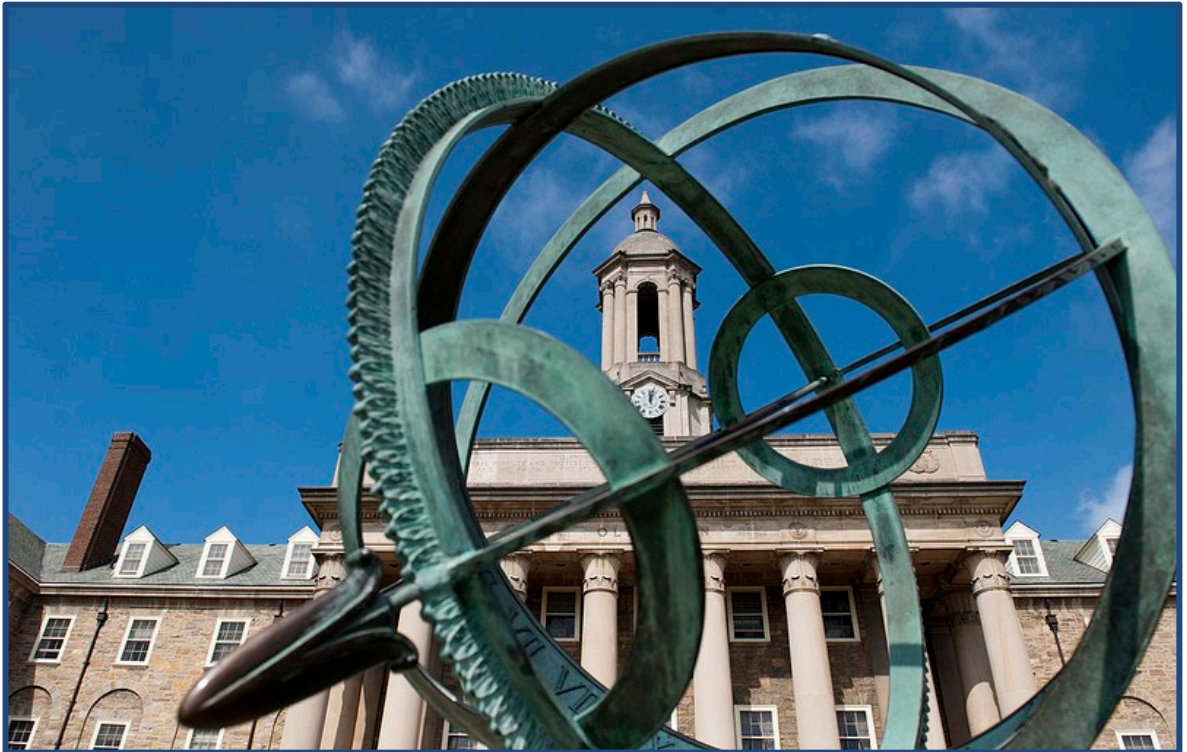


LIVING THE LAND-GRANT MISSION IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT



Institutional Self-Study: January 9, 2015

Prepared for: The Middle States Commission on Higher Education



Middle States Commission on Higher Education

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Certification Statement: Compliance with MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and Federal Title IV Requirements Effective October 19, 2012

The Pennsylvania State University
(Name of Institution)

is seeking (*Check one*):
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The undersigned hereby certify that the institution meets all established Requirements of Affiliation of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation as detailed on this certification statement. If it is not possible to certify compliance with all requirements specified herein, the institution must attach specific details in a separate memorandum.

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Kim B. -
(Chief Executive Officer)

1-6-15
(Date)

Keith E. Masser
(Chair, Board of Trustees or Directors)

1/6/15
(Date)

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Executive Summary

The Process

Preparation of this institutional self-study began in the summer of 2012, when President Rodney A. Erickson and Interim Executive Vice President and Provost Robert N. Pangborn asked Blannie E. Bowen, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, to oversee the University's self-study process in preparation for Penn State's 2014/15 decennial re-accreditation. Dr. Bowen was supported in the process by Michael J. Dooris, Executive Director of the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment.

A Steering Committee, comprising 18 members and chaired by Dr. Bowen, was formed and charged in the spring of 2013. The Steering Committee appointed four subcommittees, organized around four areas critical to the functioning of the University: 1) Institutional Context and Foundation, 2) Planning, Budgeting, and Governance, 3) Educational Context and Offerings, and 4) Student Experience. Each subcommittee addressed a subset of the 14 standards that the Middle States Commission for Higher Education outlines in *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education: Requirements of Affiliation and Standards for Accreditation*. Each subcommittee was chaired by a member of the Steering Committee and assisted by a staff member from the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment. Subcommittee membership was diverse and included trustees, faculty, administrators, students, and staff from a variety of campus locations. Overall, 48 members of the Steering Committee and the subcommittees contributed to the composition of the self-study report.

In April 2013, Tito Guerrero, Vice President at MSCHE, visited the University Park campus to meet with Drs. Bowen and Dooris, the Steering Committee, and University administration to discuss the self-study design. With input from Dr. Guerrero, it was agreed that in addition to University Park, a number of undergraduate campuses would be visited by the evaluation team during its visit. On June 26, 2013, the self-study design was submitted to Dr. Guerrero for review and was approved. Once approval was received, the Steering Committee began to expand the design into the self-study report. The theme of the report is *Living the Land-Grant Mission in a Global Context*. This theme builds from Penn State's historic objectives toward what the land-grant mission means for the University today. This approach has provided the Penn State community with an important opportunity to reflect on its past and to guide its future.

A preliminary draft of the self-study report was reviewed by the Steering Committee in early spring, 2014. After review by the Committee, the draft document was sent for further review to various constituencies—administrators, trustees, faculty, staff, and students. As a result of these reviews, further revisions were made, and a revised draft was distributed to the Steering Committee for final comments and update.

The Self Study

The self-study identifies strengths and challenges that the University faces in 2014 and the future. The study links its self-assessment to the 14 MSCHE standards and to opportunities for Penn State to better achieve its mission. Even though the standards are grouped thematically, there are dimensions of effectiveness – for example, achievement of the University’s goals for diversity and educational equity – that cut across standards, themes, and subcommittees. Thus, in order to assist readers referring to specific sections of the report, there are some intentional redundancies, combined with many cross references for additional detail.

Relevant supporting materials are available to the site team via Penn State’s course management system, [ANGEL](#). Instructions for accessing these materials are located in Appendix A. For readers’ reference, the following additional supporting materials are also located in the following appendices:

- Self-study Steering Committee and Subcommittee membership, Appendix B
- List of commonly used Penn State Acronyms, Appendix C; and
- Penn State organizational chart, Appendix D.

The organizational framework for the self-study is keyed to four chapters (Chapters 2 through 5):

Chapter 2: Institutional Context and Foundation (Standards 1, 5, 6, and 10)

The Institutional Context and Foundation chapter reaffirms the University’s steadfast commitment to realizing its historical land-grant mission, while also meeting the challenges of the 21st century. The University has been and will continue to be committed to serving the Commonwealth, nation, and world through teaching, research, and service. Over the last several years, numerous economic and social challenges have emerged that threaten the ability of American colleges and universities to carry out their important social functions. In order to meet these threats and support the work of the University, Penn State has sought to implement innovative, mission-centered approaches to cost-cutting and revenue enhancement that will enable the University to live out its mission for years to come. The success of the University has been and will continue to be enabled by an effective administrative structure that supports the work of faculty, staff, and students.

The heart of Penn State is its faculty who enable the University to meet its core land-grant mission. The University provides an environment that is strongly supportive of scholarly research, scholarship, teaching and service. Effective teaching is expected at all levels and is aided by community resources. By several measures, Penn State students are highly successful, which speaks to the quality of instruction and faculty mentorship. The University’s research model, through its Institutes, strongly supports interdisciplinary scholarship that promotes the development of faculty and undergraduate and graduate students. Penn State is now considered among the top research universities in the nation, and many departments and programs are ranked among the best in the world.

Penn State is an institution of integrity that is committed to actively assessing and reviewing important ethics and integrity measures. The management infrastructure created by the University leadership will continue to seek better and more efficient ways to promote a culture of ethics and integrity. The Director of University Ethics and Compliance makes and will continue to make regular reports to the Board of Trustees Legal and Compliance Committee so that its members may assess the University's progress. Penn State is committed to being a leader in ethics, integrity, and setting the standard for the higher education community nationally.

Chapter 3: Planning, Budgeting, and Governance (Standards 2, 3, 4, and 7)

Chapter 3 addresses the extent to which Penn State's planning, budgeting, and governance resources and mechanisms enable the University to support its mission. Because aspects of that topic involve questions about structures, policies and practices concerning communication with and participation of various groups (such as administrators, trustees, faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders), Chapter 3 is closely related to, and builds upon, Chapter 2: Institutional Context and Foundation (Standards 1, 5, 6, and 10).

Penn State has long been as deeply committed to strategic management as any large university in the United States. Its ongoing, participative, institution-wide process dates to the early 1980s. While Chapter 3 does address typical matters of strategic planning and budgeting, and provides appropriate evidence on those topics, there is little question that Penn State has a strong foundation of proactive and effective management. What may also be of interest to reasonable observers are questions about governance, especially in light of the Sandusky scandal, the Freeh Report (an independent report by Louis Freeh and his law firm Freeh Sporkin & Sullivan, LLP, into the facts and circumstances of the actions of the University surrounding the child abuse committed by a former employee, Gerald A. Sandusky), and related matters that earned Penn State considerable attention in 2011/12. Chapter 3 thus provides information on unique issues connected to the events of 2011/12, including various reports and investigations, financial implications, leadership transitions, actions by the Board of Trustees and the University Faculty Senate, communication mechanisms, and relevant policies and procedures.

Penn State clearly has the resources and infrastructure necessary to support its mission and the University utilizes extensive, well-documented, and coordinated management systems. That said, Penn State, like many colleges and universities, continues to seek opportunities to improve in the areas of planning, budgeting, and governance. For example, the balance between centralized and decentralized administrative structures is under review throughout higher education. Penn State is reviewing existing structures and considering changes in the balance points in areas such as Human Resources, Information Technology, and shared governance. These reviews will continue. Penn State today is, of course, especially sensitive to the importance of good communication across various parts of the University. It is increasingly important for the academic side of the University to be closely connected to administrative areas such as finance and business, and human resources and vice versa. Efforts to build bridges across these functions will continue in

light of the recommendations of the Freeh report and recent efforts to make changes in the University's underlying administrative systems.

In short, the evidence indicates that the University's planning, budgeting, and governance structures and practices create a firm foundation for achieving institutional goals and for Penn State to thrive as a 21st century public research university.

Chapter 4: Educational Context and Offerings (Standards 11, 12, and 13)

This chapter presents evidence demonstrating that Penn State meets Standard 11—Educational Offerings, Standard 12—General Education, and Standard 13—Related Educational Activities. Discussion around the three standards describes the range and diversity of educational offerings at Penn State, and the related policies and resources. Also presented are recommendations for improvement and suggested directions for new areas of opportunity.

The chapter focuses primarily on process, describing relevant policies, procedures, and resources related to these three standards. Evidence from the assessment and evaluation of these areas is presented in Chapter 5, Student Experience, Success and Development.

Chapter 5: Student Experience, Success, and Development (Standards 8, 9, and 14)

Chapter 5 provides an overview of the student experience at Penn State by examining student admissions and retention (Standard 8), student support services (Standard 9), and the assessment of student learning (Standard 14). As the demographics of the college-going population changes, the Undergraduate Admissions Office continuously evaluates and improves processes to ensure the University meets its strategic goal of enrolling a diverse and inclusive population that includes traditional-age students, adult-learners, international and domestic students, and students of color. Like other public institutions whose state funding has decreased, Penn State has maintained its efforts to make education affordable to all those who are admitted to the University. Chapter 5 details recruitment initiatives that range from the recruitment centers in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh through a web application system that helps students and their families to understand whether and why Penn State is a good academic and financial fit.

The success of the Penn State educational experience cannot be solely attributed to an Admissions Office that admits only academically strong students. Collaborative efforts between the Offices of Undergraduate Education and Student Affairs have greatly enhanced the student experience. Through the revamped New Student Orientation program, students receive academic advice and learn about the social and co-curricular opportunities available to them at Penn State. The University has devoted ample resources and services to ensure both undergraduate and graduate student success, and a sampling of these programs is detailed in this chapter. Depending on the college or campus at Penn State, students are also exposed to a variety of high-impact educational practices endorsed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. These include: first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning,

service learning and community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects. Thus, Penn State provides students the opportunities and services to help them develop and achieve their educational goals.

Penn State works hard not only to ensure that students have ample opportunities to learn, but also to assess whether student learning is occurring in the curriculum and the co-curriculum. Chapter 5 illustrates that assessment has become an important part of Penn State's culture. One remaining issue is that the quality of assessment varies around the University. However, serious efforts are in place, especially through the cross-University, high-level Administrative Council on Undergraduate Education Assessment Coordinating Committee, to evaluate and support assessment efforts, especially with regard to general education and baccalaureate programs, across Penn State. These initiatives are designed to be supportive and helpful (not punitive) in improving and implementing assessment plans and programs. With a solid infrastructure in place, Penn State is seeing assessment coming to greater fruition, as information is better communicated, best practices shared among units, and assessment results used to drive decision-making. Making information more accessible may help ameliorate the silo effects that can occur at such a large and complex university as Penn State.

Conclusion

Penn State's leadership chose the theme of this self-study – *Living the Land-Grant Mission in a Global Context* – purposefully, with the intent of providing a sense of balance, gaining perspective, and producing a useful, honest, and meaningful analysis.

Penn State is a distinguished university with a history of excellence and strong ambitions for the future. There is no doubt that recent years have been tumultuous for Penn State; it has been necessary and appropriate that this self-study face head-on the highly publicized and troubling Sandusky scandal. Yet Penn State has been and remains a great public research university. It is committed to building on its 160-year history, and to becoming an even greater university in the decades ahead. While the events of 2011/12 were painful and disruptive, Penn State responded with honest self-examination and positive change. The University continues to look ahead, and remains committed to shaping lives, pursuing excellence, and remaining in the forefront of higher education.

As documented in this self-study, Penn State is a strong university with a full range of achievements in teaching, research, and outreach. The University has the resources, processes, and structures necessary to achieve its public land-grant mission, fulfill its responsibilities, and undertake necessary assessment and ongoing improvement.

Along with all colleges and universities, of course, Penn State faces change and uncertainty on all sides. Technological, economic, and societal forces – weakening state support, constraints on tuition increases, demographic shifts, globalization, cost pressures, the emergence of new competitors, the potential and the threat of the digital revolution – are converging to transform higher education. Penn State faculty, students, staff, and administrators need to continue to question the status quo, to be agile and flexible,

to go outside the approach of business as usual, and to seek innovative, cost-effective ways to achieve high-quality outcomes in everything the University does.

This self-study suggests ways in which the University can sharpen priorities and act strategically in the years ahead. Penn State must continue devoting attention to governance, communication, integrity, and transparency, as it has been doing, in particular, through implementation of the recommendations of the Freeh Report. Penn State should continue to pursue paths to more efficient and effective operations, and to align resources with its most important needs and priorities, as it has with strategic planning and initiatives such as the Core Council and the Budget Planning Task Force. Penn State should follow through on technology initiatives, including new student information systems, human resource information systems, information technology governance, and plans to grow online learning. Penn State should continue to think and act globally, in terms of its global engagement strategy, research and service programs, curricula, experiences of faculty and students, and international recruitment. Penn State should continue to build its capability to assess and improve student learning. The University has greatly improved its capacity and ability to collect and analyze internal data in recent years; now Penn State should continue its commitment to become more conscientious and intentional about sharing and acting on assessment information. In addition, the effort to review and update the fifteen year-old general education curriculum should remain a high priority.

Faculty, staff, students, and administrators working together can create a foundation for ever greater accomplishment. The elements are in place for the University to extend its reach and impact through teaching and learning, research, and service. With continued hard work, creativity, and dedication, Penn State can become an even greater university, living its land-grant mission as a 21st century global university.

1. Introduction and Self-Study Design

Penn State is at a pivotal moment in its history and its leadership recognizes the need for constructive and forward-looking change. That said, over the past several decades, Penn State has achieved one of higher education's more remarkable success stories.

- Over the past 40 years – from 1974 to 2014 – Penn State has grown from an enrollment of about 57,800 students to nearly 96,000 students.
- There are more than 631,000 living Penn State alumni and 174,379 of these are members of the Penn State Alumni Association. Alumni serve on advisory boards and councils across academic units, mentor students, assist with recruitment, and hire Penn State graduates.
- Penn State rose from around 30th in annual funded research rankings during the 1970s and early 1980s to being well-established among the top dozen or so research universities in the United States.
- In 2011, the National Research Council (NRC) assessed doctoral programs in more than 60 fields. Penn State was one of 212 universities covered by that review. Sixty-five Penn State Ph.D. programs were included, and 29 of them were in the top fifth percentile of the NRC rankings.
- A distinctive strength of research and graduate education at Penn State is its success in interdisciplinary collaboration. Thirty-eight percent of Penn State's programs in the NRC assessment ranked in the top 10% of their respective fields for the percentage of interdisciplinary faculty.
- When Bryce Jordan became President in 1983, Penn State had essentially no tradition of fundraising, and a predecessor (Eric Walker) told President Jordan that he doubted Penn State's development program could rise to the level of even one million dollars per year. By his retirement in 1990, Dr. Jordan had led a fundraising campaign that raised \$352 million and the University's most recent campaign exceeded its goal of \$2 billion.
- In 1972, Penn State had three faculty members who were Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which represents 261 leading scientific scholarly societies and, among other activities, publishes the peer-reviewed journal *Science*. By 2014, that number had grown to more than 50.
- Between 1989 and 2000, Penn State added the Pennsylvania College of Technology (1989); entered the Committee on Institutional Cooperation/Big Ten (1990); opened the 118-acre Innovation Park (in 1994); and merged with the Dickinson School of Law (2000).
- From 1972 through 2014, Penn State's Commonwealth Campuses advanced considerably from their historic role as small, two-year feeder campuses. Today, students can complete the first two years of nearly all of the University's 160-plus baccalaureate majors at any undergraduate campus. All 19 of the Commonwealth Campuses also offer baccalaureate degrees; Penn State Erie and Penn State Great Valley offer master's degrees; and Penn State Harrisburg offers master's and doctoral degrees. Today, the Commonwealth Campuses provide students with a smaller-

college experience along with the quality, programmatic options, and highly regarded faculty characteristic of a world-class public research university.

- When Penn State created the World Campus in 1998, it became one of the first major accredited universities to provide online education. Currently, the World Campus has nearly 11,000 unique enrollments and has garnered three Sloan Consortium awards for excellence.
- In the mid-1960s, with grants totaling about \$71 million from the M.S. Hershey Foundation and the U.S. Public Health Service, Penn State started building a medical school, teaching hospital, and research center. The College of Medicine enrolled its first class of students in 1967, and the Medical Center accepted its first patients in 1970. The College currently enrolls 842 students, and to date it has granted over 3,907 medical degrees and 1,300 graduate degrees. The combined budget of the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center (MSHMC) and the College of Medicine is about \$1.7 billion, comprising over 35% of Penn State's operating budget. Basic and clinical research is supported by more than \$95 million annually in external funding. The Medical Center in Hershey is one of only 125 academic medical centers in the nation, and has expanded its work in education, research, and patient care through the development of a regional campus at University Park.
- In February 2013 the MSHMC opened its new 263,000 square-foot Penn State Children's Hospital. The Children's hospital ranks among the top in the country in five specialties - cancer, urology, orthopedics, neurology, and heart surgery in *U.S. News and World Report's* 2013/14 Best Children's Hospitals.
- In the past 40 years, Penn State has transitioned from a largely *ad hoc* approach to issues of diversity and educational equity to a strategic planning process that serves as a model for many other institutions of higher education. In 1990, Penn State established the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity and in 1998, implemented the University-wide *Framework to Foster Diversity* strategic planning process, which promotes inclusivity, educational access, advocacy, and a positive climate for faculty, staff, and students. *The Education Trust* has repeatedly recognized Penn State as one of the nation's "top gainer" institutions for both Hispanic and African American students. In its most recent (2012) report, *The Trust* ranked Penn State 18th among public colleges and universities, for simultaneously maintaining or increasing enrollments of African American students while also closing the Black-White graduation rate gap. In 2014, Penn State received its second consecutive national Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education.
- Student life at Penn State is a distinct asset and a critical point of student engagement. The Penn State Dance Marathon (THON) is a particular point of pride, and a wonderful reflection of some of what's best about the University's students. The first THON was held in 1973 when 78 students danced for 30 hours, raising more than \$2,000 for the Butler County Association for Retarded Children. In 2014, the Bryce Jordan Center hit capacity (16,000) several times with more than 700 dancers joined by families, children, volunteers, and supporters and THON raised \$13.3 million for the fight against childhood cancer.
- Penn State's economic contribution is substantial. According to a 2008 analysis by the independent research firm Tripp Umbach, Penn State – through its faculty, staff, students, and

alumni – generates more than \$17 billion annually in overall economic impact. For every dollar invested by the Commonwealth, the University returns over \$25.

- Penn State Libraries rose in Association of Research Libraries rankings from 25th in 1980 to ninth in 2012/13.

In short, Penn State has been one of American higher education's most notable success stories. It has been on an upward trajectory for decades, and remains one of the very best public research universities in the world with a stellar faculty, staff, and student body. While many challenges have been encountered and many surely lie ahead, Penn State is and will strive to remain one of the very best universities in the world.

1.1 Nature and Scope of the Self Study

Penn State has had perhaps the most extensive, ongoing, institution-wide planning program of any major university in the United States. For thirty years, Penn State has continued this commitment to strategic management both for the University as a whole, and for all major academic and administrative units. This productive, action-oriented approach has strengthened the University's ability to make tough, informed decisions and to allocate resources according to evidence, judgment, and priorities. The University has long approached the MSCHE self-study as a helpful tool, and continues to view the institutional accreditation process as a valuable activity that contributes to organizational learning and strategic management.

The timing of Penn State's self-study has coincided with a number of crucial events for the University. What follows places the nature and scope of the self-study in context with significant transitions and institutional planning initiatives at the University.

1.1.1 Leadership Transitions

Clearly, one pertinent contextual element is that the self-study is occurring in the midst of major leadership changes at Penn State. In particular, President Eric Barron took the reins in May 2014 and Executive Vice President and Provost Nick Jones began in July 2013. Additional leadership changes are elaborated in Section 3.4.2.

1.1.2 Unit-Level Strategic Planning

Unit-level strategic plans for the immediately prior planning cycle covered the period 2008/09 through 2012/13. If past practice had been followed, the Provost would have distributed unit planning guidelines to deans, vice presidents, and chancellors in June 2012, giving colleges, campuses, and major administrative units one year to develop strategic plans for the period beginning in 2013/14. However, taking into account the press of other matters that Penn State faced in 2012, the President and Interim Provost decided to delay the cycles for both unit and university-level planning by a year. Thus, the process began in spring 2013, when leaders of strategic planning units were asked to develop their plans for 2014/15 through 2018/19. Those plans were submitted, with well-organized and broad-based process for review and feedback carried out in fall 2014 into spring 2015.

1.1.3 Integrated Planning

Penn State has an integrated planning process, which it developed in the 1990s specifically to help the Commonwealth Campuses. These smaller campuses – which can be especially sensitive to small enrollment fluctuations – benefit particularly from considering holistically the relationships among enrollment, staffing, facilities, and budget planning.

Integrated planning mostly parallels unit-level strategic planning. Just as the start of unit planning was delayed by a year, so was the start of integrated planning. Integrated planning occurred in 2013/14, covering the period 2014/15 through 2017/18. Integrated planning originally used the same five-year horizon as unit planning, but experience has shown that three or four years of enrollment projections are all that is practical for this purpose.

1.1.4 University-Level Strategic Planning

Historically, Penn State’s university-level plan has been informed by its unit-level plans, so university planning cycles lag unit planning by a year. The University continues to see great value in that sequence.

The University’s current strategic plan is [*Priorities for Excellence: the Penn State Strategic Plan 2009/10 through 2013/14*](#). The next University-level plan will encompass 2015/16 through 2019/20. The planning process began in 2013/14 and, led by the Executive Vice President and Provost, is continuing through 2014/15.

1.1.5 Overview of MSCHE Self-Study Timeline

A detailed timeline for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) self-study review and accreditation process is available on ANGEL in the MSCHE Self-Study Design document; key milestones listed below.

- Penn State accreditation steering committee charge (March 2013)
- Finalize self-study design and submit to MSCHE (June 2013)
- Steering team and subcommittees draft sections of the self-study (fall 2013 – summer 2014)
- Compilation, constituent feedback, review and revision, and finalization of the draft self-study (fall 2014)
- MSCHE University Park site visit (spring 2015)

1.2 Self-Study Design and Theme

Penn State’s MSCHE self-study design is comprehensive, with emphasis on the theme of *Living the Land-Grant Mission in a Global Context*. Penn State is at a decisive moment in its long, rich history, so the self-study theme and design builds from Penn State’s historic objectives toward what the land-grant mission means for the University today. The Morrill Act of 1862 defined the land-grant purpose as follows: “without excluding other scientific and classical studies and including military tactic, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the

industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.” Today, the University continues to provide an accessible education to Pennsylvanians, serving as one university geographically dispersed, even as it has evolved into one of the top 50 research universities in the world. Penn State has a global reach and impact, as witnessed in its research programs, the numbers of Fulbright scholars, and the enrollment of international students. The thematic emphasis of the self-study provides an opportunity to recognize and preserve the University’s fundamental strengths, while pointing out areas that need to be addressed as Penn State continues to evolve as a truly global, 21st century, land-grant institution.

1.3 Intended Outcomes

The self-study serves several purposes. It identifies strengths and challenges that the University faces; evaluates Penn State in light of the 14 MSCHE standards; and provides an opportunity to consider ways in which Penn State can better achieve its mission. A Steering Committee guided the self-study toward those intended outcomes. Four subcommittees were charged to undertake detailed, frank, and evidence-based assessments. The self-study is structured around the work of those four thematically organized subcommittees:

- Institutional Context and Foundation,
- Planning, Budgeting, and Governance,
- Educational Context and Offerings, and
- Student Experience, Success, and Development.

The four subcommittees were charged to address the 14 MSCHE standards as follows:

Institutional Context and Foundation Subcommittee – Chair: Lori Bechtel-Wherry (Chancellor, Penn State Altoona)

- Standard 1. Mission and Goals
- Standard 5. Administration
- Standard 6. Integrity
- Standard 10. Faculty

Planning, Budgeting, and Governance Subcommittee – Chair: David Monk (Dean, College of Education)

- Standard 2. Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal
- Standard 3. Institutional Resources
- Standard 4. Leadership and Governance
- Standard 7. Institutional Assessment

Educational Context and Offerings Subcommittee – Chair: Christopher Long (Associate Dean for Graduate and Undergraduate Education, College of the Liberal Arts)

- Standard 11. Educational Offerings

- Standard 12. General Education
- Standard 13. Related Educational Activities

Student Experience, Success, and Development Subcommittee – Chair: Philip Burlingame (Associate Vice President for Student Affairs)

- Standard 8. Student Admissions and Retention
- Standard 9. Student Support Services
- Standard 14. Assessment of Student Learning.

With broad intended outcomes and the approach described above in mind, the subcommittees were guided by a set of self-study research questions defined by the subcommittees and approved by the Middle States Commission (see sections 2.1, 3.1, 4.1, and 5.1).

The four subcommittee reports became the basis of this document. However, the self-study is not a simple compilation of the subcommittee submissions. Even when the standards are grouped thematically, there are dimensions of effectiveness – for example, achievement of the University’s goals for diversity and educational equity – that cut across standards, themes, and subcommittees. The Steering Committee, therefore, identified and considered such cross-cutting topics and worked to produce a holistic analysis.

1.4 Organization of the Steering Committee and Subcommittees

In February 2013, an 18-member steering committee was appointed by President Rodney A. Erickson upon the recommendation of Interim Executive Vice President and Provost Robert N. Pangborn to lead the self-study process. Blannie E. Bowen, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Accreditation Liaison Officer, was appointed as Chair of the Steering Committee. Michael J. Dooris, Executive Director of the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment (OPIA), was appointed Vice Chair of the Committee. The other members of the Steering Committee were appointed by virtue of their positions and standing within the University community. The goal was to assemble a high-level committee that would bring a broad yet deep institutional perspective to the self-study process. Members of the Committee along with their positions can be found in Appendix B.

In March 2013, Interim Provost Pangborn charged the Steering Committee and articulated his expectations for the Steering Committee:

- Determine the key issues for self-study and develop a self-study design.
- Establish and charge subcommittees and coordinate their work on the issues to be studied.
- Ensure that a reasonable timetable is implemented.
- Think through how best to communicate about the self-study process within the University.
- Arrange for institution-wide review of responses to the draft of the self-study document.
- Oversee completion of the final report and any other related documents.

Once the Steering Committee was appointed, Interim Provost Pangborn then appointed subcommittees consistent with the goal of following the comprehensive model. Given that the self-study was organized around four areas critical to the functioning of the University now and into the future, each subcommittee was populated with a broad array of knowledgeable and highly respected individuals. In total, the subcommittees included faculty, staff, students, administrators, and a member of the Board of Trustees. Four experienced administrators were appointed to chair the subcommittees. These four chairs also serve as members of the Steering Committee.

Each subcommittee was charged by Blannie Bowen and Michael Dooris in their roles as Steering Committee chair and vice chair, respectively, to provide a seamless self-study process. One of the early major responsibilities of the subcommittees was to review the proposed research questions generated by the Steering Committee. The subcommittees were asked to revise, supplement, and as deemed appropriate to and consistent with the design, create additional questions to guide the self-study. All subcommittees made suggestions for revisions. Final approval of the questions resided with the Steering Committee.

The subcommittees were also charged to gather and analyze the evidence, information, and data needed to answer the questions. Each subcommittee was responsible for drafting its respective section of the self-study report consistent with the overall goal of the review. The subcommittees also considered and made revisions as per the recommendations of the Steering Committee.

1.5 Community Input and Feedback

During the fall semester of 2014, the Steering Committee solicited feedback on the draft self-study from the many constituents that make up the Penn State community. The draft was shared with Penn State's executive leadership team, Faculty Senate, University Staff Advisory Council, and student leaders at nine campuses. Three trustees were asked to be reviewers of the draft and provided assistive feedback and reactions. In addition, a presentation was provided to the Board in November 2014 to review the self-study process and to encourage trustees to review the draft and provide input. In addition, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and other interested constituents were invited to review the draft and provide feedback [online](#). This opportunity was widely advertised using Penn State's public communication forums, the Penn State Newswire and Penn State News. Feedback from this process was incorporated in to the final document.

2. Institutional Context and Foundations

Standards

- 1. Mission and Goals
- 5. Administration
- 6. Integrity
- 10. Faculty

This chapter evaluates the extent to which Penn State meets Standards 1, 5, 6, and 10, which are organized under the heading of Institutional Context and Foundation. The discussion around the four standards is intended to: describe how Penn State's administrative structures and policies are supporting the University's efforts to fulfill its land-grant mission in the 21st century; assess the degree to which the University attracts and retains talented faculty and how well it supports these faculty in their research, teaching, and service efforts; and provide an update on the University's recent integrity initiatives.

2.1 Research Questions

The following research questions cut across the Steering Committee's assessment of Penn State's strengths and weaknesses with respect to the four standards addressed in this chapter.

- 1. How well do the current mission and vision statements serve Penn State and its ability to carry out its land-grant mission?
- 2. How effectively are the University's mission, vision, and goals carried out through the strategic management of the various campuses, colleges, and major administrative units?
- 3. What are the most significant challenges and opportunities facing Penn State in achieving its core mission as a public land-grant research university?
- 4. How successfully does the University support and facilitate collaboration, research, teaching, and service by faculty – especially the highly productive, diverse, innovative faculty needed by a 21st century, world-class research university?
- 5. How effective are the University's procedures for faculty recruitment and retention, compensation, evaluation, professional development, and promotion and tenure?
- 6. What has been accomplished, and what remains to be addressed, regarding how Penn State demonstrably adheres to high ethical standards in the conduct of all programs and activities?

2.2 Mission and Goals

Standard 1. Mission and Goals

“The institution’s mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education and indicates who the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution’s stated goals, consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education, clearly specify how the institution will fulfill its mission. The mission and goals are developed and recognized by the institution with the participation of its members and its governing body and are used to develop and shape its programs and practices and to evaluate its effectiveness.”

~MSCHE, *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*

“Mission. Penn State is a multi-campus public research university that educates students from Pennsylvania, the nation, and the world, and improves the well-being and health of individuals and communities through integrated programs of teaching, research, and service. Our instructional mission includes undergraduate, graduate, professional, and continuing education offered through both resident instruction and distance delivery. Our educational programs are enriched by the cutting-edge knowledge, diversity, and creativity of our faculty, students, and staff. Our research, scholarship, and creativity promote human and economic development, global understanding, and progress in professional practice through the expansion of knowledge and its applications in the natural and applied sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and the professions.

As Pennsylvania’s land-grant university, we provide unparalleled access and public service to support the citizens of the Commonwealth. We engage in collaborative activities with industrial, educational, cultural, and agricultural partners here and abroad to generate, disseminate, integrate, and apply knowledge that is valuable to society.”

~ [*Priorities for Excellence: The Penn State Strategic Plan, 2009/10 through 2013/14*](#)

The Pennsylvania State University remains steadfastly committed to its historical land-grant mission in the 21st century and to carrying out its institutional mission of research, teaching, and service despite significant political and economic challenges. This chapter will illustrate the ways in which Penn State has carried out its societal mission, as well as highlight some of the challenges to this mission. Finally, the chapter will describe Penn State’s plans for the future and, in particular, how it plans to meet those challenges.

2.2.1 Penn State’s Land-Grant Mission

As stated by the 2013 [*Blue and White Vision Council report*](#), “Penn State takes enormous pride in being among the first land-grant universities in America. The land-grant movement broke new ground, extending college access to individuals who earlier had been excluded, expanding the range of academic fields of study and forming the modern public research university as it is now known. Now, a century and a half later, the nation relies heavily on Penn State and its sister public universities for accessible higher education programs and access to unbiased research results.”

The Pennsylvania State University is firmly committed to the realization of its historical land-grant mission. This mission is consistent with the University's commitment to expand college access for students with diverse backgrounds, from various cultures, and with varying needs; conduct ground-breaking research; and provide valuable public service to local communities, the nation, and the rest of the world. The unique multi-campus structure provides broad access across the Commonwealth. Factors such as geography, economics, student preparation, academic programs, and the 2 + 2 plan (students can begin at any of Penn State's 20 undergraduate campuses and then transition to another for their final two years) can influence and enhance a student's opportunities and decision to pursue a Penn State education. In addition, the Commonwealth Campuses have lower tuition, enhancing access to a high-quality Penn State education for students whose financial resources are limited. Further, campus colleges that serve as graduate centers offer instruction in evenings and weekends to allow students to maintain full-time employment while pursuing a high-quality graduate degree. A marker of the success of the campuses is that the performance of students who initially enrolled at a campus and changed assignment to University Park is, in important respects such as graduation rate, nearly indistinguishable from that of students who began at University Park (see Student Profile reports on ANGEL).

Markers of Achievement

While Penn State is at a pivotal moment in its history, it builds on an era of sustained accomplishment. The University has risen from around 30th in annual funded research rankings during the 1970s and early 1980s to being well established among the top fifteen or so universities in research investment in the United States. In 1972, Penn State had three faculty members who were Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Today, there are more than 50. Penn State is now routinely recognized as a "top producer" of student, faculty, and staff Fulbright grantees. In 2012/13 the University was among the top producers of Fulbright faculty scholars, with 11 at University Park and two at the Commonwealth Campuses. Penn State is a member of the Committee for Institutional Cooperation (CIC), a consortium of 15 research universities, including the 14 members of the Big Ten Conference and the University of Chicago. The mission of the CIC is to advance academic excellence by sharing resources and promoting and coordinating collaborative activities across the member universities. The CIC is guided by the provosts of the member universities.

- In the [2014 Academic Ranking of World Universities](#) (Shanghai Rankings) and in the [2014-15 Times Higher Education \(THE\) World University Rankings](#), Penn State is identified as one of the top 60 universities in the world.
- Among the programs [ranked by the NRC](#), almost half of the Ph.D. programs at Penn State are in the top fifth percentile.
- Penn State ranks [14th among all public national universities](#) in the *U.S. News & World Report* "2015 Best Colleges Rankings."
- Penn State Libraries [rank ninth among North American research libraries](#).
- In 2010, [The Wall Street Journal](#) ranked Penn State first among recruiters seeking new hires.

Access

While achieving academic excellence, Penn State has also expanded access. In 1968, then-President Eric Walker proposed the Special Admissions Program, which targeted enrollment of minority¹ students and economically disadvantaged students. That program provided access to students who previously had little or no opportunity to attend Penn State. No more than 10% of the Penn State freshman class could be admitted through the program. Over the years the program has been renamed the Reserved Spaces Program. Through the program, applicants who have special abilities, talents, or skills, but do not have the credentials expected for admission to University Park as a first-year student may be admitted to that campus. Enrollment limits for each category within the Reserved Spaces Program are set annually by the Provost and Vice President for Undergraduate Education in cooperation with the Senate Committee on Admissions, Records, Scheduling, and Student Aid. This program is another example of Penn State's fulfillment of its land grant mission.

The Education Trust has repeatedly recognized [Penn State as one of the nation's "top gainer" institutions](#) for both Hispanic and African American students. In 2014, Penn State received its second consecutive national Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education. Penn State's institutional commitment to expand educational access is evident in its numerous scholarship programs. Approximately 21% of Penn State undergraduate students receive scholarship assistance, awarded by many different units, including the Office of Student Aid, campuses, academic colleges, and other administrative offices. The number of discrete university scholarships (including those that are centrally funded, from endowments and through annual gifts) was 4,830 in 2012/13. These scholarships were awarded to 20,618 students. At Penn State, several types of undergraduate scholarships are available:

- *Bunton-Waller Scholarship*: Full-time students in resident instruction who have the highest financial need. Annual award is \$3,200, renewable for up to four years, provided the student maintains a 2.50 GPA.
- *Renaissance Scholarship*: Full-time students with outstanding academic records who have the greatest financial need. Annual award is \$1,500, renewable for up to four years, provided the student maintains a 3.0 GPA.
- *Trustee Scholarship*: Full-time students with the greatest financial need. Award amounts and eligibility vary depending on funds availability and donor preferences. Typical awards are \$2,000-3,000 per year and may be renewable.
- *Donor-Sponsored Scholarships*: Eligibility and award amounts vary across campuses and colleges.
- Penn State Alumni Association Chapters: Eligibility and award amounts vary.
- *National Merit Scholarships*: Terms determined by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

¹ Minority students include Hispanic, Latino, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Black, African American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and those of two or more races.

For other awards (i.e. athletics, honors, merit or merit plus financial need, study abroad) selection criteria and eligibility vary based on the scholarship. The [Scholarships page](#) of the Office of Student Aid website has detailed information about scholarship programs.

The expansion of scholarship support for students was the top priority in the [For the Future](#) campaign, completed in June 2014. This is of vital importance to the realization of Penn State's land-grant mission given the difficulty many potential applicants have in paying for a Penn State education, the number of students who work multiple part-time jobs during college, and the educational debt load (averaging approximately \$37,000 among those students with debt) that Penn State graduates bear.

This priority is already paying dividends for Penn State students. In 2013 a new scholarship program, the Provost Awards, was announced. The University invested \$20 million from the Education and General budget line to ease the tuition burden and increase access to Penn State for students, true to its land-grant mission. For 2014/15, 8,736 offers of the Provost Awards were made. The offers went only to students at the higher ranges of academic performance and preparation, within a probability range bracketing admits less likely to enroll at Penn State. Of those receiving such offers, 1,734 accepted the scholarship and their admission offer and were enrolled for fall 2014. The Provost Awards model was built upon a similar program of Chancellor Awards that began in 2006. The awarding process and criteria for these awards are very similar. Chancellor Awards have been made in the amount of \$1.5 million per year, targeted at new students enrolling at 14 of Penn State's smaller campuses. For the fall semester of 2014, 2,089 students were offered a Chancellor Award; 543 students accepted their offer and enrolled at one of Penn State's Commonwealth Campuses.

Economic and Social Impact

Penn State has cultural and economic impacts throughout the Commonwealth. According to an independent 2008 analysis by Tripp Umbach, Penn State – through its faculty, staff, students, and alumni – adds more than \$17 billion annually in overall economic impact. For every dollar invested by the Commonwealth, the University returns \$25 in [economic benefit](#) to Pennsylvania. In virtually every Pennsylvania school, business, hospital, farm, or innovative start-up, Penn State's presence is felt through its people and ideas, translating the land-grant heritage into a 21st century context.

For example, Penn State's Agricultural Research and Cooperative Extension programs provide enormous benefits to the Commonwealth. Penn State invests heavily in research and graduate study annually, supporting agriculture (the Commonwealth's number one industry) and residents of communities ranging from small towns to metropolitan areas. Penn State Cooperative Extension has a presence in every county, through which it delivers expertise directly to farmers, related industries, and individual citizens. Cooperative Extension programs feature diverse offerings, locations, and delivery modes that help

educators meet Act 48 requirements², while satisfying learning and lifestyle needs. Students can enroll in diverse Penn State courses, ranging from workshops to in-class instruction. Many of the courses are offered for college credit. Other courses do not qualify for college credit, but may qualify for Act 48 criteria as ongoing professional education. These programs provide valuable opportunities for citizens of the Commonwealth to pursue lifelong education. In addition, one of the metrics of faculty service for promotion and tenure is the contribution to outreach activities.

The University's achievements in teaching, research, and outreach would be impossible without support from alumni and friends. Penn State has become a pacesetter in private fundraising among public universities. The recent [*For the Future*](#) campaign surpassed its \$2 billion goal to advance Penn State's academic mission.

In short, while many challenges have been encountered and many doubtless lay ahead, Penn State's spirit and vision, paired with its long-term determination to remain among the very best public research universities, bode well for its future.

2.2.2 21st Century Challenges to Realization of Land-Grant Mission

Economic

While the University remains committed to its historic land-grant mission, it operates in a dynamic and often very challenging economic environment. In keeping with national trends, state appropriations for Penn State, measured both in real total dollars and in dollars per student, have declined over the last three decades; from 1970/1971 to 2014/15, state appropriations have decreased from over 60% to only 13% of the General Funds³ budget. This has placed greater pressure on the University to recoup these lost funds by raising student tuition and fees and by an annual recycling program of funds from the colleges and other units for reinvestment in high-priority areas. Today, tuition represents 79% of the General Funds budget, compared with 32% in 1970-1971. Consistent efforts have been made to hold tuition increases as low as possible, while maintaining competitive salaries for faculty and covering costs that have escalated faster for higher education than for consumer prices. For the 2014/15 year, Penn State received level funding, despite escalating costs such as employee health care and mandated increases in employer contributions to the state retirement system.

In these circumstances, it has become increasingly problematic for Penn State to accomplish its land-grant mission of meeting the education needs of the sons and daughters of the working classes. To compensate for rising tuition costs, the University attempts to offer more financial aid to students and their families.

² Continuing Professional Education is important in Pennsylvania. Act 48 of 1999 requires all Pennsylvania educators holding Pennsylvania public school certification including Instructional I and II, Educational Specialist I and II, Administrative, Supervisory, Letters of Eligibility and all vocational certificates to participate in ongoing professional education.

³ The General Funds budget covers the core of the University's teaching, research and service efforts, as well as academic and administrative support and maintenance of the physical plant.

The need for financial aid is particularly acute for students whose ‘home campus’ is a Commonwealth Campus. As [reported](#) by Immediate Past-President Rodney Erickson to the Pennsylvania House Appropriations Committee in February 2013, 40% of Commonwealth Campus students are first-generation college students; 62% work on average 22 hours per week; and their median family income is 10% below the state’s 2010 median family income.

A decrease in the pool of high school graduates—particularly in Western Pennsylvania—has resulted in declining enrollments at some of Penn State’s Commonwealth Campuses. Between 2009 and 2014, enrollments at Commonwealth Campuses dropped from 33,540 to 31,041. Enrollments during this time period also fell drastically at the Pennsylvania College of Technology (an affiliate of Penn State), from 6,409 to 5,623, and at the Penn State Great Valley School of Professional Studies, from 948 to 469. Enrollments also dropped slightly in the Dickinson School of Law (from 617 to 587). During the same period, enrollments increased slightly at University Park (from 44,832 to 46,184) and in the College of Medicine (from 817 to 842) and dramatically in World Campus programs (from 4,697 to 10,805).

Preliminary results demonstrate that initiatives undertaken by the University to address declining enrollments at the Commonwealth Campuses have been successful. For example, the Provost Award, described on page 18, has shown early promise. In fall 2014, the Provost Award offers resulted in 1,747 paid accepts at the Commonwealth Campuses and the Chancellor awards in 543, including 376 students who received both the Provost and Chancellor awards. In 2013, more than two-thirds of Provost Award recipients stated that the award was influential in their decision to attend Penn State and 61% of the recipients reported that without the award, they were “neutral” to “not at all likely” regarding their decisions to attend Penn State. Therefore, the awards likely eased declining enrollments at the Commonwealth Campuses, and Penn State should continue to extend the awards to students at the Commonwealth Campuses.

In addition to economic constraints due to reduced state funding and efforts to minimize tuition increases, the federal sequestration of funds during the 2012/13 and 2013/14 fiscal years negatively impacted University funds related to research grants, Agricultural Research and Extension appropriations, and graduate training. Penn State’s 2013/14 portfolio of \$813 million in organized research is diverse; approximately 1.0% of research funds come from federal appropriations and 4.6% from state appropriations. The bulk of research funds (77.1%) come from sponsored grants and contracts, including federal competitive grants.

Infrastructure

The work of the University is enabled in part by the excellent facilities on Penn State’s campuses. The current capital plan is funded by many sources. Over the past several years, the University has accrued operational reserves through careful management. These reserves are deployed to support pressing renewal needs. Some projects are funded with borrowing, with debt service coming from operational revenues or tuition. Self-supporting units such as the Hershey Medical Center generate operating reserves that are set aside for capital investments. Penn State received \$40 million in capital funds from the state

for 2012/13 and for 2013/14. Other sources include philanthropy, student facility fees and major maintenance reserves.

Nevertheless, challenges remain. For example, at the University Park campus, 65% of buildings are more than 25 years old and have had no significant renovations since they were erected. Many buildings' mechanical systems are operating beyond their useful life, and older buildings are not suited to 21st-century teaching or research. The Commonwealth Campuses also have many outdated, energy-inefficient buildings. To address these issues, in September 2013 the Board of Trustees approved a \$2.7 billion capital program for 2014/15 – 2018/19 for new and remodeled facilities, infrastructure upgrades, and other improvements at University Park, Hershey, and the Commonwealth Campuses.

Faculty

Like their peers across the country, many Penn State faculty members are approaching retirement age. Almost half (47.5%) of Penn State's 6,000 faculty members are 50 years of age or older (additional faculty demographics can be found in Penn State's [Fact Book](#)). Also like many other colleges and universities, Penn State has relied more heavily in recent decades on fixed-term faculty. Currently, 48% of Penn State full-time faculty are either tenured or on the tenure track (nationally, the [American Association of University Professors reports](#) that tenure-track faculty account for only 24% of all instructional staff). The mix of tenure-line and contingent faculty is a concern because of its impact on the general stability of the institution and its educational programs. This is especially relevant now, as a large segment of the faculty approach retirement and units must increasingly make strategic decisions about filling vacant positions.

Recruitment of new faculty is always an important process for large universities, and startup costs for new research-active faculty have escalated in recent years making the investment that is required for new faculty hires a significant financial challenge. This is especially evident in the physical and natural sciences and in engineering, where start-up packages of \$1 million or more are not uncommon. This is becoming an increasing concern as funding becomes more constrained, and these costs are tied to the ability of Penn State to appropriately compensate, and retain, highly productive faculty.

2.2.3 Overcoming Challenges to Realize Historical Land-Grant Mission

Cost-Cutting

The University has dealt proactively with the various challenges to the continued realization of Penn State's land-grant mission. For example, in 2009 the [Academic Program and Administrative Services Review Core Council](#) (Core Council), a group of faculty, staff and administrators from University Park and the Commonwealth Campuses, was charged with identifying permanent cost savings and non-tuition revenue sources. The Core Council reviewed every academic degree program and major administrative processes, and proposed changes to programs and procedures. On the administrative dimension, the University has targeted three areas in particular:

- **Employee health benefits:** The single largest human capital expenditure for the University, other than payroll, is healthcare. Prior to 2010, Penn State faced a rapidly increasing accumulated post-retirement benefit obligation for its traditional defined-benefit retiree healthcare program.

Effective January 1, 2010, Penn State changed its approach to providing medical benefits at retirement for newly hired employees through a defined-contribution retiree healthcare savings plan. Existing employees were grandfathered into the defined-benefit plan. Over the next 30 years, this change is estimated to save the University over \$3 billion on its projected liability for retiree health care. The accrued post-retirement benefit obligation at June 30, 2014 was \$1.9 billion.

- **Energy Savings:** In an effort to cut costs while addressing growing environmental concerns, Penn State is taking many steps to reduce energy consumption and promote responsible energy use. Penn State's integrated energy management system has helped reduce our BTU/square feet by 26% at University Park since 1997 and 18% at all campuses since 1997. Electricity consumption at University Park is currently at 2004 levels, 10% below the maximum in 2006. Penn State's aggressive energy conservation program, established in 2003, eventually invested almost \$75 million over a 10-year period with initiatives including tuning up existing buildings in order to optimize their performance, building HVAC upgrades, updating temperature controls, retrofitting lighting fixtures, installing occupancy sensors, and improving building envelopes. The average simple payback is less than 5 years, and the maximum payback for these projects is 10 years including financing costs.
- More recently, the Core Council looked for ways to cut energy use. Temperature settings were increased in the summer and decreased in the winter to save energy. Procurement strategies with utility companies have become more aggressive to help hold the line on utility costs.
- **Recycling of Permanent Funds:** The University has long recaptured permanent funds from unit budgets. Under what is called "recycling," units have in many years returned to the central administration one or two percent of their annual budget to support new strategic investments and priorities.

Enhancing Resources

While taking steps to control expenditures, Penn State has also explored mission-centered ways to enhance revenue.

- **Online Education:** Over the past decade, Penn State's World Campus has become established as one of the world's first and most highly rated online distance education learning organizations. The development and popularity of online programs have been helpful in generating new revenue, while serving the educational needs of students all over the world. This delivery method is reaching a very different audience than residential instruction, with an average undergraduate age of 32 and an average graduate age of 35. World Campus is currently experiencing annual double-digit percentage growth; the University's goal is to have 45,000 course enrollments within the next decade. Penn State will reinvest \$20 million of World Campus revenues over the next five years to expand its offerings.

The growth of the World Campus has been accompanied by an increase in the number of online courses offered by Penn State's academic colleges and campuses. Courses are also delivered to resident education students, both at the originating campus and at other locations, through Penn

State's [eLearning Cooperative](#). This sharing has increased the range of courses available at campuses, without the need to hire additional faculty, and has reduced the number of under-enrolled course sections. Further, more resident instruction students are taking one course online along with resident courses during a semester. Growth areas for World Campus include individuals seeking higher education while staying in their jobs, executive education, and professional master's degrees. The World Campus represents a tremendous current and future source of new revenues for academic units across the University, providing a substantial return on investment.

- **Recruitment of International Students:** The recruitment of international students represents a mission-centered approach to strengthening Penn State's educational environments while also increasing revenue. Penn State has therefore made concerted efforts to recruit additional international students to its University Park and Commonwealth Campuses. International students pay out-of-state tuition and an additional cost-recovery fee, which increases revenues, and their presence brings a much-needed global perspective that enriches academic and cultural life.

These efforts have achieved much success. Enrollment of international students has grown steadily over the last decade and the [percentage of international students](#) (all locations and World Campus) doubled from 2001 to 2014. The University Park campus ranked 10th in 2012/13 among research universities and fifth among CIC institutions for [numbers](#) of international students. In fall 2014 there were 6,569 international students at University Park and 1,398 at the Commonwealth Campuses. In addition, World Campus also offers an avenue for recruiting international students. International students at Penn State come from 137 countries. The five largest sending countries to the University are China, Korea, India, Taiwan, and Saudi Arabia.

In order to maximize the academic benefits associated with increasing numbers of international students, the Office for Global Programs encourages all students, faculty, and staff to become globally competent citizens. Forums for interactive engagement of international students and scholars foster an environment of mutual understanding and engender global perspectives on important current issues. These include a discussion series on topical issues that bring a wide array of students together. The institution of the [Global Engagement Network](#) strategy is an important and publicly visible step to putting this concept into action (Global Program's strategic plan is available on ANGEL).

- **Fundraising:** The University has an enviable record in development and fundraising over the past 30 years. Penn State has hundreds of thousands of alumni and friends who are powerfully engaged with the University and prepared to sustain Penn State for future generations. Underwriting undergraduate and graduate student scholarships, enhancing faculty excellence and scholarly contributions through endowed chairs, and identifying and empowering new initiatives that will define the future – these are the irreplaceable contributions made by engaged alumni and friends whose lives have been transformed by Penn State, and who are inspired to

provide those same opportunities to the next generation. Expanding these partnerships going forward will be crucial.

Strategic Decision-Making at the Commonwealth Campuses

Penn State's Commonwealth Campuses reflect the economic well-being of the communities they serve. Some Commonwealth Campuses that are situated in strong markets have realized, or are projected to realize, considerable growth. Other campuses, situated in demographically challenged regions of the state, are experiencing the enrollment declines described in section 2.2.2. In response, Penn State regularly makes strategic adjustments in program delivery and administrative infrastructure within and across campuses in order to address the economic challenges created by this diversity. Actions have included consolidation of administrative infrastructure to more effectively share expertise and talent across campuses, and greater use of online, hybrid and course sharing to maximize efficiencies in instructional delivery across campuses. In some cases, larger campus colleges serve as program hubs to afford smaller campuses access to programs with demonstrated student demand and regional market needs. Consistent with the University's land-grant mission, program planning and development at campuses continue to take into account the needs of local industry and educational opportunities for members of the broader community. The Commonwealth Campuses also continue to serve their historical access mission by offering the first two years of study for more than 160 academic programs, affording students the opportunity to transition seamlessly to University Park or another Commonwealth Campus to complete their program of study.

2.3 Administration

Standard 5. Administration

"The institution's administrative structure and services facilitate learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement, and support the institution's organization and governance."

~MSCHE, Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education

Since 1855, Penn State has achieved many demonstrable measures of success in the areas of teaching, research, and service. While the administrative structure of a large multi-campus university is necessarily broad, the many units that make up Penn State adhere to a common set of administrative policies and meet regularly to share ideas, address challenges, and to set a course for future improvement and success.

2.3.1 One University Geographically Dispersed

Penn State's "one university geographically dispersed" administrative structure is a unique strength of the University. The University is positioned in 24 locations across the Commonwealth. This unique campus configuration has evolved over the past century to fulfill Penn State's land grant mission and meet the larger needs of society, while offering multiple pathways to success for its students.

More specifically, Penn State's 20 Commonwealth Campuses contribute to the educational strength of their communities and society at large. Some 5,000 Penn State degrees are conferred annually to

Commonwealth Campus students, constituting nearly a quarter of all degrees awarded by the University. Approximately 50% of students graduating from University Park each year began their studies at a Commonwealth Campus. Many campus offerings are career-oriented, professional, or pre-professional in nature. [Specially accredited programs](#) in the fields of health, engineering, technology, nursing, education, business, and criminal justice are offered at the campuses. In addition:

- **Pennsylvania College of Technology:** Penn College joined the Penn State family in 1989, after evolving from Williamsport Technical Institute to the Williamsport Area Community College. It is a national leader in applied technology education; 5,623 students are enrolled in 100 majors, 49% in baccalaureate degree programs and 47% in associate degree programs. Penn College is proud of its 94% positive placement rate and excellent starting salaries for graduates.
- **Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center:** The Penn State MSHMC is one of only 125 academic medical centers in the nation and is home to the Penn State College of Medicine. The MSHMC has a combined budget of approximately \$1.5 billion and accounts for nearly one-third of Penn State's operating budget. The College of Medicine offers academic programs for medical and nursing students, basic science graduate students, medical residents and fellows, other students in health care-related professions, and practicing health professionals. Hershey is a significant center for education, research, and patient care. The new regional campus at University Park offers medical students the opportunity to spend two years in community practice settings in State College.
- **The Dickinson School of Law:** The Dickinson School of Law in Carlisle was founded in 1834 and is the seventh oldest law school in the United States; it was acquired by Penn State in 2000. Before the 2005/06 academic year, a dual campus proposal (including operation at University Park) was approved by the Law School Board of Trustees. In 2014, [84% of Penn State's graduating students passed the Bar exam](#) on their first try. Nationwide, legal education faces profound challenges related to numbers of graduates required by the profession, the level of tuition, and the very nature of legal education itself. As part of its response to these issues, Penn State has proposed, and the Council of the American Bar Association's Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar approved, the operation of the two programs as independent, fully accredited law schools, beginning in fall 2015. This action was supported by faculty at both campuses. The schools will be named Penn State Law at University Park and Dickinson Law in Carlisle, PA. Degrees and diplomas from the two law schools will be in the name of the The Dickinson School of Law of The Pennsylvania State University, but will clearly reflect the programs' independent and separately accredited status.
- **Penn State's World Campus:** In 1998 Penn State became one of the first universities in the nation to offer online education. The World Campus began with just 41 students in five academic programs, and today boasts an enrollment of nearly 11,000 students in undergraduate and graduate programs. It has enjoyed five consecutive years of double-digit enrollment growth. Among the hundreds of higher education institutions included in *U.S. News & World Report's* ["2014 Best Online Education Program Rankings,"](#) Penn State's World Campus is ranked in the top 10 for its bachelor's programs, graduate engineering programs, and graduate computer information technology (IT) programs.

While most university systems represent a confederation of institutions, each with substantial autonomy and curricular independence whose leaders report to a president or central coordinating office predominantly dealing with external and legislative affairs, Penn State truly functions as one university geographically dispersed—not only in concept, but also in practice.

Penn State has a well-accepted multi-campus arrangement with one administrative and financial umbrella, one set of policies and guidelines, centralized program and curriculum controls, and one governing board (a structure reaffirmed by MSCHE's decision to continue to accredit Penn State as a single institution on December 3, 2012). Twenty campuses⁴ fall under the leadership of Dr. Madlyn Hanes, Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses (who reports to Executive Vice President and Provost Nicholas Jones). Five of these campuses (Abington, Altoona, Berks, Erie, and Harrisburg) are stand-alone colleges whose chancellors also serve as deans, comparable to the deans in the academic colleges at University Park, with full curricular oversight and authority to establish new degree programs and confer degrees. For all colleges, including those at University Park and other locations, normal procedures for University Faculty Senate concurrence apply. The remaining 15 campuses are organized into the University College, for which Dr. Hanes serves as dean.

The governing body of the University is the 38-member Board of Trustees⁵. Five trustees serve in an *ex officio* capacity by virtue of their position within the University or the Commonwealth; they are the University President (non-voting); the Governor of the Commonwealth (non-voting); and the state secretaries of the departments of Agriculture; Education; and Conservation and Natural Resources. Six trustees, including one undergraduate student, are appointed by the Governor; nine trustees are elected by the alumni; six are elected by organized agricultural societies within the Commonwealth; six representing business and industry endeavors are elected by the Board of Trustees; one student nominated by a Student Trustee Selection Group and elected by the Board of Trustees; one faculty member nominated by the University Faculty Senate and elected by the Board of Trustees, three at-large members elected by the Board of Trustees; and the immediate past president of the Penn State Alumni Association. The Board annually chooses the officers of the Board of Trustees—Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer—to serve a term of one year.

There are seven standing committees of the Board. These are: Academic Affairs and Student Life; Compensation; Finance, Business and Capital Planning; Governance and Long-Range Planning; Audit and Risk; Legal and Compliance; Outreach, Development and Community Relations. In addition there is an Executive Committee. All of the committees except the Executive, Audit and Risk, Compensation, and Legal and Compliance have a non-voting faculty member.

⁴ Abington, Altoona, Beaver, Berks, Brandywine, DuBois, Erie, Fayette, Great Valley, Greater Allegheny, Harrisburg, Hazleton, Lehigh Valley, Mont Alto, New Kensington, Schuylkill, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre, Worthington Scranton, and York.

⁵ This composition is based upon changes effective November 14, 2014. Open positions will be filled in May 2015 with appointments beginning July 1, 2015.

The Board of Trustees does not extend any substantive financial and administrative independence to the campuses located away from the University Park campus. In addition, no such substantive financial or administrative independence is evident in practice or policy.

In addition to the institutional governance noted above, the University Faculty Senate is the designated representative body of all University faculty with legislative authority on all matters pertaining to the educational interests of the institution and all educational matters that concern faculties of more than one college.

The Academic Leadership Council functions under the authority of the President and provides advice and counsel on academic matters to the President and the Executive Vice President and Provost of the University. Members include all chancellors and deans from University Park and the Commonwealth Campuses and a few other key leaders, including the Chair of the University Faculty Senate.

Penn State strives to encourage the continued professional development of its administrators who, like the faculty, are required to engage in an [Academic Administration Evaluation review process](#) every five years to ensure their excellent performance and adherence to the highest of professional standards.

All of the University's policies and procedures have evolved since Penn State's founding in 1855 from the institution's original charter. To serve the University's divergent constituencies across the Commonwealth better, Penn State strives to provide similar guidelines and consistent measures of quality in order to protect the integrity of a Penn State degree. Academic and administrative policies apply uniformly across the University, in order to protect and uphold academic integrity in all aspects of Penn State's shared mission and values. The University operates from a unified set of guidelines and procedures for activities involving human resources, promotion and tenure, curricular review and approval, IT, and student affairs, among other areas, in order to maintain consistency and fairness. For additional information, see Penn State's response to the Middle States Commission's, September 2012 inquiry available on ANGEL.

- **Students:** Penn State serves students from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and beyond, both nationally and internationally. In fall 2014, 62% of students attending the University Park campus and 85% of the students attending the Commonwealth Campuses, were Pennsylvania residents. By contrast, only 45% of students enrolled in the World Campus were Pennsylvania residents. As noted previously, while some students may choose to remain at one campus or enrolled in the World Campus for all four years of a baccalaureate program, others may choose to spend their first year, first two years, or in some cases three years at one campus and then transition to another for the remaining year(s). As a multi-campus, unified institution, Penn State must meet the needs and expectations of a diverse demographic. Penn State campuses reflect Pennsylvania's varied regional, cultural, or historical contexts, its urban/rural mix, and a range of socioeconomic statuses and student expectations. The University's unique structure allows for a flexible and responsive approach to these differences, in particular allowing choice and seamless transitions from one campus to another. Overall, Penn State's campuses serve as sources of key economic, cultural, and social enrichment for communities across the Commonwealth.

- **Common Degrees Offered:** A Penn State degree is a Penn State degree no matter the campus from which it was earned, including World Campus. It is the same degree regardless of where the student starts or completes her or his program. For example, a student can receive a baccalaureate degree in Communication Arts and Sciences at the University Park campus, Penn State Berks, Penn State Brandywine or Penn State York.

This unique administrative arrangement provides for an accessible Penn State education with choices that accommodate personal situations and preferences. Although the University Park campus may be the largest campus and administrative hub of the University, it is not a “main” or “home” campus in operation or practice. The “one university, geographically dispersed” administrative structure has served admirably to fulfill Penn State’s role as the Commonwealth’s land-grant institution, facilitating student movement between and among campuses, while promoting educational access.

2.3.2 Institutional Planning and Strategic Management

This chapter details Penn State’s comprehensive and well-established mechanisms for planning. In brief, the University relies upon a top-down/bottom-up planning approach, with well-structured planning processes both for the University as a whole and for planning and budget units (e.g., campuses, colleges, and major administrative units). The current planning period for the 48 planning and budget units is 2014/15 – 2018/19; the planning period for the University will be 2015/16 – 2019/20.

2.3.3 Success of Institutional Planning and Strategic Management

There is much evidence that the University’s comprehensive and longstanding commitment to evidence-based strategic management has contributed to the realization of Penn State’s vision and goals. Priorities for Excellence: The Penn State Strategic Plan 2009/10 through 2013/14 identifies seven goals and related University-wide strategies, targeted for implementation over the first three years of the plan. Penn State has also identified a set of strategic performance indicators to reflect the goals and strategies described in that plan. Those goals, strategies, and strategic performance indicators are listed in the Strategy Implementation Matrix that accompanies the strategic plan. See “Implementing the Plan and Measuring Progress” for a description of how strategic performance indicators are used in the planning process at Penn State.

Several examples illustrate how strategic management has impacted the realization of goals outlined in the Strategic Plan. For instance, the University’s commitment to Goal #2 in the Strategic Plan, “Advance Academic Excellence and Research Prominence,” led to an impressive increase in the University’s [total research expenditures](#), from \$638 million in 2004/2005 to \$813 million in 2013/14. While Penn State continues to perform well in this area, the federal sequester affected research funding in the short-term. Penn State may be more fortunate than some institutions in this regard, since a relatively large percentage of its research funding comes from non-federal sources (38% in 2013/14).

The strategic management of the University and, in particular, the World Campus, has led to realization of Goal #5 of the Strategic Plan, “Serve the People of the Commonwealth and Beyond,” as illustrated by

the increasing numbers of [online/blended learning courses](#), which nearly doubled from 2005 to 2009, and [adult student enrollments](#) in credit courses, which grew six percent during the same time period.

The Core Council, which was established in order to help meet Goal #7 of the Strategic Plan (“control costs and generate additional efficiencies”), has achieved great success. The Council identified \$25 million in permanent annual cost savings and non-tuition revenue sources in the coming years that various administrative units will work to implement.

2.4 Integrity

Standard 6. Integrity

“In the conduct of its programs and activities involving the public and the constituencies it serves, the institution demonstrates adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support for academic and intellectual freedom.”

~ MSCHE, *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*

2.4.1 Recent Accomplishments

Hiring of an Ethics and Compliance Officer

After a national search, chaired by the Vice President for Administration and assisted by Brill Neumann Executive Search Consulting, the University selected the first Director of University Ethics and Compliance, Regis Becker, who began work in April 2013. The Director reports quarterly to the President and regularly to the Senior Vice President for Finance and Business/Treasurer as well as to the Board of Trustees (through the Committee on Legal and Compliance), working toward specific goals outlined by the President, the Board of Trustees, and senior administration. The Director serves as the University’s chief ethics and compliance officer and is the central control point for ethics and compliance programs and policies; and investigation of allegations of impropriety, harassment, inappropriate use of University resources, conflicts of interest and other inappropriate behavior. The Director provides leadership and advice on governance issues associated with ethical behavior. Through planning and directing the University’s ethics and compliance programs, policies, and practices, the Director ensures that all University activities are in compliance with regulatory requirements and University philosophies.

Creation of an Ethics and Compliance Council

Penn State recently formed an Ethics and Compliance Council chaired by the Director of University Ethics and Compliance. Other Council members appointed to the Council are the Vice President and General Counsel; the Vice President for Human Resources; the Vice President for Student Affairs; the Chief Compliance Officer of the Hershey Medical Center; the Clery Compliance Coordinator; the Associate Athletics Director for Compliance and Student Services; the Associate Vice President and Corporate Controller; the Assistant Vice President for Research and Director of the Office of Research Protections; the Director of the Office of Technology Management; the Athletics Integrity Officer; the Director of the Rock Ethics Institute; the Director of Internal Audit; the Vice Provost for Affirmative Action; and the Student Aid Compliance Officer.

The University Ethics and Compliance Council serves as the advisory board with oversight responsibility for all University ethics and compliance matters. The Council reviews and advises on ethics and compliance program content, helps develop strategy, evaluate results, suggests improvements and updates and provides oversight for the overall ethics and compliance program.

Hiring of an Athletics Integrity Officer and Creation of an Athletics Integrity Council

In 2013 the University hired its first Athletics Integrity Officer. The role of the Athletics Integrity Officer is to develop and implement policies, procedures and practices designed to ensure the Athletics Department's compliance with all applicable National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and Big Ten Conference rules and regulations and the requirements of the Athletics Integrity Agreement with the NCAA and Big Ten. The Athletics Integrity Officer is also responsible for review and oversight of matters related to the compliance and ethical obligations of the Athletics Department, including analyzing risks related to the Athletic Integrity Officer's responsibilities and, where appropriate, overseeing internal and external investigations. The Athletics Integrity Officer reports to the Director of University Ethics and Compliance and has regular and direct access to the President and the Board of Trustees through its Committee on Legal and Compliance.

In addition, Penn State created an Athletics Integrity Council chaired by the Athletics Integrity Officer. Its mission is to support the Athletics Integrity Officer in fulfilling his or her responsibilities. Council membership includes at least three faculty and senior University administrators who are not "Covered Persons" under the Athletics Integrity Agreement with respect to training, the Faculty Athletics Representative, and the Associate Athletics Director for Compliance and Student-Athlete Services. For a detailed list of the Council's Roles and Responsibilities, see the [Athletics Integrity Council Charter](#).

A New "Policy on Policies"

In April 2013, the University approved Administrative [Policy AD00](#) (Policy on Policies) which provides that responsible officials should periodically review and update policies to ensure compliance with best practices, laws and regulations, and seek approval of any material changes. The Policy formalizes the notion that in developing or amending a University policy, the responsible official should confer with others in the University who may be significantly affected by the policy or who have relevant expertise in the subject matter. This more structured process for periodic review and updating of University policies is expected to help ensure that University policies are up-to-date, consistent with best practices and with the University's ethical standards.

New Committee of the Board of Trustees on Legal and Compliance

In 2012, the Board of Trustees created a new standing committee on Legal and Compliance. The purpose of this committee is to oversee adherence to laws, regulations, and policies that pertain to University operations; consider and report or recommend to the Board on matters pertaining to compliance, oversight and legal issues; provide oversight for the legal functions of the University and for the Office of the Vice President and General Counsel and to provide oversight for the compliance functions of the University and for the Director of University Ethics and Compliance.

Revision of the University's Bylaws with Respect to Conflicts of Interest

A comprehensive revision of the Board of Trustees' Conflict of Interest policies was included in the package of governance reforms approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2013. These new Conflict of Interest policies, set forth in Article VIII of the University's Bylaws, significantly broaden and strengthen the policies that previously had been in place. In preparing the new conflict of interest policies, the Board considered best practices, including the "AGB Board of Directors' Statement on Conflict of Interest" issued by the Association of Governing Boards, as well as policies of other peer institutions, and consulted with outside counsel, expert in nonprofit governance issues.

Revision of the University's Institutional Conflict of Interest Policy

The University has had Policy RA21, Institutional Financial Conflict of Interest, since 2003. In fall of 2012, a working group headed by Stephen Dunham, Vice President and General Counsel, began a review and analysis of Policy RA21 and determined that the scope of the policy should be expanded to a University-wide policy, rather than one that focuses primarily on research-related activities. In July 2013, new University [Policy AD83](#) (Institutional Financial Conflict of Interest) was approved by President's Council. As stated therein, the purpose of Policy AD83 is to set forth the standards and procedures for reporting and reviewing potential institutional financial conflicts of interest and to provide a process by which the University will manage, reduce or eliminate those conflicts.

Preparation of a New University Statement of Core Values

In response to the [independent report by Louis Freeh](#) and his law firm, Freeh Sporkin & Sullivan, LLP, into the facts and circumstances of the actions of the University surrounding the child abuse committed by former employee, Gerald A. Sandusky, Penn State established the Freeh Advisory Council to ensure progress on the Freeh recommendations (see section 3.4.1 for additional details on the Freeh report and progress in this area). A subcommittee of the Freeh Advisory Council, chaired by Karen Wiley Sandler, Chancellor of Penn State Abington, developed a draft statement of core values to reflect the University's ethics and principles. The proposed Penn State Values are:

- **COMMUNITY:** We are Penn State, one University geographically dispersed, committed to our common values and mission, working together for the betterment of the University and the communities we serve and to which we belong.
- **DISCOVERY:** We seek and create new knowledge and understanding, and foster creativity and innovation, for the benefit of our communities, society, and the environment.

- **EXCELLENCE:** We strive for excellence in all our endeavors as individuals, an institution, and a leader in higher education.
- **INTEGRITY:** We act with integrity in accordance with the highest academic, professional, and ethical standards.
- **RESPECT:** We respect and honor the dignity of each person, embrace civil discourse, and foster a diverse and inclusive community.
- **RESPONSIBILITY:** We act responsibly and hold ourselves accountable for our decisions, actions, and their consequences.

In connection with that project, the subcommittee gathered and reviewed existing statements of core values, mission statements and strategic plans from University campuses, colleges and units, and looked at examples from other institutions to prepare the draft statement of core values. Additional information about the ongoing development of Penn State's Values statement is [available online](#).

On the recommendation of the subcommittee, the University engaged the Ethics Resource Center to develop and conduct a survey of all University students, faculty and staff during the fall semester of 2013. The survey was administered in October 2013 and feedback was received from nearly 2,300 faculty; 5,200 staff; 5,700 undergraduates; and 1,400 graduate students. [The results](#) are being used to help the University better understand its stakeholders' views about the culture of the University, and the values shared by the University community. In addition, the survey results are being used to inform and validate the draft statement of core values, establish a baseline against which future survey results may be compared, and provide important data for use by the University in orienting, educating and training its faculty, students and staff on ethical principles and values.

Increasing Awareness of the University's Compliance Hotline

The University strongly communicates the importance of reporting wrongdoing. The University's Compliance Hotline is one tool for making such reports. The Hotline is currently publicized throughout the University using postcards and posters, via training, and through various electronic media. Many of the units throughout the University currently publicize and link to the Hotline. The University *NewsWire* service runs regular news stories about the Hotline, including its purpose and how to access it. The Faculty and Staff Handbooks and the Student-Athlete Handbook also contain information on the Hotline. The University plans to continue these efforts and to make annual updates to printed and electronic materials. Calls to the Hotline have increased significantly in recent years with 161 calls in 2012, 213 calls in 2013, and 252 calls as of the end of October, 2014. This increase in activity may be attributed to an increased awareness of the existence of the Hotline as well as an enhanced sensitivity with respect to the importance of reporting suspected wrongdoing or misconduct.

Enhancing Training

In the past two years, over 15,000 faculty, staff, students, and volunteers received training on their responsibilities as Campus Security Authorities under the Clery Act and as mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse. A significant effort was made to create online training modules so that training can be done efficiently and effectively. These training modules emphasize the importance of ethical decision-

making in the context of these substantive reporting requirements. Further, the University is currently working on an action plan for Phase II that will both ensure appropriate follow up on the implementation of these initiatives and also explore other initiatives aimed at improving the University.

2.4.2 Future Goals

University Ethics Specialist and Ethics Committee

The University has hired an Ethics Specialist reporting to the Director of Ethics and Compliance who will develop, implement and support programs and policies involving the University's ethics, values and culture, as well as work with stakeholders (including the [Rock Ethics Institute](#)), to create educational resources and provide ethics training materials. The Ethics Specialist will also work to establish and support a values- and ethics-based decision-making process at all leadership levels of the University. The University is also creating a sub-committee of the Ethics and Compliance Council to focus on the ethical underpinnings of the University compliance program and to support the new University Ethics Specialist.

University Ethics and Compliance Website

The Office of Ethics and Compliance is updating and enhancing the existing [University Ethics](#) website to allow for "one-stop" shopping for employees, faculty, students and the public seeking information on Penn State's Ethics and Compliance Programs. The site will have useful information on where to report non-compliance or misconduct matters, current policies, and contact information for managers on the full range of ethics and compliance matters.

2.5 Faculty

Standard 10. Faculty

"The institution's instructional, research, and service programs are devised, developed, monitored, and supported by qualified professionals."

~MSCHE, Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education

Faculty are the foundation of any great university. Although the students, staff, administration, and alumni of Penn State all contribute to its unique character and success, it is the faculty who most profoundly shape the reputation of the institution and influence student outcomes. Penn State recognizes the need to recruit, retain, and support an outstanding and diverse faculty in order to fulfill the University's core mission of teaching, research, and service.

2.5.1 Academic Freedom

Faculty members are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subjects. Each faculty member is, however, responsible for the maintenance of appropriate standards of scholarship and teaching. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in research or other services of his/her own undertaking, and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of other academic duties.

The faculty member is a member of a learned profession, a member of the community, and a representative of the University. When faculty members speak or write as members of the community, they are free from institutional censorship or discipline, but they are expected to remember that the public may judge the profession and institution by their utterances. For further information, see University Policy [HR64](#), "Academic Freedom," and University Policy [AD47](#), "General Standards of Professional Ethics."

If a faculty member believes that there has been a violation of academic freedom, professional ethics, or procedural fairness, he or she can discuss the alleged violation with his or her department head or director of academic affairs. Each college and campus also has an ombudsman, whose responsibilities are to enhance communication and clarify possible misunderstandings in situations involving potential disputes, to advise faculty members and administrators about appropriate courses of action, and to help settle matters before they develop into serious disputes. Disputes that cannot be resolved through normal channels of administrative responsibility and procedure may be taken to the University Faculty Senate Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities.

2.5.2 Support of Faculty in Teaching and Learning

The University has a single undergraduate curriculum and a single regional accreditation, but learning environments vary across campuses. University Park is a large research-intensive campus. The Commonwealth Campuses, while also engaged in significant research, scholarship, and creative activities, offer a more intimate small-college experience. Penn State's World Campus provides a virtual learning environment. Penn State College of Medicine, Pennsylvania College of Technology, and the Dickinson School of Law further diversify Penn State's academic portfolio.

Effective teaching and innovation in teaching methods are high priorities for Penn State faculty, and this is reflected in evaluations for tenure and promotion as well as in post-tenure faculty reviews, according to University policies [HR23](#) and [HR40](#), respectively. Ample resources are available to help Penn State faculty become more effective teachers. The [Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence](#) works with faculty across all campuses to advance excellence in teaching and learning. Services provided by the Institute include individual consultations, course observations, presentations, conferences, and workshops, as well as publications and resource materials. Many campuses also have active teaching and learning committees that advance and inspire excellence in teaching and learning.

Peer review of classroom teaching is widely practiced across the University, and [Student Ratings of Teaching Effectiveness](#) are collected for virtually every instructor in every course. Also, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has been conducted periodically at University Park and Penn State's nine largest Commonwealth Campuses⁶. NSSE data reveal that teaching practices at Penn State are

⁶ Because of NSSE's focus on first-year and senior students, Penn State has not conducted NSSE at campuses with very small numbers of senior students.

comparable to other CIC and peer institutions, and that coursework emphasizes higher order thinking skills and contributes to professional growth.

The success of Penn State graduates in securing jobs and excelling in industry provides additional evidence of effective teaching by Penn State faculty. The University was ranked first in the nation in a 2010 survey by the [*Wall Street Journal*](#) in producing the best-prepared, most well-rounded graduates.

Several other measures of student success at Penn State point to the effectiveness of the faculty in teaching and inspiring undergraduates. Overall, Penn State's six-year graduation rate is 70%. Penn State University Park's six-year graduation rate is 86%, third in the [*Big Ten*](#) after Northwestern (95%) and the University of Michigan (89%). Data collected in 2013 from American and Canadian institutions by the American Society of Engineering Education indicates that the College of Engineering was ranked second in the number of bachelor's degrees awarded and seventh in the number of bachelor's degrees awarded to women. The Schreyer Honors College is highlighted in [*A Review of Fifty Public University Honors Programs*](#) as one of the top undergraduate honors programs in the United States. *Bloomberg Businessweek* has ranked Penn State's Smeal College of Business as having the [*top undergraduate business program*](#) in the country, the most innovative curricula, and the most effective career services.

Penn State faculty are at the cutting edge of research and creative endeavors, and this offers undergraduate students many opportunities for active learning in the laboratory, library, studio, and field. Working with faculty mentors, students share in the excitement of discovery, develop integrative learning skills, and explore career choices. They get to know faculty members and graduate students and connect with the expert community in their discipline. The Office of Undergraduate Education established the Undergraduate Discovery Summer Grants program to help students take advantage of Penn State's research environment. Supported by an endowment from the Penn State Alumni Association and funding from the Vice President and Dean for Undergraduate Education and several colleges, the purpose of these grants is to promote faculty/undergraduate collaboration as students engage in original research, scholarship, and creative work during the summer under the direct supervision of a faculty member. These opportunities exist at University Park and at many of the other campuses. For example, Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, provides nearly \$350,000 annually in support of undergraduate research. In addition, the Office of Undergraduate Education collaborates with departments, colleges, and campuses to provide conference travel support for students who are presenting the results of their research or creative work at national or regional professional conferences. Students from all Penn State campuses are invited to participate in the annual Undergraduate Research Exhibition. In conjunction with the Exhibition, a special performing arts showcase features creative accomplishments of students in music, theatre, and dance.

In addition to the above, research fairs that actively engage undergraduates in faculty research are conducted at many campuses. Many students present papers with faculty at conferences and also publish papers with faculty members prior to graduation. There are a variety of undergraduate research monies available to support and encourage student research.

2.5.3 Support of Faculty Research

The University provides a supportive and uniquely collaborative environment that promotes the scholarly activities of its faculty. In 2013/14, total research expenditures at Penn State stood at \$813 million. Partnerships with private industry and other universities yielded \$101 million, federal appropriations for agriculture yielded over \$8.8 million, state appropriations yielded \$37.7 million, and the University contributed nearly \$140 million to support this exceptional level of research funding. While the bulk of the research enterprise is centered at University Park (\$701.4 million), another \$95 million is invested in research at Hershey and the College of Medicine. The Great Valley School of Graduate Professional Studies, and Penn State Erie and Harrisburg also offer research-based graduate degrees, and all campuses have externally funded research programs.

A distinctive strength of Penn State is its success in fostering interdisciplinary collaboration in faculty research. In addition to support provided at the departmental and college levels, research at Penn State is organized into interdisciplinary research institutes. The seven institutes whose directors report directly to the Vice President for Research are:

- The Institute for the Arts and Humanities,
- The Institute for Cyber Science,
- The Institutes of Energy and the Environment,
- The Huck Institutes of the Life Sciences,
- The Materials Research Institute,
- The Institute for Natural Gas Research at Penn State, and
- The Social Science Research Institute.

In addition, the Institute for Neuroscience promotes collaboration between the Hershey Medical Center and the University Park Campus, coordinating neuroscience-related activities in education, research, patient care, and outreach.

Collaboration under the institute model enables Penn State faculty to be effective in emerging fields of great societal importance, even amidst periods of scarce resources. Some strategic themes that connect the interdisciplinary research, instruction, and outreach efforts of the University are sustainability, STEM education, entrepreneurship, and health sciences. A notable measure of the degree to which interdisciplinary research is effectively promoted at Penn State is that in 39 of the 66 Penn State doctoral programs included in the most recent [NRC assessment](#) (2011; data tables available in ANGEL), interdisciplinary members made up at least half of the faculty.

In order to further promote the collaborative research efforts of its faculty, Penn State has devoted resources to initiating faculty cluster hires. New faculty in multiple disciplinary domains are hired to form or join centers of excellence that address problems of broad scope and societal relevance. Recent and ongoing initiatives include genomics, infectious disease, reproductive biology, and cyberscience. Penn State will be hiring a dozen new faculty members over the next three years as part of its recently launched

Network for Child Protection and Well-Being, with the goal of advancing knowledge, practice, education and outreach to combat child abuse.

2.5.4 Support of Faculty Service Activities

Service at the department, college, and University levels, as well as external service to the profession and to society, is expected of all Penn State faculty. Service is one of the three key criteria in [promotion and tenure evaluations](#), as well as in faculty annual reviews and post-tenure reviews of faculty. As a large land-grant university dispersed across 24 campus locations, Penn State plays a unique role in service to the Commonwealth and its local communities, as well as at national and global levels. Several examples illustrate this commitment to service.

- Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences Research and Cooperative Extension programs provide enormous benefit to the Commonwealth. Penn State Extension is present in every county in the Commonwealth and delivers expertise directly to those producing agricultural products and a wide array of related enterprises.
- The Marcellus Center for Outreach and Research is Penn State's education and research initiative on unconventional gas shale formations. It serves state agencies, elected and appointed officials, communities, landowners, industry, environmental groups, and other stakeholders. The Center is committed to expanding research capabilities related to technical aspects of developing this resource and to providing science-based programming while protecting the Commonwealth's water resources, forests, and transportation infrastructure.
- Penn State's Humanitarian Engineering and Social Entrepreneurship program brings together students and faculty from various disciplines to develop innovative and practical technology-based solutions to address the most compelling challenges facing the developing world and marginalized communities. The quest is for solutions with the four hallmarks of sustainability – technologically appropriate, environmentally benign, socially acceptable, and economically sustainable. Long-term relationships with multi-sector partners and leveraging indigenous knowledge to foster developmental entrepreneurship form the foundation of all program initiatives.
- Penn State's major outreach units—World Campus, Continuing and Professional Education, Cooperative Extension, Engaged Scholarship, and Public Media—are recognized leaders in delivering programs with widespread impact, offering the largest and most diversified outreach program portfolio in the country.

2.5.5 Faculty Recruitment and Retention

Penn State pays considerable attention to faculty recruitment, retention, and development. As detailed in Section 3.3.8 (Human Resources), the University operates successfully in competitive national and international markets for world-class faculty members. Policies and procedures for the regular evaluation of faculty are detailed in Section 4.2.5.

2.5.6 Faculty Promotion and Tenure

Penn State employs 6,000 full-time faculty members, including lecturers, librarians, and research faculty. Of these, 2,879 are either tenured or on the tenure-track. Tenure-track faculty are recruited at both junior and senior levels through nationally advertised open searches. Penn State recognizes the value that faculty diversity adds to its central mission. The University's public commitment to diversity is reflected in its Mission Statement and strategic planning, including [The Framework to Foster Diversity](#).

The University employs a comprehensive promotion and tenure review process that emphasizes its threefold mission of teaching, research, and service. An important strength of the University's promotion and tenure review process is that it includes multiple levels of review in which individual committee members can serve at only one level. Formal second- and fourth-year reviews (with a decision made by the sixth-year of the provisional period) as well as informal peer mentoring provide guidance to tenure-track faculty. All faculty, regardless of rank, submit annual faculty activity reports that detail their contributions in teaching, research, and service. These reports are reviewed by the appropriate administrative officer. The goal of the annual faculty review is to provide formative feedback to faculty to ensure that faculty members and the institution are working towards common goals, and to make certain that faculty members have the resources needed to achieve these goals. In addition, formal reviews of tenured faculty (similar to promotion and tenure reviews) are conducted every five years under University policy [HR40](#), Evaluation of Faculty Performance.

The promotion and tenure process involves recommendations at the level of the department, college, and University. Faculty tenure rates have remained steady since 2005. The large majority of upper-level reviews at Penn State are consistent with recommendations coming from departments and campuses. Final outcomes for cases reaching a sixth-year level of review have, likewise, historically been consistent with the recommendations that the University committee and the President receive. In fact, in 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10, 2012/13, and 2013/14 the President approved 100% of the cases that carried positive recommendations from the University committee.

In 2013/14, 109 sixth-year tenure cases were brought to the dean/vice president of research level of review. Ten of those cases were denied at that level and 99 cases (including seven early-tenure cases) continued to the University-level of review. The University Committee recommended all 99 cases and the President approved all 99 recommendations. This information on the promotion and tenure process is shared annually in a report from central administration to the University Faculty Senate. The most recent [Faculty Tenure Flow Report](#) is available on the web.

2.6 Summary of Findings

Research Question 1: How well do the current mission and vision statements serve Penn State and its ability to carry out its land-grant mission?

Penn State was among the first land-grant universities in America, and since its founding in 1855 it has provided unsurpassed access and public service to improve the well-being and health of

individuals and communities not only in Pennsylvania, but throughout the world. The University has expanded the range of academic fields of study, forming a modern public research university and steadily advancing in prestige. Penn State provides access to many who might otherwise be unable to pursue higher education. Penn State's research, scholarship, and creative activities promote human and economic development, global understanding, and progress in professional practice. The current mission and vision statements provide direction, as Penn State remains steadfastly committed to its historical land-grant mission through integrated programs of teaching, research, and service. The University is committed to expanding college access for students with diverse backgrounds and with varying needs, and has expanded its numerous scholarship programs. The expansion of scholarship support was one of the University's top priorities in the *For the Future* campaign. Penn State's unique Commonwealth Campus structure allows students who otherwise could not access an education or would be discouraged from attending college to access a world class public university. Penn State continues to ascend in various college rankings, to expand its research capabilities and external funding, and to diversify its faculty and student body. Penn State has a significant economic impact of more than \$17 billion annually, and for every dollar invested by the Commonwealth, the University returns \$25 in economic benefit to Pennsylvania.

Research Question 2: How effectively are the University's mission, vision, and goals carried out through the strategic management of the various campuses, colleges, and major administrative units?

Penn State is a public research university with 24 diverse campuses. The University's unique structure provides many advantages in meeting its mission, vision, and goals. Penn State's many administrative units work collaboratively, adhering to a common set of administrative policies. The leaders of academic and administrative units meet routinely in a variety of venues, and provide guidance, direction and consistent formative evaluation to ensure the University's success. The University Faculty Senate works closely with the administration in a system of shared governance. The University operates as one university geographically dispersed (including the Pennsylvania College of Technology, The Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, Dickinson School of Law, the University Libraries and Penn State World Campus) and its structure is a unique strength of the University. Strategies and policies ensure consistent administrative overview of all units so that Penn State's mission and vision may be realized. The University has long engaged in a dynamic process of institutional planning and strategic management, and that effort has contributed significantly to Penn State's success. To measure progress toward goals, Penn State tracks a variety of strategic performance indicators and strategic management has impacted the realization of goals outlined in the strategic plan. Due to effective strategic planning; clearly defined mission, vision, and goals; effective administration that adheres to a common set of policies and procedures and oversight; and an administrative structure that supports the work of its faculty, staff and students in realizing the threefold mission of teaching, research, and service, Penn State has been one of American higher education's notable success stories.

Research Question 3: What are the most significant challenges and opportunities facing Penn State in achieving its core mission as a public land-grant research university?

While Penn State has achieved much success, many challenges lie ahead. Some examples include economic factors (state appropriations, keeping tuition within the rate of inflation, demographic shifts, economic stressors, and the federal sequestration of funds), deferred maintenance, and the percentage of faculty approaching retirement age. The University has strategically engaged the challenges that it faces by cost-cutting through changes in benefit plans; energy savings; recycling of permanent funds; and enhancement of resources through, for example, growth of the World Campus and the recruitment of greater numbers of international students. The mission and vision of the University are well-aligned with its goals and strategic actions. Penn State remains committed to living its historical land-grant mission through the work of its faculty, staff and students.

One significant challenge is the blending of distance and resident learning, and the development and implementation of a Penn State digital learning strategy. Digital learning is becoming ubiquitous in higher education through the dramatic growth of the use of technology to support resident education, blended, hybrid, and fully-online classes. Ongoing and rapid advances in teaching and learning methodologies and technologies, including peer-to-peer learning, learning analytics, adaptive learning technologies, flipped classrooms, massive open online courses (MOOCs) and mid-sized online closed courses (MOCCs) are transforming the core of the teaching and learning enterprise. These changes, coupled with the evolving comportment of our students regarding their desire to choose where, when, and how they learn, and their significant facility with technology, are pushing us to reconsider the impact on all forms of teaching and learning at Penn State. The digital learning strategy is also a crucial component of the overall University learning strategy, with digital learning embedded in, and providing reinforcement to, how the institution defines the learning ecosystem.

Other challenges include student success, reducing costs, and scaling up engaged scholarship to provide opportunities for every Penn State undergraduate.

Research Question 4: How successfully does the University support and facilitate collaboration, research, teaching, and service by faculty – especially the highly productive, diverse, innovative faculty needed by a 21st century, world-class research university?

Faculty are the foundation of any great university. They profoundly shape the reputation of the institution and perhaps more than anyone influence student outcomes. There are many forms of support for faculty and teaching/learning. Penn State's unique structure facilitates supportive instructional environments for learning and discovery for both faculty and students. There are many forms of support for faculty and teaching and learning. From innovative teaching methods to peer review of teaching and support from the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence, student learning is enhanced in many ways. Graduation rates and the success of Penn State graduates in securing jobs and excelling in industry provide evidence of effective teaching by Penn

State faculty. The University also provides a collaborative environment that promotes the scholarly activities of its faculty. The quality and extent of research accomplishments of the University's faculty is illustrated by its ranking as one of the top 60 universities in the world. Penn State also facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration in faculty research through its various Institutes. These collaborations enable faculty to be more effective in emerging fields of great societal importance such as sustainability, STEM education, entrepreneurship, and health sciences. There are many forms of support for faculty service activities at the departmental, college, University, profession, and society levels.

Research Question 5: How effective are the University's procedures for faculty recruitment and retention, compensation, evaluation, professional development, and promotion and tenure?

Penn State has comprehensive and consistent processes for providing formative and evaluative reviews of faculty. This system facilitates the success of faculty. Faculty recruitment and retention is important to any successful university and Penn State has been successful in a very competitive environment. Penn State works aggressively to hire and retain an outstanding and diverse faculty that can fulfill its core mission, and the University provides an environment that is strongly supportive of faculty research, scholarship, teaching and service.

Research Question 6: What has been accomplished, and what remains to be addressed, regarding how Penn State demonstrably adheres to high ethical standards in the conduct of all programs and activities?

There have been a number of significant steps to enhance and promote adherence by all members of the University community to ethical standards and University policies and procedures. Steps included the hiring of a Director of University Ethics and Compliance and an Ethics Specialist, the creation of an Ethics and Compliance Council, the hiring of an Athletics Integrity Officer, and the Creation of an Athletics Integrity Council, among others. Future goals and enhancements include updating and enhancing the University Ethics website to allow for one-stop shopping, and the establishment of an Ethics Committee.

It is the judgment of the Steering Committee that Penn State meets Standards 1, 5, 6, and 10, which the self-study groups under the heading of "Institutional Context and Foundation." In the discussion around these four standards, there is ample evidence to demonstrate that the University is true to its mission, vision, and goals; that the administration supports and facilitates the faculty, staff and students so that the mission, vision, and goals may be met; that the University has taken steps to improve upon its integrity as an institution of higher education; and that the faculty are supported so that students and the University may achieve Penn State's mission and vision.

3. Planning, Budgeting, and Governance

Standards

- 2. Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal
- 3. Institutional Resources
- 4. Leadership and Governance
- 7. Institutional Assessment

This chapter evaluates the extent to which Penn State meets Standards 2, 3, 4, and 7, which the self-study organizes under the heading of “Planning, Budgeting, and Governance.” The goal is to both describe and analyze – that is, to accurately and realistically portray what the institution is and does; to offer reasoned evaluative judgments about how well the particular objectives are being accomplished; and to seek opportunities for substantive improvement. The evaluations are informed by the evidence and by constructive participation of relevant stakeholders in processes that parallel institutional planning and budgeting, such as IT strategic planning, the Integrated Student Information System (ISIS) replacement process, and other relevant initiatives.

3.1 Research Questions

This chapter draws on multiple types and sources of evidence to address the following research questions. These questions cut across the Steering Committee’s assessment of Penn State’s strengths and weaknesses with respect to the four standards addressed in this chapter.

- 1. To what degree has the University been able to support its mission (that is, including research and online education) with necessary infrastructure (buildings, renovations, IT, staff support, enterprise information systems, and the like)?
- 2. How are resources allocated and expended, and how sufficient are the evaluative processes in place to monitor this?
- 3. How actively and extensively does Penn State interface with, share with, and learn from peer institutions regarding matters of planning, resource allocation, and governance?
- 4. How deliberately and systematically are the University’s processes for planning, resource allocation, and governance assessed, with an eye toward improvement opportunities?
- 5. How and to what extent do structures, policies, and procedures ensure adequate participation in shared governance by appropriate groups (administrators, trustees, faculty, students, and external stakeholders)?
- 6. How, and how well, do communication mechanisms and practices support planning, budgeting, and governance?
- 7. To what extent are planning and resource allocation decisions informed by evidence?

8. To what extent do planning, budgeting, and governance structures create a framework for the accomplishment of institutional goals and improvement?
9. What has been the University's response to the Freeh recommendations and what are the early indications of the results, including cost-related impacts on the University's ability to function?

Relevant to all of these questions is Penn State's history of deliberate and proactive work on matters of strategic planning, budgeting, and the efficient and effective allocation of resources. Three especially important illustrations involve the University's history of more than 30 years of University-wide, ongoing strategic planning, the Core Council, and the 2012/13 Budget Planning Task Force. Also, all of the examples cited below involved extensive participation of academic and administrative leaders (deans, chancellors, and vice presidents), faculty members, students, trustees, and staff.

The fundamental values and commitments of a major public research university are foundational and enduring, but Penn State has long known that it cannot achieve its mission by simply conducting business as usual. In short, Penn State has a demonstrated history of engaging in serious, deliberate, proactive, and participative consideration of matters related to planning, budgeting, and governance. University-wide processes at University and unit levels encompass academic, budget, enrollment, diversity, sustainability, and facilities planning. Detail on some of the most important processes is provided throughout this chapter.

3.2 Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

Standard 2. Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

"An institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and utilizes the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal. Implementation and subsequent evaluation of the success of the strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality."

~MSCHE, *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*

3.2.1 Autonomous Planning and Budget-Unit Model

Penn State uses hybrid, top-down/bottom-up structures and mechanisms for planning and budgeting. A key feature is that at Penn State considerable planning and budgeting responsibility and authority are delegated to budget executives (deans, vice presidents, campus chancellors), supported by central administration (the President, the Executive Vice President and Provost, and the Senior Vice President for Finance and Business). Sometimes informally referred to as a "strong college" model, this contrasts, for example, to approaches which are more reliant on funding formulas or position control.

3.2.2 Updated Staff Job System

In 2004, Penn State began a process – completed in 2010 – to transform a decades-old, centralized, somewhat opaque Staff Position Evaluation and Compensation human resources system to a job-tailored, flexible, and transparent system. A highly collaborative and consultative process involved more than 500

employees from across the University in the development of new job profiles. The new Competencies for Job Classification System more clearly and meaningfully outlines necessary knowledge, skills, and characteristics and allows for more consistent job postings, job evaluations and compensation practices. In addition, new salary bands have been established, with jobs matched to those bands based on current market salaries for comparable jobs. Both job profiles and salary bands are available online to employees and job applicants at the University.

3.2.3 Student Information System

When an automated student information system was activated at Penn State in 1985, the institution became one of the cutting-edge providers of student services with technology. No longer would students need to wait in long lines at the Registrar's Office during their first visit to campus to finalize their schedules. Over the years, Penn State has supported, maintained, and further developed that core student system, ISIS. Since that first release, ISIS has been managed and maintained according to institutional needs, business processes, and policy. It successfully delivered desired outcomes to students, staff and faculty in scheduling, record and registration tracking, admissions, student aid, federal/state reporting, and bursar functions. However, ISIS is nearing its 30th year of service, and is no longer efficiently sustainable. ISIS does not adequately meet the expectations of students and staff for accessibility in the mobile age, the ability to be easily maintained, ease of use, and the provision of workflow-driven, on-demand, self-service capabilities. In 2011/12, in support of the implementation of the [Priorities for Excellence](#) plan, the Core Council's fourth recommendation resulting from the IT review concluded that Penn State should: "Address aging core enterprise systems, in particular, the Integrated Student Information System and Integrated Business Information System." (All four recommendations are described in Section 3.3.9.)

Even predating that recommendation, in 2010 Penn State had begun systematic consideration of possible major changes, including rebuilding the decades-old ISIS. A project team evaluated the costs and likely impacts of three alternatives: rebuilding that system internally, moving to an open-source solution, and purchasing a vendored product. The conclusion was that it would be most cost-effective and least risky for an institution of Penn State's size and complexity to purchase a well-developed, mature, supported solution. This led to [LionPATH](#) – a project to select, purchase, and implement a vendored product for the new student information system. LionPATH is expected to follow a three- to four-year implementation path, and will revolutionize many processes, both in administrative and technical areas. In November 2013, the Board of Trustees approved Oracle's PeopleSoft Campus Solutions as Penn State's new student system software package, and the consulting firm Sierra-Cedar as the implementation partner. The ten-year budget for LionPATH implementation estimates capital expenditures of \$65 million, with a yearly increase of \$3 million in budgeted operational funds. Those figures include costs of purchasing the software; ongoing software maintenance and updates; hardware purchases; implementation consulting; training; and backfill for staff assigned temporarily from other Penn State offices to the LionPATH project.

3.2.4 Human Resources Information System and Business Information System

Projects for replacing the similarly aging integrated business information system and for launching a new human resource information system are also in the pipeline. These major initiatives will be on an aggressive timeline, according to the 2013 IT Roadmap (available on ANGEL). The human resource information system project is currently in the initial planning and assessment stages.

3.3 Institutional Resources

Standard 3. Institutional Resources

“The human, financial, technical, physical facilities and other resources necessary to achieve an institution’s mission and goals are available and accessible. In the context of the institution’s mission, the effective and efficient uses of the institution’s resources are analyzed as part of ongoing outcomes assessment. “

~MSCHE, *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*

In support of its core vision as a global university committed to excellence, Penn State emphasizes the responsible stewardship of institutional resources, both centrally and across all levels (campuses, colleges, administrative units). Important elements include controlling costs and generating efficiencies and making the best use of limited resources of all types: for example, improving instructional productivity, better using instructional and research facilities, addressing the costs of benefits, promoting continuous quality improvement, and leveraging the power of IT.

3.3.1 Revenues

Penn State’s [2014/15 total operating budget](#) exceeds \$4.6 billion. The revenues by source for both the total operating budget and the General Funds budget are depicted in the [2014/15 Income Budget](#). The General Funds budget totals nearly \$2.1 billion and is composed of: the Educational and General budget, which supports most of the University’s basic teaching, research, and public service programs; the budgets for Agricultural Research and Cooperative Extension; the College of Medicine at the MSMHC; and the Pennsylvania College of Technology. Excluding the College of Medicine and the Pennsylvania College of Technology, 79.4% of the income supporting the 2014/15 General Funds budget will come from tuition and fees and 13.2% from the state appropriation. The remaining 7.4% comes from income such as recovery of indirect costs, investments, and sales and services of departments.

The operating revenues by source for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014, by percent and source, are available for review on page 2 of the [Audited Financial Statements](#).

3.3.2 Expenses

Focusing on the total core expenses as defined by the National Center for Education Statistics and reported in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Penn State’s instructional expenses as a percent of total core expenses have increased from 38% in 2006/07 to 41% for 2011/12

(Table 3-1). A comparison of data from across the University's public CIC peers shows that Penn State's instructional expenses as a percent of total core expenses are in the top half of the range.

Table 3-1: Instructional Expenses as a Percent of Total Core Expenses.

| Institution Name | Percentage by year | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
| Indiana University – Bloomington | 39 | 40 | 42 | 49 | 49 | 51 |
| Purdue University – Main Campus | 40 | 41 | 43 | 48 | 47 | 46 |
| Ohio State University – Main Campus | 38 | 38 | 42 | 45 | 44 | 43 |
| Pennsylvania State University Park | 38 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 41 |
| Michigan State University | 35 | 37 | 39 | 41 | 40 | 40 |
| University of Michigan – Ann Arbor | 29 | 20 | 31 | 37 | 36 | 37 |
| University of Iowa | 28 | 28 | 28 | 33 | 33 | 35 |
| University of Nebraska – Lincoln | 26 | 26 | 27 | 32 | 32 | 30 |
| University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign | 21 | 20 | 25 | 31 | 31 | 31 |
| University of Minnesota – Twin Cities | 27 | 25 | 25 | 27 | 27 | 28 |
| University of Wisconsin – Madison | 23 | 23 | 22 | 25 | 25 | 24 |
| University of Chicago | 59 | 59 | 60 | 56 | 58 | 58 |
| University of Maryland | 32 | 34 | 36 | 35 | 34 | 34 |
| Rutgers University | 40 | 49 | 46 | 49 | 50 | 49 |
| Northwestern University | 40 | 37 | 39 | 37 | 38 | 37 |

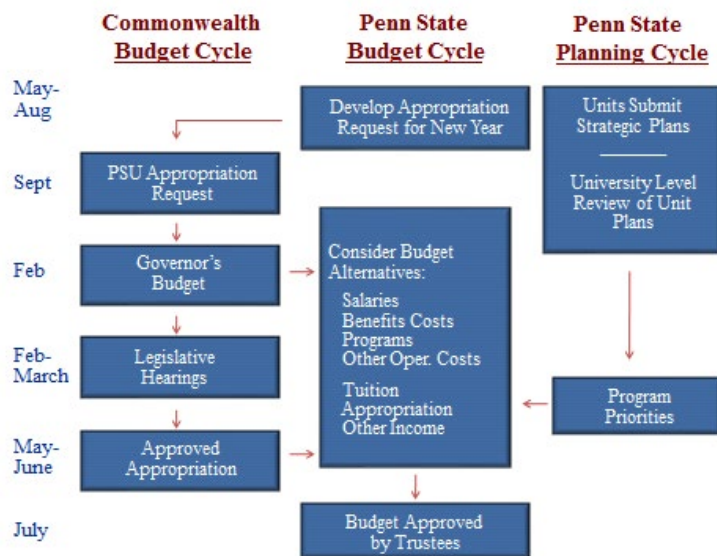
The expenses across all fund types for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014, by percent and function, are available on page 3 of the [Audited Financial Statements](#).

3.3.3 Financial Planning and Budgeting

Each July, Penn State's Board of Trustees approves the [operating budget](#) for the University. The University's budget cycle is tied closely to the priorities identified in its strategic planning process and to the Commonwealth's legislative and budgeting calendar. Figure 3-1 maps the budget and planning cycle.

Penn State utilizes a number of methods to allocate resources across units. These methods include an incremental model for the allocation of resources at University Park, a modified incremental model that includes the impact of enrollment growth at the campuses, a model that distributes a portion of the research overhead to colleges, a summer session model, a World Campus revenue sharing model, and an instructional workload model.

Figure 3-1: Penn State Budget Cycle



The research mission of Penn State is supported by various offices, policies, procedures and activities. Research expenditures are related to both the conduct of research and the infrastructure needed to support the mission of a Research Extensive institution. The Office of the Vice President for Research provides coordination of and oversight for the [research enterprise](#) at Penn State, and a source of financial support for achieving the research mission. Appropriate institutional structures assist and monitor the conduct of research, including the Office of Sponsored Programs, the Research Accounting Office, the Office of Technology Management, the fully-accredited Office of Research Protections, and the Strategic Interdisciplinary Research Office.

3.3.4 Assets

The University's net assets increased from \$4.98 billion in 2010 to \$7.68 billion in 2014. The University has experienced consistent improvement over the past few years as a result of strong investment performance, exceptional philanthropy, and strategic investments in physical plant. This is demonstrated by the growth of the University's unrestricted net assets of \$3.18 billion, up from \$1.77 billion in 2010. The University's clinical enterprise, the MSHMC, has also contributed greatly to such growth, accounting for \$494 million of the increase. Over this same period the University's endowment value increased to \$2.29 billion, up from \$1.47 billion in 2010, and the University's endowment performance regularly placed it in or near the first quartile among its peers. A significant portion of the endowment growth can be attributed to the success of the University's philanthropic efforts of *For the Future: The Campaign for Penn State Students*. Against this backdrop of financial success the University has also managed a program of robust investment in facilities as evidenced by a \$650 million increase in net physical plant value to \$2.47 billion over this time period.

During 2013 and 2014, the University continued to experience the financial impacts of the Sandusky scandal including civil litigation settlements of \$59.7 million and costs for internal investigation, legal, communications and other related costs totaling \$17.3 million and \$15.6 million, respectively. Additional costs related to Clery Act compliance and the NCAA consent decree requirements brought the total costs related to the scandal as of June 2014 to \$175 million. Notwithstanding these costs, the University has maintained a strong financial position as evidenced by the financial comparisons noted in the next section.

3.3.5 Financial Comparisons

The University's long term general obligation bonds are currently rated Aa2 with positive outlook and AA by Moody's Investors Service (Moody's) and Standard and Poor's, respectively. As such, the ratings currently reflect "high investment grade" quality and stability with respect to the University's underlying finances. The University's longstanding conservative financial practices have established a pool of institutional resources and financial capacity demonstrated on several key measures. Table 3-2 provides a summary of the University's financial ratios as compared to public university Aa1 medians published by Moody's. These medians are a composite of public institution financial statements and serve as widely accepted benchmarks for assessing relative financial strength within higher education among peer institutions. Although Penn State is currently classified as Aa2, the comparison to the higher Aa1 medians demonstrates the University's financial strength. The University's consistently favorable operating performance and cash flow generation has resulted in a 9.9% five-year average operating margin for fiscal years 2010 – 2014.

Financial success carries over to academic endeavors, as evidenced by the University's strong research enterprise. As of the end of fiscal year 2014 (Figure 3-2), Penn State had total research expenditures of \$813 million, representing an increase of \$33 million over 5 years from fiscal year 2010. Penn State ranks 18th nationally based on the National Science Foundation's (NSF) latest survey (2012) of higher education research and development expenditures. The University has a diverse source of research funding, with 62% from federal agencies, 12% from industrial sponsors, nearly 9% from Commonwealth agencies and 17% from Penn State's internal sources. The University's diversity in sources of research funding, as evidenced in Figure 3-3, has been a noted strength.

The fiscal year 2014 appropriation represents an appropriation per student of \$3,225, while the Moody's Aa1 median for 2013 is \$7,745. The University's appropriation from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is \$277.9 million for fiscal year 2015, which is down 21% from the \$350.8 million originally appropriated in fiscal year 2010. Due to the University's low reliance on state funding (6.25% of total operating budget in fiscal year 2014), the downward trend has not had a material impact on total revenues. Key financial ratios are presented in Table 3-2.

Figure 3-2: Research Expenditures by Source of Funds

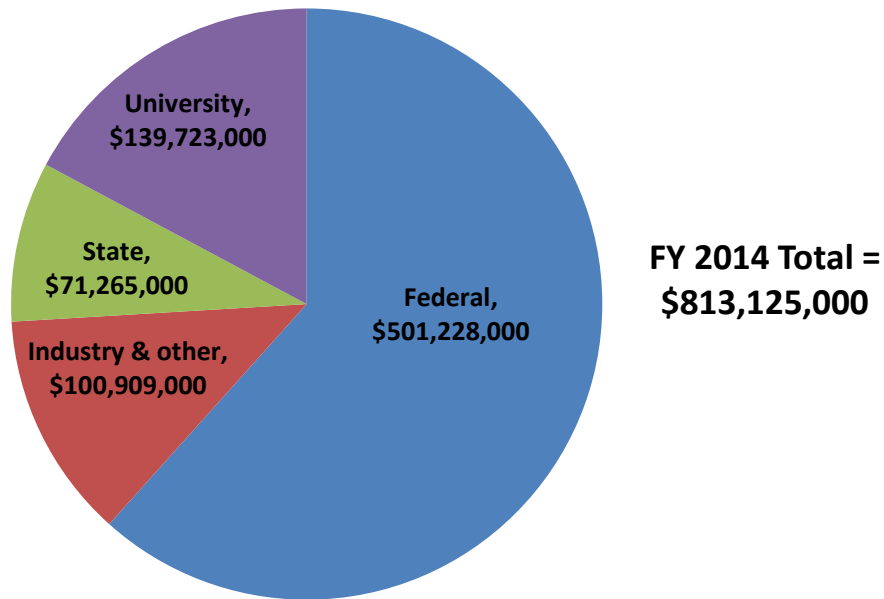


Figure 3-3: Research Expenditures from Federal Agencies

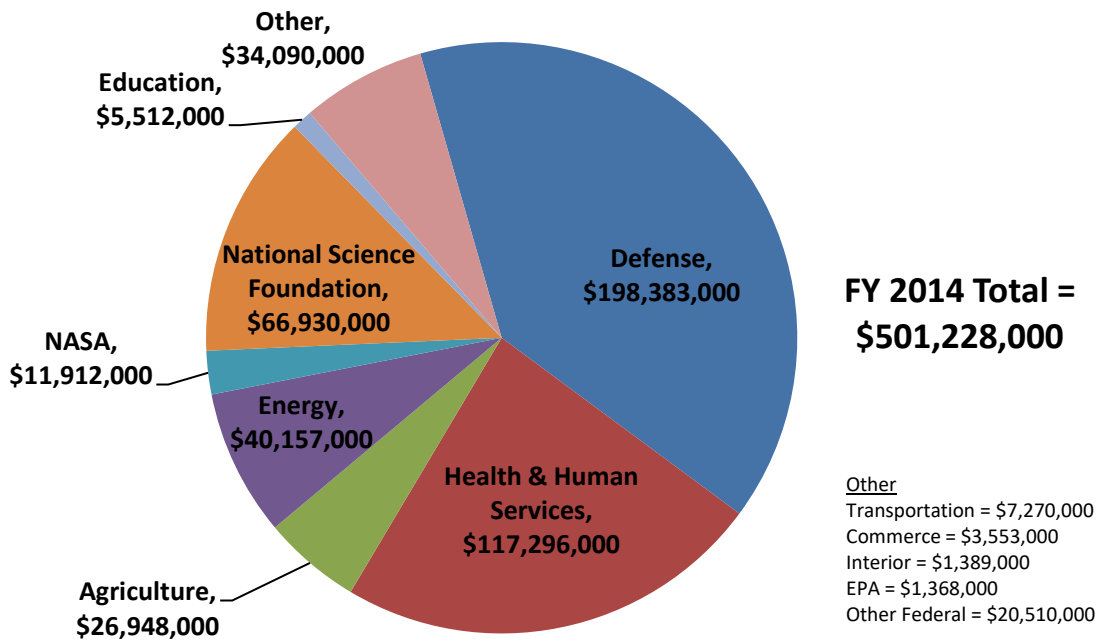


Table 3-2: Key Financial Ratios

| Ratios: | PSU 2011 | Moody's Aa1 Medians 2012 | PSU 2013 | Moody's Aa1 Medians 2013 | PSU 2014 |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Total financial resources-to-debt | 3.25 | 2.32 | 4.44 | 2.26 | 5.31 |
| Expendable financial resources-to debt | 2.31 | 1.76 | 3.23 | 1.74 | 3.95 |
| Expendable financial resources-to-operations* | 0.68 | 0.66 | 0.73 | 0.68 | 0.85 |
| Debt service-to-operations* | 2.5% | 3.3% | 2.1% | 3.2% | 2.0% |
| Operating margin* | 10.8% | 4.8% | 8.3% | 4.5% | 11.1% |

*The expendable financial resources-to-operations, debt service-to-operations, and operating margin have been recast for all years presented to conform with the 2013 presentation of the non-periodic change in postretirement benefits plans as a non-operating activity within the consolidated statement of activities. Previously, all changes in the postretirement benefits plans were classified as operating activity.

3.3.6 Audits

Penn State has a very active and engaged Board of Trustees Committee on Audit and Risk, which meets at least four times per year. The Committee is charged with oversight of external and internal audits, internal controls, conflicts of interest and various other risk areas. This governance is supported by a staff of 12 professionals within the Office of Internal Audit.

As a large research institution, Penn State is audited by many different external audit organizations. Penn State is subject to a consolidated financial statement and an OMB Circular A-133 audit performed by Deloitte & Touche LLP. Deloitte also performs various audits of certain subsidiary entities including the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, the Penn State Research Foundation, and the Ben Franklin Technology Center. Deloitte also performs audits for WPSU TV/FM, the FAA Passenger Facility Charge at the University Park Airport, and NCAA compliance. Additionally, Deloitte performs program audits that are required under contractual arrangements with certain Commonwealth of Pennsylvania agencies (Department of Community and Economic Development, Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Department of Public Welfare).

Penn State's federal auditing agency is the Office of Naval Research, and the Defense Contract Audit Agency is established on site to conduct certain audits and to review policies, procedures, systems, grants and contracts. The University is periodically reviewed by granting agency auditors under the terms of specific grants and contracts.

In general, all of the audit teams consider the University's system of internal controls to be effective, ensuring the University's long term financial strength.

3.3.7 Capital and Facilities

Capital and facilities management and planning at Penn State are dynamic processes. Capital planning occurs on a five-year planning cycle with input from a wide range of sources, including academic deans, chancellors, administrative vice presidents, facilities condition audits/analyses, the University's strategic plan, unit-level strategic plans, enrollment data, and benchmarking data. The Office of Physical Plant (OPP) takes the lead in developing the five-year capital plan in consultation with senior administration.

The plan is endorsed by the Project Decision Review Board, chaired by the President, and is presented to the Board of Trustees. As with any plan, this is subject to modification based on changes in funding availability and shifting priorities. The plan is comprehensively updated every two years. As the plan is executed, senior administration, via the Project Decision Review Board, reviews and approves the direction of each major project at specific "gates," in the design/construction process – programming, architect selection, final plan approval, and construction reporting. The individual projects are then presented to the Board of Trustees, normally twice before construction begins. The Board is consulted on architect selection (unless the project is state-funded), approval of the final plans, and authorization of the construction.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, facilities management and planning is the responsibility of OPP through the divisions of Facilities Resources and Planning, Campus Planning and Design, Design and Construction, and Commonwealth Services. Facilities Resources and Planning is responsible for: space management and planning, real estate management; leadership in universal accessibility (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance; management of building interior signage; and administrative support for the Facilities Resources Committee and the University Committee for Instructional Facilities. Campus Planning and Design leads the campus planning process by: development of campus master plans and sub-district plans; providing big-picture planning ideas and concepts to align near-term priorities with long-term goals; assuring that projects adhere to the principles, guidelines, and requirements of campus master plans; and developing site selection studies and feasibility studies for new buildings and building additions. These management and planning efforts are further supported and distributed via a network of facility coordinators within each college and administrative unit that serve as the primary point of contact and liaison with OPP. Design and Construction and Commonwealth Services divisions are responsible for individual facility project management, design, and construction at University Park and campus locations.

Penn State has 27 million gross square feet of facilities comprising over 1,700 buildings located on 23⁷ campuses across Pennsylvania, as summarized in Table 3-3. Some of the larger, recent [capital projects](#) completed include the new Pegula Ice Arena, a total renovation and addition to Moore Building for the Psychology Department, a renovation of CEDAR Building for the College of Education, and new construction of the Millennium Sciences Building for the Life Sciences and Materials Research graduate and research programs. Projects currently underway include a new Biobehavioral Health Building,

⁷ Does not include the Pennsylvania College of Technology, which is accredited separately.

additions to the Intramural and the Hetzel Union buildings, and renovations to Henderson South and the South Residence Halls. Penn State is in the early stages of a \$2.7 billion [five-year capital plan](#).

Table 3-3: Physical Plant Statistics.

| Type | Unit of Measurement | University Park | Campuses | Total for all locations |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------|-------------------------|
| Land | Acres | 7,795 | 2,663 | 22,583 |
| Paved roads | Miles | 31 | 28 | 63 |
| Paved walkways | Miles | 23 | 21 | 50 |
| Buildings | Each | 948 | 506 | 1,835 |
| Roof area | Acres | 79 | 75 | 168 |
| Building area | GSF (Millions) | 20.5 | 6.8 | 31.2 |

3.3.8 Human Resources

This section on human resources deals with faculty and staff – their quality, recruitment, retention, and development. Student experiences, learning, development, and success are discussed elsewhere in the self-study.

Academic/Administrative Development Programs

Penn State has paid careful attention to issues surrounding the recruitment, retention, compensation, and development of strong faculty, staff, and administrative cohorts. Penn State is active in a variety of programs and workshops on academic and administrative leadership, under the aegis of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. Space permits only a few specific examples to be cited here.

The [Administrative Fellows Program](#) provides professional development opportunities for standing-appointment faculty and staff. By serving under the mentorship of a senior level administrator, Fellows receive opportunities to broaden their perspectives and experiences in higher education administration. Since its inception, 73 Fellows have participated in the program. The program has been effective in increasing the pool of qualified women and minorities interested in pursuing careers in university administration. Previous administrative fellows have gone on to positions including chancellor, vice provost, assistant dean, associate dean, associate vice president, director of academic affairs, and a broad range of other types of positions affecting almost all aspects of the University's operation. Last reviewed in 2004, the program is currently undergoing evaluation.

Penn State is also a very active institutional participant in the CIC Academic Leadership Program (ALP). Established in 1987, the ALP is designed to develop the leadership and managerial skills of faculty on CIC campuses who have demonstrated exceptional ability and administrative promise. Annually, participating CIC institutions each select about five mid-career faculty members or academic administrators who attend

several three-day programs throughout the academic year at different CIC universities. Responsibility for hosting the CIC ALP is rotated among the universities.

Penn State also participates in the CIC Department Executive Officers program. In 1997-98 the CIC initiated this annual program of leadership development opportunities for department heads and chairs. Five institutional team participants include seasoned veterans as well as newer department heads and chairs who meet once in the fall in Chicago.

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) offers an array of professional development opportunities for staff members. These include in-person and online courses, workshops, tailored programs, and consultation services to individuals and to colleges, campuses, and administrative units. The [Center for Workplace Learning and Performance](#) is a nexus for staff development programming.

Competitive Positioning on Faculty Recruitment and Retention

The University carefully monitors its competitive position in terms of faculty salaries, recruitment, and retention. Each year since 2000/01, Penn State's Executive Vice President and Provost has asked University Park college deans to summarize cases in which they have had to compete with job offers from other universities to their faculty members. Campus chancellors have participated in this process since 2005-06. The responses consistently show that Penn State operates in the highest-level, most competitive markets for faculty. During the past 12 years, University Park deans and chancellors reported losing faculty members to, or negotiating against, offers from an impressive group of world-class institutions including, but not limited to, the following:

- *All of the CIC universities* – Chicago, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Michigan State, Minnesota, Nebraska, Northwestern, Ohio State, Purdue, Rutgers, and Wisconsin;
- *All of the Ivy League universities* – Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Penn, Princeton, and Yale;
- *Other prominent land-grant institutions* – the Universities of Delaware, Georgia, and Florida; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; North Carolina State; and Virginia Tech; and
- *Other premier national and global institutions* – Australia National University; Auckland University; Carnegie Mellon; Duke; Kansas City Art Institute; Aix-Marseille University; McMaster University; New York University; Stanford; Tulane; Rice; Vanderbilt; and the Universities of California (various campuses), Virginia, and North Carolina.

In 2012/13, deans and chancellors reported on 52 faculty members who were actively recruited by other institutions. The analysis tracks whether counter-offers were made, how many faculty members were retained or lost and under what conditions, the identity of the competing university, and the reasons understood to play into the outcome. The *Faculty Competition* report is available on ANGEL.

Possible Impact of Sandusky Events on Faculty Recruitment and Retention

With the November 2011 arrest of former Penn State employee Gerald Sandusky, the July 2012 release of the Freeh Report, the announcement of significant NCAA sanctions related to the Sandusky scandal,

and continued public scrutiny of the University, 2012 was one of the most turbulent years in Penn State's history. To gauge possible impacts of the Sandusky scandal on faculty recruitment and retention, the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment (OPIA) examined longitudinal quantitative data on faculty hiring and departures. Those data did not point to any obvious effects on competition for faculty in the 18 months after the scandal broke. OPIA also queried Penn State's deans for their impressionistic sense, and all deans responded. One dean reported losing one faculty member (in 2012/13) for whom the Sandusky scandal made a difference but said that even for that college (Health and Human Development), overall, "This year is going well. The scandal has not figured prominently in discussions with prospective faculty." Most deans observed that they had been seeing exceptionally well-qualified candidates, and that 2012/13 was a strong hiring year. Based on both quantitative and qualitative information, there was little evidence of any widespread, systematic impact of the Sandusky scandal on faculty recruitment or retention. That confidential study, *Recent Trends in Faculty Recruitment and Retention*, was made available to the President, the Executive Vice President and Provost, deans, chancellors, and department heads.

Faculty Salaries

The University tracks faculty salaries and shares that information widely, including in a detailed annual report to University Faculty Senate. The [March 2014 report](#) is available on the web. Salary structures encompass variations across disciplines, factors such as time in rank, gender and race/ethnicity, and much more. Based on the March 2014 report, the data suggest that Penn State's salaries continue to be generally in the middle ground or slightly higher among peers in the Association of American Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE), CIC institutions, and other Pennsylvania public universities. It is also evident that in the most recent year, the University's position slipped a bit. The 2013/14 data show that among a group of 21 public AAUDE institutions, Penn State rose from fifth in 2008/09 to third for professors, and from fifth to fourth for associate professors. Among the more limited group of Big Ten public institutions, Penn State has held steady near the top for associate and full professors. However, Penn State is less competitive at the assistant professor level, where it ranks seventh among its AAUE peers and fifth among the Big Ten. Salaries for Penn State's campus-based colleges likewise seem to rank in the upper-middle in comparison to campuses at other Big Ten institutions. Salary analyses incorporate discipline differences. College-level comparisons are possible using AAUDE data, allowing Penn State to understand its competitive position for, say, flagship campus associate professors in business, which may be different from the situation for associate professors in agriculture. Penn State similarly tracks its competitive position for new-hire salaries. Each year, OPIA compiles data on new-hire salaries by rank and department for Penn State and for AAU peers. Those confidential (per AAUDE agreement) data are made available on a secure server to deans, chancellors, and department heads as a source of information relevant to the faculty recruitment and hiring process.

Faculty Career Progression

Penn State also has well-established institutional research capacity on matters such as faculty tenure and promotion rates, differences across demographic groups, differences across disciplinary units, and the like. For example, for the past sixteen years, Penn State analyzed the rates at which its provisionally

appointed faculty members achieve tenure (see section 2.5.6). Tabulations are shared annually with Penn State's deans and with the University Faculty Senate. The analysis shows the tenure achievement rates for entering cohorts for whom sufficient time has passed to allow outcomes to be observed. Specifically, tenure rates are calculated from the time of appointment through the seventh year (which allows for the handful of individuals who "stop the clock" during the provisional period). For the entering cohorts between 1990 and 2006, 57% of new entrants had received tenure by the end of their seventh year. This does not mean that 43% were denied tenure, because assistant professors leave the tenure-track for many reasons. Benchmarks show that this places Penn State squarely in the middle of practices and outcomes at peer universities.

Similar to the examples of faculty salary and tenure analyses, the University regularly conducts institutional research on salary increases (report available on ANGEL); faculty instructional workload; the results of [faculty exit interviews](#); and [promotion rates from associate professor to professor](#) (with a particular eye to possible differences across gender or campus or racial/ethnic groupings). All of that information is made available (some securely and some publicly) to central administrators, deans, chancellors, and department heads.

Human Resources Service Delivery

Penn State's HR transformation is a multi-year strategic initiative focused on creating a more efficient and effective HR function that increases the value the HR community provides to the University. In 2012, OHR partnered with Towers Watson, a leading consulting firm in HR transformations, to design an improved HR service delivery model. Currently, OHR has no overall human resource information system (HRIS) making it difficult for OHR to provide its clientele with answers to simple inquiries. Duplication of effort is commonplace, which results in unnecessary costs. Inconsistent interpretation of policies and processes results in answer-shopping and confusion. There is a lot of transactional, repetitive work that could be performed more consistently and efficiently. The critical step in Penn State's HR transformation is transitioning to a new service delivery model which should align HR administrative and transactional services across the institution. It is also important to invest in up-to-date HRIS solutions and establish a service delivery center which is co-located. There is an opportunity to standardize HR processes around leading practice, allowing only limited customization. The implementation of effective self-service solutions for managers and employees will increase self-sufficiency in appropriate transactions and inquiries. In addition to increasing HR value to the University, the HR transformation initiative will address some of the recommendations of the Freeh Report.

The HR transformation process is taking place in phases. Phase 1 work was completed in July 2013 and included an online survey of key stakeholders. Phase 2 work, which began in August 2013, focuses on developing a more detailed organization model and structure, designing the staffing strategy and approach, completing future state process redesign and policy harmonization and clarifying the technology requirements for core HRIS as well as the technology applications needed for HR Services. By the end of 2016 or early 2017, OHR expects to have a new HR structure in place that addresses the objectives below.

- Operate more efficiently
- Ensure accountability
- Become more effective
- Maintain some flexibility
- Achieve desired outcomes

A new HR future vision was developed to guide this work: “We are an agile, trusted, customer-focused partner who delivers strategic solutions that enable the attraction, retention, and engagement of a talented and diverse workforce to support the creation of Penn State’s future.”

3.3.9 Information Technology

Technology drivers have been important elements in Penn State’s strategic planning process throughout the years. In the most recent Penn State Strategic Plan, [*Priorities for Excellence*](#), Goals 5 and 6 reflected the desire of the institution to support the use of technology to expand access and opportunities, in order to best serve the people of the Commonwealth and beyond.

As noted elsewhere, Penn State operates successfully under the “strong college” model with relatively independent but interlinked planning and expenditures. But IT challenges cross all academic and administrative boundaries of the institution, as the University must effectively and consistently manage an underlying and integrated technology framework. Therefore, to outline strategies to meet its goals, Penn State needed to sharpen its knowledge of current investment in technology across the board, to uncover any changes that could optimize the balance between existing distributed and common services. With such knowledge, the Penn State community could improve institutional planning, prioritization, assessment, and decision-making, in order to manage its IT investment more collectively and intelligently.

In 2009, Penn State launched its first ever IT assessment effort. The IT assessment collected data from all budget areas of the University (with the exception of the Pennsylvania College of Technology). The assessment was completed in 2011, using a snapshot of data as of the end of fiscal year 2009-2010. Results of the assessment provided the institution with data showing that, at the time, Penn State invested nearly \$250 million annually in personnel and non-personnel expenditures related to IT (this was approximately 6% of the University budget). There were more than 1,600 full-time equivalent staff members providing some type of IT support distributed across more than 52 units.

As noted elsewhere in this self-study, in 2011-2012, in support of the implementation for the *Priorities for Excellence*, the Core Council reviewed the institution in several in-depth areas, including technology, and as a result of its review, endorsed proceeding on [four recommendations](#).

1. Development of an IT strategic plan and five-year investment roadmap emanating from the assessments of the Council (completed);
2. Development of a governance framework emphasizing educational and business decisions that drive technology, again building upon the directions and momentum of the IT Assessment;

3. Leveraging the Information Technology Leadership Council to complete the seven improvement opportunities identified by the IT Assessment, as well as other recommendations; and
4. Addressing aging core enterprise systems, in particular, the Integrated Student Information System and Integrated Business Information System.

The Information Technology Leadership Council continues to be a vibrant body, driving change around collective IT requirements of the institution, in support of progress toward a new operating model characterized by a culture of collaboration, trust, and a focus on the effective use of technology. An updated progress report regarding the current status of momentum for each of the seven improvement opportunities, as well as related opportunity projects in the areas of data centers, collaboration efforts, and voice service advocacy was issued in November of 2013. The efforts resulted in an institutional IT Roadmap guiding report (available on ANGEL), that emphasizes four strategic priorities, each with its own measureable goals:

- **Enable Learning**—Use technology to extend Penn State’s market and student base and diversify access to educational programs. Create coordinated learning strategies, culture, policy and support structures to accommodate new learning models, along with increased instructional design capacity.
- **Support Research and Innovation**—Lead in research computing by expanding capability and capacity to resources for researchers. Adopt more faculty-driven governance to enhance Penn State’s position as a top research university.
- **Modernize Administrative Systems and Services**—Simplify, automate, and enhance administrative services to students, faculty, and staff. Develop a five year roadmap, outlining system replacement using a buy and not build approach. Begin to sequence enterprise systems replacement on the roadmap, beginning with work already underway for a new Student Information System and HRIS.
- **Sustain IT Effectiveness**—Improve IT efficiency and effectiveness through consolidation and standardization, multi-sourcing, and shared service management without hindering innovation. Include workforce talent management improvements in staff recruitment, retention and performance management.

These priorities are supported by enabling strategies in the areas of establishing effective IT governance and effective funding structures in order to optimize all IT investment value.

3.4 Leadership and Governance

Standard 4. Leadership and Governance

“The institution’s system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision-making. The governance structure includes an active governing body with

sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution.”

~MSCHE, *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*

In this section, the self-study outlines the main elements and characteristics of Penn State’s administrative and governance structures as well as events and actions relating to integrity and ethical conduct. Unique and highly publicized events have led to important steps taken in the leadership and governance arenas at Penn State. While nothing had prepared Penn State for the child sexual abuse crisis that surfaced in November 2011, the University took strong action to assume responsibility and systematically implement reforms under unprecedented circumstances.

3.4.1 Unique Issues Related to Events of 2011/12

Freeh Investigation and Report

In November 2011, upon issuance of a report by the Pennsylvania Grand Jury, Penn State, via the Board of Trustees, commissioned former FBI director and federal judge Louis Freeh and his firm Freeh Sporkin & Sullivan, LLP to lead and conduct an investigation into 1) failures in the reporting process, 2) the cause for such failures, 3) who had knowledge of allegations of sexual abuse, and 4) how allegations were handled by the Board of Trustees. In undertaking this effort, the University sought both to understand what happened and to ensure that identified failures not recur. On July 12, 2012, the [Freeh Report](#) was issued; it included 119 recommendations, which were independent from the conclusions or findings of the Report, and formed in large part by consultation with experts in various fields and feedback received during over 400 interviews. Regular reports have been posted as [updates on implementation](#) of the Freeh recommendations and the [September 8, 2014 external monitoring report](#) acknowledged Penn State’s fulfillment of the recommendations and advocated for the removal of the NCAA “bowl ban” and restoration of grants-in-aid for the football program. The NCAA enacted these recommendations immediately.

By the fall of 2013, the University had successfully implemented the vast majority of the 119 Freeh recommendations but recognized that there was still much work to be done. Due to their nature, many of the recommendations required an ongoing and continuous effort in order to fully achieve the desired effect. A few others, mainly those that involved significant capital improvements or technology solutions, required more than 12 months to be fully implemented. Still others required updating from time to time, as the University continues to improve its governance, policies, processes and procedures.

The University’s administration response team developed an action plan for what it referred to as “Phase II—the Plan for Continuous Improvement” that was intended to both ensure appropriate follow up on the implementation of the Freeh recommendations and explore other internally generated initiatives aimed at improving the University. The administration response team continued its weekly meetings, with participation by Senator Mitchell’s team and other University officials as appropriate, and continued to report publicly on its progress.

Senator Mitchell's [second annual report](#), issued in September 2014 pursuant to the Athletics Integrity Agreement and in satisfaction of the 24 month review recommended in Freeh's recommendation 8.4, reported favorably on the University's Phase II plan and activities.

Special Committee on University Governance Report

Also in the aftermath of the events of November 2011, the Chair of the University Faculty Senate appointed a Special Committee on University Governance (SCUG) to study the structure and practices of the Board of Trustees and to make recommendations for improving governance and communication at Penn State. SCUG was chaired by John Nichols, Professor Emeritus of Communications and past University Faculty Senate Chair. To achieve its charge, the Special Committee consulted extensively with experts, reviewed the literature on best practices in higher education, benchmarked Penn State with other institutions, interviewed a wide variety of constituent groups, and conferred frequently with the Board leadership and other interested parties. SCUG's thorough, evidence-based assessment was also informed by the Freeh report, the NCAA consent decree, recommendations on governance reform from Pennsylvania's auditor general, and a report from the NCAA integrity monitor. SCUG presented its [report](#) to the Faculty Senate at the March 2013 meeting. SCUG recommended that the Board include at least two current Penn State faculty members and offered numerous recommendations for improving both internal and external communication. While the Senate does not have formal administrative authority on matters of University governance, the SCUG analysis was unanimously endorsed by the Faculty Senate at the March meeting.

Interim MSCHE Reports

As follow-up to the 2005 Self-Study, the University submitted two reports specific to that evaluation to MSCHE. A Periodic Review Report was submitted in June 2010, with Commission acceptance and Statement of Accreditation Status dated November 18, 2010. In addition, a Progress Report was submitted on March 30, 2012, with the Commission acceptance and Statement of Accreditation Status dated November 15, 2012. All of Penn State's recent Middle States periodic review reports, monitoring reports, and responses to requests for information are [available online](#).

In addition to those reports which pertained to the 2005 self-study, several other reports were requested specific to the events and circumstances that ensued from the Sandusky matter. On November 11, 2011, Middle States requested an informational report to ensure that Penn State was compliant with the Commission Requirements of Affiliation and Standard 6, Integrity. The University's response focused not only on providing a context of the ethical values expected of the Penn State community and a review of policies, guidelines and practices, but also a review of programmatic and educational offerings providing foundational support for issues of ethics and integrity. The Commission accepted the report at its March 1, 2012 meeting.

On August 8, 2012, the Executive Committee of the Middle States Commission placed the University in Warning Status based upon information contained in the Freeh Report and the Consent Decree imposed by the NCAA. While on warning status, the University remained fully accredited and was asked to submit a monitoring report documenting steps that had been taken, and were planned, to ensure full compliance

with Requirements of Affiliation 5 and 9, as well as Accreditation Standards 4 (Leadership and Governance) and 6 (Integrity). Additionally, the University was asked to specifically address its capacity and plans for addressing financial obligations resulting from the related investigations and anticipated settlements. On September 27, 2012, the University submitted the requested monitoring report. Following receipt of the report, a MSCHE evaluation team (chaired by Brit Kirwan, Chancellor of the University System of Maryland) visited University Park on October 21-23, 2012. The evaluation team submitted its report on October 26, 2012, and at its November 15, 2012, meeting the Commission accepted the report, removed the warning, and reaffirmed accreditation. The evaluation team report noted that “the team commends the entire Penn State community for its response to tragic events in a way that, to date has emphasized unity and positive change over recrimination. By looking to the future and finding ways in which Penn State can be made an even better university, the community – students, faculty, staff, administrators and Board – has made significant progress toward meeting that goal” (p. 5).

Financial Implications

In addition to the interim MSCHE reports described above, Penn State submitted detailed and frank reports to MSCHE that specifically address ongoing and anticipated impacts on the University’s budget relevant to litigation and costs relating to the Freeh report, Clery Act compliance, and NCAA consent decree requirements. It is not practical to reproduce that information here. However, in brief and as of December 2014, the University estimates a total of \$175million in known and anticipated costs (litigation and costs related to the Freeh Report, Clery Act compliance and the NCAA consent decree requirements). This amount will be spread over multiple years and should be considered in relation to Penn State’s annual operating budget of \$4.6 billion. The University expects that insurance coverage and the existing pool of available funds will cover the large majority of the total incremental expenditures and settlements related to facts known at this time. Further, sources of unrestricted funds have already been identified and, as appropriate, additional sources will continue to become available as the University’s self-supporting units continue to repay internal capital loans and commitments over time. All of this will be continuously evaluated in the future as facts and circumstances emerge with respect to litigation and settlement issues. The most recent monitoring report on this matter was accepted by MSCHE in March 2014.

3.4.2 Administrative Transitions

Penn State has undergone a number of significant leadership transitions in recent years. This section summarizes those transitions.

2015

- Following Daniel J. Larson’s departure, Douglas Cavener, professor and head of the Department of Biology, was appointed interim dean of the Eberly College of Science, effective January 1, 2015. A national search is currently underway.
- Ann M. Williams, chancellor of Penn State Lehigh Valley, has announced her retirement effective July 2015. A national search for her replacement is underway.
- Mary-Beth Krogh-Jespersen, chancellor at Penn State Worthington Scranton, announced her retirement effective July 2015. A national search is currently underway.

- James A. Nemes, director of academic affairs at Penn State Great Valley School of Graduate Professional Studies, was appointed interim chancellor effective January 1, 2015, following Craig S. Edelbrock's return to the faculty in December 2014.

2014

- Richard T. Roush, dean and professor at University of Melbourne's Melbourne School of Land and Environment, was appointed dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences in October 2014.
- Lawrence H. Lokman, former founder and principal of Window in Communications, joined Penn State in October 2014 as vice president for strategic communications.
- Anne (Sandy) Barbour, former University of California athletic director, became Penn State's director of intercollegiate athletics in August 2014.
- W. Charles Patrick, chief academic officer and professor of engineering at Penn State Worthington Scranton, was appointed chancellor and chief academic officer at Penn State Fayette in August 2014.
- Following the June 2014 retirement of Douglas A. Anderson, Marie Hardin, associate dean for undergraduate and graduate education in the College of Communications, was appointed dean of the College effective July 2014.
- In July 2014, Harold Paz announced he would join Aetna as its executive vice president and chief medical officer. A. Craig Hillemeier, vice dean for clinical affairs at Penn State Hershey, was appointed chief executive officer of the Penn State Hershey Medical Center and Health System, senior vice president for health affairs, and dean of the College of Medicine, following Dr. Paz's departure. A national search will begin in 2015.
- Following Gary B. Keefer's retirement in June 2014, Donna J. Kuga, director of academic affairs at Penn State Beaver, was appointed interim chancellor effective July 2014. A national search is underway.
- With David Hall's return to the faculty in May 2014, Mary Beth Rosson, professor of Information Sciences and Technology, was appointed interim dean of the College of Information Sciences and Technology in July 2014. A national search is currently underway.
- Eric J. Barron assumed Penn State's 18th presidency on May 12, 2014. Dr. Barron served as the president of Florida State University in Tallahassee from 2010 to 2014, and held several notable positions within government and higher education, including dean of Penn State's College of Earth and Mineral Sciences from 2002 to 2006.
- Kristin R. Woolever, president of Prescott College in Arizona, was named chancellor of Penn State Brandywine, effective February 2014.
- Daniel R. Hagen, professor of Animal Science and past chair of the University Faculty Senate, was appointed executive director of the Office of the University Faculty Senate, effective January 2014.
- Amr S. Elnashai, head of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, was appointed dean of the College of Engineering effective January 2014.

- Nancy L. Herron, associate vice president emerita and senior associate dean emerita for Commonwealth Campuses, was appointed interim chancellor of Penn State Greater Allegheny in January 2014. A national search is underway.
- Jo Anne Carrick, Assistant Director for Academic Planning and e-Learning at Penn State Erie, the Behrend College, was appointed campus director of Penn State Shenango effective January 1, 2014.

2013

- M. Fredric Volkmann joined Penn State in October 2013 as interim vice president for strategic communications, subsequent to his retirement after 31 years at Washington University in St. Louis, where he served as vice chancellor for public affairs.
- David Smith was appointed as the executive director of the Division of Undergraduate Studies on September 2013. He formerly served as the deputy assistant dean for student academic affairs in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts at the University of Michigan.
- In August 2013, Craig D. Weidemann's title was changed to vice president for outreach and vice provost for online education to reflect the increasing importance of digital learning for both distance learners and resident students.
- Following Philip J. McConaughay's departure in August 2013, Retired Vice Admiral James W. Houck, the immediate past Judge Advocate General of the United States Navy and a Distinguished Scholar in Residence at Penn State's Dickinson School of Law and International Affairs, was named interim dean of Dickinson School of Law (University Park) and the School of International Affairs in July 2013. Gary S. Gildin, professor of law and Honorable G. Thomas and Ann G. Miller Chair in Advocacy, was appointed interim dean for Dickinson Law in Carlisle July 2013. As mentioned previously, the American Bar Association approved the separation of these two schools, therefore, national searches will be conducted in 2015 for deans of Penn State Law and Dickinson Law.
- Regina Vasilatos-Younken was appointed interim dean of the Graduate School in August 2013. Dr. Vasilatos-Younken joined Penn State in 1993, and is professor of endocrine physiology and nutrition in the College of Agricultural Sciences and recently served as the senior associate dean of the Graduate School since 2000. A national search is currently underway for the next vice provost and dean of the Graduate School. The new title places us in line with our peer universities.
- Neil A. Sharkey was appointed interim vice president for research at Penn State in August 2013. Dr. Sharkey joined the Penn State faculty as a professor of kinesiology, orthopedics and rehabilitation in 1997 and most recently served as the associate dean for research and graduate education in the College of Health and Human Development. A national search will begin in 2015.
- Nicholas P. Jones, the former Benjamin T. Rome Dean of the Whiting School of Engineering at Johns Hopkins University, was named executive vice president and provost, effective July 2013.
- In July 2013, Robert Kubat, formerly registrar at Purdue University, became the University registrar.

- On May 7, 2013, Francis Achampong was appointed chancellor of Penn State Mont Alto. Dr. Achampong previously served as interim chancellor and chancellor of Penn State Fayette following the death of Emmanuel Osagie in 2010.
- Regis W. Becker was named the University's first director of University ethics and compliance in April 2013. Prior to joining Penn State, Mr. Becker was employed for over 20 years at PPG Industries, with responsibilities that included providing leadership and oversight of all global compliance efforts. In this role, Mr. Becker has a dual reporting relationship to the Board of Trustees Subcommittee on Legal and Compliance, as well as to the senior vice president for finance and business/treasurer.
- In March 2013, Susan McGarry Basso's position was elevated from associate vice president to vice president for human resources.
- Julie A. Del Giorno was named as the University's first athletics integrity officer in March 2013, and reports to the director of University ethics and compliance. Prior to her appointment at Penn State, Ms. Del Giorno served as chief of staff at Moravian College and Moravian Theological Seminary.
- In January 2013, Keith E. Masser was elected chair of the Board of Trustees. He was re-elected in July 2014.

2012

- In July 2012, Stephen S. Dunham joined the University as vice president and general counsel. Mr. Dunham joined Penn State after serving in the same role at Johns Hopkins. Mr. Dunham has a dual reporting relationship to the Board Committee on Legal and Compliance, as well as to the President.
- In March 2012, Penn State Police and Public Safety hired Gabriel R. Gates to fill the newly created position of Compliance manager. Mr. Gates previously served as senior financial compliance analyst at Maersk Line Ltd.
- David Gray assumed the position of senior vice president for finance and business/treasurer on February 2012. Prior to joining Penn State, he served as chief financial and administrative officer at the University of Massachusetts.
- In January 2012, Kelly M. Austin, vice president of finance and administration at the University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, was appointed chancellor of Penn State Schuylkill effective June 2012. Prior to Dr. Austin's appointment, Stephen Couch, director of academic affairs, served as interim chancellor.

3.4.3 Board of Trustees

As the corporate body established by charter, Penn State's Board of Trustees is responsible for the governance and welfare of the University, and all interests specific to students, faculty, staff and alumni. In the years since Penn State's last self-study, a number of changes have been made to the Board's Charter, Bylaws, and Standing Orders.

There were several notable and significant changes to the University's governance documents during the time period of March 2012 through March 2014, including:

- The President of Penn State and the Governor of the Commonwealth no longer have voting rights and serve as *ex officio*, non-voting members of the Board. Thus, the number of voting trustees was reduced from 32 to 30 (later modified to 36 voting members in November 2014, as noted below).
- The provision designating the President of the University as the *ex officio* Secretary of the Board was removed. The Secretary is now an elected position.
- The number of standing committees was increased from three to seven: Audit and Risk, Academic Affairs and Student Life; Finance, Business, and Capital Planning; Compensation; Governance and Long-Range Planning; Legal and Compliance; and Outreach, Development, and Community Relations. The new committees are aligned operationally and intended to more effectively facilitate operation of the University.
- Effective with terms beginning in July 2013, the term limit for elected Board members was reduced to 12 years.
- A five-year term limit on committee chairmanship was implemented.
- Term limits are now applicable to all trustees, including appointed and elected, other than *ex officio* members. This provision does not apply to trustees while serving in their capacity as chair.
- The waiting period for former Penn State employees to serve on the Board was extended from three to five years.
- No trustee may be employed by the University in any capacity before the fifth anniversary of the date the person last served as trustee, except as approved by action of the Board.
- The Board's conflict of interest policy was expanded and strengthened.
- A public comment opportunity during each meeting cycle is provided to allow for an exchange of information from the University community to the Board.
- Majority of voting members present now defines the quorum requirement; previously, it was thirteen members.
- Other implemented changes during this timeframe include adjustments to the Trustee Standing Orders to clarify expectations of membership, as well as provisions regarding emeritus status consideration.

In fall 2013, the Committee on Governance and Long-Range Planning engaged governance consultant Holly J. Gregory to facilitate consideration of issues of University governance presented in a variety of assessments produced by both internal and external parties, and that emerged as trustees engaged in

discussions of best governance and fiduciary practices. Topics under consideration include optimal Board size, makeup of the Board (i.e., the stakeholder groups that should be represented through elected or *ex officio* positions), term limitations, communication mechanisms to gain efficiencies both within the Board and in communications with stakeholders, further examination of standards for emeriti consideration, and the evaluation of trustees, among other issues. The guiding principles in the framework of these considerations included the importance of supporting effective fiduciary governance, the uniqueness of Penn State's history and various stakeholders, the diversity of perspectives and selection methods, and the importance of viewing governance reforms as incremental changes over time. The result of this deliberative and inclusive examination of governance issues were presented to the full Board for approval at its November 14, 2014 meeting, and were adopted for immediate implementation with any new trustee positions filled in May 2015 for terms to begin July 1, 2015. The November 2014 modifications include:

- Addition of a voting trustee position for a full-time undergraduate, graduate, or professional student.
- Addition of a voting trustee position for a faculty member.
- Addition of a voting trustee position to be filled by the immediate past president of the Penn State Alumni Association.
- Addition of three at-large trustees to further augment the experience and skill sets represented on the Board in line with the Board's determination of its needs.
- Modifications to the selection and election processes supporting the election of Agricultural, Alumni-Elected and Business and Industry trustees.
- Establishment of a Subcommittee on Risk, reporting through the Committee on Audit and Risk.
- Provision for "3x3x3" meetings each semester for the leadership and executive staff of the Board, Faculty, and University.

3.4.4 Faculty, Staff, and Student Participation and Governance Bodies

Board of Trustees

The Standing Orders of the Board of Trustees provide that the Chair of the Board or President of the University is authorized to invite non-voting faculty representatives, non-voting student representatives, or other stakeholder representatives to attend and participate in meetings of standing committees, subcommittees, and special committees. The current representatives, with corresponding committee assignments, are listed in Table 3-4.

Another example of engagement of faculty, staff and students in governance bodies was the involvement of various members of the University community in the search for Penn State's 18th president. In January 2013, the Board named an 18-member University Presidential Search and Screen Committee to assist the Trustee Presidential Selection Council by screening, reviewing, interviewing, and evaluating candidates. The Committee membership included nine faculty members, one staff member, two academic deans, one vice president, two undergraduate students, one graduate student, and one representative each from the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics and the Penn State Alumni Association.

Table 3-4: Non-Voting Representatives.

| Representing | Committee Assignment |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| President, University Park Undergraduate Association | Academic Affairs and Student Life |
| Chair-Elect, University Faculty Senate | Academic Affairs and Student Life |
| Immediate Past Chair, University Staff Advisory Council | Academic Affairs and Student Life |
| Chair, University Faculty Senate | Finance, Business and Capital Planning |
| President, Graduate and Professional Student Association | Finance, Business and Capital Planning |
| Vice President, Council of Commonwealth Student Governments or University Park Undergraduate Association (alternate years by organization) | Governance and Long-Range Planning |
| Chair, University Planning Committee, University Faculty Senate | Governance and Long-Range Planning |
| President, Council of Commonwealth Student Governments | Outreach, Development and Community Relations |
| Secretary, University Faculty Senate | Outreach, Development and Community Relations |
| Chair, University Staff Advisory Council | Outreach, Development and Community Relations |
| President, Penn State Alumni Association | Outreach, Development and Community Relations |

University Faculty Senate

The University Faculty Senate is recognized as Penn State’s legislative authority on all educational matters concerning faculty of more than one college. It serves as an advisory and consultative body to the President on matters impacting the attainment of the University’s educational objectives. The Senate represents all Penn State faculty. The full Senate meets six times per year.

The Senate is mostly comprised of faculty senators who are elected from each college and campus. In 2011, the Senate legislated a fixed size of 200 elected faculty seats. Senate seats are allocated proportionately by unit, based on the ratio of full-time unit faculty to the total number of full-time University faculty. Undergraduate and graduate students are represented on the Senate, as are University administrators. The officers of the University Faculty Senate visit some of Penn State’s campuses on a rotating basis, write up and share their findings with other senators, and debrief both the Executive Vice President and Provost and the Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses. Those visits include structured meetings with faculty, students, staff, and administrators and cover whatever topics emerge,

typically academics, communications within the campus, relationships with University Park, challenges and opportunities facing the local campus, budget, facilities, promotion and tenure procedures, and student engagement. The officers also visit colleges at the University Park campus for similar discussions. [Full information](#), including membership rosters, committee structures, and agendas and records of Senate meetings dating from 1997-98 through the present, are online.

Related Structures for Campus and College Faculty Participation in Governance

Penn State provides multiple mechanisms for college- and campus-related constituent groups of faculty to communicate, collaborate, and advice on matters of shared interest or concern. There is a very active Commonwealth Campus Caucus within the Senate which includes all elected senators from the campuses. The Caucus meets at University Park the evening before and the day of each University Faculty Senate meeting. The full [Senate agenda](#) always contains a link to the Commonwealth Campus Caucus agenda.

Every college and campus also has at least one faculty ombudsperson. The group is coordinated by a University faculty ombudsperson. The ombudsperson structure provides a mechanism for communication on a range of issues in the realm of faculty rights and responsibilities, with an [annual report](#) to the University Faculty Senate. The University ombudsperson also liaises with the Executive Vice President and Provost, OHR, and Senate officers.

Every campus and every college has its own faculty senate or council. The University Faculty Senate has developed [guidelines](#) for those faculty-unit governance bodies. In brief, those campus and college bodies have delegated authority from the University Faculty Senate and the President to deal with academic and educational matters pertinent to the respective college or campus, and also to serve in an advisory and consultative role to the campus chancellor or the college dean.

University Staff Advisory Council

Since 1995, Penn State's central administration has appointed a University Staff Advisory Council, which acts in an advisory capacity to the central administration. USAC meets regularly, sometimes with the President or the Vice President for Human Resources, and explores issues and practices that can impact staff. USAC suggests revisions to policies and new policy initiatives, and also serves as an advocate for staff welfare and development. The USAC is composed of about 35 members drawn from across the University's administrative and academic areas, including multiple campuses, and across a spectrum of staff positions.

Student Government Organizations

The student voice is an active and integral part of the leadership and governance of the University. Students are represented on most committees and governance bodies including the University Faculty Senate, the Graduate Council, and the Academic Council on Undergraduate Education (ACUE). Students were also involved in the recent University Presidential Search and Screen Committee. The University Board of Trustees has traditionally included a gubernatorial-appointed student with voting membership (as noted previously, effective with changed adopted on November 14, 2014 a student trustee position will be formally designated). Student governance organizations include the University Park Undergraduate

Association, Council of Commonwealth Student Governments, and the Graduate and Professional Student Association. The presidents of these three governing bodies are active participants on various Board subcommittees.

Students are active in decisions concerning funding and financial matters of the University. The authority for allocation of Student Activity Fee funds is determined by a Student Activity Fee Board and an Allocation Committee at each campus, both of which are comprised of a majority of students. It is required that the committee(s) be included in all decision making regarding the allocation of the fee. Governance of the Student Activity Fee is outlined in the [Student Activity Fee Handbook](#).

Likewise, a Facilities Fee Advisory Committee is appointed at each campus to review and recommend proposals for Student Facilities Fee funding for non-academic, recreational and/or multi-use space for students. Student representation on these committees is required prior to authorization of any funding decisions resourced from these fees. Common facilities issues identified by students include the need for increased recreational facilities, computer laboratories, and student organization space (needs vary by location).

The Student Technology Advisory Committee serves as an advisory board to the Office of the Vice Provost for Information Technology. The primary responsibilities of the committee are to secure wide input from students on current needs and opportunities for future services, as well as make recommendations concerning the efficacy of proposed service expansions. Students do not set direction or have a voice in the allocation of IT Fee funds, which is a concern of Penn State's Student Government Association.

3.4.5 Administration

With the President reporting to the Board of Trustees, functional areas and appropriate executive leadership in the following areas report to the President: Governmental Affairs, Office of the Vice President for Administration, General Counsel, Intercollegiate Athletics, Health Affairs, Outreach, Research, University Relations, Development and Alumni Relations, Student Affairs, and Finance and Business. In addition, the Executive Vice President and Provost reports to the President, with all academic units falling under the leadership of a dean reporting to that position. Also reporting to the Executive Vice President and Provost are the following: Undergraduate Education, Academic Affairs, Educational Equity, Information Technology Services, University Faculty Senate, Commonwealth Campuses, Affirmative Action, Global Programs, OPIA, and the University Budget Office. As explained in detail in Section 2.3.1, Penn State is comprised of 24 campuses throughout the Commonwealth, and is truly one university geographically dispersed.

3.4.6 Processes, Policies, and Procedures

Penn State has mature, clear, and specific policies that have been adopted and promulgated by the appropriate academic and administrative governance bodies of the University. The [General University Reference Utility](#) is the broadest, one-stop, interlinked source for general operational policies, procedures, form usage instructions, and other business information and tools commonly used by University personnel on a daily basis.

Instruction-Related Policies and Procedures

[Academic and administrative policies and procedures](#) are all publicly available online. That information covers procedures in areas such as admissions, advising, course scheduling, change of major, examinations, grades, dropping courses, withdrawal, re-enrollment, graduation requirements, expectations about syllabi and textbooks, academic integrity, and much more. In all cases, changes to the University's academic degree programs (e.g., new majors, minors, options) must receive administrative authorization granted by the Executive Vice President and Provost through the Office of Undergraduate Education and by the University Faculty Senate for undergraduate programs, and through the Graduate School and Graduate Council for graduate degree programs. The undergraduate process involves ACUE, a committee of associate deans from every college and occurs through long-established and well-documented procedures. Substantial program amendments likely to carry implications for multiple colleges or delivery units, program name changes, and the delivery of existing academic programs at multiple campuses activate consultations with the relevant academic units. Major changes are thus informed by a well-defined process and are carefully rolled out. For example, in 2012, the College of Nursing began the process of closing the associate degree nursing programs at five Commonwealth Campuses. Following extensive consultation with the campuses, the proposal was submitted to ACUE for final deliberation and vote. With support from ACUE, the campus associate degree nursing programs will be phased out in 2016. Policies and procedures regarding the review of faculty courses, curricular change, articulation agreements, learning assessment, course substitution, and other matters related to academics are described more fully Chapter 4.

Research-Related Policies and Procedures

The research support system at the University is structured to enable Penn State to carry out its research mission and to ensure compliance with University policy and state and federal regulations. Offices at the University, college, department, and research unit levels contribute to this support system. The system is able to adapt to changing external and internal requirements, expectations, and opportunities. The following examples of recent changes to processes, policies, and procedures illustrate this adaptability.

In anticipation of changes in financial conflict of interest reporting requirements to be implemented by the National Institutes of Health, Penn State revised [Policy RA20](#), Disclosure and Management of Significant Financial Interests (formerly Individual Conflict of Interest), restructured the Office for Research Protections, and established an online Conflict of Interest System for reporting financial conflicts of interests to ensure that the University would be compliant when the new guidelines went into effect.

While this change was dictated as a result of an external agency changing its guidelines, the University took this as an opportunity to advance broader issues of responsible conduct of research.

Also related to responsible conduct of research, the University revised [Policy RA10](#), Addressing Allegations of Research Misconduct (formerly Handling Inquiries/Investigations into Questions of Ethics in Research and in Other Scholarly Activities), to define more clearly what constitutes research misconduct and to delineate roles and responsibilities for addressing allegations.

Nationally, there are increasing expectations for research universities, and in particular land-grant universities, to transfer technologies resulting from research activities to the private sector. In response to this expectation and consistent with the University's long history of industry-supported research, Penn State took an innovative approach to managing the intellectual property created as a result of industry-funded research projects. In essence, if the faculty member is willing, the University will transfer its intellectual property resulting from these projects to the industry sponsor. The purpose of this change is to accelerate the transfer of technology and to make it easier for industry to support research at Penn State. The change followed an internal fiscal analysis of licensing revenue from industry-supported research. That review concluded that the present value of the research sponsorship is greater than future revenue stemming from licensing of the intellectual property created as a result of industry-sponsored research.

Endowments

Penn State works closely with donors to craft guidelines for every endowment that is created by a gift to the University. A balance is required between the interests and goals of the donor and the evolving programmatic needs of the University. It is sometimes not possible to accommodate the wishes of a donor, and in such cases the University indicates that it cannot accept the gift. More typically, a common understanding is reached that is documented with signed agreements that become official records of the University. An annual stewardship report is sent every fall by the University to each major donor. The report provides information about the financial performance of the endowment and how income from the endowment was used during the prior fiscal year.

3.4.7 Selection and Evaluation of Leadership

The most pivotal hiring decision in recent times occurred when Eric Barron was named the University's 18th president in February 2014. The selection was the culmination of a process that engaged stakeholders throughout the University community. The University Presidential Search and Screen Committee included faculty, staff, students, and alumni who participated in the first level of credential and screening review and in preliminary interviews. Once those interviews were completed, that committee made recommendations to the Trustee Presidential Selection Council, which conducted further analysis and interviews before making the selection. There was permeability in the process, as four members of the Search and Screen Committee served on the Selection Council, and vice versa. This created an unprecedented interplay between the University community and the Board of Trustees.

In addition, in the formative stages of the search, public forums were held for all faculty, staff and students in order for the executive search firm (Isaacson, Miller) to gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Penn State's next president, as well as to discuss the traits and attributes being sought by the University community. Additionally, individuals could submit their comments directly to Isaacson, Miller.

3.4.8 Communication and Transparency

As noted, the presidential search process involved considerable community involvement and participation and included the hiring of executive search firm Isaacson, Miller. Facilitated discussions were held with a wide range of stakeholders, including the University's equity commissions, Student Leaders Roundtable, Faculty Senate leadership, Council of Campus Chancellors, President's Council, University Park Council of Academic Deans, University Staff Advisory Council, and the Executive Board of the Alumni Association. Isaacson, Miller organized five forums – three at University Park and one each at Penn State's Berks and Beaver campuses – at which members of the University community shared feedback on the search in late March and early April 2013. The University also created a presidential search website.

Related changes that have occurred since 2011 brought greater transparency at the Board level, through a mechanism for public expression, streaming of Board meetings, and making Board member e-mail addresses available to the public. In June 2012, stakeholder representation was expanded to include not only faculty members and student representatives, but also the president of the Penn State Alumni Association; chair and immediate past chair of the University's Staff Advisory Council; chair of the University Faculty Senate's University Planning Committee; and vice president of the University Park Undergraduate Association.

In September 2011, the University Marketing Council, chaired by Cynthia B. Hall, Associate Vice President for University Relations, charged a University-wide team to redesign Penn State's [main website](#), as well as the University's main [news site](#). The Penn State homepage receives an average of 1 million unique visitors every month, with more than half of these being first-time visitors. Armed with peer benchmarking and research, which highlighted the essential need to have an effectively designed and branded website presence to positively influence prospective student conversion, the project aimed to refresh and revitalize Penn State's ten-year-old main landing page. Under the governance provided by the University Marketing Council, four project phases were established, including the following.

1. Rebuild psu.edu and live.psu.edu
2. Rebuild Revenue-Generating Group Sites
3. Rebuild Campus, College, and Administration Sites
4. Rebuild Non-Mission-Critical Sites

In addition to converting the information content from a static and hierarchical, institution-focused model to a technically modern, dynamic, user-focused search and visitor-friendly navigation model, the first phase of the project supported and achieved several strategic marketing goals.

- Showcasing Penn State’s brand and mission strengths in academics, research and global reach.
- Raising the academic and research profile of the institution.
- Supporting the ideals of openness and Penn State’s core values.
- Integrating mobile and the web to provide a friendly, dynamic and interactive experience.
- Highlighting timely, compelling, media-rich (video, photography, social media) research and innovation stories from the main site as well as from within the redesigned news media site.

Phase 1 was released in February 2013, and additional work is underway, continuing the collaborative, team-based approach across the institution.

3.5 Institutional Assessment

Standard 7. Institutional Assessment

“The institution has developed and implemented an assessment plan and process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in: achieving its mission and goals; implementing planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal processes; using institutional resources efficiently; providing leadership and governance; providing administrative structures and services; demonstrating institutional integrity; and assuring that institutional processes and resources support appropriate learning and other outcomes for its students and graduates.”

~MSCHE, *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*

For the purposes of this self-study, the Steering Committee uses a broad conception of institutional assessment, which includes many dimensions of the efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and sustainability of academic programs and administrative processes. The assessment of student learning is addressed in section 5.4.

3.5.1 Three Decades of Strategic Management

Building on more than three decades of work, Penn State has what may be the longest history of continuous, institution-wide strategic management of any research university in the United States. This is one visible expression of a well-established system of planning and resource management that enables Penn State to operate effectively and efficiently as a modern, 24-campus public land-grant institution. The efficient and effective use of limited resources is a key to Penn State’s ability to accomplish its broad array of responsibilities across multiple locations, and to serve well its many stakeholders.

Penn State has been doing ongoing, continuous, institution-wide strategic planning more or less with the current approach since 1983. There’s been some evolution, but for the most part the University has been serious about planning for 30 years. Both University-level and unit planning occur on five-year cycles; the University’s planning cycle lags the unit planning cycle by one year. The next planning periods will cover, for the units, 2014/15 through 2018/19 and for the University, 2015/16 through 2019/20.

Planning is about the process and making of informed decisions about the allocation of scarce resources among competing demands. The last University-level plan was 14 half-pages long (although that was

backed up by detailed operational documentation and tools, such as the implementation responsibility matrix used to organize follow up by the Office of the President). The point is that the goal is not to produce elaborate documents, but to enable systematic consideration of big issues and themes, and to involve leaders and stakeholders who bring organizational wisdom to the process.

Planning has always been top-down and bottom-up, centered on the mission and vision of the University. The clearest illustration of the top-down aspect is University-level planning, which the President charges to a University Planning Council, chaired by the Executive Vice President and Provost. Members of the Planning Council include faculty members, administrators, trustees, students, and staff.

Centrally, the University asks the campuses and colleges and major administrative units to plan, and provides guidelines, timelines, resources, and review processes for that. A planning and budgeting unit at Penn State is essentially anything headed by a vice president or dean or chancellor. (This definition is useful although technically it's not completely precise; for example, Intercollegiate Athletics is a planning and budgeting unit, although there is not a vice president for athletics). So Global Programs is a unit, as is Finance and Business, and Student Affairs, and so on. Penn State Altoona is a unit. The Eberly College of Science is a unit. The approach is that the Executive Vice President and Provost charge the vice presidents, deans, and chancellors to carry out a planning process within centrally defined timelines and guidelines. Central offices, including OPIA, the Budget Office, Educational Equity, the Sustainability Institute, the Ethics and Compliance Office, OHR, and others with content and process expertise, are available to provide support.

Returning to the bottom-up idea, there's a lot of flexibility for the various units. The process does respect the differences in units' context, mission, needs, experiences, and capabilities. Centrally, the Executive Vice President and Provost provides guidance and communicates expectations; central administration asks for a plan for the coming five-year period, and units should have a mission/vision/strategy, metrics, participation and input. But each unit defines its own mission, and which metrics are appropriate, what the strategic plan development and input process should be, who should be involved, and how. Those decisions are not made in either the President's or Executive Vice President and Provost's offices.

A June 14, 2013, memo from the Interim Executive Vice President and Provost to 48 planning unit heads indicated that the following nine elements be incorporated into unit plans.

1. Five- to ten-year vision
2. Specific strategies to address vision
3. Strategic performance indicators structured around strategies
4. Learning outcomes assessment (academic units only)
5. Core Council follow-up as appropriate
6. Integrity and ethics
7. Correlation of budget to strategic initiatives
8. Sustainability
9. Diversity planning

3.5.2 Integrated Planning

Integrated Planning (IP) is designed and carried out to better connect academic planning with enrollment, staffing, and facilities planning, and to provide the Central Enrollment Management Group, the Facilities Resources Committee, and non-University Park administrators with synthesized information to support decision-making at and about the campuses. The IP process began as a pilot in 1999. One impetus for it was a desire by then-Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses John Romano to insure that the leaders at non-University Park campuses were receiving appropriate levels of support from central administration in their planning efforts. While campus leaders have always had access to the same planning services as the units at University Park, the IP process helped bring those who were best equipped to provide relevant planning resources to the other campuses together in an organized, more easily accessible way. Another purpose was to avoid the unintended consequences of changing one of several dimensions without adequately anticipating the impact on others: for example, adding residence halls without fully considering ripple effects on workload for student affairs and advising staff, on the demand for classroom, library and recreational space, and on student-faculty ratios.

In each IP cycle, administrators at the non-University Park campuses are asked to provide projected enrollment, staffing, and facilities data. That information is entered into interactive spreadsheets that allow users to manipulate variables of interest, such as projected undergraduate and graduate enrollments for a particular year, and to observe their relationships with related variables, such as classroom and recreation square footage. The information is then reviewed by staff from the University Budget Office, Undergraduate Education, OPP, and OPIA, to identify potentially useful points of discussion for the campuses and offices involved in the process. Once the projections for enrollments, staffing, and space are finalized, the data for these variables are then gathered and represented in a report that is shared with all participating campuses.

The IP report makes it easy to make comparisons on enrollment, staffing, and space variables across campuses and to develop projections into the next few years. It is meant to augment overall strategic planning at each campus. The results of surveys administered to participants after each IP process have indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the process, the spreadsheets, and final report. It is known that the materials from each process are used at some of the campuses on a yearly basis as part of their ongoing planning efforts. The 2013 IP process represents the fifth iteration (pilot plus four official cycles) of the project.

3.5.3 Continuous Quality Improvement

In fall 1991, the Executive Vice President and Provost appointed Penn State's University Council on Continuous Quality Improvement to facilitate improvement initiatives within budget units and across the University. Since that time, over 1,000 innovation and improvement teams have been formed, and approximately 1,000 staff and faculty have attended training to facilitate these teams using continuous quality improvement (CQI) tools and approaches. Initially the Continuous Quality Improvement Center would coach individuals interested in improving a process and match them with a volunteer facilitator. Two decades later, CQI has been folded into OPIA, which is more likely to hear about the work of a front-

line team after it has been formed and begun work than to become involved in the assignment of a volunteer facilitator. OPIA staff members are available for consultation or to assist with or facilitate specific activities. Teams are recognized and publicized on an annual basis via [Quality Team Highlights](#) and individual teams are contacted a year or two after their start to gather information regarding outcomes. The [Team Database](#) provides a means to share improvement team information across the University and around the world.

To illustrate the connections between planning, assessment, and process improvement, below are examples of some ways in which one college – Agricultural Sciences – has used facilitated teams and CQI tools and approaches over the past decade.

- Five facilitated groups met to discuss content areas (animal, plant, soil, social, food, and natural resources sciences) to determine new directions for the College.
- OPIA staff facilitated stakeholder focus group sessions to provide input for the College's 2008-2013 strategic plan.
- Six teams held discussions facilitated by individuals from across the University to redesign the College and reduce twelve departments to nine.
- In conjunction with the College redesign, a facilitated team was established to combine majors from several departments into one major in one department.
- The College's Office of Undergraduate Education first held facilitated meetings in 2006 to develop a planning calendar for the year and better allocate resources and ensure the quality outcome of events. By 2011/12 this evolved into facilitated planning to develop an office strategic plan to move beyond the status quo. Strategies in this plan are now being implemented, with facilitated progress meetings.
- A facilitated team was formed to manage University farm activity in the face of increasing residential and commercial growth around the University. The team completed a major milestone in 2012 with its Nutrient Management Plan.
- A facilitated team established an organics initiative within the College with a long-term strategy for education and research around organic production.

Both front line/bottom-up and longer term/top-down planning and improvement using CQI tools and approaches have become part of the culture at Penn State. In recognition of its continued, widespread, and successful use of facilitation and facilitators to enable this approach to planning and improvement, Penn State received an International Association of Facilitators [Facilitation Impact Award](#) in 2013.

3.5.4 Institutional Research

Penn State takes a decentralized approach to institutional research, with significant responsibilities for major aspects of data collection, reporting and analysis distributed among the University Budget Office, OPIA, Admissions, Student Aid, the Graduate School, Student Affairs Research and Assessment, the Registrar, and others. Thus, responsibility for data management and analysis tends to be distributed among the areas on the basis of major operational responsibilities.

While institutional research (IR) may be defined and organized in somewhat different ways across colleges and universities, over the past ten to twenty years – as the demand for data and analysis has increased, and as information processing technology has improved – IR as a field of practice seems to have become more proactive, contextual, responsive, and entrepreneurial. More than ever, it is feasible for IR to intersect with administrative functions and expertise in areas such as budgeting, planning, admissions, financial aid, and assessment.

Illustrations of Penn State’s grass-roots, decentralized approach to institutional research are many. The University Budget Office has major responsibilities for developing and monitoring the University’s operating and capital budgets. Those budget responsibilities are complemented by Budget Office data management capabilities. The Budget Office has primary responsibility for preparing and releasing external reports such as the Pennsylvania Joint State Government Commission data and federal IPEDS submissions, and information for use by the popular media; updating Penn State’s Fact Book; and representing Penn State on the Association of American Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE). OPIA supports planning and decision-making with analyses, often in response to specific interests of the Office of the President and the University Faculty Senate. Topics include student outcomes, faculty salaries, the use of part-time faculty, and promotion and tenure flow. OPIA also conducts relatively small-scale surveys on behalf of the Office of the President, and helps units design and/or conduct focus group and survey research. Also, OPIA is included as a secondary AAUDE representative, and is a user of AAUDE data.

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions supports the central enrollment management process with considerable data and analysis, and prepares annual enrollment reports for the Board of Trustees. The Graduate School is responsible for Penn State’s participation in the NSF’s annual Survey of Earned Doctorates; collection of graduate application and admission transactional data; graduate enrollment and program review models and analyses; and collection and submission of doctoral degree program metrics and student exit survey data for AAUDE. The Graduate School also served as the Institutional Coordinator for Penn State’s participation in the National Research Council’s most recent Assessment of Research Doctorate Programs. The Office of Student Aid analyzes and reports upon undergraduate financial aid and student indebtedness, and is responsible for annual reports to the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency. The University Registrar is Penn State’s key holder for the National Student Clearinghouse, which is also used by staff in Admissions, OPIA, and the University Budget Office to explore student college pathways.

Penn State’s data warehouse, EIS (Enterprise Information System), and iTwo (Institutional Insight) interfaces allow *any* administrative academic unit to access nearly-live institutional data.⁸ These provide access for example, to student, application, alumni, human resources, financial, and course evaluation data, all of which can be analyzed with any one of several widely available SQL software packages (such as Microsoft Access) or with point-and-click dashboard tools. The data warehouse, EIS, and iTwo are heavily used across Penn State’s colleges, departments, and campuses.

⁸ EIS is currently being phased out and replaced by iTwo.

Penn State benefits from rich communication, cooperation, and collaboration among units in the use and analysis of data. The integrated planning process, described below, is an excellent example of how data and expertise are shared among units to link planning for admissions, enrollments (including change of assignment across campuses), facilities, and human resources. Perhaps uniquely among peer institutions, Penn State has an [Institutional Research Interest Group](#). Formed in 2009 as an intramural community of professional practice, the IR Interest Group is guided by the belief that although there are many excellent data and analysis resources at Penn State, the University can always do a better job of coordination, communication, and sharing in the increasingly pertinent domain of institutional research. This self-formed community of practice numbers about 150 active participants who organize panels and demonstrations and share ideas.

3.5.5 Diverse Suite of Internal and External Information Sources

Internal Administrative Information Systems

Penn State makes data available from multiple sources and through a variety of access mechanisms. The IR Interest Group, for example, has created a guide (Table 3-5) to internal data that illustrates the variety of commonly used databases and tools available to users, and ways in which each may be more or less appropriate depending upon the situation.

External Data

Penn State benefits greatly from membership in the CIC. As an academic consortium of universities (more commonly recognized as members of the Big Ten athletic conference, plus the University of Chicago), the CIC provides mechanisms for collaboration and the exchange of information among professional and disciplinary colleagues. CIC groupings exist for universities' senior leaders who also set direction for the CIC itself (e.g., provosts, chief information officers, arts and sciences deans, and so on); collaborations built around projects, programs, or analyses (e.g., assessment, identity management, data storage, and so on); and self-organizing communities of practice that get together, face-to-face and virtually, to share information and ideas about best practices. In total, there are about 80 [formal CIC peer committees and groups](#) (e.g., general counsels, faculty governance leaders, diversity officers, registrars, research officers, and so on) that convene on a regular basis.

With a more targeted focus on quantitative data and benchmarking, Penn State also gains considerably from participation in AAUDE (see section 3.5.1). AAUDE provides a well-established, active, highly developed mechanism for 63 research universities to regularly share data via 18 clearly defined item exchanges. Topics include faculty salaries by Classification of Instructional Program (the federal taxonomy for academic disciplines); graduate student time-to-degree and completion rates, stipends, tuition and fees; retention and graduation; and more. AAUDE provides a valuable complement, with the

Table 3-5: Guide to Internal Data Sources.

| Source | Data | Additional Information |
|------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fact Book | Census data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official numbers • Publicly accessible |

- Data is a snapshot and does not change.

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fact Book Plus | Census data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official numbers • Internal use only • Data is more detailed than Fact Book • Data is a snapshot |
| EIS | Census data (Official tables) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official numbers • Drill down to major and department • Allows some ad hoc querying |
| iTwo | Census data (Official Student Enrollment) and weekly unofficial data (Student Enrollment) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option for official or unofficial numbers. • Dashboards answer common questions • Ad hoc capability with training |
| Data Warehouse | Census data (Official database) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most flexibility in getting needed information • Data can be seen for individual students |
| Data Warehouse | Unofficial data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most flexibility in specifying criteria • Data can be seen for individual students • Records are updated when they are changed (e.g. post semester grade changes) • Unofficial data answers operational questions. |



Publicly accessible data



Password-protected data

advantages of peer comparability and relevance, to other more generic data sources such as IPEDS, College and University Professional Association for Human Resources, and American Association of University Professors databases (which are also used for institutional assessment and benchmarking, and which are useful in their own right). And, across Penn State as at any research university, countless other data sources (often via discipline-related organizations such as ABET, the accrediting board for engineering programs, and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) are useful for more specialized needs.

3.5.6 Administrative Services and Academic Program Reviews (Core Council)

In 2009, the President appointed a high-level, 13-member Core Council, chaired by the Executive Vice President and Provost. Creation of the Council followed directly from the University's 2009-14 strategic plan. One of the seven goals in that plan was to "advance academic excellence and research prominence," and the plan recommended (as action toward that goal) a formal review process to potentially consolidate academic and administrative programs and services to free some existing resources. Over 18 months, the Core Council carried out data-driven reviews of every one of the University's academic degree programs (there are over 500) and major administrative processes (such as human resources, IT, energy conservation, procurement, and the like). Changes were made to several big-ticket administrative items, such as benefits, utilities, and IT, along with the consolidation or elimination of over 40 academic programs

(typically, these were small and/or relatively weak, such as low-enrollment associate degree programs not connected to a baccalaureate degree program). Actions related to the Core Council initiative resulted in identifiable, permanent, recurring savings and new revenue of over \$25 million. Plus, important changes – such as greater sharing of resources across campuses and units – although resulting in less clearly identifiable dollar impacts, have brought operational efficiencies to Penn State. The Core Council's work was consistent with Penn State's long-standing commitment to strategic management; paying attention to the efficient allocation of resources and the quality and effectiveness of programs and operations. From 1992/93 through 2014/15, Penn State internally reallocated \$328 million through budget reductions, reallocations, and cost-savings initiatives. During that period, the Board approved 200 program eliminations or mergers.

3.5.7 Blue and White Vision Council

In anticipation of the retirement of President Rodney Erickson in May 2014, the Board of Trustees charged the Blue and White Vision Council to produce a report that could inform members of the Trustee Presidential Selection Council, and also provide candidates with worthwhile information and perspective about Penn State. The Blue and White Vision Council, which met in 2012/13, was composed of trustees, academic and administrative leaders, faculty, and students.

The Council's Report, [*A Vision for Penn State*](#), offers an overview of the University – its history, markers of achievement, academic configuration, governance and decision-making structure – and sharply and candidly explores possible major issues that will need to be addressed in the years ahead. The report gives special note to the challenges and opportunities that will likely be faced by Penn State's next president, and the qualities of character and leadership needed. The report was posted for public access immediately upon receipt by the Board in May 2013. The report also lays out the challenges facing the University, especially the new and more difficult economic environment characterized by weakened state support; constraints on tuition increases; demographic shifts; and increasing costs. The report notes the need for tough choices and actions, including "reforming and redesigning processes, and strategically investing in people and technology."

The Vision Council devoted considerable attention to the digital revolution presently under way in higher education. While Penn State's 15-year-old online World Campus has nearly 11,000 students, and the University has partnered with Coursera to develop five MOOCs, the report also explores the revolutionary changes on campus in teaching and learning for resident students. The Council states in the report, "The University must develop policies, structures and practices that enable experimentation in both online and on-campus settings."

3.5.8 Budget Planning Task Force

Consistent with and complementary to both overall strategic planning and the Core Council, the President appointed the Budget Planning Task Force in June 2012. The charge to that high-level body was to fundamentally re-examine the University's budgeting strategies and to make informed recommendations about the potential for new approaches. So while the 2011/12 Core Council reviewed programs and its

recommendations focused on opportunities for consolidations, cost savings and revenue generation, the 2012/13 Budget Planning Task Force took a broader look at planning and budgeting processes.

The Budget Planning Task Force and its six subcommittees analyzed budget models; tuition and fee structures; online learning; the Commonwealth Campuses; research; and agricultural research and Cooperative Extension. The Task Force developed 74 recommendations and presented them to the President in June 2013. Some recommendations are broad while others are very specific. They include, for example, movement toward a hybrid budget model that phases in more responsibility-based budgeting for undergraduate education at University Park; changes to differential tuition structures at University Park; more experiments with pricing programs to market; sharper tuition differentials among campuses, based on campus size, breadth of curricula, and range of services; and reassessment and possible revision of the procedures for the allocation and distribution of IT fees. The administration is following up on many of the recommendations and some have already been adopted. For example, the Task Force recommended – and the University adopted – a targeted growth plan to more than triple the headcount enrollment of the World Campus to 45,000 unduplicated enrollments by 2019, with specific accompanying recommendations about revenues, faculty capacity, learner outcomes, academic quality, and procedures for course design and delivery. The executive summary and recommendations of the Budget Planning Task Force are available on ANGEL.

3.5.9 Student Experience

Penn State has a culture of evidence-based decision making that is supported by administrative offices such as OPIA, the University Budget Office, Educational Equity, Admissions, and more. Examples of the use of data in decision-making can be found in the Core Council process, the Budget Planning Task Force process and reliance of executives on secure server information on instructional productivity and analyses of under-enrolled sections.

3.5.10 Global Programs

Penn State's aspirations for internationalization and global impact are woven through the fabric of the University. That can be seen in the many references throughout this self-study to the ways in which Penn State thinks and act globally, in terms of its research and service programs, curricula, experiences of faculty and students, and international recruitment. The University's vision statement, which is a foundation for both University-level and unit-level planning, states (emphasis added): "*Penn State will be a global university*, committed to excellence, with a passion for creating knowledge and educating students to be leaders for a better tomorrow."

Globalization is clearly not the purview of any one office or unit or plan. However, Penn State does have a strong focal point for articulating and promoting the University's global ambitions. The [University Office of Global Programs](#) (UOGP) provides support and oversight for all of Penn State's international engagements. UOGP, with a staff of about 60 people, manages education abroad programs; hosts international students and scholars; and facilitates the University's many international partnerships around the world.

UOGP is, like every Penn State college and campus, a strategic planning and budget unit. Headed by the Vice Provost for Global Programs, UOGP's mission is to vigorously promote Penn State's vision of becoming a truly global university—the Global Penn State—by providing the resources and support needed to expand the diversity of the study abroad enterprise; increase and diversify the international student population; and build transformative, strategic partnerships around the world. UOGP supports all members of the Penn State community in incorporating global perspectives in their work, studies, and activities. It offers a comprehensive range of international and intercultural educational opportunities for University faculty, staff, and students alike.

UOGP is home to three directorates - [Education Abroad](#), [International Student and Scholar Advising](#), and Global Engagement and Operations - with the director of each reporting to the Vice Provost for Global Programs. The Vice Provost also oversees initiatives to coordinate with and engage faculty and students across colleges, campuses, and departments. Those initiatives include Faculty and Campus Engagement, the Global Engagement Network, and the Alliance for Education, Science, Engineering and Development in Africa. UOGP directly serves nearly 3,000 students who study abroad each year; more than 6,300 international students enrolled at Penn State; and the faculty who support them all.

3.5.11 Diversity Planning

Penn State has come a long way in fostering diverse and respectful campus environments. In 1990, Penn State established the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity and in 1998, it implemented the University-wide *Framework to Foster Diversity* strategic planning process, which has promoted inclusivity, educational access, advocacy, and a positive climate for faculty, staff, and students. In recognition of its accomplishments, Penn State was selected as a recipient of the 2013 and 2014 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Awards from *INSIGHT into Diversity magazine*. *The Education Trust* in recent years has repeatedly recognized Penn State as one of the nation's "top gainer" institutions for both Hispanic and African American students. For example, in its most recent (2012) report, the *Trust* ranked Penn State #18 among public colleges and universities nation-wide, for simultaneously maintaining or increasing enrollments of Black students while also closing the Black-White graduation gap. Also in 2014, average years to graduation were almost identical across race and ethnicity: 4.5 years for Hispanics and Latinos, 4.5 for Asian Americans, 4.6 for African Americans, and 4.4 for White undergraduates.

Building on a strong foundation in support of a diverse community, Penn State's work in the areas of diversity and educational equity has matured to the point that those matters can and should be mainstreamed into overall strategic planning. With that in mind, diversity planning is now one of the nine elements that colleges, campuses, and administrative units are asked to report on in their five-year strategic plans. [Educational Equity's website](#) provides much more information about Penn State's core values for diversity, strategic indicators, resources, history, and best practices.

3.5.12 Sustainability Planning

Penn State's vision regarding sustainability is to embed it as a fundamental value through the development of sustainability literacy, solutions, and leadership. The [Sustainability Institute's](#) mission is to promote the comprehensive integration of sustainability into research, teaching, outreach, and

operations. Past President Rodney Erickson noted that, "Sustainability will be the major theme of the 21st century, and Penn State is already establishing itself as a leader." This section highlights a few accomplishments and opportunities; sustainability planning is addressed more fully [online](#) and in Penn State's [Sustainability Strategic Plan](#).

Common sustainability actions have increased operational efficiency and waste diversion, and there is ample evidence of those activities. As reported previously, Penn State has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 18% and its purchased electrical usage by about 27% since 2005 (while its footprint has grown significantly). More than 4,534 tons of food and landscaping waste are converted into 1,200 tons of compost. Penn State has a highly developed waste management program and is now recycling 65% of its waste, avoiding \$650,000 annually in landfill tipping fees. These early successes and savings in operational efficiency are important but are just the beginning of what is possible and the University has set an ambitious new greenhouse gas reduction goals of 35% by 2020.

In 2014, Penn State joined the U.S. Department of Energy's Better Buildings Challenge and pledged to reduce its building portfolio's energy use by 20% over the next decade. With a commitment of 28 million square feet, Penn State became the largest university in the program, topping Michigan State (20 million square feet) and the University of Virginia (15 million).

Penn State also expects to attract a greater share of federal, state and local grants that are targeted to research on sustainability. In 2013, over 300 sustainability-related funding opportunities were announced by a diverse array of federal agencies, including the NSF, Environmental Protection Agency, National Endowment of the Arts, and Departments of Energy, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Commerce, Education, Interior, Defense, and Transportation. Increases in sustainability-related gifts and endowments are also expected. Penn State has barely begun to tap the interest of alumni and other potential donors to create a legacy of social, economic, and environmental well-being for future generations. Penn State's commitment to sustainability will inspire its stakeholders to rise to the challenge and establish legacies such as new centers, endowed chairs, and student scholarships.

3.5.13 Health Care

As a country, the United States faces unprecedented challenges to improving the health of its population. Health care costs continue to rise even in the face of increased mortality and morbidity. Much of the cost of health care is attributed to illnesses caused by modifiable health behaviors such as smoking and obesity. In 2014, the cost of health care for Penn State employees and their covered families was over \$220 million, a 5% increase from the prior year. In an effort to curb health care costs and provide an integrated approach to promote health and wellness among its faculty and staff, Penn State undertook a major initiative to transform its health insurance coverage, providing a strong focus on health promotion and disease prevention.

In fall 2013, faculty and staff were informed of a program entitled *Take Care of your Health* which initially required participation in three activities (biometric screening, completion of a questionnaire related to health behaviors, and agreeing to have an annual physical) designed to focus health promotion efforts in

those areas where they are most needed and can be most effective. Faculty and staff who did not participate in these three activities were initially informed that they would be assessed a monthly premium for their health insurance.

While improving the health of the Penn State academic community is viewed as a worthy goal, the process by which this program was implemented was an issue for faculty and staff. There was a perceived lack of consultation in the development of this program and a concern over the security of the data that was being submitted by the participants. Following two months of dialogue and discussion between faculty, staff and administration, University administration decided to suspend the implementation of this wellness initiative to allow for a process of reexamination with full and open input from faculty and staff. In November 2013, the President and Chair of the University Faculty Senate jointly approved a 13-member task force (two staff members, five administrators, and six faculty members) to address issues and questions around the Take Care of Your Health initiative. The [task force presented its findings](#) at the April 2014 Faculty Senate meeting.

3.5.14 Research Computing Infrastructure Report

In 2011-2012, Penn State Information Technology Services provided 46 million core hours of research computation for 3.9 million jobs submitted by 952 researchers across the University. Additionally, Penn State launched the *ScholarSphere* online repository service as a research resource with a goal of allowing researchers to collect, preserve and share their scholarly work and data. This project was a collaborative effort among members of 15-20 cross-Atlantic institutions and organizations, known as Hydra, which are focused on long-term retention solutions.

Due to the critical nature and core mission centrality of research at Penn State, research was a substantial focus in the development of the IT roadmap efforts. As described within the report, Penn State needs to ensure that it is sustaining and enhancing the University's position among leading research institutions, and IT will be a factor in that. While progress has been made regarding common resources, the University's researchers need to have access to a robust set of baseline services, including additional research networks, server hosting, professional IT support staff, and collaboration tools. The institutional assessment completed during the IT roadmap effort included benchmarking data and input from researchers, administrators, and the Faculty Senate, and ultimately promoted the following strategic directions for research technology at Penn State.

- Create a cultural shift in philosophy regarding research computing.
- Examine and define new service support models for research computing, and institute a faculty-led governance model.
- Significantly increase investment in research computing and data enterprise capabilities. Improve services, expand organizational capacity, and align policies with the needs of the research community.

3.6 Summary of Findings

Research Question 1: To what degree has the University been able to support its mission (that is, including research and online education) with necessary infrastructure (buildings, renovations, IT, staff support, enterprise information systems, and the like)?

Throughout Chapter 3 and especially in Sections 3.2 and 3.3, ample evidence is presented that Penn State connects the allocation of various categories of resources (financial, physical plant, human, IT) effectively, prudently, and in support of mission and strategic goals. Investment in the renewal of major systems and processes – such as the HR and student information systems, research computing, major interdisciplinary research institutes, online education, and the mechanisms for the professional development of faculty and staff – indicate that the University’s mission is supported on an ongoing basis with the necessary human, financial, technical, and physical infrastructure.

Research Question 2: How are resources allocated and expended and how sufficient are the evaluative processes in place to monitor this?

This chapter describes Penn State’s planning and budgeting processes as being driven by University and unit missions, with hybrid, top-down/bottom-up mechanisms and structures in which planning and budget unit executives (deans, chancellors, and vice presidents) have considerable responsibility and autonomy. The chapter demonstrates multiple ways in which the University’s operating and capital budgets connect to Penn State’s planning processes and to the Commonwealth’s budget cycle. Section 3.3 in particular explicates the several models used to allocate resources across the University, and the related monitoring processes.

Research Question 3: How actively and extensively does Penn State interface with, share with, and learn from peer institutions regarding matters of planning, resource allocation, and governance?

As noted throughout this chapter and elsewhere in the self-study, Penn State actively and extensively benchmarks with peers through mechanisms such as the Association of American Universities Data Exchange, the Committee for Institutional Cooperation, and appropriate professional and disciplinary bodies.

Research Question 4: How deliberately and systematically are the University’s processes for planning, resource allocation, and governance assessed, with an eye toward improvement opportunities?

This chapter presents multiple illustrations of Penn State’s well-established, deliberate processes for planning, resource allocation, governance and improvement, which are deeply characteristic of Penn State’s management culture. Examples include financial planning and budgeting processes; capital and facilities management; human resources; IT; institutional research; three decades of strategic planning; administrative services and academic program reviews; diversity planning; budget planning; research computing; continuous quality improvement; and integrated planning.

Research Question 5: How and to what extent do structures, policies, and procedures ensure adequate participation in shared governance by appropriate groups (administrators, trustees, faculty, students, and external stakeholders)?

This self-study demonstrates wide and deep participation of representatives from all relevant stakeholder groups in important matters. To cite just a few examples from this chapter, groups such as the Blue and White Vision Council, the Budget Planning Task Force, the Core Council, the University Planning Council, and the Special Committee on University Governance all included formal representation from the faculty, administration, staff, students, and the Board of Trustees, and all campuses and colleges have organized mechanisms for student and faculty participation in governance.

Research Question 6: How, and how well, do communication mechanisms and practices support planning, budgeting, and governance?

To the extent that policies and practices for shared governance are highly participative (as they are, in the judgment of the Steering Committee, and as summarized above in relation to Research Question 5), communication is enhanced. That said, Penn State is a uniquely large and complex university; communication is always a challenge and there is always room for improvement. Many recent changes that have been spurred by issues related to the events around the Sandusky scandal are described in this chapter, and as evidenced in that discussion, Penn State has taken significant steps to strengthen its communication mechanisms.

Research Question 7: To what extent are planning and resource allocation decisions informed by evidence?

The Steering Committee believes that Research Questions 7 and 8 are closely related, and that in some ways these two questions (of the nine posed in this chapter) are at the heart of this chapter, because it is clear that Penn State has a strong culture of systematic, strategic management informed by evidence. Chapter 3 demonstrates the adequacy of Penn State's systems for standard research university management data on the range of institutional resources. Further, the University takes evidence-based planning and resource allocation seriously, in terms of decades-long practices for strategic management, diversity planning, and integrated planning, and in terms of important ad hoc initiatives such as the Core Council's data-driven review of every academic degree program and major administrative process.

Research Question 8: To what extent do planning, budgeting, and governance structures create a framework for the accomplishment of institutional goals and improvement?

There is no doubt that Penn State's planning, budgeting, and governance structures have enabled accomplishment of institutional goals and improvement. Without repeating the bulk of this chapter, a few examples would include: the consolidation of over 40 programs and ongoing annual savings of over \$25 million resulting from the Core Council's work; Penn State's high

performance in academic success of minority students; ample evidence of increased operational efficiency, waste reduction, and other sustainability accomplishments; and the process improvements made possible by the work of over 1,000 Continuous Quality Improvement teams over more than two decades.

Research Question 9: What has been the University's response to the Freeh recommendations and what are the early indications of the results, including cost-related impacts on the University's ability to function?

Important parts of this chapter pertain directly to the strong actions that Penn State has taken to assume responsibility and systematically implement reforms related to the crisis that surfaced in November 2011. In particular, the actions taken on many fronts, such as the Freeh investigation, the Special Committee on University Governance, interim reports to MSCHE, leadership transitions, and changes to Board of Trustees structure and practices are demonstrative. This chapter also summarizes the financial implications, as they are best understood as of this writing. In short, the University expects that insurance coverage and existing pools of available funds will cover the large majority of the total incremental expenditures and settlements related to facts known at this time, with little cost-related impact on the University's ability to function.

Penn State clearly has the resources and infrastructure necessary to fulfill its mission, and the University utilizes extensive, well-documented, and coordinated systems for planning, budgeting, and governance. Strategic planning, institutional assessment, and resource management are well-developed and supported by appropriate policies and informed by data. Penn State actively and extensively engages in deliberate and systematic processes for evidence-based planning and resource allocation. The University clearly has devoted great attention to matters of governance and questions of policy and procedure, and has emphasized communication with internal and external stakeholders. Planning, budgeting, and governance structures and practices create a firm foundation for achieving institutional goals and for Penn State to thrive as a 21st century public research university.

Powerful forces are prompting higher education in general and Penn State in particular to address governance issues. For example, the balance between centralized and decentralized administrative structures is under review throughout higher education. Penn State is reviewing existing structures and considering changes in areas such as human resources, IT, and shared governance. These reviews will continue in the light of lessons learned from experiences such as difficulties surrounding the 2013 roll-out of the Penn State wellness initiative.

Penn State also recognizes the importance of good communication across various parts of the institution. It is increasingly important for the academic side of the University to be closely connected to areas like finance, business, and human resources and vice versa. Efforts to build functional bridges across these functions will continue in light of the Freeh recommendations and recent efforts to make changes in the University's underlying administrative information systems.

4. Educational Context and Offerings

Standards

- 11. Educational Offerings
- 12. General Education
- 13. Related Educational Activities

This chapter evaluates the extent to which Penn State meets Standards 11, 12, and 13, which the self-study groups under the Educational Context and Offerings heading. In the discussion around the three standards, the goal is to describe the range and diversity of the educational offerings at Penn State, to present recommendations for improvement, and suggest directions for new areas of opportunity.

The chapter focuses primarily on process, describing relevant policies, procedures, and resources related to the three standards outlined above. Evidence from the assessment and evaluation of these areas is presented in Chapter 5, Student Experience.

4.1 Research Questions

The following research questions cut across the Middle State's Commission for Higher Education Self-Study Steering Committee's assessment of Penn State's strengths and weaknesses with respect to the three standards addressed in this chapter. The chapter returns to them in Section 4.5.

1. How well articulated are the program goals and learning objectives of majors, minors, general education, and co-curricular experiences? What is the framework that ensures the curriculum is aligned with the program goals and learning objectives?
2. How well communicated to students and faculty are program goals and learning objectives including general education?
3. What institutional mechanisms are in place to ensure periodic, meaningful, systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of curricular and co-curricular offerings and experiences? How is action taken on the results of these assessment processes?
4. In view of the changing landscape of higher education in general, and the needs and context of the Commonwealth in particular, how is the University positioning itself, especially with regard to curricular flexibility and the variety of delivery methods?
5. What processes ensure that the quality and rigor of teaching and learning are comparably high across campuses and delivery methods?

4.2 Educational Offerings

Standard 11. Educational Offerings

“The institution’s educational offerings display academic content, rigor, and coherence that are appropriate to its higher education mission. The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings.”

~MSCHE, *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*

4.2.1 Connection of the University Mission to the Curriculum

As the largest state-related institution and the land-grant university of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Penn State serves a large and varied constituency and its mission is expansive. Courses and programs are developed to meet a multitude of goals including, but not limited to, serving the postsecondary educational needs of Pennsylvania’s citizens at all levels (undergraduate and graduate, degree and nondegree), conducting fundamental and applied research for the benefit of society, and serving local, regional, national, and global community needs. As a land-grant institution, Penn State remains true to its legacy of providing instruction and expanding knowledge not only in the “practical arts” but also in “classical studies.”

The undergraduate curriculum at Penn State is designed to educate students from Pennsylvania and elsewhere using a holistic approach that combines disciplinary knowledge with a strong foundation in general education skills and abilities, such as critical thinking, effective communication, and global competence. Consistent with Penn State’s research mission, the graduate curriculum focuses more on disciplinary knowledge and research skills. Professional graduate programs meet the needs of students and the global economy by educating students in the application of knowledge across a variety of traditional, interdisciplinary and emerging fields, such as business administration, resource and energy sustainability, and enterprise architecture. Numerous non-degree programs at the undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, and graduate levels meet the needs of employers and students, particularly the growing body of non-traditional students.

4.2.2 Description of the Range of Educational Offerings at the University

In keeping with Penn State’s mission to expand knowledge and application in the natural and applied sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and professions, and to support the citizens of the Commonwealth, the University offers over 160 undergraduate majors and more than 163 graduate degree programs in areas ranging from Accounting to Information Systems and from Philosophy to Wildlife Science. A number of integrated undergraduate/graduate and undergraduate/professional degree programs are available as well. In addition, the University offers 206 undergraduate minors, 76 associate degree programs, 174 graduate minors, 47 graduate certificates, 17 post-baccalaureate certificates, 207 undergraduate certificates, and 41 active noncredit certificates. While some of the associate and certificate programs are generalist in nature, many focus on particular career tracks or skill sets designed to expand professional opportunities and career advancement.

4.2.3 Strong Curriculum Development and Approval Process

The process by which the University develops and approves new curricula demonstrates how thoroughly program objectives are articulated and integrated into the curriculum.

The curriculum and course development process requires consultation with stakeholders across the University and includes both academic and administrative review. Academic review and approval is the responsibility of the faculty and is conducted through the University Faculty Senate Committee on Curricular Affairs (SCCA). Academic review ensures adherence to the University's standards of academic quality and curricular integrity. All curricular proposals initiate with the faculty and pass through multiple stages of academic approval (e.g., department, division, school, college, Faculty Senate).

Final administrative approval is granted by the Executive Vice President and Provost. Administrative review ensures consideration and fulfillment of the broader University mission, enrollment management, local needs, and resource availability and use, as well as overall academic quality and curricular integrity. New program proposals, program name change proposals, and program drop proposals require administrative approval by the Vice President and Dean for Undergraduate Education, Executive Vice President and Provost, and review, as an informational item, by the Board of Trustees. This process is illustrated in the [curriculum flow chart](#) and a detailed description of the process and requirements may be found in the [Guide to Curricular Procedures](#). Administrative approval is not required for amendments to existing offerings.

Penn State's policies and procedures ensure that degree program curricula are consistent across all campuses of the University. The process by which new undergraduate programs, including those in the World Campus, are introduced and existing programs are changed is described in detail in the [Academic Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual](#) (AAPPM), which outlines the process in Section P "Undergraduate Curricular Procedures." Any academic unit developing a program proposal must communicate its intent throughout the University via the [Administrative Council on Undergraduate Education](#) (ACUE) which includes associate/assistant deans responsible for Undergraduate Education from all colleges and the Division of Undergraduate Studies, the Registrar, the University Libraries, and the World Campus. A Curricular Program Prospectus must precede development and submission of a formal proposal for:

- New undergraduate major, minor, option, or Integrated Undergraduate/Graduate programs (P-1);
- Moving or discontinuing degree programs (P-3); or
- Academic program phase-out (P-6).

The curricular program prospectus process is based upon the 2005 recommendations from the [Joint Committee on Curricular Integrity](#) which was appointed by the Executive Vice President and Provost and University Faculty Senate. Each prospectus initiates effective preliminary consultation within disciplines and across the University utilizing ACUE membership.

Once the initial prospectus has been completed, the curricular proposal process involves a robust system of broad consultation to ensure that all campuses and colleges are included in development of a unified university curriculum. Each proposal must include each of the following components.

- Clear, measurable, and rigorous program objectives and [learning outcomes](#);
- Relationship of proposal to university and college mission;
- Learning quality indicators;
- Impact on college and campus enrollments and flow of students among campuses;
- Market need and demand documented by current, valid, and reliable evidence;
- Physical and fiscal resource availability;
- Evidence of strategic and academic approval and support; and
- Disciplinary community and administrative consultation.

The SCCA reviews the learning objectives of the proposed programs. As part of Penn State's assessment framework, learning objectives are reviewed by the University Assessment Coordinating Committee using an [established rubric](#).

4.2.4 Communication of Program Goals and Requirements

While having a thoughtful and systematic process for developing curricula and for making clear the goals of courses and programs is critical, it is equally important for students and faculty to have a shared understanding of these goals. The second research question related to Educational Context and Offerings asks how well program goals and learning objectives are communicated to students and faculty. As illustrated below, these are communicated via a variety of formats including print and digital resources, academic and co-curricular programming, faculty development, orientations, and advising.

Print and Digital Resources

The primary source of curricular requirements for both students and faculty are the [Undergraduate Degree Programs Bulletin](#), and the [Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin](#). These resources provide an overview of the majors and minors available at Penn State, including the undergraduate general education curriculum, admission requirements, and program and graduation requirements. Penn State's [eLion](#), is an award-winning, web-based service for students, advisers, faculty, and parents, and provides access to a myriad of student resources, including: degree audits, semester-by-semester academic plans, early progress reports, first-year testing results, career exploration, and guidelines for preparing for an academic advising session. Links to information specific to Penn States' Colleges and Commonwealth Campuses are available [online](#).

Curricular objectives that apply to all undergraduates, regardless of major, are highlighted in several online publications provided by units with University-wide responsibilities such as the Division of Undergraduate Studies and the Division of Student Affairs. Examples of such web pages are:

- [Undergraduate Advising Handbook](#),
- [General Education Learning Outcomes](#),
- [First-year Learning Outcomes](#), and
- [Co-curricular Learning Outcomes](#).

Many academic units post their program learning expectations online; examples include:

- [Biology](#),
- [Biobehavioral Health](#),
- [Comparative Literature](#),
- [Educational Psychology, Counseling, and Special Education](#),
- [Information Sciences and Technology](#),
- [Meteorology](#)
- [Penn State Altoona-English](#),
- [Penn State Fayette-Physical Therapy](#), and
- [Physics](#).

Programming and Advising Resources

A variety of programs and advising sessions are available to students to learn about program goals and requirements. The first opportunity occurs during the two-day New Student Orientation (NSO) instituted in 2013 (formerly a single-day event). NSO is a University-wide program, aimed at communicating both curricular and co-curricular aspects of Penn State life to new first-year students and their families.

Prior to attending NSO, students are required to complete the [Understanding a Penn State Degree](#) module online. First-year engagement and general education learning objectives are reinforced in the Educational Planning Session required for students and discussed with parents in the *Your Student's Success at Penn State* session.

All Penn State students are assigned an academic adviser (faculty or professional staff) and each adviser has the knowledge and resources to help students understand academic program objectives and outcomes. Students also have access to numerous online resources (see above) which guide them to appropriate curricular information. Every college and campus has an academic advising center.

All colleges and campuses maintain Recommended Academic Plans for the majors/degrees that they offer. These plans serve several University purposes and assist multiple constituencies: students, advisers, departments, deans, registrars, admissions officers, and family members. The plans identify normal academic progress and course sequencing so that students can plan and anticipate their academic workload, both short- and long-term.

Academic advisers are the people most often communicating program goals and requirements to students. The Division of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) offers professional development opportunities for advisers that focus on best practices, approaches, and advising tools. These opportunities include an Annual Professional Development Conference on Academic Advising, Academic Advising Noon Seminars, and a scholarly reading/discussion group.

A large number of students begin their academic careers at one of Penn State's Commonwealth Campuses and then transition to another campus midway through their academic careers. Recognizing the unique challenges faced by these students, the Student Transitions Steering Committee developed programs to provide change-of-campus students with opportunities to become familiar with their academic options. The Link UP event brings Commonwealth Campus students to University Park, a primary destination campus, for a day of exploration, information, and advising. Similar events are offered at other destination campuses.

4.2.5 Policies and Procedures to Ensure Academic Excellence

Identifying and communicating program goals, requirements, and objectives are important and necessary, but insufficient to ensure academic excellence. Penn State takes the additional steps of regularly evaluating faculty, reviewing the curriculum for consistency across locations and delivery modes, and consolidating redundant and low enrollment programs.

Regular Review and Evaluation of Faculty

At Penn State, faculty evaluations are based on recognized performance and achievement in each of several areas, as appropriate to the particular responsibilities assigned to the faculty member. Penn State's principal policies for ensuring academic excellence are [HR23](#) Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Regulations and [HR40](#) Evaluation of Faculty Performance for annual and five-year extended reviews of faculty performance. The [Administrative Guidelines for HR23](#) Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Regulations are published annually and include special guidelines for evaluating the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning criteria.

Evaluations of faculty teaching must be based on both peer and student input. Student input must include data from the Student Ratings of Teaching Effectiveness and a second form of feedback (e.g., responses from written student feedback, end-of-term interviews with students, or exit surveys). The process of collecting teaching evaluation data is specified in the [Statement of Practices for the Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness for Promotion and Tenure](#). Acceptable methods of peer evaluation and for collecting the second form of student input are determined locally by the faculty within each college.

Evaluation of the Graduate Faculty

Nearly 2,800 faculty members serve as graduate faculty at Penn State. Three types of graduate faculty ensure a diversity in scholarly and academic expertise. Form "A" appointments are for those who hold tenure-line appointments in departments offering the highest degree in the field and who have significant graduate education and research responsibilities. Academic deans are responsible for nominating faculty members who meet the criteria. "B" appointments are for faculty who hold the highest degrees in their fields and hold faculty appointments in departments not offering the highest degree in their fields. "C" appointments are for external professionals who may not hold the highest degree in the field but who have significant professional experience and expertise in a given discipline. The graduate expertise and professional credentials for "B" and "C" appointments are documented by the graduate department chair. Nominations for Form B and C membership must be approved by the college dean and a college evaluation committee of graduate faculty, and all nominations (A, B and C) are ultimately reviewed for final approval by the Dean of the Graduate School. Distinctions among the three types of faculty affect whether an individual may chair a dissertation committee, vote on the Graduate Council, and so on.

Uniformity of the Curriculum

Penn State is committed to offering a single curriculum to its students across all University locations. The University has taken important steps to discourage curricular fragmentation and foster consistency. In 2005, the University Faculty Senate passed [legislation](#) to develop a process to standardize course abbreviations. Approximately 6,000 courses were reviewed by disciplinary subcommittees of the Senate Committee on Curricular Affairs, which resulted in changes to 951 courses and elimination of 226 courses. The subcommittee concluded its work with the disciplinary teams in spring semester 2007 and the last group of courses became effective in spring semester 2008. The Senate maintains a University Course Master List of all approved courses.

Academic Excellence in Online Courses

Quality, consistency, and dissemination of best practices to all units offering online courses is accomplished through an administrative structure that includes the Penn State Digital Learning Steering Committee (formerly the Penn State Online Steering Committee), the Digital Learning Coordinating Council, and the eLearning Advocates. The [Council's website](#) includes information about the online options, resources, and committees and subcommittees. The Resources section of this website includes materials that promote consistency and quality in online learning:

- online peer mentoring,
- peer review of online courses,
- managing online classes,
- faculty self-assessment,
- certificate in online teaching,
- design standards,
- hiring guidelines, and
- faculty competencies.

Consolidation of Minors

In the fall of 2010, the Senate revised the [Requirements for the Minor](#) policy. The change allowed undergraduate students at any location to declare a minor regardless of the administrative/campus home for the minor. To streamline the processes by which students declare and pursue minor degrees, members of the SCCA, ACUE, the Registrar's Office and the Office of Undergraduate Education identified a suite of redundant minor codes. In the summer of 2013, a single code was assigned to all minors with the same name and curricula. For minors with the same or similar names and different curricula, the process of consolidating or differentiating the minors is underway and requires significant consultation among all campuses and faculty. This process is largely complete at this time.

Five-Year Drop Policy

A critical process in keeping the Degree Program Bulletins up-to-date while also providing students with the best possible information about available courses is the University Faculty Senate's five-year drop policy. This policy requires an annual review of courses that have not been offered in the past five years to determine if they should be eliminated. This policy has been in place for many years, but until recently was not consistently enforced. Details of this process are published in the Academic and Administrative Policy and Procedures Manual as procedure P-2, [Five Year Automatic Drops](#).

Transfer Students

Approximately 17% (2,966) of Penn State's fall 2014 paid accepts were transfer students⁹ and this percentage is on the rise. Ensuring that these students have all of the benefits of a Penn State education is part of Penn State's commitment to ensuring academic excellence.

Articulation Agreements and Transfer Policies

Articulation agreements establish expectations and procedures between Penn State and other accredited universities and colleges to enable students who have studied elsewhere to efficiently complete a degree at Penn State. The University has a long history of articulation agreements, most with the community and private colleges in and near Pennsylvania. More recently, agreements have been developed by the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences and the College of Engineering to provide opportunity for students attending the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education to begin at one of the system's universities and transition to Penn State University Park to complete engineering degrees in a three- plus-two format. Such agreements support the University's land-grant mission to extend technical and scientific programs to students throughout the Commonwealth. The academic colleges have also initiated agreements with a variety of international institutions as a means of reaching Penn State's global diversity goals.

Articulation agreements, both global and domestic, are established by University Faculty Senate Policy 06-20 [Articulation Agreements](#), and implemented through [Academic Administrative Policies and Procedures](#) A-11. All requests to establish, renew, or terminate articulation prospectuses, proposals and agreements must be initiated by a degree-granting unit. The determinacy of course equivalence must be conducted by an appropriate disciplinary community. The Executive Vice President and Provost maintains authority for final approval following review by the Faculty Senate Committee on Admissions, Records, Scheduling, and Student Aid. A [registry](#) of the University's nearly 100 articulation agreements is maintained by the Office of Undergraduate Education.

Task Force on Prior Learning Assessment

In April 2012, a task force was charged by the Vice President for Outreach and Vice Provost of Online Education and the Associate Vice President and Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education to examine the current status of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) and "...to provide recommendations for strategic directions that Penn State may move in with respect to PLA." The introduction to the resulting report summarizes many aspects of the current state of PLA at Penn State.

"Penn State has historically recognized college-level work that students may have successfully completed before arriving at the University. This work has been assessed through a variety of methods, such as Advanced Placement (AP) and College Level Examination Program tests, the transfer of coursework from another accredited academic institution, assigning credits for successful completion of an exam developed by Penn State faculty, and the review by disciplinary

⁹ Classified as students bringing in 18 or more post-high school credits.

faculty of a portfolio demonstrating appropriate work for credit (credit by portfolio). Since acceptance of this work lays the foundation for student success at Penn State, appraisals of prior learning have reflected both the disciplinary focus and the rigor of the Penn State courses and degree requirements.

Each year, approximately 250,000 previously earned credits are entered into student transcripts. The majority of the credits (64% or 162,000) are transferred by advanced standing students from other institutions. Entering first-year students transfer 22% of the credits (57,000), primarily through AP tests. Another 14% of the credits (35,000) are recorded for Penn State students who complete courses at other institutions and transfer credits back to meet their Penn State degree requirements. A National Student Clearinghouse Research Center study indicates that, between 2006 and 2011, fully one third of first-time college students began their college careers with credits earned previously, a trend expected to continue.

Penn State has adopted a number of policies and procedures for validating and assigning credit to prior learning....Some of the mechanisms for accepting credits for prior learning activities are well organized, widely advertised and frequently used, such as the AP credits and courses that transfer as credits from another accredited institution. However, less traditional methods such as portfolio reviews and credit by examination have not had the same benefit of centralized support and consistent processes applied across the institution. The multi-campus structure of Penn State makes it essential that course credit be assigned and incorporated into degree programs in a consistent manner at all locations and within all academic units.”

After systematically assessing data on the current status of PLA at Penn State (some of which is summarized below), the Task Force in October 2013 made five overarching recommendations. The first, and in some ways pivotal, recommendation was to create an administrative structure at the University, college, and campus level to support PLA. In mid-2014, a new position, Director of Prior Learning Assessment, was created, reporting directly to the Vice President and Dean for Undergraduate Education. The Director provides leadership for University-wide efforts in prior learning assessment. After a national search, that position was filled in October 2014, with the appointment of Dr. Michele Rice. The second recommendation was to regularly review all academic procedures related to PLA and to review and improve current pre-admission transfer course communication to students. The third recommendation was to create and improve mechanisms (e.g., courses, web strategies, and the student information system) to ensure rigor, transparency, and consistency in applying PLA. The fourth was to adjust the current fee structure for credit by exam, portfolio assessment, and transfer credit evaluation, as well as to develop additional strategies in order to recover costs associated with PLA. Lastly, the Task Force recommended that the University maintain control over assigning credits for MOOCs. The full Task Force report is available for review on ANGEL.

Evaluation of Transfer Credits

The relevant Penn State Faculty Senate and AAPP policies regarding transferring credits from other institutions are described in Senate Policy [42-00](#), Acquisition of Credit, especially under the subheadings: 42-82 Accredited U.S. Institutions; 42-84 Accredited Institutions Outside the United States; 42-86 Institutions That Are Not Regionally Accredited; and 42-88 Implementation of Policies 42-82, 42-84, 42-86, 42-92, 42-94, and 42-99. The implementation procedures are described in policy [E-5](#), Credit by Transfer from other Institutions, and policy [E-12](#), Course Substitution Process in Relation to Degree Requirements.

The Undergraduate Admissions Office (UAO) maintains a [database](#) of specific courses that have previously been evaluated by the faculty for direct equivalence to Penn State courses. Transfer courses are evaluated either as direct equivalents to Penn State courses or as general credits in the field of study covered by that course. New courses are evaluated each year for addition to the Transfer Credit Evaluation Guide, and roughly 13% of all transfer credits are evaluated for direct equivalents, with 87% listed as general credits which may be counted toward degree requirements at individuals programs' discretion.

Course Substitutions Request System

In order to facilitate the processing of transfer credits, the Offices of the Vice President for Undergraduate Education, Outreach, and Commonwealth Campuses charged staff in their respective units to develop a University-wide course transfer request system. The Course Substitution Request System (CSRS) will standardize the process for requesting exceptions to degree requirements and provide a consistent interface for students, advisers and faculty across the University. CSRS is expected to improve communication between campuses and between students and academic advisers by providing a streamlined mechanism for the submission and review of substitution requests. The system will provide capability to track and generate statistics regarding transfer courses and other exceptions to support assessment and accreditation reports. CSRS was piloted in the spring of 2014 with three colleges: Eberly College of Science, Nursing, and Altoona. Full implementation across the University is in progress. Since the pilot, six additional colleges including, Smeal College of Business, Information Sciences and Technology, Liberal Arts, Health and Human Development, Harrisburg, and University College are utilizing CSRS with the remaining colleges scheduled to onboard in 2015.

Adult Learners

As a land-grant institution, Penn State has a unique commitment to educating the Commonwealth. In keeping with its mission, Penn State has served adult students since the early part of the 20th century through Cooperative Extension, which serves individuals and communities across the state primarily through the offering of noncredit educational opportunities. Penn State also serves adult learners in other ways. In fall 2014, Penn State enrolled 9,822 adult students¹⁰ in its World Campus, 6,904 at its

¹⁰ An adult learner is someone who is 24 years of age or older, is active-duty military or a veteran, is married, has dependents, has children, has four or more years hiatus in learning, or was identified as an adult by an academic advisor using her/his professional judgment.

Commonwealth Campuses, and 6,490 at University Park. Complete demographic information for the student body is available in the Student Profile reports available on ANGEL.

The [Commission for Adult Learners](#) is dedicated to improving the experiences of adult learners at Penn State. The Commission is comprised of administrators, faculty, staff, and students from several University locations. Members sponsor the annual Hendrick Best Practices for Adult Learners Conference, a one-day event that showcases the best practices from the Penn State community. In addition, support to adult students is ensured through administrative procedures documented in [Administrative Processing for Adult Learners](#). Application information for adult applicants is provided [online](#) and adult learner persistence is encouraged by a policy that provides special accommodations for those adult students who stop out and seek to return to the University ([Re-enrollment as a Degree Candidate](#)).

Veterans

Penn State is committed to meeting the needs of those who have served their country. In 2013, Penn State was ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as American's top University for service to veterans. The University's policy of offering veterans priority registration for classes, which was implemented in spring 2014, was a key factor in this ranking, as was the University's Office of Veterans Program's assistance with benefits, enrollment, and career services. Sixteen percent of World Campus students are military students, including both active duty and veterans. Additional information about Penn State's veteran student population can be found in the 2013 report, [Veterans at Penn State](#).

4.2.6 Culture of Assessment

Penn State has a strong foundation on which to continue building a culture of student learning outcomes assessment. At the University level, there is a well-developed institutional assessment and strategic planning process. Enhancing student success was the first goal in Penn State's last strategic plan, [Priorities for Excellence: The Penn State Strategic Plan 2009/10 through 2013/14](#). Penn State's success in meeting the first strategy under that goal – to expand learning outcomes assessment – was documented in Penn State's last Middle States periodic review report. Since 2005, Penn State has embarked on processes designed to assess and improve student learning, with a strong emphasis on the areas of greatest need—academic program assessment and general education assessment. By 2010, all academic programs were required to have developed and posted program goals. Since then, there has been significant progress including implementation of a process for annual reporting of assessment plans and progress under the guidance of the University's Assessment Coordinating Committee. In addition, Penn State has a [dedicated co-curricular assessment program](#) and the University Faculty Senate has a course approval process (see Section 4.2.3) that has long included the requirement for every course to include course-level learning objectives.

Continuing in this vein, but expanding it, the University is preparing its next strategic plan (2015/16 through 2019/20), which will build upon unit planning requirements that 1) all academic units provide a discussion of their plans, progress, and initiatives in learning assessment and 2) strategic performance indicators be structured around unit level goals. Further, where appropriate, the plan will include information on how units have implemented the 2013 recommendations of the Core Council. This is very

relevant in terms of how Penn State closes the assessment and improvement loop, since the work of the Core Council was based on an intensive, data-based institutional assessment of programs and processes. The full unit strategic planning guidelines are available for review on ANGEL.

Academic Program Assessment

The [Assessment Coordinating Committee](#) (ACC) monitors progress on the University Assessment Plan; develops milestones and timelines for continued progress on learning outcomes assessment; and identifies and recommends research, analysis, or assessments that need to be implemented or coordinated centrally. Program assessment at Penn State is founded on the philosophy that program faculty have a unique role and perspective on students' achievements within a program. Because not all faculty are expert in compiling and reviewing evidence of student learning for the explicit purpose of program improvement, the ACC website <http://www.assess.psu.edu/> provides current information, resources, and links to best practices. Information about the [assessment process](#) helps faculty to determine the extent to which students are meeting the learning goals/objectives of their program and, if not, how to make the necessary changes to improve their learning.

The ACC has developed expectations and due dates for the academic program assessment process. Coordinating Committee members partner with Schreyer Institute instructional consultants to review assessment plans and provide feedback. The annual review of program assessment reports includes review of program data collection plans and programmatic change plans. Schreyer Institute consultants are also available to consult with individuals or groups on any aspect of the assessment process. Also provided is step-by-step information for program assessment.

Disciplinary Accreditation

In addition to the University's MSCHE accreditation, Penn State educational programs hold accreditation from [39 specialized accrediting bodies](#). Over the past decade, these bodies have largely shifted from input-based accreditation standards to focus on assessment of student learning outcomes and many have adopted assessment's corollary process, continuous quality improvement (for example, the accreditation standards of Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, the National League for Nursing Accreditation, and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, International). As with MSCHE accreditation, programs with specialized accreditation undergo periodic program reviews and most require assessment of evidence of student learning. As a result, a culture of assessment of student learning has both risen from the bottom-up (starting within the academic departments holding specialized accreditation) and cascaded from the top-down, with strategic planning, the ACC and other University-level assessment initiatives. For examples, the most recent self-study reports from Penn State's Smeal College of Business (2009) and the Department of Mechanical Engineering (2008) are available on ANGEL for review.

Other Program Reviews

Many academic units in disciplinary areas that are not nationally accredited are regularly examined by rigorous external review committees. These panels, often consisting of four to five distinguished external

disciplinary representatives (most often faculty or administrators from other peer institutions) with one Penn State faculty member (from outside the department), typically examine all aspects of the unit, often focusing on research, infrastructure, and facilities, but always including reviews of the department's educational mission (including both service courses and those for majors) at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

Graduate Program Assessment

Graduate students make up 15% of the student body at Penn State and the University's graduate programs are regularly ranked among the best in the country. While analogous policies and procedures described above apply to both the graduate and the undergraduate curricula and faculty, there are additional policies in place to ensure that the graduate curricula and the faculty that oversee them meet the University's standards of excellence.

The Graduate School's program review process identifies programs in need of attention and encourages all programs to thoughtfully and systematically self-evaluate. In 2005, the University implemented a more strategic approach to program review than existed prior. Previously, external teams relied primarily on indicators of program status provided by the respective academic unit and the reviews rarely resulted in recommendations other than calls for additional resources. Now, the Graduate School generates data for all programs that serve as proxy measures of program quality; programs review the data for accuracy and offer corrections or explanations. The Graduate School uses the information to identify programs in need of attention, notify college administrators, and engage the college in a discussion of issues and possible solutions.

While this process is still in place, it has been complemented by other processes including the National Research Council assessment of research doctorate programs and Penn State's Core Council review process. The Core Council conducted in-depth analyses of all University programs and identified programs "in need of attention," which in some cases led to closure.

The Graduate School is committed to continuing the process of data generation, college feedback, assessment, and planning. In the future, annually updated program data will be posted in the Graduate School Executive Information Suite that will include 10-year historical trends and the Graduate School will set thresholds (e.g., completion rate below 60%) that will result in notifications being sent to the program, college, Dean of the Graduate School, and the Executive Vice President and Provost. Penn State is considering changing the cycle of review from three to five years to allow changes to be implemented and assessed. A data analyst in the Graduate School has primary responsibility for generating program review data and data for external reporting.

Co-Curricular Program Assessment

Assessment at Penn State does not stop with academic programs. Over the past decade, a new framework for Penn State Student Affairs educational programming has been created largely based on recommendations from the College Student Educators International/National Association of Student Personnel Administrators monograph *Learning Reconsidered*. In 2005, Student Affairs partnered with the

Office of Undergraduate Education to create [first-year student learning outcomes](#). The following year, Student Affairs developed [co-curricular learning outcomes](#) for Penn State students. Since that time, many administrative units in Students Affairs have mapped their own unit-based outcomes to those outcomes. These intentional statements provide a guide for the implementation of educational programs in Student Affairs and they provide the basis for the assessment of co-curricular learning.

The [Student Affairs Research and Assessment](#) (SARA) office at Penn State is a national leader in co-curricular assessment. In addition to coordinating the administration of large-scale assessment instruments such as the National Survey of Student Engagement and Penn State's Student Satisfaction Survey, SARA administers the [Penn State Pulse Program](#), a student survey program that gathers data on specific program initiatives, Penn State's co-curricular learning outcomes (e.g., civic engagement), and student experiences. In addition to the work done by SARA, individual Student Affairs units carry out ongoing assessment to facilitate continuous improvement in the services they provide. Some examples follow.

- Student Affairs centrally collects information about its unit programming efforts in the Educational Programming Record database. Types of programs, assessment methods and numbers of student participants are collected and [reported annually](#). In 2013/14, Student Affairs presented 4,353 workshops and educational sessions.
- Student Affairs is home to the national [Center for Collegiate Mental Health](#), a multi-disciplinary research center which collects information and provides research data about the mental health of American college students.
- The Office of Student Activities has developed a series of alternative spring break [service trips](#) for students, where staff members use [unit-level learning outcomes](#) to guide student participants through a series of guided reflective writing activities and debriefs that provide evidence of student learning.
- Student Activities has developed a set of learning outcomes for its student employees and uses a pre-test, post-test methodology to examine progress that students are making in alignment with those learning outcomes.
- Student Affairs has developed a robust series of [online learning modules](#). *Penn State SAFE* is designed to help students learn about the dangers of high-risk alcohol consumption and *Penn State AWARE is a model related to sexual assault*. In fall 2014, 89% of students who completed *Penn State SAFE* reported that the module provided tips that they would use to lower their risks if they chose to drink; 90% of students who completed *Penn State AWARE* reported that the program helped them reduce their risk of becoming a victim of sexual violence.
- University Health Services and Counseling and Psychological Services units offer the Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students (BASICS) program which educates student alcohol policy offenders about the dangers of high-risk drinking and alcohol abuse. Assessment data from that program show that BASICS is reducing future alcohol consumption and abuse by program participants. No differences were found between group and individual session participants, which provided important cost-saving information. More information about the assessment of the BASICS program is available in the *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* article,

“The comparative effectiveness of individual and group brief motivational interventions for mandated college students” by J. T. P. Hustad, et al. (pre-publication draft in ANGEL).

The University Faculty Senate is also actively engaged in assessing the co-curriculum. For example, the Senate recently charged separate task forces to develop informational reports on [internships](#) and on [undergraduate research](#) at the University. The purpose of these reports is to determine the scope of such activities, scheduling patterns, and existing infrastructure. For more information, see Section 4.4.4, Experiential and Engaged Learning.

4.2.7 Penn State in the Changing Higher Education Landscape

Chapter 2 described Penn State’s structures for and approaches to strategic management. The following section of this chapter focuses on strategic challenges, opportunities, and initiatives, especially pertinent to educational context and offerings.

Growth and Expansion of the World Campus

In tandem with the rising cost of higher education, new online delivery models are being introduced by traditional and nontraditional providers of higher education. Penn State recognizes the profound shift that is occurring and is constantly evaluating the efficacy of these new models and their relevance to the University’s mission. Penn State has long been a recognized leader in delivering higher education at a distance, but in this rapidly shifting environment the University is continually assessing its goals and strategic vision for online learning.

In early 1998, Penn State opened the World Campus, offering a small number of online academic programs. Over the last five years, the World Campus saw double-digit growth. It currently enrolls 10,805 students, in more than 90 undergraduate, graduate and professional education programs. Serving primarily adult students and a growing military audience, a small but growing number of resident students also opt to participate in courses offered through the World Campus each semester. In 2013/14, 26% of students taking World Campus courses were students whose primary enrollment was at brick and mortar Penn State campuses.

World Campus courses and programs are Penn State courses and programs, taught by Penn State faculty, and a diploma from a World Campus program is the same as a diploma from a program at a physical Penn State campus. Curricular integrity is managed by programs’ academic homes (see Section 4.4.1). The learning outcomes assessment process described previously includes online programs.

As online learning continues to grow, the World Campus is positioned to continue its role as a leader in the field, with an enrollment goal of 45,000 students within the next decade. To reach this goal, Penn State is re-investing \$20 million from World Campus revenues over the next five years. In August 2013, Vice Provost for Online Education was added to the administrative title for Craig Weidemann, in addition to his role as Vice President for Outreach. In this new role, Dr. Weidemann is heavily involved in aligning the World Campus with academic units and partners in order to reach its enrollment goal. It is anticipated

that this will generate estimated gross revenues of \$295 million a year (\$80 million net), thereby positioning the University to innovate and play an even greater leadership role in this area.

In fact, digital learning is becoming ubiquitous in higher education through the dramatic growth of the use of technology to support resident education, blended, hybrid, and fully-online classes. Ongoing and rapid advances in teaching and learning methodologies and technologies, including peer-to-peer learning, flipped classrooms, MOOCs, and MOCCs are transforming the core of the teaching and learning enterprise. These changes, coupled with the evolving comportment of our students regarding their desire to choose where, when, and how they learn, and their significant facility with technology, are pushing us to reconsider the impact on all forms of teaching and learning at Penn State. Penn State's digital learning strategy is a crucial component of the overall University learning strategy, with digital learning embedded in, and providing reinforcement to, how the institution defines the learning ecosystem. The digital learning strategy is integrated into the core academic enterprise.

Massive Open Online Courses

As online learning matures, Penn State is dedicated to exploring new methods and models of online learning. Part of the University's strategy is to use materials and instructional technologies from online courses in resident education, and vice versa. More instructors are experimenting with blended courses, leveraging some online materials to supplement less-frequent face-to-face meetings. Emerging areas of exploration include both MOOCs and MOCCS.

Through a partnership with [Coursera](#), Penn State delivered seven MOOCs since summer 2013 (Table 4-1) and an eighth, Geospatial Intelligence, is in development. The MOOCs represented the collaborative efforts of the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, Arts and Architecture, Engineering, and Science, and instructional designers from the Dutton Institute and Teaching and Learning with Technology. In addition to the teams that are designing and delivering MOOCs, several committees and research groups are involved in MOOC strategy and evaluation. These include the MOOC strategy group, led by the Vice President for Outreach and Vice Provost for Online Education. The group created a proposal process for soliciting MOOC course proposals, selecting future MOOC offerings, and guiding MOOC development in the future. Teaching and Learning with Technology and the Center for Online Innovation in Learning (COIL) are collaborating on the evaluation of the first five MOOCs, including the analysis of survey data and Coursera platform data generated by MOOC participants. The evaluation efforts include work to better understand the cost of creating and delivering a MOOC, as well as pedagogical research aimed at improving future MOOC course designs. In addition to the evaluation group, Teaching and Learning with Technology and COIL have created a MOOC research cluster, bringing together diverse researchers from across the University to examine specific aspects of MOOCs such as completion rates, peer assessment, MOOCs for credit, and language barriers in MOOCs. Several of the COIL Research Initiation Grants were awarded to researchers who are exploring new technologies used to support MOOCs, or to create specialized MOOCs designed to support specific Penn State courses or curriculum.

Table 4-1: Snapshot of Penn State’s MOOCs.

| MOOC Offering | Enrolled | Attended at least once | Completed* |
|-----------------------------------------|----------|------------------------|------------|
| Creativity, Innovation and Change | 214,730 | 136,130 | 7,200 |
| Energy, the Environment, and Our Future | 45,248 | 22,079 | 2,346 |
| Epidemics | 35,906 | 18,935 | 2,626 |
| Geodesign | 17,593 | 10,375 | 451 |
| Introduction to Art | 78,501 | 56,367 | 6,139 |
| Maps and the Geospatial Revolution | 74,646 | 53,847 | 4,416 |
| Presumed Innocent | 15,856 | 9,941 | 551 |

* These courses currently have active sessions; completion rates may increase before they end.

In November, Penn State joined the nonprofit technology consortium Unizin, becoming the latest major research university to join the organization alongside Colorado State University, Indiana University, Oregon State University, the University of Florida, the University of Michigan, the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Unizin was formed to enable universities to reach their goals with digital learning, from MOOCs to flipped classrooms. The consortium focuses on improving the way educational content is shared by providing a common digital infrastructure and will enable Penn State faculty to share lesson plans, syllabi, research and more via content sharing and storage services. Students will benefit from the work being done at Penn State and other institutions as well.

The Center for Online Innovation in Learning

[COIL](#) was established in the fall of 2012, with funding provided by Outreach and Online Education, to “guide the transformation of teaching and learning processes by inventing, implementing, investigating, or supporting researchers who want to investigate the effects of technologically enhanced learning environments.” COIL is sponsored by the College of Information Science and Technology, the College of Education, and World Campus. COIL organizes three to five invited speaker events each semester, including scholars from academia as well as CEOs and innovators from business and industry. In the summer of 2014 COIL concluded its fourth round of Research Initiation Grants, providing resources to Penn State researchers to pursue innovative projects in online innovation, with the goal of both improving online and resident instruction, as well as pursuing larger, external funding opportunities. The second two rounds of proposals, covering fall 2013 and spring 2014, awarded over \$450,000 to researchers from 11 colleges and six campuses at Penn State.

4.2.8 Information and Technological Literacy

The [University Libraries](#) (an academic unit, with a dean and tenure-line librarians) support students, staff, and faculty across all Penn State locations. The Libraries employ 134 faculty librarians, 311 staff members

and 388 part-time wage employees (students and non-students). Library resources include more than 5.8 million books, 100,000 serials, 579 databases, and more than 203,000 e-books. Course reserves are available to ensure access to print and electronic course material. In addition to print resources, the library provides access to e-readers, iPads, laptop computers, copiers, scanners, and printers. The Knowledge Commons provides technology and collaborative study space. Adaptive services, such as listening devices for the hearing impaired and braille materials for the visually impaired, are available through Adaptive Technology and Services.

The University Libraries enhance student information literacy by integrating library classes strategically into the existing curriculum throughout the undergraduate experience, building from basic first-level courses through upper-level disciplinary and graduate courses. Information literacy has been part of the definition of general education, and is implemented through collaborative relationships and liaison activities with faculty, departments, and colleges. At University Park, eleven classrooms with advanced instructional technology allow optimal opportunities to meet with students in the library. “One-button” audio recording and editing studios in the Libraries allow students to get assistance as they create videos, podcasts, and other media products. In addition, the Libraries enhance student information literacy through the provision of inviting spaces for both individual and collaborative group work, updated technology, research consultation, reference assistance, and tutoring services. The Libraries have a wealth of information to share with students and provide a multitude of services to ensure that students can find and use those print and electronic resources effectively and responsibly.

Collaboration for Information Literacy

One of the University’s goals is that every Penn State student be information literate by the time they graduate. The commitment to that goal is evidenced by the University Libraries’ standing as the top library among the Association of Research Library members for the past two years in teaching and outreach. To achieve this, library faculty collaborate with faculty and administrators in the colleges and at the campuses to teach information literacy through established courses throughout the curriculum.

The Information Literacy Continuum

At Penn State, the Libraries have collaborated with faculty and administrators to create dynamic programs that engage students at multiple levels, with the ultimate goal of achieving an information literate student by graduation. A multi-tiered approach has become the framework for the University’s efforts.

- Initial engagement that introduces students to a large and complex research library through open houses and orientation activities.
- First-level information literacy, including the introduction of library resources and research strategies. These are achieved through course-related instruction and guest presentations for first-level composition and speech classes, including a hands-on introduction to library resources and databases as well as web-based tutorials and online interactive multimedia learning objects.
- Upper-level, disciplinary information literacy, including upper-level disciplinary information research courses and course-related instruction within the disciplines.

- Graduate-level, in-depth specialized disciplinary research, graduate-level disciplinary research seminars, research methods courses, and individualized research consultations with subject specialist librarians.

These tiers reflect the increasing depth of learning that takes place in higher education. This is done through direct collaboration with faculty in their courses, so that instruction in library and information literacy happens where it is needed most, at the point when students are preparing to begin their information research for their course assignments and projects.

In 2013/14, Penn State University Libraries provided 2,875 group presentations (including instructional sessions and Outreach/special programs) to 92,156 participants. These numbers speak to the extent of the University's information literacy and library outreach efforts and the effectiveness of collaborations with faculty and administrators.

Instructional Technology and Equipment

Currently, all general purpose classrooms (361) at University Park and 97% (N=726) of the general purpose classrooms at the Commonwealth Campuses have permanently installed instructional technology. The design and specifications for needed equipment in classrooms is determined by the University Committee on Instructional Facilities (UCIF), a collaboration among faculty, administrators, IT professionals, and media professionals to develop the most useful array of instructional technology for the classrooms. Most of these rooms have standard setup and equipment so that any teacher can easily move between classrooms and be comfortable with the technology provided. In addition, many specialized rooms are equipped with additional functionality for specialized purposes.

[Media and Technology Support Services](#) (Media Tech), a unit of the University Libraries, is responsible for implementing the plans developed by the UCIF and assists with the design of technology classrooms. Media Tech houses, circulates, and maintains a pool of equipment to support academic credit instruction of all colleges at University Park. Media Tech provides students and faculty with an all-in-one media service including previewing movies, borrowing equipment for class projects and video/audio projects, and using two state-of-the-art digital editing labs, complete with video cameras, light kits and green screens. Penn State also currently has six one button studios and a seventh in development. These studios allow students to create high-quality, polished video projects without having to anything about lights, cameras, or other related technology. Other instructional technology services include: class presentations recorded using a variety of digital formats, duplication services in various analog and digital formats, and lecture capture technology. Over the past decade, the University has invested nearly \$7.5 million in equipment for Media Tech.

4.3 General Education

Standard 12. General Education

“The institution’s curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.”

~MSCHE, *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*

Penn State has been a leader in general education in the United States since launching its first program of general education in 1954. Philosophies, pedagogies, and best practices in general education have evolved considerably since Penn State implemented its current general education program in 2001 and Penn State is currently working toward a significant revision, with the hope that it can begin to phase in a revised curriculum in fall 2016. The sections that follow outline the University’s current program of general education, as well as the process for revision (see section 4.3.7) and anticipated future elements of this key curricular component of a Penn State education.

4.3.1 Description of the General Education Program

Structure

The typical baccalaureate Penn State academic program requires the completion of between 120 and 130 credits. [General education requirements](#) are common to all degree programs and compose about one-third of the coursework (45 credits). All students must also complete a First-Year Engagement program, courses in United States Cultures and International Cultures, and a major-/college-specific Writing-across-the-Curriculum course as part of their degree program. For simplicity, those courses are included with the general education program. The course selections are designed to provide students with a well-rounded academic experience that allows for individual flexibility. The components of the program are:

- skills courses that help develop quantitative and communication skills;
- studies in the knowledge domains of the Arts, Humanities, and Sciences (including the Health Sciences, Natural Sciences, and the Social and Behavioral Sciences);
- First-Year Engagement programs that help introduce students to the scholarly community of the University;
- a "Writing across the Curriculum" component; and
- United States Cultures and International Cultures courses that provide opportunities to increase understanding of the relationships between people of different cultures and widen a student’s international perspective.

Scope

In order to satisfy Penn State's general education requirements, undergraduate students must complete:

- 9 credits of writing/speaking (GWS),
- 6 credits of quantification (GQ),
- 3 credits of health and physical activity (GHA),
- 9 credits of natural sciences (GN),
- 6 credits of arts (GA),
- 6 credits of humanities (GH), and
- 6 credits of social and behavioral sciences (GS).

All students must also complete:

- up to 3 credits in a First-Year Engagement program (FYS),
- 3 credits of United States cultures (US), and
- 3 credits of International Cultures (IL).

Relationship to Majors

The inclusion of general education in every degree program reflects Penn State's deep conviction that successful, satisfying lives require a wide range of skills and knowledge. These skills include the ability to reason logically and quantitatively and to communicate effectively; an understanding of the sciences that makes sense of the natural environment; a familiarity with the cultural movements that have shaped societies and their values; and an appreciation for the enduring arts that express, inspire, and continually change these values. General education, in essence, augments the specialized training students receive in their majors and aims to cultivate knowledgeable, informed, literate citizens.

Assessment of Enrollment and Instructor Patterns in General Education Courses

Recognizing that general education is a critical component of the undergraduate curriculum, the Faculty Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education periodically explores this aspect of the undergraduate experience. Most recently, in 2012, the Committee undertook a [review of Enrollment and Instructor Patterns in General Education Courses](#). Examining data from three academic years (2009/10 – 2011/12), the Committee reviewed four to six high-enrollment courses from each of the skill and knowledge domains encompassed by Penn State's general education curriculum. Overall, the review found that there is a great deal of homogeneity in class size for these courses. Students at campuses comprising the University College are the most heavily enrolled in shared electronic-delivery courses. Students at University Park are the most likely to be enrolled in a course with over 100 students, although these large sections comprise less than 12% of the total offerings of the analyzed courses. The majority of classes analyzed fell into the 16-30 student category. In general, the stand-alone campuses and University College have similar instructor assignment patterns, while University Park and World Campus are similar to one another. The highest proportion of standing faculty instructors in these courses are found at the stand-alone campuses and University College, although these locations also have the highest proportion of fixed-

term, part-time instructors. University Park has the highest reliance on teaching assistants (TAs), but TAs do not hold leadership roles in the majority of the courses in the analyses (with writing courses being the exception).

General Education Communication

General education goals and learning objectives are communicated to multiple audiences in a variety of formats. These include print and digital resources, co-curricular programming, faculty development, student orientations, and advising. Although Penn State has a long tradition of general education, it has been over a decade since the last strategic attempt to engage the wider community in a discussion of the importance and value of general education. As discussed below (0), the current general education reform process has made ongoing communication about and discussion of general education central to its approach. Recognizing that faculty and students need to develop a shared understanding of the value and purpose of the general education curriculum, a Communications Subcommittee was assigned to develop and implement a communication strategy. That strategy, which includes a [web forum](#) and listening tour, has been very successful in cultivating an ongoing conversation about general education at Penn State.

The current general education requirements and learning outcomes are outlined [online](#). In the 2013/14 academic year, more than 24,000 hits were recorded to these pages. The majority of the visits aligned with the student advising and course registration time periods. Further, every student attending New Student Orientation receives a [general education worksheet](#) and is advised regarding the importance, requirements and expected learning outcomes of general education. The University maintains several related websites which assist prospective and current students in understanding general education requirements. The websites and their 2013 page views are:

- [Think Global](#) - (434 page views),
- [Major Decisions](#) - (324),
- [Register for Courses](#) - (7,441),
- [Registration Tips](#) - (385), and
- [MajorQuest](#) - (29,324, up from 8,571 in 2012).

The majority of these websites are designed to explain the University's general education requirements, but these do not foster an understanding of general education learning outcomes for students or faculty. Moving forward, the Communications subcommittee of the General Education Task Force is has been charged with developing an improved strategy to communicate the general education learning outcomes.

4.3.2 General Education Curricular Procedures

The curricular procedures for general education are wholly integrated into the University-wide curriculum development and approval process outlined in 4.2.3. The specific components associated with the general education curriculum are outlined below. Several sections of the [Guide to Curricular Procedures](#), which outline the course and program proposal and review process, detail the special review and policies related to general education courses. The SCCA has five standing subcommittees, three of which are dedicated to the review of general education courses:

1. [General Education](#) - reviews courses requesting a GA, GH, GS, GQ, GN or GHA designation,

2. [Writing Across the Curriculum](#) - reviews courses requesting a “W” designation which is part of the GWS requirement and GWS courses, and
3. [United States/International Cultures](#) - reviews courses requesting a US or IL cultures designation.

A course for which a general education designation is requested must be approved by the appropriate subcommittee prior to review by the SCCA. The subcommittees review the proposals for appropriate content and judge whether the course will meet the general criteria for general education in addition to the criteria specific to the particular domain (knowledge or skill).

4.3.3 Tradition of Writing and Speaking at Penn State

In 1985, Penn State’s Faculty Senate introduced the GWS requirement for all undergraduate students as part of its general education program. While this requirement has evolved over the years, Penn State’s focus on writing and speaking has never wavered. It is the objective of [GWS courses](#) to teach students to communicate information clearly and set forth their beliefs persuasively both orally and in writing. At the same time and in addition to the GWS requirement, the Senate also adopted “Writing Across the Curriculum.” Baccalaureate and associate degree students must complete at least three credits of writing-intensive courses prior to graduation. These courses must be selected from [approved writing-intensive, “W” courses](#) offered within the major or college of enrollment. Specific writing-intensive courses are built into the requirements for a major. Writing assignments in these courses are used as instruments for learning the subject matter, methods of inquiry, and types of writing associated with a given discipline (e.g., to gain experience in interpreting research results and/or to learn a kind of writing associated with a given profession). The requirements for “W” courses can be found at [online](#).

In addition to an introductory general education rhetoric course (ENGL 15), many Penn State majors require students to take an advanced general education writing course (ENGL 202) in which they are expected to bring some disciplinary expertise from their major coursework to their writing. The goals of ENGL 202 are to: 1) introduce students to typical kinds of writing in their respective disciplines (and typical ways disciplinary members go about writing), and 2) advance their skills as critical readers and effective writers, not only for use in college, but also in their professional, civic, and private lives. Five different offerings of [Advanced Writing in the Professions](#) are available for students that reflect five broad disciplinary categories: the Social Sciences, the Humanities, Technical Writing, Business Writing, and Literacy.

4.3.4 Quantitative Reasoning

The general education program at Penn State requires six credits of quantification. The objective is for the students to work with numbers to measure space, time, mass, forces, and probabilities; to reason quantitatively; and to apply basic mathematical processes to daily work and everyday living. In the review of a quantification course proposal, the General Education Committee of the Faculty Senate examines whether the proposal meets the general education course criteria stated above and in addition shows how the course will provide opportunities for students to develop informed judgments based on quantitative reasoning and assess the degree to which its stated quantification general education objectives are met.

4.3.5 Incorporating the Study of Values, Ethics, and Diverse Perspectives

Penn State's commitment to ethics education is reflected in the University's strategic plan [*Priorities for Excellence*](#), which emphasizes ethics education as an essential outcome of education at Penn State and a key element of student success. Every day brings news coverage of situations that involve professional and personal ethics and ethical dilemmas in all sorts of organizations and settings. Many of these situations are complex, and graduate and undergraduate students have opportunities to confront the issues while they are enrolled at Penn State. The University should ensure that no student graduates from Penn State without having had the opportunity to confront issues of ethics and ethical dilemmas, both theoretical and applied.

The study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives is woven throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum at Penn State. From New Student Orientation to capstone courses in the majors, and from first-year seminars to co-curricular leadership training, students have the opportunity to explore value systems, ethics and integrity, and diverse perspectives. Many majors have specific course requirements related to these areas. The General Education Task Force is currently deliberating over how best to incorporate the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives in any new proposal for the general education curriculum.

In order to further inculcate ethics in both academic programs and the University community writ large, the 2014/15 – 2018/19 strategic planning guidelines call for each unit to include information on practices that promote integrity and ethical behavior. Specifically, units are being asked to “describe the ways in which the unit...demonstrably accomplishes adherence to high ethical standards. This may be related to the extension of existing practices and policies or by planning and implementing new initiatives – relating to curriculum, hiring, professional and/or student development programming, and so on – that are appropriate to the mission of the unit” (Unit Strategic Planning Guidelines for 2014/15 through 2018/19, p. 4, available on ANGEL).

General Education Curricular Requirements

In the 2010-15 [*Framework to Foster Diversity*](#), Penn State identified developing a curriculum that fosters national and international cultural competency as a key challenge in achieving the University's diversity potential. The US and IL requirements in general education provide opportunities to increase intercultural competence and help students to recognize the existence and validity of diverse perspectives. Penn State now has [over 250 courses](#) that satisfy only IL, almost 200 that satisfy only US, and 120 that satisfy both, for a total of over 550 permanent courses, excluding study abroad and one-semester-only offerings. For additional progress made in this area, see the *Framework* strategic indicators [Change 5: Developing a Curriculum that Fosters U.S. and International Cultural Competencies](#).

The [Joint Diversity Awareness Task Force](#) was appointed in the spring of 2013 to provide recommendations to the Faculty Senate and administration to increase diversity awareness in the University community. To help achieve that goal, this group is working closely with the General Education Task Force to ensure that cultural competency remains a key component of any proposed general education curriculum revision.

Penn State Principles

The Pennsylvania State University is a community dedicated to personal and academic excellence. The Penn State Principles were developed to embody the values that Penn state hopes its students, faculty, staff, administration, and alumni possess. At the same time, the University is strongly committed to freedom of expression. Consequently, these Principles do not constitute University policy and are not intended to interfere in any way with an individual's academic or personal freedoms. The hope is, however, that individuals will voluntarily endorse these common principles, thereby contributing to the traditions and scholarly heritage left by those who preceded them, and will thus leave Penn State a better place for those who follow.

- I will respect the dignity of all individuals within the Penn State community.
- I will practice academic integrity.
- I will demonstrate social and personal responsibility.
- I will be responsible for my own academic progress and agree to comply with all University policies.

The Penn State Principles are introduced to new first-year students during orientation and each fall, Penn State's New Student Pulse Survey (available on ANGEL) assesses students' familiarity with the expectations outlined by the Principles. Unfortunately, the data indicate that only about half of students are "substantially" or "extremely" familiar with the Principles, indicating that additional efforts are needed if the Principles are to be fully integrated into the fabric of the Penn State culture.

Scholarship and Research Integrity

The Scholarship and Research Integrity program (SARI@PSU) at Penn State offers University researchers and scholars comprehensive, multi-level education in the responsible conduct of research, in a way that is tailored to address the issues faced by individual disciplines. Undergraduate researchers and all graduate students in research-based graduate degree programs are required to complete an appropriate online Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative course. Graduate students in all graduate degree programs (professional and research degrees) are also required to complete an additional 5 hours of discussion-based scholarly integrity training appropriate to the discipline. In addition, [SARI@PSU](#) provides links to a variety of background information, policies, PowerPoint presentations, case studies, online learning tools, and articles to support Responsible Conduct of Research training and education.

Rock Ethics Institute

There is a commitment to reinforce to the entire Penn State community the moral imperative of doing the right thing every time. The Rock Ethics Institute has responded to these challenges by providing faculty across Penn State with resources for integrating ethics into their classes. Their model of teaching the teachers is designed to provide pedagogical resources and training to a wide range of faculty, in order to encourage the incorporation of ethics issues within their classes. This model ensures that ethics education is not only relevant, but sustainable. The aim is to make ethics education effective by weaving it throughout the curriculum so that students learn to understand the centrality of ethics to all aspects of their life—personal, professional, and civic.

College and Campus Examples

The following are just a few illustrative examples of curricular programming around ethics and integrity.

- Numerous undergraduate and graduate courses in the [Smeal College of Business](#) address issues of ethics and integrity as they pertain to the business world, while others focus on ethical business issues as they pertain to specific disciplines, such as accounting and supply chain management. First drafted in partnership with students in the Penn State Smeal MBA Program in 2006, and then introduced to Smeal undergraduates in 2007, the Honor Code strengthens the connections between all members of the Smeal community.
- The College of Engineering maintains the [Engineering Ethics website](#). The site includes suggestions for faculty seeking to incorporate ethics into their classes, theories of ethics, decision processes for approaching ethical dilemmas, case studies for classroom use, and sample syllabi from benchmark institutions.
- The 18-credit interdisciplinary [ethics minor](#) in the Department of Philosophy includes fields such as philosophy, communication, engineering, law, psychology, sociology, anthropology, public policy, international studies, and environmental studies. Its students have the opportunity to learn about various ethical perspectives and challenges that cross disciplines.
- Starting in the fall 2013 semester, all First-Year Seminar courses in the College of Science participated in a program of classroom visits by representatives of the Office of Student Conduct who provide background on undergraduate ethics issues. This initiative grew out of several years of having many (but not all) students attend special [Know the Code](#) presentations in the evenings. This new model will help ensure that all students are introduced to ethical issues, especially regarding academic affairs, early in their undergraduate career at University Park.
- The Sheetz Fellows experience at Penn State Altoona offers "an education for leadership" in the best tradition of the Business program. Students selected for the program receive mentoring from select community leaders, special advising, and scholarships. Fellows must complete an [ethics course](#) and 80 hours of servant leadership.

Ethics and Diversity in the Co-curriculum

Various Colleges offer co-curricular opportunities that focus on values, ethics, and diverse perspectives. Just a few of the many examples, include:

- The Shoemaker Lecture series focusing on business ethics, Smeal College of Business;
- The Bronstein Lecture in Ethics and Public Relations, College of Communications;
- Diversity Speaker Series, Penn State Schuylkill; and
- Feminist Scholars Speaker Series and Culture Week, Penn State Erie, The Behrend College.

Center for Ethics and Religious Affairs

Penn State recognizes that the well-being of its students, faculty, and staff – and their ability to lead healthy, fulfilling lives – is a product of their intellectual, cultural, moral and spiritual development. The largest multi-faith center of its kind in the country, the Pasquerilla Spiritual Center is home to the Center for Ethics and Religious Affairs (CERA) at Penn State. CERA offers a welcoming, safe, inclusive environment for the Penn State community to explore a multitude of faith traditions in a compassionate, open-minded setting. CERA aims to promote an environment that stretches beyond tolerance to a genuine appreciation of and respect for religious and spiritual diversity.

As a multi-faith learning community, CERA is charged with providing programs and a venue for the ethical, religious, spiritual, and character development of the University community. CERA strives to build active, responsible citizens and raise the consciousness of the community. With a broad offering of worship opportunities, educational events, and cross-cultural programs that enrich the heart and mind, CERA hosts a culturally diverse multi-faith community and celebrates differences and similarities in a safe, supportive environment.

4.3.6 Evidence of Success in General Education

In spring 2011, the Assessment Coordinating Committee decided to pilot the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT) as a measure of critical thinking for Penn State students. The CAT was designed by researchers at Tennessee Tech University with support from the NSF. The test is unique among other critical thinking instruments because students answer questions with a short essay and the answers are scored by faculty members at the institution. Each question has its own rubric and essays are scored by multiple faculty.

In March 2012, the test was administered in eight English classes (Rhetoric and Composition and Effective Writing) and in an Engineering Design course at University Park. Twenty-four Penn State faculty members assisted in the scoring of students' responses during a series of scoring sessions.

The goal of the pilot was to determine the feasibility of using the CAT on a larger scale to provide evidence of the critical thinking and problem-solving skills of Penn State students. Based on the initial report from Tennessee Tech and additional analyses of the data by the Schreyer Institute, the Assessment Coordinating Committee has determined that it is feasible to use the CAT on a larger scale and additional use of the CAT is anticipated moving forward. Initial results indicate that students in upper division courses are achieving greater mean scores than first-year students, and that administration in 75-minute courses rather than 50 minute courses is most appropriate.

4.3.7 General Education Reform Process

The 2009/10 to 2014/15 University Strategic Plan called for a comprehensive review and re-evaluation of the goals and requirements of general education at Penn State. Since then, higher education has faced the pressures of increasing tuition and decreasing public funding, and the potential for transformation by newly emerging technologies. Responding to these challenges as opportunities, on May 13, 2013, then Interim Executive Vice President and Provost, Robert Pangborn, and the Chair of the Faculty Senate, Brent Yarnal, charged the General Education Planning and Oversight Task Force with the responsibility to develop a process for and to oversee the revision of the general education program at Penn State.

The Task Force was initially asked to complete the process in time to implement the new curriculum in fall of 2015, but it quickly became clear that more time would be needed to develop and implement any significant changes. Currently, the Task Force is working toward a fall 2016 implementation. Working closely with members of the Faculty Senate, the Task Force has developed an ambitious proposal to substantially revise the general education program at the University by focusing on clear and measurable learning outcomes and the development of a coherent curriculum that extends across all four years of a student's education. Any curricular changes proposed by the Task Force will require approval by the Faculty Senate.

From its inception, the Task Force has adopted a transparent and consultative approach, seeking to engage the Faculty Senate and the entire University in a discussion of the importance and value of general education at Penn State. To further its goals, the Task Force has designated seven subcommittees: 1) Themes and Explorations; 2) Faculty and Staff; 3) Student Opportunities and Constraints; 4) Assessment; 5) Budget; 6) Communications and Transparency; and 7) Logistics and Implementation. An [informational report](#) on the Task Force's preliminary ideas, questions, and timeline was delivered to the University Faculty Senate in November 2013 and a forensic discussion was held in March 2014. After additional work and extensive community consultation, a [progress report](#) was delivered to the Senate in October 2014. This informational report presented research and data compiled by the Task Force, as context and background for the Task Force's current thinking about changes to Penn State's General Education program. It also focused on options for change, including multiple curriculum prototypes and additional questions to consider.

4.4 Related Educational Activities

Standard 13. Related Educational Activities

"The institution's programs or activities that are characterized by particular content, focus, location, mode of delivery, or sponsorship meet appropriate standards."

~MSCHE, *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*

Penn State offers a vast array of educational programming through its multi-campus structure, non-traditional modes of delivery, and nondegree programs. In this section, a wide range of activities, their

interconnectedness, and their relationship to the overarching mission of the University are identified and discussed.

4.4.1 Curricular Integrity across Locations

As Pennsylvania's land-grant university, Penn State holds a unique responsibility to provide access, outreach, and public service to support the citizens of the Commonwealth and beyond. Through a system of unified campuses, the University meets the needs of a diverse demographic: one that spans rural and urban areas, specific regional contexts, a range of socio-economic groups, and varied student expectations. Penn State's unique structure, one university geographically dispersed, requires curricular integrity across locations to support an approach that facilitates the transition of undergraduate students from one campus to another. All Penn State campuses adhere to the land-grant mission and share and operationalize the curricular policies outlined in Section 4.2.3, to ensure curricular integrity and consistency across campuses.

While Penn State campuses provide a wide range of four-year degree programs, the 2+2 model is the foundation of all academic programming. The campuses provide access for students to complete the first two years of study for the University's 160 baccalaureate majors. Historically, 60% of all undergraduate students enroll at a Commonwealth Campus with the intent of completing their degree at another campus. The 2+2 model provides students the opportunity to transition from one campus to another with the benefit of an integrated curriculum that distinguishes Penn State among its peers, and perhaps all institutions of higher education. Approximately 5,000 students change their campus location annually.

Academic information is shared across campuses and colleges to insure consistency and integrity. [Recommended academic plans](#), maintained by the colleges, assist students and advisers in planning students' short- and long-range schedules, registrars and departments in planning course offerings, and deans in determining when students should change to another campus. In addition, each college and campus identifies a representative for each disciplinary area who is responsible for communicating academic information to faculty and students across the University. Details regarding the responsibilities of the representatives are available as part of the [College, Campus, and Administrative Advising Information and Communications policy](#). An example of this policy in best practice is demonstrated by the College of Agricultural Sciences which ensures communication across campuses through its [CAS Commonwealth Campuses website](#). The site includes a weekly electronic newsletter forwarded to students and faculty at other campuses. Several colleges sponsor campus visits each semester to meet with faculty and students, and many host annual meetings for faculty and advisers at University Park.

The University admits first-semester baccalaureate degree candidates to one of 20 undergraduate campuses that provide the courses required for the first and second years of study. Generally, students are expected to complete two full years of academic work at their initial campus. Students typically declare their academic majors in the middle of their second year of enrollment. Students are informed of the campuses at which each major may be completed. If a student declares a major that is not offered at the student's current campus, the student will be required to change to an appropriate campus. Information regarding the entrance to major and change of campus process is provided to students by

the Office of Undergraduate Education [online](#) and throughout the [DUS Advising Handbook](#). Procedures regarding change of campus are documented in the [Academic Administrative Policies and Procedures](#) D2 Entrance to Major and Upper Division Campus and D5 Early and Temporary Change of Campus.

4.4.2 Delivery Units

Authority for all course development and academic programming rests with the academic colleges. Academic program authority may be the responsibility of a single college or shared among several colleges and is granted by the Executive Vice President and Provost through the Office of Undergraduate Education or the Graduate School and by the Faculty Senate. This is distinguished from program delivery which may be accomplished through residence-based instruction, or delivery through the World Campus or Continuing Education.

The World Campus, described in Section 4.2.7, is an online delivery unit for academic programs extended by the colleges. The colleges oversee course development and instruction to insure consistency with residential offerings. The colleges and the Graduate School manage all academic records and the conferral of degrees for World Campus undergraduate and graduate students, respectively.

The statewide Continuing Education network is responsible for delivering credit and noncredit programming throughout the Commonwealth, mostly to nontraditional audiences of adult students, workforce professionals and youth groups. Delivery methods include both residence-based instruction and synchronized video, known as the Video Learning Network, which makes it possible to share courses and extend the reach of faculty across campuses. Continuing Education was recently reorganized as a result of the Core Council review. The [Core Council recommended](#) that academic units have “greater control” of continuing education programs and that “academic priorities” as reflected by the academic units should drive decisions regarding credit and noncredit programming. A subsequent task force charged by the Vice Presidents for Outreach and Commonwealth Campuses provided input for the reorganization of Continuing Education at the campuses, and recommended that all directors of Continuing Education report to the chancellors at their respective campus to further insure academic oversight. This reorganization was completed in 2014.

Student Verification

All students accessing the virtual learning environments used by the World Campus must authenticate using their assigned Penn State web access user ID and password. This is the same ID and password that students use when registering for classes, checking grades, and requesting transcripts. The World Campus maintains a list of proctors at various locations across the country that are called on to proctor assessments in specific courses. As software and hardware identity management solutions emerge, the World Campus continues to explore new solutions for identity management at a distance.

Learning Resources for Distance Education

Distance education students have similar access to learning resources to that of the University's on-site students. The library has a section on their website dedicated to serving students at a distance and they support students and faculty through the e-reserves system to assure easy access to resources related to specific courses. Further, distance education uses a variety of tools to provide for a highly engaged interactive experience with the instructors and fellow students (Blackboard Collaborate, YouSeeU, Wikis, and Blogs). Student access to all of these tools is via the University's learning management system, which allows access only to information by students in the associated class. Also, textbook and other related materials are handled by the University's online bookstore.

The World Campus shares many of the [resources](#) available to resident students at any of the campus locations. Examples of these resources include the ANGEL course management system, Lynda.com training materials, and online library services. World Campus also invests in online learner-specific resources, such as specialized advising and career counseling personnel, tutoring services, and a helpdesk. Specialized programs and staff exist to support a variety of students, such as military and veterans, international students, corporate education, and students with disabilities.

In addition to resources provided by World Campus, centralized units that support resident students also provide access to many of the same services for students at a distance through technology-assisted methods. For example, the Graduate Writing Center, sponsored by the Graduate School, offers individualized counseling for graduate students in online programs to improve their professional writing through Skype sessions with senior doctoral teaching assistants in English.

Technical and Physical Plant Facilities

The World Campus is administratively located at University Park. The technical infrastructure of the University (networking, web space, servers, student services, etc.) supports both resident and online students simultaneously. The World Campus requires some specialized infrastructure in terms of tools and technologies to support student learning, such as a Content Management System to manage the growing catalog of online course offerings.

Support for Faculty

Penn State faculty who teach through the World Campus are supported collaboratively by their programs and departments and through the services of the World Campus Faculty Development unit. These services include 1) free, online skills training courses to improve online teaching and learning, 2) onboarding for new faculty, 3) mentoring, and 4) supporting scholarly life (e.g., providing research grants and travel funds) for virtual or remote faculty.

The World Campus offers several faculty development courses to help faculty be successful online instructors. In addition to individual courses, the World Campus offers a [Certificate for Online Teaching](#). The core focus areas for online instructor professional development include familiarity with Penn State resources, accessibility considerations, readiness assessment for teaching online, experiencing an online course as a student, and instructor online presence. The World Campus also runs a mentoring program

for new online instructors, matching them with experienced online instructors. With the projected growth of the World Campus, additional programs are in the conceptualization phase to help onboard online instructors to all facets of the World Campus.

Impact on Institutional Resources

The World Campus is a strategic resource for the institution and its revenue has funded numerous positions in all areas of the institution in order to insure that Penn State's high standards for admissions, the registration process, student advising, teaching and research, and technical support are maintained. As such, the revenue, resources, and content produced by the World Campus and its academic partners have been shared and reinvested in the institution and its core mission and goals.

The World Campus is a complete cost recovery unit. In 2013/14, revenue through the World Campus was estimated at \$107.6 million, with \$62 million (approximately 58%) shared back to the colleges and campuses that offer online programs. Colleges have the option of leveraging World Campus resources to design and develop online courses (with the assistance of a faculty member), or to leverage college-level resources for the design of courses. These two options drive how revenue is allocated between World Campus and the originating College or Campus. For a more detailed explanation of how World Campus operates, please see the 2013 Faculty Senate report, [*Penn State World Campus: Today and Tomorrow*](#).

4.4.3 Identifying and Supporting Students who Need Remediation

Penn State has numerous processes for identifying and assisting students who need academic support to be successful. Because there are so many, only a selection of these is included in this report and they are described in brief. Additional detail is available from the indicated web pages. Also, the admissions and testing aspects of these processes are further addressed in Chapter 5. This section focuses on how Penn State provides remediation to students who need it.

Placement Testing and Advising

Upon acceptance of admission to Penn State, all new baccalaureate and associate degree students are evaluated to determine the appropriate placement in foundation courses. Placement in mathematics, English, and chemistry (if required for the student's major) courses is determined by either participation in placement examinations developed and administered by the University or results of the SAT Writing examination. Detailed information about these placement exams is described later in this self-study in Section 5.2.5, Diagnostic Testing and Ongoing Assessment of Student Success. This section focuses on the steps taken by the University when the results of these diagnostics suggest that a student needs remediation in one or more areas.

Developmental Courses

A number of developmental courses are offered at Penn State. These include Writing Skills (ENGL 004), Writing Tutorial (ENGL 005, 1 credit), Developmental Mathematics (MATH 001, 6 credits), Elementary Geometry with Problem Solving (MATH 002, 4 credits), and Math Basic Skills (MATH 003, 3 credits), Intermediate Algebra (MATH 004). These courses are provided to help underprepared students' progress

toward college-level math and may not be used to meet the basic minimum requirements for a baccalaureate degree program.

- Two hundred and seventy-six developmental sections were offered in fall 2010.
- On average, 80% of students pass ENGL 004, 74% pass MATH 003, and 67% pass MATH 004 on their first attempt.
- Eighty-two percent of ENGL 004 students who enrolled in ENGL 015 passed the course.
- MATH 003 students who enrolled in a second math course had pass rates ranging from 48% to 67%.
- Pass rates for students who completed MATH 004 ranged from 58% to 62% in their second course.
- At the Commonwealth Campuses, approximately one-third of fall 2006 cohort of students taking developmental courses graduated compared to 54% of all students.

As part of Penn State's continued commitment to opening the doors of higher education to the widest possible audience, Madlyn Hanes, Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses, charged a Working Group for Developmental Course Offerings in 2013 to: 1) assess the current approach to developmental instruction, 2) identify best practices, 3) evaluate the needs of students in order to recommend course alternatives, 4) identify the preferred role of the University Learning Centers, and 5) recommend a future course of action.

After reviewing the literature, analyzing the data from fall 2006 and 2010, and interviewing faculty and staff from across the University, the Working Group made the following preliminary recommendations.

- Establish a Standing Committee to coordinate pilot projects; refine student assessment; conduct long-term studies on the effectiveness of innovations; and coordinate the implementation of developmental education best practices across the campuses.
- Add credit-bearing course options to provide academic assistance to "gray zone" students placed in ENGL 004 or ENGL 015.
- Explore possibilities to reduce the number of campus locations that offer MATH 001 and MATH 003, with the eventual goal of eliminating the courses completely.
- Adopt an adaptive diagnostic instrument for mathematics placement that targets specific skill areas where students are deficient to replace the current assessment.
- Create additional policies to help students overcome pre-college math deficiencies.
- Improve advising to inform students who place into MATH 004 and wish to pursue majors that require calculus that they will need at least one additional year to complete their degree requirements and encourage them to pursue another major.
- Establish a framework for professional development of faculty and learning center staff.

In 2013/14, Penn State began implementation of a new mathematics placement test to replace the internally developed and housed system that had been used since 2002. The new math placement exam is [ALEKS](#) (Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces) an online adaptive program that provides both placement testing and remediation. The decision to pursue a vended placement and remediation solution

was made at the urging of the Mathematics Department, in consultation with Undergraduate Education, The University Academic Measurement Committee, the University Advising Council, and Information Technology Services.

ALEKS is an adaptive test, which means that no two students will take identical tests. The test is designed to probe for students' areas of strength and weakness. Areas needing strengthening are immediately revealed to students and they are immediately provided the opportunity to use ALEKS online learning modules to learn the needed content and to re-test after completing an amount of review determined by the Math Department. Each student will have a maximum of two remediation opportunities free of charge. Since the placement tests are individualized for each student, the placement results are much finer-grained than with the earlier model and more accurately point students to courses where they are likely to be successful. Students will have the ability to contact an adviser to counsel them on the value of self-remediation.

Online Student Progress Report

The student [Early Progress Report](#) (EPR) system communicates academic performance early in the semester to first-year students and their academic advisers. The online system is mounted on the eLion platform and strives to achieve early intervention for at-risk students while encouraging them to use existing resources to promote beneficial, evidence-based interventions.

Students receive notification between the third and sixth week of the semester. Notification is based on reports provided by faculty teaching first-year students. Students receiving reports are encouraged to meet with their course instructor and with their academic adviser. Reports are delivered early to address problems such as absenteeism, missed assignments, and low test scores. The eLion platform provides links to Penn State resources including learning centers, tutoring services and peer counseling services. Assessment and monitoring capabilities are also built into the EPR system. Two types of real-time operational monitoring reports are generated, by instructor and by student. These are used at the unit level (colleges, departments, programs, campuses) each semester.

Penn State Learning and Campus Support Services

At University Park, [Penn State Learning](#) is a multi-disciplinary academic assistance program that is staffed by peer tutors who are themselves undergraduates, by scholars-in-residence who are content experts in their respective fields, and by professional and administrative staff members. Penn State Learning supports individual and group tutoring, learning community development, and collaborative projects with academic departments to assess learning and improve academic assistance resources for undergraduates. For example, free tutoring is available in accounting, Chinese, computer science, economics, French, Italian, Japanese, mathematics, public speaking, sciences, Spanish, statistics, and writing.

The Commonwealth Campuses each have their own learning centers, though the names of these offices vary. Some are staffed by faculty and others have full-time staff directors. Examples include:

- Penn State Altoona [Robert L. Smith Learning Resources Center](#);

- Penn State DuBois [Center for Undergraduate Excellence](#), and the;
- [Writing Center](#) at Penn State Great Valley, a special mission campus that offers graduate professional studies.

Penn State's World Campus offers online tutoring in writing and several math-related fields, as well as Transitions, a college and career preparation class that eases students into the learning environment, while helping to improve basic skills, such as computer, study skills, and research.

Comprehensive Studies Program and Educational Opportunity Programs

The [Comprehensive Studies Program and Educational Opportunity Program](#) are alternate admission programs for Pennsylvania students with financial need who may have academic challenges due to environmental, socioeconomic, and disruption issues. Students in these programs receive diagnostic and placement services for basic skill courses in English, math, and reading; study skills course work; tutoring; counseling; and educational grant funding.

Summer Bridge Programs

A variety of summer bridge programs for students who place into developmental courses are available at various Penn State locations. These programs seek to provide a firm foundation in math and writing skills, as well as strategies for college success. Examples include:

- Penn State Abington MAP, a noncredit summer math preparation program;
- Penn State Brandywine LAUNCH, Math Boot Camp, Math Tune-Up for Adult Learners and Post-Baccalaureate Students, and Campus College Connection Program;
- Penn State Hazleton Summer Success program offers free remedial instruction in math and English based on students' placement test scores; and
- Penn State Mont Alto Jump Start virtual summer program provides English and math modules and assistance from peer mentors and a learning specialist; and an early entrance experience in which students arrive 3-5 days prior to other new students and receive classroom experiences, specialized college skills programs, and social activities.

iStudy for Success

The [iStudy](#) online tutorials are designed to advance students' knowledge and skills in areas that can promote overall academic achievement, such as studying, communicating, and career planning. Faculty and instructors can use the tutorials to help students adjust to college curricula and expectations. Students can use iStudy tutorials outside of academic coursework and subjects include academic integrity, active reading, basic statistics, and test anxiety.

Support for Specific Populations

The [Morgan Academic Support Center for Student-Athletes](#) offers a comprehensive academic support program that focuses on building skills to be a successful student-athlete, to adjust to the many transitions during the undergraduate experience, and to prepare for life after intercollegiate sports. In addition to

traditional academic counseling, tutoring, and study skills sessions, the Morgan Center completes regular progress reports using [GradesFirst](#) for all student athletes, not just those in the first year. Similarly, the Schreyer Honors College students and their advisers receive regular progress reports that provide an early warning of unacceptable progress. Some of Penn State's other colleges also send out "academic difficulty" reports of students with semester or cumulative GPAs below a specific threshold. For example, the Eberly College of Science puts academic holds on such students and requires an adviser to sign off in order to lift the hold. For minority students, Penn State's [Multicultural Resource Center](#) provides academic support and the [Student Support Services Program](#) is a federally funded TRIO program serving students who are from low-income backgrounds, or who are first generation college students (from families where their parents or guardians do not have a four year college degree), or students who have a disability.

Additional Support at the Commonwealth Campuses

Additional developmental support is available at the Commonwealth Campuses. Resources and programs vary from campus to campus, but some examples are provided here.

- Penn State Erie, The Behrend College: Faculty can access an online form to notify the Retention Coordinator when a student is not doing well in a course and the Coordinator will follow up with the student.
- Penn State DuBois: After the Early Progress Reporting stage, faculty participate in a "Missing class letter program" encouraging students to meet with their advisers.
- Penn State Mont Alto: An Early Intervention Team made up of student services staff, advisers, and faculty, has been established to identify at-risk students and to provide appropriate support and an academic year program consisting of a common learning experience (First-Year Seminar, Coping with College, Intermediate Algebra, and Basic Writing Skills), support from peer mentors and a learning specialist, and opportunities for specialized courses such as Developmental Listening (CAS 126) and Effective Career Decision Making (CN ED 100)
- Penn State New Kensington: An eight-week program for provisional students that focuses on basic English and math skills, as well as college-readiness skills.

4.4.4 Experiential and Engaged Learning

As a land-grant institution, Penn State has long had as part of its stated mission "...to promote the liberal and practical education..." of students "...in all of the pursuits and professions of life." This has meant that Penn State has always recognized that deep learning happens in all sorts of non-classroom environments. In 2013, Penn State made a significant commitment to promoting engaged and experiential learning. With University-level task forces working to find ways to engage students outside of the classroom during their formal educational experience and to recognize the experiential learning that many students bring with them to campus, the University is on the verge of a significant breakthrough in the support and recognition of these experiences, both for students and faculty.

The Faculty Senate has recently produced thoroughly researched studies of the state of both internships and on undergraduate research (see Section 4.2.6 for more information). In addition, a Task Force to study the current status and potential growth of service learning and other high-impact experiences –

generalized and expanded to the wider conceptual framework of engaged scholarship – produced a comprehensive study, and has led to wider discussions of incorporating that general idea into the student educational experience (which would include internships, research, and many other kinds of experiential learning.) These discussions are also part of a wider re-envisioning of the structure of general education at Penn State which is currently underway (see Section 4.3.7). One result of this extensive exploration is the realization that many PSU students already take advantage of one or more components of engaged scholarship. This has led some units, such as the [Eberly College of Science](#), to include such experiences in their expected outcomes.

Engaged Scholarship Initiative

Engaged scholarship at Penn State is defined as academically based out-of-classroom learning experiences such as undergraduate research, internships, service learning, community-based learning, capstone courses, and study abroad. Research clearly shows that these types of high-impact learning experiences reinforce and complement classroom learning; contribute to student academic, personal, and social growth and development; foster integration into university life; and contribute to continued success after graduation. Penn State students, faculty, and staff are involved in a wide variety of engaged scholarship activities. Two of the most well-known include the [Humanitarian Engineering and Social Entrepreneurship](#), and the [Pittsburgh Landscape Architecture Studio](#).

Since summer 2011, Penn State has been involved in a strategic effort to weave engaged scholarship into the fabric of the institution. Conceptualized and sponsored by the Vice Presidents of Outreach, Student Affairs, and Undergraduate Education, a unique engaged scholarship triad found nowhere else in higher education, the long-term goal of the initiative is to provide every student, including World Campus distance learners, with at least one if not multiple engaged scholarship experiences. The institutional vision is that Penn State will be the leading public institution for undergraduate engaged scholarship, inspiring students to graduate as informed, engaged, globally knowledgeable citizens, a vision that is vital to reimagining Penn State's 21st century land-grant mission. To achieve this vision, the Executive Vice President and Provost charged the University Council on Engaged Scholarship to provide advice and guidance on the institutionalization process. The Council and its six sub-committees are working diligently to collaborate with the many players involved in the institutionalization process, including student leaders across the campuses, the Board of Trustees, Faculty Senate, Colleges, Departments, Centers and Initiatives, and other University-wide efforts such as the General Education Task Force and the Joint Diversity Awareness Task Force.

Recognizing the potential of engaged scholarship to contribute to deepening understanding of the process of student success, one of the biggest opportunities moving forward is scalability. Penn State's current undergraduate enrollment includes approximately 76,000 residential students and 6,245 distance learning students. In order to achieve Penn State's goals for engaged scholarship, the Task Force has developed a number of goals.

- Embed engaged scholarship in the University strategic plan;
- Embed engaged scholarship in general education;

- Develop an Office of Engaged Scholarship with significant, dynamic web presence, dedicated space, robust staffing, and secure funding;
- Embed robust, data-driven assessment into all facets of engaged scholarship at Penn State;
- Harness the potential of Penn State’s online educational delivery system to pioneer cost-effective engaged scholarship opportunities for Penn State undergraduate students;
- Educate administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends, donors, community members, and legislators about engaged scholarship;
- Secure funding for faculty, staff, and student engaged scholarship awards; and
- Foster development opportunities for engaged scholarship by working with the Board of Trustees, communities, industry, local, state and federal governments, and global partners.

These activities are now under the leadership of the Council on Engaged Scholarship, whose members presented a [review of their work](#) at the October, 2013 Faculty Senate meeting. The inaugural Engaged Scholarship Symposium, sponsored by the University Faculty Senate and the Council on Engaged Scholarship, was held on March 25, 2014 and attracted more than 200 Penn State faculty, staff, and students from Penn state’s 24 campuses. The Symposium provided an opportunity to learn more about engaged scholarship and how it enriches student learning.

As a founding member of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium, Penn State, through the Council on Engaged Scholarship and Outreach and Online Education, plays a significant leadership role in the international and national engagement scholarship arena.

Policies and Procedures: Testing and Learning

Penn State has a well-developed suite of policies, procedures, structures, and mechanisms that enable the efficient administration of all aspects of the University; these are described in Chapters 2 and 3. This section focuses on policies and procedures most relevant to teaching and learning. Penn State has a variety of policies and procedures that determine how faculty involvement in experiential and engaged learning is documented and rewarded.

Faculty Procedures

The University’s [Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Regulations](#) specifically note “Outreach activities should be properly documented and considered in the promotion and tenure process: Under service when they are mostly service, under teaching when they involve teaching, and under research and scholarship when they result in publication or activity that can be valued in those terms” (p. 8). None of the academic units use the term “engaged scholarship” because that terminology and definition have only recently been adopted at Penn State. However, all use comparable language.

Each of the three primary sections of the dossier (teaching, research, and service) provides opportunities to include evidence of community engagement and the scholarship of engagement. Each college and campus has its own procedures that serve to tailor dossiers to meet disciplinary expectations. Many college and campus promotion and tenure procedures mention public service, outreach, and service learning. Excerpts from two colleges are provided below.

- The [College of Arts and Architecture](#): “The College regards the quality of teaching, the quality of research or creative accomplishment, and the quality of outreach and public service all to be important. The integration of these three elements is also highly valued.” (p. 3)
- The [College of Education](#): “The committee will judge regular classroom instruction and courses and workshops taught in support of outreach-based instruction, including continuing and distance education, service learning courses, international programs, and Cooperative Extension programs...” (p. 3).

Student Procedures

The [Guide to Curricular Procedures](#) specifies the procedures by which students may obtain credit for experiential learning, including course designations for research topics, internships, independent studies, and foreign studies (Section 1.D.2. Common Course numbers). Baccalaureate and associate degree students may satisfy their general education course requirements for United States Cultures (US) and International Cultures (IL) through experiential learning by petition or credit acquisition through their college advising office or college dean’s office. While Penn State does not currently have a centralized source of information for faculty, students, and academic advisers with the broad array of engaged scholarship opportunities, there is broad interest in and support for development of such a resource through the Council on Engaged Scholarship.

Study Abroad/Global Programs

The University Office of Global Programs (UOGP), overseen by the Vice Provost for Global Programs, provides support and oversight for all of Penn State's international engagements, which make up a key component of Penn State’s experiential and engaged learning opportunities. UOGP manages education abroad programs; hosts international students and scholars; and facilitates the University's international partnerships around the world. Penn State students can choose from hundreds of international programs in more than 45 countries around the world and earn Penn State credit. [Every program](#) has been reviewed and approved by Penn State. Programs vary in length: semester, academic-year, summer; and include embedded programs that provide a brief international trip as a minor component of the course. Detailed information regarding the study abroad initiatives is available [online](#).

4.4.5 Certificate Programs

Consistent with the University’s land-grant mission, credit and noncredit certificates provide higher education access and opportunity for a diverse group of students, including many adult students. Certificates are awarded for completion of courses in an area of specialty or competency within a discipline or field of study. Each certificate consists of a sequence or group of courses developed by the faculty members of the offering academic unit. Certificates often reflect emerging academic areas or necessary professional development requirements. The University, through its academic units, offers nearly 300 undergraduate and graduate certificate programs across the Commonwealth. The academic procedures regarding certificate development and delivery (Section [M12](#)) were revised in 2011. All certificates (credit and noncredit) must be authorized by a degree-granting academic unit of the University. Academic deans, campus college chancellors, and, for the campuses of the University College,

the Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses, are charged with approving all undergraduate certificates and are responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the certificate adhere to the guidelines and national standards for certificate delivery.

4.4.6 Noncredit Offerings

Noncredit programs are offered at all Penn State locations. Rather than a central hub for noncredit programs, the programs are administered by individual colleges, units and campuses. There are events/lectures offered that may or may not be counted as enrollments. AD03, [Conducting Educational Programs Using the Name of the University](#), is the policy that guides all noncredit programming. During fiscal year 2013/14 there were 70,996 enrollees in noncredit programs at all locations. There are also 41 active noncredit certificate programs available. With a few exceptions (e.g., sport camps), all programs are expected to use the Noncredit Registration System to ensure the official record is maintained by the Registrar. All noncredit programs using the registration system will receive a “grade” after successful completion of the program. The efficiency of the system was significantly enhanced in 2012 with the transition from the previous manual system, to an online system, Destiny One.

All noncredit programs must have an academic home. The academic home is responsible for reviewing the program goals, objectives, and expectations for student learning and periodically assessing the outcomes. The academic home is also responsible for approving all instructors. Noncredit certificates are considered for transferability to a credit course using prior learning assessment. This is the responsibility of the academic unit. The learner must demonstrate competence in each of the credit learning objectives through a portfolio, demonstration, or successful completion of an examination.

Assessment of the impact on the institution’s resources is the responsibility of each unit, college, or campus. The Noncredit Governance Team chaired by the University Registrar and Director of Conferences has been charged with evaluating processes to increase consistency across all units where noncredit programs are offered. The team has representation from the majority of the units offering noncredit programming.

4.4.7 Contractual Relationships and Affiliated Providers

Penn State contracts with nonprofit organizations and other universities in the U.S. and abroad that administer study abroad programs or provide exchange opportunities for students at U.S. colleges and universities. The Institute for the International Education of Students, Council on International Educational Exchange, and Arcadia University through its College of Global Studies, are among several providers and universities that enroll Penn State students in study abroad programs. All programs are proposed by Penn State academic units which are responsible for assessing academic content. Students may register for courses at affiliated study centers and/or in courses delivered by accredited universities. Providers offer Penn State students pre-departure advising, visa assistance, on-site orientation, and in many instances, field trips, volunteer opportunities and internships. All providers monitor health and safety matters. These study abroad activities, reviewed and administered by the UOGP, are integral to the University’s mission to serve a wider public by educating global citizens.

As described above in Section 4.2.7, Growth and Expansion of the World Campus, Penn State is working with Coursera, which serves as a *delivery vehicle* for Penn State's MOOCs. The relationship with Coursera is not addressed in depth here, however, because these courses are still taught and controlled by Penn State faculty.

4.5 Summary of Findings

Research Question 1: How well articulated are the program goals and learning objectives of majors, minors, general education, and co-curricular experiences? What is the framework that ensures that curriculum is aligned with the program goals and learning objectives?

As addressed in this chapter, educational offerings and experiences are well articulated, and are consistent with the objectives of improving the well-being and health of individuals and communities in Pennsylvania, the nation and the world through integrated programs of teaching, research and service. Further, those objectives are widely understood by members of the Penn State community.

At the programmatic level, the goals and learning objectives of major, minor and general education courses are aligned with the curriculum through the University's thorough and consultative program and course approval process described in Section 4.2.3. All program proposals require an articulation of program goals and learning objectives and the approval process at the departmental, university and faculty senate levels ensure that the curricula align with the articulated objectives.

With regard to general education, the program goals and learning objectives are shared across the University, and the General Education Subcommittee of the SCCA ensures that they are effectively integrated into the curriculum during the course approval process (see section 4.3.2). Particular attention in this area has historically been paid to cultivating excellent writing and speaking skills. The GWS and "Writing Across the Curriculum" requirements ensure that these goals are met by every Penn State student. However, attention is needed to address the delay in availability of the ENGL 202 writing courses until the junior year for most students. Similarly, the University has adopted a specific set of goals and objectives related to Quantitative Reasoning (4.3.4) that are integrated into the general education curriculum through the General Education Subcommittee of the SCCA.

Penn State's commitment to fostering diversity, discussed in section 4.3.5, is built into the general education curriculum through the US and IL requirements monitored and approved by the General Education Subcommittee. Cultivating an appreciation for diversity could be more effectively integrated into a broader range of courses beyond general education if it is as central to the mission of the University as the Framework to Foster Diversity indicates.

Further, despite attempts to fold the Penn State Principles into New Student Orientation and, more broadly, into the wider curriculum, the evidence suggests that students remain relatively

unfamiliar with the Penn State Principles, as suggested in Section 4.3.5. Ethics education needs to be more effectively incorporated into the Penn State curriculum both in general education and in the disciplines. The inclusion of ethics in the 2014 guidelines for strategic planning may serve as a good start toward this goal.

Research Question 2: How well communicated to the students and faculty are the program goals and learning objectives, including general education?

As outlined in Sections 4.2.4 and 4.3.1, program goals and learning objectives are required by policy and communicated to multiple audiences via a variety of formats. These include both print and digital resources, academic and co-curricular programming, faculty development opportunities, student orientations, and advising. However, it is the impression of the Steering Committee that while the sources for this information are numerous, too many faculty members and students remain ill-informed regarding program goals and learning objectives, particularly in the general education program. However, this position is based on largely personal and anecdotal evidence. In order to improve in this area, the University's General Education Task Force is working both to evaluate the level of understanding that both faculty and students have of the current general education program goals and to develop a systematic strategy for educating the community about the goals of any new or revised general education curriculum that should emerge. Penn State should continue to require learning goals at the course and program level and to communicate these widely.

Research Question 3: What institutional mechanisms are in place to ensure periodic, meaningful, systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of curricular and co-curricular offerings and experiences? How is action taken on the results of these assessment processes?

As noted in section 4.2.6, there is indeed a strong culture of assessment at Penn State. This includes annual program assessment reports required of every department, which ask (in broad terms) two types of questions, namely:

1. What did you learn from last year's questions, and answers, and what impact has that had on your program?
2. What will you measure in the coming year related to the achievement of your stated program goals?

This type of institutional expectation has resulted in many departments being more open to examining in a regular way their educational goals, strategies for achieving those goals, and the outcomes of their students.

The cyclic strategic planning process, as it relates to Penn State's educational mission, requires input from all levels of the University, starting at the department/program level, feeding into college or campus plans, combined into an institutional-wide document which helps guide the institution. Individual departments, programs, and colleges often interact with external advisory

groups to regularly review program goals and student learning outcomes. Student Affairs and Undergraduate Education are charged with many aspects of co-curricular assessment.

Research Question 4: In view of the changing landscape of higher education in general, and the needs and context of the Commonwealth in particular, how is the University positioning itself, especially with regard to the flexibility of the curriculum and variety of delivery methods?

Section 4.2.7 summarizes recent and ongoing strategic initiatives designed to explore the issues, challenges and opportunities that confront all of higher education, while at the same time, giving special attention to matters of particular relevance to Penn State. The Core Council, Blue and White Vision Council, and University Budget Planning Task Force were charged to think boldly and to insure Penn State's emergence as a stronger, sustainable institution. Maintaining its commitment to the land-grant mission and providing affordable access to higher education within Pennsylvania and beyond remain in the forefront of the University's priorities.

Emerging recommendations from these initiatives include greater deployment of learning technologies into the classroom, expansion of digital multi-media resources, consolidation of academic programs, sharing academic and administrative resources across Penn State, and changes in pedagogy with emphasis on online and blended learning. Penn State, recognized for its excellence in residential education and for innovative approaches to online and technology enhanced learning, is well positioned to implement these initiatives. The Center for Online Innovation in Learning provides a research-based rigor for future programs.

The planned expansion of the World Campus, also outlined in Section 4.2.7, will add to the University's capacity to develop creative online pedagogies. Additional delivery units, including the eLearning Cooperative and Video Learning Network, provide additional mechanisms for blended learning initiatives, as well as opportunities to extend and share faculty expertise among Penn State's unique campus structure.

Section 4.2.4 outlines policies intended to insure that emerging opportunities remain embedded within the academic enterprise of the University. It is the belief of the self-study committee that the University must insure this commitment by assessing and adapting long-standing policies and procedures to encourage new ideas and to continue Penn State's tradition of excellence in teaching and learning.

Research Question 5: What processes are there to ensure that the quality and rigor of teaching and learning are comparably high across campuses and delivery methods?

Penn State's unique organizational structure, uniformity of the curriculum across all locations, and a promotion and tenure process that applies to all academic units ensures that the quality of teaching is assessed uniformly across all locations (Section 4.2.5).

Section 4.4.1 describes Penn State’s approach to “one university geographically dispersed” where the University’s students receive a Penn State degree, not a degree from a specific campus. The University’s ongoing efforts to maintain curricular integrity through the activities of the University Faculty Senate and ACUE (Section 4.2.3) ensure that Penn State students obtaining a degree at any location receive a comparable education.

Even though each college has local procedures appropriate for its academic disciplines, uniform adherence to University-level policies ensures conformity across locations and disciplines. All faculty are expected to undergo peer evaluation and all utilize a single student ratings instrument. While student ratings are not intended to be used to compare colleges or departments, the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence provides [summary data](#) on response rates and overall ratings at the request of the University Faculty Senate.

Quality across delivery units is ensured because academic units maintain authority over any curriculum offered through another delivery unit such as the World Campus. Sharing of best practices across delivery units for online courses is facilitated by the website maintained by Penn State’s Online Coordinating Council (see Section 4.2.5).

It is the judgment of the Steering Committee that Penn State meets Standards 11, 12, and 13, which the self-study groups under Chapter 4, Educational Context and Offerings. Discussion around the three standards provides evidence of the range and diversity of the educational offerings at Penn State, and the related policies and resources. Also presented are recommendations for improvement and suggested directions for new areas of opportunity.

The chapter focused primarily on process, describing relevant policies, procedures, and resources related to the three standards outlined above. Evidence from the assessment and evaluation of these areas is presented in Chapter 5, Student Experience.

5. Student Experience

Standards

8. Student Admissions and Retention

9. Student Support Services

14. Assessment of Student Learning

This chapter evaluates the extent to which Penn State meets Standards 8, 9, and 14, which the self-study organizes under the heading of Student Experience. In discussing the three standards, the goal is to describe the student experience and to analyze the assessment Penn State conducts to maintain and improve educational quality. This chapter includes an examination of the admissions process and the college experience, which encompass both curricular and co-curricular domains. Through this analysis the University has assessed how well objectives are being met, but more importantly it now has a better understanding of enhancements that can be made to improve student success at Penn State.

5.1 Research Questions

The following research questions cut across the Steering Committee's assessment of Penn State's strengths and weaknesses with respect to the three standards addressed in this chapter.

1. What are Penn State's processes and strategies for enrollment management and how do these processes and strategies help the University to achieve its admissions and retention goals?
2. How, and how well, is the University positioning itself to respond to demographic and economic shifts in Pennsylvania, nationally, and globally, especially in the areas of residential instruction enrollments, World Campus enrollments, the interface of enrollments between degree and non-degree programs, and emerging online learning options (MOOC's, certificates, and badge credentialing)?
3. How is Penn State developing and achieving its goals to provide access for middle/low income and traditionally under-represented students in the Commonwealth?
4. What post-admission diagnostic and placement tests are used to guide the placement of first-year students into courses? How is the effectiveness of this testing assessed?
5. How has Penn State's new student orientation evolved in recent years to support the academic success and transitional adjustments of first year, transfer, change-of-assignment, and new students?
6. How does the University assess the achievement of curricular and co-curricular goals for student experiences and student development? What data are collected to identify opportunities for improvement?
7. How will Penn State ensure a high-quality student experience and provide adequate student support services at all campuses, including the planned growth in enrollments in World Campus?

8. How well do all academic programs (e.g., including general education, baccalaureate, and graduate) and co-curricular educational programs define desired outcomes?
9. How do Penn State's assessment strategies provide sufficient data to effectively measure intended outcomes? How does Penn State use assessment data on student learning to inform decisions? What are some examples of actions taken on the basis of assessment findings?
10. How can Penn State's structures, mechanisms and strategies for assessing student learning (both curricular and co-curricular) be improved?

5.2 Student Admissions and Retention

Standard 8. Student Admissions and Retention

“The institution seeks to admit students whose interests, goals, and abilities are congruent with its mission and seeks to retain them through the pursuit of the students’ educational goals.”

~MSCHE, *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*

5.2.1 University Mission and Admissions Strategic Goals

Mission

As described in earlier chapters, Penn State is a multi-campus public research university that educates students from Pennsylvania, the nation, and the world. The University’s instructional mission includes undergraduate, graduate, professional, and continuing education offered through both resident and online instruction. As Pennsylvania's land-grant university, through 20 undergraduate campuses, Penn State provides unparalleled access and public service to support the citizens of the Commonwealth.

The Undergraduate Admissions Office (UAO) serves as the central support for all undergraduate recruitment and admission policies and decisions. Its strategic goals reflect the broad mission of the University to enroll an increasingly diverse and inclusive population, while managing University enrollments responsibly.

Managing Enrollments

The Central Enrollment Management Group, chaired by the Vice President and Dean for Undergraduate Education, comprises senior leaders from UAO, Educational Equity, the Office of the Registrar, Student Aid, OPIA, Faculty Senate, Commonwealth Campuses, the Graduate School, World Campus, and the Budget Office, and provides direction for the enrollment management initiatives of the University. Web-delivered information hosted by UAO provides access across the University to data critical to the effective and efficient management of Penn State enrollments. Enrollment goals for each campus are determined through an integrated planning process that considers enrollment projections, staffing, and facilities requirements. Enrollments are managed through a combination of admission criteria and enrollment goals or controls for campuses or programs, based on limitations of space, faculty, or other resources.

University Park has increased enrollments by 13% over the past ten years (2004 to 2014). In 2004, University Park enrolled 41,289 undergraduate and graduate students. As of 2014, the official census

enrollment at University Park was 46,606. Enrollment at the Commonwealth Campuses has remained relatively level from 2004 to 2014 (31,326 versus 31,041). These figures exclude enrollments at the two professional schools of medicine and law.

As explained thoroughly in Chapter 2, Penn State is truly one university that is geographically dispersed. Therefore, change of campus is a critical enrollment metric for Penn State. Students can begin at any undergraduate campus and complete a baccalaureate degree at any of the 20 campuses. In 2014, 57% of the first-year class began their studies at University Park; 43% began at a Commonwealth Campus. After completing two years of undergraduate courses, students declare a major either at their current campus or another campus location to complete their Penn State degree. From 2012 to 2014, about 3,500 students moved annually to University Park and over 715 students moved to another Penn State campus.

Transfer student enrollments have become increasingly more important to balance the enrollment of the University. (For reference, “change of assignment” or “change of location” denote movement from one Penn State campus to another, while “transfer” denotes movement from another institution of higher learning.) Within their first two years, transfer students are typically considered for admission only at a Commonwealth Campus. After transfer and completion of entrance to major requirements, those students can complete a four year degree or change assignment to University Park or another Commonwealth Campus. Students who have completed two or more years at another college or university must meet all entrance to major requirements for admission to the academic program at the requested campus.

World Campus Admission Services is a dedicated team of admissions counselors, who specialize in the needs and challenges of adult, active duty and veteran military learners. These counselors assist all adult learners with interest in returning to college, but their primary focus is on individuals interested in World Campus programs. In 2013, the World Campus Admission Services team also added an Educational Planning Specialist, who provides guidance to World Campus prospects in determining the appropriate degree program based on their educational and career goals. To further engage World Campus prospects and applicants, and to help increase conversion and retention rates, the World Campus provides enrollment coaching to prospective students through their first month of classes. Topics covered by coaches include: application completion and deadlines, transfer credit process, University resources, time management, financial aid, registration, and enrollment.

5.2.2 Multi-campus Admission Structure and Recruitment Strategies

Penn State seeks to recruit and admit a diverse student body by increasing avenues of access. Recruitment and admission is a collaborative and coordinated effort among all Penn State academic colleges and campuses. To increase opportunities for Pennsylvania students to interact with students from different cultures and backgrounds, various strategies are used to actively recruit out-of-state and international students.

Penn State seeks to recruit and enroll students who demonstrate the greatest likelihood of academic success. Penn State communicates with over 350,000 prospective students each year. Admissions

professionals at all campuses provide information regarding the breadth of academic and campus choices available at Penn State.

Campuses have designated service areas to connect with students, families and school counselors within their region in Pennsylvania. Every campus plans open house and visit events throughout the year. The UAO maintains two recruitment centers, one in Pittsburgh and another in Philadelphia and also coordinates Penn State's out-of-state and international recruitment efforts. Since 2011, regional prospect programs in Pennsylvania have been scheduled to help families who might not be able to visit a campus. This strategy connects Penn State to students and families in their home areas. Student interest and preference always supersede the designated service area or college.

Full-time regional recruiters in New York City, New Jersey, Washington, DC/Maryland/Virginia focus on recruiting a diverse student body from the University's primary out-of-state markets by managing and coordinating recruitment events in collaboration with campuses, colleges and alumni volunteers. Penn State maintains a high profile through high school visits and via participation in college fairs, school programs, and state educational organizations. Importantly, students, families and school counselors have a personal Penn State contact within their region. Part of the personal connection comes from over 1,000 alumni throughout the United States who volunteer to represent Penn State at various recruiting events. These alumni participate in regular training, meetings, and conference calls with University staff.

Prospective students learn about Penn State campus and academic options through comprehensive communication in both electronic and print media. The delivery of information online has greatly increased the interactions between Penn State and students interested in applying and eventually enrolling. In addition, the web application developed by UAO is an effective and efficient tool to gather information and credentials from students. The information provided on the application creates the ISIS student record. In fall 2014, 83,035 undergraduate applicants applied online, representing 98% of all undergraduate applications.

UAO hosts and delivers personalized online services for prospective students with the MyPennState portal. MyPennState is customized to show students their individual information at any step along the admission process which includes visitation and event registration, application status, college information, campus information and links to relevant information based on the status of the student. When offered admission, the student can view a decision letter and receive all the supplemental materials through software that replicates the printed publication, allowing a student to page through the information online, but also has hyperlinks to additional information on the web. Students accept offers of admission through MyPennState and are also linked to the important services needed after accepting an offer (academic college, housing, student aid, new student orientation, etc.).

MyPennState also provides prospective student social media connections with student blogs, Facebook, and Twitter posts. A [virtual tour of University Park](#) is available and Commonwealth Campuses are considering investing in the software that will provide prospective students a glimpse of campus experience and facilities. A virtual visit would provide students who are unable to travel an opportunity to tour the campus of interest.

In 2014, UAO launched the use of Talisma, a vended Customer Relationship Management solution for reaching and engaging prospective students. The use of this sophisticated software will maximize Penn State's ability to target and customize the 2+2 message, recruit upper division transfer students, highlight new academic opportunities, attract athletes, deliver specific information to adult learners and veterans, and serve other important constituents. Investing in Talisma centrally in the UAO will increase efficiency and minimize costs in the delivery of targeted messages and communication from campuses and colleges across Penn State. Talisma will replace the current prospect database and provide the platform for all undergraduate prospect management across the University by interfacing with Project LionPATH, the new student information system currently under development.

While technology has allowed for 24/7 delivery of targeted messages and information to prospective students, Penn State also strives to maximize the opportunities for students to visit and learn about the academic and extracurricular opportunities by meeting with staff, faculty, alumni, and current students. A collaborative open house effort is the University's [*Spend a Summer Day*](#) program, an example of one event that is orchestrated across each campus of the University. Prospective students and family members are invited to visit the campus of their choice to tour facilities, meet with current students, advisers and faculty; attend information sessions, and ask questions. This opportunity has become and remains popular for many prospective students and their families, with approximately 9,800 visitors attending University Park program in 2014 – an increase of 1,600 over 2013. In the fall, all undergraduate campuses host *Penn State Days*, another venue for students to learn about the opportunities at Penn State.

Academic colleges and faculty are key partners in recruitment programs across the University. While programs for prospective and accepted students are coordinated by the UAO, individual colleges and the Schreyer Honors College also invite students to events and programs during the year to connect students with faculty and resources on campuses.

Domestic Diversity

Penn State's commitment to diversity is demonstrated through a variety of initiatives, including the Community Recruitment Centers in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Staff members at the recruitment centers focus their energies on delivering the Penn State message to underserved and underrepresented student populations and helping these students understand the college selection and application process at Penn State. In 2012, the University began targeted outreach to the growing Latino/Hispanic population in Pennsylvania through programs held in high schools and regional venues. A [Spanish language microsite](#), bilingual videos for parents, and special campus visitation programs are part of the University's efforts.

Minority enrollment at University Park and other campus locations has increased substantially since 2002—with the vast majority of the increase occurring at the Commonwealth Colleges. In 2014, minority students made up 19.1% of the total university population—up from 11.3% in 2002. Diversity by campus and college is available in [Penn State's Fact Book](#).

International Students

International students make up 9% of the student population, and more than three-quarters of these students are located at University Park. In 2007, UAO launched an aggressive initiative to increase the number of international undergraduate students enrolled at the University. Customized publications created for the international student market were enhanced through online messages and a completely paperless communication strategy, including an offer letter providing detailed information for visa documentation.

Resources from UAO are invested to recruit and diversify the University's undergraduate international student population. Admissions counselors with backgrounds in international credential evaluation participate in recruiting trips in most of the top 25 countries sending students to institutions of higher education in the United States. The recruiters visit both international and native schools, conduct workshops on U.S. higher education, interact with the college guidance community, and participate in college fairs. Between 2007 and 2014, the number of new first-year international undergraduate students who accepted offers of admission for fall semester increased from 302 to 1,439. International student enrollment by campus and college is available in [Penn State's Fact Book](#).

Adult Learners

The need for life-long learning and changing job skills has had an impact on the average age of the student population at many campuses. Adult learners¹¹ comprise 16% of the undergraduate student population at Penn State, with 56% enrolling in courses on a part-time basis. In fall 2014, the adult student population, largely between the ages of 24 and 40, was 51% male and 49% female. Penn State's [Commission for Adult Learners](#) is composed of faculty, administrators, staff, and students who are dedicated to improving the adult learner experience at Penn State. This group is charged to monitor the recruitment, retention, and support services for adult students, as well as recommend changes in policy, practice, and procedures that impact adult learners.

Online Learning

Section 4.2.7 covers Penn State's World Campus, MOOCS, and related innovations in online learning at the University. It is appropriate to observe here that Penn State has been a leader in developing and delivering high-quality technologically advanced learning and is committed to continuing to build on these initiatives.

Certificate Programs

Penn State's academic units offer 53 [online certificates](#) via the World Campus. The World Campus undergraduate certificates are designed as a convenient way to start an online degree program, enhance professional development, or to take a few courses online. The online graduate and post-baccalaureate certificates are discipline-specific graduate-level programs designed for professionals who are looking to

¹¹ At Penn State, an adult learner is defined as someone who is 24 years of age or older, is active-duty military or a veteran, is married, has dependents, has children, has four or more years hiatus in learning, or was identified as an adult by an academic advisor using her/his professional judgment.

continue their education at the graduate level with the convenience and flexibility of an online learning delivery format. Most of the World Campus graduate and post-baccalaureate certificate programs are 12 – 15 credits. Graduate level certificate programs are discipline-specific to further career advancement or to explore a career change.

5.2.3 Admission Policies, Criteria, Decisions, and Communications

Admission Policies

Undergraduate admission to the University at all locations, including World Campus, is governed by policies established by the University Faculty Senate. The Senate [Committee on Admissions, Records, Scheduling, and Student Aid](#) initiates legislation relating to academic admissions and reenrollment standards. This committee makes recommendations on policies concerning the effect of Admissions, Records, Scheduling and Student Aid procedures on the attainment of the University's overall educational objectives. It functions as the Senate advisory body to the Vice President and Dean of Undergraduate Education, and it maintains liaison with other University officials in these areas.

There are two admission types: 1) first-year admission for applicants who hold a high school diploma or its equivalent and who have taken fewer than 18 credits at an accredited college or university; and 2) Advanced Standing (Transfer) Admission for applicants who have acquired at least 18 credits at an accredited college or university. To be considered for admission to the University as a baccalaureate degree candidate the applicant must meet secondary school graduation requirements and also have completed required units of preparatory work.

Section 4.4 deals with the numerous processes involved in identifying and supporting students who need academic remediation. The admissions component, in particular, of these processes is dealt with in this section. Provisional admission provides an applicant who holds a high school diploma or its equivalent the opportunity to be admitted conditionally to Penn State when the applicant might not otherwise meet the initial criteria for entrance to the University or the academic program. For a provisional student to meet academic progress for a baccalaureate degree, all conditions must be successfully met within 18 to 36 credits of enrollment, with a minimum GPA of 2.0 on a 4-point scale. If a provisional student has more than 27 credits and less than a 2.0 GPA, a registration hold is placed on the student's record, which prevents the student from registering for the next semester. Academic advisers in DUS provide each student with recommendations for a schedule of courses and referral to additional academic support as needed. The University Registrar maintains an email advisory system to alert the student to next steps in meeting the conditions of admission. If a student reaches 36 credits as a provisional student without fulfilling the conditions for entrance, a registration hold is placed on the student record which does not permit the student to continue as a provisional student.

Admission Decisions

Decisions for admission to the University are centrally managed in collaboration with each college and each campus. All first-year baccalaureate students must meet a minimum evaluation index based primarily on their high school academic profile. Two thirds of this evaluation index is based on the high

school GPA and one third is based on standardized test scores from a single test date. The applicant must also meet all prerequisite course requirements prior to enrollment at the University. After being determined eligible for admission, the applicant must meet the academic profile for either the Liberal Arts/Professional or Engineering/Science criteria. Campus placement is determined based on the competitiveness of the student's profile for the requested campus. Should a student be admissible to the University, but not to the requested campus, Undergraduate Admissions contacts the student to encourage another campus choice for admission.

First-year criteria for colleges and Commonwealth Campus admission are determined each September after enrollment targets have been approved by the Central Enrollment Management Group. Communication of Commonwealth Campus first-year decisions begins in October; University Park decision notifications begin in November. Decisions continue daily until the college or campus has determined that available spaces have been committed for the requested semester.

Advanced standing (transfer-in) criteria are determined by each academic college based on the academic major. Some majors are not available for transfer student admission based on the availability of faculty and facilities and the number of current students enrolled at the University in that major. Applicants for advanced standing admission must meet grade-point average and prerequisite course requirements for the current admission year. Detailed criteria along with the review protocol (e.g., dean's review, referrals to other programs) are maintained on a secure intranet site to provide consistent communication and decisions. The University Bulletin provides [comprehensive information on this topic](#).

Students applying for transfer admission to Penn State access detailed information from a website tailored specifically for students who have completed collegiate course work at another college or university. Penn State's [Information for Transfer Students](#) website outlines transfer student requirements, academic and other considerations and transfer credit evaluation. At any point in the admission process, students can determine how courses transfer by using the Transferring Credits Tool developed and maintained in Admissions. The [Transferring Credits Tool](#) is a table of over 413,950 courses which have been evaluated from more than 2,600 institutions.

Every offer of transfer admission includes an evaluation of transferrable credits with the offer letter. Academic advisers provide individual degree plans that demonstrate how transfer courses can apply to the student's major. Guidelines for awarding transfer credits are directed by the Faculty Senate policy [Credit by Transfer from Other Institutions policy](#), in collaboration with academic departments. Applications from first-year and transfer students to World Campus have increased 16% from 2011/12 to 2013/14. A significant number of World Campus applicants are adult learners who transfer credits to Penn State. In 2013/14, 2,475 new World Campus students had transfer credits from 4,756 transcripts, an average of nearly two transcripts for each student who had been accepted and paid tuition.

Segments of the Admissions website are designed for the University's primary audience based on the specific and unique needs of 1) first-year students, 2) international students, 3) advanced standing/transfer students, 4) military/veteran students and 5) Latino/Hispanic students. Admissions

information is also important for others including school counselors, [parents and families](#), current students related to transfer credit policies, and alumni volunteers in support of recruitment.

Nondegree Students

Any person having received a high school diploma or its equivalent may be permitted to register as a nondegree regular student. A student may remain in [nondegree status](#) until a maximum of 30 credits is earned, at which time the student must be accepted into a degree program to continue taking credit courses at Penn State. UAO reviews students who apply for degree status from [nondegree](#) registration. All high school and collegiate course work, including that from Penn State, is evaluated for admission to the requested college and campus. In fall 2014/15, 2,678 undergraduate and 1,536 graduate students were enrolled as nondegree students.

Academic Choices

Penn State offers over 160 baccalaureate majors taught by expert faculty who are recognized both nationally and internationally for their achievements in teaching and research. Students are connected to academic colleges as admissions prospects and offered student visitation programs. Academic information is broadly available, with each academic college hosting information about majors and academic success of graduates on its website. For example, the [College of Engineering](#) website links information for future and current students. Each department reaches out to students with an overview of the program, business and industry partnerships, student projects, and faculty research activities.

Graduation and Retention Rates

The six-year graduation rates for the 2003 to 2008 first-time, full-time baccalaureate cohorts have ranged from 69.0% to 70.4%, with University Park having a six-year graduation rate ranging from 84.5% to 86.7% and the Commonwealth Campuses having a six-year graduation rate ranging from 53.3% to 56.4% (see the most recent Cohort Report – 2007 on ANGEL for additional detail and Penn State’s [Fact Book](#) for the most recent information on the 2008 cohort). In 2014, Penn State’s overall one-year (first to sophomore year) retention rate was 86%; its two-year rate was 78% and its three-year rate was 72%. Retention rates at the University Park campus were 93%, 88%, and 85% respectively. Section 5.2 provides details on programs, such as the New Student Orientation, that will help the University improve student retention and completion rates.

5.2.4 Student Aid Policies, Criteria, Decisions, and Communications

The Office of Student Aid is a part of the Office of Undergraduate Education. The office is a part of the enrollment management group, together with the UAO and the University Registrar. The office administers financial aid programs from all sources (federal, state, institutional and private), serving undergraduate, graduate, and professional students at all Penn State campuses.

The Student Aid Office administered a total of \$1.17 billion in student aid funding in 2013/14, assisting 73,381 students or 75% of all enrolled students. These figures are up from \$714.7 million assisting 60,615 students in 2005-06. The primary increase in funding comes from an increasing number of students and

parents using the Federal loan programs to assist with their educational costs. At the same time, Penn State continues to increase its own support for student aid, providing \$109.8 million to undergraduates from endowed and centrally funded grants and scholarships in 2013/14; a 60% increase over funding in 2003-04. Over the past decade, Penn State exceeded its \$100 million endowment goal in the Trustee Matching Scholarship Program targeted to Penn State's lowest income students. Last year this program provided \$10.7 million in scholarships to 4,832 low-income students.

Penn State continues to serve a high percentage of students from low- and middle-income households, reflective of its commitment to the University's land-grant mission. In 2013/14, 29% of undergraduates were first generation college students and 26% received Federal Pell Grants. Penn State campuses provide a more affordable access point to a Penn State education, especially for the University's traditional-age students who can live at home and commute to a nearby campus. The University also serves a growing number of adult learners, many returning to college to complete degrees started years earlier. The University continues to enhance its services to these students to facilitate their degree completion goals.

Included in institutional funding sources are a number of scholarship programs that ensure students with financial need can avail themselves of study abroad experiences while enrolled at Penn State. Studying abroad can be costly, but there are many potential sources of financial aid and scholarships. The UOGP offers five grant and scholarship programs and in 2013-2014 awarded over \$300,000.

While institutional aid has increased, the Federal and State student aid programs have been relatively flat funded and have not kept pace with increasing tuition. In the face of a challenging economy and declining state support, Penn State has worked hard to keep annual tuition increases in check. Still, Penn State remains among the most expensive public universities in the country. In this context, Penn State confronts several strategic considerations related to cost and affordability.

Awareness has been raised by Congress and the President about college affordability for low- and middle-income families. With declining state support, affordability has become a challenge for Penn State and for other public institutions of higher education across the country. Resident tuition increased from \$11,646 in 2006-07 to \$16,572 in 2014/15¹². Median household income in Pennsylvania has increased from \$48,477 in 2006 to \$51,904 in 2012¹³. As mentioned previously, federal and state grant programs are not keeping pace with increased costs and the gap between cost and available financial assistance continues to widen. There are no easy solutions to this situation. Applicants to Penn State see the University's programs as a great investment and most families understand the financial struggle required to send their student to Penn State. Many are willing to take on debt to make this investment possible. Shifts in the income distribution of students who apply for financial aid are being closely monitored to ensure that Penn State is doing all it can to remain affordable for low- and moderate-income students.

¹² Lower division undergraduate tuition per academic year.

¹³ Source: US Census Bureau, "[Median Household Income by State – Single-Year Estimates.](#)"

As noted, an increasing number of students are taking advantage of federal student aid to help off-set some of the cost of education. More upper-middle and higher income students are turning to the federal student loan program. Student loans comprise 66% of all financial aid to undergraduates including loans made to parents through the Federal Parent Loan Program. The average loan debt for seniors graduating with debt in 2013-2014 was \$36,955, compared to the average national debt for public university graduates of \$27,850. The slow economy has made it difficult for graduates to meet their loan repayment obligations, both statewide and nationally. Penn State's most recent cohort default rate calculated by the Department of Education shows Penn State's rate of 7.7% continues to fall well below state (11.6%) and national (13.7%) default rates. However, Penn State works to ensure that its graduates are well informed of their obligations as well as their options should they encounter difficulty in repaying their loans. To help prospective and current students address the issues related to cost, a Financial Literacy Coordinator has been hired to create and coordinate programs University-wide. Through the use of [webinars and workshops](#), students learn how to create a budget, manage personal debt, and understand student loan options and repayment obligations.

Penn State's overall graduation rate is just under 70%. This fact contributes to keeping the Penn State student loan default rate lower since students who graduate are more likely to repay their student loans. A look at the graduation rates of Pell Grant recipients shows a 10 percentage point gap compared to the overall graduation rate. Given the challenges of college completion for students from low-socioeconomic household, this gap is not uncommon. However, recent national awareness of this gap suggests that schools may be assessed on this metric as a condition to receive increases in federal student aid funding. Penn State has an opportunity to increase the parity between its overall graduation rate and the rate for Pell Grant recipients. A realignment of advising and other support services to target more time and attention to at-risk students would be a sound strategic investment for the University.

Over the past decade, the Office of Student Aid has significantly increased its allocation of resources to partner with other offices to ensure the wide distribution of cost and student aid information to both prospective and current Penn State students. Each Commonwealth Campus has knowledgeable Student Aid personnel to ensure distribution of financial aid information to students and families. Student Aid works closely with UAO to deliver timely and accurate information to prospective students and their families' need so that they may make an informed choice about their financial 'fit' to Penn State. The goal is to ensure that families understand the cost as well as the degree of borrowing to pay the cost of education and how to avail themselves of various scholarship and grant programs.

The office works closely with the academic advising community to ensure advisers are aware of federally mandated academic progress requirements for financial aid recipients. The office employs a number of communication strategies to inform both prospective and current students of the process to apply for financial aid and important deadlines for consideration. Through email and web communications, students and families receive clear and timely information. Penn State's information dissemination process is especially important for prospective and newly admitted students. In the spring, Student Aid staff speak daily with students offered admission to help them make a final decision whether to accept their offer. During this time, staff also provide a number of community presentations about financial aid,

in particular at high schools in all of the University's service areas. In the summer, staff meet daily with students and parents who come to campus for New Student Orientation. Student aid staff members are available to assist students in person, on the phone and through email exchanges.

5.2.5 Diagnostic Testing and Ongoing Assessment of Student Success

The following focuses on testing and assessment of incoming undergraduate students (see section 4.4 for information on how students with identified remediation needs are helped). Upon admission and acceptance of admission to Penn State, all new baccalaureate and associate degree students are evaluated to determine the appropriate placement in foundation courses. All placement tests and assessment tools are reviewed periodically by the appropriate academic department of Penn State to ensure their predictive ability and appropriateness. Applicants requiring test accommodations due to a disability are encouraged to utilize the Office for Disability Services for assistance.

Mathematics testing is required of all entering first-year students in residential degree programs because courses in quantification are a required part of the general education curriculum. World Campus requires testing for all students whose transfer credits do not include six credits of quantification and for students in degree programs that require calculus (e.g., Business). In November 2013, Penn State replaced the University's internally developed test with an online adaptive test developed and produced by McGraw Hill Education. The [Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces](#) (ALEKS) test requires fewer than 30 questions and provides much finer granularity for placement than the previous tool. All test questions are aligned directly with the objectives of every lower-division course in the pre-calculus sequence, and students receive immediate feedback on their individual degree of mastery of each objective. Students then have the opportunity to self-remediate and re-test in order to improve placement if desired. The results of this new placement modality are being assessed rigorously with regard to student success and remediation behavior.

Penn State requires all students to complete a first-year composition course that can be satisfied by taking one of four course options early in their college career. A student's SAT Writing score is used to determine placement in one of the course options or if a basic writing skills course (ENG 004) may be required as a foundation prior to the required course.

Up until very recently, placement in chemistry has been based on an internally developed test required of all students interested in science and engineering majors. The test covered a wide variety of topics including simple atomic structure, common elements and compounds in addition to various formulas, equations and concepts. Analysis by OPIA found that mathematics placement scores had a greater predictive value for student success than the chemistry placement test; thus the chemistry test was eliminated in November 2013. Ongoing analysis of the efficacy of the ALEKS mathematics placement exam for placement in chemistry courses will guide future efforts to renew discipline-specific testing in chemistry.

Placement tests and the SAT Writing scores are complemented by the results of the Educational Planning Survey completed by all incoming students. This survey asks students to provide information about their

parents' educational level, their hours of paid employment, interest in various subject matter, motivation for attending college, projected future academic performance, and other self-reported characteristics. This tool is utilized by New Student Orientation advisers, in conjunction with placement information, as a framework for the development of an appropriate first semester course schedule. This schedule attempts to realistically match the student's demonstrated academic performance and academic interests with the challenges presented to a first-time student at Penn State.

5.3 Student Support Services

Standard 9. Student Support Services

"The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution's goals for students."

~MSCHE, *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*

Penn State provides comprehensive support services for students who begin their studies at different points of entry to the University (first year, transfer, change of campus, graduate, and professional programs) through graduation. These services are extended across campus locations, based on professional standards in their respective areas, and led by qualified professionals.

5.3.1 Vision, Mission, and Goals of Student Services

Penn State University ensures a high-quality student experience and provides student support services at all campuses through a number of offices that provide undergraduate and graduate student services.

Student Affairs

Student Affairs is comprised of 21 administrative departments with approximately 400 employees at University Park (see ANGEL for a list of Student Affairs units). Each Commonwealth Campus also has a student affairs structure to meet the needs of the students on the respective campus. The student affairs professionals at the Commonwealth Campuses communicate and collaborate regularly with their counterparts at University Park. Members of the Student Affairs staff have expertise in a variety of areas focused on supporting students at Penn State: counseling, clinical psychology, medicine, pharmacology, student learning, student organizations and communities, leadership, service learning, diversity, social justice, and legal issues in higher education.

Student Affairs provides programs and services designed to foster a more positive learning environment and to improve the learning readiness of students. Student Affairs departments provide direct services for students seeking counseling, health care, career assistance, activities, spiritual growth, conflict resolution, and residence life services. Staff members in Student Affairs teach dozens of credit courses in leadership, multicultural competency, mentoring, and career planning. Several staff have affiliate faculty appointments in various graduate departments. In 2013-2014, Student Affairs offered 4,353 educational programs designed to add value to a Penn State education. These programs, which had an estimated total

attendance of 207,029 (participants were counted once for each program, but may be counted in multiple programs) focus on personal growth, health and wellness, ethics, spirituality, leadership development, appreciating diversity, and career planning.

Student Affairs Research and Assessment (SARA) conducts valuable research related to students' co-curricular learning, attitudes, self-assessments, and behaviors. The office also compiles assessment research about Student Affairs educational programs and student satisfaction and has completed a six-year longitudinal study on Penn State's Class of 2000. SARA regularly conducts [Penn State Pulse](#) surveys that gather data from a large sample of Penn State students via electronic surveys. Since 1995, more than 90 Penn State Pulse surveys have been completed. In addition, SARA regularly conducts Penn State's *Student Experience Survey* (prior to 2014, the *Student Satisfaction Survey*) and oversaw past administrations of the *National Survey of Student Engagement*.

Graduate Student Services

Graduate student services are also provided through the Student Affairs offices at University Park. The Graduate School provides a [student resource guide](#) to help direct students to these services and also provides a number of professional development resources including: Doctoral Career Exploration workshops, Grant Writing workshops, the Graduate School Teaching Certificate, the Graduate Writing Center, NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Information workshops, and the Inclusiveness Lecture. Each semester, The Graduate School sends out an exit survey to all graduating students. For those respondents who completed their graduate degree requirements in summer 2013, fall 2013, or spring 2014, over 94% rated their overall and academic experience as good, very good, or excellent.

International Student Services

The University Office of Global Programs [assists international students](#) with immigration regulations and academic requirements, and provides a special orientation for new international students as well as social and cultural activities that help students become acclimated to life at Penn State and in the United States. In fall 2014, 8,625 international students were enrolled at Penn State. Of those, 1,731 students were on physical campuses other than University Park; 3,079 were graduate students and 5,546 were undergraduate students. In 2011, for the first time, the number of new international undergraduate students exceeded the number of new international graduate students. This trend continues largely because of an increase in the number of Chinese students.

Penn State World Campus Student Services

Penn State [World Campus Student Services](#) support online distance learners through phone, email, Skype, social media, instant messaging, and web conferencing. World Campus students have full access to University systems online, and have access to resources including (but not limited to) academic advising and mentoring, career counseling and development, disability services, exam proctoring, student – faculty mediation, orientation, readiness assessment, support webinars, technical support, and tutoring in writing and several math-related fields. Students are able to connect with other online distance learners through student clubs, organizations, and honor societies. In addition, services are available for military members and veterans, international students, alumni, and corporate education. Students may also participate in Transitions, a nationally-recognized, free eight-week college- and career-preparation class.

Intercollegiate Athletics

Intercollegiate athletic programs offered at each Penn State campus may differ from one another in terms of the sponsored sports, national affiliations, and conference membership. Regardless of location, all intercollegiate athletic programs are governed by the University's academic and administrative policies. The Intercollegiate Athletics Committee of the University Faculty Senate is charged with providing general academic oversight and approval of athletic schedules.

Penn State University Park has 31 teams competing in NCAA Division I¹⁴. University Park is a member of the Big Ten athletic conference. Five of Penn State's largest Commonwealth Campuses (Penn State Abington, Altoona, Berks, Erie, and Harrisburg) are full members of NCAA Division III. These locations also hold membership in three different athletic conferences (North Eastern Athletic Conference, Capital Athletic Conference and the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference) which provide competition with other baccalaureate-level institutions generally located within a five-state region. Each college is responsible for its relationship with the NCAA and its related athletic conference.

The University College campuses are members of the Penn State University Athletic Conference which has an executive director based at University Park and an executive committee comprising athletic directors and chancellors. They are also members of the United States Collegiate Athletics Association (USCAA). The USCAA is a national organization that focuses on smaller institutions and provides opportunities to compete in national championships and national recognition for student athletes on a weekly and yearly basis. The primary athletic competition for these campuses is typically other Penn State campuses and local colleges. The office of the executive director of the Penn State University Athletic Conference assists in coordinating the relationship of these campuses with the USCAA.

The oversight and funding of intercollegiate athletics at each location is the responsibility of the campus administration, operating within University policies. Typically a Director of Athletics provides day to day oversight of athletics, reporting through the Office of Student Affairs to the Chancellor or to the Chancellor

¹⁴ For a list of the 31 teams at Penn State see [Annual Report of Academic Eligibility and Athletic Scholarships for 2013-2014](#).

directly. Decisions regarding budgetary allocation, staffing, level of competition, facilities and facilities management, and health and wellness of student athletes are generally determined at the campus level. In addition, a faculty athletic representative is identified by each campus to help ensure direct faculty involvement with intercollegiate athletics and to monitor and determine any exceptions to academic standards for athletic participation by an individual student. Campus personnel may also utilize the services and expertise of the University's central administration in areas such as contract approval, purchasing, management, and best practices.

All intercollegiate student athletes are subject to the academic standards for participation as defined by the University Faculty Senate and monitored by the Senate Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics. Faculty from all campuses and University Park may be represented on the committee. However, individual campuses (particularly true for those NCAA Division III members) also have a campus intercollegiate athletic committee associated with the local Faculty Senate. The local committee is typically charged with approval of athletic schedules and recommending any policies or practices specifically to that campus.

The University Libraries

The [University Libraries](#) embrace the mission of providing the best in research library services to Penn State students and users at all locations. The University Libraries continually engage in assessing student and user needs and the quality of services to the Penn State academic community. As a service supporting all students, faculty, and staff of Penn State, the University Libraries hold at the heart of their mission the enhancement of excellence and success among the University's students and faculty. As the eighth-ranked research library in North America under the standards of the Association of Research Libraries, the University Libraries work to address the wide spectrum of student academic and co-curricular needs in a manner that is equitable, supportive, sensitive, and safe.

At University Park, the University Libraries encompass eleven subject and branch libraries. The Reference, Collections, and Research Department is the administrative home for subject libraries. Faculty and staff in these units are responsible for providing reference and upper-division undergraduate and graduate instructional services, and for developing print, media, and electronic collections across all disciplines. Other departments located at University Park are Access Services (Lending and Inter-Library Loan); Central Cataloging/Metadata Services and Acquisitions; Collection Development; Information Technologies; and Reference, Collections, and Research (University Park Subject Libraries); all under the Associate Dean for Collections, Information, and Access Services. Additional services based at University Park include Content Stewardship; Copyright; Digital Curation; Digitization and Preservation; Grant Processing; Publishing and Scholarly Communications Services; Research Commons (under development); and Special Collections (including University archives and inactive records services), under the Associate Dean for Research and Scholarly Communications.

Also within the University Libraries and under the leadership of the same dean, the Commonwealth Campus Libraries (CCL), directed by the Head of University College Libraries, serve over 32,000 students at 20 Penn State campuses across Pennsylvania, with 53 faculty librarians, 57 full-time staff, and numerous work-study students providing reference, instructional, and research services to a user community

remarkable in its racial/ethnic, age, socioeconomic, and educational diversity. The number of instruction sessions delivered in the 2012 academic year totaled 1,191, with 21,966 students being reached during those course-related/course-integrated sessions. Individual counseling, advising, and research support is also provided by the CCL librarians. Along with the CCLs, under the Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate and Learning Services, is the Knowledge Commons at University Park, Library Learning Services, Library Services to the World Campus/Penn State Online, and Media Technology and Support Services.

5.3.2 Coordination and Continuous Improvement of Student Services

In Penn State's strategic plan, *Priorities for Excellence*, the first goal is to enhance student success. One of the top strategies for implementing this goal is to improve key student transition experiences. As a result, in 2009 a University-wide committee was charged to examine how the University could affect improvement in this area, particularly in first-year new student orientation. Although the First Year Testing, Consulting and Advising Program that was established in 1957 had evolved over the years, the one-day format did not allow sufficient time to address both the academic and the out-of-class aspects that are essential to an effective orientation. The deliberations that led to a proposal and then the implementation in summer 2013 of a two-day NSO program at University Park were a true partnership between Student Affairs and the Office of Undergraduate Education. The strength and impact of this collaboration cannot be overstated. It brought expertise, resources and power from both "sides" to establish a successful transition experience that unites the academic, social, and co-curricular messages to students.

Both Student Affairs and Undergraduate Education recognized that success in this initiative would require dedicated infrastructure. As a result, an office for NSO was created and a director hired in October 2012, to plan for the 2013 implementation. The office handles the transition from the point of accepting an offer of admission and paying tuition to enrolling through the NSO, by also facilitating the testing process, and by hosting and coordinating Welcome Week and organizing the President's Convocation for First-Year Students. The staff has the time and resources to think systematically about how best to integrate NSO with Welcome Week and other transition events and programs. What is unique about this initiative is that the office is jointly budgeted and supervised by Student Affairs and Undergraduate Education.

This NSO represents a dramatic change for the University Park campus. By using the first half day of NSO to address students' concerns about logistics, roommates, and social or emotional questions, the new format allows for the second full day to be devoted exclusively to academic matters. In fact, on this second day, students now come better-prepared for deeper conversations with academic advisers.

Initially, academic units feared that their message to students would be diluted in the new format. But after the first session of NSO, those doubts vanished. The goal was to design NSO so that it would always be in the service of the University's academic mission. Its outcomes are clear; new students have more time on campus and more peer interaction and, in addition, the same messages are delivered to parents and students. In summer 2014, 99.8% of students who attended NSO enrolled. The advantage of the NSO is twofold: 1) academic advising personnel are freed to focus exclusively on the academic component, and

2) students experience a comprehensive program that focuses on academic fit and personal/social fit with Penn State's expectations and opportunities.

In addition to NSO, there are two other new initiatives that require all incoming students on all campuses to take two in-house designed learning modules: PSU Safe (alcohol awareness) and PSU Aware (sexual assault awareness). Penn State Reads is a new collaborative common reading program for new students at University Park. While independent of NSO, these initiatives are complementary in their goals.

Other initiatives have been established to better serve change-of-campus and transfer students. Through Link UP, University Park annually hosts a visit by 3,400 non-University Park campus students prior to their change of campus in the junior year. The goal of Link UP is to provide students with better information in order to make an informed decision about the change of campus that will best fit them. A special [Transfer Student Orientation](#) is also held annually at University Park.

The Graduate School sponsors a half-day orientation for all new graduate students. Like NSO for undergraduates, this orientation covers both academic and social topics such as using Penn State online student and class systems, mentoring, graduate student life, and graduate student services and benefits, which include health insurance. In addition, representatives of student organizations provide information about their groups. Most academic departments also hold orientations for their new and returning graduate students.

5.3.3 Signature Services

Penn State offers many services and programs to ensure students' success at the University. Instead of listing all of the University's programs, this section highlights a sampling of services and initiatives around the University.

Learning Edge Academic Program and Student Transitional Experience Program

Three summer programs provide students with strong academic and transitional support. The Learning Edge Academic Program (LEAP) provides entering first-year students the chance to begin their journey at Penn State University Park as part of a learning community. In groups of 25, LEAP students take two linked courses together that are reserved exclusively for first-year students, live together in the same residence hall area, and have an upper class student mentor to guide them through their first semester. This comprehensive transitional experience is offered only during the summer and only to first semester undergraduates admitted to University Park. Students who receive a fall offer of admission can change their admission to summer in order to participate in LEAP. Approximately 1,200 students enroll in LEAP each summer. iLEAP is based on the LEAP model but designed for incoming international first-year students. In summer 2013 and 14, iLEAP had a combined enrollment of 118 students.

The third program, Student Transitional Experience Program also follows the LEAP model but is designed for rising juniors who are transitioning from a Commonwealth Campus to University Park. The program enables students to complete two of their junior year required courses and learn about the University Park campus during the summer, which facilitates a smoother fall transition.

ASPIRE Program

[ASPIRE](#) is a retention initiative at Penn State Berks that works with approximately 30 incoming students who are economically and academically at risk. Admission to this program is coordinated with UAO and is open to both commuter and residential students. The college employs a full-time staff member, assisted by four to five student mentors, to serve both incoming and returning ASPIRE students.

Incoming ASPIRE students are provided an opportunity to participate in a two-week residential program during the summer months, regardless of whether they intend to be a commuter or a residential student. Students receive a detailed orientation to general college life, but more importantly, committed faculty instructors emphasize academic expectations, particularly in writing, reading and math skills.

Once ASPIRE students enroll in the fall, they take required courses as a cohort in Orientation Leader Training and First-Year Seminar, in addition to critical foundation courses. Both required courses are taught by the Coordinator of the ASPIRE program, thereby providing direct and frequent assessment of how students are assimilating into the academic and overall collegiate environment. Structured study halls are required in addition to other enrichment activities throughout the initial semester and year.

Center for Excellence in Science Education

The [Center for Excellence in Science Education](#) provides students and faculty members in the Eberly College of Science with opportunities to engage deeply in teaching and learning. The Learning Assistant Program is designed to provide large-enrollment science courses with a tool for creating small learning communities that engage students in collaborative problem solving. A Learning Assistant is an undergraduate student who has been recruited to facilitate small group work in large group settings; this program is in use in selected large-enrollment courses in the departments of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and Forensic Science. Targeted programs in learning and pedagogy are also provided for graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, and faculty members.

The Earth and Mineral Sciences Academy for Global Experience

The [Earth and Mineral Sciences Academy for Global Experience](#) (EMSAGE) was formed in 2009 as a vehicle to foster students' global competence and to promote a spirit of integrity, service, and leadership. By comprehensively embracing these principles, students develop into leaders in their chosen discipline, while possessing the breadth and maturity to extend their knowledge to the improvement of society as a whole. Students may self-nominate for recognition as an EMSAGE Laureate. Student may achieve Laureate status through notable achievement in scholarship, experiential learning and global literacy, and service.

Global Lions Mentoring Program

[Global Lions Mentoring Program](#) is a peer mentoring program for the international student population at Penn State Harrisburg. New international students are paired with returning international and domestic students who help them navigate their new surroundings and University systems. The mentors are active participants during the orientation sessions and through extended orientation sessions that provide topic-

specific sessions. This program is evaluated by a formal assessment completed by both mentors and mentees.

Knowledge Commons

An increased emphasis on collaborative spaces and group studies, supported by collaborative technologies, encourages student interaction and supports the team-learning concept. The University Libraries are moving toward dynamic, flexible, student-centered learning environments called “knowledge commons” or “information commons.” Student assessment has found that students want everything to be “easy, fast and convenient,” and in one place. They want the Libraries and their study spaces to be warm, welcoming, and secure. Therefore, University Libraries are re-envisioning existing spaces; requiring that the traditional concept of a library be viewed in a more flexible way in order to create a one-stop location for library services, technical tutoring, and media services, all geared toward Penn State’s undergraduate population. The libraries are in the process of implementing the “Commons” philosophy of library and student learning support services at University Park and all Commonwealth Campus libraries.

At University Park, the [Knowledge Commons](#) opened in spring semester of 2011, creating a dynamic, flexible, student-centered learning environment. The Knowledge Commons emphasizes collaborative spaces and group studies, supported by collaborative technologies. Spaces and services are designed to encourage student interaction that supports the team-learning concept. The first phase includes a new Map Library; group study rooms; classroom/collaborative learning spaces; technology help-desks; a media commons with recording and editing studios; a leisure reading collection; new adaptive technology spaces offering disabled students improved access to web technology and resources; and overall 24/5 reference and lending/reserve services supported by Access Services, expert referral services from the Subject Libraries, and a new online chat reference service called [Ask a Librarian](#). Subsequent phases will include the redesign and renovation of current spaces to provide a commons for collaborative research among faculty, graduate, and upper-division undergraduate students.

Task forces made up of librarians, faculty, staff, and students are in place at Penn State Abington, Erie, Brandywine, Fayette, Greater Allegheny, Hazleton, New Kensington, and Worthington Scranton to move these campus libraries towards this model. Committees are at differing stages; some campuses have completed architects’ feasibility studies and are in the process of locating funding for renovations, while others are still carrying out needs assessments related to each library.

Library Learning Services

In 2007, [Library Learning Services](#) (LLS) was founded at University Park and charged with providing learning opportunities and initial experiences that engage Penn State students with library resources and services to enrich and support their education. LLS develops programs and initiatives to reach out to first-year and lower division students, along with other special groups. LLS sponsors programs such as the University Libraries’ Open House, the Information Literacy Award, the International Library Experience Essay Contest, and other exciting events and projects designed to engage students with the University Libraries in both curricular and co-curricular activities. Additionally, LLS offers Research Consultation

Services, and a variety of services and learning tools in collaboration with the References, Collections, and Research libraries for in-class and online instruction, such as the [Research Project Calculator](#); and it provides specialized classes in library research in areas such as Library Research Basics and use of research software resources. The fundamental mission of LLS is to present the foundation for developing life-long learning habits in first-year English and communications courses.

As each academic year begins, open houses are held for new and first-year students at University Park and across the campuses to introduce students to the University Libraries. The [Libraries Open House](#) uses a variety of tours, games, and prizes to orient new and first-year students to the physical structure of the libraries, as well as to its collections and services. The goal is for each student to leave the Open House feeling comfortable with the library and its faculty and staff, and with a positive feeling about the University and their choice of coming to Penn State. Students will know that they have a secure, welcoming place to find future help with all of their future information needs. These programs annually attract more than 5,000 to 6,000 students across the University. Participants report that they find these events beneficial, and that they increase their comfort level in using the vast resources of the Libraries.

[LeaderQuest – Western PSU Leadership Retreat](#)

This initiative was created in 2011 to retain student leaders at Penn State DuBois, Shenango, Greater Allegheny, Beaver, New Kensington, and Fayette. The hope was that by engaging first time leaders in a retreat and providing leadership development they would be more likely to be engaged and be successful. The learning objectives of this program include:

- recognizing personal values and leadership styles and how those traits function in a group setting;
- increasing self-awareness about communication skills;
- understanding the importance of multicultural competency as a foundation of effective leadership; and
- gaining a sense of Penn State pride and a respect for the campus community.

[Leonhard Center for Enhancement of Engineering Education](#)

The [Leonhard Center](#) was established in 1990 and its mission is to catalyze the changes that are crucial to maintaining world-class engineering education at Penn State by supporting teaching and learning in the College of Engineering. The Leonhard Center is responsible for supporting curricular assessment and developing instructional support programs for faculty and teaching assistants. Specific activities include coordinating support for program assessment by working with department faculty to: identify assessment needs, determine or develop assessment instruments, establish data collection methods, and assist with data analysis.

[Morgan Academic Support Center for Student-Athletes](#)

The [Morgan Academic Support Center for Student Athletes](#) offers a comprehensive academic support program that focuses on building skills to be a successful student-athlete, to adjust to the many transitions during the undergraduate experience, and to prepare for life after intercollegiate sports. For the 2013/14 academic year, [the average GPA of Penn State's 31 varsity teams](#) was 3.04 in fall 2013 and 3.10 in spring

2014. A total of 197 of Penn State student athletes earned Dean's List honors during fall and 205 during spring by posting a GPA of 3.50 or higher. Two hundred and eighty-five student-athletes earned Academic All-Big Ten honors and 73 of them were selected for the Big Ten Distinguished Scholar Award, which honors student-athletes who maintained a minimum GPA of 3.7 for the previous academic year. Thirteen of the 73 Big Ten Distinguished Scholars had a perfect 4.0 GPA. The NCAA's [annual study](#) of institutions across the nation recently revealed Penn State student-athletes at the University Park campus earned a Graduation Success Rate (GSR) of 89% compared to the 82% average for all Division I institutions for students entering from 2004-05 through the 2007-08 academic year.

[The Ryan Family Student Center](#)

The [Ryan Family Student Center](#) in the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences provides academic advising and tutoring for undergraduate students, while also serving as the home for information on international programs, internships, scholarships and the EMSAGE Laureate program. Student recruitment activities through the [Earth and Mineral Sciences Exposition](#), the student open house, are also handled through the Student Center, as is the Total Orientation to Earth and Mineral Sciences, a summer program for first-year students. After moving into their residence halls early, students say goodbye to their families and board a bus to Lake Raystown, a resort area approximately one hour from campus. Students spend the next three days learning to work in teams to solve problems creatively and network with peers, near-peers, faculty, and alumni.

[Penn State Summer Leadership Conference](#)

The first [Summer Leadership Conference](#) took place in 1964 and discussion there led to the formation of the Penn State Council of Commonwealth Student Governments. Today this conference, which is sponsored by the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Vice President of the Commonwealth Campuses, and Penn State's student governments, has evolved to include all Penn State campuses in leadership sessions offered by Student Affairs staff and faculty members. During each of the past several years, approximately 200 students have attended the three-day leadership conference in August. The vision of the conference is to "provide a challenging and motivating experience for participants where they will learn to be bold and confident leaders personally and professionally and will be inspired to lead purposeful lives in both civic and global arenas." Recently, the learning objectives of the conference have been to:

1. Enhance essential leadership skills and competencies and identify areas for further exploration and development; specifically ethical decision making, group dynamics, and conflict management.
2. Gain a deeper understanding of multicultural competency and explain its importance for effective leadership and citizenship.
3. Define leadership values and philosophy by describing how your [the student's] sense of self-awareness has changed because of attending this conference.
4. Demonstrate how the role of a student leader at Penn State can create a sense of community.
5. Examine character, conscience, and social responsibility and their relationship to leadership.

Each conference participant is asked to evaluate his/her growth related to the goals. The findings from this assessment are available for review on ANGEL.

World Campus and Online Embedded Tutor Services

World Campus employs a full-time tutor who is embedded within two of the more challenging undergraduate business courses (Financial and Managerial Accounting for Decision Making and Corporation Finance). The tutor is embedded into approximately eight course sections per term. This individual is in the course daily, watching the discussion and proactively contacting students about concepts they may be struggling with. The tutor holds individual tutoring sessions as well as group appointments, is available via email for questions, and sends weekly emails to the class regarding such topics as study skills, web resources, and helpful hints. This model has been very successful and popular with the students and World Campus is looking to expand it to the undergraduate Statistics courses.

World Campus is also partnering with the Department of Math to support a Retention and Intervention Coordinator. This person functions similarly to the embedded undergraduate business tutor by proactively reaching out to students who have been identified as high-risk for struggling with math. The Coordinator has developed a free, two-week supplement to the College Algebra course that allows students to gauge their readiness and work on their math skills prior to beginning College Algebra. The Coordinator is also the primary contact for students who are looking for additional math resources.

World Campus and Online References

Penn State World Campus students have access to wide arrange of resources of the Penn State University Libraries, described in section 5.3.1, which support, complement, and enhance each World Campus, online, and hybrid student's educational experience. For-profit online competitors in higher education cannot compare. The University Libraries are continuously partnering with the World Campus and Penn State academic colleges and campuses to ensure that Libraries contribute appropriate content and services to meet the needs of distance learners, and to develop more effective approaches for communicating to World Campus students, faculty and instructors, and course designers and developers. In 2011, The University Libraries appointed the first Head of Library Services to the World Campus to organize online instruction and learning tools, support online reference services, upgrade the Libraries' liaison with World Campus administration, and build partnerships with the colleges and campuses in developing online courses and programs.

At the beginning of fall semester 2013, The University Libraries introduced their new [*Ask a Librarian*](#) service, providing online virtual reference and research referral services through chat and email. The Online Reference Expert Team is responsible for managing the development of the Libraries-wide online reference; coordinating shared staffing models for online public service; developing policies, coordinating training, selecting, and evaluating available technology services; and investigating and selecting new software. Establishing a formal referral/availability service to ensure that all librarians are actively involved in the delivery of high-quality online reference service is a key element in expanding this service. The Team also has the responsibility for analysis of data generated, regularly assessing the training, hours, staffing, and effectiveness of the service, and communicates regularly with Libraries department heads

and the head librarians across all campuses. The Online Reference Expert Team is supported by a designated individual from the Information Technology Department for technology implementation and troubleshooting.

5.3.4 High-Impact Practices

This section highlights co-curricular and curricular practices which are categorized around [high-impact educational practices](#) (HIEPs) as endorsed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). The AAC&U states that these teaching and learning practices add value to the student's academic experience and also contribute to enhanced student retention through engagement and participation. HIEPs also support and reinforce Penn State's commitment to engaged scholarship in that many of the HIEPs involve and support community engagement at local, state, national, and international levels.

The assessment of these co-curricular and curricular activities is left to the discretion of the unit providing these activities. The rationale behind this approach is that units, who are responsible for designing and implementing these activities, will understand best the purposes and are most able to make the necessary changes for improvement. The methods of assessment varied from activity to activity as well as from unit to unit. Some examples of these methods include student self-report through surveys, evaluation of student reflections, and performance evaluations by employers/ supervisors. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Penn State has a culture of assessment and there is support (e.g., SARA, OPIA, Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence) to help units with assessment. The documents "Undergraduate High-Impact Educational Practices" and "Graduate, Medicine, and Outreach High-Impact Educational Practices" provide a comprehensive list of the HIEPs and how they are assessed at Penn State (available on ANGEL). The following section highlights just a few of the University's HIEPs.

First-Year Seminars and Experiences

First-year experiences emphasize critical inquiry, writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. Examples of First-Year Experiences include an array of orientation and academic experiences.

- Penn State Harrisburg provides a variety of programs. One is a two-phase program in which Phase 1 is an academic orientation that occurs at various times throughout the summer and is planned and hosted by DUS. Phase 2 is a campus/community resource orientation the weekend prior to the beginning of classes. Harrisburg also provides separate Adult and Veteran Student Orientation and International Student Orientations that provide students with information about campus technology, student services, and many other services that they can utilize to help them be successful students. These events are assessed via participant surveys.
- Smeal College of Business hosts a two-week orientation to introduce MBA students to critical skills required for success. Orientation culminates in a corporate-sponsored case competition where teams compete in analyzing and presenting a business case. Participants' perspectives on values and accomplishments of affective, behavioral, and cognitive objectives are captured via survey.

- At Penn State DuBois, First-Year Seminar credit-based courses are required for both associate- and baccalaureate-degree students. They are offered in three different formats, but each version incorporates strong emphasis on critical inquiry, writing, information literacy, and other skills that develop students' competencies. Presentations by faculty and staff from various student support areas leads to a more active use of those areas. Assessment is conducted through pre- and post-surveys along with "Paw" cards to track attendance at events. Penn State DuBois also monitors the practical competencies of these students by monitoring things like the timing of student course registrations and changes in the number of problems with ANGEL.

Common Intellectual Experiences

There are several examples of common intellectual experiences across Penn State.

- In the Eberly College of Science, each major degree program has a set of vertically aligned courses, spanning the first two or all four years of the curriculum. Two examples are in Chemistry and Physics. In Chemistry, all students take a set of required courses and laboratories where learning communities form.
- At Penn State Worthington Scranton students enroll in a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community. The assessment of these programs includes monitoring the retention and degree completion of students.
- Several campus locations have common book programs that also aim to create a common intellectual experience. The goals at Penn State Berks, where a common book program has been in place since 2004, are: to provide a common experience for first-year learners to ease the transition into the academic community of the College; to encourage reading and comprehension among students; to build an intellectual community among first-year learners, returning students, faculty and staff; to help students make connections between classroom and out-of-classroom experiences; and to engage students in discussions surrounding current societal issues. Curricular and co-curricular activities are associated with the common book project, including author visits, lectures, and other engagements. Penn State Reads, a common book program at University Park, began in 2013. All incoming, first year students at University Park were given a complimentary copy of the book chosen for 2013/14. The program shared many of the goals of the Berks program and the Berks and Abington campuses used the same book for their 2013/14 programs. The Schreyer Honors College also has a long-standing common-reading program. Through close collaboration, one of the two books that Schreyer students were asked to read was the Penn State Reads selection. Assessment of these programs ranges from conducting surveys to monitoring and counting the number of participants.

Learning Communities

Learning communities encourage integration of learning across courses and involve students with "big questions" that matter beyond the classroom. Typically this involves two or more linked courses where students work together as a group and with their professors.

- One example of a learning community is in the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences. In this context, first-year students take two classes together (Rhetoric and Composition and First-Year Seminar). They examine sustainability on three scales: global, local, and interpersonal. The class then travels to Ocho Rios, Jamaica, where they are challenged to apply their classroom knowledge to hands-on projects, to live in sustainable ways, and to be engaged global citizens. The class culminates with a poster session attended by faculty, staff, students, and student families. This program is assessed via Student Ratings of Teaching Effectiveness.
- In Introduction to Leadership, offered by World Campus, students are involved in a semester-long group project in which they create a virtual leadership resource center. They collaboratively research a leadership topic and provide guidelines and best practices, with supporting case examples. Students are peer-reviewed on their collaboration and the instructor assesses the quality of their leadership resource center.

Undergraduate Research

Undergraduate research affords students the opportunity to be involved in systematic investigation which engages them in critical thinking, development of inquiry-based learning, the collection of empirical evidence, and engagement in cutting-edge technologies and practices. Every year, the Office of Undergraduate Education extends undergraduate research funds to each Commonwealth Campus. Each campus receiving such funds is required to submit a report on undergraduate research activity.

- In the Eberly College of Science, over one-half of graduating seniors (spring 2013) participated in undergraduate research. Graduating seniors who participated in undergraduate research were 22% more likely to be successfully placed in a job or graduate school at the time of graduation than seniors who did not participate in any academic extra-curricular activities.
- The College of the Liberal Arts sponsors Summer Discovery Grants to students to support independent research.
- Earth and Mineral Sciences reported that approximately 40% of their graduating Meteorology seniors indicated that they had conducted some undergraduate research while at Penn State.
- Penn State Schuylkill has a very active undergraduate research program. The campus has sponsored an undergraduate research poster conference every semester for over a decade.

The assessments of these activities ranged from collecting information about the students' experience to counting the number of student presenting their research at a conference with a faculty member.

Diversity/Global Learning

Diversity and Global Learning emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. Penn State has a rich and varied set of opportunities for students to experience diversity and to learn intercultural competence and global awareness. A few examples follow.

- Penn State Lehigh Valley hosts a monthly diversity discussion series titled Hot Topics, where students are invited to share and discuss current social or hot-button issues. Typically about 30

students participate in this program each month and topics have included sexual harassment, drugs, and terrorism. At the end of each session, students are asked to answer a learning reflection question that is based on the topic discussed that day.

- Penn State Altoona hosts an annual global business etiquette program where students learn about business etiquette practices through round table discussions from international students and faculty. Assessment is done by surveying students about their cultural awareness and knowledge of study abroad opportunities offered at Penn State.
- Penn State New Kensington hosts a Country of Focus study program. The International Committee selects a Country of Focus each year and coordinates a schedule of associated campus events as well as working with faculty to tie in classroom activities and assignments. Assessment for these programs include participation in events and programs, a pre/post survey of the general student population, and other evaluations of faculty and student engagement determined by the type of program or activity.

Similarly, there are a wide variety of multicultural and diversity activities across the colleges and the colleges support numerous student clubs related to minority interests. For example, the College of Communications provides more than 80 diversity-focused learning modules in coursework across its majors each semester. In addition, the College offers several stand-alone diversity/global-focused courses, including *Women and the Media*, *World Media Systems*, and *International Reporting*. In 2013, the College received the Equity and Diversity Award from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

The Office of Global Programs is incorporating learning outcomes assessment as part of their efforts to improve the study-abroad curricula. Beginning in 2014, instructors from a pilot group of courses will select individual outcomes from the AAC&U Global Learning Value Rubric and identify course activities that allow students to demonstrate growth during course enrollment. This pilot study will be used to develop a suite of best practices for assessing program strength.

Service Learning and Community-Based Learning

Penn State views engaged scholarship as learning through thoughtful integration of teaching, research, and service to involve students with faculty and staff mentors in engaging societal challenges faced by community partners. Section 4.4 describes Penn State's educational offerings, related educational activities, and current initiatives in the area of engaged scholarship in considerable detail.

Off-campus service and international learning opportunities also provide engaging opportunities for students to further develop cultural competence. At Penn State Berks, for example, students can participate in a service-oriented spring break trip that assists a local community in achieving one of their development goals. Each trip accommodates approximately 20 students and a minimum of two staff members with a specific educational purpose. In the College of Medicine, the Global Health Scholars Program provides a unique four-year longitudinal service-learning program for Penn State medical students that includes two separate month-long trips to the same international community. Pre-trip sessions cover topics related to culture, recognizing culture shock, rapid ethnography, community

assessment techniques, and developing individual goals. The College of Medicine is one of only seven U.S. medical schools with a global health track.

Internships

Internships provide students with direct experience in a work setting, usually related to their career interests. Internships provide the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. Across the University, internship participation is quite high. For example:

- Seventy-nine percent of graduating seniors from the Smeal College of Business participated in an internship related to their academic program in 2012/13.
- All graduating seniors in the College of Education complete an internship or student teaching experience.
- The College of Communications facilitates placement of 550-600 students each year in for-credit internships – up from 274 fifteen years ago – and a comparable number of students complete noncredit internships annually. The College maintains a database of 3,500 site opportunities.
- All students in the College of Nursing participate in unpaid clinical experiences related to the academic program and are supervised by professionals in the field of nursing.
- All undergraduates in the College of Information Sciences and Technology participate in a paid and/or unpaid internship related to their academic program.
- All students in the University College enrolled in Business, Human Development and Family Studies, and Information Sciences and Technology must complete an internship as part of their degree requirements.
- All students enrolled in the associate degree programs in Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physical Therapy Assistant, and Nursing, must complete fieldwork and clinical experiences under the supervision of clinical or fieldwork coordinators and clinical site professionals.

Capstone Courses and Projects

Capstones require students to synthesize and apply their learning in an integrated and culminating project. The assessment methods for evaluating capstone projects range from evaluating portfolios, theses, and projects, to using surveys to gauge students' self-efficacy or experiences, to having an external reviewer (i.e., company) providing feedback on client-based projects. Many Penn State programs require a capstone experience. For example:

- College of Communications Broadcast Journalism students are required to complete a six-credit course in which they produce the *Centre County Report*, a weekly 30-minute student newscast that is aired on public television in 27 Pennsylvania counties and online. This capstone course was named the best student newscast in the U.S. for 2012 by the Broadcast Education Association and also received a Mid-Atlantic Emmy for student newscasts.
- Penn State Mont Alto Physical Therapy Assistant students are required to complete a culminating Clinical Practice Exam through a simulation scenario that may include symptoms of stroke, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, multiple sclerosis, etc. Student evaluations are based upon

professionalism, empathetic manner, effective patient communication, and safe and quality treatment for the selected scenario.

- In the College of Education, Professional Development School interns complete an extended teacher inquiry project and develop a web-based portfolio that demonstrates their beliefs about teaching as well as mastery of the competencies required by the Penn State Teacher Education Performance Framework.
- At Penn State DuBois, General Engineering students complete a year-long capstone under the supervision of a faculty mentor that focuses on an industry-related problem.
- For the past six years the Penn State Center in Pittsburgh hosted Landscape Architecture students in the Landscape Architecture Pittsburgh Studio. Each fall, 12-14 advanced landscape architect students engage local Pittsburgh neighborhoods. Land use, urban planning, and green space design concepts are applied to marginal communities.

5.4 Assessment of Student Learning

Standard 14. Assessment of Student Learning

“Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution’s students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.”

~MSCHE, *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*

5.4.1 Penn State’s Assessment System

The following section complements information presented in Section 3.5, which describes Penn State’s assessment culture and infrastructure. Penn State’s assessment system includes student admission to the University (see Section 5.2.3), entrance to major, retention requirements, graduation criteria, and post-graduation assessments. The Senate Committee on Curricular Affairs Subcommittee on Retention and Transfer reviews all entrance to major and retention policies for academic programs. Entrance to major processes and procedures are managed at the College level in accordance with the Senate [Entrance to a College or Major Policy](#). Students notify the University of their intent to graduate through eLion, in accordance with the Senate Policy on [Candidates’ Responsibilities and Options](#). College personnel review undergraduate student transcripts to certify that all degree requirements have been met prior to graduation.

Following graduation, [Alumni Career Services](#), a partnership between Penn State’s Student Affairs and Alumni Association offices, provides support to alumni as they enter the job market. As part of this support, Career Services compiles data on [post-graduation student activity](#). Data are collected by colleges and campuses and provide a snapshot of career and continuing education plans for recent program graduates. Currently, the University is working to make the data collection process more uniform among the colleges and campuses.

In October 2013, the Task Force on Prior Learning Assessment completed a review of current practices and policies, and made recommendations for improving the processes around this form of conferring credit (see section 4.2.5). The current status of PLA at Penn State is highly decentralized and lacks strategic vision. Individual units have taken steps toward developing broad and equitable measures of student learning, but tremendous disparities exist across colleges and campuses. The Task Force recognized both the need and the opportunity to create an infrastructure and a framework to ensure that the principles of prior learning assessment are met across Penn State. The group further recommended periodic and rigorous review and evaluation of the University's PLA efforts and practices.

5.4.2 Results of Assessments

Baccalaureate Program Assessment

The [ACUE Assessment Coordinating Committee](#) (ACC) was established in 2010 to provide vision and oversight to the assessment of baccalaureate programs, including general education. This group and its role were described in Penn State's most recent Periodic Review Report. Beginning in the 2011/12 academic year, the ACC requested from each baccalaureate degree program or option a statement of learning objectives, as well as data collection and analysis including data summary, lessons learned, programmatic changes, and assessment plan for the next academic year. Plans and progress reports were evaluated to identify strengths and weaknesses around the fundamental purpose of program-level assessment: collecting evidence of student learning.

In 2012/13 the Committee received 186 reports, the results of which are presented here in summary form. Every plan and progress report was reviewed by at least three members of the ACC and the committee chair. Reviewers were selected to include a member of the committee, a representative from the Faculty Senate, and an assessment consultant from the [Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence](#). Members of the ACUE Assessment Coordinating Committee and consultants at the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence are available to work with program faculty to strengthen the assessment process.

All submissions were ranked by the ACC on a three-point scale of Exemplary (strong), Acceptable with revisions (moderate) and Developing (needs refinement)¹⁵. The results of the reviews are provided on ANGEL. Overall, 58 programs were rated as developing, 83 were acceptable with revisions, 10 were approaching exemplary, and 32 were exemplary. Three programs for which learning outcomes were poorly defined have subsequently been discontinued. Table 5-1 and Table 5-2 provide examples of exemplary learning objectives and actions taken on the basis of assessment findings. Participation was not uniform across all units for several reasons. For example, the College of Agricultural Sciences was in the midst of merging several academic departments and making several baccalaureate program revisions, so they were permitted to postpone submission of learning objectives and assessment plans.

¹⁵ The evaluation rubric can be found at www.assess.psu.edu/files/Rubrics_for_Evaluating_Program_Assessment_Plans.pdf.

Beginning in 2013/2014, all proposals for new baccalaureate degree programs are required to include learning objectives. Many University College campuses submitted no assessment plans. This failing reflects inadequate communication between the Committee, campus leadership and campus program faculty members, so new structures are currently being implemented.

Table 5-1: Exemplary Learning Objectives

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| <p>Human Development and Family Studies (University College, Brandywine)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate knowledge of management in human services and how to apply appropriate practices • Demonstrate professional written, oral and technology-assisted communication skills; • Demonstrate clinical, interactional, and practical skills used in human service professions; • Identify the different organizational needs of public, private-for-profits, and private-not-for-profit agencies. <p>Meteorology (College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, University Park)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduates can demonstrate skills for interpreting and applying atmospheric observations • Graduates can demonstrate knowledge of the atmosphere and its evolution • Graduates can demonstrate knowledge of the role of water in the atmosphere • Graduates can demonstrate facility with computer applications to atmospheric problems • Graduates can demonstrate skills for communicating their technical knowledge <p>Professional Writing (Berks College, Berks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will develop a comprehensive understanding of the theories and practice of language use. • Students will demonstrate advanced critical thinking skills, inclusive of information literacy across a range of print and electronic genres. • Students will demonstrate sophisticated rhetorical abilities and rhetorical flexibility. • Students will be able to communicate to diverse audiences in a variety of contexts and genres. • Students will be prepared for a wide range of writing-related careers or graduate programs. • Students will have the ability to use, analyze, and learn communication technologies. • Students will develop exceptional textual, visual, and verbal communication abilities. |
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Table 5-2: Sample of Actions Taken on the Basis of Assessment

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| <p>Hotel Restaurant and Institutional Management (College of Health and Human Development, University Park)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the beginning of the 2011/12 school year, assessment fell under the SHM curriculum committee. The workload of this committee was such that little time was left for completing assessment work and analysis of data. A sub-committee of curricular area “team leaders” is being formed to continue the HRIM assessment work. This sub-committee will begin meeting in August 2012 and complete a further analysis of the data collected in 2011/12, review the data collection plans for 2012/13 and suggest revisions or any further needed data collection |
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and/or programmatic changes prior to the start of the classes in fall semester. This group will also revisit the entire list of program learning objectives and suggest revisions, if needed.

- Faculty members teaching HRIM 201, HRIM 330, HRIM 442, HRIM 480, and HRIM 490 had indicated that they will be making or are looking at making revisions to course outlines, lectures, activities and assignments (as a result of the data collected over the last year) to better help students meet program learning objectives. HRIM 330 faculty piloted a major course revision starting in summer 2012. Assignments leading to further competency on learning objective #5 (demonstrate the ability to integrate concepts and theories across functional business domains, e.g., Finance, Marketing, Human Resources, Operations, etc.) would be restructured to be completed by more individual students than by teams of students. This change should improve the ability to measure individual student progress and attainment of the learning objectives.
- All faculty members will be asked to consider the targeted program learning objective(s) for the year as they relate to their courses taught and include any additional assessment measures, data and proposed course changes in their individual faculty portfolios (submitted in the spring semester each year).

Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures (College of the Liberal Arts, University Park)

- Based on the results from the assessment of the 2011-2012 year, the University does not plan to institute any programmatic changes at this time. However, in order to supplement current data with regard to students' knowledge of the structures of the German or Russian language, Penn State will collect additional data from GER 401 and RUS 400 in 2012/13. To augment essays from these two 400-level courses, in 2012/13 Penn State will also collect and evaluate essays from students enrolled in language courses at the 200-level. This will allow us to assess whether there is significant improvement in students' knowledge of German or Russian grammar between the 200- and 400-level.
- In future surveys Penn State will also alter the questionnaire slightly and be more direct in asking students whether they are heritage learners of German or Russian. Besides the number of years spent in Russia/Germany or in a Russian/German speaking country, the students would need to tell us whether they use Russian or German at home with their parents or relatives. Especially in the Russian program, a significant number of students are heritage learners, which may have an impact on their knowledge of the German or Russian language.

In 2013/14, two aspects of the review process changed. First, programs are now asked to submit a single annual document that describes both the results of the current year's assessment activities and the plans for the coming year¹⁶. The new template for providing this information is provided on ANGEL. All submissions are reviewed by a group of associate deans who were asked to join the ACC, and who received mentoring from experienced members of the committee as well as from the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence consultants for this effort. This group includes associate deans from colleges at

¹⁶ Exemplary Baccalaureate Assessment Program Plans can be found at www.assess.psu.edu/exampleplans.

University Park, as well as their counterparts from the four-year campuses and Directors of Academic Affairs from University College campuses. Feedback on the plans is provided by this group to the units.

The 2009/10 to 2013/14 strategic planning process asked every unit to detail their plans for baccalaureate program assessment. The ACC provided feedback on these plans and thus began transferring responsibility for evaluating program assessment from central administration to the associate deans in the academic units. The Committee will remain active in a consultancy role around baccalaureate assessment and will expand its efforts in the areas detailed below for the next strategic planning cycle. A summary of the reviews is available on ANGEL.

General Education Assessment

In 2012, the ACC piloted the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT) developed by researchers at Tennessee Tech to assess students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The results of this pilot (see ANGEL) were encouraging in many ways. Specifically, the University determined that implementation across Penn State's many campuses was feasible and appropriate. In addition, the pilot results suggest that students gain in their critical thinking abilities during their Penn State years. In 2013/14, Penn State will expand the pilot to include at least one stand-alone Commonwealth College and one campus of the University College, in addition to another implementation at University Park.

Penn State has elected not to continue participation in NSSE, despite two prior implementations across a majority of campuses (2008 and 2011). The decision was based on three principal factors. First, the results of the survey are consistent with those of Penn State's peers within the Committee on Institutional Cooperation. The University interprets many of the individual results as indicative of institutional size and student body. Second, without a major centralized effort it has proven impossible to use the data to promote specific actions. Effecting change in NSSE indicators at institutions of Penn State's scale is rarely feasible without a tremendous investment in specific new programs, and current budgetary considerations do not make that approach possible. Third, NSSE does not address issues of academic assessment and/or intellectual growth. Penn State has therefore decided to rework its *Student Satisfaction Survey* (conducted regularly from 2002 to 2010) into a new *Student Experience Survey*, administered in spring 2014 across all campuses with the goal of gaining better insight into student engagement and learning. The goal of the *Student Experience Survey* is to assess student behaviors and experiences associated with academic success and the University's general learning outcomes for students. The survey is intended to provide actionable data for all campuses and colleges and for multiple student populations.

Despite these efforts, one driving force behind the work of the General Education Task Force is recognition that Penn State is not doing an adequate job of assessing its general education curriculum. In order to address this shortcoming in the new curriculum proposal, an Assessment Subcommittee has been charged with developing learning objectives for the new curriculum, proposing vehicles to assess student mastery of these objectives, and of developing a five-year assessment plan for general education. To date, the subcommittee has drafted objectives that have been accepted in principle and are currently undergoing refinement in an iterative process. Members of the subcommittee and one of the Task Force co-chairs

attended the AAC&U 2014 Summer Institute on General Education and Assessment. At the Institute, Task Force members had the opportunity to further develop the objectives and to consider multiple approaches to assessing the curriculum under the guidance of recognized national experts in the field. The subcommittee is currently focused on calling attention to the significant faculty involvement that will be necessary for a quality assessment program and the substantive faculty development and support that this will require.

5.5 Summary of Findings

Research Question 1: What are Penn State's processes and strategies for enrollment management and how do these processes and strategies help the University to achieve its admissions and retention goals?

Section 5.2.1 provides an overview of the processes and strategies that help the University achieve its admissions and retention goals through its multiple admission structure. Section 5.2.2 outlines the recruitment strategies of providing and communicating information so that Penn State continues to fulfill its mission of educating traditional and non-traditional students from Pennsylvania, the nation, and the world.

Research Question 2: How, and how well, is the University positioning itself to respond to demographic and economic shifts in Pennsylvania, nationally, and globally, especially in the areas of: residential instruction enrollments, World Campus enrollments, the interface of enrollments between degree and non-degree programs, and emerging online learning options (MOOC's, certificates, and badge credentialing).

Penn State continues to innovate in response to the demographic and economic shifts in Pennsylvania, nationally, and globally. As detailed in 6.1.2, Penn State has been able to increase its residential enrollments by 14% over the past eight years (2004 to 2014). World Campus applications from first-year and transfer students increased 16% from 2011/2012 to 2013/14 while course enrollments were over 60,000 for the 2013/14 academic year. Students enrolled in the World Campus come from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, three territories and more than 73 countries. In meeting the needs of the workforce, Penn State also offers over 90 online degrees through the World Campus to nearly 11,000 students.

Research Question 3: How is Penn State developing and achieving its goals to provide access for middle/low income and traditionally under-represented students in the Commonwealth?

As described in Section 5.2.2, the enrollment of underrepresented groups has increased 86.8% since 2002. Programs and tools such as MyPennState, Spend a Summer Day, and Penn State Days, and recruitment centers in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia are efforts to increase the number of traditionally underrepresented students from the Commonwealth enrolling in the University. Penn State also continues to meet the needs of the non-traditional student, as adult learners comprised 16% of the undergraduate student population in 2014.

Helping students fund their education continues to be a concern and top priority at Penn State (see Section 5.2.4). The Office of Student Aid administered a total of \$1.17 billion in student aid funding in 2013/14, assisting 73,381 students or 75% of all enrolled students. Penn State exceeded its \$100 million endowment goal in the Trustee Matching Scholarship Programs, which provided \$10.7 million in scholarships to 4,832 low income students. Penn State also recognizes the importance of not only providing access but also providing funding opportunities that make the Penn State experience special; thus grants and scholarships are available to students for study abroad.

Research Question 4: What post-admission diagnostic and placement tests are used to guide the placement of first-year students into courses? How is the effectiveness of this testing assessed?

Section 5.2.5 provides details of the post-admission diagnostic and placement tests that all new baccalaureate and associate degree students take to determine their appropriate placement in foundational courses. Penn State has consistently evaluated the effectiveness of these placement tests. From these assessments, the University has replaced its internally developed test for mathematics with the ALEKS online adaptive test. Assessment data has also led Penn State to eliminate the diagnostic test for chemistry, because it has found that the mathematics placement scores had a greater predictive value for student success in chemistry than the internally developed test for chemistry. Penn State will continue to monitor the effectiveness of its placement tests with regard to appropriate placement of students in foundational courses.

Research Question 5: How has Penn State's new student orientation evolved in recent years to support the academic success and transitional adjustments of first-year, transfer, change of campus, and new graduate students?

Although the First Year Testing, Consulting and Advising program has been in place since 1957, Penn State recently created the Office for New Student Orientation and Transition as a result of its strategic goal to improve key student transition experiences (see Section 5.3.2). After redesigning and implementing NSO in 2013 to help students with their social and academic fit, 99.8% of students who attended NSO enrolled. Increasing the orientation from one day to two days, has provided students more time with academic advising personnel and they are exposed to learning modules to increase their alcohol and sexual assault awareness. The University is also continuing efforts to improve the transition for students who move from one Penn State campus to another, transfer students, and graduate students. The Graduate School sponsors a half-day orientation that covers academic and social topics such as using Penn State online student and class systems, mentoring, graduate student life, and graduate student services and benefits.

Research Question 6: How does the University assess the achievement of curricular and co-curricular goals for student experiences and student development? What data are collected to identify opportunities for improvement?

Penn State has developed institutional and unit-level structures and procedures to ensure assessment of student learning outcomes. The foundations for these structures were described in Penn State's [2012 Periodic Review Report](#) and are not repeated here. For baccalaureate degree programs, decisions about student learning outcomes and assessments of progress toward these outcomes are made by faculty and staff at the program level, with guidance, review and cross-campus coordination provided centrally. For the current strategic planning cycle, all academic colleges will describe their plans, progress, and initiatives in learning assessment, and address how ongoing assessment connects to improvement efforts (this extends an assessment expectation in the previous five-year unit-planning cycle). Assessment of progress toward goals of the majors is generally conducted annually by program faculty. In general education, a rigorous evaluation of critical thinking has been administered in pilot fashion at University Park and is being expanded to multiple campuses in 2014-15. Co-curricular programs (e.g., Global Programs, Student Affairs) assess their effectiveness with several metrics including the National Survey of Student Engagement (which has been discontinued at Penn State), Penn State's *Student Experience Survey*, and Pulse surveys. Documented changes in curricula, co-curricular engagements, policy, procedures, and student services result from assessment findings.

Research Question 7: How will Penn State ensure a high-quality student experience and provide adequate student support services at all campuses, including the planned growth in enrollments in World Campus?

As highlighted in Sections 5.3.3, Penn State continues to offer student support services at all campus locations and for students enrolled in courses and programs offered through the World Campus. More importantly, because of the University's commitment to assessment (see Section 5.4.1), programs are constantly evaluated to ensure their contribution to student success with respect to academic and social fit. With the infrastructure and resources devoted to assessment, Penn State is not only dedicated to collecting data but also using the information to improve its programs and the student experience.

Research Question 8: How well do all academic programs (e.g., including general education, baccalaureate, and graduate) and co-curricular educational programs define desired outcomes?

Section 5.4.2 examines the work of the ACUE Assessment Coordinating Committee, which provides vision and oversight to the assessment of baccalaureate programs. In 2013/14 that Committee reviewed the assessment plans of 131 programs; 27% were rated as developing, 50% were acceptable, and 23% were exemplary. That Section also highlights a few degree programs that have exemplary learning objectives. Sections 5.3.3 and 5.3.4 provide a sampling of co-curricular educational programs offered at Penn State. Most of these programs are considered high-impact educational practices because of the added value to students' academic experience and contribution to increased levels of student retention through engagement and participation. Not all co-curricular educational programs and academic programs have well-defined outcomes,

but Penn State does have an infrastructure and culture in place, and initiatives under way, to identify and help those in need.

Research Question 9: How do Penn State's assessment strategies provide sufficient data to effectively measure intended outcomes? How does Penn State use assessment data on student learning to inform decisions? What are some examples of actions taken on the basis of assessment findings?

With respect to general education, the Assessment Coordinating Committee piloted the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (2012) and the results suggest that students gain in their critical thinking abilities during their time at Penn State (see Section 5.4.2). Section 5.4.2 also provides examples of degree programs taking actions based on their assessment of student learning. During the review process, three programs for which learning outcomes were poorly defined have subsequently been discontinued because of inadequate resources devoted to these programs. Section 4.4.1 examines the challenges of offering the same degree program at multiple campuses and the processes to help campuses determine learning objective and assessment methodologies while also improving communication and faculty engagement, increasing curricular integrity, and preserving academic freedom among campuses.

Research Question 10: How can Penn State's structures, mechanisms and strategies for assessing student learning (both curricular and co-curricular) be improved?

The organizational structure at Penn State provides flexibility and freedom for individual colleges and campuses to provide programs and services that are best suited for their students. This has created a diversity of programs that are tailored to students' needs. Guided by the research questions for this section, this self-study found that colleges and campuses are making strong efforts to follow best practices by developing learning objectives and assessment plans for curricular and co-curricular programs. Penn State recognizes that not all programs are exemplary in all phases of these practices; however, the University has provided resources and infrastructure (particularly the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence, Student Affairs Research and Assessment, and OPIA) to help those units and departments in need. While recognizing that there is room for improvement, the University has created a culture of assessment for improvement and action.

Assessment is not just about collecting data and utilizing it for program improvements. Often forgotten but just as important is the communication of such results. Many units do communicate within, but not between and among, colleges and campuses. As a University, Penn State can better utilize information by sharing it among appropriate constituents, which can help foster better collaboration between units. By making information more accessible, this may even help remove and lessen the silo effects that can occur at such a large and complex university. The inaccessibility of information is illustrated in how the University informs students of the procedures for filing complaints and grievances. Students have many avenues to file complaints and grievances, whether they pertain to issues such as [discrimination](#) or to [academics](#). However, there is no single location or resource with all this information. Even though the information is

available publicly, its lack of accessibility can make it difficult for students to find and utilize it, thus decreasing its utility. The Steering Committee recommends that the University be more conscientious and intentional with regards to communicating assessment activities and results.

It is the judgment of the Steering Committee that Penn State meets Standards 8, 9, and 14. The evidence in this chapter describes the student experience and analyzes the processes Penn State conducts to maintain and improve educational quality. Penn State has an admission process and offers educational experiences - both curricular and co-curricular - that allow the institution to fulfill its mission as a land-grant university. The infrastructure for assessment is also in place to document student learning and to ensure that enhancements can be made to improve student success at Penn State.

6. Conclusion

Penn State's leadership chose the theme of this self-study – *Living the Land-Grant Mission in a Global Context* – purposefully, with the intent of providing a sense of balance, gaining perspective, and producing a useful, honest, and meaningful analysis.

Penn State is a distinguished university with a history of excellence and strong ambitions for the future. There is no doubt that recent years have been tumultuous for Penn State; it has been necessary and appropriate that this self-study face head-on the highly publicized and troubling Sandusky scandal. Yet Penn State has been, and remains, a great public research university. It is committed to building on its 160-year history, and to becoming an even greater university in the decades ahead. In short, while the events of recent years were painful and disruptive, Penn State responded with honest self-examination and positive change. The University continues to look ahead, and remains committed to shaping lives, pursuing excellence, and remaining in the forefront of higher education.

As documented in this self-study, Penn State is a strong university with a full range of achievements in teaching, research, and outreach. The University has the resources, processes, and structures necessary to achieve its public land-grant mission, fulfill its responsibilities, and undertake necessary assessment and ongoing improvement.

Along with all colleges and universities, of course, Penn State faces change and uncertainty on all sides. Technological, economic, and societal forces – weakening state support, constraints on tuition increases, demographic shifts, globalization, cost pressures, the emergence of new competitors, the potential and the threat of the digital revolution – are converging to transform higher education. Penn State faculty, students, staff, and administrators must continue to question the status quo, to be agile and flexible, to go outside the approach of business as usual, and to seek innovative, cost-effective ways to achieve high-quality outcomes in everything the University does.

This self-study suggests ways in which the University can sharpen priorities and act strategically in the years ahead. Penn State must continue devoting attention to governance, communication, integrity, and transparency, as it has been doing, in particular, through implementation of the recommendations of the Freeh Report. Penn State should continue to pursue paths to more efficient and effective operations, and to align resources with its most important needs and priorities, as it has with strategic planning and initiatives such as the Core Council and the Budget Planning Task Force. Penn State should follow through on technology initiatives, including new student information systems, human resource information systems, IT governance, and plans to grow online learning. Penn State should continue to think and act globally, in terms of its global engagement strategy, research and service programs, curricula, experiences of faculty and students, and international recruitment. Penn State should continue to build its capability to assess and improve student learning. The University has greatly improved its capacity and ability to collect and analyze internal data in recent years; now Penn State should continue its commitment to become more conscientious and intentional about sharing and acting on assessment information. In

addition, the effort to review and update the fifteen-year-old general education curriculum should remain a high priority.

Faculty, staff, students, and administrators working together can create a foundation for ever greater accomplishment. The elements are in place for the University to extend its reach and impact through teaching and learning, research, and service. With continued hard work, creativity, and dedication, Penn State can become an even greater university, living its land-grant mission as a 21st century global university.

Appendix A: Accessing Supporting Materials on ANGEL

Prior to the Site Team's visit, each member should establish a Friends of Penn State (FPS) account. This account will provide access to a secure site where supporting materials are located for the Team's use.

Establishing your Friends of Penn State account

1. Ms. Katryn Boynton, Assistant to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, will provide a Friends of Penn State (FPS) username and password to all members of the evaluation team.
2. Please take note of your FPS username and password. These are the credentials you will use to access the ANGEL site.

Accessing the files on ANGEL

Once Ms. Boynton has confirmed your access, go to <https://cms.psu.edu/> and login with your FPS username and password

1. Go to My Groups
2. Go to Committee / Task Force
3. Go to "MSCHE Visiting Team Reference Materials"

Who do I contact if I have problems?

- If you cannot logon to ANGEL, you can contact ITS Help at (814) 865-4357 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except on official University holidays.
- If you are able to logon to ANGEL, but do not see the "MSCHE Visiting Team Reference Materials," contact Katryn Boynton at klb8@psu.edu or at (814) 863-7494.

Appendix B: Self-Study Steering Committee and Subcommittee Membership

Steering Committee Membership

(*Denotes a member of both the Steering Committee and a subcommittee.)

- Francis Achampong, Chancellor, Penn State Mont Alto
- Marianne Alexander, Member, Board of Trustees, 2003-2014; President Emerita of the Public Leadership Network
- Katherine Allen, Associate General Counsel, Office of the Vice President and General Counsel
- Janine S. Andrews, Director, Office of the Board of Trustees/Associate Secretary
- Lori J. Bechtel-Wherry, Chancellor, Penn State Altoona*
- Blannie E. Bowen (Chair), Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
- Philip J. Burlingame, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs*
- Barbara I. Dewey, Dean, University Libraries and Scholarly Communications
- Michael J. Dooris (Vice Chair) Executive Director, Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment*
- Yvonne M. Gaudelius, Associate Vice President and Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, Office of the Vice President and Dean for Undergraduate Education
- David J. Gray, Senior Vice President for Finance and Business/Treasurer
- Daniel R. Hagen, Executive Director, Office of the University Faculty Senate*
- Christopher P. Long, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies and Resident Instruction, College of the Liberal Arts*
- David H. Monk, Dean, College of Education*
- Karen O'Brien, Coordinator of Institutional Reporting, University Budget Office
- Lisa Powers, Director, Department of Public Information
- David Sylvia, Director of Academic Affairs for Graduate Programs, Penn State World Campus
- Regina Vasilatos-Younken, Interim Dean, The Graduate School

Subcommittee Membership

Institutional Context and Foundation Subcommittee

- Lori Bechtel-Wherry (Chair), Chancellor, Penn State Altoona*
- Regis W. Becker, Director, University Ethics and Compliance
- Daniel R. Hagen, Executive Director, Office of the University Faculty Senate*
- Samuel E. Hayes, Jr., Member, Board of Trustees , 1997-2013; Former Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture

- Ronald J. Huss, Associate Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer, Office of the Vice President for Research
- Thomas E. Mallouk, Evan Pugh Professor of Materials Chemistry and Physics, Eberly College of Science
- Michael Minutello, Graduate Student and Ostar Fellow, Higher Education Graduate Program

Planning, Budgeting, and Governance Subcommittee

- Anthony Atchley, Associate Dean for Research and Administration, College of Engineering
- Ingrid Blood, Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders, College of Health and Human Development
- Patricia A. Cochrane, Financial Officer, Office of the Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses
- Michael J. Dooris, Executive Director, Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment*
- Paula Milone-Nuzzo, Dean, College of Nursing
- David H. Monk (Chair), Dean, College of Education*
- Thomas G. Poole, Vice President for Administration, Office of the President
- Cheryl A. Seybold, Director of Strategic Initiatives and PMO, Administrative Information Services
- Rachel E. Smith, University Budget Officer, University Budget Office

Educational Context and Offerings Subcommittee

- Penny H. Carlson, Senior Director of Academic Services, Records and Assessment, Office of the Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses
- Coral J. Flanagan, Undergraduate Student, English and Comparative Literature and member of the Presidential Leadership Academy
- Betty J. Harper, Senior Planning and Research Associate, Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment
- Angela R. Linse, Executive Director and Associate Dean, Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence
- Christopher P. Long (Chair), Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies and Resident Instruction, College of the Liberal Arts*
- Bart Pursel, Research Project Manager, Information Technology Services
- Andrew F. Read, Professor and Director, Center for Infectious Disease Dynamics, Eberly College of Science
- Richard W. Robinett, Professor of Physics, Eberly College of Science
- Margaret J. Slattery, Assistant Professor of Bioengineering, College of Engineering
- Marcus Whitehurst, Interim Vice Provost for Educational Equity, Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity

The Student Experience, Success, and Development Subcommittee

- Philip J. Burlingame (Chair), Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs*

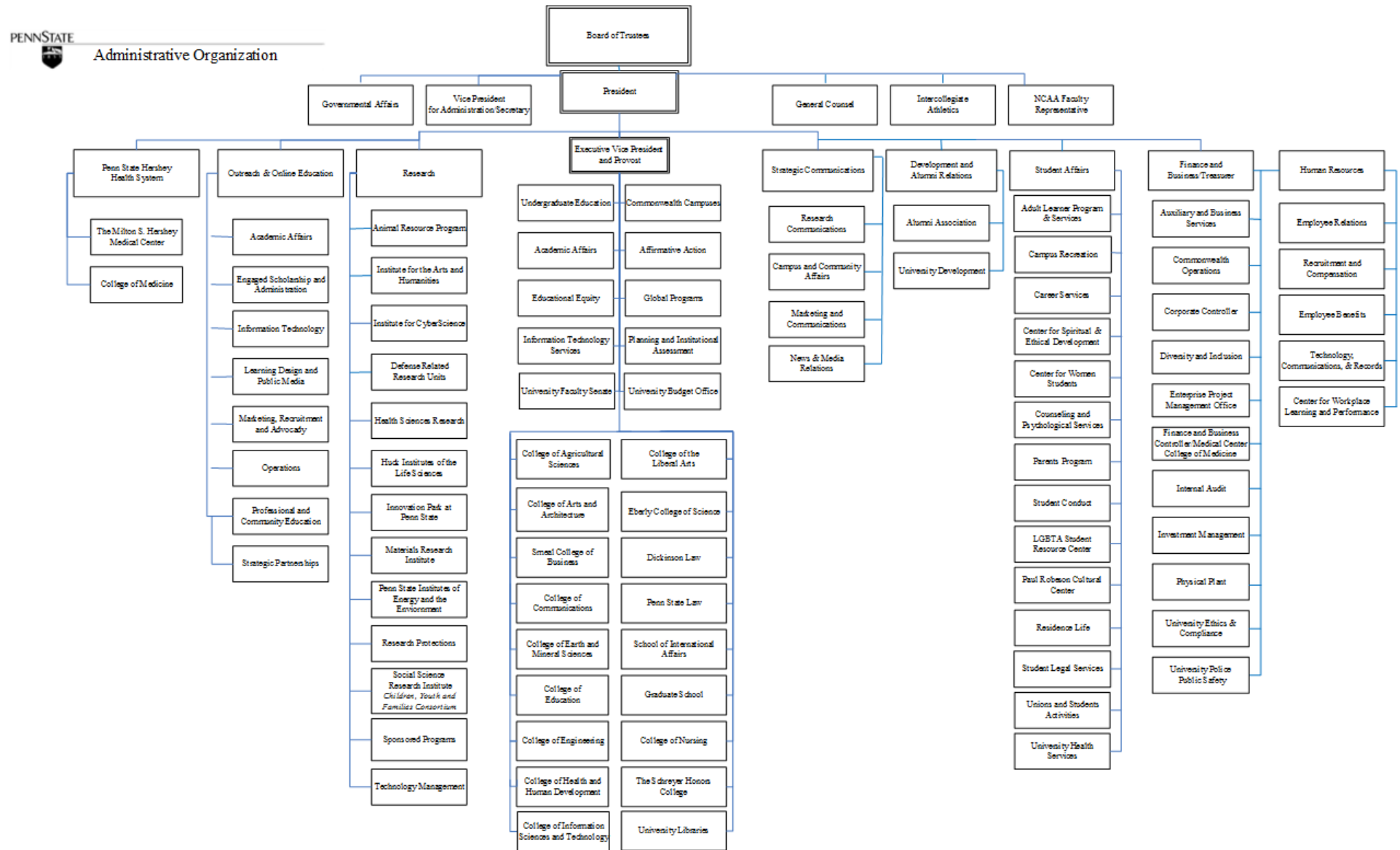
- Jacqueline Edmondson, Associate Vice President and Associate Dean, Office of Vice President and Dean for Undergraduate Education
- Tanya Furman, Assistant Vice President and Associate Dean, Office of Vice President and Dean for Undergraduate Education
- Anna M. Griswold, Assistant Vice President for Undergraduate Education and Executive Director for Student Aid, Office of Vice President and Dean for Undergraduate Education
- R. Keith Hillkirk, Chancellor, Penn State Berks
- Tracy S. Hoover, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, College of Agricultural Sciences
- Anne L. Rohrbach, Executive Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Office of Vice President and Dean for Undergraduate Education
- Barbara J. Rowe, Executive Director of Education Abroad, Office of the Vice Provost for Global Programs
- Blaine E. Steensland, Senior Director of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Penn State Berks
- Alexander Yin, Senior Planning and Research Associate, Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment

Appendix C: Penn State Acronyms Reference Sheet

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|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AAPP | Academic Administrative Policies and Procedures |
| AAPPM | Academic Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual |
| ARSSA | Faculty Senate Committee on Admissions, Records, Scheduling, and Student Aid |
| IUG | Integrated Undergraduate Graduate Program |
| AAC&U | American Association of Colleges and Universities |
| AAUDE | Association of American Universities Data Exchange |
| ACC | Assessment Coordinating Committee |
| ACUE | Administrative Council on Undergraduate Education |
| ALEKS | Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces |
| ALP | Academic Leadership Program of the CIC |
| AP | Advanced Placement |
| BASICS | Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students |
| CAMP | College Assistance Migrant Program |
| CAT | Critical Thinking Assessment Test |
| CCL | Commonwealth Campus Libraries |
| CERA | Center for Ethics and Religious Affairs |
| CIC | Committee on Institutional Cooperation |
| COIL | Center for Online Innovation in Learning |
| CQI | Continuous quality improvement |
| CSRS | Course Substitution Request System |
| DUS | Division of Undergraduate Studies |
| EIS | Enterprise Information Systems |
| EPR | Early Progress Report |
| FPS | Friends of Penn State |
| FYS | First-Year Seminar/Experience |
| GA | General Arts |
| GH | General Humanities |
| GHA | General Health Activities |
| GN | General Natural Sciences |
| GQ | General Quantitative Sciences |
| GS | General Social Science |
| GWS | General Writing and Speaking |

| | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| HIEP | High-Impact Educational Programs |
| HRIS | Human Resources Information System |
| IL | International Cultures |
| IP | Integrated Planning |
| IPEDS | Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System |
| IR | Institutional research |
| ISIS | Integrated Student Information System |
| IT | Information technology |
| iTwo | Institutional Insight |
| LEAP | Leading Edge Academic Program |
| LLS | Library Learning Services |
| MOOC | Massive Open Online Course |
| MSCHE | Middle States Commission for Higher Education |
| MSHMC | Milton S. Hershey Medical Center |
| NCAA | National Collegiate Athletic Association |
| NRC | National Research Council |
| NSF | National Science Foundation |
| NSO | New Student Orientation |
| NSSE | National Survey of Student Engagement |
| OHR | Office of Human Resources |
| OPIA | Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment |
| OPP | Office of Physical Plant |
| PLA | Prior Learning Assessment |
| SARA | Student Affairs Research and Assessment |
| SARI | Scholarship and Research Integrity |
| SCCA | Senate Committee for Curricular Affairs |
| SCUG | Special Committee on University Governance |
| TA | Teaching assistant |
| THON | Penn State Dance Marathon |
| UAO | Undergraduate Admissions Office |
| UCIF | University Committee on Instructional Facilities |
| UOGP | University Office of Global Programs |
| US | United State Cultures |
| USAC | University Staff Advisory Council |
| USCAA | United State Collegiate Athletic Association |

Appendix D: Organizational Chart



11/10/2014

