

Assurance Argument

Fairmont State University - WV

Review date: 4/3/2023

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Argument

1.A.1. The University's current mission and vision statements, as well as strategic plan were [approved by the Board of Governors](#) on February 15, 2018, reflecting a multi-year inclusive and deliberative process involving faculty, staff, students, and community members participating in a regional public university context. The core values of Fairmont State University which first appeared in the 2005 Strategic Plan were [updated](#) and included in the current strategic plan. *A Quest for Distinction: Strategic Plan 2018-2028* began in January 2016 with a retreat involving approximately 80 members of the campus community engaging in a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threats (SWOT) analysis ([BOG Meeting Minutes February 2018](#), p.4). The SWOT analysis identified retention, growth, and resource diversification among the top priorities for ensuring Fairmont State University's future success. Then, during the following Spring semester, nearly 100 representatives from all levels of the University met to discuss high-impact, low-cost strategies that could be implemented in order to improve undergraduate student experiences related to issues raised within the SWOT analysis ([BOG Meeting Minutes February 2018](#), p.4). In Fall 2017, nearly 80 members of the campus community served on strategic planning teams that identified initiatives that could meaningfully impact previously identified strategic priorities ([BOG Meeting Minutes February 2018](#), p.4). At the same time, a total of 1,171 individuals – including alumni, community members, faculty, staff and students – responded to a constituent [survey](#) aimed at soliciting input on the revised mission and vision statements aligned with these solidifying priorities. Former President Mirta Martin convened a smaller committee in January 2018 in order to further refine and tailor the work of the strategic planning teams into a final strategic plan consistent with revised mission and vision statements prior to formally seeking approval from the Board of Governors ([BOG Meeting Minutes February 2018](#), p.4). The University was therefore able to create cohesion in its mission, vision, core values, and strategic plan by developing them in conjunction with each other within an inclusive

process that involved multiple stakeholders committed to the advancement of the institution as a regional, 4-year public institution in North Central West Virginia.

The Fairmont State University mission, vision, and core values statements are as follows ([Strategic Plan](#)):

Mission

“Fairmont State University is a comprehensive, regional university committed to educating global citizen leaders in an environment distinguished by a commitment to excellence, student success, and transformational impact.”

Vision

“Fairmont State University will be renowned for its innovative pedagogical practices and programs and as the first-choice institution for students seeking a transformative educational experience.”

Core values:

- Family – establishing interdependence and mutual support
- Diversity - engendering a culture of respect where all people’s views are acknowledged and valued
- Excellence - ensuring distinction in programs, service, faculty, staff and students
- Entrepreneurship – supporting creative and innovative initiatives that may have an element of risk
- Safety – promoting an environment free from the occurrence or risk of injury, danger, or loss
- Trust – inspiring confidence in a person in whom responsibility or authority is placed
- Respect – having esteem for or a sense of the worth or excellence of our people
- Integrity - adhering to the highest standards
- Transparency – establishing visible foundations for decisions and plans
- Stewardship - responsibly overseeing and protecting the things considered worth caring for and preserving

1.A.2. The mission and related guiding statements of the University were approved February 15, 2018. The strategic plan, which is based upon and led the development of such statements, is reviewed annually, with progress towards strategic benchmarks discussed and assessed by the Executive Leadership Team in order to link individual area initiatives to wider strategic plan goals ([ELT Strategic Plan Priority Listings](#)). The planning and budget allocation process are reviewed and approved by the Executive Leadership Team and the Board of Governors relative to these strategic initiatives ([BOG Approval of Meeting Minutes](#)). As such, the University’s mission and other guiding statements both reflect and affirm the basis for critical functions of the University, including, but not limited to: curriculum development, program review, student life, budgeting, outreach, as well as the mission statement, vision statements, and strategic plans of academic and non-academic units.

As part of curriculum development, individual faculty, Curriculum Committee, and Faculty Senate are all required to consider how a curriculum integrates with the University mission, vision, and core values when creating and approving curricula; many of which may also include scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, and/or public service activities. [Academic Program Reviews](#) are conducted every five years. Faculty and the Board of Governors are required by [State statute](#) to review the degree program’s alignment with the mission of the

University.

As such, multiple aspects of the mission are integrated into curricular practice. For example, first year baccalaureate students are required to take a [First Year Seminar course](#) which emphasizes the importance of the University mission, vision, and core values and how these infuse into all aspects of campus life through instruction. These lessons are subsequently reinforced through student service projects and assignments in multiple courses aimed at innovation in learning and transformational impact, such as [building concrete canoes](#) by the SAE Baja Team, coordinating the [West Virginia State Science and Engineering Fair](#), participating in robotics and drone competitions, implementing a [campus needs assessment](#), developing strategic plans, and [presenting research at statewide conferences](#). Off-campus learning experiences such as [course trips](#), [clinical practicums](#), [field placements](#), internships, and capstone course assignments further integrate with various aspects of the university mission, vision and core values. Beyond the classroom, student organizations embrace the University's mission and vision statements through a variety of service projects and activities.

1.A.3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services provided by addressing student-focused education as an all-encompassing enterprise comprised of interrelated and mutually supporting services, ideals, and ideas in a public regional university context situated within a world-wide arena of knowledge and skill acquisition and application. Our primary constituents are directly identified in the University's mission statement, "...educating students as global citizen leaders". The University's [Strategic Plan](#) benchmarks use clear metrics that identify intended student populations, as well as campus constituencies related to them.

The current strategic plan includes areas connected to educating global citizens in a regional university setting: by promoting degree attainment (graduation, retention, credit hour production, etc.), the University ensures—through completion of its curriculum—a highly educated and skilled workforce for the wider region. By increasing articulation agreements, cross-border programs, as well as non-traditional and out-of-state students within a financially stable institutional structure, the University asserts its commitment to delivering a transformational learning environment engaged in the exchange of a diverse realm of ideas, perspectives, experiences, and pedagogies suitable for global leadership. Further, the Executive Leadership Team maintains detailed plans of responsible parties and multi-pronged implementation initiatives for the strategic plan, thereby ensuring that multiple constituencies across the University are engaged in strategically realizing its mission and related statements ([ELT Strategic Plan Priority Listings](#)).

1.A.4. In keeping with its context as a public regional university, Fairmont State educates students predominately from West Virginia, enrolling an average of 11% of out-of-state students since the inception of the updated mission and related statements in Spring 2018 ([HEPC Undergraduate Enrollment Report 2021](#), p.38). Nevertheless, the University's global orientation is still present. In Fall 2021, Fairmont State enrolled students from all 55 of West Virginia's counties, 33 states, and 17 countries. According to the 2021 National Survey of Student Engagement, approximately 54% of first-year students and 60% of seniors consider themselves to be first-generation college students ([NSSE 2021 Respondent Profile](#), p.5).

New academic offerings continue to demonstrate the institution's commitment to its mission. For example, the English program developed two new Concentrations for the English major in 2018: Writing for the Workplace and Creative Writing. These both aim to produce graduates who can write well and analyze texts in response to local and global workplace demands. Moreover, the healthcare management major added two new concentrations in 2021: Wellness Leadership and Non-profit

Leadership. These concentrations were designed to meet regional and national workplace trends and are unique offerings among programs in West Virginia.

In alignment with the University's mission, existing programs also exemplify the University's commitment to educating global citizen leaders. The Spanish major and minor degree programs help students cultivate the intercultural competence and linguistic skills that enable them to thrive in the global economy. This program prepares bilingual and multicultural global citizens who are challenged to excel academically, while undergoing a true transformation, as they explore the ways in which they will integrate Spanish with their future career paths. The Spanish program offers authentic opportunities for students to connect with the international community, including LinguaMeeting conversation partners (native speakers living throughout Latin America) and Study Abroad. The National Security and Intelligence major and minor focuses on developing research and writing skills in a globally-based environment, with students undertaking research projects and field experiences related to intelligence gathering and threat assessment.

To ensure that students from a diverse array of backgrounds are supported, a variety of services are made available to all students, including the [LEAD Center \(Learning Enrichment and Academic Development\)](#), [student health and wellness](#), [financial aid](#), academic advising, [exploratory advising](#), [veteran support](#), [Encova Career Development Center](#), and the NSF-sponsored [S-STEM program](#). Support for high-achieving students is provided through the University Honors program. The [Tulasi & Marilyn Joshi Office for Educational Pathways for International Centers and Students](#) currently has collaborative agreements with Japan, Italy, and South Korea, and serves as a hub for international student support ([International Experience](#)).

Throughout the admissions and enrollment process, the Office of Student Success attempts to identify students who come from underserved or minority backgrounds through questions on the [general admissions application](#) and [EAB-Navigate's student intake survey](#). When students self-identify themselves in this regard, a special effort is made to welcome them and ensure they know of University resources that can help them succeed and feel a sense of belonging. In addition, University and foundation scholarships, like the [Hunt-Arnold Scholarship](#), seek to financially support students from diverse backgrounds to attract and retain them at Fairmont State University.

Further, the University believes its close-knit campus and small class sizes enhance the faculty and staff's capacity for frequent communication with students. As such, faculty use multiple platforms to communicate with their students, including email and text messaging through [Remind](#) and [EAB Navigate](#). An early alert system, EAB-Navigate, was implemented in Spring 2022 to identify at-risk students and allow early interventions to occur to assist students.

These highlighted services above, of which have strategic initiatives aligned with the University strategic plan and mission, demonstrate the breadth and depth of scope of mission-oriented services provided to students.

1.A.5. In affirmation of the University's commitment to promoting its mission throughout the campus community and to the public at large, the University mission and vision statements are included on the University's website, current course syllabi, signage throughout buildings, undergraduate and graduate catalogs, student handbook, and faculty handbook. The [strategic plan](#) is also available online. Further, the University mission, vision, and core values are integrated throughout the mission and vision of program curriculum and student support services; examples of these integrations can be found in the evidence for Criterion 1A.

Sources

- BOG Meeting Minutes February 2018
- Campus Needs Assessment
- Concrete Canoe Competition
- EAB Navigate Fall 2022 Student Intake Survey
- ELT Strategic Plan Priority Listings
- Encova Career Development Center
- Exploratory Academic Advising Center
- Financial Aid
- HEPC Enrollment Report 2021
- Hunt_Arnold Diversity Scholarship
- International Experience
- Learning Enrichment and Academic Development (LEAD) Center
- Navigate
- North Central West Virginia Math Science Energy and Engineering Fair
- NSSE 2021 Respondent Profile
- Nursing Clinical Partners
- Professional Development School Partnership
- Program Review Rubric and Mission
- Remind Training
- SOAR Syllabus
- S-STEM—Bridging the STEM Gap in Appalachia
- Strategic Plan
- Strategic Planning Survey
- Student Health Services Center
- Tulasi and Marilyn Joshi Office for Educational Pathways for International Centers and Students
- Undergraduate Application
- Veteran Services
- Wilderness Explorer
- WV Code 18B-2A-4
- WVCTM Conference

1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

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

Argument

1.B.1. Fairmont State University's strategic focus on teaching, learning, and responding to the educational needs of the community have remained constant throughout its history. As the first normal school in West Virginia (1865), Fairmont State University is a long-standing pillar for education in the region. As a public institution, the University is directly funded, operated, and governed by the public while providing education, jobs, service, and resources to the wider community.

The [institution's mission](#) and related statements give greater detail about Fairmont State University's intent to initiate actions and decisions demonstrative of its role as an educational provider to the public. Providing a transformational impact is a fundamental tenant of our mission statement: *Fairmont State University is a comprehensive, regional university committed to educating global citizen leaders in an environment distinguished by a commitment to excellence, student success, and transformational impact.* The following examples illustrate how the University does so through its actions and decisions: preparing teachers for jobs in public institutions in West Virginia; participating actively in community projects; sharing its facilities with the local community; offering curriculum to support employment opportunities and the needs of business, industry, and public service agencies in the university's regional service area and beyond; as well as providing continuing education programs to provide career enhancement and personal skill sets.

Fairmont State University engages with surrounding communities through several activities such as the [STEM Innovation Center](#), [NASA-Educator Resource Center](#), [Professional Development Schools Partnership](#), and [Academy for the Arts](#). The institution demonstrates its commitment to area schools by offering robotics camps/competitions ([FIRST LEGO League](#), [VEX U Robotics Tournament](#)), and professional development/continuing education for teachers. In an effort to enhance cultural opportunities in the region, the University offers [community-based theatre productions](#), hosts the [West Virginia Symphony Orchestra](#), and preserves local heritage through the [Frank and Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center](#), making Fairmont State University a cultural and educational center for the region.

As such, many external constituencies choose Fairmont State University's facilities to host events, such as the [Marion County Chamber of Commerce *Dancing with the Stars*](#) (a United Way fundraising event), [K-12 Science Fair](#), [West Virginia Robotics Education and Competition \(REC\) Foundation Aerial Drone Signature Event for K-12 students](#), and various other banquets/events.

1.B.2. [Chapter 18B of the West Virginia Code](#) obligates Fairmont State to “a system for the delivery of post-secondary education which is competitive in the changing national and global environment, is affordable for the state and its citizenry and has the capacity to deliver the programs and services necessary to meet regional and statewide needs”. Chapter 18B emphasizes that State institutions of higher education—to the degree appropriate for their mission—provide higher education services through instruction, public service, and research. The Board of Governors at all other regional institutions are required to seek approval from WVHEPC prior to increasing tuition and fees increase greater than 10% in any one year or more than seven percent on a three-year rolling average ([WVCode 18B-10-13](#)). Fees garnered from student housing, dining halls and cafeterias are required to be used for “revenue bonds for which the receipts may have been pledged as security and to pay the operating and maintenance costs of the dormitories, faculty homes, dining halls and cafeterias. Any such receipts not needed for these purposes may be expended by the appropriate governing board for any other auxiliary enterprise or educational and general instructional costs” ([WVCode 18B-10-1](#)). Board of Governors' members must serve their terms without compensation, and cannot hold appointments as officers, employees, or members of other post-secondary institutions, government agencies, or political parties in West Virginia ([WVCode-18B-2A-1](#)). All employees and processes of Fairmont State are subject to guidance and rules established by the [West Virginia Ethics Commission](#) and [WV Higher Education Policy Commission](#) and must maintain compliance with the [West Virginia Freedom of Information Act](#), the [West Virginia Open Governmental Meetings Act](#), and relevant rules related to the purchase or acquisition of materials, equipment, property, and services. As a result, Fairmont State by its nature as a public institution of higher education in West Virginia is circumscribed in its context and composition from generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests beyond those ascribed to it in State law or by authorizing State agencies.

Furthermore, the financial management of the University reflects its primary commitment to the University’s educational responsibilities. In fiscal year 2020, the University’s core expenses comprised 31.6% of costs associated with instruction, 6.2% for academic support services, 8.2% for student services, and 1.4% for public service ([Financial Statements 06302020](#)). Well over half of all core expenses are associated with education and educational delivery this illustrates Fairmont State University's strong commitment to education. The University consistently seeks methods to keep its education affordable and accessible. For example, several faculty offer Open Education Resources (OER) in their courses and have received [grant funding from the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission](#) for this purpose. [Partnerships with local hospital systems](#) have allowed cohorts of nursing students to receive full tuition scholarships and a guaranteed full-time job offer upon graduation. The Office of Financial Aid has also committed to increasing the longevity of renewable institutional scholarships to four years to ensure stability in the costs of undergraduate students’ education from year-to-year ([Opportunity Scholarship Rack Card](#)).

1.B.3. Fairmont State University understands the importance of its role as the community’s education partner and strives to be responsive to its needs. The University engages with its external constituencies through many program and College-based advisory boards that provide guidance for aligning academic programs with external workforce and professional needs. On an ongoing basis, faculty are able to provide adaptive curricular changes as a result of [advisory board feedback](#). For example, the Professional Development School Advisory Board, composed of teachers, principals, and recent Education program completers, recommended teacher candidates receive more preparation for supporting the social and emotional needs of K-12 students ([PDS Advisory Board Minutes](#)). Faculty responded by reaching out to public-school administrators and teachers, who are identified as experts in their fields, to collaborate on the creation of video case studies. These case

studies will be used to help teacher candidates develop knowledge of evidence-based practices for addressing common classroom problem behaviors and for supporting students who experience trauma ([Case Studies Meeting Agenda](#)). Faculty met with administrators and teachers to create scripts and dialogue for each case study ([Case Study Challenging Behaviors Overview](#)) and the video case studies are being implemented in Education courses.

The University also recognizes its position in an economically disadvantaged State with a college-going rate insufficient to meet future economic demand. To inaugurate a college-going culture in West Virginia, the University's recruitment and admissions teams work to ensure outreach extends to all counties throughout the State. Outreach, including recruitment and financial aid events, focus on sharing how higher education is attainable, valuable, and affordable. Many events are held to meet prospective students and their families, and to provide assistance with FAFSA completion and scholarship applications. The University holds "[SOAR Scholarship Events](#)" (between 8 to 12 events) each year for incoming students and their families where University faculty, staff, and administration travel to areas around throughout the State and the wider region to meet and guide families through the college going process. Student Success has sponsored bus travel for high schools around the area to attend campus visitation days, including high schools from communities where travel for a visit would be financially burdensome.

The University's commitment to the public good is also apparent in its extracurricular and co-curricular programming. Nursing students organize and lead community health fairs, health screenings, educate homeless populations, and also spent over 1,300 hours administering the COVID-19 vaccine to local communities in 2021 ([Nursing Newsletter](#)). The faculty in the Department of Education visit community partners to offer professional development opportunities to enhance classroom instruction. Annually, the College of Science and Technology partners with [VEX Robotics](#) to host a series of tournaments for elementary, middle, high school, and college students, and to promote STEM fields of study. The University accommodates several related on-campus educational competitions and events for K-12 students in the region, including the 2019 [FIRST LEGO League \(FLL\) and FIRST Tech Challenge \(FTC\) West Virginia State Championship Tournaments](#). [Events at the Frank and Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center](#) such as the *Trunk of Traditional Tunes*, a celebration of West Virginia's traditional music, invite community members to visit and discover West Virginia's cultural traditions. The [Academy for the Arts](#), ran through the College of Liberal Arts, teaches singing and music lessons for the community as well as hosts events on campus and in the community. The Department of Architecture, Art, and Design hosts [art exhibitions](#) that are free and open to the public. Additionally, departmental partnerships with the City of Fairmont allows for not only beautification of the city but also allows student and faculty artwork to be showcased throughout the city (e.g., [YMCA Mural Project](#), [Feast of the Seven Fishes Mural](#), and [Palatine Park Mural Project](#)).

In addition, faculty incorporate service-based learning into their curricula to connect student learning with community needs. Examples of these learning opportunities include: 36 K-12 public-school partnerships coordinated through the [Professional Development School partnership](#) within the College of Education, Health and Human Performance which enable public-schools to receive additional instructional support and allows students to gain important professional field experiences; and the College of Nursing's [92 clinical partnerships](#), which allow hospitals and clinical sites to provide additional staff support to patients and allows nursing students to receive real-world experiences. Other course level examples include: Spanish majors undertaking translation projects for the University Relations and Marketing Office and the College of Liberal Arts in order to help attract and accommodate Spanish-speaking students to Fairmont State; the grant-sponsored

[Appalachian Teaching Project](#) course, *FOLK 3375: Preserving Appalachian Culture*, culminates each December in a presentation in Washington D.C. before the Appalachian Regional Commission and engages students in projects focused on improving regional tourism and historical preservation. The latter project involved students working closely with the Marion County Visitors' Bureau and the Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery.

Moreover, the University has a long-standing partnership with the Tygart Valley United Way. Through the "[Better Together](#)" annual campaign, the University offers pre-tax payroll deductions to directly support 46 programs at 39 health and human service agencies across five local counties. Concomitantly, Student Government Association sells "[Maroon Madness](#)" t-shirts at sporting events in order to raise funds for these programs. The University partnered with the United Way to offer a community service component during the Fall 2021 Welcome Week programming and hosts an annual [Fairmont State Day of Action](#).

The University communicates in a variety of ways with external constituencies in order to respond to their needs. The University Relations and Marketing Office oversees many methods of communication with off-campus audiences, including press releases and Fairmont State University's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#) accounts. [University marketing materials](#) are also distributed at many off-campus events. Additionally, several departments, offices, and organizations on campus communicate through [social media accounts](#) and [newsletters](#). The University participates in the legislative process by communicating with state legislators. The President, Board of Governors members, and Student Government Association regularly visit with legislators to discuss Fairmont State University and higher education, and participates annually in Higher Education Day and [Fairmont State Day at the State Capitol](#).

Sources

- Advisory Councils
- Art Exhibits
- Better Together with United Way Campaign
- Case Studies Meeting Agenda
- Case Study Challenging Behaviors Overview
- CoEHHP Program Exploration Guide
- College of Nursing Instagram
- Community Arts Programming
- Community Arts Programming Summer Arts Series
- Day of Action Flyer
- Fairmont State Day at the Legislature
- Fairmont State Instagram
- Fairmont State SGA Selling Maroon Madness T-Shirts
- Fairmont State Twitter
- Fairmont State University Facebook
- Fairmont State YouTube
- Feast of the Seven Fishes Mural
- Financial Statements 6-30-20
- FIRST LEGO League and FIRST Tech Challenge
- Folklife Center
- Folklife Center Events

- Marion County Dancing With The Stars
- NASA IV and V Educator Resource Center
- North Central West Virginia Math Science Energy and Engineering Fair
- Nursing Clinical Partners
- Nursing Newsletter
- Opportunity Scholarship Rack Card
- Palatine Park Mural Project
- PDS Advisory Board Minutes
- Professional Development School Partnership
- SOAR Awards
- STEM Innovation Center
- Strategic Plan
- The Appalachian Teaching Project
- VEX U Robotics Tournament
- West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
- West Virginia REC Foundation Aerial Drone Signature Event for K12 Students
- West Virginia Symphony Orchestra Performance
- WV Ethics Commission
- WV FOIA
- WV Open Governmental Meetings Act
- WV Open Learning Resource Grant
- WVCode-18B-10-1
- WVCode-18B-10-13
- WVCode-18B-2A-1
- YMCA Window Murals Beautification Project

1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Argument

1.C.1. The University [mission](#) emphasizes its “*commitment to educating global citizen leaders*”. This dedication is realized at the curricular and co-curricular level. The [core curriculum](#) (i.e., general education curriculum) lays the foundation for crafting global citizen leaders in its mission to “*ensure all students acquire the knowledge, skills, and attributes necessary to become life-long learners, as well as productive and contributing citizens in diverse local and global communities*”. Both [Citizenship](#) (“*Explain the responsibilities of citizens, how to participate in the democratic process, and how to contribute to civil society*”) and [Global Awareness](#) (“*Explain the responsibilities of citizens, how to participate in the democratic process, and how to contribute to civil society.*”) are two of the main learning outcomes for the core curriculum. To further prepare students for a globally-oriented workforce, students in areas such as teacher education, aviation, business, psychology, and nursing spend time outside of the classroom completing practicum hours in order to acquire real-life experiences related to their chosen field of study ([Professional Development School Partnership](#)).

In both academic and co-curricular areas, the University designates a number of resource offices and centers with the mission of providing support for diverse groups of students. These resource offices collectively provide student-centered activities and learning opportunities for on-campus and off-campus students. Examples of activities aimed at enhancing workplace success and facilitating the acquisition of informed global citizenship include celebrations of [International Women's Day](#), Black History month, [Martin Luther King, Jr. events](#), and [Native American Heritage Month](#). [The Folklife Center](#) offers information on Appalachian Heritage and community programming focusing on music, poetry, literature and guest speakers. Throughout the academic year, students and community members participate in a variety of musical presentations, such as “[A Song of Hope](#)”, where ticket revenues are donated to the Tygart Valley United Way. The University's athletic teams raise money for a multitude of charitable causes, including [cancer research](#), and [autism awareness](#); athletics also conducts [youth summer sports camps](#).

1.C.2. Activities and processes at Fairmont State University are executed with a value for diversity and support for underrepresented students, faculty, and staff. The University adheres to West Virginia State Code and the [West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission \(WVHEPC\)](#) policies regarding equal opportunity and affirmative action – race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identify, and veteran status are

protected characteristics. [WVHEPC Series 40](#) requires that “[e]ach institution and the Commission shall take the initiative in developing or modifying their own plans to achieve compliance with the equal employment opportunity and affirmative action policy of the Commission as well as those of the State and federal governments”. As such, each Fairmont State University job postings—including those for student workers—states:

Fairmont State University does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of race, color, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression/association, national origin, age, height, weight, religion, creed, genetic information, disability or veteran's status, as identified and defined by law in employment, admissions, and educational programs and activities. Minorities/Women/Veterans/those with disabilities are encouraged to apply. Fairmont State University will not discharge or in any other manner discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because such employee or applicant has inquired about, discussed, or disclosed the compensation of the employee or applicant or another employee or applicant ([Human Resources Equal Opportunity Practices](#)).

Nevertheless, Fairmont State University struggles with success in recruiting a diverse faculty and professional staff. Though approximately 57% of the Fairmont State workforce identified as female in 2020, less than 10% of staff and faculty at the University came from a minority background ([Human Resources Data](#)). The rural nature of our region, non-competitive salaries, and limited benefits have resulted in a paucity of qualified applicants or applicants subsequently declining an offer for positions, which sometimes end in failed searches for both faculty and staff positions. Further, COVID-19 may have also increased faculty and staff turnover due to [early retirement](#).

The University recognizes diversity, equity, and inclusion is an issue and the Office of Human Resources is currently working on a plan to address this in its hiring practices. Currently, position postings are posted on Indeed, Veterans, Higher Ed Jobs, Facebook, and The Chronicle. The Director of Human Resources recently attended a webinar (August 2022) regarding posting positions on websites specific to diversity, equity, and inclusion and the associated language to use in postings. Additional hiring and recruitment practices for more diverse faculty and staff is being researched. Given the population in Fairmont, WV (87.9%) and in the state of West Virginia (93.1%) is predominantly a white race, alternative hiring strategies are needed to attract other races to Fairmont State University ([U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts Fairmont](#)).

Further, the University's [Umbrella Coalition](#), an inter-departmental committee comprised of faculty, staff, and students, provides a multitude of diversity, equity, and inclusion programming to the campus community. The group's mission focuses on “providing campus programs centered around education, awareness, prevention, and support. The work of this group has a strong emphasis on serving under-represented and/or historically marginalized populations in order to build a more inclusive and welcoming Falcon Family. The group coordinated over 24 campus-wide events focused on six themes: [Black history/culture](#), [Women's empowerment](#), [Sexual assault awareness](#), [Health and wellness](#), [LGBTQ+ issues](#), and [celebrations of global cultures](#).

Moreover, the following resource offices and student support centers help ensure inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse student populations:

- The [Honors Program](#) serves high-achieving and ambitious students to enrich intellectual development, provide strong community bonds with peers and professors and provides opportunities for study abroad and field trips.
- The [Office of Accessibility Services](#) is committed to providing leadership and facilitation of

equal access in all instructional opportunities for students who have disabilities, so they may achieve their academic, personal, and professional goals.

- The [Office of Falcon Wellness and Mental Health Services](#) provides convenient, high-quality, affordable physical and mental healthcare to all students by modifying or removing health related barriers to learning and by promoting optimal levels of wellness.
- [Tulasi & Marilyn Joshi Office for Educational Pathways for International Centers and Students](#) provides support internationalization of our curriculum, welcomes international students to campus, and sends our native students abroad.
- [Veteran Services](#) provides support and assistance for students or prospective students who are currently serving or formerly served in the military, as well as spouse and dependents of active military personnel.
- The Office of Student Life houses [The Nest](#)—a food bank which contains basic necessities as well as clothing—and [Freddie’s Pantry](#).

1.C.3. Fairmont State seeks to maintain a climate of respect for a diverse range of backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives throughout the campus community. All faculty, administrators, and staff are required to complete Diversity and Inclusion trainings every year through the University’s [SafeColleges](#) initiatives. In addition, [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion sessions](#), activities, and topics are included in Professional Development Day activities for faculty and staff, including topics on inclusive workplaces and [LGBTQ+ students](#).

For students, the University sets expectations for conduct in [course catalogs](#) (p. 4), which maintains that students should “Embrace and act upon an ethical view that respects the life, property, opinions, and feelings of others.” The University then ensures these expectations are reinforced educationally. One of the core curriculum’s outcomes is [Global Awareness](#), which seeks to “Develop the awareness and knowledge to understand the complexity of intercultural connections and to live and work in a global society.” As such, faculty subsequently encourage a culture of respectful dialogue throughout their courses and activities. For example, a Communications Adjunct Professor served as principle investigator for an West Virginia Higher Education Diversity for Equity Grant entitled “[At the Elders’ Feet: Conversations Across the Generations](#),” a project designed to produce a collection of interviews and related media with notable and recognized elders of color within the region in order to preserve the perspective and wisdom of previous generations. Student investigators interviewed elders including Ellis Ray Williams of Welch, WV, Dolores Johnson, of Huntington, WV, and Susie Green of Bluefield, WV and presented their research to the community through a gallery exhibition and website. Likewise, students in ENGL 2251 regularly engage in material covering feminist, African American, and LGBTQ criticism while enrollees in *HONR 3350: Global Crises*, read Karen Armstrong’s *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*, which argues the world’s wisdom traditions all focus on respect and inclusion of all people. This culture of respect extends in co-curricular offerings. The play “[Us and Them](#)” was presented by the student theater group Masquers both on-campus and at local elementary schools in March, 2022 to promote tolerance and understanding.

Sources

- 2021 Honors Program Academic Roadmap
- Annual International Programs
- At the Elders Feet Conversations Across the Generations
- Autism Swim Challenge 2022
- Cancer Awareness Event Womens Basketball

- Civic Engagement Initiatives
- Community Arts Presents Song of Hope
- Concrete Canoe Competition
- Core Curriculum
- Faculty Staff Retirements 2020 2021
- Falcons with Pride
- Feast of the Seven Fishes Mural
- Folk Life Center Events
- Freddies Pantry
- Health and Human Performance Club Flyer
- Health and Wellness Fair
- Human Resources Data
- Human Resources Equal Opportunity Practices
- International Womens Day
- LGBTQ+ Event
- Martin Luther King Day of Service Flyer
- Mural Project at Palatine Park
- Native American Heritage Month
- Office of Accessibility Services
- Professional Communication Business Speakers Series
- Professional Development Diversity Equity and Inclusion
- Professional Development School Partnership
- SafeColleges Training
- Sexual Assault Awareness Month
- Strategic Plan
- Student Health Services Center
- Student Life
- Summer Athletic Camps
- The Nest
- Tulasi and Marilyn Joshi Office for Educational Pathways for International Centers and Students
- U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts Fairmont
- Umbrella Coalition
- Us and Them
- Veteran Services
- WVHEPC Series 40
- YMCA Window Murals Beautification Project

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

Fairmont State University's strategic plan and associated mission and vision statements were revised in 2018 to help focus the university in a more sustainable direction at the helm of new University leadership. Mission documents are readily available to the public and potential students via the University's website, undergraduate and graduate catalogs, and student handbooks, as well as being provided to new faculty and staff at orientation.

The Fairmont State University mission statement describes the University as a comprehensive, regional university, committed to educating global citizen leaders in an environment distinguished by a commitment to excellence, student success and transformational impact. Fairmont State has a strong commitment to serving the people of West Virginia and surrounding region. Within the overarching Fairmont State University 2018-2028 strategic plan, the University developed specific action plans for: Undergraduate Educational Experience; Graduate Scholarly Experience; Research, Scholarly and Creative Activity, and Discovery; Engagement, Outreach, Extension, and Service; Faculty and Staff; Facilities and Infrastructure; and Athletics. It is through these seven broad areas that the University undertakes its day-to-day operations.

Fairmont State's mission statement reflects a commitment to meeting students' professional and personal goals and broadly defines the organization's desire to help students engage in active citizenship. Fairmont State understands who its students are; guided by this mission, faculty, staff, and administrators are committed to meeting student and constituent needs. These needs direct the delivery of quality degree opportunities, vital education experiences, enriching service learning and civic engagement, as well as a commitment to the public good. The University's strong commitment to meeting the needs of students with a primary focus on effective teaching as evidenced by documents relevant to the hiring of faculty and staff, the review process for tenure and promotion of faculty, faculty and student handbooks, as well as additional documents that can be found on the University's website.

Fairmont State's mission and commitments are clearly communicated throughout internal and external channels as well as clearly understood by all levels of employees. The University articulates its mission through a strategic planning process that supports its mission and the allocation of critical resources. The *2018-2028 Quest for Distinction Strategic Plan* capitalizes on Fairmont State's uniqueness in a way that would leave a lasting impact on students, the City of Fairmont, and the surrounding region. The strategic plan is aspirational and is clearly articulated. At its heart is a mission statement that indicates the University's desire to chart a course for higher learning while remaining dedicated to serving as lifeblood to the region.

Fairmont State offers a variety of programs at the baccalaureate and masters levels to meet the intellectual interests and career goals of students, as well as the needs of surrounding businesses and communities. The University understands its constituents, and the mission is largely aligned with their needs. Constituents understand the significance of their roles to the mission and the University. An extensive and diverse array of programs and courses are offered as well as "one of kind in West

Virginia" programs on the undergraduate and graduate levels. The University embraces its responsibility to serve the public and proactively engages local communities in order to build mutually beneficial relationships and be a strong educational and civic asset to its communities.

While there are numerous strengths at our institution, opportunities for improvement are reviewed on a continual basis. One area for improvement is in the area of diversity. Fairmont State has not yet achieved the diversity it strives for among its student body, faculty, and staff; this is challenging given the City of Fairmont and state of West Virginia are predominantly of a white race. Recent training (August 2022) on diversity, equity, and inclusion by the Director of Human Resources is one of the first steps in the right direction. The University strives to promote collaboration and communication by bringing together representatives from constituency groups. This approach applied toward actualizing diversity goals and objectives will likely lead to a more diverse campus in the future. While evidence is seen in many ways of the campus embracing diversity (through events held on campus like the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service), the diversity goal is to achieve a rich multicultural environment in the University's student body composition and organizational structure.

Due to the swift departure of key University administration and decisions being made in silos on the upper administrative level in the past four years, communication has been a challenge. Improved communication between administration, faculty, staff and students will help facilitate a better understanding of the strategic plan and budget, as well as ways in which a plan's implementation can occur within optimal time frames. Through a new leadership vision for campus improvements, faculty, staff, and administration will be able to share the responsibility of setting budget priorities which align with the University's commitments and core values. Additionally, perceptions regarding budget allocation can be improved through enhanced process transparency.

As illustrated in Criterion 1, the mission, vision, and core values statements are articulated in a variety of public documents. For example, these Statements are located on the College's website, 2022-2023 Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Catalogs, 2022-2023 Student Handbook, and 2022-2023 Faculty Handbook. Faculty are expected to embed the mission statement in course syllabi as a constant reminder to students of the direction of our University. The mission and vision statements are located on the entrance page for faculty and students in Blackboard (the University's Learning Management System). Finally, the President and Provost consistently articulate the College's mission and vision across campus and in the community through presentations to audiences such as the Fairmont State University Rotary Club, the Marion County Chamber of Commerce, and the West Virginia Legislative Delegation. The institution considers itself a member of the local community as well as the global community and sponsors or participates in community activities and opportunities throughout the year.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

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

Argument

Core Component 2.a

Fairmont State University's stated mission is to be a comprehensive, regional university committed to educating global citizen leaders in an environment distinguished by a commitment to excellence, student success, and transformational impact. Our vision is to be renowned for innovative pedagogical practices and programs, and as the first-choice institution for students seeking a transformative educational experience. This mission and vision is developed by the institution and adopted by the governing board. It is communicated publicly as indicated by ([Exhibit 2022.2A.1-1 Exhibit 2022.2A.1-1 Mission Vision webpage](#)) and its adoption by the governing board is reflected in ([Exhibits 2022.2A.1-1a Exhibit 2022.2A.1-1a BOG Meeting Minutes February 15 2018](#), p. 4.)

The University operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions through fair and ethical behavior on the part of the governing board, administration, faculty and staff. The administration and governing board establish policies and processes to comply with legal requirements, to safeguard the integrity of the institutional culture, and to safeguard all stakeholders. Illustrative examples of the established processes and policies that ensure the integrity of institutional operations, by source and description, include:

FERPA, Title IX and Discrimination policies ([Exhibit 2022.2A.2-17 Evidence Exhibit 2022.2A.2-17 Title IX webpage](#)), ([Exhibit 2022.2A.2-18 Exhibit 2022.2A.2-18 FERPA Policy](#)), ([Exhibit 2022.2A.2-19 Exhibit 2022.2A.2-19 BOG Discrimination Policy](#)), ([Exhibit 2022.2A.2-20 Exhibit 2022.2A.2-20 Covid Protocols webpage](#));

Grievance policies ([Exhibit 2022.2A.2-11 Exhibit 2022.2A.2-11 Example - Ongoing Training](#), [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-12 Exhibit 2022.2A.2-12 Staff Grievance Policy](#), [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-13 Exhibit 2022.2A.2-13 Faculty Grievance Policy](#), [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-14 Exhibit 2022.2A.2-14 Student Grievance Policy](#));

Hiring Processes ([Exhibit 2022.2A.2-1 Exhibit 2022.2A.2-1 Hiring Processes](#)); BOG Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest ([Exhibit 2022.2A.2-2 Exhibit 2022.2A.2-2 BOG Code of Conduct](#))

[- Conflict of Interest Policy](#));

Internal budget control policies, audits, bond ratings and investment policies (Exhibit 2022.2A.2-3 [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-3 Budget FAQs](#), Exhibit 2022.2A.4 [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-4 FSU Audit on HEPC webpage](#), Exhibit 2022.2A.2-5 [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-5 Bond Rating webpage](#), and Exhibit 2022.2A.2- 6 [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-6 HEPC Investment and Compliance Policy](#));

Board of Governors academic program review, committees, agendas and policies (Exhibit 2022.2A.2-7 [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-7 BOG Program Review webpage](#), Exhibit 2022.2A.2-8 [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-8 BOG Committees and Schedule webpage](#), Exhibit 2022.2A.2-9 [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-9 BOG Policies webpage](#) and Exhibit 2022.2A.2-10 [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-10 BOG webpage](#)); Exhibit 2022.2A.2-15 [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-15 BOG Copyright Policy](#), Exhibit 2022.2A.2-15 [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-15 BOG Copyright Policy](#), and

Handbooks setting standards, expectations, and outlining processes for major stakeholders- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-21 [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-21 Student Handbook webpage](#), Exhibit 2022.2A.2-22 [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-22 Faculty Handbook webpage](#), and Exhibit 2022.2A.23 [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-23 Staff Handbook webpage](#)), Academic Catalogue Exhibit 2022.2A.2-16 [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-16 Academic Catalogue webpage](#)); and Auxiliary Functions (2A.2-24 [Exhibit 2022.2A.2-24 Auxillary Functions webpage](#)).

The University operates ethically and with integrity and it presents itself clearly and completely to its students and the public/constituent groups in fulfillment of the mission, though it recognizes that we must continually strive to refine and improve policies and processes.

Sources

- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-10 BOG webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-11 Example - Ongoing Training
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-20 Covid Protocols webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-24 Auxillary Functions webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-3 Budget FAQs
- Exhibit 2022.2A.1-1 Mission Vision webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2A.1-1a BOG Meeting Minutes February 15 2018
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-1 Hiring Processes
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-12 Staff Grievance Policy
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-13 Faculty Grievance Policy
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-14 Student Grievance Policy
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-15 BOG Copyright Policy
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-16 Academic Catalogue webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-17 Title IX webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-18 FERPA Policy
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-19 BOG Discrimination Policy
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-2 BOG Code of Conduct - Conflict of Interest Policy
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-21 Student Handbook webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-22 Faculty Handbook webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-23 Staff Handbook webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-4 FSU Audit on HEPC webpage

- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-5 Bond Rating webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-6 HEPC Investment and Compliance Policy
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-7 BOG Program Review webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-8 BOG Committees and Schedule webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2A.2-9 BOG Policies webpage

2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

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

Argument

Core Component 2.B.1

Fairmont State is transparent about its financial standing. All tuition and fees approved by the Board of Governors (BOG) are available online through the Office of Financial Aid's website (Exhibit 2022.2B1.15 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.15 Cost of Attendance webpage](#) and Exhibit 2022.2B.1.15a [Exhibit 2022.2B.1.15a BOG Approval of Tuition - Fees- Program Reviews Minutes May 5 2022](#)). Monthly financial reports from administration to the BOG are also widely distributed across campus. (Exhibit 2022.2B1.17a [Exhibit 2022.2B1.17a Email distributing BOG Book before meeting](#)). To better assist current and prospective students in estimating their total costs of attending, an online Net Price calculator (Exhibit 2022.2B1.16 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.16 Net Price Calculator](#)) is available. The university also provides free workshops on applying for federal financial aid, information about loan repayment programs, and other topics important to helping students fund their education. The Administrative & Fiscal Affairs Office (Exhibit 2022.2B1.17 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.17 Administrative and Fiscal Affairs webpage](#)) provides oversight for grants/sponsored programs, budget planning, HR & payroll, procurement, capital projects, campus police, and physical plant.

In keeping with the University's commitment to accountability to its stakeholders, and to the transparency of its processes, all governance and accreditation information is readily available online. All BOG policies, meeting agendas, minutes, committee descriptions, and member details are available online (Exhibit 2022.2B1.18 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.18 BOG webpage](#)). Likewise the organizational structure (Exhibit 2022.2B1.19 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.19 Organizational Structure webpage](#)) of the University is maintained by the Office of the President and updated throughout the academic year.

Fairmont State's long-standing continuous improvement efforts are reflected in the value it places on HLC accreditation and specialized program accreditation. Individuals interested in the university's continuous evaluation and improvement have a variety of options to review those activities, including access to program accreditation information (Exhibit 2022.2B1.20 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.20 Accreditation Information webpage](#)), an overview of the assessment process (Exhibit 2022.2B1.21 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.21 Assessment Process Information webpage](#)), copies of program reviews (Exhibit 2022.2B1.22 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.22 Program Review Information](#)), and lists of program-specific student learning outcomes (Exhibit 2022.2B1.23 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.23 Student Learning Outcomes webpage](#)). Specialized accreditation information is readily available for the Colleges of Business & Aviation (Exhibit 2022.2B1.24 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.24 CoBA ACBSP Accreditation webpage](#)),

Education (Exhibit 2022.2B1.25 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.25 Education CAEP Accreditation webpage](#)), Nursing (Exhibit 2022.2B1.26 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.26 Nursing ACEN Accreditation webpage](#)), Architecture (Exhibit 2022.2B1.27 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.27 Architecture NAAB Accreditation webpage](#)), Engineering (Exhibit 2022.2B1.28 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.28 Engineering ABET Accreditation webpage](#)), and Occupational Safety (Exhibit 2022.2B1.29 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.29 Occupational Safety ABET Accreditation webpage](#)). Students interested in fields that require licensure can access the information through links on Fairmont State's website (Exhibit 2022.2B1.30 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.30 Licensure Disclosure webpage](#)).

Fairmont State is transparent and accessible to its stakeholders. Students, employees, and the larger community have access to a plethora of information through numerous sources. Fairmont State has a strong internet presence and uses its website (*See e.g.*, Exhibit 2022.2B1.01) and social media to communicate with others. The university has main accounts on Facebook (Exhibit 2022.2B1.02 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.02 FSU Facebook page.pdf](#)), Twitter (Exhibit 2022.2B1.03 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.03 FSU Admissions Tweet](#)), Instagram (Exhibit 2022.2B1.04 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.04.pdf FSU Instagram post](#)), and YouTube (Exhibit 2022.2B1.05 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.05 FSU YouTube link](#)). Departments within the university also have accounts, for example, Falcon Center (Exhibit 2022.2B1.06 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.06 Falcon Center webpage](#)), Intramurals (Exhibit 2022.2B1.07 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.07 Intermurals webpage](#)), and Folk Life Center (Exhibit 2022.2B1.08 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.08 Folklife Center webpage](#)). Recruitment and admissions activities are accessible through numerous resources, including dual enrollment (Evidence 2022.2B1.09 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.09 Falcon Fast Track webpage](#)), online applications (Evidence 2022.2B1.10 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.10 Online Admissions webpage](#)), and FAQs (Evidence 2022.2B1.11 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.11 Admissions FAQs webpage](#)). The University Media Relations department conducts periodic audits of social media accounts and provides information concerning those accounts to the institutional leadership for review and discussion. (Exhibit 2022.2B1.12 - Social Media Audit/Inventory from URM [Exhibit 2022.2B1.12 URM Social Media Inventory](#)), and ensures that all statistical data used for marketing publications and purposes comes directly from institutional research (Exhibit 2022.2B1.12a [Exhibit 2022.2B1.12a Confirmation email for data for recruiting](#)). Additionally, this abundance of information from numerous sources across platforms creates an additional type of check and balance that permits the public to compare and verify the information provided across programs and departments.

Fairmont State's undergraduate and graduate academic catalogs from the 2013-2014 academic year forward are available online (**Exhibit** 2022.2B1.13 Online Catalogues [Exhibit 2022.2B1.13 Online Catalogues webpage](#)); new catalogs are published every Summer for the upcoming academic year. Select digitized academic catalogs dating back to 1876 are also available. All degree program requirements, course offerings, course schedules, academic regulations, fees, tuition, room and board costs, and the academic organization of Colleges and the University are included in the catalogs. Institutional Research & Effectiveness (Exhibit 2022.2B1.14 [Exhibit 2022.2B1.14 Institutional Research and Effectiveness webpage](#)) publishes the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System reports, dating back to 2001, Data Feedback Reports, dating back to 2005, HEPC enrollment reports, and other reports related to student engagement, accreditation, and graduate outcomes.

Core Component 2B.2

Students' educational experiences and the institution's broad community activities are guided by the

University's mission to educate global citizen leaders in an environment distinguished by a commitment to excellence, student success, and transformational impact. The specific processes and structures in place to ensure the ethics and integrity of research and educational activities is more thoroughly addressed in Component 2E; but, the university's commitment to its mission and to providing the public readily available evidence to support the fulfillment of that commitment is illustrated by this sampling of educational, research and engagement opportunities for students and the larger community:

- To expand access to its programs and increase the percentage of college-educated citizens, the university offers dual enrollment (Exhibit 2022.2B2.01 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.01 Dual Enrollment-Falcon FastTrack webpage](#)) for high school and homeschool students. Additionally, prospective students have a variety of methods for joining the university, including getting admissions information (Exhibit 2022.2B2.02 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.02 Admissions webpage](#)), completing an online application (Exhibit 2022.2B2.03 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.03 Online Application webpage](#)), and visiting the FAQ website (Exhibit 2022.2B2.04 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.04 Applying FAQs webpage](#)). Additional resources include checklists (Exhibit 2022.2B2.05 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.04 Applying FAQs webpage](#)) to help with the application process and tailored information for high schoolers (Exhibit 2022.2B2.05 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.05 Timelines-Checklistswebpage](#)).
- Fairmont State's Honors Program (Exhibit 2022.2B2.07 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.06 Honors Program webpage](#)) provides a unique curriculum, focused advising, study abroad opportunities, and directed research to prepare students for engagement in global communities after graduation. Students needing additional assistance in their courses are encouraged to work with their professors and take advantage of the Learning Enrichment & Academic Development Center (Exhibit 2022.2B2.08 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.08 LEAD Center webpage](#)). The LEAD Center logged 759 students and 750 students participating in tutoring during the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters, respectively, with 100% of students reporting that they would recommend the services to a friend. A pilot program aimed at providing directed academic coaching, workshops, and tutoring to students with previous academic suspensions during the 2020-2021 academic year found that participating students increased their cumulative GPA by 0.29 points.
- Fairmont State students have a wide range of opportunities outside the classroom. The university keeps a record of the registered student organizations (Exhibit 2022.2B2.09 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.09 Student Organization webpage](#)), club sports (Exhibit 2022.2B2.10 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.10 Club Sports webpage](#)), student-athlete advisory council (Exhibit 2022.2B2.11 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.11 Student Athlete Advisory Committee webpage](#)), student government (Exhibit 2022.2B2.12 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.12 Student Government webpage](#)), and other campus life activities (Exhibit 2022.2B2.13 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.13 Campus Life webpage](#)). Fairmont State's student athletes and teams have earned recognition at the local, regional, and national levels. Students interested in mental health can participate in the Active Minds (Exhibit 2022.2B2.14 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.14 Active Minds-Counseling webpage - Copy](#)) chapter, a national organization dedicated to reducing stigma and promoting mental wellbeing.
- Despite no longer offering undergraduate degrees in music or theater, the university offers many opportunities to participate in the fine arts and other cultural enrichment activities. Offerings include marching band (Exhibit 2022.2B2.15 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.15 Marching Band webpage](#)), Academy for the Arts (Exhibit 2022.2B2.16 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.16 Academy for the Arts webpage](#)), and community theater (Exhibit 2022.2B2.17 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.17 Community Theater webpage](#)). Students can also minor in studio art (Exhibit 2022.2B2.18 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.18 Studio Arts webpage](#)), art education (Exhibit 2022.2B2.19 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.19 Art Education webpage](#)), art history (Exhibit 2022.2B2.20 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.20 Art HIstory webpage](#)), folklore studies (Exhibit 2022.2B2.21 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.21 Folklore minor](#)

- [webpage](#)), and museum studies (Exhibit 2022.2B2.22 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.22 Museum Studies webpage](#)), student publications (Exhibit 2022.2B2.23 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.23 Student Publications webpage](#)), including The Columns (newspaper), The Mound (yearbook), and Whetstone (literary and art journal). Students participate in art exploration (Exhibit 2022.2B2.24 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.24 Murals webpage](#)) and design murals celebrating the local history and cultures (Exhibit 2022.2B2.25 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.25 Art Exploration webpage](#)) of North Central West Virginia. In June 2022, the university's Academy for the Arts was awarded \$10,000 (Exhibit 2022.2B2.26 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.26 Art Academy Grant](#)) to increase participation in art-related educational experiences.
- Fairmont State fosters research and academic activities, including the WV Literary Symposium (Exhibit 2022.2B2.27 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.27 Literary Symposium webpage](#)), undergraduate research (Exhibit 2022.2B2.28 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.28 Celebration of Student Scholarship](#)), and Health Sciences & Technology Academy Science Symposium (Exhibit 2022.2B2.29 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.29 Health Sciences -Technology Academy](#)). Additionally, students routinely participate in Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol (Exhibit 2022.2B2.30 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.30 Undergrad Research Day at the Capitol](#)).
 - The Open Source Intelligence Exchange (OSIX) (Exhibit 2022.2B2.31 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.31 OSIX webpage](#)) is the applied-research element of Fairmont State University's National Security and Intelligence Studies (NSIS) Program. Working with faculty mentors, students leverage open-source information, including social media, to identify and assess national security and public safety threats. Past and current OSIX partners include federal, state, and local agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations.
 - The Career Development Center (Exhibit 2022.2B2.32 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.32 Career Development webpage](#)) provides civic engagement and volunteer opportunities. The university's Folk Life Center (Exhibit 2022.2B2.33 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.33 Folklife Center](#)) offers educational and cultural events in person and virtually. Individual programs and courses offer students many opportunities to work with the larger community, such as meeting holiday needs of children (Exhibit 2022.2B2.34 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.34 Christmas with a Falcon webpage](#)), community health needs assessments (Exhibit 2022.2B2.35 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.35 Community Health Needs Assessment webpage](#)), and increasing awareness about important issues such as MLK Day of Service (Exhibit 2022.2B2.36 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.36 MLK Day Service webpage](#)), food insecurity (Exhibit 2022.2B2.37 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.37 Psi Chi Food Insecurity webpage](#)), geography (Exhibit 2022.2B2.38 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.38 GIS-Geography Awareness webpage](#)), and sustainability (Exhibit 2022.2B2.39 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.39 Sustainability Projects webpage](#)).
 - SciTech offers the Forensic and Analytical Chemistry Technology (FACT) Camp (Exhibit 2022.2B2.40 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.40 Forensics and Analytical Chemistry Camp webpage](#)) in the summer to encourage 5th-8th grade students to consider careers in STEM. In January 2022, the University received \$749,693 from the National Science Foundation (Exhibit 2022.2B2.41 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.41 NSF LowIncome STEM major gran](#)) to develop programming designed to further support low-income students pursuing education in STEM fields. The College of Nursing provides a summer academy (Exhibit 2022.2B2.42 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.42 Summer Nursing Academy for HS Students](#)) to introduce high school students to nursing and other healthcare professions. During the summer of 2022, the university hosted the Governor's Honors Academy (Exhibit 2022.2B2.43 [Exhibit 2022.2B2.43 Governor Honors Academy webpage](#)) for rising high school seniors from around the state.

Sources

- Exhibit 2022.2B.1.15a BOG Approval of Tuition - Fees- Program Reviews Minutes May 5 2022
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.02 FSU Facebook page.pdf
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.03 FSUAdmissions_Tweet
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.04.pdf FSU Instagram post
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.05 FSU YouTube link
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.06 Falcon Center webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.07 Intermurals webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.08 Folklife Center webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.09 Falcon Fast Track webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.10 Online Admissions webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.11 Admissions FAQs webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.12 URM Social Media Inventory
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.12a Confirmation email for data for recruiting
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.13 Online Catalogues webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.14 Institutional Research and Effectiveness webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.15 Cost of Attendance webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.16 Net Price Calculator
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.17 Administrative and Fiscal Affairs webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.17a Email distributing BOG Book before meeting
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.18 BOG webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.19 Organizational Structure webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.20 Accreditation Information webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.21 Assessment Process Information webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.22 Program Review Information
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.23 Student Learning Outcomes webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.24 CoBA ACBSP Accreditation webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.25 Education CAEP Accreditation webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.26 Nursing ACEN Accreditation webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.27 Architecture NAAB Accreditation webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.28 Engineering ABET Accreditation webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B1.30 Licensure Disclosure webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.01 Dual Enrollment-Falcon FastTrack webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.02 Admissions webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.03 Online Application webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.04 Applying FAQs webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.05 Timelines-Checklistswebpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.06 Honors Program webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.07 Honors Program webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.08 LEAD Center webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.09 Student Organization webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.10 Club Sports webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.11 Student Athlete Advisory Committee webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.12 Student Government webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.13 Campus Life webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.14 Active Minds-Counseling webpage - Copy
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.15 Marching Band webpage

- Exhibit 2022.2B2.16 Academy for the Arts webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.17 Community Theater webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.18 Studio Arts webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.19 Art Education webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.20 Art History webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.21 Folklore minor webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.22 Museum Studies webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.23 Student Publications webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.24 Murals webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.25 Art Exploration webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.26 Art Academy Grant
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.27 Literary Symposium webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.28 Celebration of Student Scholarship
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.29 Health Sciences -Technology Academy
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.30 Undergrad Research Day at the Capitol
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.31 OSIX webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.32 Career Development webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.33 Folklife Center
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.34 Christmas with a Falcon webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.35 Community Health Needs Assessment webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.36 MLK Day Service webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.37 Psi Chi Food Insecurity webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.38 GIS-Geography Awareness webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.39 Sustainability Projects webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.40 Forensics and Analytical Chemistry Camp webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.41 NSF LowIncome STEM major grant
- Exhibit 2022.2B2.42 Summer Nursing Academy for HS Students

2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Argument

Core Component 2.C.

The autonomy of the Board of Governors (the "BOG") and the integrity of institutional decisions and operations is assured through compliance with state statutes, regulations, and BOG policies. To ensure its autonomy, Chapter 18B of the West Virginia Code delegates to the BOG the power and duty to "determine, control, supervise and manage the financial, business and education policies and affairs of [Fairmont State]" (See Chapter 18B-2A-4, [Exhibit 2022 C2-1 Chapter 18B WV Code p.88.](#)) West Virginia law, Chapter 18B-2A-1(5)m, mandates sufficient institutional resources be made available to the BOG for conducting its business. [See [Exhibit 2022 C2-1 Chapter 18B WV Code, p. 86](#)].

The BOG is comprised of 12 members as required by state statute. Nine lay members are nominated by the governor, with the advice and consent of the senate. No more than five of those lay members can be from the same political party and, in making the appointments, the governor is required to consider the institutional mission; diversity; the need for individual skills, knowledge and experience relevant to the institution; and the need for awareness and understanding of institutional problems and priorities, including those related to research, teaching and outreach. [Chapter 18B of the West Virginia Code 22A-1, See [Exhibit 2022 C2-1 Chapter 18B WV Code , pp. 82-84](#), and [Exhibit 2022 C2.-3 Listing of Current BOG Members webpage](#)]

Core Component 2.C.1

The BOG is regularly trained to build and maintain an understanding of its duties, responsibilities, obligations and powers as specified in Chapter 18B-1D-9. [See [Exhibit 2022 C2-1 Chapter 18B WV Code, p. 64](#), and, e.g., [Exhibit 2022 C2.1-2 Board Retreat](#), [Exhibit 2022 C2.1-3 Board Retreat](#), [Exhibit 2022 C2.1-4 Board Retreat](#), [Exhibit 2022.C.1-5 Board Training](#)].

The BOG meets regularly; as do its standing committees: executive committee, academic affairs committee, athletic affairs committee, bylaws committee, finance committee, and enrollment,

housing and student life committee. [See BOG Agenda and Minutes, and Committee Agendas Exhibits 2022 C2.1-6. [Exhibit 2022 C2.1-6 BOG Meeting Dates and Procedures](#)] Through this structure and schedule of meetings, the BOG meets with administration official and maintains continuous review and oversight of financial and academic policies and practices on campus.

Core Component 2.C.2

West Virginia Code ensures that the “academic expertise and institutional experience” of a duly elected faculty member and a duly student of the institution, as well as “the technical or professional expertise and institutional experience” of a duly elected member of the staff. [See Exhibit 2022 C2-1, Chapter 18B-2A-a through c, pp.82-84. [Exhibit 2022 C2-1 Chapter 18B WV Code](#)] Additionally, in making appointments of the nine lay members of the boards, the governor, with the advice and consent of the senate is required to consider “an awareness and understanding of the issues facing the institution”

As reflected in Core Component 2.A.1, the BOG approves and adopts the institution’s mission state, and is guided by those considerations in its actions and deliberations. For example, acting in accordance with the institutional “commitment to excellence, student success, and transformational impact”, the BOG endorsed and pursued the institutional objective of obtaining limited administrative exemptions under of HEPC Series 64 [Exhibit 2022 C2.2-3 HEPC Series 64 Administrative Exemption](#) and [Exhibit 2022-C2-2 Administrative Exemption HEPC-Special-Meeting-7-19-2021](#). The net result of the administrative exemption is to permit the institution to be more responsive and develop new academic programs more quickly and efficiently, and to address corollary facilities needs and capital projects with fewer steps and less red-tape. Similarly, the BOG is required by state law to “[i]nvolve faculty, students and classified employees in institution-level planning and decision making when those groups are affected.” See, Chapter 18B-2A-4(j), [Exhibit 2022 C2-1 Chapter 18B WV Code](#), p. 90)

Core Component 2.C.3

The composition of the BOG is designed to ensure that the interests of all of the institution’s internal and external constituencies are regularly heard and considered in its decision-making. The statutory requirements seek to infuse the BOG with the breadth of perspective necessary for effective decision-making.

Chapter 18B-2A-1 mandates that of nine (9) lay members on the BOG, five (5) must reside in West Virginia and no more than five may be from the same political party. [See [Exhibit 2022 C2-1 Chapter 18B WV Code, p. 84.](#)] The requirement of in-state residency for a majority of members safeguards the BOG’s awareness and consideration of matters relevant or of concern in West Virginia higher education, economic development and governance; while the authority to appoint member residing in other states enriches the range of experience and perspective the BOG members bring to the discussion. Similarly, the limitation as to political affiliation mitigates against the risk of a skewed view in BOG considerations.

The capacity of the BOG is further strengthened by the statutory mandate that, in making the lay appointments, the Chapter 18B-2A-1 requires the Governor to consider diversity; institutional mission, problems and priorities--including teaching, research and outreach; and characteristics such as individual members skills, knowledge and experience relevant to the institution. [See, Chapter 18B-2A-4(a), [Exhibit 2022 C2-1 Chapter 18B WV Code, p.84](#) and [Exhibit 2022 C2.3-2 About BOG webpage](#)]

Again, to enhance the BOG's ability make decisions in the best interest of the institution, state statute mandates that the state's interest is best served by inclusion on the BOG members representing Fairmont States internal constituencies. A member elected by the faculty brings "academic expertise and institutional experience," a member elected by the staff brings "technical or professional expertise and institutional experience, and a member elected by the students, who ensures consideration of the students interests. [See Exhibit 2022-C2-1, Chapter 18B-2A-4(a), p.82-83 [Exhibit 2022 C2-1 Chapter 18B WV Code](#)] The members bring the perspective, issues and concerns of key internal stakeholder to all committee and board discussions. [See, Exhibit 2022-C2.3-3 Committees | About Fairmont State University [Exhibit 2022 C2.3-3 BOG Committees webpage](#)]

Core Component 2.C.4

Chapter 18B of the West Virginia Code insulates board members from undue influence and protects their ability to exercise independent judgement in the best interest of the institution by mandating that board member cannot be removed "except for official misconduct, incompetence, neglect of duty or gross immorality and then only in the manner prescribed by law for removal of the state elected officials by the Governor. Similarly, Chapter 18B of the West Virginia Code ensures that resources are available to support the BOG [See 2022-2C-1, Chapter 18B-2A-(d)1(3) and (5), p.86. [Exhibit 2022 C2-1 Chapter 18B WV Code](#)], which provides that "the president of the institution shall make available resources of the institution for conducting the business of its board of governors."

Core Component 2.C.5

West Virginia Code vests in the BOG the authority to determine, control, supervise and manage the financial, business and educational policies and affairs of Fairmont State. [See, Chapter 18B-2A-4(a), [Exhibit 2022 C2-1 Chapter 18B WV Code, p. 88.](#)] The BOG through its delegation of authority policy properly delegates sufficient authority to administration to manage the institutions day-to-day management, while maintaining its proper policy and oversight responsibilities. [See BOG Policy [Exhibit 2022-C2.5-2 Delegation of Powers Resolution](#)]

Sources

- Exhibit 2022 C2.1-2 Board Retreat
- Exhibit 2022 C2.1-3 Board Retreat
- Exhibit 2022 C2.1-4 Board Retreat
- Exhibit 2022 C2.1-6 BOG Meeting Dates and Procedures
- Exhibit 2022 C2.2-3 HEPC Series 64 Administrative Exemption
- Exhibit 2022 C2.-3 Listing of Current BOG Members webpage
- Exhibit 2022 C2.3-2 About BOG webpage
- Exhibit 2022 C2.3-3 BOG Committees webpage
- Exhibit 2022 C2-1 Chapter 18B WV Code
- Exhibit 2022 C2-2 Rules and Policies -WVHEPC
- Exhibit 2022.C.1-5 Board Training
- Exhibit 2022-C2.5-2 Delegation of Powers Resolution
- Exhibit 2022-C2-2 Administrative Exemption HEPC-Special-Meeting-7-19-2021

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

Core Component 2.D.

Fairmont State University has a long history of valuing shared governance, academic freedom, and freedom of expression. While we continually review and refine processes and policies related to those quintessential academic ideals, the institution meets the standards of compliance for criterion 2.D of HLC Criterion 2.

The Fairmont State University Board of Governors (BOG) is the statutorily designated governing body of the University. The BOG recently renewed and updated a long-standing policy directly related to freedom of expression at the University. BOG Policy GA-04 recognizes the right of free speech and assembly with only content neutral, reasonable time, place and manner restrictions. As the BOG policy expressly recognizes, Fairmont State "recognizes that the primary purpose of higher education is to use research, teaching, and public services as means to discover and disseminate knowledge [; t]he University is committed to fulfilling this charge through a free interchange of ideas within the campus community." ([Exhibit 2022 2D-2 BOG GA-04 Freedom of Expression Policy](#))

The Fairmont State University Faculty Senate meets monthly and receives reports and updates from the President of the University, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the faculty's elected BOG representative, as well as from variety of other individuals as Senate topics necessitate. Following such reports, the Senate utilizes open forums and agenda items designated for discussion as methods of free expression for all members of the campus community. Robust and intense discussions frequently occur at Senate meetings regarding topics of import to the institution. Every member of the senate and its guests are provided the opportunity to speak and provide opinions. The Faculty Senate webpage communicates all Senate business and contains an archive of agendas, meetings, documents. ([Exhibit 2022 2D-4 Faculty Senate webpage](#).) Similarly, open expression and a vigorous exchange of ideas is fostered through student organizations such as Student Government Association, Black Student Union, Falcons with Pride. ([Exhibit 2022-2D-6 Student Organizations webpage](#)) Likewise, Staff Council provides the opportunity for staff to express ideas and concerns, and to help shape campus culture. ([Exhibit 2022-2D-7 Staff Council webpage](#))

The Faculty Handbook represents an excellent example of shared governance that protects the values of academic freedom and freedom of expression. It was recently revised by a committee consisting of faculty and administrative representatives, adopted by the Fairmont State University Faculty Senate, and approved by the BOG. ([Exhibit 2022 2D-3 Faculty Handbook 2022-2023](#), p. 2.) The Handbook recognizes [a]cademic freedom is the indispensable requisite for unfettered teaching and research in institutions of higher education." ([Exhibit 2022 2D-3 Faculty Handbook 2022-2023](#), p. 35.) the section addressing academic freedom also recognizes the concomitant responsibility of faculty to be good citizens of the community, to follow the rules and regulations of the institution regarding pecuniary gain from research conducted as a faculty member, the responsibility to contribute to "institutional and departmental missions in teaching, research, and service as defined by the

institution” and the responsibility to respect the rights of every member of the campus community, in and out of the classroom. ([Exhibit 20222 2D-3 Faculty_Handbook_2022-2023](#), p. 35.)

The freedom of expression and academic freedom actions and activities of the BOG, the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, student organizations, and the entire campus community consistent with mandates of relevant statutory provisions and administrative regulations in West Virginia. W.Va. Code § 18B-1-1 *et seq.* provides the statutory framework for institutions of higher education in West Virginia. ([Exhibit 2022-2C-1 Chapter 18B WV Code](#)) §18B-20-2 defines and illustrates protected expressive activities. ([Exhibit 2022-2D-Selected Sections of Chapter 18B WV Code](#) p1.) §18B-20-3 prohibits the establishment of “free speech zones” on campus and recognizes the inherent limitation such zones place on free speech and expression. ([Exhibit 2022-2D-Selected Sections of Chapter 18B WV Code](#), p. 1.) §18B-20-4 empowers institutions to create reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions and § 18B-20-5 provides for freedom of association and nondiscrimination against students and student organizations. ([Exhibit 2022-2D-Selected Sections of Chapter 18B WV Code](#) pp. 1-2.)

W.Va. Code § 18B-1B-1 establishes the Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) and § 18B-1B-6 provides for a broad range of rule-making authority for the HEPC ([Exhibit 2022-2C-1 Chapter 18B WV Code](#), pp. 34 and 48.) Pursuant to that authority HEPC has enacted Title 133, Series 9 relating in part to academic freedom and professional responsibility ([Exhibit 2022 2D-5 HEPC Series 9 Academic Freedom.](#)) BOG Policy and the Faculty Handbook are consistent in language, implementation, and spirit with the Code and Series 9.

Sources

- Exhibit 2022 2D-2 BOG GA-04 Freedom of Expression Policy
- Exhibit 2022 2D-4 Faculty Senate webpage
- Exhibit 2022 2D-5 HEPC Series 9 Academic Freedom
- Exhibit 20222 2D-3 Faculty_Handbook_2022-2023
- Exhibit 2022-2C-1 Chapter 18B WV Code
- Exhibit 2022-2D-6 Student Organizations webpage
- Exhibit 2022-2D-7 Staff Council webpage
- Exhibit 2022-2D-Selected Sections of Chapter 18B WV Code

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

Argument

Core Component 2.E.1

Fairmont State University supports basic and applied research while instituting institutional schemas that ensure regulatory compliance, ethical behavior, and fiscal accountability in research activity. The University has an established policy on research (Exhibit 2022.2.E.1.1 [Exhibit 2022.2.E.1.1 Policy on Human Research webpage](#)) and an active Institutional Review Board (IRB) comprised of faculty from multiple disciplines across all Colleges of the University (Exhibit 2022.2.E.1.2 [Exhibit 2022.2.E.1.2 IRB - Policy on Research webpage](#)); the IRB committee supplies training on Human Subjects research (Exhibit 2022.2.E.1.2 [Exhibit 2022.2.E.1.2 IRB - Policy on Research webpage](#) & Exhibit 2022.2.E.1.3 [Exhibit 2022.2.E.1.3 IRB By lawsProtocols & Training program website](#)) and also reviews and approves or disapproves human subject research projects for faculty, staff, and students. University employees, students, and collaborating community members conducting research must complete CITI Ethics Training (Exhibit 2022.2.E.1.3 [Exhibit 2022.2.E.1.3 IRB By lawsProtocols & Training program website](#)) and meet federal requirements(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018) prior to conducting research with human participants. To enhance fiscal accountability, the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs aids faculty, staff, and students in the administration of research projects including budgeting, planning, and implementation, and oversees the fiscal administration of internal and external research grants (Exhibit 2022.2.E.1.4 [Exhibit 2022.2.E.1.4 Grants and Sponsored Programs Info webpage](#)).

Core Component 2.E.2

Fairmont State provides support to all students and employees to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice. As described in Exhibit 2022.2.E.1.4 [Exhibit 2022.2.E.1.4 Grants and Sponsored Programs Info webpage](#), the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs aids faculty and students in the pursuit of grants and research opportunities. In addition to this office, the Ruth Ann Musick Library also serves as a major hub of support for student and faculty research activity and has staff and resources dedicated to multiple research and scholarly topics (Exhibit 2022.2.E.2.1 [Exhibit 2022.2.E.2.1 Library training on plagiarism and citations webpage](#)). Many research projects are highlighted through the Celebration of Student Scholarship (Exhibit 2022.2.E.2.2.a & Exhibit 2022.2.E.2.2.b [Exhibit 2022.2.E.2.2a and 2b Celebration of Student Scholarship](#)) (held annually in the spring semester) and student research presented at regional and national conferences (both

undergraduate and graduate).

Core Component 2.E.3

Fairmont State supports ethical research and promotes ethical scholarship. Within the IRB training program, there is a certification aimed specifically at guiding students through ethical research practices. (Exhibit 2022.2.E.1.4 [Exhibit 2022.2E.1.4 Grants and Sponsored Programs Info webpage](#)) Students, both Undergraduate and Graduate, conducting research involving human subjects must complete this training prior to initiating a research project. While the first-year seminar, SOAR Class (Exhibit 2022.2.E.3.1 [Exhibit 2022.2E.2.3.1 Explanation of SOAR classes](#)), provides instruction on ethical research practices and opportunities to use information systems on campus through its research methods module. Additionally the ENGL 1101 & 1102 required course series, implement appropriate integration and documentation of scholarly research materials. (Exhibit 2022.2.E.3.2 [Exhibit 2022.2E.2.3.2 Composition course sequence training statement](#)) Several degree programs require completion of subsequent coursework which focus on the ethics of research and use of information resources. A few of these courses include: CRIM 4400, CHEP 4440, PHED 4440, PSYC 3305, and SOCY 3360. (Exhibit 2022.2.E.3.3 - Course descriptions in catalog ([Exhibit 2022.2E.2.3.3 Examples of Research-Oriented Courses](#))).

Core Component 2.E.4

In the areas of academic honesty, plagiarism, citations, etc. Fairmont State utilizes multiple methods and platforms to educate students on appropriate and inappropriate conduct in academic matters. All entering freshmen are required to take a SOAR class (i.e. first-year seminar) which includes an entire module dedicated to understanding academic policies and ethical practices in scholarship (Exhibit 2022.2.E.3.1 [Exhibit 2022.2E.2.3.1 Explanation of SOAR classes](#)) . The student code of conduct (Exhibit 2022.2.E.4.1 [Exhibit 2022.2E.4.1 Student Code of Conduct webpage](#)), the student handbook (Exhibit 2022.2.E.4.2 & Exhibit 2022.2.E.4.3 [Exhibit 2022.2E.4.2-2022.2E.4.3 Student Handbook-Academic Dishonesty webpage](#) & Exhibit 2022.2.E.4.4 [Exhibit 2022.2E.4.4-2022.2E.4.5 Policy on Academic Integrity](#)), and common syllabus (Exhibit 2022.2.E.4.5 [Exhibit 2022.2E.4.4-2022.2E.4.5 Policy on Academic Integrity](#)) used across all courses provide students with detailed and consistent guidance on academic honesty. To enforce policies related to academic honesty, Fairmont State maintains an Office of Student Conduct charged with enforcing the institution's Student Code of Code. (Exhibit 2022.2.E.4.1 [Exhibit 2022.2E.4.1 Student Code of Conduct webpage](#)) The Office of Student Conduct investigates allegations and referrals from University personnel related to academic dishonesty, and provides for substantive rights, due process, and procedural transparency in disciplinary processes. A framework of progressive disciplinary actions for cases of academic dishonesty are included in the Student Code of Conduct from which the Director of Student Conduct or a designee make student disciplinary decisions.

Sources

- Exhibit 2022.2E.1.1 Policy on Human Research webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2E.1.2 IRB - Policy on Research webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2E.1.3 IRB By laws Protocols & Training program website
- Exhibit 2022.2E.1.4 Grants and Sponsored Programs Info webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2E.1.5 Training programs on plagiarism, citations, use of library resources, online research

- Exhibit 2022.2E.2.2.1 Library training on plagiarism and citations webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2E.2.2a and 2b Celebration of Student Scholarship
- Exhibit 2022.2E.2.3.1 Explanation of SOAR classes
- Exhibit 2022.2E.2.3.2 Composition course sequence training statement
- Exhibit 2022.2E.2.3.3 Examples of Research-Oriented Courses
- Exhibit 2022.2E.4.1 Student Code of Conduct webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2E.4.2-2022.2E.4.3 Student Handbook-Academic Dishonesty webpage
- Exhibit 2022.2E.4.4-2022.2E.4.5 Policy on Academic Integrity

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

Fairmont State has policies and processes designed to ensure ethical and responsible conduct on the part of all its key stakeholders. The institution has a long-established commitment to academic freedom and shared governance. While our institutional imperative is teaching excellence, we encourage and support faculty and students in ethical research efforts and robust experiential learning initiatives, with appropriate checks to maintain the integrity of those activities.

Our governing board follows sound oversight practices, as well as state law mandates, to safeguard the integrity of institutional practices, including financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary activities, while delegating to administration authority sufficient to permit it to properly develop, grow and manage university operations. While pandemic-related conditions and management transitions have contributed to staffing needs in some departments, sufficient oversight is in place to ensure proper and compliant practices. The governing board and institutional leadership are monitoring and assessing needs throughout the institution, recognizing an opportunity to review practices and develop areas in a thoughtful, strategic and responsible manner.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Argument

3.A.1. Fairmont State University offers degree programs at the associate, bachelor, and master levels that are current, rigorous, and relevant. Academic programs are housed within five colleges and twelve academic departments, offering a breadth of programs to students as reflected in various options, including majors, minors, concentrations, certificates, and specializations.

Admissions requirements are specific and appropriate to the level and type of degree program offered, as demonstrated through undergraduate-level standardized test scores (ACT, SAT) for the purposes of undergraduate admissions, and [specialized graduate-level program requirements](#) (GRE, exam, writing sample) for graduate-level admission. Upon admission to the University, student academic performance expectations differentiate between undergraduate and graduate degree programs. A cumulative 2.0 grade point average (GPA) is required to maintain satisfactory academic progress in all undergraduate degree programs, whereas a 3.0 GPA is required to progress and graduate from any graduate degree program. The University maintains credit hour, academic load, and course regulations for both undergraduate and graduate coursework.

The rigor and relevance of courses and programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels are supported through the external accreditation process, the internal program review process, and various curriculum/course review processes. The Fairmont State University [accredited programs](#) that demonstrate clear evidence of that they are current and rigorous include Business, [Education](#), Nursing, and Engineering. In 2020, the Architecture program received [initial candidacy with the National Association of Architectural Accrediting Board \(NAAB\)](#); if successful, the Architecture program will be the only accredited architecture program available in the state of West Virginia. In addition, the quality of Fairmont State's programs can be demonstrated by the pass rate of students and graduates on state and national licensure/certification exams ([Education Praxis pass rates](#), [Nursing exam pass rates](#)).

All undergraduate and graduate programs, regardless of delivery mode, are reviewed on a five-year

cycle as mandated by the [West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission \(WVHEPC\) Series 10 Policy](#), which includes a program self-study evaluating the viability, adequacy, and necessity of the course, along with its consistency with/relevance to the University mission. All non-accredited programs complete a [comprehensive program review](#) that includes a longitudinal analysis of curriculum, assessment of student learning, student course performance data, faculty productivity, and relevance to external demand and labor market projections. The [Program Review Council \(PRC\)](#) and an external reviewer also evaluates the currency of non-accredited programs as part of the program review process. The process of program review is complimentary to accreditation review by the HLC and other U.S. Department of Education-recognized regional or national accrediting agencies and to the reviews of professional accreditors.

[Departments review curricula](#) and course offerings as needed with attention given to preparing students to meet learning outcomes and/or professional standards. Course and curricular changes begin with faculty and are initiated at the program and department level and transition to the College Dean and then through the University's [curriculum review and approval process](#).

The Office of the Provost in collaboration with the [University Curriculum Committee](#) provides faculty leadership for the development and evaluation of undergraduate-level, credit-bearing courses and curriculum. The Curriculum Committee is comprised of one faculty member from each department, the University Registrar, and the Associate Provost of Academic Affairs. The [Committee's functions](#) are to:

- Act on all [curriculum proposals](#) that have been recommended by a college, department or unit and reported to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- Act as the primary curriculum body for proposals concerning the Honors Program, the Library, and the Office of the Provost.
- Act upon any appeals from Deans, Chairpersons, or other members of the Faculty concerning the disposition of curriculum proposals.
- Undertake research into the successes and failures of the University curriculum.
- Develop guidelines that will assist the University in curriculum development.

[New courses](#) and specific course revisions that are reviewed and evaluated through the curricular process [e.g., course level changes (e.g., 2000 level to a 3000-level course), credit hour changes, learning outcomes changes] require the submission of a [new course proposal](#) accompanied by course learning outcomes, assessment of the outcomes, and a two-level course content outline. The [course evaluation process](#) ensures academic credit-bearing courses are current, rigorous, and relevant to higher education and to the degree program. Recommendations of the Curriculum Committee are sent to the Faculty Senate for final approval.

Program planning at Fairmont State is an ongoing process informed by regional and state demands, student needs, and/or program review findings. To ensure programs are current and appropriately rigorous, proposals for new degree programs require both an [intent to plan](#) and a [full program proposal](#) which evaluates educational outcomes, student needs, and employment demands. New undergraduate degree programs, majors, concentrations, certificates, and any programmatic changes in delivery modality must be [approved internally by the Board of Governors \(BOG\)](#) after being recommended by the Curriculum Committee and Faculty Senate, and before transitioning to the Higher Learning Commission for final approval.

The Office of Graduate Studies, in collaboration with the Graduate Council, provides leadership in [the development and evaluation](#) of all graduate-level courses and curricula, monitors the quality,

rigor and relevance of graduate programs, and oversees policies and processes governing graduate education ([Graduate Studies Governance document](#)). New master's programs, concentrations and certificates must be approved internally by the University Graduate Council and BOG before transitioning to the Higher Learning Commission for final approval.

The Office of the Provost, in collaboration with the [General Studies Committee](#) and Director of General Education, provides leadership and coordination of the [Core Curriculum](#). The [charge of the General Studies Committee](#) is to

- Review courses submitted for inclusion in the Core Curriculum.
- Create and oversee Core Curriculum learning outcomes
- Manage assessment data on the effectiveness of the Core Curriculum and conduct a program assessment review on a five-year cycle.
- Formulate, review and maintain policies and procedures to operate the Core Curriculum.

New courses submitted for the Core Curriculum are reviewed and evaluated by the General Studies Committee using a [course assessment rubric](#). All new courses must be at the 1000-2000 level, include measurable learning outcomes based on relevant Bloom's Taxonomy cognitive skills, and be appropriate and aligned assessments (direct measures) for the course level. Core Curriculum courses report annually to the General Education Director on data collected and course improvements made based on their evaluation of that data. Those courses are evaluated by the General Studies Committee on a five-year cycle under the direction of the General Education Director as part of the [course recertification](#) process.

The *West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission* (WVHEPC) also recognizes the currency and rigor of general studies courses at Fairmont State and other WV colleges and universities through transfer agreements. The [General Studies transfer agreement](#) includes Fairmont State core curriculum courses that have been evaluated by faculty content experts across WV institutions to ensure the course learning outcomes, objectives, and contact hours of these courses are equivalent to the same courses offered at other WV institutions.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Operations assists by reviewing and approving assessment plans for new academic programs and supporting campus-wide assessment activities in coordination with the academic program review schedule. All academic programs must maintain assessment plans that include:

1. Measurable student learning outcomes inclusive of appropriate level of thinking based on Blooms Taxonomy;
2. Assessment map showing how learning outcomes were assessed;
3. Assessment outcomes and targets met;
4. Assessment timelines;
5. Summary of assessment findings.

These requirements are met annually through two distinct and interrelated phases of assessment. First, college-designated faculty review and develop measures for collecting data in order to evaluate established student learning outcomes (SLOs) for their academic programs. At the conclusion of the academic year, faculty analyze data from these measures to assess how and if desired SLOs are being achieved, and then make recommendations for improvement in the future. [Degree program level assessment](#) is completed in TaskStream.

Additionally, many existing courses are assessed through two iterative processes to determine if students are performing at appropriate levels. First, the primary or designated instructor of the course reviews and/or updates their SLOs and then selects measures for collecting data to evaluate student performance. In some cases, these measures may be the same as those utilized for degree program assessment. While there are currently no established institutional deadlines for course-level assessment, the Office of the Provost highly encourages faculty to work with their department chairs and deans to establish milestones and processes that are appropriate to the nature of the course.

[Course level assessment](#) is also completed within [TaskStream](#).

3.A.2. The University articulates distinct [learning outcomes](#) for all current Certificate, Associate, Bachelor's, post-Bachelor's, and Master's degree programs. Learning outcomes and performance expectations are established by the faculty at the [program and/or course planning and approval phase](#) and are maintained throughout the lifetime of the curricula and degree programs. To maintain the consistency of its mission and its liberal arts heritage, Fairmont State's Core Curriculum ensures that Bachelor's degree programs all offer a consistent breadth and depth of both knowledge and skills for students as they hone their abilities within their majors and advance as global citizens leaders. Core curriculum courses must meet the foundational criteria outlined in the [new core curriculum course application](#), including having 1000 or 2000 level prefix code, and no additional prerequisites requirements except for those expected in the core curriculum (e.g., ENGL 1102), and measurable learning outcomes.

In order to further evaluate desired skills as well as the personal development and learning of undergraduate students, Fairmont State University participates in [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#) reporting. Data is collected from four-year institutions nationally on students at the first-year and senior level; this data can be used both internally and externally to assess and compare topics such as academic advising, development of transferable skills, global learning, and inclusiveness and engagement with cultural diversity.

Graduate-level degree and certificate programs require graduate students to acquire the specialized disciplinary competencies associated with their respective field of study upon graduation. Graduate program learning outcomes are clearly articulated in the graduate catalog ([M.Ed. Exercise Science learning outcomes](#)). Appropriately credentialed faculty are empowered to develop SLOs appropriate to the specialized needs of the degree program, while maintaining a level of rigor appropriate to the credential. The differentiation of learning outcomes from the undergraduate to the graduate level is supported and enforced by through the curriculum proposal development process, the new program and new course review process, and the five-year program review process.

The [Graduate Education outcomes](#) demonstrate that all graduates from a Fairmont State University Master's Program have the ability to:

- Think logically and consistently
- Integrate and synthesize knowledge
- Access up-to-date knowledge and information within the discipline
- Communicate in a clear, consistent, and logical manner, both orally and in writing
- Understand the interrelationships between their discipline and others
- Be aware of and prepared to deal with ethical dilemmas within their profession
- Apply their knowledge of the discipline to real life situations
- Adapt to the increasingly dynamic requirements of their profession and their workplace.

The [Program Review Council \(PRC\)](#), with an external reviewer, evaluates the currency, level of

rigor, and learning outcomes of all academic program across all academic levels and delivery modes at Fairmont State as part of the [five-year program review cycle](#). The PRC's review and evaluation of the program's self-study includes, but is not limited to, the following curriculum components:

- The curriculum is aligned with national standards. If not, there is an explanation as to why no such alignment exists.
- There is a summary of degree requirements, including information on
 - Program description
 - Mission, purpose, goals of the program
 - Degree program requirements
- The curriculum reflects a progressive challenge to students and that depth and rigor effectively prepare students for careers or advanced study.
- The student learning outcomes for the program are measurable and provide a description of what the student will be able to do.
- Student program learning outcomes include higher level thinking action verbs (e.g., apply, interpret, analyze, evaluate, create, develop, etc.).
- The program has a well-articulated assessment plan showing how student learning outcomes will be assessed, and how improvements based on findings will be implemented. There is clear evidence the program has collected, analyzed, and used data for improvement.

The Provost/VP of Academic Affairs or Board of Governors (BOG) may request a one-year follow-up report if curriculum or other specific program deficiencies were found as part of the program review evaluation process. The Provost and Associate Provost meet with the faculty and chair of each academic program and provide a general synopsis of findings and specific recommendations for program improvement and follow-up reporting ([Spanish Program Recommendations](#)). All FSU academic programs reviews and actions taken are housed on the [BOG website repository](#).

3.A.3. All academic programs and course offerings are held to the same rigorous academic standards and are subject to the same faculty governance processes, regardless of delivery modality and location. All undergraduate programs at the University have one location and one primary delivery mode with the majority of course offerings on-campus. Graduate-level programs are delivered through one modality, either face-to-face or 100% online. Fairmont State does not have a separate set of degree programs offered at additional locations.

The University maintains a dual-credit population through the [Falcon FastTrack \(FFT\) Program](#) supported by the Associate Provost of Academic Operations/Director of Falcon FastTrack Programming. The FFT program allows eligible high school students to enroll in Fairmont State University courses offered in a high school, on our main campus, or online. The University's [dual-credit course delivery model](#) is driven by the availability of "qualified faculty" instructors as defined by the HLC. The goals and expectations for student learning are the same across all dual-credit delivery models.

Consistency in program quality and learning goals for all undergraduate and graduate programs across all modes of delivery are demonstrated through established institutional policies and processes, including the common course syllabus, FALCON Blackboard/LMS instructional design requirements, faculty training and support, curriculum and course approval process, and periodic program review process.

The University maintains a [common syllabus](#) across all courses regardless of delivery type. The common syllabus was [approved by Faculty Senate](#) in the spring 2021 and includes course learning

outcomes, prerequisites, assessments, evaluation, and course outlines that apply to all course sections regardless of delivery mode or location. ENG 1101 is an example of Core Curriculum courses taught through two modalities - [on-campus](#) and [virtually](#).

Consistency in delivery was heightened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 pandemic restrictions forced the University to pivot and provide every course with the technology to operate remotely. Instructors were provided hardware to communicate with students (e.g., cameras, laptops, monitors), [remote work tools](#), and [enhanced software](#) to enable a sustainable remote learning environment across the semester. The Office of Information Technology established "hot spots" throughout designated campus areas so students who did not have at-home access to the Internet could come to campus and access all learning material.

Fairmont State is a Quality Matters (QM) Systems Institution and has a campus QM Coordinator and certified QM facilitator who oversees instructor training and course design based on QM principles. During the Fall 2020, [Blackboard course design requirements](#) were established based on QM best practices for all University courses to ensure online and hybrid courses had the same level of quality and rigor as face-to-face courses. The *Educational Technology Center* provided, and continues to provide, [instructional resources](#), [online course training](#), and support for all faculty, staff, and students across all modes of delivery. All faculty have the opportunity work with the Fairmont State's Instructional Designer when developing a new online course, transitioning a face-to-face course online, or having an existing course evaluated to ensure efficacy and alignment with course outcomes according to the [FALCON instructional design principles](#). As of June 2020, [75 instructors](#) at the University had received QM training. As a result of post-COVID-19 University operations currently in place, almost all courses and programs offered can support a shift in the modality and locality of delivery.

As articulated in 3.A.1 and 3.A.2, the University has shared governance processes in place to ensure program quality, learning goals, and outcomes are consistent across all modes of delivery. Fairmont State ensures consistency by following uniform academic standards and processes applied to each program relative to curriculum and course review/changes, program reviews, and assessment criteria regardless of delivery modality. For example, General Studies Committee regularly [evaluates the quality and appropriateness of learning outcomes](#) of Core Curriculum courses through a course recertification process and applies the same standards regardless of delivery modality; the Graduate Council evaluates the learning outcomes and appropriateness of graduate-level programs through [periodic program reviews](#) and applies consistent standards across programs. The University regularly provides for additional appraisals of quality of program courses, including that of the course modality, through course evaluations, and this feedback has been incorporated into curricular and/or course revisions. Although faculty hold the primary responsibility for establishing and maintaining program and course quality, rigor, and consistency; the academic colleges/Deans and departments/Chairs provide oversight for ensuring consistency with [support from the Office of Provost](#) and IESO Office (note: IESO office not a functioning unit as of May 2022), in collaboration with the Educational Technology Center.

Sources

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- Program Review Council 2021-22
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- Provost Office Support - Virtual Online Training
- Remote Work Tools
- TaskStream Course Level Assessment
- TaskStream Program Assessment - Accounting and Community Health Education
- TaskStream Program Assessment Report - Psychology Program
- TaskStream Program-Course Level Assessment
- WVHEPC General Studies and Course Equivalency Transfer Agreement 2022-23
- WVHEPC Series 10 Program Reviews

3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

Argument

3.B.1. The Fairmont State mission creates the intellectual framework for our undergraduate general education program, referred to as the Core Curriculum. The General Studies Committee, a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, is responsible for articulating the Core learning outcomes and for [reviewing courses for inclusion](#) in the Core based upon those expectations of purpose and content. The [list of courses](#) approved for inclusion in the Core (in alignment with the [WV HEPC General Studies Transfer Agreement](#)) appear both on the University website and in the undergraduate academic catalog. To provide oversight within the University's organizational structure, a [Director of General Education position](#) was created in 2021 to support the assessment and effectiveness of the program.

3.B.2. After three years of discussion and review, the Core Curriculum was approved by the Faculty Senate in Spring 2020 for launch in Fall 2020. Given Fairmont State's identity as a comprehensive regional state university, the Core was envisioned as a foundation for learning, with a [mission statement](#) that supports the University's overall mission: "The Core Curriculum is designed to ensure that all students acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to become life-long learners, productive employees, and contributing citizen leaders in their diverse local and global communities."

[Learning outcomes](#) conceived within this mission have been organized into [three affective domains](#): Basic Skills, providing tools for academic success; Critical Reasoning in the Disciplines, providing multiple approaches to problem-solving; and Personal Development, providing intellectual concepts to develop students as life-long learners and citizens. These Core learning outcomes are also [mapped](#) to course-level student learning outcomes.

[2021 NSSE results](#) further support the common core's emphasis on broad knowledge and concepts aligned with the University's mission. Among first year students—one of the first cohorts to

experience the core curriculum—mean responses to questions related to [theme of Academic Challenge](#), which engagement indicators related to higher-order learning reflective and integrative learning, learning strategies, and quantitative reasoning, were not significantly different than those of the Southeast Regional Pub, Carnegie Class, and NSSE 2020 and 2021 comparison groups. Of first-year respondents, 73% indicated their coursework emphasized evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source “Very much” or “Quite a bit”. Likewise, 55% of respondents found coursework included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments, and 71% noted that courses “tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective.” On the [Career and Workforce Preparation Module](#), first-year students had positive responses with means quantified above that of comparison groups—at statistically significant levels—on the questions related to the degree to which they had a clear idea of their career plans and the degree to which their experience at the University helped clarify their career plans.

3.B.3. Fairmont State also provides an atmosphere of human and cultural diversity outside of the classroom through its co-curricular offerings. [Multiple student organizations](#) participate in a wide array of inclusive and diverse initiatives/programming that recognize the range of experiences and perspectives within the student body. Those organizations include, but are limited to, the Black Student Union, the Catholic Student Union, the Student Veterans Organization, and Falcons with PRIDE (an LGBTQ+ group).

Various offices around campus also provide programming to refine and expand multicultural learning opportunities. [The Umbrella Coalition \(UC\)](#) is an inter-departmental work group that provides campus events and programming centered around education, awareness, prevention, and support. UC provides a strong emphasis on serving under-represented and/or historically marginalized populations by [hosting residential life events](#) such as “Diversity Puzzle”, “Building Bridges and Learning Inclusivity” and “Make your Own Door Dec” aimed at normalizing diversity and inclusion. Beyond the dorms, the group has hosted an LGBTQ+ Trivia Night, a Women’s Wellness Mini-Series, a Chalk the Walk event in support of Sexual Assault Awareness, and a Straight Talk: Dialogue on Race panel. Most recently, responding to the pressures of our post-COVID world, UC hosted a [Mental Wellness Month initiative](#). Examples of other diversity-related programming include the Encova Career and Development Center's [Professional Spotlights series](#) and the [Women's and Gender Studies Colloquium](#).

In addition to multiculturalism at home, Fairmont State is committed to providing both faculty and students with global opportunities to learn and grow. In addition to offering [regular international trips](#), students have the opportunity to study abroad in a range of countries. The university has also formed [relationships](#) with several overseas institutions, including student exchanges with the University of Calabria in Italy and [faculty exchanges](#) with the Northwest Agricultural and Forestry University in Yangling, China. We have also hosted [Fulbright scholars](#), most recently, a Mathematics professor from Siberian Federal University in Russia.

3.B.4. As part of the faculty criteria for hire and yearly evaluation, engagement in scholarly activity is a criteria. Faculty are encouraged to conduct research that broadens the scope and understanding of subject to align with program goals and increase the knowledge base of themselves and their students. The [Faculty Handbook](#) (p. 47) lays out expectations of scholarly practice using Boyer’s model of scholarship, which includes scholarship related to discovery (i.e., research), integration (i.e., interdisciplinary work), application (i.e. service), teaching and learning, and digital scholarship (i.e., scholarly communication) as a basis for teaching, scholarship and service. This model serves as

the basis for faculty evaluation in the promotion and tenure process as well as annual faculty review. Further, faculty scholarship is included as part of degree program reviews every five years.

Students are also engaged in contributing to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge. Every year, the University hosts the [Celebration of Student Scholarship](#), which aims to provide a venue for the display and recognition of student scholarship and faculty mentorship. Many degree programs, including all major degree programs in the Behavioral Sciences, and the Honors program require completion of a research-based capstone. Since the 2016-2017 academic year, the Institutional Review Board has approved 104 research projects involving faculty, students, and/or staff. As such, the 2021 NSSE report found that 24% of senior respondents indicated that they participated in research with a faculty member. Graduate students and graduate faculty have a wide range of scholarly and research experiences, all of which are [reported to the University](#) annually.

Special research programs also provide students with professional experience in a range of fields, including an [Action Research Celebration](#) in the College of Education, Health, and Human Performance, the [Open Source Intelligence Exchange Lab](#) (OSIX) in the Department of Social Sciences, and both [Summer Research Fellowships](#) and an [Undergraduate Literary Symposium](#) in the Department of Humanities. Fairmont State recently won [a grant](#) from the First 2 STEM Student Success Alliance to provide rural, first generation students with research internships in Chemistry.

In creative ventures, in addition to [visiting artists](#), the University hosts student-led and faculty-mentored creative events, including community [theater performances](#), [art shows](#), and band performances. Students may also present their creative work in [Whetstone](#), the student art and literary journal. For those interested in creative writing, there are also [internships](#) available with Kestrel, Fairmont State's professional literary journal.

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- Study Abroad
- Summer Research Fellows named for Department of Language and Literature
- Umbrella Coalition Agenda 8.17.22
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- Women and Gender Studies Colloquium
- WVHEPC Annual Graduate Report 2021-22
- WVHEPC General Studies Transfer Agreement 2022-23

3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Argument

3.C.1. Fairmont State University is an [Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action institution](#) in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the West Virginia Human Rights Act, Title IX (Educational Amendments of 1972), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) of 1990, and all other applicable laws and regulations. These are further strengthened by policies of the [WV Higher Education Policy Commission](#) and the University Board of Governors. Fairmont State tracks [diversity demographics](#) regularly to inform hiring decisions.

3.C.2. The institution has sufficient numbers of credentialed faculty in order to maintain continuity of instruction and advising. In 2021, the University had a [student to faculty ratio](#) of 15:1 and an average class size of 22. The total number of staff as of Fall 2020 was 393 full-time and 185 part-time employees. Instructional staff made up 166 full-time and 128 part-time employees. Between November 2019 and October 2020, a total of 39 new full-time employees were hired at the University, of whom 13 were members of faculty. Currently, 67.2% of classes offered at Fairmont State have an enrollment of fewer than 20 students.

3.C.3. All Fairmont State instructional staff are [appropriately qualified](#). Upon hire, each faculty member—including adjuncts—submit to Human Resources (HR) an official transcript(s) of all undergraduate and graduate credits earned previously. To be acceptable, all credits, degrees, and professional licenses must be earned at institutions accredited by nationally recognized regional or professional agencies.

For undergraduate degree programs, full-time faculty members generally must have earned a doctoral

or other equivalent terminal degree ([Faculty Handbook, p. 14](#)) related to the field in which they will teach and/or develop curricula prior to hire. Faculty are required to hold at least 18 graduate credit hours related to the discipline in which they are teaching if they are the instructor of record of a course in a discipline outside of the discipline of their degree. Prior professional experience has been defined ([Faculty Handbook, p.62-67](#)) and may qualify as providing equivalency to a qualifying credential for a course as determined by the Academic Dean of the College in which the course will be housed. Staff members with academic duties are also rigorously [screened for credentials](#) appropriate to their positions.

To ensure that full-time faculty maintain appropriate qualifications for their academic rank, the Faculty Personnel Committee maintains a [comprehensive evaluation process](#) to enable it to review all applications for tenure and for promotion to one of four academic ranks recognized by Fairmont State beyond the Instructor level: Assistant, Associate, and Professor. Senior level designations are also recognized at the Associate and Professor levels based on longevity of teaching at the institution.

At the graduate level, the acquirement of faculty status is more rigorous. Determination of whether [qualifications are sufficient for graduate teaching](#) are made by the Graduate Faculty Credential Committee. To become a full-time member of graduate faculty, teaching responsibilities, sufficient of evidence of scholarly activity, and a terminal degree appropriate to the discipline in which the member teaches are required. Like undergraduate instructional staff qualifications, the University grants sufficient latitude in its hiring procedures to allow tested experience and/or career achievement to equivocate to a terminal degree in graduate teaching. The Graduate Faculty Credential Committee reviews and evaluates the qualifications of all graduate instructional staff, including adjuncts, according to [criteria established by the Committee](#). A decision is made by the [Graduate Council](#) based on the recommendations of the Credential Committee to continue, discontinue, or modify a faculty membership after two years for provisional faculty, and after five years for all other recognized graduate faculty ranks.

The [Falcon FastTrack program](#) is the Universities dual-credit program that allows eligible high school students to enroll in college courses at Fairmont State University. These courses may be offered in a high school, on our main campus, or as online/virtual courses. The current dual-credit course delivery model is driven by the availability of qualified instructors as defined by the HLC, with [three options for dual-credit course delivery](#). The academic department chair reviews the transcripts of prospective dual-credit high school teachers to ensure compliance with HLC's faculty qualifications. If the department chair determines the high school teacher is qualified to teach a course independently, the course would be offered by the teacher in the high school classroom.

3.C.4. Faculty are [evaluated annually](#) by their [academic units](#) and [peers](#), using the following criteria: (1) Excellence in teaching classroom performance; development or revision of courses or curriculum, including online courses and programs; development of new or modified forms of instruction appropriate to course content and students); course assessment; (2) Accessibility to students, including advising; (3) Professional and scholarly activity and recognition, based on the [Boyer model](#) and includes five types of intellectual activity, including the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of teaching and learning, the scholarship of integration, the scholarship of application, and digital scholarship; (4) Significant contribution and service to the University; (5) Significant contribution and service to one's academic unit; (6) Evidence of continual professional growth; (7) Publications and research; and (8) Service to the people of the state of West Virginia. All annual faculty review information and workflow are housed on Watermark's Faculty Success platform.

3.C.5. Fairmont State University offers processes and resources for assuring that instructors are

current and adept through ongoing professional development. The University hosts required and voluntary training opportunities for faculty and staff at multiple points throughout the academic year. The University offers [Professional Development Days](#) held at the beginning and end of the Fall semester, and the end of the Spring semester using a conference style format. Each event also includes keynote speakers and panel discussions that focus on delivering insights into student success, ensuring faculty are aware of available student resources, and providing a forum for which faculty can hear from student panels about their campus experiences. The concurrent sessions cover a [variety of topics](#), including technology use in the classroom, assessment best practices, introductions of new and upcoming technology, and other topics suggested previously by faculty.

Librarians provide access to and assistance with [LibGuides](#) to support faculty coursework and research. This support includes training, guide creation, content suggestions, maintenance and ongoing troubleshooting as needed. These partnerships have produced course guides to support instruction, event/topical guides to support departments and events, and research guides to support grant work. Many guides include student generated content as well.

In Fall 2019, on-site and virtual training opportunities were integrated into the University's online calendar platform, LibCal, to expand the types and topics of training opportunities available to faculty and staff. These events include [webinars](#) offered by professional organizations such as EDUCAUSE and the Chronicle of Higher Education, and from software vendors related to products being used on campus, such as Microsoft and Blackboard. Placing these opportunities on the calendar has provided faculty with visibility into external offerings that they may not otherwise have known about. Pre-recorded [materials for faculty & staff](#) are also available year-round through the Educational Technology Center (ETC) webpage.

In addition, a year-long [new faculty orientation and training](#) is required for all new full faculty. The orientation is broken into several parts to include guidance and training on building an effective [syllabus](#), resources for faculty, faculty probationary review process, [Boyer's model of scholarship](#), course development, student learning resources, and institutional policies and procedures. The orientation is further supplemented by [online trainings](#), including discrimination and harassment prevention and FERPA.

Fairmont State also supports more traditional faculty development through scholarship and research, including [travel](#) to conferences, [tuition wavers](#), [sabbaticals](#), and the [development of graduate courses](#).

3.C.6. The University has [clearly defined expectations](#) for the accessibility of faculty to students. The Office of Academic Affairs maintains a [common syllabus template](#) which requires faculty to prominently post their availability in their syllabi. Faculty are also provided with both WebEx and MS Teams accounts to help meet with students.

The University utilizes an Appreciative Advising model to encourage students to build on their knowledge of self while utilizing resources (interest inventories, identifying majors, counseling on how to overcome academic difficulties) by building positive relationships with their academic advisors. The Appreciative Advising model is one that is listed and recommended as good practice by the [National Academic Advising Association \(NACADA\)](#). The University provides additional resources to students that are unsure of their academic path through designed Academic Success Coordinators assigned to [Exploratory Advising](#).

The University has used software to increase communication with students and faculty/staff throughout the campus. Both [Remind](#) and [Navigate](#) provide multiple communication pathways.

Students can view their grades, teacher messages, their calendar, and links to resources on campus. Faculty and staff can share information with other departments, refer students to services, and share notes to help increase communication to better help students.

3.C.7. Fairmont State University staff members providing support services are appropriately qualified and trained. [The Staff Council](#) represents the interests of, and advocates for, the staff of Fairmont State. The Staff Council also strives to provide a positive and productive work environment for the staff by providing various services, sponsoring events to build and maintain morale, and providing [opportunities for professional and personal development](#). Each department supports [additional professional development](#) (training) to ensure the relevance of the subject matter. Line items in the budget allow for the opportunity for faculty/staff to attend (in-person or virtually) training as approved by the program Director or authorized Administrator.

Several components work together to make a successful program of staff professional development. The University's [expectations](#) for both staff performance must be clearly defined and transparently communicated. Those expectations must be [operationalized](#) in practical, meaningful ways, such as check lists or detailed procedures. And new initiatives, such as Appreciative Advising, must [reflect best practices](#), draw on [interdepartmental synergy](#), and be shared with all participants through [active training sessions](#).

The University [LEAD \(Learning Enrichment and Academic Development\) Center](#) establishes guidelines for who is eligible to become a peer tutor, a minimum of a 2.8 cumulative GPA, an A or B in the course(s) for which the student intends to tutor, a resume, a letter of recommendation from an FSU faculty member, and at least sophomore academic standing. Tutors must complete [training](#) as dictated by CRLA (College Reading and Learning Association) [certification standards](#).

Sources

- Academic Success Coordinator Minimum Qualifications
- Anatomy of the Common Syllabus
- Annual Evaluation of Probationary Faculty by Chair or Dean
- Annual Faculty Review Faculty Success Documents
- Appreciative Advising Checklist
- Appreciative Advising Presentation
- Appreciative Advising Questions
- Campus Calendars
- College Readiness and Learning Association Certification for tutors
- Common Syllabus Components
- Determining Graduate Faculty Qualifications
- Dual-Credit Course Delivery Model
- Educational Technology Center Trainings
- Employee Tuition Waiver
- Evaluation for Promotion and Tenure by Peer
- Exploratory Advising Expectations
- Faculty Office Hour Policy
- Faculty Travel Budget
- Faculty-Staff Diversity Data
- Falcon Advising Network Top 10 Disarm List

- Falcon FastTrack - Dual Credit
- Financial Aid Employee Training
- Graduate Council Agenda 1.22.20
- Graduate Faculty Qualifications and Membership Policy
- Graduate Studies Governance
- HR Mandatory Trainings - SafeColleges
- Institutional Diversity Statement - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Introduction to Boyers Model of Scholarship
- Library Libguides Examples
- NACADA
- Navigate Login Page
- New Faculty Orientation - Anatomy of the Common Syllabus
- New Faculty Orientation - Introduction to Boyers Model of Scholarship
- New Faculty Orientation and Development
- Policy on Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action
- Professional Development Day May 2022
- Promotion and Tenure Faculty Success Documents
- Recruiting Diverse Faculty
- Remind Onboarding Training
- Sabbatical Application
- Staff Council Meeting Agenda 6.29.22
- Staff Council Website
- Student Training - Students Taking Academic Responsibility
- Student-Faculty Ratio 5-year Trend
- Terminal Degree Information
- Tutoring
- WV HEPC Title 33

3.D - Core Component 3.D

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

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

Argument

3.D.1. Fairmont State University provides appropriate services to support learning for our student populations. Roughly 54% of first-year students identify as first-generation college students, and 41% of first-time full-time students received the Pell grant during the 2020-2021 academic year.. In Fall 2021, 17.2% of Fairmont State undergraduate students were over the age of 25, 11.2% were from a minority background, and 27.8% were part-time. These socioeconomic demographics within the student population at large, combined with the requisites of the University's mission, has yielded a large array student support services at the institution.

[The Office of Accessibility Services](#) provides leadership and facilitate equal access in all institutional opportunities for students who have disabilities, so that they may achieve their academic, personal and professional goals. To accomplish this mission, the Office of Accessibility Services:

- provides institution-wide advisement, consultation, and training on disability-related topics like legal and regulatory compliance, universal design, and disability scholarship
- collaborates with students, instructors, staff, and administrators on removing barriers and fostering an all-inclusive campus that offers diverse, usable, and equitable learning environments
- facilitates academic accommodations and provides individual services for students with disabilities

[The Encova Career Development Center](#) provides career development and exploration through a variety of programs including speakers, workshops, and both virtual and on-campus career fairs.

[The Veteran Services Office](#) provides benefit and educational counseling, program information, referral to various agencies, and certification of eligible students to receive education benefits under various state and federal programs while maintaining a congenial working relationship with the Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies serving veterans. This office maintains a full-time Veterans Certifying Official/Financial Aid Counselor/Advocate assigned solely to Veteran students who can assist veterans with their educational benefits and financial aid.

[The Office of Financial Aid](#) assists students in achieving their educational goals by promoting

scholarships, grants, Federal Work Study, and loans. This office aims to educate, assist, and inform students about the financial aid resources available to them in a student friendly atmosphere. The financial aid staff provides financial literacy events on campus and in the residence halls to promote the FAFSA, loan indebtedness, scholarships, and satisfactory academic progress. The staff is comprised of individuals who specialize in student employment opportunities, athletic awarding and compliance, federal and state compliance, academic course of study compliance, and social media.

[Fairmont State University Health Services](#) provides both medical appointments and emergency care. The [free services](#) available to students include lab testing, women's health, and referrals. In response to the current mental health crisis among college students, Fairmont State also has two [mental health counselors](#) on staff to help students with a range of issues, such as depression, anxiety, grief, and substance abuse.

As part of Fairmont State's efforts to identify and support at risk student populations, the University created the [Autism Individualized Mentoring and Support Services](#) (AIMSS) program. AIMSS provides students on the autism spectrum with advocacy, tutoring, and programming to assist them with developing [academic skills, social skills and independent living skills](#).

3.D.2. The University has processes in place to provide holistic and targeted learning support and preparatory instruction that address academic needs and directs entering students to courses and programs for which they are prepared. All entering freshmen and transfer students are required to attend the [New Student Orientation](#) during which they schedule classes and are introduced to University resources and support services. The orientation program also helps new students build relationships with each other and with their student mentors, so that they become part of a social network prior to arrival on campus. Sessions are available during evening hours, in person, or remotely.

Undergraduates in the first-year of their curriculum also required to take a First Year Seminar class, most commonly the [S.O.A.R.](#) (Scholarship, Opportunity, Achievement, Responsibility) course. The mission of the First Year Seminar is to help students develop foundational academic skills, a sense of belonging at Fairmont State, and a sense of personal and professional identity as a college student.

Fairmont State uses prior high school grade point average (GPA) or placement test scores, if available, to determine if incoming students need to take designated Math or English support courses. These courses have replaced developmental and remedial courses in response to [recommendations](#) from Complete College America and the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. The most recent iterations of [Math Support courses](#), provide students with [multiple pathways](#) aligned to the pre-requisites of future courses in majors across disciplines and colleges, helping students forge a realistic route to on-time graduation. All sections of ENGL 1101, the gateway English course, follow the [Accelerated Learning model](#), in which qualifying students receive an additional hour of supplemental instruction weekly.

Faculty may also recommend students get [tutoring support](#) in the [LEAD Center](#); faculty are also required to submit 4-week grades so that academic Colleges and non-academic units with a focus on student success can provide students with [intervention services](#) that may augment the capacity for the student to “course correct” during the semester. Several initiatives, such as the STAR ([Students Taking Academic Responsibility](#)) and [Journey](#) programs have yielded impressive results in helping students succeed.

3.D.3. Fairmont State as a well developed set of [advising practices and procedures](#). All students,

regardless of if they are degree or non-degree seeking, are assigned an academic advisor. Academic Success Coordinators—a title reserved to professional academic advisors—serve first-year students who have a declared major, and assist these students with program and course planning, defining and developing long-term career goals, and addressing academic difficulties. For students who have fewer than 30 credit hours and are undecided on an academic major, [Exploratory Academic Success Coordinators](#) assist them in choosing courses [within an academic pathway of interest](#) designed to better aid them in choosing a program of study by the end of their first academic year. Once students declare a major at the end of their first year, they are assigned a Faculty Advisor within their program of study. The University utilizes Degree Works and EAB Navigate to further assist all advisors and students across campus. [All degree programs](#) have [model schedules](#) for students and advisors to utilize and multiple dedicated resource pages for students.

3.D.4. Fairmont State University provides infrastructure and resources to support students and faculty regardless of whether classes are offered on-campus or online. Faculty and students use technology to enhance teaching and learning not only in virtual course delivery, but also for in-person instruction. Wi-Fi is available campus-wide, and classrooms at all campus locations have a computer and projector, along with the capacity for laptop use. During the pandemic, the University added webcams and microphones in all classrooms to enable remote learning opportunities and the ability to record lectures. Faculty record can lectures and place them in Blackboard for access by the students. In addition, The University hosts a variety of software, such as VMWare, SPSS, Adobe InDesign, etc. for students, staff, and faculty who need to meet specific program requirements. Moreover, the University provides all faculty, staff, and students with access to the Office 365 suite, including the Microsoft office products. Video-conferencing is provided through WebEx and Microsoft Teams, and is frequently used across multiple courses.

As an example of program-specific technologies and resources used to support effective teaching and learning, the [Rusty and Kimberly Hutson Family Nursing Simulation Laboratory](#) allows Nursing students to participate in realistic scenarios that hone their skills and support team-building and critical thinking. Students are assigned roles and must respond to the simulators, which are life-sized robotic mannequins that imitate physiological functions. A faculty member acts as the voice of the simulator, while students respond to the simulators as they would to a real patient. Their interactions are videotaped and are then used by faculty as a basis to work with students on teachable moments.

Fairmont State's technology infrastructure is supported by the [Information Technology Commons](#) (Tech Commons), a division of the Office of Information Technology. The Tech Commons staff are available during regular business hours via telephone, email, live chat and walk-in to provide support to faculty, staff, and students for all technology related issues, including hardware and software troubleshooting, log-in troubles, and Internet connectivity (wired and wireless) support. After hours support is available via telephone and email from BlackBelt Help, which provides 24x7 support for all students, faculty and staff.

The [Ruth Ann Musick Library](#) provides access to physical and electronic scholarly resources, prepares spaces for collaboration and study, and works with faculty and students on the discovery, use, and management of information in order to support the curriculum. The Library manages streaming media, e-journals, e-books and journal articles as well as shared databases, government resources, print books, periodicals and multimedia items. Individual and group study rooms, printing, copying, exhibits, e/reserves, online resources, inter-library loans and document delivery are provided to students, staff, and faculty. The library conducts training and provides [LibGuides](#) that lead students to important topics, tutorials, and course-specific resources to assist them in their research.

Additionally, librarians interact and consult with students via chat, video conferencing, e-mail and telephone.

The University also provides spaces for arts and cultural preservation. [The James David Brooks Art Gallery](#) regularly hosts student art projects and serves as a community base for visiting artists. The [Wallman Hall Theatre](#) and the Studio Theatre is a 300-seat classroom and venue for campus and community theater and musical productions. The [Frank and Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center](#) serves as a hub for the study and sustainment of the region's Appalachian culture, and regularly hosts events, offers educational programs, and develops resources for the campus and wider community. Unique to Fairmont State is the [One-Room Schoolhouse](#), which serves as a mini-museum and educational resource for students in the Museum Studies minor.

Sources

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- AIMSS
- AIMSS Brochure
- Architecture Model Schedule 2021
- Bowen to Exhibit in Brooks Gallery
- College of Education Health and Human Performance Student Advising and Support
- Encova Career Development Center
- Exploratory Advising
- Exploratory Advising - Advisor Responsibilities
- Fairmont State's LEAD Center Sees Growth Throughout 2021-22 Academic Year (STAR)
- Financial Aid
- First Year Seminar
- Folklife Center
- Health Services
- Information Technology Commons
- Journey Program - Early Field Experience Manual
- LEAD Center Resources
- LEAD Center Workshops & Skill Labs
- Learning Enrichment and Academic Development (LEAD) Center
- LibGuide Russian Invasion of Ukraine
- Library
- Master Syllabus- Math 1430 Spring 2023
- Matilda
- Mental Health Services
- Model Schedules by College
- New Student Orientation
- Nursing Simulation Lab
- Office of Accessibility Services
- One Room Schoolhouse
- Pathways_EffectiveFall2019 (1)
- Services Provided
- SOAR Syllabus
- Veteran Services Office

- WV Developmental Education History - FSU version Fall 2022

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

Fairmont State University provides its students quality educational offerings. The institution has a wide variety of students and aligns its resources with the needs of those students. Sixty percent of the student body consists of first-generation college students, who require additional resources to maintain the student performance levels associated with the institution's credentials.

The institution meets the goals of providing sound academic groundwork by collecting, analyzing, and communicating information with multiple stakeholders both inside the University and in the surrounding community. Faculty and staff are provided training to meet the demands of the diverse student body and continually seek to improve high-quality programs and student services. The institution's efforts and those of its stakeholders' increase the efficiency of Fairmont State's limited resources and the effectiveness of its infrastructure.

Sources

There are no sources.

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 ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

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

Argument

4.A.1. To support its mission to educate global citizen leaders, Fairmont State maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon those findings. The University implements a [five-year program review](#) cycle for all degree programs, regardless of program-level accreditation. The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, WVHEPC requires all state institutions to participate in the program review process under WVHEPC Series 11. The University recently revised/updated internal Program Review forms to ensure better alignment with [Series 11 Standards and Processes for Approval of New Academic Programs requirements](#).

Academic Affairs has developed an internal timeline for Program Review that includes required training for faculty as well as quality assurance protocols to guarantee milestones within the review process are completed promptly, that multiple stakeholders have input, and that program review documents are ready for the Board of Governors (BOG) to examine as a full body every April using the [Program Reviewer Rubric](#). Final determinations of the BOG as to the continuance, monitoring, or discontinuance of degree programs under Program Review are provided to WVHEPC no later than May 31st each year according to [paragraph 8.2 of the WVHEPC Series 11](#).

The process for Program Review begins with faculty within the degree program. The faculty complete a ‘self-study’ component utilizing the data supplied through institutional research and then follow the format included in the [institutional Program Review](#). The following [timeline](#) outlines the procedures described hereafter. By the end of the Fall semester, the report is supplied for review by the College Dean and Provost’s Office according to the [assessment procedures on page 2](#). The University has strengthened the review process by requiring that the external reviewer is of similar discipline expertise as the degree program to ensure feedback is appropriate to the degree. The Reviewer’s comments and the Program Review report are then submitted to the Program Review Council, appointed by designees within the Office of the Provost, to be evaluated. The Council provides a report to the Provost that is added to the [Program Review](#). The Provost, the Dean, and the Department Chair of the degree program then present the Program Reviews to the BOG Academic Affairs subcommittee at the meeting before the full April BOG meeting. The BOG reviews deliberate, and makes one of the following final determinations—with a written rationale for each—as required under [Series 10 Regarding Program Review](#):

- Continuation of the program at the current level of activity, with or without specific action;
- Continuation of the program at a reduced level of activity (e.g., reducing the range of optional tracks) or other corrective action.
- Identification of the program for further development; or
- Development of a cooperative program with another institution, or sharing of courses, facilities, faculty, and the like.
- Discontinuance of the program.

The process varies slightly for a program that has an external accrediting body. Outside accredited degree programs are allowed to use their most recent review report from their visiting team to serve in place of an external reviewer ([Pathways to external accreditation](#)). The degree program faculty use data from Institutional Research and the accreditor’s report to complete the exec requirements needed to satisfy WVHEPC reporting requirements. This review is still processed through the Program Review Council and the BOG as described above.

To ensure that all reviews are submitted by May 31st to WVHEPC, the Provost’s office submits the documents after the April BOG meeting and the findings are placed on the BOG webpage.

4.A.2. Fairmont State University’s Office of the Registrar works with faculty and admissions staff to ensure that all credit provided on transcripts is evaluated responsibly. Authority for curricular decisions, including the nature of credit transfers, resides primarily with the faculty to the extent granted under State law and WVHEPC. Fairmont State is required by [WVHEPC Series 17](#) to accept credit from the in-state community and technical colleges and four-year institutions for courses that meet at least 70% of student learning outcomes of comparable courses offered at Fairmont State. The University maintains transfer articulation tables for all courses from West Virginia postsecondary institutions. Transfer course credit from institutions outside of West Virginia is awarded based on the recommendations from a discipline-specific faculty evaluation. Designated faculty also provide guidance on which courses currently satisfy the 70% standard for Series 17.

Currently, the Office of the Registrar is implementing Transferology by College Source in the Spring/Summer of 2022 to help with the warehousing of transfer information, to eliminate duplicity of workflows, and to make the [transfer crediting process](#) more efficient in the University’s Student Information System, Ellucian Banner. Fairmont State under the requirements of [WVHEPC Series 59](#) has approved a committee for the formal process for accepting prior learning/college-equivalent

undergraduate credits. The committee is creating an internal process for accepting all areas of prior learning credit. FSU also has a shared TEAMS space for this committee with additional notes and information should HLC wish to view it. [Prior Learning Credit meeting timeline 2022](#). [Prior Testing and Placement Meeting Minutes 07-29-22](#)

4.A.3. Transfer students seeking admission to Fairmont State must submit official transcripts from all previously attended institutions. The institutions must be regionally accredited institutions or institutions with national accreditation formally recognized by the U.S. Department of Education ([FSU Undergraduate Catalog 2021-2022 p. 40](#)). The Office of Admissions verifies this information for all incoming transfer students. A transfer student must have at least a 2.0 GPA at their previous institution for full admission ([FSU Undergraduate Catalog 2021-2022, p. 40](#)).

As detailed further in 4.A.2., the viability of the transfer credit for each course resides with the program faculty. It is on the recommendation of the faculty that the type and level of credit are assessed and provided for transcription purposes by the Office of the Registrar ([FSU Undergraduate Catalog 2021-2022, pp. 40-41](#)).

4.A.4. Fairmont State maintains and exercises authority over all coursework undertaken for which the University awards credit. The faculty are credentialed at the department level based on the nature of the position for which they are hired or the discipline in which they are expected to teach. The rigor of all modalities of a given course remains the same no matter how it is taught, including dual enrollment offerings ([Dual Enrollment Guidelines](#)). **NO NEED TO CITE AND INCLUDE HLC RESOURCES**

When faculty develop or redesign courses they set the pre- or co-requisites for the courses ([FSU New Course Form](#)). The faculty are the “owners” of the curricula and the University’s processes ensure that it remains faculty-driven to the greatest degree possible [Curriculum Proposal Form](#). When course changes or new courses go through the approval process (detailed in CRITERIA 3) the catalog for the year in which the change is to be effectuated is subsequently updated by the Office of the Provost, and any courses changes or additions are updated in Banner and student support systems by the Office of the Registrar and the Office of Information Technology based on the given approvals ([Workflow Process for changes](#)).

All sections and modalities of our courses require the instructor to teach to the same faculty-approved Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and they are completing the same assessment requirements set by the program faculty in line with University guidance. Currently, our dual enrollment offerings are being taught by Fairmont State faculty and adjuncts that have been vetted by the program areas. The University is not currently able to utilize many high school partner faculty due to the lack of the required 18 graduate credit hours ([Falcon FastTrack](#)). As a result, the institution created some larger dual enrollment sections of some general education courses that have a Fairmont State faculty member as the instructor and use the high school faculty member in the teaching assistant role to aid the primary instructor ([Falcon FastTrack](#)).

4.A.5. Fairmont State maintains specialized accreditation in several areas. The University fully supports the specialized accreditation processes by providing necessary resources to ensure the programs meet the needs of each accrediting body.

Our Teacher Education programs in the College of Education, Health and Human Performance are accredited by [Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation \(CAEP\)](#).

The College of Nursing has three accrediting bodies: The [West Virginia Board of Nursing \(WVBON\)](#) accredits both our Associates of Nursing (ASN) and our Bachelors of Nursing (BSN) programs. The ASN is also accredited by the [Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing \(ACEN\)](#) and the BSN is accredited by the [Commission of Collegiate Nursing Education \(CCNE\)](#).

In the College of Business and Aviation our Bachelor of Business Administration (BSBA), the Masters of Business Administration (MBA), the Bachelor of Science in Accounting, and the Bachelor of Science in Information Systems Management are all accredited by the [Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs \(ACBSP\)](#). The Bachelor of Science in Aviation Administration is certified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

In the College of Science and Technology, the programs within the Department of Engineering Technology are accredited by ABET. Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering Technology, and Electronics Engineering Technology are fully accredited by the [Education Technology Accreditation Committee \(ETAC\) of ABET](#). Our new Surveying and Geomatics Engineering program is seeking accreditation with [ETAC of ABET](#).

The fifth program in Engineering Technology, Occupational Safety, is accredited by the [Applied and Natural Science Accreditation Commission \(ANSAC\) of ABET](#). Our Master of Architecture (March) is in the final review stage to be fully accredited by the [National Architectural Accrediting Board \(NAAB\)](#) – which will make the program the only accredited Architecture program in the state of West Virginia.

4.A.6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates at both the program and University-level in multiple ways. The program review process provides degree programs with the opportunity to demonstrate the necessity of its program by providing information related to both the placement and success of graduates from the degree program within the past 5 years. Placement data is required for accredited programs and optional for non-accredited programs, though all non-accredited programs have provided evaluative information on the placement and success of graduates in all program reviews since 2018. Many programs have established procedures for tracking the success of graduates, including through interviews and online surveys developed by program faculty, and include the success of graduates as part of the degree-level assessment. Moreover, all degree programs as well as the general studies and honors curriculum are required to have and evaluate degree outcomes as part of ongoing assessment.

However, while the University recognizes the importance of graduate success measured at the degree program level in ways that faculty find appropriate for their programs, the University also acknowledges that logistical limitations and variance are likely to be present in the type and standards of data collected and utilized by degree programs in tracking graduate success across the institution. To provide for standardization and to give faculty greater comparative information on graduates' success, the University has since 2012 participated in the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#), which surveys seniors on multiple aspects of their experience at the University as well as their career trajectories. In addition, the Career Development Center created and implemented a "[First Destination Survey](#)(pg50)" for the Class of 2016 during Spring 2016 commencement. The practice continued to various degrees until the Spring of 2019, when the Career Development Center and institutional research piloted and standardized survey items for graduates, including those related to aspects of the University's mission, such as the degree to which students' employment related to their studies. [In 2021, the graduate placement survey](#) was presented to the University and will continue to administer, analyze, and report on survey data of graduates at least once per year moving forward. In addition, the Office of Alumni Services launched a pilot [1-year](#), [3-year](#), and [5-year](#) graduate survey to

better evaluate longitudinal trends in graduates' career progression and educational attainment over time.

Sources

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- 2021-2022_Program_Reviewer_Rubric
- 2021-221 p 40 Fairmont_State_University_Undergraduate_Catalog
- 3Year
- 4 A Last One HLC Standard Pathway Mid-Cycle Review Report with IAC Letter
- 4A 3 2019-2020 Undergrad. Catalog
- 4A 3 HLC Dual Enrolment Criteria for Accreditation (CRRT.B.10.010) _ Policies
- 5.3 Five-Year_File-SOS-Series-10-HEPC-Program-Review-2022-08-02
- 5Year
- Academic Program Review _ Fairmont State University
- Accreditation _ College of Business Aviation _ Fairmont State University
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- Architecture Program _ College of Science Technology _ Fairmont State University
- Assessment Process at Fairmont State University Overview _ Fairmont State University
- bog-agenda-book-december-8-2016
- CAEP Accredited Programs _ College of Education Health and Human Performance _ Fairmont State University
- Curriculum Proposal Form FSU 2022
- Falcon FastTrack _ Dual Enrollment Fairmont State University
- Final-File-SOS-HEPC-Series-11-New-Program-Approval-2022-08-02
- FSU New_Course_ProposalForm _ 2022
- FSU ProgramReview Accredited Programs - AY20-21
- Mechanical Engineering Technology _ College of Science Technology _ Fairmont State University
- Occupational Safety _ College of Science Technology _ Fairmont State University
- Prior Learning Credit meeting timeline 2022
- PriorTesting and Placement Meeting Minutes 07-29-22
- SERIES 10 Policy Regarding Program Review
- Series-59-HEPC-SOS-Final-File-Ver-2018-08-28-1
- Survey Results-ExpectationsC
- Surveying Geomatics Engineering Technology _ College of Science Technology _ Fairmont State University
- Timeline_Academic_Program_Review
- Transfer Students _ Admissions _ Fairmont State University (1)
- TRANSFER_HEPC-Series17-FinalFileSOS-2015-11-24 (1)
- Workflow for Proposed Curriculum Changes 2021

4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Argument

4.B.1. Fairmont State recognizes that meaningful and measurable progression of student learning in academic and cocurricular offerings is critical to achieving its mission, and has established processes to ensure that assessment of student learning outcomes (SLOs) occur throughout the academic year for both academic and cocurricular offerings. The process of changing to an institution-wide culture of assessment was facilitated first by the Critical Friends Group (CFG), an informal gathering of assessment leaders in each department, who eventually became [Assessment Points of Contact](#). That group was followed by a more formal, representative body, the [Institutional Assessment Council \(IAC\)](#). The IAC oversaw self-reviews of both academic and non-academic areas, [identifying strengths and weaknesses in assessment processes](#).

Because of the discipline-specific and often accreditation-driven nature of assessment, academic units establish their internal assessment procedures. At the beginning of every Fall semester, college-designated faculty within each academic department are asked to review and create valid [quantitative or qualitative measures for collecting assessment data](#) as well as an assessment strategy summary for the academic year to guide the evaluation of their given degree program(s). The University designates an Assessment Day as part of the professional development week that precedes each semester at which [college-designated faculty within each academic department collect and analyze assessment data](#) relative to the measures identified for use at the beginning of the academic year, and then, if appropriate, develop actionable tasks for the following academic year. Academic Affairs reviews academic degree programs' progress on meeting assessment tasks at least once per year and collaborates with Deans and Chairs to address any identified deficits.

Since the 2016-2017 academic year, all degree programs have [institutionally required levels](#) of assessment. Assessment for academic degree programs is completed in Taskstream and [regularly reviewed](#). Further, [SLOs](#) for all academic major degree programs, the core curriculum, and the honors program are publicly available online and are updated with any changes biannually. Assessment for academic degree programs with outside accreditation, the honors program, and the common core curriculum follow the same assessment process, but degree programs with outside accreditors may conduct an assessment as specified by their outside accreditor. [The course-level assessment](#) follows a similar timeline and is institutionally required for all courses from which assessment data is collected for degree program assessment. Curricular assessment has continued unabated throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

While co-curricular assessment is a relatively new process, in recognition of the interrelated nature of students' educational experiences within and across non-academic units, the University is taking steps to systematize non-academic unit assessment within the context of unit-level strategic planning to ensure that assessment procedures across the University are coordinated. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as staff turnover in non-academic units has slowed, but not stopped, progress in co-curricular assessment.

What follows are examples of various University assessment processes at multiple levels of academic and cocurricular activity:

Healthcare Management

In the Fall of 2018, Fairmont State revised a former 2+2 program in allied health administration to become a [four-year degree within the College of Business and Aviation](#) (COBA). The BS in Healthcare Management (HCMG) was designed to provide a comprehensive, high-quality undergraduate education that incorporates the study of the theoretical and technical aspects of healthcare management for aspiring healthcare managers and clinicians desiring additional management skills. HCMG degree program SLOs were mapped to the SLOs of each of the eight required healthcare management courses. This linkage provided a basis for the assessment of outcomes.

The HCMG undergraduate academic program documents SLOs and program goals in Taskstream as is standard practice across the institution for all academic programs. [HCMG program information](#) in Taskstream includes assessment plans, measures, findings, and action plans.

Nursing

The College of Nursing uses a [Master Plan of Evaluation](#) as a guide and timeline for the analysis of aggregate student and program outcome data based on national accreditation standards. The [Associate Degree Nursing Programs are accredited](#) by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). The [RN-BSN Program is accredited](#) by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The College maintains the same two-pronged assessment process as non-accredited programs and completes all institutionally required areas within Taskstream.

Core Curriculum

In January 2018, Fairmont State began an overhaul of its General Studies program. That program had been in effect for several years with no assessment review. Although assessment data had been collected on the course level through Taskstream, no process existed to coordinate the assessment of the GS program itself. To develop an action plan for the program, the Chair of the General Studies committee assembled [focus groups](#) for each learning outcome. [Those groups](#), consisting of faculty teaching courses that met the outcome, met to discuss the available assessment data and made recommendations, which were incorporated into the programmatic changes.

In the Fall of 2020, the new general education program, the [Core Curriculum](#), went into effect. Unlike previous preconceptions of general education, designing the core curriculum involved consideration of an [assessment process](#) from the beginning. To oversee that process, a new position was created, [Faculty Director of General Education](#). As core curriculum assessment occurs on the individual course level, growing the assessment regimen has involved finding sustainable ways to further report that information on an institutional level for review, primarily to the [General Studies Committee](#), an already existing standing committee of the Faculty Senate.

Co-Curricular/Student Life

The Office of Residential and Student Life has a plan in place for effective processes for the assessment of student learning and the achievement of learning goals in co-curricular offerings. In March 2020, those plans were disrupted due to Covid-19 as staff worked to [transition to a fully remote campus environment](#). Before March 2020, a task force met to establish [SLOs for Residential Education](#) and to align those outcomes with a [programming model](#) for Resident Assistants (RAs). Professional Staff members, (Resident Directors, the Assistant Director of Residential Education, and the Director of Residential Education) started [the training process](#) for this curricular model. However, with barriers that the Covid-19 pandemic presented to the entire campus community, and especially to co-curricular programming, the plan was not fully implemented. Currently, the [planning and implementation](#) focus is now on the [2022-2023 academic year](#), focused on developing more efficient and intentional interactions to gather and subsequently analyze data to make informed programming decisions based on students' needs. [Training of student staff members](#) to prepare them for the implementation of the intentional interactions/conversations began in Spring 2022, and modeling/simulating intentional interactions/conversations was incorporated into our [RA training](#).

4.B.2. Fairmont State University uses information gained from assessment to improve student learning in several ways, including at the academic degree program level, in cocurricular learning, and through the curriculum revision process. In the 2020-2021 academic year alone, 461 SLOs across 64 program spaces—including academic degree programs with concern actions—had 759 measures, 539 findings, and 111 linked actions associated with them at the degree program level

Examples of how information gained from assessment improves student learning are as follows:

Education

In Spring 2021, the College of Education, Health and Human Performance (CoEHPP) planned a two-day professional development, including its [Assessment Day](#), to meet a range of programmatic (for programs with and without external accreditors) and faculty needs. This two-day event was planned by the assessment team and included a survey for faculty/ staff participants to complete. Data from the survey was compiled and used to make informed decisions about [the processes in place within the CoEHHP regarding assessment](#). Traditionally, [assessment meetings in CoEHHP](#) focused on matters related to the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and/or Taskstream. A [Continuous Improvement Leadership Team](#) was subsequently established, enabling more ongoing conversations about programmatic needs (based on an established assessment) and collaboration between methods instructors and other content area specialists to improve student learning. Annual data collected from teacher education program completers and employers informed continuous improvement in the teacher education programs, including [revisions to course assignments, assessments, and learning objectives](#). These updated processes are incorporated into [institutional assessment reporting for academic degree programs](#) within CoEHHP in Taskstream.

Core Curriculum

Faculty reporting data from courses meeting Core Curriculum learning outcomes are required to submit annual course reports that indicate both results and an improvement plan on the course level. Those reports are then [reviewed](#) by members of the General Studies Committee, who will make recommendations both to course faculty and program-wide faculty. They will complete a full review of the Core Curriculum as an academic program over a [five-year cycle](#). Because the Core Curriculum is relatively new, the Director of General Studies is engaging in [efforts to train faculty](#) on

the types of analysis and actions appropriate for improving student learning moving forward.

Healthcare Management

Assessment data are collected and used to measure overall performance and determine if improvement is needed. If a course has specific outcomes that do not meet the standard benchmark, corrective action is noted in Taskstream and discussed with the instructor by the program coordinator (EVIDENCE). The next cycle of evaluation compares whether improvement was achieved based on the 'plan.' The results for courses taught for each semester are presented during the annual department faculty assessment meetings. This includes highlighting where improvement plans were successful in meeting benchmarks and summaries of the program assessment and corrective actions status as reported at the end of the [2018-2019](#) academic cycle and during the [fall 2021](#) mid-year review respectively, and are also available in Taskstream.

Co-Curricular/Student Life

The Office of Residential and Student Life gathers data regularly to learn more about the [demographics](#) of students living in the Residence Halls on campus and [participating in events](#). As an example, based on Student Life [student feedback surveys](#), the staff revised programmatic activity and event planning for 2021-2022 to create [events that would be more well-attended and meaningful](#) for students. Student Life further finds that Gathering data on [why students are leaving the residence halls](#) is a key step to informing best programming practices in the residential community to attract students and retain them. With the adoption of [Presence](#) to manage co-curricular experiences including clubs and residence hall programs, the Student Life Professional team will have access to data to inform future programming practices. [Presence is managing](#) all student programming information, communications, data collection, and sign-ups.

4.B.3. Fairmont State strives to ensure that processes of methodologies of assessment reflect good practice within and across disciplines and the context (i.e. outside the accredited program, cocurricular events, course-level assessment, etc.) in which student learning occurs. [Participation from a wide variety of faculty, staff](#), and even outside professionals is ascertained through these processes.

Education

Currently, COEHHP faculty members and content methods instructors [collaborate to design assessments](#) that simultaneously address CAEP requirements and standards for Specialized Professional Associations (SPAs), thereby ensuring that assessment is based on best practices established by professional organizations. Continuous Assessment meetings that include all content area method instructors, faculty members in the teacher education department in the COEHHP, and staff members in the Professional Development Schools office that oversee clinical placements are planned to provide the space for collaboration and addressing the needs of students in our teacher education programs. While COVID-19 and other barriers presented logistical challenges to maintaining collaboration between method instructors, education course instructors, and clinical placement office, there are plans to continue holding [collaborative Assessment Day meetings](#) twice a semester in addition to semester EPPAC meetings to provide space for ongoing collaboration through data analysis. Thus, assessment discussions are continuous throughout the semester and allow the assessment to reflect input from faculty, staff, and practicing professionals in the field of education.

Core Curriculum

All full-time faculty teaching Core Curriculum courses are expected to participate in creating annual Core Portfolios, and the membership of the General Studies committee reviewing the reported data represents all academic units on campus.

Healthcare Management

The status of measures for student learning outcomes for program assessment is reported at the end of each semester as part of the College of Business and Aviation faculty meeting. Assessment results are obtained using scores on identified items by course via the Blackboard grade book, which itemized grading by deliverable as specified on the [curriculum map](#). The methodology for data collection is verified through the use of the 'column statistics tool in Blackboard. For example, if program learning outcome 1 was assessed for a course as 'introduced,' this would be reported as an average grade on that assignment with a comparison of the targeted outcome. A baseline of at least 75 percent of the course would achieve a score of 80 percent or above.' The HCMG program coordinator collects the data from courses taught by all faculty, including adjunct faculty members, for this review. It is incorporated into results reporting in Task Stream. The results for courses taught for each semester are presented during the [annual department faculty assessment meetings](#). The grades are submitted by the instructor and recorded before the evaluation and data collection by the program coordinator. This overall assessment plan follows a typical 'plan-do-study-act' cycle traditional to healthcare management.

The College of Business and Aviation (COBA) Dean, Director of Assessment, and full-time faculty members provide additional oversight, and compare data to the prior year and [trend data and established benchmarks](#). The results of all COBA program assessments (including the HCMG program) are reviewed during the mid-year status update at the end of the fall term and the end-of-year review at the end of the spring term as part of the COBA faculty meetings. These reviews include the COBA Dean, the COBA Director of Assessment, and all full-time COBA faculty members (EVIDENCE). The Director of Assessment coordinates program and course assessment review activities throughout the year within the College of Business and Aviation including [open help sessions](#) with Taskstream during the Institutional Assessment Days at the start of each term.

Co-Curricular/Student Life

During the planning of the programming model, multiple University stakeholders were involved in the process. For example, the Director of Housing and Student Life and the Assistant Director of Housing collaborated with a faculty member in the Education Department to plan and facilitate in-services for resident directors on writing learning outcomes using a backward design model of planning [purposeful programs](#) connected to learning outcomes. [The first in-service](#) was in February 2020; additional in-services were planned for Spring 2020, Summer 2020, and [training for resident assistants](#) in Fall 2021. The campus moved to [remote learning](#) in March 2020, which presented [multiple interruptions](#) for co-curricular through the Fall 2021 semester.

Sources

- 17-18-18 Healthcare Management REV 1 Final
- 2021_Residence Life_Quarantine Isolation FAQ Final
- 2022 Spring Training
- 4B.2 Education 6
- APPROVED Core Curriculum Data 06-02-2021 DL_

- Assessment Day Planning Meeting
- BSchool Online Outreach v2 (1)
- COBA Faculty Meeting and Professional Development
- COBA Program Assessment Review and Help Session Email_Fall 2021 Start of Term
- Core Course Portfolio Assessment Rubric 2021.22
- Core Curriculum Assessment
- Core Curriculum assessment cycle
- Core Curriculum Assessment Faculty Development
- Coursera Certificate Fossen
- Education Assessment Day
- Education Meeting Minutes
- Education ongoing assessment
- ENGL 1108 Shared Assignment Rubric
- ENGLISH Department Assessment Plan
- English Program Writing Review Rubic
- Fairmont State Proposal for Student Development and Engagement Software
- Falcon Mini-Grant Student Life Proposal
- Fall 2020 Programming
- Fall 2022 Housing Application Demographics
- FSU 21-22 GS Agenda 21Oct2021
- FSU Program Assessment Rubric 2015-2016 V5
- General Education Faculty Director (final)
- General Studies Outcome 5 and 6 Assesment Session Report
- General Studies Quantitative Literacy Assessment Report 1-12-18 final
- HCMG Assessment 2018-2019
- HCMG Assessment F2020_S2021
- HCMG Assessment Fall 2021
- HCMG Curriculum Map
- ID 2 assignment sheet
- Improvement Leadership Team
- Institutional Assessment Council v.2
- Minutes 5-2-2017
- Nursing ACEN Accrediation Letter
- Nursing CCNE Reaccreditation letter
- Orientation_Summer 2022
- Presence_Software
- Program Assessment Points of Contact
- Program Model Outline
- Programming Model
- Programs UT
- RA Training Schedule Spring 2021
- Residential Education Curriculum
- RN-BSN Master Plan of Evaluation 2015-2019
- SA Programming Calendar 20-21
- Spring 2020 Training Schedule
- Stay in Place Communication
- Student learning outcomes by program
- STUDENT LIFE_student feedback survey examples
- StuLife Assessment Plan

- StuLife Strategic Plan v3
- SUMMARY FSU Program Assessment Report
- Taskstream Log In Review 2020-2021 and 2021-2022
- Why Are Students Leaving Residence Halls
- WW Survey Results 8.17

4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Argument

4.C.1. Fairmont State University pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that focus on increasing the retention rate of first-year students, improving the 6-year graduation rates of students, and reducing the transfer rate to other institutions. In 2018, the leadership at Fairmont State University published [a new Strategic Plan for the institution](#) (i.e., Fairmont State University Our Quest for Distinction: Strategic Plan) The plan established objectives with benchmarks to address retention, graduation rates, and reducing the transfer rate to other institutions. The Strategic Plan also provided strategies to achieve the specified benchmarks. The plan was realigned and updated in 2021 based on data collected and with the implementation of initiatives to support student learning and persistence. The realignment established several new benchmarks to address student success, and retention rates of first- and second-year students, and to improve the six-year graduation rates. [The revised Strategic Plan](#) illustrates the sources to be used in data-based decision-making. An example of a strategy put into place because of the data collected from the strategic planning process was the development of the [Learning Enrichment and Academic Development \(i.e., LEAD\) Center](#). The LEAD Center provides necessary resources to students in the form of peer and professional tutoring, mentoring, and student success strategies.

4.C.2. Fairmont State University collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs. This data is necessary to allow for systemic improvements and for the institution to strive in meeting its [Vision Statement and Strategic Plan](#). Examples of data collected to aid in decision-making can be found in [IPEDS reports](#), enrollment surveys, [degree completion reports](#), and [graduation rates](#). Additional data is collected by the [West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission](#), and this is regularly reviewed and utilized by Fairmont State University faculty and staff.

4.C.3. Faculty and staff at Fairmont State University utilize data collected to initiate course and program improvements that influence student success and graduation rates. To assist in data

collection and analysis, the institution created a new office in 2019: the [Office of Institutional Research](#). This was done after a self-study found a strong need to align and centralize data collection, reporting, assessment coordination, and institutional decision-making support under one unit. In Fall 2021, the Office of Institutional Research undertook a review of its duties and functions to ensure that it was aligned with the essential duties and functions of institutional research offices as indicated by the Association of Institutional Research (AIR) 2017 Association of Institutional Research (AIR) [Alignment of Duties and Functions report](#). The data provided by the Office of Institutional Research assists in accreditation endeavors, budgetary analysis, strategic planning, course, and programmatic level assessments.

Specialized [accreditation](#) also requires that data be used to assess and determine if students and graduates are meeting programmatic outcomes and national standards. While the data is useful in illustrating student success rates and degree completion, the data collected by the institution and programs of study assist in improving programs of study via a continuous process improvement strategy

Other sources of data and resources available to faculty and staff to assist students in degree completion consist of [DegreeWorks](#) reports and support services provided by the [LEAD Center](#). The Center provides additional support to students to overcome challenges in mathematics, time management, stress management, and reading and writing. Faculty are provided reports on individual students taking advantage of the Center every week.

4.C.4. Fairmont State University utilizes processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs. This is done using IPEDS data, information collected by the Office of Institutional Research, and the WVHEPC. In addition, 5-year program reviews and specialized accreditation require comprehensive program data analysis. These types of assessments require a sharing of the data used in the self-studies with the outside reviewer (for 5-year program reviews) and the accreditation teams visiting campus.

Sources

- 2018-2028 Strategic Plan Components
- 2018-2028_Strategic_Plan_Components_09292021
- Accreditation _ Fairmont State University
- Admissions and Test Scores 2018
- Degree Completions 2020
- DegreeWorks _ Turley Student Services Center _ Fairmont State University
- Graduation Rates 2020
- IPEDS Reporting _ Fairmont State University
- IR_and_AIR_Alignment
- LEAD Center
- Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness _ Fairmont State University
- Retention Data - West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
- The Learning Enrichment and Academic Development (LEAD) Center _ Fairmont State University
- Vision Statement

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

Fairmont State maintains a five-year program review cycle for all degree programs, in alignment with the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission's (WVHEPC) Series 11 program review process. Academic Affairs has developed an internal timeline and formal process for program review that culminates in final decision-making by the Board of Governors (BOG) about the continuance, discontinuance, or monitoring of programs. This process is modified somewhat for programs with external accrediting bodies.

Fairmont State's Office of the Registrar works with faculty and admissions staff to ensure that all credit provided on transcripts is evaluated responsibly. Credits transferred from in-state institutions must meet a 70% learning outcomes equivalency standard established by WVHEPC Series 17, but Fairmont State also applies that standard to credits transferred from out-of-state institutions. When course equivalency is not indicated on maintained transfer articulation tables, discipline-specific faculty evaluate courses and make articulation recommendations. This process is coordinated by the Testing, Placement, and Prior Learning Committee. The Office of the Registrar is currently implementing the computer application Transferology to make the credit transferring process more efficient.

The rigor of courses is maintained through several policies and procedures. Transferred credits must come from regionally or nationally accredited institutions. The faculty maintain oversight of courses and programs through the processes of the Curriculum Committee, which answers to the Faculty Senate. Dual Enrollment offerings are taught by Fairmont State faculty or adjuncts who have been vetted by the academic units. Several areas of the University maintain specialized accreditation, including Teacher Education, Nursing, Business, Aviation, and Engineering Technology.

Fairmont State evaluates the success of its graduates in multiple ways. Many programs have established procedures for tracking the success of graduates. University-wide information is provided by the National Survey of Student Engagement, as well as surveys implemented by The Career Development Center and the Office of Alumni Services.

Fairmont State recognizes the critical importance of its mission of meaningful and measurable assessment and has established processes for both academic and co-curricular offerings. The process of changing to an institution-wide culture of assessment was facilitated first by the Critical Friends Group (CFG), then the Institutional Assessment Council (IAC).

Because of the discipline-specific and often accreditation-driven nature of assessment, academic units establish their internal assessment procedures. Academic Affairs reviews academic degree programs' progress on meeting assessment tasks at least once per year and collaborates with Deans and Chairs to address any identified deficits.

While co-curricular assessment is a relatively new process, in recognition of the interrelated nature of students' educational experiences within and across non-academic units, the University is taking steps to systematize non-academic unit assessment within the context of unit-level strategic planning to ensure that assessment procedures across the University are coordinated. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as staff turnover in non-academic units has slowed, but not stopped, progress in co-curricular assessment.

Fairmont State pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that focus on increasing the retention rate of first-year students, improving the six-year graduation rate, and reducing the transfer rate to other institutions. Information on student retention, persistence, and completion is also gathered from IPEDS reports, enrollment surveys, and data collected by the WVHEPC. Other sources of data and resources available to faculty and staff to assist students in degree completion consist of Degree Works reports, as well as tutoring and other academic support services provided by the LEAD Center. Faculty and staff at Fairmont State utilize this data to initiate course and program improvements that further influence student success and graduation rates.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Argument

5.A.1.: Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.

Shared governance at Fairmont State University regularly involves faculty, staff, and students through planning, policies, and procedures. The basic structure of shared governance at the institution is assured through **Chapter 18B of the West Virginia State Code**, which provides for a Faculty Senate and Staff Council that engage at least quarterly with the President of University and at least annually with the Board of Governors on matters affecting their constituencies “and the effective and efficient management of the institution.” **State code** also necessitates an institutional student government organization. Each of these groups are robustly active at Fairmont State and have long-standing constitutions which further delineate their responsibilities related to institutional governance. The **Faculty Senate** acts “as the principal agent of the Faculty of Fairmont State University in policy determination,” the **Staff Council** as “a representative body and a voice for all members of Fairmont State University staff and...a forum for discussion of staff concerns,” and the **Student Government Association (SGA)** as a regulatory body on “all matters pertaining to the student life of its members which do not fall under jurisdiction of the faculty and administration.” Each group **elects a representative to the BOG** with full voting rights.

The administration, faculty, and staff engage in shared governance by participating in committees that impact University policies, driving the development of new programs and courses, and advocating for new initiatives. The University has a **curriculum committee** which generally meets monthly to review proposals for new programs and courses and to propose major curriculum changes. The curriculum committee has faculty representation from each College and ex-officio members to

receive a wide range of perspectives on proposals.

A variety of **standing committees** provide the opportunity for faculty and staff to engage in the governance of the institution. The Provost's Council, Faculty Senate, and Graduate Council meet regularly. Most changes to policy and graduate curriculum changes go through the Graduate Council, while changes to undergraduate curriculum go through the Faculty Senate for approval and implementation. The recommended changes are then forwarded if additional approval processes are warranted (such as to the Board of Governors, WVHEPC, and/or the HLC for new academic programs).

To support their programs with specialized accreditation, some of the colleges have Industry Advisory Councils (IAC), made up of program stakeholders, including faculty, students, alumni, and industry representatives, which meet regularly. The goal of the IAC is to review curriculum and program relevancy and gather recommendations to improve the program by representing the needs of the stakeholders.

While Chapter 18B requires that the BOG approve and adopt financial, business, and educational policies—including annual institutional budgets, the introduction, continuance, or discontinuance of degree programs, tuition and fees, and capital facilities projects—through its **delegation of authority resolution**, the BOG releases the administrative operations of the University, including the execution of its “financial, business, and educational policies and affairs” to the President. The previous President operationalized this authority in-turn through the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), comprised of the following positions:

- Director of Athletics
- Vice President for University Relations and Marketing
- Vice President for Student Success
- Vice President for Information Technology/CIO
- Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Operations
- Vice President for Finance and Administration
- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Chief of Staff
- Chief of Police/Director of Emergency Management
- Vice President for Human and Legal Affairs
- Associate Vice President for Facilities Management

Collectively, ELT met at least weekly to discuss internal operations and strategic issues related to the day-to-day functions of the University. Throughout the academic year, members of ELT presented information, asked questions, answered inquires, provided assistance, and accepted guidance from the BOG, Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and SGA (EVIDENCE). During the pandemic, the previous President also held weekly **Continuity of Operations (COOP) meetings** to augment communication and discussion of pressing operational issues among the ELT, Deans, and upper-level management across campus.

In 2019, the Faculty Senate and the Provost established a joint Senate and Administrative Committee to update, revise, and reorganize the [Faculty Handbook](#) to make the material in it more accessible and usable. The Committee included members from each College in the University as well as the Library. The Provost represented the Administration. From its beginning, the Committee saw its work as potentially a healing of divisiveness between faculty and administration. The Committee also hoped its work would improve morale by having many faculty representatives at the table, reinforcing

the concept of shared governance.

The Committee reviewed handbooks from other institutions of comparable size as well as those of other institutions in West Virginia and came up with seven sections for our Handbook: University Structure and Governance; Faculty Classification and Evaluation; Faculty Development and Awards; Faculty Rights and Responsibilities; Grievance Process and Procedures; Faculty Salary and Benefits; and Faculty Support Services.

The Committee also added a preface that included a statement of principles or ideals on which the work of the faculty rested. That statement invoked Fairmont State's roots as a normal school established to train teachers, stressed our common goal of helping students develop intellectually, cited our shared commitment to facilitating their success as they prepare for the lives ahead of them, and ended with a mutual pledge of excellence in our work as individual members of the faculty. The Committee and its work was well and truly a process of shared governance.

During its deliberations, the Committee came to see that the Faculty Handbook would require updating each year, so it worked with the Provost and the Faculty Senate to establish a standing **Faculty Handbook Committee**. This joint administrative and Senate committee is composed of five members elected by each College, three members appointed by the Provost and the Provost. The president of the Senate, the director of HR, and University Counsel serve *ex officio*. The Committee worked under the assumption that the Faculty Handbook is a dynamic and evolving document that reflects the changing circumstances of faculty life.

The revised [Faculty Handbook](#), further prescribes how shared governance is realized in academic matters: "Faculty members have authority and responsibility, both individually and as a General Faculty body, to participate in the institutional planning, policy development, and decision-making through (1) academic communication channels as members of academic units, (2) administration-directed committees, projects, and activities that rely on faculty participation, (3) representation of the Faculty Senate, and (4) oversight and input from the General Faculty."

Fairmont State's governance structure enables the university to involve all key constituents in planning, policies and processes. Two examples demonstrate these efforts. The first is the inclusion of faculty, staff, students and administration in the pre-planning, development and approval at different levels of the B.S. in Surveying and Geomatics degree program. The proposal originated at the Department and College level, was forwarded to the Associate Provost of Academic Affairs where the proposal and other material were reviewed by (a) faculty and staff members of the University Curriculum Committee; and (b) faculty and student members at the Faculty Senate meeting. The approval recommendations from all constituencies were completed prior to the academic degree program being submitted to the BOG, which subsequently voted, approved and communicated its decision to campus constituencies and the public in compliance with pre-existing institutional and state policies

The second example demonstrates the shared governance process in the development of [graduate faculty qualifications](#) to ensure compliance with HLC's Assumed Practice Guidelines for Institutions. A subcommittee of the University Graduate Council, titled Graduate Faculty Credential Committee, began the planning process for this policy in the Fall, 2019 with representation from each Department with a graduate program. As the policy was drafted and refined, it was reviewed by key groups including the University's HLC Liaison, Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Graduate Council of which includes both faculty and student representatives. The Graduate Faculty Membership Policy received [final approval](#) on January 20, 2021 and is available on the [Graduate Studies webpage](#).

Moreover, Over the past two-years the university has focused on integrating technology into governance. While the overall goal has been to foster collaboration, specific projects have included online collaborative work teams (UG program review teams space) online surveys and assessing feedback.

5.A.2.: The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.

The institution's administration uses data regularly to reach informed decisions, and indeed requires it as part of many decision-making processes. Where appropriate, the administration utilizes shared governance and collaborative structures to involve multiple stakeholders so as to confirm that data-based decisions are made in the best interests of the institution and its constituents. The following examples highlight some of the ways in which data supports and enhances decision-making at Fairmont State:

Academic Affairs:

- Any curriculum change, be it a proposal for a new course or the modification of learning outcomes for degree programs, must provide a quantitative and qualitative analysis supporting the rationale for the proposed change (EVIDENCE). These analyses are discussed and reviewed by the Provost's Office, the Curriculum Committee, and the Faculty Senate, and when appropriate, additional data or analyses are requested (EVIDENCE).
- The program review process requires that faculty and staff utilize multiple sets of degree-specific data—including information on enrollment, graduation, retention, student success, course types, etc.—in their review and supporting analyses. Institutional Research and Effectiveness has compiled these types of data into standardized data dashboards and program data sheets available to faculty to further assist them (EVIDENCE).
- The addition of faculty lines and instructional staff in colleges typically require a data-based justification from the academic dean.

Retention:

- Within the Division of Student Success, a Director of Retention Initiatives works to partner with various offices and colleges on campus to implement student success programs or approaches in an effort to improve retention and degree completion. Multimodal feedback and information from students is gathered regularly through surveys, on-campus meetings, email outreach, phone calls, etc. When trends are identified that suggest a barrier to success, this office conducts campaigns in conjunction with faculty, academic deans, and members of Academic Affairs to educate students on solutions. Examples of previously identified barriers from data have included students who have an outstanding balance (rectifying and/or understanding), students with registration holds, or simply a lack of understanding of how/where to find advisors to register for classes. Significant effort is taken to reach out to students in multiple channels to help them understand these barriers and suggest solutions.

Information Technology:

- The Office of Information Technology (IT) utilizes TopDesk, a service management tool to enable faculty, staff, and students to submit tickets to request technical assistance from IT for a variety of matters, including computer repair, application services, educational technology infrastructure, and networking solutions. IT analyzes these tickets based on the different types

of request tickets it receives to make decisions as to the allocation and purchasing of resources to meet demand and maintain the satisfaction of constituents.

- IT routinely replaces computer systems with state of the art for the users on campus based on the established lifespan of their computer systems, which is determined by industry standards, their warranty plans, and their function. All of these data are stored and available in the IT Inventory System. The number of systems purchased is determined by the number needed and IT's financial resources at the time.

To further support a culture of data competency at Fairmont State, the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness has data dashboards, external reports, and analyses available publicly on its website (EVIDENCE). Faculty, staff, and members of the campus community also regularly submit requests for ad-hoc data, surveys, and analyses through a centralized data/analytic request portal (EVIDENCE). Institutional Research processed and completed over 200 data requests during the 2020-2021 academic year, and to the extent made possible by its obligation to data security and privacy, has made data types commonly requested publicly available on its dashboards to further enhance the ease of data access (EVIDENCE).

More detailed reporting is also available to faculty and staff internally. As an example, all academic deans have access to a suite of Argos reports which allow them to retrieve student-level information compiled in ways to further assist them in areas related to college-level retention, major changes, academic success, schedule building, budgeting, and faculty hiring. These reports were developed in collaboration with academic deans, Institutional Research and Effectiveness, and Information Technology.

5.A.3.: The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Fairmont State administration works to ensure that faculty, staff and students are involved appropriately in establishing academic requirements, policy, and processes through established collaborative structures.

Curriculum at Fairmont State University is faculty-driven, staff-supported, and student-focused. All curriculum changes are reviewed and must be approved by the Curriculum Committee, Office of the Provost, and Faculty Senate. Throughout this process, staff work with faculty to verify that any required structural data schemas (CIP Codes, major code, level selections) are appropriate, compliant with relevant State and Federal guidance, and executable across the University's student information systems in a requested timeline. To support a curriculum change, such as the introduction of a new degree program, faculty must articulate a student-based need for the program, and many proposals, such as the Police Academy, 4-year BSN, and Criminal Justice, conduct student interest surveys and focus groups to further support the need for a curricular change or new degree program (EVIDENCE).

An example of faculty, staff, and student involvement which set academic requirements, policy and processes can be found in the introduction of Academic Pathways to the University. Prior to Fall **2020, students could stay undecided with very few limits on the length of time they could remain so (EVIDENCE). The University began actively participating in the Complete College America (CCA) initiative as part of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission**

(WVHEPC)'s 15 to Finish Campaign (EVIDENCE). University leadership established a workgroup comprised of faculty and staff to review and align strategic initiatives—including those related to the strategic plan—with best practices identified by CCA (EVIDENCE).

Through this process, the workgroup found that students in undecided majors and students in the pre-nursing pathway had poor retention rates, academic underperformance, and limited on-time graduates. In fact, some students remained in these program designations for longer than six years (EVIDENCE). As a result, academic pathways, which allow undecided students to take courses aligned within an area of interest to the student (EVIDENCE). To provide tailored support to academic pathways students, they are assigned to the Office of Exploratory Advising, and a new academic requirement was instituted requiring students to declare a major within the first academic year of full-time study. These changes were proposed, reviewed, and approved through relevant established shared governance processes, and involved staff from a myriad of campus areas, including the Registrar, Academic Affairs, Institutional Research, Office of Advising, Financial Aid, Student Life, and Finance (EVIDENCE).

Students also have representative interests in decision-making around academic requirements, policy, and processes. Through the Student Government Association (SGA), student representatives have prescribed seats on Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and the BOG. The BOG representative of SGA is a voting member, and the Faculty Senate and Staff Council representatives are charged with bringing initiatives discussed at SGA for consideration and possible implementation with the collaboration of the Faculty Senate and Staff Council. These representatives collectively inform discussions related to academic requirements, policy, and processes. Students also serve on campus advisory committees, such as the Campus Safety Committee, and represent the University in official capacities at external academic events, such as First2 Network Conferences (EVIDENCE).

Sources

- Graduate Council Meeting Minutes 1-20-21
- Graduate Faculty Qualifications and Membership Policy
- Graduate Studies Website

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Argument

5.B.1.: The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Fairmont State has operational processes and resources in place to ensure that staff are qualified and trained appropriately, and that infrastructure supports operations regardless of how and where educational programming is delivered. All staff are hired from job postings which have position qualifications set by the hiring manager and the Office of Human Resources (EVIDENCE). Upon hire, these qualifications are subsequently confirmed through a comprehensive background check (EVIDENCE).

To support staff in growing their skillsets and knowledge, the institution provides ongoing professional development to staff. Through Safe Colleges, the University requires all staff members to engage annually in professional development related to Title IX, the Cleary Act, data stewardship, FERPA, and inclusive workplaces (EVIDENCE). Further, the Educational Technology Center coordinates professional development days throughout the academic year to which staff are invited to attend, and many individual offices engage in unit-specific related professional development (EVIDENCE). The University offers scholarships and employee tuition and fee waivers to help staff who wish to further their education at the institution (EVIDENCE). Budgetary lines are contained with many departments to support professional development through conference travel and participation in activities of professional organizations (EVIDENCE).

Staff members attend professional development conferences appropriate to their role in the University with departmental approval, which provides opportunities for industry networking and education. Fairmont State also funds professional organization membership for faculty and staff through institutional memberships. Although operations are lean, there are a sufficient number of positions to support operations across the University, and if a department or area needs additional resources, requests for additional staff may be made through the annual budgeting process.

The University has also developed an infrastructure to also support its operations. The Office of Information Technology (IT) instituted multiple technologic and infrastructure changes to support the University during the pandemic, which has subsequently allowed the University to better support students, faculty and staff both on campus and at off campus locations. As the university prepared to

move to remote operations at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, IT staff held a week of professional development covering topics that would enable faculty and staff to successfully work remotely. Sessions offered included use of video conferencing tools (WebEx and Teams), accessing campus systems online and through the VPN (Microsoft Office, Teams, OneDrive), library resources, using the online Advising tools, and an information session on COVID-19 offered by a health professional. Academic technology sessions were offered to each college and covered Blackboard and other systems. During the week, there were 67 individual training sessions offered, and 3,907 registrations received across all of those sessions. EVIDENCE Each session was recorded and placed on the IT website for anyone who could not attend. As the University began preparing for the return to campus, all classrooms were equipped with web cams and microphones, which coupled with WebEx, provided the ability to record lectures and offer synchronous classes for students.

In addition to training and classroom upgrades, employees were offered the use of a laptop while the campus was shut down. As employees began returning to campus, IT instituted replacements of desktops with laptops for faculty and staff in order to provide continuity and ensure the ability to work remotely again if needed. The practice of providing laptops first remains in effect today, with a few employees continuing to select desktops as a technology preference. The IT department is also researching current technology trends as it looks towards the future of technology at the University.

In addition, the University invests in infrastructure sufficient for education in its degree programs. The [Ruth Ann Musick Library](#) provides students with access to over 150 digital databases, 85,933 media resources, and more than 500,000 books in digital and physical formats (EVIDENCE). The Library participates in interlibrary loans, and maintains a facility which contains small [group study rooms](#), computer labs, a coffee/snack shop, technology enhancements such as projectors, loanable laptops, and a variety of seating options to support both individual and group-based study and presentations (EVIDENCE). In-person, virtual, and [chat reference](#) services are available during all library hours to meet faculty and students at their point of need, as well as a form for after-hours questions. In addition to offering traditional library instruction in in-person, virtual, and recorded formats, librarians work closely with faculty members to design course- and assignment-specific instruction, [research guides](#), and tutorials. The Library maintains a course reserve collection, supplied by course instructors, which currently allows access to textbooks and other course materials for over 370 active classes. (<https://fairmont.on.worldcat.org/courseReserves/landing>) Concomitantly, the Library offers [E-reserves](#) services in accordance with copyright law for small online readings and media resources. Librarians are regular participants in University professional development days, offering sessions on various resources and services, and soliciting feedback from faculty. The [Library Committee](#) serves as an advisory committee of the Faculty Senate as well.

5.B.2.: The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.

Aligned with the mission, vision, and core values of the University, Fairmont State has the following strategic planning themes (EVIDENCE):

1. Improve student success with a focus on retention;
2. Grow enrollments; and
3. Resource diversification through stabilization.

Adding the Falcon FastTrack for high school students, and exploring continuing education, credentialing and badging are other ways Fairmont State is attempting to increase enrollment and improve student success.

Fairmont State encourages low cost textbook options for our students, including rental programs, digital books and open educational resources. Through its partnership with Follett, a new adoption platform is in the soft roll-out phase which brings more transparency to the textbook options available to students and encourages faculty selection of low cost and no cost options for students.

The University chooses to focus on accessibility with concern for both increasing the number of students and enhancing the quality of newly enrolled students.

The University set ambitious but attainable and quantifiable goals through its strategic planning process—also aligned with the formation of the mission as indicated in 1.A.1. The strategic plan acts as a roadmap for the institution’s mission.

Goals stemming from Fairmont State University’s mission and related statement are realistic and reflect the institution’s organization, resources, and opportunities. The University mission indicates that the institution is “a comprehensive, regional university committed to educating global citizen leaders in an environment distinguished by a commitment to excellence, student success, and transformational impact” (EVIDENCE). The mission identifies the context of Fairmont State University as a regional institution that offers a broad and complete educational schema that, as articulated further in 2.B.2., promulgates an environment distinguished by excellence, student success, and transformational impact. Through curricular and co-curricular processes, the University uses this environment to craft global citizen leaders. The University set ambitious but attainable and quantifiable goals through its strategic planning process—also aligned with the formation of the mission as indicated in 1.A.1. The strategic plan acts as a roadmap for the institution’s mission.

Indeed, the sustainability and appropriateness of the University’s strategic goals are already bearing fruit. As a result of the institution’s focus on achieving financial stability within its strategic plan, the University’s Composite Financial Indicator (CFI) and days cash on hand are one of the highest among all public postsecondary institutions in West Virginia; this stabilization has subsequently allowed the University to make strategic investments guided by its strategic plan in areas of student success, academic programming, and enrollment management, including the purchase of software such as Slate, Evaluation Kit, and Navigate (EVIDENCE). Though there is an overall paucity of educational attainment and diversity in West Virginia, the institution’s goals—such as increasing out of state and international enrollment and developing cross border partnerships—enable it to fulfill its need to provide educational services to the region while bringing a larger global-focus to it. Given West Virginia’s declining population, fulfilling objectives within the strategic plan enables the institution to minimize potential losses to its in-state enrollment profile while attracting new potential residents to the state.

5.B.3.: The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.

Fairmont State’s budget process is reflective of its organizational structure as a public regional institution, and it has multiple protocols in place for monitoring its financial wellbeing. Broadly, the budget preparation process begins very early in the Spring semester of the preceding fiscal year. The Office of Finance produces drafts of fiscal year budget planning documents—including operation and spending plans—which collectively depict current fiscal conditions and revenue projections, the known availability of resources, and previously identified funding priorities to the University’s Executive Leadership Team (ELT), which in turn utilizes information from these documents to

identify and refine funding initiatives for the upcoming fiscal year. When resources exist, funding prioritization is given to any new or continuing projects aligned with the University's strategic plan. In a trend previously articulated in the University's 2016 interim assurance argument, the Office of Finance no longer utilizes a Budget Committee for budget planning and instead uses the ELT—a general equivalent to the President's Cabinet—and the Finance Committee of the Board of Governors to better facilitate the flow of information and budget-building within and between academic and non-academic units, and to allow for the University to quickly pivot in times of financial exigency.

The budget cycle is an ongoing process and begins with a review of current and future strategic initiatives. The remaining cycle steps include budget preparation, budget approval, budget execution, and budget monitoring and revisions. The review of current and strategic initiatives begins with University leadership and key stakeholders and identifies resources needed to complete the desired objectives over the corresponding fiscal year.

As such, the University's current budgeting comprises three components: The Board of Governors, Auxiliaries, and Restricted/Unrestricted areas. Below is a brief explanation of each budgetary component, and the budgeting and monitoring process in place for each.

Board of Governors component: This component houses only designated capital revenues and expenses. Revenues include capital and bonded infrastructure, tuition and fees paid by students as well as external funding, when available, such as bond refunding proceeds or state capital funds allocated by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WVHEPC). Expenses include capital and maintenance expenses along with debt service and depreciation. This component was required to appropriately report the shared assets between Fairmont State and its former two-year institution, Pierpont Community and Technical College. Since a final separation has occurred between the two institutions since the previous interim report, this component is under evaluation by the Office of Finance for its continued need.

The budgeting process for this component starts with understanding the bond debt requirements needed for the upcoming fiscal year. Once the annual debt service amounts are known, revenue projections are estimated based on the current fee structure, current enrollment, and projections for future enrollment. If the excess expected from revenues after making debt service payments are not sufficient to support capital and maintenance expected needs, a fee increase is usually requested for this component. Fairmont State has not had a fee increase to this component for the past several years.

Because of the fixed nature of expenses in this component, monitoring of actual revenues and expenses is done by the Vice President for Finance and Administration throughout the fiscal year to ensure bond obligations are met. The budget is set so that even unusually large fluctuations in enrollment-derived revenues do not place hardship on the University relative to its obligations for debt service payments. Fairmont State strives to have at least \$1 to 1.5 million in excess revenues towards capital and maintenance expenses annually.

Auxiliary component: This component houses all auxiliary revenue and expenses. WVHEPC-defined auxiliaries at Fairmont State include Housing, Parking, the Falcon Center, and Athletic facilities. Each of these operations functions as a standalone cost center, which was a requirement of the original 2002-2003-issued bond debt that supported construction of new facilities for most of these auxiliaries. Revenues are derived from housing rents, dining operations, bookstore operations, designated student fees, parking fees, ticket revenues, and various ancillary sources of auxiliary revenue, both internal and external. The majority of the institution's debt is derived from auxiliary

facilities, and lives in the auxiliary component. Each of the auxiliary's operations and reserve funds are also housed within this component.

Each of the auxiliaries has its own financial proforma that serves as both a budget and monitoring tool to the VP of Finance and Administration and the auxiliary financial managers. In addition, there is a summary financial report that is compiled monthly. This report is part of the financial report provided to the Finance Committee and the Board of Governors for review, discussion and approval at every meeting.

Like the Board of Governors component, the budgeting process for this area starts with an understanding of necessary bond debt requirements. All auxiliaries currently support outstanding bond debt with the exception of Athletics. Next, operation expectations are taken into consideration, including new initiatives requested from these areas through the ELT. In a collaboration between the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Finance, an evaluation of the current revenue generation and expected future enrollments is completed to determine expected revenues. All of this information is contained within each auxiliary's proforma to indicate if revenues are expected to be sufficient to cover bond debt and operating expenses. Each proforma also has future repair and maintenance needs projections to ensure that sufficient excess revenues are provided by reserve funds when needed. If revenues will not support needs, various avenues of revenue generation or cost savings are then weighed. As an example, fee and rent increases are considered annually by the BOG, and has been previously requested to support anticipated expenses. Additionally, adjustments can be made to either annual operating plans or to future reserve spending plans in order to arrive at the current year's budget for this component. In the case of Athletics, which is heavily supported by Education and General Funds (E&G), an increase in E&G support is considered as well.

As indicated above, individual financial proformas as well as monthly summary reports are used to monitor the financial health of each auxiliary. Proformas are generated about six times each fiscal year at designated milestone points. The Vice President of Finance and Administration and the auxiliary financial managers meet at a minimum monthly to ensure operations are within expected levels. Additionally, the Finance Committee and BOG review, discuss, and approve monthly summary financial reports for this component. The BOG and its committees also review data that supports this component at regular meetings, such as enrollment and housing occupancy.

Unrestricted and Restricted component: This component has three facets within itself: E&G, Fund Manager, and Restricted. Each one has a slightly different budgeting process as a result of their funding processes and are described below.

Unrestricted Education and General (E&G): This component is generally the main operating component of the institution. It includes state appropriations, general tuition and fees, and for the last several years, operating support revenues received from Pierpont Community and Technical College.

Fairmont State's E&G annual budget begins with the passage of the State budget bill, which provides the level of state appropriation support that can be expected. State appropriation support has remained fairly level for the past few years, with the State most recently providing small increases to support pay raises. State appropriations are set and provided by the State through the annual legislative process. Tuition and fees to be charged—as well as budgets—are established and approved annually by the Board of Governors (BOG). Following BOG approval, Fairmont State's approved tuition and fees and budgets are reviewed by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WVHEPC), which is statutorily required to approve any tuition and fees increase over 10 percent

annually or 7 percent on average over a three-year period.

Since the previous interim report, tuition and fee increases at Fairmont State have been well below these thresholds. Even with a realignment of support about three years ago that provided an additional \$3 million to Fairmont State's appropriation, Fairmont State still remains as one of the lowest funded schools per in-state FTE. Nevertheless, the University strives to keep its tuition low, evidenced by an average increase of 2% over the last three years. Fairmont State is also on the lower end in terms of tuition and fees charged to students. Of the seven regional four-year institutions in 2021, Fairmont State had the second lowest undergraduate tuition and fees, only \$154 behind the institution with the lowest published tuition.

Once appropriations are known, analysis of the tuition and fees generated is completed by the Office of Finance, considering any expected increases or decreases in enrollment. The President and ELT discuss if an increase in tuition and fees is appropriate and any factors that might affect that decision, including the need to support program creation and growth identified by Academic Affairs. Should a decision be made by ELT to request that the BOG consider an increase, it is supported by data.

Once expected revenue generation is known, the prior year expense budget is rolled forward in Banner, removing any one-time approvals of spending or cuts. This process yields either additional funds to support previously identified initiatives, or evidence of a needed budget realignment or decrease. Further, this process supports times when mid-year, it becomes necessary to implement initiatives with funding that has not yet been identified. These unfunded initiatives are placed on the budget planning document, which is utilized during the budget preparation phase each Spring semester. If additional funds have been detected or it is anticipated that additional funds will be produced through a previous tuition increase, these initiatives are generally supported. If funds are not available to finance it after this analysis, ELT and the President discuss alternative existing budgets to support it.

The E&G budget is monitored by the BOG and its Finance Committee through the same process as the summary auxiliary financial reports. This component has its own summary financial report and it—along with 5 years' worth of comparative data—are reviewed and approved by the full BOG at each meeting. Additionally, during enrollment and refund periods, the Vice President for Finance and Administration in conjunction with Budget Managers monitors revenue generation weekly to ascertain if there is need for adjustments to operations within the fiscal year. Should adjustments be deemed as needed, the President and ELT then collaborate to determine the appropriate action.

Fund Manager: This component almost solely supports Academic operations and is made up of revenues derived from program and course-specific fees. Most of the colleges use these funds for adjunct support, discretionary funding such as travel and professional development, equipment needs and program accreditation support.

The budget process for these funds is driven primarily on current revenue generation and expected future program and course enrollments. These funds are inception-to-date type balances and any excess revenues generated by the academic units are contained in the funds for future strategic uses. The current budget process is to roll forward current budgets into the new fiscal year and adjust revenues and expenses based on the current and expected values mentioned above. Each fund is budgeted for a zero net-position increase. Distribution of these funds throughout an Academic College's programs is made at the discretion of the Dean of the College. Since many of the academic units heavily utilize these funds for daily operations, Academic Affairs has identified this as a tedious task. As such, the Vice President of Finance and Administration, Provost, and Academic Deans are

working together to develop a standardized distribution process of the funds. Further, statistically driven prediction models for these funds are being developed in conjunction with stakeholders from the Office of Finance, Institutional Research, and Academic Affairs.

Annually, Academic Deans can request to the Office of Finance an increase to the program and course fees being assessed to students. They must provide a data-based justification for the increase, which is used to support the request to the BOG. If it is granted, any increase in revenues is budgeted as increases in expenses, at the discretion of the Dean. If, throughout the fiscal year, the Dean has a need to use past excess revenues for a strategic purpose, a request—including a data-based justification for its use—is required.

This budget is monitored by the Board through the same process as the summary auxiliary and E&G financial reports. Additionally, just after enrollment ends in the Fall and Spring, the Office of Finance reviews revenue generation for indication of needs for adjustments to operations. Should adjustments be identified, the Office of Finance works with the Academic Dean to make appropriate budgetary adjustments.

Restricted: this component houses all Federal, State and private financial aid and sponsored programs funding. For financial aid, the budgets are estimates based on historic uses and enrollment projection. For sponsored programs, the agreement from the source of funding solely determines the budgets, and as such the institution has little to no control over the manner in which these funds are expended. Nevertheless, these funds are monitored through a monthly summary report process that is provided to the full BOG and the BOG Finance Committee. As new awards are received, budgets are updates to appropriately reflect the change. These funds generally have a sum zero effect on the net position of the institution.

5.B.4.: The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Fairmont State continues to strive to ensure that allocated fiscal resources under its control support its educational purposes. The Fund Manager monies within the Unrestricted and Restricted budget component described in 5.B.3 allow for Academic Deans to directly utilize allocated monies to address educational needs within their College. Further, the broader budgetary process, from planning to implementation, elicits input from multiple stakeholders and allows for the University to budget and implement financial allocations aligned to its strategic priorities across all areas of the University, including its auxiliaries. EVIDENCE That Fairmont State has continually kept tuition low has now provided opportunities to increase fees so as to address strategic opportunities while remaining competitive with regional peers. External sponsored funding has provided support to expanding existing programs and improving facilities. In the past fiscal year, the Office of Grants supported the allocation of \$X from X number of sponsored projects NEED TO ADD NUMBERS AND EVIDENCE. Fairmont State also has a robust unrestricted reserve, and discussions are underway to begin careful planning with multiple administrative and academic stakeholders as to how these funds may sustainably support long and short-term educational goals. It is expected that any deliverables from these discussions will be incorporated into future budgeting processes and BOG reports. For instance, the Board of Governors approved an allocation of \$1 million from unrestricted reserves to be used in FY23 for strategic capital priorities determined by the administration. To date, funds have been used to purchase an additional airplane to support growth in the aviation management flight program.

Along with tuition and fee revenues, Federal Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) have provided needed resources to ensure that budget cuts did not have to implemented when

revenues naturally declined at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The University is further proud that its financial position and relevant processes have allowed it to remain one of the few West Virginia institutions that has not had to resort to employee layoffs or reductions in compensation throughout the pandemic, thereby enabling the University to continue to its educational mission.

In collaboration with the Fairmont State Foundation, the University maintains an annual Day of Giving every Fall semester to raise money to support multiple departments, organizations, and causes across campus via an online giving platform that enables stakeholders and donors to provide challenges and incentives for reaching fundraising goals (EVIDENCE). This platform allows donations to specific entities on campus, including each college, student organizations, and scholarship initiatives, thereby allowing stakeholders to provide funds directly to areas they wish to support (EVIDENCE). Since Fall 2019, over \$1.2 mil has been raised across four Days of Giving (EVIDENCE). These allocations further allow the University to be responsive to members of the campus community while growing additional financial support for educational purposes important to them.

Sources

- LIBRARY_Ask_Us
- LIBRARY_Checkout Technology
- LIBRARY_Course Reserves
- LIBRARY_E-reserves
- LIBRARY_homepage
- LIBRARY_Libguides
- LIBRARY_Library Committee Membership
- LIBRARY_Reservable Spaces

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

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

Argument

5.C.1.: The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.

NEED TO DISCUSS PIERPONT IN THIS SECTION??

Fairmont State University attempts to allocate its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities. Every year in conjunction with budget planning, the Executive Leadership Team has **multiple retreats** in order to identify current and future initiatives that align with each goal of the University's mission-driven strategic plan and other ancillary matters identified by the Board of Governors as priority topics in need of addressing for the upcoming academic year (EVIDENCE). Each initiative is assigned a cost and labor value as well as a start and end date. For example, \$15,000 was allocated for professional tutors during the 2021-2022 academic year for the University to better support Goal# 2 Retention; the initiative was then funded within the University's budget planning process and subsequently allowed the testing and tutoring center to provide full daily coverage of student needs(EVIDENCE).

As such, although support from State appropriations has not kept pace with inflation, Fairmont State's monitoring of enrollment, strategic investments, and its financial health has allowed for the growth of new and existing programs, such as Healthcare Management and **Education**, respectively. Indeed, each of these programs were able to grow with curriculum proposals tied directly to the University's mission and priorities.

In 2021, the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs launched an internal mini-grant competition opened to all faculty and staff designed to help meet some specific departmental needs while also fostering a culture of grantsmanship on campus. Fourteen applications were submitted in 2021;

submissions increased to 34 in 2022. Applications are selected in part on how the proposed project advances the mission, vision, and strategic plan of the institution (EVIDENCE)

In addition, the University partners closely with the Fairmont State Foundation to host the annual Day of Giving every Fall semester as well as donor and alumni events throughout the year. The Day of Giving in particular allows University internal and external constituencies, including multiple departments, organizations, and scholarship programs, an additional avenue for gaining resources to support strategic initiatives (EVIDENCE).

However, the University recognizes that more work is needed to better define its allocations of financial resources in areas within Academic Affairs. While Academic deans and faculty can readily ascertain the general amount of monies budgeted and allocated across colleges, and are thus able to make strategic decisions around those dollars, the complexity of the budgetary process at the University has translated into difficulty in developing financial metrics applicable across all colleges. As such, though projections of financials are required in curriculum proposals for new degree programs and financial metrics, such as costs per credit hour, are necessary for academic program reviews, there is inconsistencies in the method and utility for which are defined even within the colleges themselves. To address these issues, the Office of Finance, Institutional Research, and Academic Affairs engaged in conversations around standardizing academic-specific financial metrics in 2020, and had some success, including **defining a breakeven point for both undergraduate and graduate courses that Academic Deans utilized in developing course schedule for the Fall 2020 term (EVIDENCE)**. However, staff shortages and the offices' ongoing obligations to their regular duties on top of the pandemic meant these talks slowed. Nevertheless, the Office of Finance, Institutional Research, and Academic Affairs are now engaged in bi-monthly conversations that include developing degree-specific financial metrics that will better able faculty and staff to comprehend and utilize academic financial data in the course of their work (EVIDENCE).

5.C.2.: The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.

While planning and budgeting are generally integrated and mutually inform each other at Fairmont State, the University's current structure of assessment of student learning in academic degree programs does not have any specific component that ties directly to budgeting, meaning that assessment only loosely ties to budgeting. This paucity of connectivity is partly intentional, as the University has focused in the past five years on building an assessment schema that focused foremost on developing a culture of actionable evidence around student learning across all degree programs in order to then mature the model further towards a comprehensive system of continuous improvement of student learning and operations(EVIDENCE).

That is not to say academic programs ignore data analyses in supporting students' learning. For example, NEED PROGRAM THAT BOUGHT THINGS LIKE SPSS, COMPUTERS, GOOGLEBOOKS, ETC.

Moreover, operational budgetary decisions are also made on the basis of assessment of student learning and in alignment with strategic planning. For example, in Spring 2021, the Learning, Enrichment, and Academic Development (LEAD) Center piloted a program designed to provide students who were granted academic suspensions with required academic coaching, skills workshops, and tutoring. The cohort's Fall 2020 to Spring 2021 GPAs were monitored relative to students who

did not participate, and evidence suggested that students in the cohort were able to outperform non-participatory students' GPAs by 0.13 points. As a result, funds within the University's budget were provided to the LEAD center to hire dedicated personnel to help manage the program; this allocation was aligned with the strategic plan's Growth goals(EVIDENCE).

5.C.3.: The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

The University inclusively engages relevant stakeholders in the process of planning and evaluating its progress towards its strategic goals. As articulated in 1.A.1, beginning in January 2016, the University undertook a multi-year effort to update and realign the University's strategic plan with a revitalized mission and vision. It is a testament to the strength of constituent engagement in strategic planning that this process occurred continuously across three Presidencies, including one interim. The strategic plan was approved in February 2018 by the full Board of Governors (BOG).
EVIDENCE

During early implementation, the Strategic Plan Monitoring and Leadership Committees met regularly (EVIDENCE). More recently, the University entered into a monitoring phase—with one notable exception detailed below—and therefore annually solicits updates from Academic Deans and the Executive Leadership Team on any and all areas' progress in enacting initiatives supportive of the strategic plan's goals. Many of these initiatives tie directly to initiatives included in the budget planning process (EVIDENCE). An update on the University's progress towards defined metrics within each of the University's strategic goals is provided every year to the Board of Governors (BOG) and its relevant committees (EVIDENCE). To better reach the University's external constituencies, in Spring 2022, Institutional Research debuted a data dashboard that displays the University's progress towards metrics which comprises its defined goals, and in Fall 2022, the University expects to debut on its website its first comprehensive Five-Year Institutional Strategic Plan Update, which aims to provide a narrative and data-based depictions of the University's interim progress towards its 2028 goals (EVIDENCE).

In Fall 2020, at the request of the BOG and as part of the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Operations undertook a review of the metrics utilized for the strategic goals (EVIDENCE). It also looked for accordant areas wherein pertinent metrics pertaining to athletics could be incorporated in alignment with the Athletics strategic plan, which was being developed at the same time. Institutional Effectiveness consulted multiple constituencies, including the Office of Finance, the Office of Financial Aid, Academic Affairs, Institutional Research, and the Athletics Department during its review (EVIDENCE). As a result, Institutional Effectiveness recommended replacing two existing metrics with measures that more directly quantified the original strategic plan's goals and the addition of a goal related to athletics in each of the strategic plan's focus areas: retention, growth, and stabilization. The modification of nine 2028 goals was also advised for in order to improve efficiencies in data collection, to reflect the impact of COVID-19, and to recognize the University's current progress towards its goals (EVIDENCE). Because of time and physical restrictions related to COVID-19, Institutional Effectiveness was limited in the degree to which constituencies could be engaged as groups, and therefore did not utilize a committee structure.

Nevertheless, the holistic nature of the University's planning process and its engagement with constituencies is demonstrated at a more micro-level within its Offices and Departments, as exemplified by the Office of Information Technology (IT). IT uses multiple measures and metrics—including discussions with relevant groups and surveys of internal and external constituencies—to

identify initiatives which should be implemented in support of its strategic plan and the University's wider strategic goals, as detailed in the following:

- In 2020, the Faculty Senate completed a technology survey (EVIDENCE) that asked faculty about their use of various technologies in the classroom. The survey showed that about 20% of respondents were not satisfied with the use of technology to facilitate learning during the pandemic, and it was revealed that there were several technologies that were not used by many faculty members. As such, these results provided guidance for the Educational Technology Center as to what professional development activities should be planned throughout the upcoming academic year. The survey also yielded many comments about procedures in use and subsequently spurred changes to IT processes, including the establishment of a Maintenance/Outage notice any time major work is planned that could impact faculty or staff. IT has determined that these initiatives support the Retention and Growth areas of the University's Strategic Plan.
- When the University was preparing to pivot to online learning at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the course evaluation survey system (Evaluation Kit) was used to survey students and determine if they were technically ready for online learning. This survey was followed-up with a question on the end-of-course survey to help close the loop. Faculty were able to use the results to tailor their classes or help students meet the technology needs (EVIDENCE).

In addition to all the work with internal constituents, the University participates in many EDUCAUSE surveys and projects, including the Core Data Survey (CDS) and student/faculty surveys to provide results from external entities (EVIDENCE). Information from CDS is used to benchmark the university against others institutions to analyze the current spending, staffing, services and more – and adjust as needed. The Student Experience Survey is conducted every two years, and Fairmont State participated in 2020 as the pandemic was starting. This information allows the university to benchmark data from students as compared to students nationally, and make adjustments to reflect the population at Fairmont State(EVIDENCE). The information also provides areas of interest for Fairmont State to research as potential implementation ideas relative to the University's strategic plan (EVIDENCE).

5.C.4.: The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.

The University's planning is rooted in an awareness of the University's current capacity and sources of revenue and enrollment. Indeed, in 2017, when the current strategic plan was being developed in conjunction with the University's mission and vision statement, "State appropriations and budget cuts" as well as a "Decrease in supply of college-bound students" were identified in SWOT analysis involving almost 80 constituents from the campus community as a Threat (EVIDENCE). As such, the strategic plan was developed in a way to address and remedy these long-term issues. For example, increasing the number of out of state students and students over age 25 allows the University to buttress enrollment against anticipated declines in traditional aged in-state college-going populations (EVIDENCE). Moreover, the strategic plan has an entire focus area (Stabilization) meant to develop a secure and lasting financial basis for future strategic infrastructure investments in enrollment management and student success, as evidenced by the University's acquirement of Slate and EAB Navigate, respectively (EVIDENCE).

The University continues its planning efforts around its current and anticipated future resources. As

an example, the University has seen a demonstrable increase in the number of dual enrollment students taking college-level courses since Fall 2019. Recognizing the potential for future enrollment pipelines from these students a new academic area was created in 2020, Continuing Education & Community Engagement, to support expanding both high school and non-traditional student enrollment. Data analyses have found roughly one third of dual enrollment students in one Fall semester returned as regular students in the following Fall semester (EVIDENCE), and as such, the University's Enrollment Management team has focused on enhanced recruitment capacities for dual enrollment students while Continuing Education & Community Engagement has engaged in improving the academic quality and learning experience of students BY EXAMPLE.

Moreover, Institutional Research maintains comprehensive data dashboards, authors multiple data reports yearly, and provides external University reports such as IPEDS and NSSE in a one-stop shop style website that allows the University to access a wealth of data and analytics that support further analyses of multiple indicators, such as enrollment, retention, graduation, and finances, across the University (EVIDENCE).

5.C.5.: Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.

As indicated in 5.C.3., the University's strategic planning process was imbued with a recognition of external factors that may impact the University's future resources and enrollment. In 2020, Institutional Research completed a trends and statistical analysis of factors affecting FTE, and concluded that outside factors such as the graduating high school senior class size, unemployment rate, average housing value, and West Virginia's total population were strongly correlated with past Fall enrollment and credit hour productivity (EVIDENCE). Moreover, the report found that demographic characteristics such as students' gender and residency were related to credit hour productivity beyond chance (EVIDENCE). The report provided scenarios demonstrating how increasing credit hours attempted could offset a general headcount decline as well (EVIDENCE). A preliminary follow-up report examining the impact of the pandemic revealed these trends—positive and negative—were generally accelerated by it. In addition, the Institutional Research office has since Spring 2020 provided Enrollment Point in time reports to campus leadership with general analytic notes meant to provide proactive analyses of how enrollment is trending (EVIDENCE). As a result, Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management have incorporated many of these anticipatory analyses into their own planning initiatives. NEED EXAMPLES

5.C.6.: The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

The University documents implementation of its plans and attempts to evidence performance. As detailed further in 5.C.3., the University annually compiles and annually informs campus constituencies as to its progress towards metrics identified by its strategic plan (EVIDENCE). These metrics are quantifiable and aligned directly with improvement in both student outcomes such as retention and graduation rates as well as operational outcomes such as financial stability and resources (EVIDENCE). At a more microlevel, the University's ELT and relevant academic

constituencies realize this plan of improvement in operations and student outcomes by linking strategic initiatives to needed funding allocations within the budgeting planning phase (EVIDENCE). As a result, in spite of the pandemic, first time freshman retention rates improved by 8% to 69% from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 despite the pandemic and 2021 six-year graduation rates improved by 9 percentage points to 45%(EVIDENCE).

Moreover, the University compiles data, and acts on the basis of that data within its established processes. NEED examples.

Sources

There are no sources.