officer and his/her staff the internal administration and operation of an individual university." KBOR defines its basic principles and operating procedures to include appointing the

chief executive officer and having the authority to oversee many of the daily operational functions of the state universities, although the board has chosen to delegate actual performance of those functions to the chief executive officers and their staffs. An example of such includes a recent WSU proposal to transfer authority over supervision of certain classified information to a campus committee that was approved by KBOR in October 2020. Faculty retain the right to oversee academic matters.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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WSU expresses its committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning in statements, polices, and procedures. A commitment to Freedom of expression is seen in a university value statement and in the curriculum tool developed for faculty. Evidence of Academic Freedom and freedom of expression is addressed in several polices found in the Polices and Procedures Manual.

Policy 3.06 and 3.19 reaffirm university commitment to maintaining an environment free of intimidation, fear, reprisal, and coercion — one in which students, faculty, unclassified professionals and university support staff can develop intellectually, personally, and socially.

Section 4.06 (Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty) denotes the teachers' entitlement to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of the teacher's academic duties.

The preamble for section 9.10 (Intellectual Property) outlines the purpose of WSU's Intellectual Property policy: ". . . to foster the creation and dissemination of knowledge and to provide certainty in individual and institutional rights associated with ownership and with the distribution of benefits that may be derived from the creation of intellectual property."

Specific uses for university and non-university groups respective to First Amendment activities (11.12) are noted, in addition to the specific guidance KBOR provides in its manual for how students, faculty, staff, and the general public may use WSU facilities.

Faculty members who believe that their academic freedom has been compromised may address such action through the grievance process, which is designed to resolve internal disputes, ensure careful consideration of personnel actions and complaints, and safeguard academic freedom. (WSU Policies and Procedures Manual, chapter 4.04). No grievances have been filed since the last review.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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To ensure responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge and to meet the needs of diverse student and faculty populations, Wichita State University provides oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice at all levels. Chapter 9 of the WSU Policies and Procedures Manual provides guidance on the conduct of research for the university.

Chapter 9, specifically policy 9.01, provides guidance and policy for overall administration of research. WSU's Office of Research, managed by the Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Vice-President for Research, facilitates and promotes ethical research at every step of the process. The office supports faculty and staff researchers with the development and implementation of proposals, grants and contracts.

To ensure that students are offered appropriate and sufficient guidance in the ethical use of information resources, WSU has committed efforts to address these goals at every level. Freshman students are grounded in library skills and research principles and ethics in required courses such as English 101 and 102 or through faculty librarians. In English 101, students must sign and submit a Plagiarism Contract signifying that they understand what constitutes plagiarism and what penalties may be imposed should they plagiarize. All English 102 students spend significant time addressing ethical and effective research practices and are exposed to copyright concerns.

The Kansas Board of Regents is committed to academic integrity and states: "The Board of Regents believes that academic dishonesty is inimical to the fundamental ideas of public higher education. Furthermore, the Board believes that public higher education has a mission to develop the moral reasoning abilities of students and to promote the importance of integrity in all aspects of student life, but particularly in academics. Therefore, it is the policy of the Kansas Board of Regents that student academic dishonesty not be tolerated on the campuses of the Regents institutions."



## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary**

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

### **Rationale**

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The institution acts with integrity and its conduct is ethical and responsible. KBOR and WSU policies guide practices to assure operating with integrity in financial, academic, human resources, and auxiliary functions. Research policies address research conducted at or supported by the institution.

WSU has documented its compliance with the Kansas Open Records Act and provides ready access to information related to admissions, fees, etc. The governing board adheres to policies and procedures to make decisions that are in the best interest of the institution. WSU is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression. Examples of the above are provided in the documents submitted and in the assurance argument.

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

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

### **3.A - Core Component 3.A**

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

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

### **Rating**

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Met

### **Rationale**

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Wichita State University assures that courses and program maintain currency using program assessment, faculty oversight, and program review. The frequency for program assessment, Gen Ed assessment, and overall Academic Program Review are discussed in Criterion 4.

Department Faculty Curriculum Committee, Academic Affairs Committee (undergraduate), General Education Committee, and Graduate Council (for grad programs) meet regularly and provide oversight of programs. Meeting minutes from these committees document faculty governance. These meetings take place at least four times per year or, in the case of the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee, additional meetings as often as affairs arise requiring the attention of the committee.

As noted in the assurance argument, faculty with input from external stakeholders, base curriculum changes on strategic plans of the university, colleges, and departments as well as changes in the workforce and industry. In the new program proposal for the Master of Science in Athletic training it is documented that the new program proposal was in response to a May 20, 2015, formal announcement from the National Athletic Trainers' Association that entry-level athletic training degree programs are required to transition to the master's degree. This new program proposal indicates that the WSU strives to maintain currency in their program offerings based on current professional guidelines and needs of the stakeholders.

All academic programs undergo a yearly cycle of program review as required by KBOR, as well as a quadrennial cycle of self-studies prepared by program faculty for review internally. Modified from the three-year cycle in 2019 to better align with KBOR reporting and specialty accreditation

schedules, a university program review committee made up of faculty and staff from the Office of Academic Affairs reviews the self-studies. Section 4.A.1. provides actual program review results evidencing these processes.

To ensure continuous quality improvement and set expectations for performance, all programs submit an intensive self-study to address their; 1) Centrality to fulfilling the mission and role of the institution; 2) Quality as assessed by the strengths, productivity and qualifications of faculty; 3) Quality as assessed by its curriculum and impact on students; 4) Demonstrated student need and employer demand; and 5) Service provided to the disciplines, the university and beyond, and 6) evidence of a feedback loop including plans for improvement.

Program review reports, when examined sequentially, provide evidence of the criteria used to examine alignment of each program. The 2019 review materials provide evidence that program faculty used feedback from previous reviews to make improvements in biomedical engineering, electrical engineering, and computer science.

University-based undergraduate student learning goals (outcomes) are identified as part of the general education program and evaluated annually by the General Education Committee. Samples of SLO's provided by departments and sample syllabi confirm the alignment of SLO's.

Concurrent enrollment for high school students is allowed if the school is contracted to WSU, and KBOR encourages students to participate. Teachers are recruited to meet the new HLC credentials.

Online learning is managed through individual colleges under the administration of the Office of Online Learning and reports to the Associate Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management. WSU participates as a member of NC-SARA. Training opportunities are provided for teaching distance learning by the Office of Instructional Resources.

WSU is a QualityMatters school and is moving toward a new "course quality" program. WSU is meeting the goal to increase enrollment of new fall students in online programs per the evidence provided.

Learning and the Media Resources Center are working on an improved internal Online Course Review process for courses that are part of a fully-online program. Evidence provided indicates the courses go through a "Friendly Audits of Online Courses". Additionally, periodic student satisfaction surveys help demonstrate improvement areas for online services and offerings.

Comparisons between online and face-to-face versions of the same course showed there were no differences in student grade outcomes and the same content. The most current self-assessment (2015 Online Learning Consortium Quality Scorecard Institutional Self-Assessment) is dated 2015. Online Learning is in the process of creating a new survey instrument and will allow students and faculty to provide direct input into the effectiveness of online course administration and faculty and student support.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

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The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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The General Education purpose and mission dovetail with the university mission and there are regular degree audits performed to assure that students are on target for completion of the general education requirements.

The make-up of the General Education Committee is sufficiently broad and covers the content knowledge areas relevant to the General Education Curriculum. The review of General Education Student Learning outcomes provided as evidence show consistent effort to do a detailed assessment, recommend changes based on the data, and show refinement of the General Education Curriculum across academic years.

Many students complete general education credits at other institutions and their adequacy for transfer is governed by transfer and articulation agreements. General Education Student Learning outcomes are reported by academic year by the General Education Committee. The committee primarily relies on data/evidence for the CLA for assessment of educational outcomes.

WSU offers Study Abroad opportunities for students to be exposed to other cultures and ways of life along with using a National Student Exchange consortium to provide opportunities for all students regardless of their SES or ability to pay for the extra experience. Additional examples of opportunities for students to develop lifelong skills and work in a multicultural world have been provided in previous criteria.

WSU offers students numerous opportunities to partner with experienced faculty members for undergraduate research opportunities. A wide variety of research opportunities across departmental core research areas include Aerospace Engineering, Anthropology, and Biology for example. WSU has facilitated partnerships with local industry-related employers to offer opportunities to students and has more than 200 industry and government clients and research partners.

The institution encourages undergraduate research experiences for students as evidenced through creation of a student research repository of student research projects through the Shocker Open Access Repository, First Year Research Experience (FYRE), hosting an annual Undergraduate Research and Creativity Forum, an annual Graduate Research and Scholarly Projects Symposium (GRASP), and participation in the annual Capital Graduate Research Summit. In addition, the TRIO McNair Scholars Program prepares first-generation, low-income and minority students for graduate studies, and provides research training and early scholarly experiences.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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While Wichita State University has a most diverse student body and continues to work at increasing representation in the faculty. Students support these efforts. WSU has initiated cluster hires to increase faculty diversity, and has received an NSF Advance Catalyst grant to enhance recruitment of women and minorities in STEM. A Campus Committee, reporting to the President, has been created to develop a workforce diversity plan. The plan includes goals for sourcing, posting, searches, hiring, and onboarding; training and development; awards and recognition; performance evaluation; and activities to improve the campus culture. The plan is to be finalized by fiscal year end. In the absence of any clearly defined goal or metric, a specific goal for the recruitment of diverse faculty might be helpful.

WSU ensures the adequacy in numbers of faculty members per program offered at all levels of education (undergraduate, masters, and doctoral). These are reviewed by KBOR annually, and if found with inadequate numbers of faculty members, a justification for the inadequacy along with a remedy must be provided, Standards of faculty numbers are ensured through a variety of activities such as Program Review, and the Annual Update to the HLC including the Consolidated Faculty Report, showing student-to-faculty ratio of 18:1 and increasing in line with the institutional aspirations.

Through a credentialing process, WSU ensures the quality of faculty teaching on the WSU campus or in the high schools. Faculty teaching graduate courses must be nominated for an appointment to the graduate faculty. Chapter Four of the WSU Policies and Procedures Manual provides guidelines for faculty policies to maintain adherence to the HLC standards. HLC has suspended review of the institution's compliance with its faculty qualification requirement solely as applied to dual credit faculty until the first evaluation occurring on or after September 1, 2023, at which time the institution's compliance will be examined.

Policies and procedures are followed for regular evaluation of instructors. Guidelines are provided for remedy of any instructors who do not meet minimum expectations. WSU provides numerous professional development and support activities to promote the continuous improvement of faculty professional standards. These activities, professional development training activities, research funding support, etc., are detailed in the Assurance Argument.

Per policy 4.09, members of the faculty post office hours extensive enough to provide ample opportunity for scheduled and unscheduled conferences with students. Student exit survey results confirm that faculty are available to students at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Initial qualifications are established before the hire of student support staff employees who are provided professional development, funds for attending conferences to improve their skills, ongoing training, and opportunities to earn certificates in their field. Evidence is provided that ongoing internal professional training opportunities are provided to improve service to students at all levels. In order to assure regular systematic employee evaluations which include performance feedback, an electronic tracking system is being implemented

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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To meet the varying needs of a diverse student population — including first-time freshmen, transfer, returning adult, online, and international students — Wichita State University provides a multitude of support services. More than \$37 million (21.9 percent of the general use funding for the university) is allocated for academic and student support services on an annual basis. Determinations of which support services should be provided and resourced are made by the Strategic Enrollment Management group, managed by Academic Affairs and placed in the university SEM plan. Support services are assessed for effectiveness by the Office of Assessment every four years using the CAS Standards. Others who offer targeted interventions, such as TRIO Student Support Services or the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, are evaluated by comparing outcomes for served and non-served students.

WSU has detailed the many Academic Support Services and Personal Support Services geared toward all levels and categories of students to ensure student success. Detailed description and evidence is provided along with information about the teams designated for each support area.

WSU employs a complex system of placement tests designed to assure that students are appropriately prepared for success. In addition, they employ a custom Student Early Alert system to alert advisors to the specific needs of specific students. Data have shown improvement in students' work to remove them from the "at-risk" status. Various other systems are in place to monitor academic behavior and provide assistance to degree completion.

Academic advising takes place within each of the academic colleges. Undeclared student advising is handled through the CLAS and employs various systems to follow students and encourage them to completion. Graduate students are advised by faculty in the Graduate School. Each college has an advising syllabus (sample syllabus). Students learn about advisement during orientation. Advising take place in a face-to-face, telephone or online session, and students are encouraged to see their

adviser before enrolling each semester.

Exit surveys report on student satisfaction and feed into the WSU Strategic Enrollment plan for continuous improvement. Overall, 80 percent of undergraduate students were satisfied or very satisfied with their academic advising. Graduate students report over 90 percent satisfaction with their academic advising. It would be interesting to see how these actual outcomes compare with the institutional goals for these metrics.

Online Learning provides advising for students enrolled in 100 percent online programs. Business, Education, Health Professions, and Liberal Arts and Sciences are the only colleges that have 100 percent online programs, and each has an adviser for those students who are strictly online.

Detailed descriptions and evidence to support numerous technology and technical infrastructure support was provided. Additionally, extensive examples of Learning Venues were provided along with evidential links to the resources described.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary**

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

### **Rationale**

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Wichita State University demonstrates its ability to combine quality degrees with real-world, experience-based learning opportunities. From testing out a career to building a resume that will open doors, WSU students and graduates have access to resources needed to build the futures they want. This emphasis has been the focus of university work since the Higher Learning Commission's last site visit, as evidenced in WSU's new mission and strategic plan.

WSU responded to the COVID pandemic by offering services to the community and adjusting class schedules and teaching modalities. The institution assures that offerings are of high quality no matter what delivery method is utilized.

The continuing foci for the future will be on increasing faculty and staff diversity, and strengthening advising processes through the strategic enrollment management plan.

## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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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

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The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Evidence of regular program review for academic units is demonstrated by the Program Review Policy and several submitted Program Review Reports. There are annual program-level reviews, with in-depth reviews taking place in 4-year increments and focusing on the centrality of the program to fulfilling the institution's mission; the productivity and qualifications of faculty; the curriculum and its impact on students; demonstrated student need and employer demand for the program; service to the discipline, university, and beyond; and more. At the conclusion of the program self-study, the institution's program review committee provides recommendations for improvement for the department; departments then submit documentation describing the recommendation, activities to address the recommendation, and outcomes of the modification. This process aligns with and is supported by the Kansas Board of Regents program review policy.

There is additional evidence of the institution engaging a Strategic Program Alignment process, focusing on programs with low enrollment. Evidence indicates the institution has taken direct action as a result of this process. This includes a focus on bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs.

There is evidence the institution evaluates credits in transcripts, through evaluation upon admission to the institution, as well as policies regarding the awarding of credit for Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Dantes/DSST, Military ACE, department challenge exams, and department-specific retroactive credit. Policies are clearly defined and followed at the institution.

Regarding transfer credit, the institution adheres to the documented Transfer and Articulation policy provided by the KBOR. Additionally, the institution recognizes courses with automatic transfer between Kansas institutions. Also of note, the institution offers dual advising for community college students interested in enrolling. The institution's advisors also visit community colleges in the state on a rotating basis and provide data regarding retention and graduation rates to community colleges in the states to demonstrate the success of their students.

There is evidence the university exercises authority over prerequisites, rigor, expectations for learning, and faculty qualifications. Prerequisite requests and changes are reviewed by the college committee and, when necessary, by the university curriculum committee. A review of sample syllabi indicated that appropriate learning outcomes are shared with students. The institution also has well-documented policies regarding the tenure and promotion processes for tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty.

Many programs maintain specialized accreditation, with accreditation cycles ranging from 5 to 0 years. Accredited programs are publicly displayed on the academic affairs website.

There is evidence the institution evaluates the success of its graduates, through exit surveys, alumni surveys, and data from the Kansas Higher Education Reporting System. KBOR also tracks employment rates through the Kansas Higher Education Reporting system, which indicates the institution had one of the highest rates among all state universities for the percentage of graduates of all levels gaining employment in Kansas one year post-graduation .

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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The institution has a well-documented assessment system focused on the evaluation of the general education program, which has the following student learning goals: 1) Have acquired knowledge in the arts, humanities, and natural and social sciences; 2) Think critically and independently; 3) Write and speak effectively; and 4) Employ analytical reasoning and problem solving techniques.

The assessment system is also focused on degree programs and student affairs/co-curricular offerings (supported by the CAS standards). Much of the latter assessment appears to be indirect, focusing on student leaders and student engagement, as evidenced by the Student Learning Outcome Assessment Plan and Timeline. The institution acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic caused some disruption in student engagement, leading to some incomplete assessment data during this period.

The general education program is evaluated by the General Education Committee. Additionally, assessment data are reported to the Office of Assessment and Accreditation, which receives guidance from a university assessment committee, comprised of individuals from both academic and student affairs.

Dashboards are used to display learning outcomes review data. The general education committee reviews reports regarding assessment of the general education program, as evidenced by annual Review of Student Learning Outcomes reports and documentation. The institution also provided evidence that program review information has been used to prompt change, as evidenced by the hire of a new faculty member in aeronautics.

There is evidence the institution provides training related to assessment and evaluation through regular symposia and workshops. These trainings are coordinated through the Office of Assessment and Accreditation. The institution tracks participation of faculty and staff in these activities. Additionally, there is funding (approximately \$35,000 annually) utilized to support assessment activities, in the form of awards to individual units.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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The institution has specific goals for retention, persistence, and graduation rates, with targets for 2021 and goals for 2025. These 2025 goals are 75% freshman fall-to-fall retention; 90% for all degree seeking freshman through junior students, both fall-to-spring and spring-to-fall persistence; 85% all degree seeking freshman through junior students fall-to-fall persistence; and 28% four-year and 52% six-year graduation rates. The institution has made notable progress toward these goals, particularly toward that of the six-year graduation rate. It is unclear if these goals will be re-evaluated and reset when met and achieved. These goals are evidenced by the Student Success Dashboard. It is not clear if these goals are shared more broadly.

As evidenced by the Student Success Dashboard, progress toward retention, persistence and completion is tracked. These data are reviewed by the Strategic Enrollment Committee. As presented, the dashboards appear to be static. It is unclear if the institution utilized dynamic dashboards that allow filtering or disaggregation by demographics, population, or modality.

While it appears the institution's Strategic Enrollment Committee meets weekly to monitor data and makes adjustments to activities of the institution, there could be greater documentation of the changes that result from this monitoring activity. The dashboard shows improvements in the areas of retention, persistence, and completion, but there does not appear to be evidence that links the improvements to documented change. As noted in the COVID-19 Institutional Response form, the institution used its HERF funding to address financial issues for students (i.e., discharging student debt from eligible accounts).



The institution utilizes best practice to collect and analyze information related to retention, persistence and completion, as evidenced by the existence of the Data Governance Council, which provides oversight to systems to ensure data integrity, best practices in data management, reporting standards, information consistency and security access. The institution also has key performance indicators related to retention, persistence and completion. There is also evidence of data governance by-laws, along with a Data Glossary and a published listing of Reporting Terminology, Definitions and Standards

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary**

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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.

### **Rationale**

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, through regular program review for academic units, coupled with an assessment system focused on evaluation of the general education program, degree programs, and student affairs/co-curricular offerings.

The institution has stated goals for persistence, retention, and completion rates. WSU collects data and tracks progress to its articulated goals (e.g. retention, persistence, and graduation), assisted by institutional committees such as the General Education Committee, the University Curriculum Committee, the Strategic Enrollment Committee, and the Data Governance Council.

## 5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

### 5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Since the most recent comprehensive visit, the University has updated the shared governance policy, established a new President's Innovation Advisory Council (PIAC), held semester-based town-halls for faculty, staff, and students; and conducted a recent forum on the new digital transformation initiative. Minutes of various governance bodies—faculty, staff, student, and Regents—provide evidence that these groups are engaged in planning and in establishing policies and procedures. The institution's response to COVID-19 and subsequent return to the campus provides a recent and robust example.

The team report following the 2018 comprehensive visit mentioned that "finding additional ways to disseminate information in a timely manner to the campus community would likely be beneficial." The changes to the shared governance policy and subsequent outreach activities reflect a thoughtful and evidently effective response to this suggestion.

Based on minutes of relevant bodies, published reports, and further evidence in the assurance document, the university has processes in place to keep all constituent groups (President's Executive Team [PET], Faculty Senate, Unclassified/University Support Staff Senates, and the Student Government Association [SGA]) engaged and informed of university decisions and opinions that affect those groups and to allow input toward decisions and university policies and/or procedures.

The Office of Planning and Analysis (OPA) performs institutional research services and provides support for evaluation and assessment. OPA has implemented business intelligence platforms and predictive modelling thus transforming the manner in which the institution evaluates its performance. For example, the Inclusive Excellence goals of the 2020-21 Strategic Plan show specific objectives and exemplar goals with measurable targets. These are further described in the President's 2021 priorities for the strategic plan. The performance agreement reports provide further evidence of using robust data to set goals and measure performance. The institution continues to deploy processes such as independent internal auditing in the decision-making process, as evidenced by consideration of a proposed merger between the Alumni Association and the Foundation. Based on the above evidence and publications and minutes of institutional councils and boards, and further evidence in the assurance document, the institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.

The KBOR specifically delegates responsibility for the operation of the University to the President. Chapter Four of the WSU Policies and Procedures Manual specifically gives the faculty collective responsibility for setting academic requirements, policies and processes, including the curriculum. The educational and public service missions of the university, along with over 70 percent of the general use budget, are the administrative responsibility of the Provost. The President, members of the executive team, Faculty Senate, Unclassified Professional Senate, University Support Staff Senate and Student Government Association are designated as policy initiating authorities. Recent initiatives such as a new shared governance policy, a student academic integrity policy, and an update of the strategic planning policy provide evidence of the engagement of all constituency groups in governance. The above examples, minutes of various bodies, and other information provided in the assurance document provide evidence that the institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective collaborative structures.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Despite reduced state funding and increased student headcounts, various ratios show that the institution has maintained stability in teaching and support personnel. For example, the student-faculty ratio remains 19:1 and the student-advisor ratio is 226:1 and shows little variation since the comprehensive visit. Moreover, data show that these ratios are consistent with WSU peers.

Hiring policies for faculty and staff continue the same practices outlined in the prior assurance document and include provisions for a diverse workforce. All faculty, unclassified professionals, and university support staff continue to be subject to annual performance evaluations. The institution continues to provide training and development opportunities, as described in section 3C5.

Per the 2020-21 Common Data Set, the institution has 562 full-time faculty, of whom 70.6% have a PhD or other terminal degree. The institution employs another 282 part-time faculty, for a total of 844, of whom 66% have a terminal degree or equivalent. Sponsored programs, including sponsored research, showed a marked increase in 2019, the most recent year reported in the assurance document; this is further evidence of a highly qualified and motivated faculty.

The technology infrastructure continues to evolve, including expanded provisions for remote work, provision of high performance computing, the Master Classrooms initiative, and the creation of Lightboard studios, to name a few.

The physical infrastructure includes a new five-year capital investment plan, support for several off-campus teaching and research sites, and continued expansion of the innovation campus which now includes more than twenty companies working with students and faculty to increase research productivity and prepare students for employment.

The above examples and other information provided in the assurance document provide evidence that the institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its

operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

The University has enjoyed continued success with strategic initiatives. One major example of this is the creation of the Innovation Campus as a way to focus on applied learning and research. The Innovation Campus, authorized in 2014, is tied to the university's mission as an essential educational, cultural and economic driver for Kansas and the greater public good. The idea is for outside companies to build infrastructure on university land and establish operations on campus, bringing with them new ideas, technology, jobs, and paid student internships (e.g., Airbus Americas and NetApp relocating to campus). In turn, companies will gain regular interaction with university faculty, students, research, and other technology-driven companies. In addition to broad private sector participation, the innovation campus has been a significant factor the increase in sponsored programs noted above.

Another important strategic initiative relates to increasing enrollment in response to reductions in state support. This strategic initiative included a geographic focus on the local region and on states in I—35 corridor. The initiative has shown success, not only in overall goals but in creasing enrollment from states in the I-35 corridor by 200 percent.

The above examples and other information provided in the assurance document provide evidence that the goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.

The institution continues to deploy the well-developed processes for budgeting and monitoring finances as described in the most recent comprehensive assurance document. For examples of this deployment, see below.

WSU's internal budget process begins during February and March. The process is participatory and is co-chaired by the vice president for Administration and Finance and the provost, and includes the associate vice president for Administration and Finance and director of budgets, deans from the academic colleges, and presidents from the senates of faculty, unclassified professionals, university support staff, and student government. It is a three- to four-month process with the university's strategic plan providing the foundation for funding allocation decisions.

The FY22 draft working budget includes 56 identified new budget items, together with budget targets and possible funding sources. The list, which is refined throughout the budget process, encompasses a broad range of university initiatives which are, in turn tied to strategic priorities.

WSU is funded from two major categories of resources: general use funds and restricted use funds. Both funds are on deposit in the Kansas State Treasury. General use funds are derived from two separate funding sources: the state general fund (tax revenues) and the general fees fund (student tuition). Appropriations from the state general fund may be for general operating purposes or targeted for a specific use. For example, the FY21 general fund showed a 1.9% increase over FY20, while the FY21 general fees budget showed a 5.48% decrease, doubtless attributable to COVID-19. The institution's response to the Commission's COVID-19 survey indicates that this reduction was taken into account during the budgetary planning process.

During the fiscal year, budget-to-actual reports are continuously monitored. The Assurance Argument provides examples of two programs where monitoring revealed potential deficits, but further analysis showed expected revenues would resolve any cash-flow issues. The WSU consolidated financial statements show a strong Consolidate Financial Indicator of 3.56.

The above internal monitoring systems served the institution well during operational changes induced by COVID-19. Heavily used services such as student health and mental health services received supplemental funding, while overall the institution instituted salary freezes, limited discretionary spending, including travel, and implemented a voluntary separation program (early retirement). As a consequence, the institution's budgets did not result in any short-term financial shortfalls during the pandemic. This is also evidence of the institution's ability to support programming whenever and however needed.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

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The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

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

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Wichita State University engages in continuous systematic and integrated planning as evidenced through its strategic planning process. Annual reports are provided (the assurance document includes reports from 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020). The transformation of the university, as guided by planning processes, has steered resources toward strategic enrollment management, new degree programming, increasing faculty salaries (see 2018-2019 priorities report), increasing research resources (e.g., high performance computing resources, and increasing PhD stipends), and the construction of a new business school building.

The evidence provided shows a continuous process of strategic planning, evaluation of goals and achievements, and specific, robust examples of how this process has continued to transform the university since the last comprehensive visit. These examples, together with other information in the assurance document, provide evidence that the institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes, and affiliated centers.

Within Academic Affairs, new budget requests are reviewed and approved by the provost prior to being vetted by other vice presidents and the budget committee. The linkage to assessment of student learning is provided through WSU's program review process. Each academic program is expected to plan in the context of program review, which requires evaluation of program quality as assessed by its curriculum and impact on students.

Over 70 percent of the WSU operating budget is in the Provost's area. All WSU vice presidents are charged with vetting proposed budgets as part of the University's budget process, taking into account



not only their own vice presidential area but also the institution's overall mission and goals. In this way, planning is integrated in such a way that the mission is paramount.

A recent example of how assessment of student learning has been linked to budgeting is the development of a new first-year general-education seminar approved for freshmen entering in the fall of 2021. The course came about after assessing student learning outcomes for an existing first-year experience course (WSU 101) and a recommendation from the General Education Committee for a new course. The provost added new resources to develop the first-year seminar course beyond what was allocated to WSU 101. The new course will be implemented in Fall 2021.

An additional example relates to the creation of a new Latinx studies area which arose in connection with multiple strategic initiatives, including diversity in the student population, diversity in the faculty, adding Latinx courses to the curriculum, and the recruiting initiative along the I35 corridor. In response to these strategic objectives, the institution added a new Latinx studies area and devoted over \$70K in resources for an additional faculty hire.

The items noted above together with documentation in the assurance document provide evidence that the institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.

The strategic planning initiative of 2018 engaged hundreds of stakeholders, including students, staff, faculty, alumni, and business and community leaders. The planning committee, with representation from all parts of the campus, met with individuals and departments as well as conducting shared governance forums, town halls, and a world café. The Committee maintained a strategic planning website to keep the stakeholders advised of progress. The institution's website shows that the processes of 2018 continued in subsequent years, reviewing university goals, tools, and metrics, and revising the same as appropriate.

The information above, information on the institution's strategic planning website, and information in the assurance document, and other information, the institution's planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

WSU continues the robust processes for planning and assessing the possible impact of fluctuations in revenue determined by the state economy as described in last comprehensive visit. Systematic reviews and monitoring of local, regional and global trends continue to allow WSU to engage in a dynamic planning process to thrive in the complex fluid environment of higher education. The institution's response to COVID-19 is an impressive example of these processes at work.

As part of the above environmental reviews, the institution created a strategic goal of increasing enrollment in order to diversify and stabilize revenue streams. As a consequence, the institution developed a comprehensive enrollment management plan with the assistance of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. Over the first five years, this plan resulted in a 7.4 percent increase in enrollment even as state appropriations declined.

The above, other information in the assurance argument, and the information in the institution's Office of Planning and Analysis website, provide evidence that the institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.

WSU has vigorously responded to local, regional, and global trends in the demand for graduates of

STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) areas. The institution has taken advantage of additional state funding in support of engineering education, expected to continue through at least 2032. WSU has developed a digital ecosystem, including a number of new degree programs in data science, support for campus-based innovation such as The Smart Factor @ Wichita, and research and testing capabilities with the planned construction of the National Institute for Research and Digital Transformation.

The WSU undergraduate student body has also undergone demographic change. It is younger, with more first generation students, more underserved students (including under-represented minorities and first generation students). These changes have led the university to develop specific support services to better assure student success for these new populations. These services include the Office of Student Success, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the First-Generation Coaching Council.

The items noted above and the additional information in the assurance argument provide evidence that institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.

The institution annually provides KBOR with a performance agreement report, with the most recent approval in February 2021. These reports document such goals as increases in degree completion, degree productivity in STEM areas, and research expenditures. Several initiatives are under consideration or in process to address areas needing improvement such student retention and and participation of first generation students (see above).

Based on feedback from various constituencies, the President's Executive Team has restructured select administrative roles, including making the Provost also Executive Vice President. The latter change adds new duties to the Provost's area and a new area named Strategic Engagement and Planning.

Finally, in 2013 the institution initiated the development of a business continuity plan. This plan has been continuously reviewed and updated to assure continuous operations of mission-critical services. The plan is regularly tested via various exercises, including a table-top exercise in 2019.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

### Rationale

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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.

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission. In particular, the institution has updated its shared governance policy to better disseminate information in a timely manner; the Office of Planning and Analysis provides robust data and forecasting resources; and Board of Regents and institutional policies assure that the faculty have collective responsibility in academic matters, including the curriculum.

The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future. In particular, internal monitoring and external environmental scans have led to appropriate strategic goals in enrollment, student services, and academic programming, among many examples. The institution further demonstrates nimble and robust responses to changing environments, most recently evidence in their COVID-19 planning.

WSU engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement. The evidence provided shows a continuous process of strategic planning, evaluation of goals and achievements, and specific, robust examples of how this process has continued to transform the university since the last comprehensive visit.

## Review Dashboard

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Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	
5	Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	

## **Review Summary**

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### **Conclusion**

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Wichita State University has provided evidence that all criteria are met.

### **Overall Recommendations**

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#### **Criteria For Accreditation**

Met

#### **Sanctions Recommendation**

No Sanction

#### **Pathways Recommendation**

Eligible to choose

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*