



MERCYHURST

UNIVERSITY

MSCHE Self Study
Working Group V
Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment
Third Interim Report
December 4th, 2020

Standard V: Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

Overview:

Interim Report III synthesizes the findings or evidence gathered in support of Mercyhurst University's congruence with MSCHE Standard V, Educational Effectiveness Assessment. The Working Group identified a myriad of evidence to suggest compliance with this standard as well as evidence that Mercyhurst continues to develop and refine assessment processes and systems to support data-driven decision making to fuel educational improvement. The Working Group has identified a few areas of growth, namely the solidifying of the cyclical assessment processes to close feedback loops between OIE, Deans' Offices, and Departments in regard to assessment results. The report breaks down each of Standard V's criteria into a listing of the potential evidence, a summary of the evidence, and a summary of compliance within each criterion.

Criteria:

Standard V-1: Clearly stated educational goals at the institution and degree/program levels, which are interrelated with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the institution's mission.

Potential Evidence

- Mission, Vision, and Core Values, 2019- 2020 Graduate / Undergraduate Catalog
- Departmental Mission Statements, 2019- 2020 Graduate / Undergraduate Catalog
- Strategic Plan HUB site
- Strategic Plan Update 2.14.20
- Annual Assessment Reports in the Assessment Handbook
- Curriculum Map
- Syllabi repository HUB site
- Statement of Accreditation status

Summary of Evidence:

The Standard V Working Group identified several lines of evidence to demonstrate MU provides succinct educational goals that are intertwined within our Mercy Mission on several levels. The evidence items with clearly stated educational goals of the level of the institution as well as the departmental/programmatic level are included below. They are arranged from broad, comprehensive goals such as those found with our Mission, Vision, and Core Values down to more granular goals found within course syllabi. The mission statement, vision statement, and core values are detailed on page five of the 2019-2020 undergraduate course catalog and page six of the 2019-2020 graduate course catalog. The vision statement in part says “*Mercyhurst University seeks to be a leading higher education institution that integrates excellence in the liberal arts, professional and career-path programs...*”. This ties directly into the mission statement that in part says, “*where the beauty and power of the liberal arts combine with an appreciation for the dignity of work...*”. The core values of the institution are to be socially merciful, globally responsible, intellectually creative and reflectively aware. This is in coordination with the mission statement that states “*students whose choices, in life and work, will enable them to realize the human and spiritual value embedded in everyday realities and to exercise leadership in service toward a just world.*”

The mission statement for the business department is found on page 61 of the 2019-2020 undergraduate course catalog. The department mission statement states, “*Graduates will embrace Mercyhurst’s core values of respect and tolerance for people and their ideas, and dignity in the treatment of all workers.*” and “*a collaborative approach to learning*”. These correlate with the University mission statement which states, “*an appreciation for the dignity of work*” and “*Confident in the strength of its student-faculty bonds...*”. The mission statement for the graduate program in secondary education is found on page 58 of the 2019-2020 graduate course catalog. It states, “*Students in this program demonstrate strong pedagogical skills, leadership and service to others throughout the program.*” This is interrelated with the university mission statement that states “*an appreciation for the dignity of work and a commitment to serving others.*” The mission of the criminal justice associate degree program is found on page 154 of the 2019-2020 undergraduate course catalog. It states, “*This program works to enhance the importance of understanding and compassion in the application, of the law.*” This is compatible with the university mission statement that states “*to exercise leadership in service toward a just world.*”

The strategic plan 2018-2020 and the update to the strategic plan 2018-2020 are clearly tied to the mission of the University. The title of the strategic plan is *Renewal Through the Mercy Mission*. The University’s mission statement, value statement, and core values are clearly stated on page four and page five of the strategic plan. The first goal is “*Deliver a Mercyhurst education that provides students with a distinct and transformative academic experience in preparation for personal and career success while empowering them with the knowledge and attitudes to lead fulfilling, civically engaged lives.*” And is found on page six of the plan. This is consistent with the mission statement that states, “*Consistent with its Catholic identity and Mercy heritage, Mercyhurst University educates women and men in a culture where faith and reason flourish together, where the beauty and power of the liberal arts combine with an appreciation for the dignity of work and a commitment to serving others.*” Goal two found on page seven of the plan states, “*Consistent with the Mercy tradition of whole-person development, provide students with an environment that supports intellectual growth as well as spiritual, professional and personal*

wellbeing.” Goal two is interrelated with the core value of being Reflectively Aware which states, “*Our Christian environment encourages self-reflection and contemplation of human behavior, promotes balance of mind, body and spirit, and ultimately offers the opportunity to develop a moral compass for a life of integrity.*” The update to the strategic plan is a 51-page document that details all of the activities that were accomplished in pursuit of the goals listed in the original strategic plan 2018-2020.

The syllabus repository is located on the University Hub. All faculty are required to submit their individual syllabi. These syllabi reflect the institution’s educational and degree/program level goals. In the 2019-2020> Fall semester 2019-2020 North East>Walker College of Business, you will find ECON106-60FTEspanogle. On page three of her syllabi, you will find the associate degree program student learning outcomes. It also identifies the outcomes that will be assessed in the 2019-2020 academic year. The outcome “Demonstrate knowledge and functions of economics.” was assessed that year. The annual assessment reports that are on file with the Institutional Effectiveness Office show that the students met or exceeded the standard for that period. The syllabi, program learning outcomes, annual assessment reports, and the curriculum map all show clearly stated educational goals that are interrelated to the educational experience of the students. In the 2019-2020> Spring semester 2019-2020 Erie>Walker College of Business>Business, you will find BADM350-02FTEzaphiris. On page two of her syllabi, you will find the bachelor’s degree program student learning outcomes. It also identifies the outcomes that will be assessed in the 2019-2020 academic year. The outcome “*Demonstrates the ability to apply ethical principles in solving business problems*” was assessed that year. The annual assessment reports that are on file with the Institutional Effectiveness Office show that the students met or exceeded the standard for that period. The syllabi, program learning outcomes, annual assessment reports, and the curriculum map all show clearly stated educational goals that are interrelated to the educational experience of the students.

The five-year self-study for the Graduate program in Organizational Leadership further illustrates the connection between stated educational goals at the institution and educational experiences. On page 11 and 12 of the five-year self-study, the report ties the International Leadership Association’s (ILA) values to Mercyhurst core values. The report states, “The OL department is examining its vision, mission, values, and strategies to complement ILA principles.” An example of this synergy is on page 11 of the report, “Impact: Encourages leadership initiatives that advance the field of leadership and contribute to the greater global good.” Mercyhurst University maintains a statement of accreditation status from Middle States Commission on Higher Education with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The last reaffirmation was in 2014 with the next self-study in 2021-2022. This document articulates the accreditation status, mode of delivery, credential levels, and physical locations at which the University operates toward the educational goals and realizing the institution’s mission.

Summary of Compliance:

The examples listed above, in the summary of evidence, support the assertion that Mercyhurst University has clearly stated educational goals at the institution and degree/program levels, which are interrelated with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the institution’s mission.

Standard V-2: Organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty and/or appropriate professionals, evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/program goals. Institutions should:

- a. define meaningful curricular goals with defensible standards for evaluating whether students are achieving those goals;**

Potential Evidence:

- **Curriculum Map**
- **Annual Assessment Report Process found within the Assessment Handbook**
- **Syllabi Repository Hub Site**
- **5 Year Self- Study Process found within the Assessment Handbook**
- **IDEA Global Learning Outcomes**
- **Departmental Mission Statements as found within the Catalog**

Summary of Evidence (V-2a):

The Standard V Working Group identified several lines of evidence to demonstrate that MU defines meaningful curricular goals with defensible standards for evaluating whether students are achieving those goals. Evidence items under this standard include the Departmental Mission Statements, as found within the Catalog; Curriculum Map; the Annual Assessment Report Process, found within the Assessment Handbook; the 5-year Self-study Process, outlined in the Assessment Handbook; the Syllabi Repository Hub Site; and the IDEA Global Learning Outcomes.

The Assessment Handbook (2019) provides clear direction for all faculty and student services staff on the process for both annual program assessment and the 5-year self-study process including the identification of student learning outcomes, mapping outcomes to learning experiences (curriculum maps), and a specific timeline for assessment planning and reporting. While faculty driven, this process is supported by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). Annually, action plans are developed for student learning outcomes that do not meet the expected level of achievement set by the faculty. The 5-year self- study assists programs in determining their degree of progress and achievement on curricular goals and learning outcomes and how the overall program mission ties into the larger university mission and strategic plan. Programs take a comprehensive view of their enrollment, resources, and trends. An external review process allows for a holistic review of the program and an Action Plan is developed that defines the initiatives the program deems important for the next evaluation cycle. This is also a time to make any changes to the Curriculum Map or Assessment Plan. The MS in Secondary Education: Pedagogy & Practice degree offers an exemplar of a Program Assessment Plan with the inclusion of the mission statement, student learning outcomes, curriculum map, data management and roles and responsibilities. The curriculum map demonstrates where in the curriculum each student learning outcome is introduced, developed and mastered. Rubrics are developed and used to measure

outcomes and each course has a lead faculty member assigned that is responsible for drafting an assessment report in the year due on the delineated outcome.

The Syllabi Repository Hub Site was implemented in 2007 and, with a coordinator to oversee the process of syllabi submission, this site contains the syllabi for all courses taught from 2007 to the present. Each syllabus includes course and program goals as well as evaluation standards for course work. The syllabi repository ensures that there is the capability to monitor all course syllabi for observable, measurable student learning outcomes and the means by which those outcomes are assessed. Soliciting student feedback after each course allows for the evaluation of goal achievement. IDEA student surveys are disseminated electronically at the end of each semester. In 2018, program faculty reviewed the IDEA Global Learning Objectives and selected the learning objectives that are Important (I) and Essential (E) for students to meet for each program major course. After the course surveys are completed and data aggregated, faculty are provided with the results, further allowing for relevant objective progress evaluation.

Summary of Compliance (V-2a):

Two of the four colleges have completed their five-year self-studies. One college is currently undergoing this process. The faculty interviewed felt that it was a helpful process to identify strengths and weaknesses but indicated that there was a lack of follow-up from administration once the self-study had been submitted. A process to close the feedback loop may be warranted. While the Syllabi Repository Hub Site appears to be complete, there is no evidence that course syllabi are routinely monitored by administration for observable, measurable student learning outcomes and how those outcomes are being assessed.

- b. articulate how they prepare students in a manner consistent with their missions for successful careers, meaningful lives, and, where appropriate, further education. They should collect and provide data on the extent to which they are meeting these goals; and,**

Potential Evidence:

- **Departmental Mission Statements as found within the Catalog**
- **Annual Assessment Report Process (found within Assessment Handbook)**
- **5- year Self-Study Process (found within the Assessment Handbook).**
- **Career Development Center (CDC) Usage and Survey Data**
- **Field/Clinical Internship Evaluation Forms**
- **Enrollment Data on IPEDS site**
- **Graduation Data**
- **First Destination Survey**
- **Standardized Professional Licensure Exam Data**

Summary of Evidence (V-2b):

Evidence items within this subcategory confirm that Mercyhurst University articulates how students are prepared in a manner consistent with their missions and systematically collects data related to the educational effectiveness of our mission and educational goals. Such evidence items include the University's Mission Statement, the mission statement of each department and/or program, annual assessment reports and the 5-year self-study reports, Career Development Usage

and Survey Data, enrollment and graduation data, licensure exam data, post-graduation surveys, and field/capstone evaluation forms.

Department and Program mission statements serve as a bridge between the university's overall mission statement and concrete outcomes and specific field knowledge within each department. Every five years, during the 5 Year Self-Study process, these mission statements are evaluated to ensure they are in-line with the university's mission and strategic plan as well as taking into account trends in the field and other information collected through assessment. In turn, these mission statements help guide staffing decisions and course offerings and are used in departments to locate any curricular gaps. As noted in the Assessment Report Process, (Assessment Handbook, 2019) every degree/program is required to have student learning outcomes that are assessed each year based upon expected level of achievement (ELAs) set by the faculty. If a standard/ELA is not met, an action plan is created and implemented. It is then reassessed the following year. The Career Development Center Usage and Survey data offers a running report of meetings that counselors have with students and alumni. This report is managed by the Career Development center (CDC). The CDC director reviews the data to identify student trends and prioritize needs. The data is used to determine how the CDC can best support students for successful careers, meaningful lives, and if appropriate, further education.

Many departments also use evaluation forms related to clinical, field, or internship experiences. Often, these experiences add career-embedded context to the curriculum and provide data related to the preparedness of the student for their future careers. For example, pre-licensure nursing students are evaluated weekly, using the Nursing Clinical Evaluation Form, during all clinical rotations. Along with formative assessment, students must demonstrate satisfactory clinical performance/competence at the end of each clinical rotation in order to progress to the next clinical course. These formative and summative assessment forms provide evidence that organized and systematic assessment of goals are occurring, and data are aggregated and reported to ACEN, the nursing accreditor.

Enrollment data is available for baccalaureate programs via the IPEDs website (NCES). This enrollment data is reviewed at the Annual State of the University Address and trends are discussed. By capturing enrollment data, we have the data needed to assess graduation rates which demonstrate the extent of student achievement of institutional degree. Graduation data are available for the latest cohort to enroll and graduate with a baccalaureate degree within 6 years (150% of expected program length). Graduation rates demonstrate our baccalaureate students' achievement of program requirements and program goals.

Students are surveyed after graduation. Prior to 2018, the Post-Graduation Survey was the tool used. Since that time, the First Destination Survey is used to gather information from recent graduates about their employment status and experiences after graduation such as continuing education. This survey is conducted through Handshake, which is managed by the Career Development Center (CDC). The CDC conducts the survey and sends the data to be held by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). Data are made available to departments upon request. Those that do request graduate survey data often do so to complete annual or self-study reports for their accreditors. There is no current mechanism in place to provide this information to all departments. This may represent a gap in the use of graduate data to articulate how the university prepares students for successful careers, meaningful lives or further education.

Professional Licensure Exam Data is gathered for pre-licensure Associate Degree programs in the health professions, such as Nursing, and graduate programs that require licensure,

such as Physician Assistant. Licensure Exam Data is available in the Dean's offices. The Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) is a pre-licensure program that prepares the graduate to sit for their licensure exam, the NCLEX-RN. A minimum first-time pass rate of 80% on the NCLEX-RN is required by the Pennsylvania Department of State (PA DOS) Professional Licensing Board of Nursing. The PA Board of Nursing communicates the pass rates on a quarterly basis to the program's administrator of record (ASN Program Director). Action plans are developed if the pass rate falls below this standard. Pass rates and completion rates are posted on the program's web page and updated on an annual basis. Licensure pass rates above the benchmark provide evidence of successful educational preparation of students for successful careers.

Summary of Compliance (V-2b):

The Working Group noted that some of the items of evidence do not have a cyclical process, which could enable programmatic/institutional improvement. For example, there is not currently a working follow-up process for the annual assessment reports or the 5-year self-study in which departments and administration could analyze the results and facilitate improvement. Further, it was identified that Enrollment Data is available only for baccalaureate students. This group was unable to locate Associate degree and graduate degree enrollment data. Additionally, the group reviewed the post-graduation survey that is used. Yet, whoever receives the data or how the data is used remains unclear. In addition, while each pre-licensure program monitors licensure pass rates and shares this data with the Dean of their college and communities of interest, it is recommended that all licensure data and any action plans are maintained in one office, such as the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, to assure data is monitored and trended over time.

c. support and sustain assessment of student achievement and communicate the results of this assessment to stakeholders.

- **Annual Assessment Report Process (found within Assessment Handbook)**
- **5-Year Self-Study Process (found within the Assessment Handbook)**
- **Exit Interview Form and Cease Enrollment Form (with directions)**
- **Program Accreditation Status (found within the 2019-2020 Catalogs)**
- **Advisory Board Reports**
- **Mercyhurst Public Website**
- **Sophomore Review Process found within Course Catalog**
- **Field/Clinical/Internship Evaluation Forms**

Summary of Evidence (V-2c):

Evidence items in this subcategory demonstrate that Mercyhurst supports assessment processes and communicates our assessment results to our stakeholders. Such evidence items include: the Assessment Handbook with processes such as the annual assessment report and the 5-year self-study; the Cease Enrollment form and Exit Interview form; the Sophomore Review processes in the Undergraduate Catalog; Program accreditation status, found within the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs; Advisory Board Reports; the Field/Clinical/Internship Evaluation Forms; and the Mercyhurst Public Website.

There is a clear annual assessment process as noted in the Assessment Handbook and referred to in V-2a. Every degree/program has student learning outcomes that are assessed on an annual basis. The results of those assessments are reported to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness via the annual assessment reports. This annual assessment report is reviewed by the associate dean of the college and if the assessment does not reach the desired goal, an Action Plan is developed and the student learning outcome is re-assessed the following year. All data collected is available in the office of Institutional Effectiveness. The 5-year Self-Study process, listed on page 13 of the Assessment Handbook, allows programs to complete a more in-depth look into the assessment of students and trend assessment data over time. The process of the 5-year self-study is clearly delineated. Some accredited programs do share this data with communities of interest, such as Advisory Boards and Accreditors. However, as it relates to V-2c, the findings of these studies are not widely communicated to external stakeholders.

All programs/departments maintain ongoing academic assessment of student learning outcomes, as detailed in the 2019 Assessment Handbook. As part of this assessment process, many programs/departments make use of Field/Clinical/Internship Evaluation Forms to gather data from students' experiential learning. As part of the on-going program/departamental assessment process Field/Clinical/Internship Evaluations Forms constitute an important component of data collection. Representative examples may be considered from the pre-licensure Nursing program (associate degree) or the Physician Assistant program (graduate degree). Ultimately, these data are used to assess student achievement of Program Learning Goals and Outcomes, the results of which are reported as part of the annual assessment reports. Clinical and Internship evaluation forms provide critical data/information regarding student achievement during experiential learning, typically at an off-campus facility and sometimes under the supervision of a non-Mercyhurst employee.

Current program accreditations are listed in the beginning of each catalog. These range from Police Academy certification to the Physician Assistant program. Program accreditation demonstrates that programs have met specific standards set by leading authorities in the education of these students. A listing of all accreditations and accreditors (with accreditor websites listed) communicates that these standards have been met and are available for public viewing.

There are several programs/departments that maintain Advisory Boards comprised of relevant internal and external stakeholders, such as community leaders of the program's discipline. Reports are disseminated to update Board members on student achievement during annual or bi-annual meetings, conveying on-going assessment of student achievement. In the pre- and post-licensure nursing programs, for example, information such as program completion rates, licensure exam pass rates, job placement rates for graduates are shared annually at these meetings (see Nursing Advisory Board meeting minutes). As Board members and relevant stakeholders are appraised of student achievement within the program/department, they are also asked to provide feedback and recommendations as a means to continually improve student achievement of program/department learning outcomes and proficiencies.

Mercyhurst maintains a publicly available website that communicates relevant and necessary assessment of student achievement of institutional and program/departmental learning goals and

outcomes. The Mercyhurst Public Website is regularly and consistently updated to make available necessary student achievement data. This information is frequently mandated by program/department accrediting agencies. Relevant examples can be seen by viewing the Department of Physician Assistant Studies website at <https://www.mercyhurst.edu/academics/graduate-programs/physician-assistant-studies/mission> and <https://www.mercyhurst.edu/academics/physician-assistant-studies/nccpa-pance-pass-rate>.

Many departments and programs outline a sophomore review process in the Undergraduate Catalog. An example of this process can be found on page 51 in the 2019-2020 Undergraduate Catalog, section on Applied Forensic Sciences. Departments who have sophomore review use it to assess student progress and achievement within the program. They then communicate these assessment findings back to each sophomore student in the program, so that they can develop an individual action plan for meeting their educational goals.

Mercyhurst University has a cease enrollment process for when a student formally declares that they are leaving the University. The process begins with an interview of the student by an Academic Support counselor. Knowing that student experiences while at college strongly influence decisions to stay or leave, the interview questions are based on 3 areas of experience: Social Integration; Academic Integration; and Institutional Action. After the interview, the Cease Enrollment form is used to gather the specific reason for withdrawal, student major, and any anticipated date of return. When complete, this information is entered into Colleague. The data captured on the form provides important information when creating or reviewing student learning support programs. The data, through Colleague, is shared with internal stakeholders. Yet, upon interview of faculty, there doesn't seem to be a clear process of generating these reports and getting them to the program faculty for program assessment, even though there are reasons for withdrawal, such as faculty being non-responsive and academic rigor, that are essential for program assessment.

Summary of Compliance (V-2c):

The Working Group noted that while most of the items of evidence support and sustain assessment of student achievement, the process for generating reports and disseminating these results to internal and external stakeholders is not always clear.

Summary of Evidence of Criterion 2 (a, b, & c):

Evidence items demonstrate assessment of student achievement through use of curricular goals and evaluation of said goals, confirms that Mercyhurst University articulates how students are prepared, systematically collects data related to the educational effectiveness of our mission and educational goals, and demonstrates that Mercyhurst supports assessment processes and communicates our assessment results to our stakeholders.

Summary of Compliance of Criterion 2 (a, b, & c):

Working Group V noted that many of the aforementioned evidence items do not have a cyclical process which could support programmatic/ institutional improvement. For example, there is not a working follow-up process for the annual assessment reports or the 5-year self-study. With a follow-up process, departments and administration could collaborate on the analysis of results

and facilitate improvement. The working group further noted that enrollment data are only available for baccalaureate students. This group was unable to locate Associate degree and graduate degree enrollment data. This impacts on graduation data, requiring programs outside of traditional baccalaureate programs to monitor enrollment data and calculate graduation rates for their students. Additionally, the group identified that graduate survey and exit interview information for those students who cease enroll is being gathered, yet it was not clear who receives the data, how the data is utilized, or whether it is being shared with external, as well as internal, stakeholders. Overall, the working group was unable to identify any robust data usage of the graduation surveys and exit interviews (cease enrollment data) limiting the extent of institutional and degree/program goal evaluation.

Standard V-3. consideration and use of assessment results for the improvement of educational effectiveness. Consistent with the institution's mission, such uses include some combination of the following:

a. assisting students in improving their learning;

Potential Evidence:

- Self-service Advising Function
- Usage and Survey Data for Academic Support Units
- Library Data Collection and Assessment Processes

b. improving pedagogy and curriculum;

Potential Evidence:

- Annual Assessment Report via Assessment Handbook
- 5 Year Self-study via Assessment Handbook
- IDEA Global Learning Outcomes Data
- Faculty Evaluations via IDEA Diagnostic Instrument
- Faculty Evaluations via Classroom Observation Form
- Faculty Evaluation Process via Faculty Handbook pages 23-25
- Faculty Development Days via Agenda from 2018 FDD
- Faculty Tenure process via Faculty Handbook

c. reviewing and revising academic programs and support services;

Potential Evidence:

- Annual Assessment Report process via Assessment Handbook
- 5-year Self-study process via Assessment Handbook
- Exit surveys
- Usage and Survey Data for the Writing Center and Tutoring Center
- Assessment Institute Schedules
- New Program Application forms
- Program and Course Revision Forms
- Course Information Change Applications
- Substantive Change Reports for Accreditation

- Annual Report for Accredited Programs

d. planning, conducting, and supporting a range of professional development activities;

Potential Evidence:

- Center for Teaching Excellence Programming
- Faculty Development Funding Request Forms
- Faculty Development Days Programming

e. planning and budgeting for the provision of academic programs and services;

Potential Evidence:

- Strategic Plan
- 5-year Self-Study processes outlined in the Assessment Handbook
- New Program, Concentration, and Course Application Forms
- Faculty Development Request Forms
- Budget Management Policies and Procedures document.

f. informing appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs;

Potential Evidence:

- Strategic Plan
- Mission Statements via the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog
- Mercyhurst Public Website
- Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
- Mercyhurst Magazine
- MSCHE Self-Study

g. improving key indicators of student success, such as retention, graduation, transfer, and placement rates;

Potential Evidence:

- Mission, Vision, and Core Values as included in the Catalog
- Graduation rates,
- Final Destination survey
- Career Development Usage Data and Surveys
- PEDS report data.
- Midterm Grading Policy—p. 15 in 19-20 Faculty Handbook
- Midterm Notice Email
- Directions-Early Alerts Fall 2020

h. implementing other processes and procedures designed to improve educational programs and services;

- N/A

Summary of Evidence:

Evidence items in this subcategory document that Mercyhurst considers and uses assessment results to improve student learning, pedagogy and curriculum, review and revise our academic processes and support services, plan, conduct, and support a range of professional development activities, plan and budget for the provision of academic programs and services, inform constituents about our institution and programs, and improve key indicators of student success. In relation to assisting students in improving their learning, the Working Group identified several lines of evidence to support congruence with this criterion, including, the Self-Service Advising Function, Usage and Survey Data collected by Academic Support units, and the Library's Data Collection and Assessment processes.

The Self-Service Advising function allows faculty to post an "early alert" for students whose performance in the course needs to be improved. The alerts are available to students through Self-Service at any time in the semester. Furthermore, counselors in the Academic Support and Learning Differences office review early alerts and send an email to students with the information contained in the early alert. Contact information regarding support units, such as the Tutoring Center, is also sent in the early alert email. In the past two years, the graduate student population has also received early alerts. The Writing Center's Client Report provides information to faculty from writing consultants regarding the progress a student is making on written assignments with assistance from the writing consultant. After each consultation, consultants write a Client Report documenting their work with the student. Client Reports are sent to faculty unless the student requests that it not be sent. There is anecdotal evidence that faculty have used the report Client Reports to evaluate the writing project and to evaluate students' understanding of writing prompts.

Mercyhurst University Hammermill Library collects data not only on library services but also library space occupancy for planning and potential enhancement of the academic library when needed. This is accomplished by a series of data gathering tools that the library employs. One such tool is the Library Log Report that was created using the LibWizard product by Springshare. This permits the library to conduct an intentional hourly count through the library building and enter this into the reporting system. Over time, this data is gathered to assess the occupancy of the building during days, weeks, and hours to develop predictability of peak usage and, therefore, providing staff coverage where needed. To assess library services, the library utilizes the data gathering tool LibInsight. This tool allows the library to target specific question types that may be asked by students and other users of the University Library. Specifics include who asked, who answered, how the question was asked i.e., in person, by phone, email, etc., where was the question asked; in the library, from outside the library, how was the request answered, and finally the amount of time spent on the question. Again, this tool allows for quick data analysis at a given time and assists with informing the strategic decision-makers on how to improve, adjust, and predict necessary services and support.

In relation to the use of assessment results to improve curriculum and pedagogy, evidence in this subcategory document the premium Mercyhurst places on teaching excellence and the integrity of their academic programs. Evidence can be divided into two categories: one pertaining to individual faculty pedagogical evaluation and development and the other to departmental evaluation and development. There is ample documentation of evaluation and assessment of pedagogy and curricula. All faculty evaluations for both promotion and tenure, and teaching effectiveness evaluations are detailed in the faculty handbook. Per p. 23, "Classroom observation is an essential part of assessing faculty performance at Mercyhurst University." Pre-tenured and

non-tenured faculty are observed twice a year by both the chair of the department and the assistant dean. Meanwhile, tenured faculty are evaluated at a minimum of every three years.

Deans and department chairs use the same evaluation form across disciplines and colleges. This form demands comment on student engagement, communication with students, lesson strategies, pedagogy, course content, and an overall evaluation. The observed faculty member reviews the observation, has an opportunity to include their own comments and then passes it on to the Provost who maintains a professional file for each faculty member. Other than classroom observations, a faculty member's professional file contains student evaluations of all courses taught. Since adopting the IDEA diagnostic Instrument in 2018, all courses now have recorded student evaluations. Prior to 2018, only courses with faculty up for review received SIRII evaluations. Through IDEA faculty have access to both qualitative and quantitative student feedback, weighted based on how the outcomes of the course was imputed by the faculty members (Essential and Important outcomes). While IDEA offers faculty a lot of information, the quantitative data and data over time are still new tools for the faculty.

Pre-tenure and non-tenure track faculty with fewer than seven years of service undergo annual evaluations and tenured faculty and others with seven years of service complete triennial evaluations wherein the faculty member in conjunction with their department chair establish yearly goals focused on teaching excellence and a secondary area of scholarship or service. The explicit purpose of these evaluations is to assess "cumulatively the faculty member's growth and achievement," tracking "progress toward promotion, pre-tenure review and/or tenure by using the most recent calendar year's information within the context of previous years' progress and achievement" (24). These evaluations consist of faculty self-assessment and summary reports by the department chair and associate deans, respectively.

Mercyhurst's standard timeline for the pre-tenure probationary period is six years. In their sixth year, eligible faculty are evaluated by their teaching effectiveness, scholarship and professionalism, and university and community service. Evaluations by colleagues, department chairs, deans, and the office of the Provost and students all contribute to an evaluation of teaching effectiveness. Both classroom observations and student course evaluations, and interviews of students and colleagues are used. To support their individual commitment to teaching excellence, all faculty members attend annual faculty development days where they choose to attend workshops dedicated to topics on career and professional development, educational technology, and pedagogical support, techniques, and practices. While faculty choose which sessions they attend, they must attend a total of five sessions over two days. Academic programs complete a self-study every five years, including assessing its own mission's alignment with that of the university, its personnel, resources, and student outcomes. Moreover, it researches trends in the field, elicits an external review, and completes an action plan. Additionally, programs complete an annual assessment that focuses on a single outcome. These reports involve a detailed set of questions followed by the creation of an action plan.

A robust sample of evidence was also identified to support the sub-criterion related to use of assessment results to review and revise academic programs and support services. Academic programs and student service units complete a self-study every five years, including assessing their program's activity in light of their own mission and that of the university, their personnel, resources, and outcome data. Moreover, it researches trends in the field, elicits an external review, and completes an action plan. Additionally, programs complete an annual assessment that focuses on a single outcome. These reports involve a detailed set of questions followed by the creation of an action plan. These studies are housed with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness who

recommends any changes. Programs use these to assess courses and curricula. For example, Public health changed the course level for PUBH 105 Public Health Policy and Law based on assessing student outcomes. Seeing that less than half of students achieved mastery in the course, they applied to change the course number to a 200-level course.

The system for making changes to academic programs is formal and rigorous. Faculty may only change course names, prefixes, numbers, or descriptions by documenting their justification for proposed changes to the Provost's Office. No changes can be made without Provost approval. Academic programs apply for any substantive changes at the department level and must receive approval from the college dean, the office of institutional effectiveness, and APAC of faculty senate. Final approval of these changes lies with the Provost's Office. New academic programs go through a similar application process. These applications include descriptions of these programs that must account for how the program increases the University's academic reputation, is consistent with the University's Mission and Strategic Plan. These applications must also address any new faculty or resources, and the potential effect it has on student licensure and postgraduate employment. There is plenty evidence for use of the Writing and Tutoring Centers there is little current evidence of how they are reviewed.

The Working Group also identified several lines of evidentiary support related to planning, conducting, and supporting professional development opportunities. Evidence collected demonstrates robust offerings for faculty development in areas of teaching and career development. Faculty are required to attend Development Days annually before the beginning of each academic year. Additionally, faculty input is solicited for what specific sessions are offered for faculty development days. The Center for Teaching excellence offers around twelve to sixteen sessions focused on specific Mercyhurst issues like implementing new cross-university student curriculum profiles (self-service) in preparation for Advising Day to broader discussions of rubric development and educational technology to specific sessions for career advancement. Additionally, there are monthly sessions specifically for new faculty continuing their orientation to Mercyhurst. After the pivot to remote instruction in the Spring of 2020, the Center for Teaching Excellence has moved its programming online and has solicited faculty-led sessions and many faculty-created videos. Funds are available to faculty who have completed a short application detailing the use of the funds, a clear tie to the faculty member's development as a teacher and scholar and proposed budget. The deans of each college determine how the funds are allocated to individual faculty members.

Working Group V also identified evidentiary items to demonstrate the use of assessment results in planning and budgeting for academic programs and services. Beginning at the grandest level, Mercyhurst's Strategic Plan emphasizes strategies and action steps related to Goal III: Renew the University's Resources, Processes, and Infrastructure that focus on the enhancement of assessment results to fuel planning for programming and services, namely action steps 3.2 and 3.3. A similar focus is seen in Goal 1: Renew Our Commitment to a Mercyhurst Education with strategies 1.1 and 1.5 emphasizing the use of assessment results to drive programming. The most recent update (on 2/14/20) of the current Strategic Plan includes actions and outcomes in working toward the four identified goals that ultimately enhance educational experience of students and develop/enhance academic programming and services.

There is evidence of the interplay between assessment results and programmatic budgetary planning in the Assessment Handbook's details of the 5-year Self-Study processes. Listed on Page 13 of the Assessment Handbook, the 5-year self-study is a process that allows programs to determine their degree of progress and achievement on program goals and learning outcomes and

how the overall program mission ties into the larger university mission and strategic plan. As related to this sub-criterion, programs are also required to take a comprehensive view of their enrollment, resources, and trends. For example, in their five year self-study, the Organizational Leadership Department rationalized the need for additional faculty to be able to effectively offer the coursework needed. Another example can be seen in the B.A History self-study which notes their communication in their Annual Assessment Reports of a need for more financial support to support their capstone requirements. Additionally, all new program, concentration, minors, and course application forms include a portion that specifically addresses the budget. Any impact on the department budget would need to be considered during the Annual Budgetary Planning process.

Another evidence item for this sub-criterion is the Faculty Development Funding Requests form which is used by faculty to request monetary, time, or personnel support to engage in faculty development and professional activities. The form is completed by the requesting faculty and identifies the nature and justification of the professional development activity. The form is submitted to the College Dean for review and approval, including amount and budget line. These forms are submitted on a rolling basis and the funds are allocated on a monthly or bi-monthly basis depending on the volume of submissions by a committee of faculty and deans. This process ensures that funds are distributed to faculty based on needs and the effect it will have on the applicant's development. Priority should be given to development that addresses a specific deficiency exposed through assessment.

Lastly, the Annual Budgetary Planning process involves long and short-term planning and makes use of an array of assessment data. Through analysis of assessment data and conversations with faculty, Academic Deans can make modifications to programmatic and service-related budget items using three separate forms; existing contractual commitments, new funding (recurring or nonrecurring, and capital. Requests for additional funding for the next academic year are submitted to the University's Budget Team by the end of the fall term. Each of the three forms has a segment which requires an explanation of anticipated outcome(s) and return on investment where a description of how the budgetary increase will support the University's Mission and Strategic Plan, enhance revenues, and/or reduce expenses.

Evidentiary support to demonstrate that the University informs appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs can be seen with the Mercyhurst Public Website and the internal Mercyhurst HUB sites which inform constituents across the University. For external constituents, including alumni, information regarding associate, baccalaureate, and graduate academic programs, financial aid, the admissions process, student life, athletics, alumni, and current news and events can be easily accessed through the website's landing page. Information regarding accreditation, articulation agreements, Mercyhurst's history and mission, non-discrimination policies, Title IX policies, and student consumer information is also accessible on the landing page. For internal constituents, Mercyhurst maintains a central "HUB." Individual departments and offices create their HUB page with relevant information. The HUB provides information regarding Academics, Campus Life, Mission, Services, and Resources to both employees and students at all academic levels. Importantly, the HUB provides access to the University's Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs, which includes the University's mission statement as well as descriptions of academic programs, academic services offices, and policies and procedures.

Both the website and the HUB provide comprehensive access to most of the University's programs, offices, departments, and functions. For instance, information about the Strategic Plan

is posted on the website's Assessment and Planning Department page, which is accessed from the About link on the landing page. The Assessment and Planning page describes the mission of the department and its goals, function, staff, and guiding principles. Each of the department's functions are linked to that function's webpage, which provides detailed information regarding the function. The Strategic Planning page, for example, lists the 4 strategic plan goals and provides descriptions of each goal. A link is provided to the full strategic plan pdf. document.

Finally, Working Group V identified several evidentiary items that suggest Mercyhurst uses assessment results to improve key indicators of student success. Such evidence items include the Mission, Vision, and Core Values as included in the Undergraduate Catalog, Graduation rates, post-graduation surveys, Career Development Usage Data and Surveys, IPEDS report data, and the Midterm Grading Policy. The Career Development Center sends to all recently graduated baccalaureate students the Final Destination Survey. The survey is delivered through the CDC's Handshake accounts. The survey asks graduates several general questions about their employment activity post-graduation, including questions regarding employment status, the type of work obtained, compensation, and employer. The survey also asks graduates about their volunteering activity, military service, and post-graduate education. The survey also asks questions specifically about the graduates' experiences with Handshake and the CDC. Questions include, "What impact did this experience have on your success in securing employment to continuing your education?" and "During your time at Mercyhurst, how many times did you visit or interact with the staff in the Career Development Center?" Such questions not only collect data on graduates but also serve as an assessment tool for the CDC.

The Mid-Term Grading Policy, found on page 15 of the 2019-2020 Faculty Handbook, is evidence that the University uses key indicators of student success to improve retention. The policy states that faculty members are expected "to submit mid-term grade reports for students whose progress is unsatisfactory and for all first-year students by the time and date specified each term" (emphasis in the original). Faculty use the Grading function in Self-Service to post mid-term grades according to his policy. The Midterm Grading Policy provides information for the University's Early Alert (Erie Campus) and Academic Warning System (North East Campus) programs. Each program is conducted by the academic support office for each campus. Unsatisfactory grade reports are compiled by the appropriate support office, whose academic counselors and coaches reach out to students listed in the reports, usually by email. The email provides students with their midterm grades and instructor notes. The email also provides students with contact information for various support services, such as tutoring services and Academic Support counselors.

Summary of Compliance:

As evidenced by the myriad of evidence items within this criterion, Mercyhurst University is considering and using assessment results to improve educational effectiveness. However, there are some items that need to be addressed. There is evidence that assessment results are considered and used to assist students in improving their learning (e.g., the Library's data collection and assessment processes) However, there is very little evidence to suggest that a process is in place for assessment and/or for the results to be used in considering how effective this evidence is in assisting students' improving their learning. However, the Assessment Office is scheduled to work with Student Services units on developing new assessment plans soon and may include new processes that consider and use assessment results in a way consistent with meeting this standard.

There is robust evidence that the mechanisms and practices are in place for academic programs to assess their learning outcomes. The office of institutional effectiveness keeps detailed accounts of both assessments and action plans. The same might be said likewise of faculty teaching excellence, since the loop is quite external: faculty are evaluated against their own goals both for individual courses and for their overall excellence goals.

What remains hard to find is evidence of these policies being individual correctives. Given the confidential nature of student evaluations and the newness of the IDEA tool (especially with the interruption of course delivery methods and the herculean effort to pivot to new modality of course delivery in 2020), faculty struggle to put this information to good use. IDEA is especially tricky with online courses. Additionally, while the budgetary process does include a connection to the Mission and Strategic Plan within the process forms, there was no process identified that considers yearly assessment report results and/or 5-year Self-study documents in the budgetary planning process. The Working Group was unable to find any evidence that the assessment results were driving academic budgetary planning. One recommendation would be to have a cyclical process with the annual assessment reports and 5-year self-studies that require departments and Deans to meet to discuss findings and form budgetary proposals based on the assessment results. Similarly, there was no evidence that results of an assessment process are used to improve the effectiveness of informing appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs. However, the information presented on both website and HUB is regularly updated. For example, the Registrar posts the new Academic Calendar yearly on its HUB site. News and Events information on the website is updated regularly as needed.

In relation to Academic programs and student service units complete a self-study every five years, including assessing their program's activity in light of their own mission and that of the university, their personnel, resources, and outcome data. Moreover, it researches trends in the field, elicits an external review, and completes an action plan. Additionally, programs complete an annual assessment that focuses on a single outcome. These reports involve a detailed set of questions followed by the creation of an action plan. These studies are housed with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness who recommends any changes. Programs use these to assess courses and curricula. For example, Public health changed the course level for PUBH 105 Public Health Policy and Law based on assessing student outcomes. Seeing that less than half of students achieved mastery in the course, they applied to change the course number to a 200-level course.

The system for making changes to academic programs is formal and rigorous. The faculty may only change course names, prefixes, numbers, or descriptions by documenting their justification for purposed changes to the Provost's Office. No changes can be made without Provost approval. Academic programs apply for any substantive changes at the department level and must receive approval from the college dean, the office of institutional effectiveness, and APAC of faculty senate. Final approval of these changes lies with the Provost's Office. New academic programs go through a similar application process. These applications include descriptions of these programs that must account for how the program increases the University's academic reputation, is consistent with the University's Mission and Strategic Plan. These applications must also address any new faculty or resources, and the potential effect it has on student licensure and postgraduate employment. There is plenty evidence for use of the Writing and Tutoring Centers there is little current evidence of how they are reviewed.

Standard V-4. if applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of assessment services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers; and

Potential Evidence:

- **Accreditation reports**
- **External Review portion of the 5-year Self-study via Assessment Handbook**

Summary of Evidence:

The Standard V Working Group identified limited evidence items related to third-party assessment outside of assessment activities related to accrediting bodies and the external reviewers utilized during assessment processes such as the five-year self-study. Mercyhurst has 17 Programmatic Accreditors with 6 accredited associate programs, 18 baccalaureate accredited programs, 4 graduate accredited programs across its four colleges. While the accreditation review process and reporting requirements differ across programs, each department works with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to prepare documents, analyze assessment data, etc. One example, Mercyhurst's Education Department recently conducted their 10-year Major Review with the Pennsylvania Department of Education for their 22 teacher certification programs. As described by PDE, the Major Review is, "A comprehensive review of a provider's approved certification programs to document and evaluate the level of program compliance with all PDE Framework Guidelines and regulations." Each separate program's application underwent review by a designated PDE liaison as well as an external reviewer. Each application received a separate external reviewer, and their comments, requests, and recommendations were provided to Mercyhurst. All 22 programs received PDE approval. The next PDE Major Review will occur in 2029.

Another institutional review process that involves assessment by a third-party provider is the 5-year self-study process, which is detailed in the Assessment Handbook. Per pp. 13-14 of the Assessment handbook, "Each department should solicit an unbiased external assessment of the program. Departments should work with the Assessment Coordinator to determine who will conduct the external review (a person, department, organization, etc.). [...] The external reviewer should then provide the department with written documentation of their review that can be included in the final self-study document." The external reviewer should speak to "(a) evidence of student learning, (b) evidence of quality of student work (e.g., student portfolios, senior research papers/projects), (c) a report from meetings with Dean, faculty, and student representatives, (d) best practices employed by the department (e.g. recruitment efforts, retention efforts, capstone requirements), (e) strengths within the program, (f) challenges within the program, (g) strategies to address the challenges, and (h) resource needs."

An exemplar of this process can be viewed in the 5-year Self-Study for the History Department where on pages 21, Dr. Philip Guingona, Associate Professor from Wells University, provides feedback on the B.A. program. Feedback from the external reviewer noted an overall lack of diversity in the Department's faculty, staff, students, and course offerings and applaud the interdisciplinarity, recruitment, and assessment as strengths of the Department. Elements of the aforementioned feedback was utilized in the Department's Action Plan to diversify. On Page 26, the History Department writes, "It is undeniable that we would be well served to, as the reviewer suggests, '[hire] a full-time professor in Asian-American, Latino, African-American, Indigenous- or Native-American history; or Asian, African, Islamic World, or South or Central American

history.” They also cite the reviewer’s emphasis to further develop public history projects involving their students and make those visible on the Department’s website.

The Working Group questioned whether the IDEA evaluation system could be considered a third-party provider for assessment.

Summary of Compliance:

Overall, there is limited evidentiary items related to this criterion. Accreditation reporting and evaluation processes involve a rigorous analysis of programs assessment processes and while the Office of Institutional Effectiveness is involved in those processes, it is recommended that the documents related to accreditation reporting be housed and overseen by OIE. Furthermore, the external review seems to be the most appropriate way to ensure that programs are remaining competitive within the discipline and following/developing best practices on a granular level of assessment. It is one of a few ways the institution may evaluate structural strengths and weaknesses within a department within specific disciplinary expectations. Evidence of the effectiveness of these reviews would best be seen at a departmental level. However, there is a lack of evidence to suggest that external review found within the 5 Year Self Study process is used in any robust manner to drive programmatic or institutional change.

Standard V-5. periodic assessment of the effectiveness of assessment processes utilized by the institution for the improvement of educational effectiveness.

Potential Evidence:

1. Strategic Plan HUB site
2. Strategic Plan Update 2.14.20
3. Annual Academic Assessment via Assessment Handbook
4. 5 Year Self-study process via Assessment Handbook
5. Accreditation report
6. Assessment Institute Programming
7. Middle States Self-study

Summary of Evidence:

The Standard V Working Group identified several lines of evidence to demonstrate MU periodically assesses the effectiveness of our assessment processes with the initiative to improve educational effectiveness. Evidence items under this standard include the Strategic Plan, the Annual Academic Assessment and 5-year Self-study processes outlined in the Assessment Handbook, Accreditation Reports, Assessment Institute Programming, and the Middle States Self-study.

Beginning at the granular level, periodic assessment of the department’s assessment processes is highlighted in the Annual Academic Assessment processes. The Annual Academic Assessment process is described in detail on page 11 of the Assessment Handbook as annual reporting of assessment efforts to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Faculty are required to compile data from the assessment of their student learning outcomes (SLOs) and answer questions related to the outcomes assessed, the data sources used, measurement and evaluation methods, data collection period, standards used, a description of the findings, and any possible changes to be

made. An exemplar of this process can be seen in the Physical Therapist Assistant program. The Program assessed two SLOs (SLO 1- Demonstrate professional behaviors in all patient/clinical interactions, including simulated situations and SLO 4- Utilize appropriate communication and documentation to aid in the effective operation of the physical therapy department and the provision of physical therapy services) during the Fall and Spring semesters using data from practical exams, a standardized evaluation tool (CPI), and a performance evaluation. Ratings on the practical exams and standardized tool are converted to a rubric. The PTA program established clear thresholds for the standards to be met such as 90% of students will perform at or above level 4 on item 1 A and B using the practical exam rubric and reported that their standards were successfully met.

An exemplar of a program not meeting their standard(s), can be seen in the B.S. Public Health Department's Annual Assessment Report. The Public Health Department assessed 3 SLOs during the 2018-2019 academic year. SLO 1- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and philosophy of Public Health, the healthcare system and the relevant dimensions of health policy, law, ethics and economics related to public health, did not meet the standard with 80% of the students obtaining mastering (A grade range) on a public health policy brief presentation. Consequently, the Department realized the content was not appropriate for a 100-level course and changed the course offering to be 200 level. The curriculum and syllabus of the course was also modified to emphasize the use of policy for prevention purposes. The Department further reported plans to create a more appropriate evaluation tool (rubric) for evaluation and implement alternative teaching strategies. It was noted that the standard for SLO1 was met the following year. As showcased in the later example, if the assessment does not reach the desired goal, the student learning outcome is assessed again the next year. Faculty review the assessment process and results to determine if a change in assessment process or content delivery will improve their educational effectiveness. Faculty make necessary changes to ensure that the student learning outcome is successful the next time the course is taught.

While effective and necessary for small changes or identifying areas of weakness, the Annual Assessment Report does not provide a holistic view of the assessment of all the Department's SLOs and their trends overtime. Thus, the 5-Year Self-Study process serves the purpose of a larger scale review of programmatic assessment processes. As previously noted throughout this report, the 5-year self- study is a process that allows programs to determine their degree of progress and achievement on program goals and learning outcomes and how the overall program mission ties into the larger university mission and strategic plan. Programs are also required to take a comprehensive view of their enrollment, resources, and trends. Through the lens of assessing assessment processes, an exemplar can be seen in the Organizational Leadership Graduate Program. After review of 2013-2017 SLO data, the OL Department met with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to modify the program's SLOs, condensing the SLOs from seven down to four to assess student learning and streamline the overall departmental assessment more effectively.

With 6 accredited associate programs, 18 baccalaureate accredited programs, and 4 graduate accredited programs across Mercyhurst's four colleges, periodic review of the institutional assessment processes related to educational effectiveness is a continual and ongoing process with 17 programmatic accreditors. The Education Department including the Graduate Secondary Education and Graduate Special Education Departments recently completed their 10-year Major Review of their 20 teacher certification programs through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The process included recommendations from the accreditor on

assessment such as revision of field placement evaluation tools and methodologies to gather data from placement LEAs. Another example of a periodic assessment evaluation within our accredited programs can be seen in the ACEN Final Report which was a focused review of the Associate Nursing program's systematic plan of evaluation, specifically the results of assessment focused on student learning outcomes. The report notes full compliance with ACEN's standards and a demonstration of student achievement on each end-of-program SLO. The report also notes that the nursing program has a current systematic program of evaluation that contains specific and measurable SLOs, appropriate assessment methods, regular intervals of assessment, and sufficient data and analysis to inform decision making on program maintenance.

The Assessment Institute is combined with Faculty Development Days to kick-off the academic year; the schedule for these days (and the Assessment Institute) is available in the MSCHE evidence as "Faculty Development Days." The scheduled Assessment Institute allows faculty and staff dedicated time to review and revise on-going assessment processes and student/course feedback. The Assessment Institute allows programs to review and revise curricula, student outcomes, and assessment processes toward improving educational effectiveness. While the primary goal of programming at the annual Assessment is to provide professional development to faculty, the Assessment Institute programming has also historically served as mechanism of evaluation of assessment processes. For example, at the 2018 Assessment Institute departments were tasked with identifying which of IDEA's 13 Global Learning Outcomes (GLOs) were most important and essential for their courses. Identification of important and essential outcomes impacts the weight and overall score related to the course and faculty evaluation. With a little over a year's worth of GLO data, the 2020 Assessment Institute programming focused on reviewing and revising department selected GLOs to ensure the assessment process was best aligned to the program's learning outcomes. To facilitate this periodical review, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness created a Hub site that contained descriptions of each GLO, tips for choosing GLOs, information on how GLO data is used in course evaluations, and suggestions for effectively sharing GLOs with students.

On a larger scale, a periodic review of our assessment procedures is a guiding principle of Mercyhurst's Strategic Plan. As mentioned in the 2018-2020 Strategic Plan Renewal Through Strength, Goal 1.5 focuses on enhancing academic systems and processes that support research informed teaching in every department across campus through the use of the results of assessment activities to continue to enhance student learning. The Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 is currently being finalized. Lastly, the current Middle States self-study process that we are currently engaged in is also an example of a periodic review of our assessment processes. This process involves the diverse perspectives and experiences of faculty, staff, and students across the University with distinct roles related to educational effectiveness to holistically review our processes to identify areas for growth.

Summary of Compliance:

As evidenced in the myriad of aforementioned assessment review processes, Mercyhurst periodically assesses the effectiveness of assessment processes at the granular department level through annual academic assessment reports and 5-year self-study processes to grander, institution evaluations as demonstrated in the strategic plan planning process, assessment institute programming, and Middle States Self-study. One recommendation would be to solidify the cycle of feedback between the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and departments submitting their assessment reports and 5-year self-study documents.

Requirements of Affiliation (related to Standard V)

ROA 1: The institution is authorized or licensed to operate as a postsecondary educational institution and to award postsecondary degrees; it provides written documentation demonstrating both.

Authorization or licensure is from an appropriate governmental organization or agency within the Middle States region (Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), as well as by other agencies as required by each of the jurisdictions, regions, or countries in which the institution operates. Institutions that offer only postsecondary certificates, diplomas, or licenses are not eligible for accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

Potential Evidence:

1. Graduate and Undergraduate Catalogs (Program Accreditations)

Summary of Evidence:

The Standard V Working Group identified a list of Program Accreditations housed within the Graduate and Undergraduate Catalogs as evidence of Mercyhurst's authorization and/or license to operate as a post-secondary educational institution. Additionally, Mercyhurst University maintains a statement of accreditation status from Middle States Commission on Higher Education with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The last reaffirmation was in 2014 with the next self-study in 2021-2022. This document articulates the accreditation status, mode of delivery, credential levels, and physical locations at which the University operates toward the educational goals and realizing the institution's mission.

Summary of Compliance: The listing of all accreditations and accreditors (with accreditor websites listed) communicates that these standards have been met and are available for public viewing.

ROA 7. The institution has a statement of mission and goals, approved by its governing body that defines its purpose within the context of higher education.

Potential Evidence:

1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values, 2019-2020 Undergraduate Catalog
2. Board of Trustees Minutes Winter 2020
3. Mission Subcommittee of the Board – Charter
4. Strategic Plan Update 2.14.20
5. Strategic Plan HUB site

Summary of Evidence:

The Standard V Working Group identified several lines of evidence to demonstrate MU provides succinct educational goals that are intertwined within our Mercy Mission on several levels. The evidence items with clearly stated educational goals of the level of the institution as

well as the departmental/programmatic level are included below. The mission statement, vision statement, and core values are detailed on page five of the 2019-2020 undergraduate course catalog and page six of the 2019-2020 graduate course catalog. The vision statement in part says “*Mercyhurst University seeks to be a leading higher education institution that integrates excellence in the liberal arts, professional and career-path programs...*”. This ties directly into the mission statement that in part says, “*where the beauty and power of the liberal arts combine with an appreciation for the dignity of work...*”. The core values of the institution are to be socially merciful, globally responsible, intellectually creative and reflectively aware. This is in coordination with the mission statement that states “*students whose choices, in life and work, will enable them to realize the human and spiritual value embedded in everyday realities and to exercise leadership in service toward a just world.*” The Mission Subcommittee of the Board of Trustees is responsible for reviewing the university’s mission statement every three to five years, according to the committee charter. The Mission is briefly reviewed at each winter subcommittee meeting.

The Strategic Plan and the update to the strategic plan 2018-2020 are clearly tied to the mission of the University. The Strategic Planning process at Mercyhurst University has been engaged twice in the last six years and has combined assessment of previous goals, analysis of the current state of the university, input from all university stakeholders, and a constant referral to the mission and values of the institution. The title of the strategic plan is *Renewal Through the Mercy Mission*. The University’s mission statement, value statement, and core values are clearly stated on page four and page five of the strategic plan. The first goal is “*Deliver a Mercyhurst education that provides students with a distinct and transformative academic experience in preparation for personal and career success while empowering them with the knowledge and attitudes to lead fulfilling, civically engaged lives.*” And is found on page six of the plan. This is consistent with the mission statement that states, “*Consistent with its Catholic identity and Mercy heritage, Mercyhurst University educates women and men in a culture where faith and reason flourish together, where the beauty and power of the liberal arts combine with an appreciation for the dignity of work and a commitment to serving others.*” Goal two found on page seven of the plan states, “*Consistent with the Mercy tradition of whole-person development, provide students with an environment that supports intellectual growth as well as spiritual, professional and personal wellbeing.*” Goal two is interrelated with the core value of being Reflectively Aware which states, “*Our Christian environment encourages self-reflection and contemplation of human behavior, promotes balance of mind, body and spirit, and ultimately offers the opportunity to develop a moral compass for a life of integrity.*” The update to the strategic plan is a 51-page document that details all of the activities that were accomplished in pursuit of the goals listed in the original strategic plan 2018-2020. While the planning and development of the Strategic Plan involves a diverse array of University constituents and stakeholders, the final approval of the plan is given by the Board of Trustees.

Summary of Compliance: The examples listed above, in the summary of evidence, support the assertion that Mercyhurst University has a statement of mission and goals, approved by its governing body that defines its purpose within the context of higher education. However, a more rigorous system of accountability should be put into place to ensure that the mission is reviewed

every 3-5 years and stated. This could be directed by the Vice President for Mission Integration, who then shares important take-aways from the review with the campus community. The detailed and robust strategic planning process has served the institution well in creating a set of mission-grounded, achievable, and assessable institutional goals.

ROA 8. The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.

Potential Evidence:

1. Mercyhurst Public Website
2. Assessment Handbook
3. Syllabi Repository
4. OIE Hub Site

Summary of Evidence:

Evidence items in this subcategory demonstrate that Mercyhurst supports assessment processes and communicates our assessment results to our stakeholders. Such evidence items include: the Assessment Handbook with processes such as the annual assessment report and the 5-year self-study; the Cease Enrollment form and Exit Interview form; the Sophomore Review processes in the Undergraduate Catalog; Program accreditation status, found within the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs; Advisory Board Reports; the Field/Clinical/Internship Evaluation Forms; and the Mercyhurst Public Website.

There is a clear annual assessment process as noted in the Assessment Handbook and referred to in V-2a. Every degree/program has student learning outcomes that are assessed on an annual basis. The results of those assessments are reported to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness via the annual assessment reports. This annual assessment report is reviewed by the associate dean of the college and if the assessment does not reach the desired goal, an Action Plan is developed and the student learning outcome is re-assessed the following year. All data collected is available in the office of Institutional Effectiveness. The 5-year Self-Study process, listed on page 13 of the Assessment Handbook, allows programs to complete a more in-depth look into the assessment of students and trend assessment data over time. The process of the 5-year self-study is clearly delineated. Some accredited programs do share this data with communities of interest, such as Advisory Boards and Accreditors. However, as it relates to V-2c, the findings of these studies are not widely communicated to external stakeholders.

All programs/departments maintain ongoing academic assessment of student learning outcomes, as detailed in the 2019 Assessment Handbook. As part of this assessment process, many programs/departments make use of Field/Clinical/Internship Evaluation Forms to gather data from students' experiential learning. As part of the on-going program/departamental assessment process Field/Clinical/Internship Evaluations Forms constitute an important component of data collection. Representative examples may be considered from the pre-licensure Nursing program (associate degree) or the Physician Assistant program (graduate degree). Ultimately, these data are used to assess student achievement of Program Learning Goals and Outcomes, the results of which are reported as part of the annual assessment reports. Clinical and Internship evaluation

forms provide critical data/information regarding student achievement during experiential learning, typically at an off-campus facility and sometimes under the supervision of a non-Mercyhurst employee.

Current program accreditations are listed in the beginning of each catalog. These range from Police Academy certification to the Physician Assistant program. Program accreditation demonstrates that programs have met specific standards set by leading authorities in the education of these students. A listing of all accreditations and accreditors (with accreditor websites listed) communicates that these standards have been met and are available for public viewing.

There are several programs/departments that maintain Advisory Boards comprised of relevant internal and external stakeholders, such as community leaders of the program's discipline. Reports are disseminated to update Board members on student achievement during annual or bi-annual meetings, conveying on-going assessment of student achievement. In the pre- and post-licensure nursing programs, for example, information such as program completion rates, licensure exam pass rates, job placement rates for graduates are shared annually at these meetings (see Nursing Advisory Board meeting minutes). As Board members and relevant stakeholders are appraised of student achievement within the program/department, they are also asked to provide feedback and recommendations as a means to continually improve student achievement of program/department learning outcomes and proficiencies.

Mercyhurst maintains a publicly available website that communicates relevant and necessary assessment of student achievement of institutional and program/departmental learning goals and outcomes. The Mercyhurst Public Website is regularly and consistently updated to make available necessary student achievement data. This information is frequently mandated by program/department accrediting agencies. Relevant examples can be seen by viewing the Department of Physician Assistant Studies website at <https://www.mercyhurst.edu/academics/graduate-programs/physician-assistant-studies/mission> and <https://www.mercyhurst.edu/academics/physician-assistant-studies/nccpa-pace-pass-rate>.

Many departments and programs outline a sophomore review process in the Undergraduate Catalog. An example of this process can be found on page 51 in the 2019-2020 Undergraduate Catalog, section on Applied Forensic Sciences. Departments who have sophomore review use it to assess student progress and achievement within the program. They then communicate these assessment findings back to each sophomore student in the program, so that they can develop an individual action plan for meeting their educational goals.

Mercyhurst University has a cease enrollment process for when a student formally declares that they are leaving the University. The process begins with an interview of the student by an Academic Support counselor. Knowing that student experiences while at college strongly influence decisions to stay or leave, the interview questions are based on 3 areas of experience: Social Integration; Academic Integration; and Institutional Action. After the interview, the Cease Enrollment form is used to gather the specific reason for withdrawal, student major, and any anticipated date of return. When complete, this information is entered into Colleague. The data

captured on the form provides important information when creating or reviewing student learning support programs. The data, through Colleague, is shared with internal stakeholders. Yet, upon interview of faculty, there doesn't seem to be a clear process of generating these reports and getting them to the program faculty for program assessment, even though there are reasons for withdrawal, such as faculty being non-responsive and academic rigor, that are essential for program assessment.

Summary of Compliance: The examples listed above, in the summary of evidence, support the assertion that Mercyhurst University systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.

ROA 9. The institution's student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.

Potential Evidence:

1. Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs
2. Syllabi Repository
3. ODL Course Development Checklists
4. Assessment Handbook
5. IDEA Evaluation

Summary of Evidence:

The Standard V Working Group several evidentiary items in congruence with ROA 9. The Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs contain clearly stated educational learning goals for each program and lay the foundation for the course structure which can be seen in syllabi found within the Syllabi Repository. Also, evidenced in course syllabi found within the Syllabi Repository are high levels of rigor, coherence, and assessment of student achievement across the associates, bachelors, and masters degree level. The adherence to rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement remains constant not only across degree levels but also across delivery modalities. Online courses that are also offered in a traditional, face-to-face modality share the same rigor, learning outcomes, etc. Additionally, online courses are required to work with the Office of Distance Learning's Instructional Designers to ensure their online course is in compliance with all learning standards set internally and externally by our accreditors. Online course instructors work with ODL to complete a Course Development Checklist to ensure full compliance. The Assessment Handbook houses descriptions and instructions related to processes for both annual program assessment and the 5-year self-study process including the identification of student learning outcomes, mapping outcomes to learning experiences (curriculum maps), and a specific timeline for assessment planning and reporting. While faculty driven, this process is supported by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). Annually, action plans are developed for student learning outcomes that do not meet the expected level of achievement set by the faculty. Soliciting student feedback after each course allows for the evaluation of goal achievement. IDEA student surveys are disseminated electronically at the end of each semester. In 2018, program

faculty reviewed the IDEA Global Learning Objectives and selected the learning objectives that are Important (I) and Essential (E) for students to meet for each program major course. After the course surveys are completed and data aggregated, faculty are provided with the results, further allowing for relevant objective progress evaluation.

Summary of Compliance: The examples listed above, in the summary of evidence, support the assertion that Mercyhurst University has student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.

ROA 10. Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.

Potential Evidence:

1. Strategic Plan

Summary of Evidence:

The Standard V Working Group identified the 2018-2020 Strategic Plan as an evidentiary item that demonstrates holistic institutional planning that integrates aspirations for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and assessment results. The 2018-2020 Strategic Plan Renewal Through Strength, Goal 1.5 focused on enhancing academic systems and processes that support research informed teaching in every department across campus through the use of the results of assessment activities to continue to enhance student learning. The Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 is currently being finalized.

Summary of Compliance: Mercyhurst's Strategic Plan demonstrates holistic institutional planning.