Assurance Argument
Central Michigan University - MI

12/11/2015

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

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

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

Argument
To ensure that students receive the highest quality education, CMU prioritizes a multi-faceted program review process to recognize the quality of existing programs and to strengthen them for the future. Expectations for student learning at both the program and course levels are established through the faculty-led curricular process, as governed by the Academic Senate Curriculum Authority Document, and are reinforced through review and accreditation by regional and specialized accrediting bodies. To complement its internal quality measures, the university maintains its Transfer Credit Policy to ensure the quality of credits it accepts in transfer from regionally accredited degree-granting colleges or universities and government-approved international institutions. The university also assesses prior learning and provides examinations for students with relevant background experiences to ensure their level of credit matches their abilities. Guided by data from multiple sources, the sum of the university’s quality assurance measures demonstrates its commitment to preparing students for employment outside of the classroom.

4.A.1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

Academic program review is a primary vehicle in a multi-faceted commitment to continuous quality improvement, extending from institutional accreditation through specialized accreditation to the review of programs and the assessment of student learning. If done well, program review can recognize quality and strengthen academic programs for the future. The program review processes includes evidence collection relative to quality, shared discussions regarding a program’s current status and future directions, and constructive feedback through peer and administrative review. As part of this process, program faculty complete a self-study that evaluates 30 program quality indicators, including assessment of student learning outcomes, the effectiveness of the capstone experience, and graduate employability. Although faculty continuously assess the effectiveness of a program when they teach and advise, program review is an opportunity for a more structured reflection that often results in program improvements.

A secondary purpose of program review is to provide information that informs decisions to alter the size of the program. Options include increasing, maintaining, or reducing the size of the program, consolidating the program, or deleting the program. Program review results in three summary ratings: program quality, modification of program size, and need for additional resources. The recommendations regarding quality and program size directly affect the resources needed for program improvement or the resources that become available to build other programs when programs are reduced, combined, or eliminated.

The Vice Provost for Academic Effectiveness meets with department chairs and program faculty the year before the scheduled review to go over the Program Review Handbook and to discuss the best way to approach the process for their unit. The self-study is the heart of the program review process as it is the vehicle for focusing conversations among faculty and other stakeholders on evidence relevant to the current status of the program and aspirations for its future.

The program faculty conduct an analysis of the internal strengths and weaknesses of the program, as well as the external opportunities and threats, and rate the program on quality, size,
and funding. An external review of the program occurs either as part of the specialized accreditation process or as part of program review. The program faculty then develop action steps for program improvement.

The self-study, library and technology surveys, external reviewer comments, program SWOT analysis, and action plan are then forwarded to the college dean and, if a graduate program, to the Vice President for Research and Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. The concluding program review discussion is with the Provost, Vice Provost, dean(s), department chair, and program leadership. Following that meeting, the Provost makes independent recommendations to address the quality and size of the program as well as required resources. Following thorough discussion of the program, the Provost writes a letter that includes a summary of program quality and the need for resources as well as a set of recommended actions for program improvement to be taken in response to the program review (Evidence: Sample Provost recommendation letters). The Provost may ask for interim reports that summarize progress on recommended actions for program improvement.

Program review is scheduled every five years, but the schedule may be adjusted to coincide with specialized accreditation reviews and visits by outside organizations as agreed upon in advance by the dean, department, and Vice Provost for Academic Effectiveness (Evidence: Program Review Schedule).

In addition, in 2010-2011, CMU engaged in academic program prioritization modeled after the process described in Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services: Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance by Robert C. Dickenson. The prioritization process began with each department providing a review of its programs utilizing both quantitative and qualitative information to evaluate each program with regard to the importance of the program, the quality of the program, the opportunity for program growth, and the opportunity for program improvement.

After discussions between departments, college advisory committees, deans and the Provost, all programs were placed into one of the five categories with a forced distribution of programs within each college:

- candidate for enrichment (10-15%),
- retained at a somewhat higher level of support (25-30%),
- retained at a neutral level of support (25-30%),
- retained but with a lower level of support (25-30%), or
- candidate for reduction, phasing out, or consolidation with another program (10-15%).

Program prioritization allowed for the comparison of one program to another based upon a common set of criteria. After much discussion, President Ross made final prioritization in Fall 2011. The investment via prioritization was $3,667,296 in new base funds plus $1,185,000 of one-time funds. In addition to those dollars, colleges were to internally fund $2,163,000 of base investments plus $2,025,000 of one-time investment. In addition, 50 programs were eliminated, put on hiatus, combined, or reconfigured, allowing for the reallocation of resources. More
information regarding the process, timeline, and criteria may be found on the strategic planning web page https://www.cmich.edu/about/Strategic_Planning/Pages/Academic-Prioritization.aspx.

4.A.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.

Transfer Credit. The CMU Transfer Credit Policy published in the Undergraduate Bulletin and on the Registrar’s website (https://www.cmich.edu/ess/registrar/RegistrarTransferCreditEquivalency/Pages/_Transfer_Credit_Equivalency_Requirements_and_Conditions.aspx) describes the transfer of credit from accredited schools and foreign institutions, non-accredited schools, military training and experience, non-military training experiences, international baccalaureate diplomas and certificates, and the 13th year of high school (Evidence: Transfer Credit Policy). It also presents the Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (MACRAO) Articulation Agreement and the new Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA) (effective Fall 2014) as well as how to deal with exceptions. Included in the Registrar’s web page is a link to the Transfer Credit Equivalency Table. Students may request an evaluation of courses not listed in the Transfer Credit Equivalency Table by contacting Undergraduate Academic Services (Evidence: Request for Credit Transfer Form).

CMU considers for transfer credit coursework from regionally accredited degree-granting colleges or universities or international credit that is approved by the government or the official regulating agency of the country in which the college or university is located. Coursework must be comparable in both nature and content to coursework offered by CMU and appropriate to the intended program of study. To be considered, courses must appear on an official transcript sent to CMU from the issuing institution. Faculty members work with the Registrar’s Office to establish whether a course is deemed equivalent to a CMU course. Courses judged to be equivalent are transferred as specific CMU courses; those not equivalent can be transferred as elective credits. There are limitations to the number of transfer credits that can be applied to a degree program and, in some cases, to a specific major. These are described in the academic bulletins and on the program web pages (see for example, chemistry major, foreign language, MBA??PDF web page of a few examples. Different colleges).

A student who transfers from a community college in Michigan with a transcript documented as having satisfied the MACRAO or MTA Agreement will also have satisfied the University Program portion of the General Education Requirements section at CMU (Evidence: MTA and MACRO Agreements). Both agreements are accepted, and both reference courses that fulfill the University Program portion of the General Education requirements, with the MTA being more restrictive in defining the courses and the minimum GPA required for transfer credit.

Global Campus publishes its undergraduate and graduate Transfer Credit Policy in the Global Campus Bulletin, which includes information about veterans’ educational benefits and how they may use transfer credit (Evidence: Transfer Policy Global Campus, Global Campus Bulletin 2015-2016, p. 35-37). Students enrolled in programs delivered by Global Campus can receive
prior learning credit for courses that did not transfer to CMU as long as the courses were completed at regionally accredited schools (see below for additional discussion).

Graduate transfer credit is evaluated and approved by the relevant academic department and awarded by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. In most cases, there is a limit to the number of transfer credits that may be counted toward a graduate degree. A copy of the Graduate Transfer Credit Policy can be found in the Graduate Bulletin (Evidence: Graduate Transfer Credit Policy, Graduate Bulletin 2015-2016, p. 55-56).

Central Michigan University has a variety of articulation agreements, including those with community colleges, domestic and international universities, tribal colleges, and United States military bases. All articulation agreements in their entirety are available on the Agreements web page. The agreements database is searchable by country, state, program, purpose, college, agency, and effective dates (Evidence: Agreements Database Search). In addition, the Reverse Transfer Agreements are available on the Registrar’s web pages, and the Transfer Curriculum Guides are available on the Admissions Office’s web pages (Evidence: Transfer Credit Guide - Example Alpena CC for Athletic Training).

All articulation agreements clearly show the equivalency of prescribed coursework that transfers to CMU. These agreements ensure transferability of credit and uninterrupted continuity of the student’s program. They are regularly updated as requirements change. Several offices, including Admissions, Office of International Affairs, Global Campus, and academic departments, collaborate to develop the articulation agreements.

Advanced Standing by Examination. Undergraduate students may be granted credit at CMU by earning high scores on the following specified examinations: Advanced Placement (AP), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), and International Baccalaureate. Credit can be earned in some CMU classes by AP examination. A table in the Undergraduate Bulletin shows approved AP examinations paired with the CMU courses in which credit is granted for a minimum score of three to five depending upon the content area. The courses are approved by individual academic departments and are subject to change (Evidence: Accepted Advanced Placement Program Examinations, Undergraduate Bulletin 2015-2016, p. 74).

The College Level Examination Program (CLEP) sponsored by the College Board affords current and prospective students the opportunity to demonstrate their academic proficiency at the freshman and sophomore levels in various general areas and in specific subjects. Policies concerning the use of CLEP General Examinations at Central Michigan University are developed and controlled by the Academic Senate. The minimum scores for CLEP Subject Examinations are determined by the department authorizing credit for the subject. When a student submits evidence of achievement by CLEP, this evidence will be evaluated by the Registrar’s Office, with credit being granted in appropriate areas. A table in the Undergraduate Bulletin shows approved CLEP subject examinations paired with the CMU course in which credit is granted for a score at the 50th percentile or higher. The courses are approved by individual academic departments and are subject to change (Evidence: College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), Undergraduate Bulletin 2015-2016, p. 75).
High school students may be able to receive credit through the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme. IB examination scores should be sent from the IB Office directly to Undergraduate Admissions for evaluation. Strong scores on IB Higher Level examinations may allow for course waiver or course credit. A table in the Undergraduate Bulletin shows International Baccalaureate course name, exam level, score, and CMU equivalent. (Evidence: International Baccalaureate, Undergraduate Bulletin 2015-2016, p. 76). Additional IB course content and examinations are under review by departments.

**Credit by Examination.** A regularly matriculated student who has had experience or background comparable to a course at the university may file for Credit by Examination in a specific CMU course. Certain restrictions, articulated in the Undergraduate Bulletin, ensure that there is no duplication of credit, that credit has not been earned for a higher-level course, and that this credit is not used to improve or replace a grade. Very few students avail themselves of this option.

Credit by Examination forms are available in the Registrar’s Office. The completed form is to be submitted to the appropriate department chairperson. If the department chairperson approves the course for Credit by Examination, an instructor will be assigned to give the examination, and the student will be directed to pay for the course and submit the approved form to the Registrar’s Office. Credit by Examination, when graded, carries point values as other courses do. Credit by Examination in courses offered only on the Credit/No Credit basis do not carry point values and count only as earned hours. Semester hours earned by Credit by Examination do not apply to meet any of the hours required in residence.

**Foreign Language Placement/Retroactive Credit.** Students who have had French, German, or Spanish in high school and want to continue the study of that language at CMU must take a placement exam in that language before registering for classes. Only those who have had no previous experience in the foreign language may enroll in 101 without taking the placement exam. Students with CMU or other college-level credit in the language do not have to take the placement exam. After completing the course and earning credit, students have the opportunity to earn retroactive credit. Students who enroll in a course beyond the beginning 101 course, such as the lower-level courses 102, 201, or 202 or a course beyond 202 (FRN 315 or 316, GER 311 or 312, or SPN 214 or 331), and receive a grade of B (3.0) or better are eligible for up to 8 hours of retroactive credit. To qualify, students must be enrolled at the level determined by their score on the placement exam, or at a higher level.

**Prior Learning Credit at CMU.** CMU has developed a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) process and assembled a team of regular faculty to evaluate portfolios submitted for college credit. CMU recognizes the value of adult experiential learning and offers the opportunity for students to obtain academic credit for that learning (Evidence: Prior Learning Assessment Briefing, http://global.cmich.edu/prior-learning/handbook.aspx). Much of the personal and professional development of adult students may have occurred outside the traditional academic classroom. Academic credit may be awarded for learning resulting from career and personal experiences; job-related activities; extensive hobbies, travel, and foreign residency; community service; and training received through on-the-job instruction, self-study, or specialized schooling. CMU’s prior learning model is based on “competencies” rather than course “equivalents,” but the credit awarded may be applied to students’ degree program (usually as elective credits).
Unlike transfer credit, the competency model for prior learning allows students to earn credit in areas of college-level learning regardless of whether CMU offers any specific courses in those areas. All graduate and undergraduate students admitted to CMU and enrolled in a degree program offered through CMU Global Campus are eligible for prior learning credit. (Note: Students enrolled in programs offered only on campus are not currently eligible for prior learning credit, which we recognize is a problem). To be applied to a program plan, prior learning must be directly related to the degree being pursued. Credit from prior learning may not be used to meet any University Program or competency requirement.

For assessment purposes, students’ prior learning experiences are categorized into three areas: (a) work experiences (based on employment positions), (b) training experiences (e.g., workshops or classes taken to enhance learning and professional development), and (c) life experiences (less formal, volunteer-type interests and activities that are of substantial duration and have resulted in college-level learning). For any of these types of learning to be considered for credit, students must develop a portfolio that explains and documents the experiences and the competencies acquired. Key in this process is students’ self-assessment, which explains the learning that occurred through the experiences (Evidence: Prior Learning Portfolio Undergraduate Sample, Prior Learning Portfolio Graduate Sample).

Eligibility for prior-learning credit, the types and levels of credit awarded, the number of possible credits, and the mechanisms for evaluation and verification of the information in the portfolios is all found in the Prior Learning Student Handbook and Prior Learning Assessment Team Manual (Evidence: Prior Learning Student Handbook and Prior Learning Assessment Team Manual).

4.A.3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

The Transfer Credit Policy ensures the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer (Evidence: Transfer Credit Equivalency Requirements and Conditions). CMU will consider for transfer credit an undergraduate course from another college and/or university that is accredited by the regional institutional accrediting associations, from a foreign university, a college approved by the government, or the official regulating agency of the country in which the university or college is located, subject to the following conditions:

- Courses must be germane to a program at Central Michigan University;
- Only transfer courses completed with a grade of C- or better or the equivalent will be accepted; and
- Credits from foreign institutions are accepted using the guidelines developed by the World Education Series of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and in consultation with the affected departments.

All applications for undergraduate transfer credits are evaluated by the Registrar’s Office. The staff ensures when granting a new credit transfer that all policies and procedures approved by the university are followed. For example, the Registrar’s Office verifies that the course was taken at an accredited institution and that the student has earned the minimum grade required. All changes to the university transfer credit policies are submitted to the Degrees, Admissions,
Standards and Honors committee (DASH), and Academic Senate committee for approval. Students must appeal through the Board of Appeals to receive transfer credit from a non-regionally accredited institution. Before making a decision, the Board of Appeals consults with the appropriate academic department. Finally, the graduation audit includes an audit of transfer credit and verification that the credits are allowed on the major and that the number of credits does not exceed any limitations set by the department. All undergraduate audits are performed by the Registrar’s Office, and all graduate audits are performed by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

4.A.4. **The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.**

*Faculty Authority Over Curriculum Quality.* CMU faculty control the curricular process that ensures course and program rigor, as governed by the Academic Senate Curriculum Authority Document (CAD). As described in 3.A.1, all new courses and programs (CAD, p. 6) and all course and program modifications (CAD, p. 12) proceed through the curricular process as outlined in the CAD, which specifies committee review at the department, college, Academic Senate curricular review committee, and Academic Senate levels. In addition, new programs are reviewed by the Academic Planning Council (APC). Each Master Course Syllabus follows a standard format that describes the course, prerequisites, co-requisites, recommended courses and/or experiences, rationale for course level, materials and other requirements, typical instructional formats, course objectives, an outline of topics, and typical methods for student evaluation to ensure the academic rigor of the course (Evidence: Example Master Course Syllabus ANT231, Master Course Syllabus Guidelines). Prerequisites are enforced through the course enrollment system.

*Faculty Determine Student Learning Outcomes.* Expectations for student learning exist at both the program and course levels and are evaluated through the Assessment and Program Review processes as well as through specialized accreditation for some programs. Program goals are set by faculty when the program is first proposed. The annual assessment reporting provides an opportunity for faculty to review the goals outlined in their assessment plan. As part of program review, the faculty describe the relevance of the program purpose and goals and tie the program goals to the university and college mission. In addition, they review their programs in relation to those at peer institutions.

Program goals are linked to student learning outcomes in the assessment management system, WEAVEonline. The Policy on Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (Evidence: Student Learning Outcomes Policy) outlines the assessment process, links the assessment of student learning outcomes to program review, describes the roles of faculty and administration in the process, and sets the process timeline. All graduate programs, undergraduate majors, independent minors and certificates, the General Education Program, and the Honors Program are required to develop assessment plans and to engage actively in yearly assessment activities. The Assessment Council, an Academic Senate committee composed of faculty and staff from
Across campus, oversees the assessment process and reviews program assessment plans and reports.

**Access to Learning Resources.** As stated in criterion 3.D.1. CMU’s teaching and learning infrastructure includes backbone services such as the technology and library infrastructures and is available to all students independent of location. Additional spaces and resources that support individual programs of study are available as needed. Many program-related resources, such as museums and performance spaces, enhance the cultural environment for students and the broader community. Others, such as specialty clinics, deliver needed services to the CMU students, faculty, and staff as well as the community at large. Collectively, these resources promote learning and provide places where students gain practical experience. All resources are administered and supported financially by the university.

**Institutional Control of Faculty Qualifications.** CMU requires all faculty to meet the criteria outlined in the HLC Assumed Practice B.2., Faculty Roles and Qualifications (Evidence: HLC Assumed Practices Policy). These qualifications are outlined in the CMU-FA Agreement, where it states that an instructor must have an earned terminal degree or equivalent for appointment to the tenure track. Schools and departments determine the credentials and experience required for individual positions by following procedures described in their bylaws (Example Bylaws), screening applicants, and forwarding their interview choices for approval by their dean and Faculty Personnel Services (who verifies qualifications against position announcements). All regular faculty must submit academic transcripts and credentials at the time of their initial hire for review by Faculty Personnel Services (Evidence: Faculty Hiring Guidelines, Faculty Hiring Process for Hiring Managers, Regular New Faculty Appointment Checklist, Sample Regular Faculty Appointment Letter).

Fixed-term faculty members and teaching post-doctoral fellows are appointed by the dean of the appropriate college after receiving a recommendation from the appropriate department chair, with the concurrence of the Executive Vice President/Provost or designee. Part-time temporary faculty members teaching through Global Campus are reviewed for individual course approvals by the appropriate academic department chair or review committee. In accordance with the CMU-FA Agreement (Article 26), approvals are granted for one-time-only, one-year, or three-year periods.

Central Michigan University does not offer dual credit classes.

**4.A.5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.**

Central Michigan University discloses the relationship with all regional and specialized accrediting bodies on the Academic Effectiveness web pages (Evidence: Accreditation Affiliations) and in the online and paper Graduate, Undergraduate, and Global Campus Bulletins (Evidence: Accreditation Undergraduate Bulletin 2015-2016, p. 5; Accreditation Graduate Bulletin 2015-2016, p. 11; Accreditation Global Campus Bulletin 2015-2016, p. 6).
Twenty-five CMU programs have also been reviewed and are accredited by one or more specialized accrediting organizations. All accredited programs report their accreditation status on their web page and in the academic bulletins. The most recent action letter and comprehensive evaluation report for each specialized accrediting agency are linked to the Table of Specialized Accreditation and to the agency abbreviation below (Evidence: Specialized Accreditation Table). The Table of Specialized Accreditation has links to the accreditation letter and final report from the accrediting agency.

All programs are fully accredited and in good standing except the Master of Science in Physician Assistant, which is on probation by the ARC-PA. CMU has provided a communication plan and is making good progress addressing the areas of concern. The written response to the accreditation citations was due to ARC-PA October 2, 2015 (include link to document). A site visit followed in December 2015. We have been working closely with a consultant from the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) and with the ARC-PA leadership. CMU fully expects to successfully meet all criteria and be awarded full accreditation in the spring of 2016.

The program leading to the Doctor of Medicine is new and is moving through the process toward full accreditation by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). The CMU program has been granted preliminary status by the LCME and is undergoing review for provisional accreditation. Full accreditation is not granted until the first class of students is in its final year of the program, which will be 2016-2017.

4.A.6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Because the heart of CMU’s mission statement is to prepare students for productive careers, the university places a strong emphasis on preparing students both in and outside the classroom. CMU uses data from many sources, including those available from national associations and those specific to our students, to develop curricular and co-curricular programming that prepares students for employment upon completion of their degrees.

Employment Surveys. CMU conducts two annual assessments of recent graduates to understand and continuously enhance services that help to prepare students for gainful employment. The First Destination Survey monitors where recent baccalaureate graduates are working or studying after graduation (Evidence: First Destination Surveys: 2004-2014 graduates), and the Employer Satisfaction Survey monitors employer satisfaction in concurrence with the skills of CMU graduates. Academic departments throughout campus utilize the findings to inform future practice.

The 2013-2014 First Destination Survey resulted in the following key points among recent graduates (six months post-graduation):
• 58% of students were employed full-time and 15% were employed part-time
• 14% of students were enrolled, pursing an advanced degree
• 9% of students were unemployed and seeking employment

These findings are similar to what has been found over the past ten years: employed full-time has ranged from 58%-61%, pursuing an advanced degree has ranged from 11%-24%, and unemployed has ranged from 9%-15% (First Destination and Employment Surveys, 2004-2014). When asked how closely connected the current positions of the alumni are to their academic majors at CMU, more than half of all respondents (51.3%) reported that they are “directly related,” whereas nearly one-third of respondents (28.9%) indicated “moderately or somewhat related.” Only 19.8% indicated that their current employment position is not related to their academic majors. Over the past ten years the majority of students (80%-90%) reported that their current position was somewhat, moderately, or directly related to their academic major (First Destination and Employment Surveys, 2004-2014). Furthermore, 70% of survey respondents indicated that their academic studies at CMU have prepared them either “exceptionally” or “moderately” well for their current jobs (Evidence: First-Destination Survey Summary Dec 2013 May 2014 graduates).

Additionally, numerous departments have undertaken alumni surveys on their own, either as part of their program review efforts or as part of their assessment of student learning. For example, 84% of geology graduates in the past five years are employed in their field or entered graduate school, 70% of the electrical engineering graduates and 98% of the mechanical engineering graduates in the past three years are employed in their field, and 97% of the students graduating from the masters programs in chemistry/biochemistry are employed or in graduate programs. The Academic Senate’s Assessment Council provides grants to departments to offset the costs associated with these data gathering efforts. In recent years, departments as diverse as Foreign Languages Literatures and Cultures, History, Social Work, and Athletic Training have undertaken these kinds of alumni surveys to learn about the employment success and graduate school activities of recent graduates. These data are included in the assessment report and are used to inform program improvement.

In addition, as part of their CAEP (formerly TEAC) accreditation efforts, alumni with BS in Education degrees are surveyed when they are one year and three years distant from graduation, and alumni from graduate programs in education are interviewed in the year after their graduation. A survey of Michigan principals is also administered annually to learn of their satisfaction with the performance of CMU graduates with BS in Education degrees. Global Campus surveys its alumni annually. Their Michigan graduates, including students who are in exclusively online programs, are also interviewed by telephone approximately six months after their graduation.

License and Certification Testing. An important form of assessment for a subset of CMU programs has been students’ performance on certification and licensing exams given to new practitioners. Academic Effectiveness maintains records of specialized accreditations held by CMU and certification exams that are available to students graduating from CMU programs (Evidence: Specialized Accreditation Table). These assessments provide CMU with standardized data regarding student performance that lend themselves to comparative
benchmarking. Validation of program content through these professional bodies and standardized examinations provides clear measures of program success in meeting external standards. Using pass rates as the criterion, there are a number of CMU programs that do well, including teacher education and health professions programs.

Graduates of Michigan’s teacher preparation programs must pass a certification exam in their field of specialization in order to become certified to teach. Data regarding teacher preparation programs are collected, analyzed, and benchmarked against other Michigan institutions every year. The performance of CMU students is regularly assessed against the goals and standards of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and against other relevant standards involving alumni, employers, practitioners, and community partners in improving program elements and processes. CMU receives results for all students taking the Michigan Test of Teacher Certification (MTTC) by subject area tested, major or minor, and test date. These results are reviewed at many levels by the Professional Education Unit faculty, staff, advisors, and the Dean of the College of Education and Human Services. In addition, these test results must be addressed in the annual program assessment reports, program review of all programs leading to the Bachelor of Science in Education, and CAEP (previously, TEAC) accreditation self-study. Curricular changes are made as a result of campus analyses of the certification results as well as feedback received from the Michigan Department of Education’s periodic review of CMU’s education programs.

Pass rates on all licensure exams are presented on the program websites. Central Michigan University students and graduates often exceed national averages on licensure exams (Evidence: table of links and results).

Participation in Fellowships (N/A), Internships, and Special Programs. Another indicator that graduate programs prepare students for employment is placement rates in internships required prior to licensure exams. For example, the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program has an excellent track record of students obtaining APA-accredited pre-doctoral internships. Over the past four years, 19 of 21 applicants matched (91%) at APA-accredited sites compared to the national average of 75% (Clinical Psychology Internship Placement Table). A geology graduate currently is a land steward with Americorps and another is applying for the Americorps program as a master's student at Michigan State University.

Sources

There are no sources.

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

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

Argument

Guided by the framework of CMU’s Academic Senate Policy on Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, each academic department and unit comprising the university’s 324 programs demonstrates its commitment to educational achievement and improvement by developing and implementing comprehensive assessment plans founded on clearly stated goals for student learning. Faculty and staff preparing annual assessment reports receive financial and personnel assistance from the Assessment Council and College Assessment Coordinators, and CMU’s Student Learning Outcomes Policy serves to outline the facets and level of rigor expected of assessment. Biannually, faculty and staff prepare assessment narratives that link their findings to achievement targets and measures associated with student learning outcomes in an effort to inform subsequent actions for program improvements.

4.B.1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

Student Learning Outcomes. Central Michigan University’s departments and units have established clearly stated goals for student learning for each of the 324 programs (excluding minors and certificates directly associated with majors or like minors). The faculty and staff within these programs are responsible for assessing their programs by establishing assessment plans containing mission statements, program learning goals, student learning outcomes, direct and indirect measures, and achievement targets. (Evidence: Developing a Program Assessment Plan). The framework for these assessment plans is established by CMU’s Academic Senate Policy on Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (Evidence: Policy on Student Learning Outcomes Assessment). Assessment plans are stored electronically in CMU’s assessment management system, currently WEAVEonline, a web-based assessment management system that consolidates accreditation, assessment, planning, and quality improvement processes across all academic and administrative units to allow greater dissemination of assessment data among faculty and staff.
All undergraduate students complete the General Education program as part of their degree requirements. **Specific learning outcomes** are detailed for each of the University Program subgroups and for the Competencies ([Evidence: Basic Document Set](#)). The General Education program is assessed using a series of widely available assessment measures such as NSSE and the CLA, along with a new system of directly assessing samples of student work derived on a rotating basis from the General Education subgroups. In addition, university-wide programs such as the Honors Program also have articulated student-learning outcomes and assessment plans.

**Assessment Process.** The **Assessment Council**, a committee of the Academic Senate, oversees the assessment processes. The charge of the Assessment Council includes recommending policies to the Academic Senate, communicating assessment plan status to departments and units, developing formats for yearly summary reports, reviewing and approving requests for funding of assessment projects, and developing and maintaining the presence of assessment as the defining element of CMU, including recognizing faculty and units making significant contributions to learning outcomes assessment. In addition, the Assessment Council in collaboration with the Office of Curriculum and Assessment develops effective processes based on these policies ([Evidence: Assessment Council Charge](#)).

CMU’s **Policy on Student Learning Outcomes Assessment** ([Evidence: Student Learning Outcomes Policy](#)), part of the Academic Senate’s CAD, governs assessment practices at CMU outlining the responsibilities of programs/departments/units/interdisciplinary councils/academic offices as well as deans/Provost/President and the Assessment Council. In addition, this policy provides guidelines for the use of assessment data as well as timing associated with CMU’s assessment cycle. Assessment processes for assessment plan revisions, submission of annual assessment reports, and the evaluation of annual assessment reports are consistent with the senate’s assessment policy. Faculty access these processes through the assessment portion of the **Academic Effectiveness website** ([Evidence: PDF of Academic Effectiveness website](#)).

**4.B.2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.**

CMU assesses achievement of the learning outcomes through the submission of annual assessment reports ([Evidence: Annual Assessment Reporting](#)). Each curricular program subject to assessment requirements collects assessment data and submits their findings directly linked to student learning outcomes. In addition, each finding is linked to an achievement target and measure associated with the student learning outcome. Achievement targets are defined as the overall level for satisfactory performance on a measure-outcome combination. Faculty and staff update the status of each achievement target according to the following criteria: Not Met, Met, Partially Met, or Not Assessed this Cycle. Findings often contain a brief narrative explaining the target status. As a result of the findings and achievement target status, faculty and staff in the program faculty use the findings to draw conclusions and make discoveries of student learning within their programs that later lead to subsequent actions.

This annual reporting of assessment activities is overseen by the Assessment Council and the College Assessment Coordinators (faculty or staff who are assigned to each college to assist faculty with program assessment). The Director of Curriculum and Assessment maintains a list
of all programs and the status of both their assessment plans and their annual assessment reports. Each report is reviewed by the relevant College Assessment Coordinator and by one Assessment Council member. A letter, endorsed by the Assessment Council, is written by the College Assessment Coordinator to the relevant department chair and faculty acknowledging the receipt of the assessment report and providing commentary on both the strengths and weaknesses of the program’s assessment activities. The College Assessment Coordinators meet with departments or interdisciplinary councils at least once each year. Notes from the annual meeting, along with the yearly letter, are forwarded to the relevant dean, the Vice Provost for Academic Effectiveness, and the Provost. Coordinators are asked, as well, to schedule a meeting with the dean to review highlights of the college’s assessment activities.

CMU is actively involved in the process of creating co-curricular learning outcomes. In 2015, the university started a review process with an external evaluator to help identify opportunities for the establishment of a leadership framework to help guide the formation of learning outcomes to bridge a strategic curricular and co-curricular alignment of learning goals, intended outcomes, and the respective measures. This work is ongoing and reflects an area where CMU continues to focus as a part of continued improvement.

4.B.3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

After reporting the findings and achievement target status in WEAVE annually, faculty and staff in the program use the findings to draw conclusions and make discoveries about student learning within their programs that inform subsequent actions. In fact, programs are asked both to report the actions that they have already taken to improve student learning and to discuss the steps that they expect to take in the future. This narrative, which should be based on extensive discussion among program faculty, is now reported biannually, with a five-year summary included in program review. The biannual reporting (a recent change in the assessment policy from an annual reporting requirement) is welcomed by program faculty who found that the yearly reporting of actions taken to improve programs did not allow either for adequate reflection on assessment findings or for the processing of curricular or pedagogical changes implied by assessment data. Including the five-year summary in program review documents strengthens the link between assessment and program review and highlights the role that assessment plays in ensuring program quality.

The biannual assessment report includes answers to four analysis questions. Analysis question 1 is specifically directed toward the dissemination of the findings and helps to maximize faculty participation, as discussed below (4.C.5). Departments and interdisciplinary councils must share assessment information with constituencies, including students, and promote conversation among faculty and staff of the implications of assessment for program improvement. It is expected that departments will post, at a minimum, their current detailed assessment reports on their department/program websites. Programs are strongly encouraged to share findings with multiple stakeholders such as alumni, donors, internship sponsors, etc. Analysis questions 2 through 4 prompt programs to establish conclusions regarding student learning based on the findings reported, plan subsequent actions, and report on actions taken since the previous report.
4.B.4. The institution’s processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Central Michigan University engages in processes and methodologies that reflect good practice when assessing student learning by conducting a rigorous review of assessment plans and annual reports (as outlined in CMU’s Student Learning Outcomes Policy), providing support for faculty and staff professional development, providing financial resources for the development of assessment tools and data collection, embedding assessment in institutional processes such as program review, disseminating assessment information broadly, encouraging faculty ownership of assessment initiatives, and providing incentives for using assessment data to improve student learning (Evidence ).

CMU utilizes personnel specifically assigned to assist faculty and staff with assessment practices. These personnel, referred to as College Assessment Coordinators (Coordinators), are responsible for assisting faculty and staff with assessment plan development, including the mission, goals, student learning outcomes, measures, targets, and curriculum maps. Coordinators review and pre-approve assessment plans prior to referring plans to the Director of Curriculum and Assessment for placement on the Assessment Council meeting agenda; analyze assessment plans to determine potential challenges that may hinder the data collection process; assist in the collection and analysis of assessment-related data; assist faculty/staff with inputting, organizing, and reporting assessment data in WEAVEonline; coordinate one-on-one training of the WEAVEonline program as needed with faculty and staff; help to resolve assessment-related problems and issues; communicate timelines and approval processes to faculty/staff working on assessment-related activities; attend department and college meetings as requested to communicate and assist with assessment-related information; attend Assessment Council meetings; present recommendations to enhance assessment activities to the Director of Curriculum and Assessment, Interim Vice Provost, and/or Assessment Council; and report challenges with meeting timelines or project objectives related to assessment to the Director of Curriculum and Assessment.

The Assessment Council, with the support of Academic Effectiveness, makes available limited financial resources to assist faculty and staff with activities associated with student learning outcomes assessment at the program level. The goals of these activities are to develop sound learning outcomes assessment practices at the program level, encourage professional development associated with program-level outcomes assessment, and to strengthen the infrastructure for the scholarship of teaching and learning. Funding is available for assessment-related activities directly related to the program’s outcomes assessment plan, curricular design, program structure and pedagogy, attendance at conferences, seminars or workshops, support for a faculty retreat, support for an external expert, and the purchase of books or other published materials related to assessment. In addition, funding is also available to support faculty and staff who are presenting at a state, regional, or national conference on student learning assessment.

Faculty ownership of assessing student learning is encouraged through the Academic Senate Student Learning Outcomes Policy, Assessment Council, Provosts, Deans, and Department Chairs as well as specialized accrediting agencies. In addition, the language crafted in the SLO
policy encourages faculty to assume ownership in order to develop a positive culture. For instance, “A positive culture of assessment requires the input of multiple stakeholders, especially faculty and students. Assessment is a collaborative effort that fosters effective student learning, curriculum enhancement, and program development. A positive culture of assessment should NOT be a punitive-oriented process for students, faculty, or programs/units” (Student Learning Outcomes Policy; Appendix E, Section 1B).

The Provost Assessment Incentive Award encourages faculty to demonstrate how they have used assessment data to improve an academic program or student success. The award is given yearly to programs that can demonstrate that they have gathered assessment data over multiple years and have used those data to guide program improvement (for example, course redesign), the revision of curriculum, incorporation of technology, or the revision to admission, retention, and/or completion criteria.

Substantial participation of faculty is demonstrated through the various processes and assessment activities such as assessment planning, assessment plan revisions, annual assessment reporting, departmental and college meetings, annual assessment feedback meetings, CMU assessment workshops hosted by faculty, Provost Assessment Award Winner discussion panels, new faculty assessment orientation, assessment newsletters, and faculty and staff representation at the IUPUI Assessment Institute Conference. In fact, programs are asked explicitly to report on the ways in which assessment information has been disseminated. The assumption is that reporting is widespread among faculty. Revisions to the assessment policy in 2015 include a mandate that assessment reports be made available on department websites. Discussion is on going in the Assessment Council about how these websites will be crafted (without creating an unnecessary burden for departments).

The Professional Education Unit is an entity comprised of faculty and staff who apply time and resources to oversee aspects of professional education programs. The PEU is recognized by Central Michigan University as one of many components in the university structure. The PEU utilizes a long-standing committee structure for governance on teacher education. The committees are as follows: Professional Education Executive Board (PEEB), Clinical Partnership and Practice Committee (CPPC), Professional Education Assessment Committee (PEAC), Professional Education Curriculum Committee (PECC), and Professional Education Selection, Admission, and Retention Committee. The responsibilities of the PEAC include providing leadership in the development and ongoing monitoring of an assessment system for the professional education programs as a whole that satisfies CAEP standards, Michigan Department of Education requirements, and complements the ongoing program majors (e.g., Mathematics Major on the B.S. in Ed Degrees) or specific professional preparation degree programs (e.g., Bachelor of Music Education). In addition, PEAC regularly engages faculty members in the professional education programs to analyze and discuss assessment findings, make recommendations for actions to enhance assessment activities, and recommend revisions to curriculum and programs based on assessment results. Lastly, PEAC, PECC and the Professional Education Selection, Admission and Retention Committee (PESAR) communicate and collaborate with one another on an ongoing basis to ensure dissemination of assessment information.
Sources

There are no sources.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Argument

CMU utilizes both current and historical data to ensure that the five-year goals of its Strategic Plan promote student retention and increase four- and six-year graduation rates. Instrumental in this effort is the Office of Institutional Research, whose methodologies in conducting internal studies and collecting and analyzing information from a variety of sources reflects the university’s commitment to best practices in alignment with IPEDS definitions. Furthermore, the Office of Student Success was created to actively utilize predictive analytics in an effort to identify at-risk students and provide outreach to those students. These data also inform the ongoing process of internal program review, providing further assurance that CMU’s practices and educational offerings are appropriate to its mission and conducive to student success.

4.C.1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
Student Retention, Persistence, and Completion Goals. Central Michigan University has clearly defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion as a part of the overall University Strategic Plan (Evidence: Strategic Plan) and the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (2013-2015) (Evidence: Strategic Enrollment Management Plan). The Strategic Plan five-year goals are ambitious and attainable as they were derived from historic CMU trends in comparison to our Peer Group (Evidence: peer group from OIR website) and other similar institutions. Strategic Priority 1, Student Success, metrics include the following goals:

- Improve freshman to sophomore retention rate to 80%.
- Increase the four-year graduation rate of first-time, full-time students to 25%, and
- Increase the six-year graduation rate of first-time, full-time students to 63%.

These goals were extended to post-traditional undergraduate part-time students completing coursework through online and off-site programs in the Enrollment Management Plan to the following:

- Improve freshman to sophomore retention rate to 64%.
- Increase the four-year graduation rate of first-time, full-time students to 32%, and
- Increase the six-year graduation rate of first-time, full-time students to 43%.

These goals are appropriate to CMU’s core mission of the pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, discovery, and creativity in that to reach the goals, programs and initiatives must be implemented that increase students’ likelihood for success. Below are strategies implemented to affect these goals.

4.C.2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

CMU’s Office of Institutional Research (OIR) and Division of Enrollment and Student Services (ESS) collect and analyze information from admissions, advising, student activities, student feedback surveys and enrollment reporting, benchmarking, program completion, and progress analysis to inform support services and develop retention initiatives. The university actively utilizes predictive analytics to identify students who may be at risk for retention and completion and actively engages in outreach to those students. In addition, OIR completes studies related to institutional programming and events to understand their possible effect on student persistence. These reports are completed on a regular basis to inform decision-making and practice. All OIR reports exist on the internal file-sharing network. Through the Director of OIR, information from these reports are disseminated across campus to key groups including the Academic Senate, Council of Deans, Council of Chairs, Senior Leadership Team, Enrollment Management Committee, Presidents Cabinet, Board of Trustees, and various other groups. Below are several examples of reports generated by OIR:

- **Risk Factors Analysis** that uses admissions data pertaining to academic performance prior to enrollment to identify those students who are at risk for attrition. These analyses of predicted performance based on incoming student academic history are completed for
both new first-year students and new transfer students. OSS runs this report each fall to identify students at risk (Evidence: Risk Factors summary _1_30_14.pdf). The findings of this report were reported to the Academic Senate, Senior Leadership, and to the Enrollment Management Committee. ESS adopted the findings and developed the “Elevated Risk Campaign” to aid identification, early engagement, and ongoing support for the students with elevated risk of attrition before degree attainment (Evidence: elevated risk campaign, docx).

- Retention and Completion of First Time Freshmen as a function of gender, ethnicity, and entering academic profile (Evidence: On IR site).
- Retention and Completion of New Transfers as a function of entry class level, type of transfer institution, number of transfer credits, and transfer GPA (Evidence: Complete but not posted to OIR website).
- Persistence and Graduation by Program for Undergraduate Students (Evidence: On IR site).
- Persistence and Graduation by Program for Master’s Students (Evidence: Complete but not posted on OIR).
- Persistence and Graduation by Program for Ph.D. Students (Evidence: Complete but not posted on OIR).
- Degrees Conferred by Program that includes gender, ethnicity, age, admission category, years to graduation, credits at graduation, degree, with honors, multiple majors, on vs. off campus (Evidence: On IR site).
- Peer Comparisons of a number of variables, including enrollment, retention, and graduation statistics (Evidence: On IR site).
- Analyses of Course Grades and DEW rates - An annual report of course grades with a calculated rate of students who receive grades of a D or E or W (Withdraw) from the class (termed the DEW rate). These reports are used to determine courses that students typically find challenging and in which they often struggle (Evidence: On IR site).
- CMU is also a member of the Consortium for Student Retention and Data Exchange (CSRDE). OIR uses comparisons with other similar schools participating in the exchange to assess CMU’s retention performance (Evidence: On IR site).
- Impact of student participation in club sports and student activities on persistence (Evidence: Complete but not posted).

The Office of Student Success (OSS) uses data dashboards to track various aspects of student performance, including progress toward degree, GPA, attempted and earned credit hours, and students who are expected to reenroll but have not registered for the next term (Evidence: pdf of https://cmudashboards.cmich.edu/Dashboards/Enrollment%20Retention/Summary.asp x). CMU also implemented Talisma, a constituent relationship management software to aid recruitment, admissions, and case management for advising and support services. Talisma is the case management solution actively utilized by the Global Campus unit and Undergraduate Admissions. Development of the platform for use with support offices
including the Office of Student Success and Academic Advising and Assistance is in process, with tentative implementation scheduled for Fall 2016.

4.C.3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

Central Michigan University uses information on enrollment, student retention, changing demographics, persistence rates among student populations, and program completion information to make strategic decisions about resource allocations and programming.

OIR has conducted an analysis of transfer students that should be leading to changes in how new entering transfer students are advised (Evidence: power point of analysis of transfer students). This analysis is the first at CMU conducted to determine the impact of the number of transfer credits, transfer GPA, first-generation status, Pell Grant eligibility, and full-/part-time student status on transfer student success. Findings suggest outreach to transfer students with less than a 2.4 GPA and less than 50 credit hours is necessary and may be effective (Evidence: Factors that Impact Transfer Success.pptx).

Each year, OIR conducts a study of the impact of Leadership Safari (Evidence: Analysis of Camp Safari 05-14.docx). The purpose of this analysis is to determine the participation rate, demographics of participants, and the unique contribution of participation controlling for differences in aptitude on retention and GPA. This analysis shows a positive impact and is the basis for the continuation of the program.

OIR conducted a study of the impact of intramural sports and Student Activities Center usage on retention. Data indicate students who participate in intramural sports or use the SAC tend to retain at a higher rate and have a higher average first-term GPA than non-users (Evidence: UREC REPORT.docx).

The Office of Student Success (OSS) was created to actively utilize predictive analytics and implement an intensive success coaching/advising model to support early and ongoing success in the progress toward improved four-year degree completion rates among undergraduate students enrolled on the main campus. Students enrolled online or at one of the off-site locations receive advising and support through CMU’s Global Campus.

OSS and Global Campus professionals use data to identify students at risk in all stages of progression toward graduation starting from the time a student becomes a paid admit (i.e., when a student pays the orientation fee, which implies intention to enroll. Below is a list of campaigns that were designed to support students at different stages as they navigate their path toward degree completion.

- To begin to foster the connection to new students, a Melt Campaign was initiated for all paid admits. This campaign is designed to engage the student, starting with an email communication about what it takes to be successful in college (Evidence: Melt communications). Paid admits are given monthly email contacts and at least three phone calls before the start of classes in the fall. OSS then uses a set of dashboards to identify
students for phone outreach who have paid the orientation fee but not secured housing and those who have secured housing but not paid the orientation fee (Evidence: need address of dashboard and at least one screen shot).

- All paid admits must attend an orientation event in the college that houses their intended major. Within 48 hours of orientation, all participants are given a follow-up phone call and a survey about the orientation experience. If the student indicates a change of area of interest after orientation, contact is made to aid in determining a new area of interest and to revise fall course selections. **Online orientation** is available to post-traditional students at a distance (Evidence: pdf of https://orientation.globalapp.cmich.edu/Default.aspx).

- Post-traditional graduate and undergraduate students are contacted by a Global Campus academic advisor during their first semester to answer any questions and to make sure that an advisor appointment is established so that an academic program plan can be developed prior to completion of the first 12 semester credits.

- During their first year, students are assigned a **Virtual Peer Coach (VPC)**. The VPC staff are student employees in the OSS. The Virtual Peer Coaches use a call center to contact students for various campaigns throughout the year, including troubleshooting student concerns; follow-through and follow-up on all student questions, concerns, and requests; tracking conversations using a variety of technology applications and platforms; and referring students to campus personnel, resources, and offices as needed. Virtual Peer Coaches receive approximately one week of pre-work training and attend weekly support meetings. Training details the management of student information, including FERPA policies (Evidence: OSS Student Handbook).

Prior to the registration period each semester, all students receive an email reminding them about the online advising workbench, which details their academic progress and resources, and to meet with their advisor to plan for course selection (Evidence: copy of a representative email). As registration opens, students who are expected to register but who have not are contacted by email and reminded to register within 48 hours. Students who do not register within one week of the email are contacted by telephone to provide direct assistance with registration. Students that are placed on probation receive an academic plan from their advisor or academic program director that outlines a pathway for making academic progress.

Students who receive a CMU Merit Award must maintain at least a 3.25 GPA and accumulate 30 semester credit hours in each academic year to maintain the award. These students are tracked for progress and those who are not on track at the end of their first semester receive notification about the importance of meeting with an academic advisor or success coach to explore options and create a plan to support future success (Evidence: Student Success Planning Resource Template).

At CMU students must declare a major prior to the completion of 56 credit hours. Those students who are nearing 56 credit hours but have not declared a major are contacted by CMU’s Registrar and the Office of Student Success through email during the first year and again two semesters in advance of reaching 56 credits (Evidence: example email).
Students who have reached 120 credit hours with no pending graduation date are contacted by the college Success Coach. OSS reviews graduation lists with CMU’s Registrar and works with success coaches to support direct outreach emails and calls (Evidence: Examples of correspondence). All students who have Limited Academic Progress are required to provide a re-matriculation plan. Academic Advising and Assistance produces a report at the conclusion of each semester to identify undergraduate on-campus campus students whose cumulative grade point averages are considered in good academic standing (2.00 or higher) but whose semester grade point averages fell below 2.00. A registration hold is placed on student accounts for the purpose of academic advising intervention. The report is shared with the academic colleges and the Office of Student Success.

All students with registration holds are contacted by the OSS. CMU’s web-based class registration system allows university departments, with approval of the Registrar’s Office, to place a hold that prevents students from registering from classes until specific criteria have been met. The Limited Academic Progress hold is issued by Academic Advising and Assistance, and it requires that students meet with an academic advisor or faculty member to discuss the student’s declining grade point average, future class registration advice and graduation completion potential.

CMU has developed an advising dashboard, the Advising Workbench, that provides students with an online audit of their transcripts showing real-time progress toward their degree. Advising Workbench is a virtual tool that allows faculty members, academic advisors and students to track and plan academic progress. Advising Workbench is designed to record all interactions between students and advisors to be detailed and monitored for future reference, and any changes made by faculty and department chairs can be seen immediately. This tool allows for more efficient and accurate advising sessions, as well as providing students with an up-to-date visual representation of their progress to graduation.

To better support the increasing financial stress among incoming and current students, CMU used data pertaining to student financial aid to inform an adjustment to financial aid for the 2013-2014 academic year. CMU developed a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan involving a broad spectrum of membership. The committee consists of four subcommittees: Academic, Recruitment, Retention, and Service. These subcommittees meet regularly to discuss current initiatives and new data analyses. The Enrollment Management Committee routinely reviews data from the subcommittees and various departments, including the Office of Student Success, Office of Institutional Research, Financial Aid, Admissions, and University Communications.

Data about student retention and graduation rates are frequently used to inform the internal review of academic programs. For example, the number of credit hours required to complete the Bachelor of Science in Education for students pursuing elementary certification was reduced to create a more efficient curriculum and to allow students to complete the program in a timely manner. (Evidence: BSED Analysis2015.pdf). Departments pay close attention to the progress of students through their majors and modify curricula as necessary, for example, undergraduate majors in biology, exercise science, and environmental studies have made major changes to their programs.
Global Campus maintains an active analytics unit. The office administers alumni surveys and continuing student surveys on a biannual basis. Further, the unit houses databases that allow for on-going monitoring of retention and graduation rates.

4.C.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.)

The OIR methodologies reflect best practices in several ways. Data collection methods are continually reviewed in bi-weekly meetings to ensure accuracy and meaning of individual data elements. OIR promotes professional development, with a large proportion of the staff attending regional and national conferences. OIR stays up to date on all IPEDS and HEIDI (MI State reporting) data submission guidelines through webinars, listservs, and meetings. As there are no standard guidelines for metrics beyond external reporting, the office generates informative data based on internal definitions. For example, in analyzing persistence and graduation rates by program, OIR defines the cohort as any student who entered the program at any time in the academic year. Persistence for the cohort is then defined as anyone that either graduated or returned in the subsequent academic year.

CMU uses processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs that reflect known best practices and alignment with IPEDS definitions. CMU actively engages with thought leaders at the Education Advisory Board, the National Survey of Student Engagement Institute, the Higher Education Research Institute, and the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education to review and refine methodologies for mining and leveraging data to better support student learning or student retention, persistence and graduation, and to optimize course selection to promote timely graduation.

Sources

- ESS - Enrollment Plan 2013-2015

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary
There is no argument.

**Sources**

*There are no sources.*