Working Group – Standard VI – Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
Interim Report #3 – December 7, 2020

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

Part I: Standard Overview
Standard VI is a sweeping assessment of large scale, University-wide policies and processes. This standard requires the committee to see how Mercyhurst works to ensure not only that individual units are well resourced and forward looking, but how those individual units fit together to meet the mission and goals of the institution as a whole. Our task was to examine if and how different units of the University articulate a clear procedure for planning and implementation of Mercyhurst's programs and services with an eye toward collecting data that allows for measurable assessment

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Summary of Evidence

Mercyhurst carries out standard practices and procedures that align with the compliance of the many laws and regulations that impact all areas of its functionality in the realm of higher education. Various university handbooks, catalogs, and websites contain references to and information on how the university complies with applicable laws and regulations. The Student Consumer Information page contains links to many policies related to compliance with state and federal laws and regulations.

A recent example of how Mercyhurst University complies with federal and state laws and regulations is evident in relation to the updated Title IX grievance process that took place in August of 2020. In response to the U.S. Department of Education's launch of an update to the regulation of Title IX and new resources for students and schools, Mercyhurst has modified the Title IX grievance policy which became effective immediately upon release. As reference, the Student Consumer Information page mentioned above includes this updated Title IX grievance policy and procedure.

The Employee Handbook found on the HR HUB page also references numerous areas of legal compliance. The course catalog also references several laws and regulations.

Summary of Compliance

Mercyhurst University complies with applicable state and federal regulations as evidenced in handbooks, catalogs, and university websites. The community is notified of the policies through handbooks, email notifications, and website postings. In addition, annual compliance workshops for employees are offered by the Office of General Counsel each summer and are an effective mechanism to ensure employees are aware of the regulations and what each may mean in relation to their area of work at the university.

7. The institution has a mission statement and related goa00-.006 Twuietutio r r (i)0.6 (o)6 (n)6 (t)0.7 (o6 (
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The mission, vision, and core values of the institution is clearly articulated in a wide range of documents across the University, included a dedicated page on the Hub. The Mercyhurst Emissary programs for employees and students empower cohorts to be guardians of the Mercy and Catholic education, to develop and embody a whole new way of Mercy leadership in higher education, and to ensure that the Mercy Heritage is carried on into the future so that we are an honest, hope filled mission community.

Operationally the commitment to the mission of the institution is found in the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan helps drive the comprehensive planning for items like facilities, infrastructure, and technology that are essential for the maintenance of the University's overall physical plant. It is also an important tool for resource allocation in support of the University's mission and goals. The minutes of the Board of Trustees provide evidence of putting the Strategic Plan, with its focus on Mission, into practice. The minutes are housed with the Board Services team, specifically with the Executive Director of Events and Board Services. Given that the Board of Trustees is the University's governing body, official minutes are kept for the Board's three annual meetings as well as all committee and subcommittee meetings. The minutes are official record of University business and how decisions are made and thus provide evidence for whether and how the mission is implemented. They therefore serve as a valuable resource for assessment of decision-making processes and for record-keeping purposes.

The Handbooks for both Employees and Faculty are also grounded in the Mission, Vision, and Core Values of the institution and use these as reference points for policies and decisions.

and reporting. Assessment is intended to help departments not only engage in critical self-reflection about whether its programs and polices are producing explicated student learning outcomes. It also assists with determining if and how the department's curriculum and policies advance the mission, vision, and core values of Mercyhurst University

The Assessment Handbook clearly states objectives for the units within the University and explains how the assessment process is to function. The Assessment Coordinator and Associate Provost for institutional effectiveness determine whether the policies and procedures described in the Handbook are implemented.

The IPEDS report is the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Report. It is updated yearly and housed in Finance. The IPEDS report finance portion provides context for understanding the resources and costs of providing postsecondary education. It can be used by participating institutions oneself to similar institutions and it provides valuable data to analyze where institutions' revenues are generated, and expenses are incurred.

The IPEDS report provides a yearly assessment of the institution's revenues and expenses by category and location.

The Maintenance Ticket System is located as a quick link on the main Employee Hub page. It was implemented to request any maintenance related work: Electrical, Heating/Cooling, Plumbing, and Building maintenance (door repairs, ceiling tiles, lights, etc..). Landscape/Grounds maintenance and Custodial services are also performed by this department. An employee accesses the work request form using the quick link on the Employee Hub page. Their contact and office information, along with a description of the work they are requesting, is submitted. A confirmation email is received and a staff member from the appropriate maintenance team will then reach out for further details and a date and time for performing the requested work.

Summary of Compliance

The University has systems and procedures in place to assess the function of its academic and student services operations, its financial situation, and its physical plant.

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

Potential Evidence

departments not only engage in critical self-reflection about whether its program and polices are producing explicated student learning outcomes, but also to determine if and how the department's curriculum and policies advance the mission, vision, and core values of Mercyhurst University. The Assessment Handbook clearly states objectives for the units within the University and explains how the assessment process is to function. The Assessment Coordinator and Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness are the two individuals on campus who determine whether the policies and procedures described in the Handbook are being implemented.

Departments at the University follow clearly explicated procedures to keep their curricula relevant in a 21st century context. For micro-level changes the University requires departments to fill out a Course Change Form is housed on the Mercyhurst Hub under the Provost's page. The form is used to make changes and/or corrections to course listings, to the course numbers, descriptions, and credits earned. The document also seeks information as to the change's impact to the REACH curriculum or impacts to other programs. The document requires appropriate approvals from Academic Planning and Assessment Committee (APAC), the Department Chair, Dean and Provost. Any changes must have the concurrence of these parties in order for the request to be implemented.

Especially crucial in maintaining academic excellence in a time of pandemic is the Course Equivalency Guide. It is available through the Mercyhurst Hub under the Provost's page. The guide is regularly communicated to faculty to ensure that learning experiences for students meet accreditation requirements. The guide outlines in specific details how faculty may substitute alternative learning applications for classroom time. The details provided offer guidance to faculty to follow and ensure adequate learning occurs by students.

The current process in placed to assess student satisfaction in the delivery of courses is the IDEA diagnostic tool. This tool is used for every section of every course taught by Mercyhurst faculty. Information about this diagnostic tool is available under the Assessment & Accreditation folder under the Academics tab on the Mercyhurst Hub. IDEA is one component in the evaluation of teaching effectiveness at Mercyhurst. Individual faculty members, Department Chairs, Deans, and the Rank & Tenure Committee use these data. The IDEA student satisfaction survey has only been used on a University wide scale starting in Fall of 2018, therefore further data gathering and review are required to determine if the data provided are an accurate reflection of teaching effectiveness at Mercyhurst and/or if the data provided allow for concrete, measurable improvement over time.

The Modified Use Survey is another student satisfaction tool that is sent to students seeking input on a variety of campus-life experiences. The survey is sent asking for information on 15 different areas including, but not limited to IT, Library, Food Service, etc. The survey provides students an opportunity to offer insights and information on their campus experience. The feedback is shared anonymously with the appropriate campus administrators. The results of the survey help measure the adequacy of resources available for students and provide data to determine whether students' needs are being met.

Recognizing the need for the University to stay relevant in its program offerings, Mercyhurst has applications for changing an existing program or the creation of a new program. These applications are available on the Mercyhurst Hub

then sent to the Registrar's office for filing and programming. The form and University governance hold Faculty and Administration accountable to ensure a process is followed to consistently review and approve programs that advance the mission of the University. Additionally, the Registrar's office regularly refers to the approved document for any clarifications needed.

Further evidence of the rigor of the University's academic programming can be found in the Programmatic Accreditation Chart that is available through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and is available in the Assessment and Accreditation section (under the Academics tab) on the University's Hub. The document is available to provide information on the various programs that have been accredited with links to the various accreditors' sites. It is a quick reference guide that clearly documents the accreditations of various academic programs. This, in turn, allows members of accredited programs information about their programs' responsibilities.

All of the above are governed by the first goal of the Strategic Plan (2018-2020): "Deliver a Mercyhurst education that provides students with a distinct and transformative academic experience in preparation for personal and career success while empowering them with the knowledge and attitudes to lead fulfilling, civically engaged lives." The Strategic Plan is available on the Mercyhurst external website under the 'About' tab by clicking on "Planning and Assessment."a A new strategic plan was (at)0.7 [(n)6 ( )1l6.6 (on)]TJ   (")7.4 0.006 T.7 (n)6 ()0.71.7-b.7 (.1 0

Summary of Evidence

The single most important piece of evidence for the University's institutional planning is the Strategic Plan (2018-2020). The document is frequently used in the overall decision-making process at the University's cabinet level and frequently referenced in conversation with the University's Board of Trustees whom approves the document. This document helps drive the comprehensive planning for items like facilities, infrastructure, and technology that are essential for the maintenance of the University's overall physical plant. It is also an important tool for resource allocation in support of the University's mission and goals. The University began in fall 2019 to start the process to create a new strategic plan to cover the following three years. The early stages of this process were underway when the COVID-19 pandemic hitionallyo in

to student life on campus. This survey includes questions on 15 different areas including, but not limited to, information technology, library, food service, etc. The survey provides students an

disclosure statement. Individuals are required to abstain from any action involving an area of conflict. The Conflict of Interest Policy and the annual disclosure forms are reviewed by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees on an annual basis. The Audit Committee also is

Resources (HR) on a weekly basis. The Budget Team reviews all PAFs to ensure budget funding is enough to support the action. If funding is not enough, no action is taken and the PAF is returned to the department for resolution.

During the fiscal year, the Budget Team along with the President's Cabinet monitor the operating budget. Vice Presidents can reallocate funding within their areas to address projected budget shortfalls or unplanned expenditures. The Intra Year Funding Form to use Operating Contingency is an option that a Vice President can pursue. All Intra Year Funding Request Forms require approval of the President.

As a result of various economic and demographic factors, the North East Campus was evaluated for continuation in its current form. After extensive study and evaluation, a decision was made by the Board of Trustees in August 2019 to begin a phased closure of the North East Campus. A Substantive Change for Closure of the North East Branch Campus was submitted and approved.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the President and the Cabinet decided to accelerate the closure of the North East campus to help ensure the overall financial sustainability of the University. Faculty, staff, and administrative layoffs at both the Erie and North East campuses occurred in the Spring of 2020, shortly after the pandemic took its hold on the country. The consolidation and movement of many the North East Campus academic programs was accelerated to the Fall of 2020, a full year ahead of schedule. Residential housing at the North Eat campus was also shuttered for the Fall of 2020, and instead was designated for use to first quarantine international students or students arriving from designated "hot spot" states in the Fall of 2020. Later the housing was used to isolate COVID-19 positive students and quarantine other students who had been in close contact with COVID-19 positive individuals.

COVID-19 also challenged the Annual Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2020. The original University budget was projected at a $250,000 operating margin. The pandemic forced the University to close residence halls and food service venues and move to remote learning the third week in March 2020 for both the Erie and North East Campuses. As a result, the University lost $4.3 million in room and board revenue. The President's Cabinet took immediate action to implement expense reductions through layoffs, key contract renegotiations, deferral of planned capital projects, among others, and

Ireland as a company limited by guarantee to provide education opportunities for U.S., Irish and Interna

locations throughout the Erie Community. In the following year the University continued to integrate outREACH across the liberal arts curriculum through enhanced engagement in the Capstone Ethics course. For fiscal year ended May 31, 2020, the Introduction & Involvement in Mercyhurst (iMU) courses, BTG and Capstone Ethics courses are now fully integrated and participating in the four-year longitudinal study of mission impact on Mercyhurst students

Summary of Compliance

The University properly identifies its legally constituted governance and all related parties in its annual audited Consolidated Financial Statements. And, when reviewing the past year of Board of Trustees minutes, there are numerous initiatives which exemplify the University's commitment for ensuring the quality and integrity of the institution and safeguarding that the institution's mission is accomplished. In addition, the Renewal Through the Mercy Mission Strategic Plan strongly supports the Mission of the University in countless ways.