# Assurance Argument



**Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan**
10/7/2016

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# 1 - Mission

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

## 1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

### Argument

**1.A.1**

Lake Superior State University's mission is to

"*help students develop their full potential. We launch students on paths to rewarding careers and productive, satisfying lives. We serve the regional, state, national and global communities by contributing to the growth, dissemination, and application of knowledge*."

While the University mission, ideals and philosophy have developed over time there has been a consistent dedication to central themes including: "to educate students for a well-rounded life," "to teach basic fundamentals and their application," and "to encourage initiative, self-criticism and intellectual curiosity." The current mission statement was developed through a new process inclusive of the broad University community, and demonstrates our commitment to the principles of shared governance. Shared governance has been an important component to governing committees and councils since 1969, as evident the 1970 university catalog. The recent form of shared governance at the University was implemented in the spring semester of 2010 in the appointment of the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee. As evidenced through the committee minutes the faculty, staff and students of this committee worked from first principles to develop a shared understanding of our institutional mission. In the summer of 2010, a wide cross-section of faculty, staff, students and trustees participated in a campus-wide dialog focused on our institutional identity and future. Board of Trustees adopted the current Mission Statement on November 11, 2011. The mission statement serves as the foundation for the University's vision, core values, as well as the strategic plan

In November 2014 the Board of Trustees and Cabinet hosted a retreat which included the President, the faculty chair of shared governance oversight and others. Out of this dialog, a number of key outcomes were established, including Board committee structure, establishing goals for newly appointed President Pleger, examining the shared governance structure, and updating the strategic planning process. Furthermore, the University has established a set of four overarching goals, that are aligned with the mission, and that encapsulate the seven existing critical outcomes identified in the 2012 strategic plan. The goals have been widely incorporated into our campus dialogs, including discussions of an integrated service model and the President's presentation on the LSSU Transformational Plan. These goals are the basis of the acronym "CAFE".

- Culture
- Academics
- Finance
- Enrollment/Student Experience.

**1.A.2**

**Academic Programs.**

The university has a diverse mix of liberal arts programs, unconditional courses (courses with no prerequisites in the natural and social sciences, the humanities, and the arts), as well as programs in the professional disciplines, which help us achieve our mission to "help students develop their full potential." The University's wide range of academic degree programs contribute to the growth, dissemination and application of knowledge. Academic programs are regularly reviewed, and their alignment to, and support of, the mission is evaluated. Undergraduate research is an important component of many of the academic programs, as exemplified by examples from Biology, Mathematics and Exercise Sciences, wherein students apply themselves to the development of new knowledge in some aspect of their field of study. Undergraduate student research activity is supported through funding of the undergraduate research committee, and in annual presentations of student research on campus. The program review process in place for all academic programs, as documented on our program review website provides a framework for a critical review of the alignment of each program to the mission. The program review for the B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife provides a strong example of program-level assessment, making a clear statement of the academic program mission and its connection to the University mission.

The University mission is the basis for the unit missions at the college and school level. This is evident through various academic program websites which publicly present the unit's mission, and all new academic program proposals require explicit narrative describing the relationship of the program to the University mission.

The University's diverse mix of baccalaureate level liberal arts, science and professional disciplines is consistent with the institution's Carnegie classification. The University ensures that our programs and services are relevant, current and meet the needs of our community through a template defining the process of regular program reviews, which include explicit connection to

the University mission as well as critical analysis of internal and external demand, indicators of program quality and effectiveness. Summaries of program review findings are accessible to the University community and public through our assessment website.

**Student Support Services:** All students are granted opportunities to access the many services provided through the University, in support of their academic, social, health and emotional needs, while they are pursuing their academic goals. The individual mission statements of the student support services departments and programs, evident in the bullets below, are consistent with the University mission and are publicly displayed on the websites.

- Career and job counseling is available through Career Services.
- Personal and emotional counseling is available at the Counseling Center.
- Students with disabilities are provided assistance through Disabilities Services.
- Counseling and assistance related to the cost of education is provided by Financial Aid .
- The Study Abroad office provides information for students leaving campus for academic pursuits.
- The International Education office provides supports for international students coming to campus.
- Student Housing office provides support for students living on campus.
- Campus Recreation department coordinates activities utilizing the exceptional natural resources of our region.
- Campus Life provides co-curricular and social opportunities outside the classroom.
- The Native American Center provides support and an on-campus community for students
- Student health services are provided by the Health Care Center.
- The Shouldice Library provides a full range of library, AV and support services.
- The Learning Center provides assistance to all students, tutors, and programming.
- Public Safety department provides 24/7 support for students, faculty and staff.

 **Enrollment Profile:**

The University mission statement states that LSSU  will 'serve the regional, state, national and global communities' and our enrollment profile reflects this mission. The University enrollment profile, as shown in publicly reporting the institutional snapshot, reflects characteristics of the university student population as a whole. The University enrollment management plan connects our efforts to build enrollment to the mission and vision within the context of the University's position in the state and region. The University total student headcount in the fall 2014 was 2260, reflecting a marked decline of 486 students over the last 4 years, making enrollment growth an institutional priority. The enrollment profile also reflects our commitment and service to the Native American/First Nations Peoples of our region who constitute nearly 10% of our total enrollment. The University primarily serves students in our close geographic region and from the two primary urban centers downstate – greater Detroit and the Grand Rapids area (HEIDI report p116).  In 2012, the University partnered with STAMATS to examine perceptions of the institution from a variety of perspectives with respect to prospects and parents, and with internal stakeholders.

Recent initiatives to expand enrollment, consistent with our mission, have included a new transfer articulation agreement to the University of Wisconsin Colleges.  The LSSU-Wisconsin Bridge program incorporates the standard Wisconsin associate's degree in Liberal Arts into any LSSU degree. A second initiative provides in-state tuition, "One Rate at Lake State," to residents of any resident from North America.  This initiative is aimed to bring new talent to Michigan, and to expand the pool of candidates, both nationally and internationally, who come to LSSU for our programs and the opportunities afforded in Northern Michigan. The University also provides opportunities, consistent with our mission, at three regional centers in Michigan located in Escanaba (at Bay College), Iron Mountain (at Bay College West), and Petoskey (at North Central Michigan College).  Programs at these sites mirror those of the main campus, align exactly with the mission of the University, and serve to provide expanded educational opportunities for students while better serving the needs of our extended region.

The University has worked to expand our national and international presence consistent with our mission to serve "regional, state, national and global communities." The University has worked to establish legal authorization to offer programs and education to students in a number of other states through specific state-level authorizations.  LSSU makes the status of these authorizations available to the public on our State Authorization website and advise students at the point of registration of restrictions which apply to some states or Canadian Provinces.  Our focus in support of international education is aligned with our mission and the institution provides detailed information and support for students as they interact with the institution at the point of admission, registration, through our Office of International Education, and in academic programs including International Business.

**1.A.3.  The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)**

The Strategic Planning and Budget Committee (SPBC) regularly reviews the impact of strategic initiative funding and uses that to guide future activities and ensure that activities continue to be aligned to the University mission.The University community has understanding of the connection between mission and strategic planning, which is reinforced through regular communications, for example the Laker Log article on strategic initiatives. The University, through the SPBC, and as evident in the committee's minutes, and through establishment of Budget Guidelines, provides the University community appropriate broad opportunity for input and review.  New budget requests document the justification and alignment with the mission and strategic plan. The impact on planning aligned with the mission is evident in documentation supporting recent initiatives approved by SPBC, for example the acquisition of new budgeting software. Additional information on the connection between institution guiding documents, resource allocation, and the budgeting process is found in Section 5.C.1.

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# 1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

## Argument

### 1.B.1

As part of the University's commitment to transparency, the mission and other articulations of the mission, including the vision, core values and strategic plan, are all clearly and prominently articulated to the campus community and the general public through the University website and catalog. In addition, the mission and vision statements are posted at prominent locations across campus, including the lobbies of each academic building.

The mission is articulated through the implementation of the University's core values, principles that guide LSSU and its employees as they conduct business both internally and externally. These are the values of the individuals who serve and sustain the institution and are readily recognized and appreciated by constituencies of the institution. All planning for the future depends on the acceptance and adherence to the University's core values.

The mission is articulated through the University vision statement, which establishes the goals and aspirations of the institution.

The mission is also articulated through the University's strategic planning process and institutional goals which provide the road map by which the institution will implement the values, vision and achieve its mission. As an example, the mission speaks to serving the regional community, the vision statement speaks to the institution serving as regional choice for excellent quality education, and the strategic plan to providing programs that align to the mission and the needs of our regional stakeholders.

### 1.B.2

The University mission, and our documents derived from the mission, such as the strategic plan, remain current through regular reviews by the Board of Trustees, most recently a formal review conducted at the fall 2014 at a Board Retreat. Governance documents, such as The Faculty

*Agreement,* reflect expectations that are aligned with the mission of the University, including instruction, advising and student support, scholarly activity and service, defined in Section 11.  The *Agreement*, including relevant addenda, expresses the shared understanding of the nature and scope of responsibility within the faculty employment, and as aligned with the University mission. The Agreement establishes the range of faculty effort as a percentage of workload by category (teaching, research and service), provides clear expectations for faculty, and consistent tools for evaluation focused on supporting and promoting effective practices in Sections 8 and Section 20.

### 1.B.3.

The mission statement guides the University in the delivery of programs to all students, to the extent possible, based on our resources and regional needs. The University has authorization to deliver degree programs at the associate and baccalaureate levels as evident in the institutional status report. The University delivers over 100 programs in a diverse range of disciplines, including fire science, robotics, environmental health, and fish health as well as a range of more traditional academic fields such as biology, psychology and mathematics. This range of programs is consistent with our mission to 'help students reach their full potential' and new degrees, such as the Bachelor of General Studies, has sufficient flexibility and content depth to help all students reach that potential. Most programs feature strong undergraduate research, clinical, or other practical application components, and take advantage of specialized facilities and regional opportunities to enhance student learning. Senior project presentations from math/computer science, biology, engineering, and political science are evidence from just a few of the programmatic areas.

The University's primarily undergraduate-teaching and student-learning centered focus is reflected in the types and curricula of the degree programs offered, the qualifications and scholarship of the faculty, and the faculty review criteria, which places the greatest evaluation weight (50-75%) on excellence in teaching.  The Agreement between the LSSU Board of Trustees and Faculty Association (MEA/NEA) clearly promotes high expectations for both teaching and advising for the awarding of promotion and tenure, as well as continuation of probationary (pre-tenure), term, and adjunct faculty. The University's commitment of teaching excellence is made clearer by the large percentage of courses taught by tenured or tenure track faculty (82% of sections, 83% of contract load, 84% of student credit hour generation) based on fall 2014 load reports .  Further evidence is found in the recent establishment of a Faculty Center for Teaching , which provides a variety of resources and professional development opportunities  to enhance instructional effectiveness.

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# 1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

## Argument

### 1.C.1.

The mission, vision, core values, and strategic plan demonstrate the institution's continued support and commitment to diversity as we "serve the regional, state, national and global communities." Our earliest college catalogs (circa 1967) refer to educating students for a well-rounded life, including the development of "mental, spiritual, physical and social development." By 1991, University goals were introduced that included "designing support programs that will address the special learning needs of minorities, nontraditional students and women." Over time, and through several refinements and presidential leadership changes, the University's statement on diversity has continued to change.  At the time of our 2011 self-study, institutional documents included the Value Statement to "welcome diverse perspectives and remain open to change and innovation."  The current mission statement focuses on the broad reach of students that the institution continues to serve as the University strives to provide "all students" with a well-rounded education, one which provides them the skills needed to succeed in their chosen careers. This well-rounded education includes a focus on diversity, recognizing the multicultural makeup of the institution and its students. The vision statement stresses that LSSU is "student centered" and empowers students to realize their "highest individual potential." The core values of the institution communicate our understanding of the relationship between mission and diversity in our aspirational statement that "students [will] experience a campus community environment which is inclusive and welcoming."

The University is unique in the state through our service to the Native American and First Nations peoples.  While LSSU is by far the smallest public university in the state, the institution serves the largest number of individuals identified as "American Indian," both in absolute number and in percentage. In addition, LSSU is third in the state for the number of "non-resident aliens" served. This is evidence of our commitment to diversity by serving students from various nations, provinces and U.S. states -- students who bring with them a variety of cultural characteristics that continue to enrich the diversity of the University community.  Beyond location diversity, LSSU embraces its commitment to diversity through the race/ethnicity of its students.  The LSSU demographic makeup of this category of students includes race/ethnicity such as Hispanic, Native American, and Black, etc.

The institution is reminded each day of the international nature of our campus as Canadian vistas are viewed from nearly every part of campus by looking North across the St. Marys River.

Sitting on the border of two nations, and surrounded by a rich heritage derived from Native American and French history, the University embraces its role to prepare students to be effective citizens in a multicultural society.  Internationalism is incorporated into University operations, traditions, student events and community events. Evidence highlighting these cultural influences can be seen in areas such as the annual University commencement that features Native American drummers. The University supports a full-time nine-month director, Stephanie Sabatine, to provide oversight for the Native American Center which also enhances campus culture each year through performances, meals, lectures and art shows and exhibits in the Arts Center and Kenneth J. Shouldice Library Gallery. The campus displays US and Canadian flags in the Taffy Abel Arena, and routinely begins each sporting event and commencement exercises with the U.S. and Canadian national anthems. National flags from students native lands are regularly displayed in the Quarterdeck dining hall to emphasize the diversity of our student body.

The Athletic Department recruits a broad range of international student athletes.  In 2015-16, there were 21 international student-athletes on athletic rosters.  Those student-athletes came from Canada, Thailand, Jamaica, Spain, Scotland, New Zealand, England, and Serbia.

LSSU continues to refine our understanding of institutional diversity, in part through the activities of the Shared Governance Diversity Committee, as evidenced through their committee minutes. Reflecting this growth and ongoing development, the Diversity Committee developed a Diversity Statement and Diversity Plan which were submitted to the Shared Governance Oversight Committee (SGOC) on March 31, 2015. After continued committee dialog, on December 8, 2015 the Diversity Committee presented a new diversity statement at the University senate meeting reflecting our ongoing campus dialog on this issue.

The Diversity Committee is using meetings of the University senate and other opportunities to seek input into the adjustment of the Diversity Plan. The statement and plan promote a more focused view of what diversity at LSSU means and what needs to occur within the campus community to promote that understanding.  The committee seeks input through the use of intentional prompts to which faculty, staff and students respond. On November 17-19, 2015, large display boards were set up in the Walker Cisler Center and the Kenneth J. Shouldice library where the prompt was stated and those wanting to respond were given an index card to fill out anonymously for the appropriate prompt.  That information, along with the information collected from the academic senate meeting is being used in the development of an adjusted diversity plan. Areas of the Diversity Plan currently include: changes in the general education curriculum; bringing back a visiting professor to focus on diversity using King Chavez Parks funds from the State of Michigan to conduct a diversity audit and campus climate study; and conducting an annual forum on diversity for students, faculty, and staff to focus on diversity needs. The University coordinates recruitment through the Charter School Office to promote programs and opportunities to students at schools we charter, which are predominately in urban areas with a more diverse student population than the main campus. The Diversity Committee values and uses the input from the University community to help map future diversity initiatives at LSSU.

**1.C.2**

The Campus Life staff is the catalyst for a full range of dynamic and engaging campus community activities.  The Laker Get Involved Guide (GIG) highlights some of the activities characteristic of this supportive environment, and the annual Laker Life publication provides students with an introduction to the full spectrum of institutional activities as evidenced through a compendium of Campus Life events, programming and student engagement activities that are produced in conjunction with the Diversity Committee. The activities have ranged from speakers, such as Terri Houston, on critical and current issues (e.g., Trayvon Martin, bullying, racism, and Ferguson), to cultural displays (e.g., spoken word poetry and exhibits on racism), to celebrations of the lives of those who have taken a stand against oppression and racism (e.g., Martin Luther King, Jr., Frederick Douglass, and Harriet Tubman). SafeZone Training has also been provided for Resident Assistants, Area Coordinators and other staff on Title IX, including training on sexual assault, and training has been provided at the annual Professional Development Days as evidenced through the programs from 2012-2015.

Diversity-related student organizations have also assisted in campus programming efforts. The Campus Life office, working with the Shared Governance Oversight and Diversity Committees, re-established a fall student convocation (2015, 2016).  Important to that event was a new "Laker Pledge" that stresses the importance of personal responsibility with the statement "I will help foster a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere that values DIVERSITY." Student organizations have sponsored and led discussions on diversity programming beneficial to students, faculty, and staff, and the activities board, Presidents' Council and Student Government have contributed in planning and sponsoring efforts to provide more diversity-related programming on campus. The Presidents' Council is comprised of the club president from each recognized campus student organization.

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# 1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

## Argument

**1.D.1.**

Established in 1946 to address the needs of returning World War II veterans and to provide educational opportunities to the people of the Eastern Upper Peninsula, Lake Superior State University has long been dedicated to the public good and continues that commitment today. The University mission statement affirms: "We serve the regional, state, national and global communities by contributing to the growth, dissemination, and application of knowledge." This commitment to the public good can be seen across campus as evidenced through broad institutional support for the arts, sciences, and public health education.

The University demonstrates its understanding of, and commitment to, its role of providing educational enrichment opportunities in the arts as part a commitment to the public good. The University demonstrates its commitment that the arts add value and understanding beyond the enjoyment of a theatrical production, a concert, or the fine lines of a painting.  The LSSU Arts Center is a premier facility dedicated to enriching the lives of our students and the people of our service regions. The $15 million ARTS Center provides classrooms, performance and rehearsal space, and an art gallery. This facility, the only one of its kind in the region, not only enhances the education of our students, but also provides a center for cultural events for the region. The Arts Center Gallery exhibits the work of regional and national artists and also holds local competitions to support local artists such as the "5 by 7 Art Show."  It features performing arts events which bring classically trained musicians, nationally-renowned dance troupes, and multi-cultural entertainers to campus, in addition to student productions which are open to the public.

Recently, an initiative to increase the amount of public art on the LSSU campus was launched. President Tom and Teresa Pleger and members of the President's Cabinet created the President's Public Art Challenge Fund, which will be used to acquire works of art for public display. The first piece in this new Presidential Collection is a 12x10 foot mobile inspired by prehistoric ginkgo leaves, shells, and other primordial shapes. The mobile is displayed in the Shouldice Library foyer and contributions are being made to the new fund to add additional artwork to the collection.

Other arts initiatives which demonstrate that LSSU has embraced its educational commitment to the public good, include the LSSU Visiting Writer Series and Summerfest. The LSSU Department of English created the Visiting Writer Series to bring highly acclaimed literary authors and poets to campus to raise awareness of LSSU's expanding Creative Writing Program and bring together the community and college in a shared literary experience. Attendees have the opportunity to hear writers read their work and answer questions about their writing process. Past visiting authors have included National Book Award winners in both fiction and poetry. Summerfest is a campus arts event that promotes music, local musicians, and local food. Held on an outdoor stage on the north side of the Walker Cisler Center, this event features free performances by local bands and members of the Sault Symphony Orchestra.

The LSSU Aquatic Research Laboratory (ARL) is a key example of how the University uses its educational leadership in the sciences to promote the public good. The mission of the ARL is to combine education and research on aquatic biota and their associated habitats within the Great Lakes basin to serve the academic, scientific, and public communities. The mission/goals of the ARL are to: provide scientific information to further advance our understanding of regional water bodies and issues of concern; provide logistical and technical support for faculty and researchers from LSSU and other institutions engaged in freshwater research; promote and conduct hands-on training for undergraduate students in freshwater science; and foster information transfer between scientists and local communities regarding water resources of the northern Great Lakes region. The ARL's hatchery operation's goal is to propagate 25,000 - 40,000 yearling Atlantic salmon annually. The release of salmon into the Great Lakes serves to promote healthy fish populations within the Great Lakes basin. The ARL fosters interaction between LSSU faculty and staff and the Sault Ste. Marie communities by highlighting the aquatic resources of the northern Great Lakes region. ARL staff give presentations on ARL activities to regional community groups, participate in community environmental events, and provide educational tours to school groups of all ages. Because of its importance to the Great Lakes Region, a New Center for Freshwater Research and Education is being proposed and is the number one priority in LSSU's Capital Outlay Master Plan. Both houses of Michigan's legislature have approved nearly $9 million in funding for an expansion of Lake Superior State University's successful Aquatic Research Lab (ARL). The legislation was signed by Gov. Rick Synder on June 29 for inclusion into the state's 2016-17 budget.

The Environmental Analysis Laboratory (EAL) at Lake Superior State University provides further evidence that in its educational role the institution serves the public good. The EAL provides analysis services to state, federal, and local environmental monitoring programs emphasizing education, research, and community service. It follows US Environmental Protection Agency and MI Department of Environmental Quality approved analytical protocols on all analyses allowing data from the Environmental Analysis Laboratory to be included in appropriate state databases. Current activities include: traditional wet chemical analysis techniques; classical and state-of-the-art instrumental analysis methods; and field measurements taken using both portable equipment, and equipment for the continuous monitoring of environmental conditions. The EAL provides students, staff, and faculty with the opportunity to collaborate with external agencies in research projects involving relevant environmental problems. It also provides the community with technical assistance for water quality analysis and monitoring.

LSSU's Health Care Simulation Center provides assessment, remediation, certification, transition to practice, and community outreach opportunities for a variety of health care specialty disciplines. The center is a Center of Excellence within the LSSU School of Nursing, supporting the nursing program and health care professionals in the region, including a partnership with Sault Ste. Marie's War Memorial Hospital. It features five state-of-the-art, computer-controlled, wireless  mannequins that blink, bleed, cry, sweat and express their symptoms to healthcare workers and students just as live patients might, and respond to treatment much like live patients would. Further exemplifying strong partnerships with the community, the center is currently located in the Sault Economic Development Commission's SmartZone accelerator building. LSSU is assessing plans to expand the facility in partnership with War Memorial Hospital, to develop a community resource for hospitals and other medical facilities that do not have their own simulated-patient training labs to support medical continuing education. This project has been so successful it was featured on the March 2016 cover of *MedSim* magazine.

In collaboration with Bayliss Public Library, the Shouldice Library hosts a monthly memoir writing workshop called "Palm of the Hand," which is open to anyone in the community. Additionally, the University library and Bayliss Public Library have initiated a joint library card program allowing community patrons and campus patrons full access to all resources in both libraries.

## 1.D.2.

The University regards its role as a leader in higher education as central to all the institution's activities. As a public, non-profit, state university the institution's number one core value is stated directly and unequivocally: "Teaching is our first priority." About 45% of the General Fund is allocated directly to the education of students. About 25% is allocated for student support (activities, recreation, counseling, advising, retention, scholarships, etc). About 15% is utilized to maintain the educational facilities. The remaining 15% is used for University administration, finances, reporting, HR, etc.

Hosting a variety of conferences on campus demonstrates the University's commitment to promote the public good while continuing to recognize that the institution's educational responsibilities are the number one priority. For example, in 2015, the Superior Accounting Conference 2015, presented by LSSU's Student Chapter of the IMA, and a TEDx event were held on campus.These events allowed our students to reap the educational reward of these experiences at the same time that LSSU helped to promote the public good more generally. While LSSU's educational responsibilities will always take primacy over other purposes, its outreach efforts have only strengthened LSSU's ability to fulfill its mission.

## 1.D.3.

LSSU's commitment to respond to the needs of our constituents can be seen through public outreach initiatives, activities, and community focused programs. The LSSU Product Development Center (PDC) is a not-for-profit activity of the LSSU College of Professional Studies that provides fee based engineering services to businesses, entrepreneurs and inventors. Engineering project managers with industrial experience participate in each project and guide

skilled engineering students to provide an economical result for the client. Whether it is a prototype device or process that is needed, or making an existing idea ready for market, the PDC helps with engineering in the areas of mechanical, electrical, software, manufacturing and robotics/automation, statistical analysis, technical writing and documentation. If a project needs additional support in the business or sciences areas, the PDC manages the project and collaborates with various departments of the University. As a project develops from idea to marketable product, the PDC interacts with other economic development entities such as SSMart ( Sault Ste. Marie Advanced Resources and Technology), Inc. and other SmartZones.

The Regional Outdoor Center (ROC) is the newest addition to the Campus Recreation Department at LSSU, and is redefining the way community members and visitors to the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan can experience nature. Open to the public, the outdoor center provides highly affordable rental equipment, including camping gear, bikes, cross country skis, snowshoes, canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards. The ROC also provides guided tours of some of the area's most primitive locations, maps and guides of local attractions, and planned trips to recreational attractions. To strengthen collaborations with the university athletics and recreation the ROC was moved to the Norris Center in the summer of 2016.

The Gil Gleason Natural History Museum, located in Crawford Hall of Science, features mounts of wildlife native to the Eastern Upper Peninsula and beyond, including wolves, black bear, fox, and a polar bear.  The adjacent Kemp Mineral Museum presents an impressive collection of rocks and minerals, and displays of local geology. The museums are open to the public and frequented by K-12 classes as a field trip destination.

The LSSU Health Care Center serves the needs of LSSU students, employees, and the general public. The center offers a wide range of services, including acute/urgent medical care, chronic illness care, communicable disease evaluation and treatment, family planning, allergy injections, and immunizations. The University partnered in the presentation of the "2015 Your Health Lecture Series" with MSU, War Memorial Hospital and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan, which brings speakers to discuss important health issues that affect both the campus and the community.

LSSU engages with its external constituents through participation on numerous advisory councils, including the Bi-National Public Advisory Council for the St. Marys River Area of Concern, the School of Engineering  Industrial Advisory Board, and the Lukenda School of Business Professional Advisory Board.

Another particularly illustrative example of outreach to fill a community need is the Superior Children's Book Festival, which is held on the LSSU campus each year. The festival promotes books and reading to local children and families in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, serves as a bridge between LSSU and the local community, and supports Michigan authors. This festival, created in 2012 as a cooperative effort between the Bayliss Public Library and the LSSU Department of English, is the only children's book festival held in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.  A similar event is an annual EUP Reads family night, hosted each year. LSSU's School of Education, JKL Bahweting elementary school, and Sault Area Public Schools encourages reading and literacy.

More evidence of community partnerships and engagement is shown by LSSU student placements into community areas of need. For example, the University's School of Education partners with local districts to place teacher candidates in the classrooms in select K-12 schools in Michigan and Canada. Similarly, the LSSU College of Nursing provides nursing interns to War Memorial Hospital and other medical facilities.

LSSU offers internal grants for use in community outreach efforts. The LSSU Cultural Affairs Committee seeks to fund events that promote the value of art and culture, and has been used to fund events such as the Superior Children's Book Festival. The LSSU Issues and Intellect Fund enables LSSU to enhance its academic environment by bringing in authorities who can offer broad perspectives in matters related to the world of ideas, society and culture and enrich areas within the LSSU curricula. Attendees are provided an opportunity to engage the presenters formally and informally in dialogue about areas of expertise not readily accessible on the campus. These grants allow LSSU to provide opportunities to involve the local community and K-12 schools. In addition, LSSU offers free tuition for all Michigan residents age 60 and older.

LSSU offers Sault Ste. Marie residents many recreational opportunities through the Norris Center, LSSU Athletic Camps, Regional Outdoor Recreation Center, an indoor pool facility with open swim times and lessons for the public, an indoor field house with a 6 lane track, a full ice sheet which hosts hockey tournaments and practice times for various local groups, and a gymnasium.

The University's continuing education branch offers a wide range of enrichment opportunities through the Superior EdVentures program, and an extensive summer camp program for all ages.

The University has developed and nurtured extensive relationships with external constituencies in order to serve the greater good. While its engagement is broad and substantial, it is also executed in a manner that is consistent with LSSU's mission and capacity.

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# 1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

## Summary

Lake Superior State University meets or exceeds the expectations for each of the core components of Criterion One: Mission. The University has documented our development and implementation of a clearly defined institutional mission statement that guides our operations, our programs, and our support services. Through this mission, and its realization in the Core Values, Vision Statement, and in the implementation of the Strategic Plan, we demonstrate the institutional commitment to the public good, to the valuing of all forms of diversity, and focusing clearly on student learning.

While LSSU has established having satisfied the requirements of Criterion One, there are opportunities for continued growth.

- The University mission is clearly understood and articulated throughout campus, including academic programs, student support services and our enrollment profile. The adoption of the CAFE goals (culture, academics, finance and enrollment) has brought a clearer appreciation of the importance of these key areas to continued stability and growth. Review of the Strategic Plan in 2013 identified the need for a specific focus to strengthen the human capital of the institution, leading to a new strategic initiative which focuses on human capital in 2014.  Further review and refinement of the Strategic Plan is necessary to maintain it as a living and powerful tool for institutional change.
- The University elevates the mission and presents it prominently across campus and in our public presentations, including new student orientations, and faculty and staff orientations.
- The University values and celebrates diversity of all types through the activities and support of the Native American Center, the Diversity Committee, and the work of Student Affairs staff.
- The University demonstrates its commitment to the public good through a diverse range of services to the arts, sciences, and public health education.  Strong relationships with our regional partners is evidence of our commitment to "serve the regional, state, national and global communities."

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# 2 - Integrity:
# Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

## 2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

### Argument

Lake Superior State University operates with integrity in all aspects of its operations.  This commitment begins with the Board of Trustees and applies to every member of the University community.  The Board specifically and clearly approved the policy prohibiting actions by all members of the institution that would represent a conflict of interest through University Policy 1.7. The LSSU Code of Ethics, made public in the Academic Catalog, applies to all members of the University community. In addition, more specific policies and procedures are in place to provide for the integrity of specific offices, including the solicitation of financial transactions and bids, the activities of the Purchasing Office, and Financial Aid Office.

The University operates with integrity in its financial operations. While the ultimate responsibility for financial oversight rests with the Board of Trustees, it is the Vice President for Finance that oversees the University's day to day financial operations through the Business Operations office. The University conducts its financial transactions using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and the financial records are made public on the Business Operations web site. Annual Financial Reports (2013, 2014, 2015) are the basis of annual audits (2013, 2014, 2015).  Audit results document the integrity of our financial operations; the Board of Trustees reviews and approves the fiscal reports as evident in the Board minutes (2014 2015).

The University operates with integrity in the areas of academic affairs. Academic policies have been carefully developed, and are continuously being refined through the shared governance process as evidenced through the Shared Governance Oversight Committee list of resolved issues. Academic policies of the University are primarily described by the Catalog including policies on admission and matriculation, academic standing, granting of credit, university and program graduation requirements, etc. These policies are clearly defined, and are publicly and prominently available to all faculty, staff, students, prospective students, and members of the public through the University website.

The University operates with integrity with regards to its hiring and employment policies. LSSU is an equal opportunity employer. The non-discrimination policy is clearly communicated on the Human Resources website, and all hiring decisions are reviewed for compliance with this policy prior to approval of hiring recommendations. All employees involved in the hiring process receive training from Human Resources staff prior to reviewing candidates, to ensure compliance with all applicable University policies, best practices, as well as state local, and  federal laws. In addition, search/selection committees are required to complete an EEO memo prior to making a hiring recommendation.  The EEO memo provides details on the candidates interviewed, what qualifications were considered, and if a minority candidate was not selected, evidence that the policy was followed.

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# 2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

## Argument

The University represents itself clearly and completely through the institutional web site and the Academic Catalog. Alumni relations newsletter and social media sites provide additional avenues for communicating clearly and completely to students and the public.

**Website**

The University website provides extensive documentation of our policies, programs, and program requirements.  The website is maintained by the webmaster, and other trained faculty and staff, under the direction of the Director of the Shouldice Library, to ensure that current information is available regarding the following:

- academic programs,
- cost of attendance,
- faculty and staff qualifications,
- financial aid,
- accreditation status,
- institutional assessment,
- University control,
- University governance.

The website also clearly articulates the University's innovative One Rate tuition policy, which offers in-state tuition to any student currently residing in North America. Additionally, a scholarship calculator is available on the Admissions Department website that allows any First Time in College student who qualifies for the One-Rate tuition to readily calculate base academic scholarships using ACT/SAT scores and their high school GPA and determine final educational costs. Consistent with Assumed Practice A.7.a, the University provides information regarding the distinction between regional and disciplinary accreditation on the accreditation webpage.

**Catalog**

The Academic Catalog is the primary source for current information on academic programs, academic policies, and course descriptions.  With a transition to a web-based catalog, the boundary between the University website and Catalog is seamless and indistinguishable. The Catalog is generally updated annually, and an electronic copy is available to the University community and members of the public through the website.  The Catalog is maintained by the

Registrar's Office, with guidance and review from the Curriculum Committee and school chairs. During 2014, and as a result of action based on student feedback, the Curriculum Committee charged each academic unit to review the Catalog and submit course deletion proposals for courses that had not been offered recently, and were not likely to be offered in the future. This initiative identified 177 courses that had not been offered recently, and resulted in the deletion of 84 courses, significantly improving the University's effort to ensure that the Catalog reflects current course offerings. (Note: the process for program review is discussed fully under Criterion 4.A.) The website contains a prominent posting of a statement of University control, and lists our regional accreditation standing with the Higher Learning Commission, and our discipline-specific accreditation and authorizations.

**Alumni Magazine**

LSSU actively communicates with the public through its alumni communications, which are developed and disseminated through the Office of Alumni Relations. Primary forms of communication include the Laker Log alumni magazine (electronic and print, published twice a year), and Laker E-ffect (electronic, published monthly). These publications feature updates on academic programs, alumni success stories. Laker E-ffect features regular updates from schools in the form of newsletters prepared by the faculty.

The Athletic Department regularly distributes newsletters to alumni in the areas of basketball and hockey (May 2016 MBB, June 2016 WBB.)  These newsletters are distributed to individuals outside alumni upon request

**Social Media**

The university is active in social media, including Facebook and Twitter.

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# 2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

## Argument

### 2.C.1

Lake Superior State University was established through [Michigan Act 26 of 1969](#) as an autonomous public institution of higher education governed by a Board of Trustees. The [Board of Trustees](#) consists of eight residents of Michigan who are appointed by the [Governor](#), with the advice and consent of the Michigan Senate, for staggered, renewable, eight-year terms. Trustees serve without monetary compensation. As the source of all legal authority in the University, defined in [Section 390.391](#) of the Michigan Compiled Laws, the Board of Trustees exercises final control over, and accepts ultimate responsibility for the general supervision of the University, control and direction of all expenditures from the University's funds, the right to sue and be sued, adoption of a seal and altering of a seal.  The Board establishes the schedule of regular open meetings at the first session of each fiscal year, which commences July 1. Through open meetings the Board ensures that all interested parties and constituencies are awarded an opportunity to provide input into the decision making process. The Board regularly participates in ongoing training and review, as evidenced by the fall 2014 [Board Retreat](#), and working group sessions held with the Board the day prior to the meeting for business. The Board secretary makes public posting of the annual schedule of all [regular and special meetings](#) and the [Board's agenda](#) for each meeting. Board minutes are publicly available in the Shouldice Library on the university campus and on the Board's [website](#).  The [Bylaws of the Board](#) identify four standing committees: Human Resources, Finance and Development, Academic and Student Affairs, and Government Affairs, in addition to any special committees established by the Chair.

### 2.C.2.  and 2.C.3.

The authority and oversight powers retained by the Board of Trustees are set forth in [Article V](#) of the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees.  In the spring 2015, the Board revised the Bylaws, in part to address new requirements and clarify the [conflict of interest policy](#). The Board, as defined

through the bylaws and enabling legislation, exercises the following powers relevant to their responsibilities to preserve and enhance the institution including:

- Appointment and removal of the president (as evident through the recent appointment of Dr. Thomas Pleger as the 8th president of the University).
- Assessing the president's performance.
- Adoption, revision or reaffirmation of the mission, goals, objectives and priorities of this University (as evident in the last revision of the mission by the Board).
- Assessing University programs, including curricular offerings, to assure compliance with established Board policy and to assure that such programs meet all appropriate standards, and upon careful analysis, propose approval, change or deletion.
- Maintaining financial solvency and protecting and preserving the assets of the University (as evident through minutes documenting ongoing development of the capital outlay plans (2016-20, 2017-21) approved by the board, approval of the University 2016 Master Plan (executive summary, complete),  approval of the annual budget, and approving infrastructure changes to campus, approval of tuition, room and board rates, and the establishment of contracts and property acquisition such as the Hunt Creek Research Station.
- Preserving institutional autonomy and independence.
- Maintaining University relationships (as evident through our leadership in charter school oversight and work with state and federal agencies).

Furthermore, the Board's authority and powers, include, but are not limited to, oversight of financial matters, contracts, student policies, academic degrees and programs, and University property.

During the 2014-2015 academic year, the Board established a special committee charged to update the bylaws to reflect greater alignment with HLC expectations and address institutional priorities.  On May 1, 2015, the Board approved the revised Bylaws which included, among other changes, clarification of the Board's conflict of interest policy in Subsection 4.02.e, explicit statement of the Board's oversight of financial and academic policies Subsection 5.02.  In addition the Board agreed to formally and annually renew their commitment to the policy. The members of the Board of Trustees serve as representatives of the University, and as such they interact with key external constituent groups including employers, alumni, donors, politicians, etc.  These interactions inform and guide Board deliberations allowing the University to make effective and timely decisions in the best interest of the University.  Board meetings are routinely attended by all members of the institutional community: faculty, staff, students, administrators, alumni, and community members. Each meeting of the Board of Trustees includes a public comment period to ensure a hearing for the reasonable and relevant interests of both internal and external constituents.  Comments are noted in the permanent record of the Board Minutes, for example related to budget, promotion and tenure. The current Board of Trustee bylaws are posted to the University web site.

**2.C.4.** The Board-appointed University president is the chief executive officer of the University, is responsible for the day-to-day management of the University, and serves as an ex-officio non-voting member of the Board. Acting on authority delegated by the Board through the Bylaws, the

President assumes primary responsibility for all of the University's educational, financial, and administrative functions. It is the President's responsibility to ensure that the University operates according to policies determined by the Board of Trustees, to articulate the University's needs as it moves toward the future, and to relay all pertinent University matters to the entire campus community. The President serves as the chief executive spokesperson for the University as it carries out its multiple roles defined by the University's mission, vision, and goals.

Lake Superior State University's president has delegated authority over the major operational activities of the University to the following: the provost and vice-president for Academic Affairs; the vice president for Enrollment Services and Student Affairs; the vice president for Finance; the executive director of the Foundation, and the director of athletics. The president's cabinet, comprised of these and others, serves as the senior leadership for the University.

The Board expresses its expectation of faculty leadership in academic matters, as evidenced through the Faculty Association Collective Bargaining *Agreement*. Faculty, acting corporately through their academic schools and colleges, bear primarily responsibility for curriculum development and oversight through the Curriculum and General Education Committees. Faculty engage in peer-review, of both faculty and programs, to ensure that the University provides high quality educational experiences and opportunities, and make recommendations to senior administration on issues of evaluation, promotion and tenure. The Board reserves the sole authority to grant tenure or promotion which is documented in Board minutes

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# 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

## Argument

The University's first priority is teaching, as evident in the core values.The institution has demonstrated its commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning in a number of ways and across various constituencies.

**Students**

Encouraging students to pursue the truth and express themselves freely is critical to LSSU's mission to "help students develop their full potential." The LSSU Campus Life website lists many diverse student organizations that students can join as a vehicle for self-expression. These organizations cut across many categories including social, economic, racial, political, and religious spectrum, as well as sexual orientation and gender.

The institution's commitment to freedom of student expression is also evidenced by student access to and involvement with the student-run online newspaper, The Compass, and the student-run radio station, WLSO 90.1 FM. These resources for student expression share editorial and financial independence, with both The Compass and WLSO receiving a percentage of funding from the Student Activity and Media Fees (Student Handbook, **p 67**). Students can also express themselves freely and creatively in the campus literary journal, Snowdrifts, which is published once a year.

Student pursuit of truth in learning is additionally supported by grants given to help students with research projects. The Undergraduate Research Committee is charged with promoting and recognizing the student research efforts that occur across campus, as well as encouraging new efforts. One of the main roles of the URC is to oversee the Undergraduate Research Fund, a program sponsored by the LSSU Foundation that awards grants of up to $500 to students to support research-based equipment, supplies, and travel, as documented in committee reports.   Funding for student professional development is also available through the LSSU Foundation's Fund for LSSU Grants, and through Student Government.

To further encourage student access to the pursuit of truth in learning, guest speakers are brought to campus on subjects of particular appeal to students.  Students are encouraged to make suggestions for guest speakers and other events (Student Handbook, **p. 37**).  The Issues and Intellect Fund enables LSSU to enhance its academic environment by bringing in authorities who can offer broad perspectives in matters related to the world of ideas, society and culture and enrich areas within the LSSU curricula. Faculty and students are provided an opportunity to engage the presenters formally and informally in dialogue about areas of expertise not readily

accessible on campus. The provost's updates inform the campus on important activities, including the Issues and Intellect program.

**Faculty**

The academic freedom of faculty has historically been safeguarded at LSSU through inclusion of an academic freedom provision in the *Agreement* with the Faculty Association. That language was recently updated in 2014 to further strengthen and make unambiguous the institution's dedication to the principles of academic freedom, including freedom in research and publication of results, and freedom in the classroom. These revisions show a desire to make clear the institution's commitment to ensuring faculty can exercise freedom of expression in research and publication, and in the classroom.

A grievance policy is set forth in the 2014 Faculty Agreement, Section 12, to document any alleged violations of the faculty members' right to academic freedom and to ensure that any issues are addressed and resolved.

The institution also supports faculty pursuit of truth in teaching and learning by encouraging and supporting research and scholarship. The University grants each full-time faculty member $1,000 per academic years for professional development, which may carry over to a total fund balance of $4,000. The PD fund balances for faculty is evidence of the commitment of the University to support research and scholarship. These funds are often used for attending seminars and conferences that extend learning beyond the limits of our campus boundaries. Faculty also may, and often do, pursue truth in teaching and learning by applying for grants from the Issues and Intellect Fund to bring guest speakers to campus.

The institution additionally provides sabbatical leave each academic year for a total of up to three semester hours at full pay for activities which may include "applied or theoretical research related to professional activities and the advancement of knowledge within disciplinary areas. Sabbatical leave reports are made public through the provost's website.

The pursuit of truth using outside grants is also supported through the LSSU Office of Sponsored Programs. The goal of the Office of Sponsored Programs is to enhance and facilitate the ability of LSSU faculty and staff to seek and secure external funding that will strengthen the quality of the University's academic programs and support services. Information on potential funding sources, proposal-writing guides, sample proposals, and a funding source database are some of the various resources that are available.

The Faculty Center for Teaching is another resource that the institution provides to help faculty pursue truth in teaching and learning. It was established in 2013, as part of our successful $1.86M Title III Strengthening Institutions Program proposal, with the goal of providing resources for faculty to support excellence in teaching, innovation and professional development.

As further evidence that the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning is highly valued at LSSU, faculty scholarship is considered as an integral part of the LSSU promotion and tenure process. Both the Professional Activities Report and the Yearly Activities Report require information on

scholarly and creative activities, and the [Evaluation Narrative](#) and Professional Activities Weighing Form make it clear that these are important factors in the decision to award promotion and tenure.

Finally, faculty and student accomplishments in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning are often recognized in the provost's [Campus Updates](#). The newsletters, as evident in in the [November 2015](#) edition, highlight campus and community engagement but also grants and contracts, faculty and student publications, presentations and collaborations.

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# 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

## Argument

### 2.E.1

Lake Superior State University has an active Human Subjects Institutional Research Board (HSIRB), which provides oversight, policies, and procedures for all activities involving human subjects to ensure the privacy, ethical and humane treatment of all subjects. The HSIRB recently updated its comprehensive set of policies during Fall 2014, reflecting our continued, strong commitment to these practices.

The Undergraduate Research Committee (URC) also offers support to students by providing grants that can be used towards research expenses and scholarly research presentations. Students are required to submit an application and grants are awarded on a competitive basis. The committee requires progress reports to be submitted which allows for further scrutiny of research projects, and helps to ensure integrity.

### 2.E.2

LSSU has put an emphasis on advising students to take the First Year Seminar class, which allows students to learn about the different resources available across campus to encourage the use of proper writing formats and to reduce academic dishonesty.

The Writing Center, a part of the LSSU Learning Center, supports students by providing information on proper citations and writing formats, as well as one-on-one help with trained staff on all parts of the writing process. The center has many resources available online and offers training on writing, revising, and proofreading.

The University provides systems for both faculty and students access to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly activities. Prior to the fall 2016, the University provided Safe-Assign as a module within the Blackboard learning management system. In the conversion to Moodle, which was completed for the start of fall 2016, the University provided faculty and students access to TurnitIn within the Moodle LMS. The Originality Report and Grademark features in Turnitin enable instructors to provide formative feedback targeted to improve students' learning, as well

as their understanding of what constitutes plagiarism. It further facilitates instructor engagement with the active learning processes of their students.

These services help educators prevent plagiarism by detecting unoriginal content in student papers. In addition to acting as a plagiarism deterrent, these tools aid in educating students about plagiarism and the importance of proper attribution of any borrowed content. Faculty Development Day in fall 2014 included a training session on both Moodle and TurnItIn. A faculty support group has been created to assist in the transition to Moodle, and the group presented again in the professional development day program (fall 2015 and fall 2016).

In addition to Turnitin, we have contracted with RemoteProctorNow (RPN), which also supports the University's alignment with the Higher Learning Commission Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (2009). Remote Proctor Now checks the student identity of students taking an online exam by taking a picture of the student and the student's ID card for review.  The system records a video of the student taking the exam and the student's computer screen as they take the online exam. The video, audio, and screen capture are used for the purpose of ensuring academic integrity during the testing process.  This is in addition to the unique user ID and password that is assigned to each student.  The student logs in to the portal at my.lssu.edu using these credentials.  The data entered at each log in is then authenticated with the LDAP (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol) server.  This adds another layer of verification of student identity.

Both Turnitin, RemoteProctorNow, and the use of unique userid and passwords strengthen LSSU's ability "to assure the integrity of its on-line learning offerings" with "effective procedures through which to ensure that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit" and to address "issues of academic integrity, including ways to reduce cheating". Turnitin and Remote Proctor Now were funded by the Title III grant. Training opportunities continue to be provided through the Faculty Center for Teaching brown bag series and the annual professional development day programs (2015, 2016).

**2.E.3**

LSSU's  Academic Integrity Policy is made available to every faculty for inclusion on course syllabi, is included in the student handbook, and is posted for the public on the provost's website. This policy sets forth the University commitment and expectations for students to reflect the ethical use of information resources.  Similarly, faculty and staff are held to a high and scholarly standard in their conduct relevant to scientific research as published in the policy relevant to scientific misconduct.

In cases where a faculty member has determined a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, an Incident Report will be filed with both the vice president of Academic Affairs and the vice president of Enrollment Services/Student Affairs (VPESSA). In the case of egregious or repeated violations, the Scholastic Standards Committee may hold a hearing on a recommendation for dismissal from the University. In the case of a dismissal, the student has the ability to appeal to the VPESSA.

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# 2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

## Summary

Lake Superior State University has met or exceeded all the core components described within Criterion Two - Integrity.  LSSU has established policies and procedures which serve to ensure the integrity of our operations and our ethical relationships with each other.  The University presents itself clearly to students and the public through an extensive website and thorough documentation of our programs, requirements, costs and control.  The University is governed by a knowledgeable and proactive Board which appropriately delegates responsibility for control and operation to administration and faculty.  The University demonstrates its commitment to the pursuit of truth in teaching, and to the responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge, providing effective oversight and support for these activities.

While LSSU has demonstrated having satisfied the requirements of Criterion Two, there are opportunities for continued growth. These include the following:

- While revised language in the most recent faculty *Agreement* reinforces the commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth, the University recognizes an opportunity to revise the statements of vision and/or core values to elevate this element in our institutional view.
- The University continues to evaluate and revise its social media presence and look for new opportunities to present itself clearly and completely to students and the public.

## Sources

*There are no sources.*

# 3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

## 3.A - Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

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

## Argument

### 3.A.1

The University's focus is on undergraduate education, serving our students primarily through the delivery of high quality, undergraduate programs. Ensuring our courses and programs reflect our commitment to quality, currency and relevance is a part of our overall commitment to continuous improvement. To this end, LSSU delivers a broad range of baccalaureate level academic programs, and also serves as a regional access institution providing a range of certificate and associate programs. Undergraduate courses are numbered from 100 to 499. While the University does not offer graduate programs, a limited number of graduate courses are offered for professional development through the School of Education; these are numbered 500 or higher. Developmental courses not bearing college credit are numbered below 100.

Recognition of the currency and rigor of LSSU courses and programs is evidenced, in part, through the external validation of national and international accreditation. The following programs, and accrediting bodies, have indicated through their endorsements, summarized on our website, that the University requires appropriate levels of performance from students and that the curricular content is both current and relevant to the degrees. Advisory boards for accredited programs provide an outside validation of courses and programs. This feedback helps to guide program development.  Accredited programs include:

- Athletic Training – Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education
- Business – Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs
- Chemistry – Approval (not accreditation) through the American Chemical Society Committee on Professional Training
- Computer, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering and Manufacturing Engineering Technology - Accreditation Commission of ABET
- Teacher Education – Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation
- Environmental Health – National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council and the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors
- Fire Science – International Fire Service Accreditation Congress
- Nursing – Michigan Board of Nursing and the Accreditation Commission for Evaluation in Nursing

The University further ensures the quality and rigor of its courses and programs through regular course assessment, as described in Criterion 4.B, through our regular practice of program review, described in Criterion 4.A, and implemented through our institutional policies and practices related to curriculum review and approval. Faculty review of new and revised course and program changes incorporates a review of the student learning outcomes, assessment and curriculum mapping. This is done to ensure appropriate levels are set in establishing the student learning goals, and that curriculum change decisions are driven by meaningful assessment. This is evidenced in part through the curriculum new course and new program proposal forms, and related curriculum documents.

The growth in our assessment of program quality measures is reflected in program curriculum changes over the past three years.  For example, in 2013-2014 the School of Mathematics and Computer Science brought forward a substantial program restructuring proposal, documented in the Curriculum committee minutes (part 1, part 2) incorporating a detailed narrative of the changes and the projected impact.  While this proposal was approved, it was noted there was limited evidence of assessment of course and/or program outcomes underpinning the rationale. The next year, the 2014-2015 Curriculum Committee minutes (part 1, part 2) document how the medical laboratory science program was restructured  using the same curriculum forms. The curriculum proposal incorporated assessment data, included additional evidence such as curriculum mapping and assessment data presented in reports from our institutional assessment database, Tracdat. The program clearly documented their ongoing assessment of student learning leading to continuous program quality improvement.

The University continued this pattern of assessment-informed action, as documented in the 2015-2016 Curriculum Committee Agendas, in the recent restructuring of the practical nursing program, and the theatre program.

Finally, the University regularly employs appropriately qualified practicing professionals as adjunct instructors, bringing an enhanced relevance and currency to the classroom experience, ensuring the courses and programs are current and appropriate to the discipline.

**3.A.2**

The University establishes and conveys information on our program requirements through our program review website. Furthermore, the University establishes degree requirements which are specific, differentiated, and appropriate to each degree level as published in the Academic Catalog. The University has also differentiated the general education requirements, described in the Catalog, that reflect progressively higher expectations when moving from the certificate and associate's degree to the baccalaureate degree. The faculty, acting through the curriculum committee, and documented in their minutes (2014-2015, 2015-2016), have primary responsibility for academic courses and programs, including the structure and content of the curriculum and graduation requirements.  The faculty and administration provide oversight of the curriculum as evidenced through Curriculum Committee documentation which requires evidence of the assessment of student learning, of the appropriateness and relevance of the curriculum, and of the appropriate level for the student learning outcomes for new courses, course changes, new programs, and program changes.

The Curriculum Committee is comprised of members from across academic affairs, including students, faculty, administrators and staff (ex-officio). Examples of the institutional oversight of curriculum providing effective checks and balances include Curriculum Committee's recent denial of new programs in fermentation science. In this example, while the program had substantial conceptual support from the school and administration, the committee did not find that the school had adequately articulated the student learning goals or differentiated between the certificate and the bachelor degree programs. The school will have an opportunity to review these program applications for re-submission.

In addition, the University has worked to differentiate our learning goals for programs through the implementation of a policy on the minimum number of 300/400 level credits required in majors and minors. Following review by the University Policy & Procedures committee, a recommendation addressing degrees and minors was sent to the Curriculum Committee.  A recommendation from the Curriculum Committee led to the provost implementing the new policies in two-steps, beginning in early spring 2013. Reports were regularly generated which identified programs which were not compliant with the policy, and over the next three years schools worked through the curriculum process to implement the policy. In articulating our learning outcomes, the Curriculum Committee and Provost Council critically review all proposals, including the rationale for changes and assessment evidence supporting changes. Evidence of our oversight of curriculum is shown in two examples from the 2015-2016 academic year. The Provost Council (chairs and deans) did not find that two course proposals (renumbering CHEM225 and a new course CSCI323) had adequately documented student learning outcomes differentiation, although both had been recommended for approval by the Curriculum Committee.  Based on the subsequent review and discussion, each school submitted addenda (CHEM225 *Addendum*, *CSCI323Addendum)* providing additional rationale and justification leading to their final approval.  Based on this experience, the Provost Council established a subcommittee in spring 2016 to review and recommend new course-leveling guidelines to formalize the expectations for the differentiation of learning goals. These leveling guidelines were adopted by the Curriculum Committee at the April 20, 2016 meeting.

**3.A.3**

The University delivers courses and programs on the main campus, at four regional locations, and through a limited online presence. In addition, the University offers concurrent enrollment at a number of high school locations across the state including Advanced Technical Academy, Charleton Heston Academy, Cardinal Mooney Catholic, and schools located in Cedarville, DeTour, Engadine, Newberry, and Sault Ste Marie.

The University ensures that there is continuity and consistency in the learning outcomes and student achievement irrespective of modes or location. All courses are approved using the same institutional forms, procedures, and assessment protocols. Course syllabi use a common template and multiple sections of the same course are expected to share common student learning outcomes. The location-based integrity of the regional sites was recently validated through an HLC Multi-Location Visit Report which noted the successful 'concept of one universal collegiate educational system'. The Multi-Location reviewer noted that *"main campus faculty teach most of the courses at the Regional Centers thus a comparison of not only facilities and services but it provides an opportunity to compare student achievement levels with those of enrolled students at the main campus. Both Regional Centers and main campus utilize the same instructional documents such as syllabi, course objectives and outcomes are consistent within the university academic system. Samples of syllabuses were reviewed from both the Petoskey and Escanaba for content as well as assessment measures."* However, the reviewer also noted weakness in the assessment of those common learning outcomes which is an area of ongoing attention by the schools.

The University has formalized the documentation and reporting of course and program assessment through our HLC Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning Project. The Academy Project website documents our progress and the many sub-initiatives related to assessment, including the documentation of assessment activities into Tracdat, LSSU's institutional assessment database. One strategic decision made through this process was to create a single reporting module for each course, but not for each section, each instructional modality, or each location. Through this approach the University has communicated clearly and effectively with faculty about the commonality of all sections, all student learning outcomes and all modalities. Faculty have embraced this concept and understand the necessity to aggregate across sections, and for faculty to work with Regional Center instructors to aggregate findings across locations. The University has established a structure within Tracdat to document comparative data across modalities using institutional assessment database, as illustrated in this example from CJUS102 Police Process. Using a custom field on the findings report, faculty can now annotate the instructional modality used at the same time as they document specific findings from the course assessment. Through a custom report progress can be tracked using this assessment evidence through a new focused report. While the database does not yet contain many examples across multiple modalities, the University has invested in a reporting structure that will allow it to build this evidence and use the data to make a positive impact on student achievement irrespective of modality or location.

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# 3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

## Argument

### 3.B.1

The University has established effective and appropriate institutional learning outcomes applicable to all graduates as reflected through our general education program requirements. LSSU is a member of the AAC&U, and through the State of Michigan's membership in the AAC&U, and the Michigan LEAP initiative, the institution supports the development of well-rounded education including the advancement of:

- knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world;
- intellectual and practical skills such as critical thinking and quantitative literacy;
- personal and social responsibility; and
- integrative and applied learning.

LSSU's mission, prominently displayed across campus, is to "help students develop their full potential." In order to ensure completion of the mission, LSSU graduates must be well prepared not only for a lifetime of learning in their respective fields, but must also possess a broad range of general skills to meet an ever changing regional, state, national and global community. The general education requirements set by the institution's General Education Committee, as defined in the Agreement, are designed to foster the development of our Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). The ILOs are the general skills and knowledge through which students demonstrate the ability to:

- Analyze, develop, and produce rhetorically complex texts
- Communicate competently in a variety of contexts
- Analyze, evaluate, and explain human aesthetics and its historical development
- View the world from cultural perspectives other than their own
- Incorporate empirical evidence in the analysis of the causes and consequences of natural phenomena
- Think critically and analytically about the causes and consequences of human behavior
- Analyze situations symbolically and quantitatively in order to make decisions and solve problems

As a publicly funded, regional, state, and primarily undergraduate institution, the current general education requirements are appropriate for our baccalaureate and lower program offerings. The requirements are clearly and publicly articulated on our website. The University requirements are consistent with statewide mandates reflected in the Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA), and the former Michigan Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers (MACRAO) statewide agreement. On April 20, 2016, the General Education committee recommended acceptance of the MTA to not only fulfill the institutional general education requirements, but also to implement institutional learning outcomes which build upon those requirements. The general education program for all bachelor's degrees requires that students complete at least 34-36 approved credits from the curriculum, distributed as follows: six from Oral/Written Communication; three from Mathematics; six from Social Sciences; seven from Natural Sciences; six from Humanities; three from Cultural Diversity; and one additional three-credit course from the Oral/Written Communication section that completes one full year of composition and one semester of communication.

Students earning an associate's degree at the institution complete a similar set of general education requirements. However, only 24 credits are required and all students must enroll in ENGL110, ENGL11, COMM101, and MATH110 or higher. The remaining 12 credits may be taken from any two of the categories listed in the paragraph above.

**3.B.2**

The University has clearly articulated the purpose, content and intended learning outcomes for the LSSU graduate through the requirements of the general education curriculum as noted in 3.B.1. Throughout each year, the president actively engages the campus in discussion of the importance of a liberal education through direct communication to faculty, students, and staff. For example, in the fall semester 2015, President Pleger met with the general education committee and reviewed the framework described by William Cronon on the "Goals of a Liberal Education." Other examples include President Pleger's emails on the value of humanities, the liberal arts, and the relationship between the liberal arts and STEM.

The institutional learning outcomes represent our longstanding commitment, reflected in our university catalogs since 1967, "to educate students for a well-rounded life."  As early as our first catalog, LSSU, then known as Lake Superior State College, required "a program of general education, with required and elective courses in social science, natural and physical sciences, humanities, history of western civilization, and other academic areas." While the details of this

program have changed slightly over time, for example removing physical education, adding then removing computer science, and adding a cultural diversity requirement, the institution remains grounded in our fundamental commitment to development of the whole person, with a foundation of liberal arts and technical skills that enable them to reach their full potential. The minor revision to the general education requirements are evidenced in a compendium of these requirements from 2006 to the present.

**3.B.3**

Lake Superior State University offers an array of unique experiential professional, technical and liberal arts programs that are grounded in a liberal education experience.  Our programs are designed to engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments. The general education program builds the foundational skills that are then developed and documented at the program level through capstone learning experiences, such as senior projects which are highlighted in our annual Senior Symposium compendiums from 2015 and 2016. Evidence of program design can be ascertained via a review of the Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Planning webpage which documents program learning outcomes, our process for regular program review, and the feedback cycle used to ensure continuous quality improvement. As described in greater detail in Criterion 4.A.1, the program review process engages schools in the critical review of their academic programs, achievement of student learning outcomes, and the relevance and effectiveness of the programs in helping students achieve their academic and life goals. The University is working to incorporate explicit evidence of this aspect of program design into the next revision of the program review template. The working-draft of this template is being developed by a task-group of the Assessment Committee.

**3.B.4**

Lake Superior State University recognizes and elevates human and cultural diversity through direct educational requirements implicit in our general learning outcomes and through a diverse spectrum of curricular and co-curricular activities. At the baccalaureate level, the general education program requires a three-credit course that directly relates to the human and cultural diversity of the world.The courses are clearly and publicly listed in the Cultural Diversity section and include:

- BUSN308 Managing Cultural Differences
- EDUC250 Diversity in School and Society
- ENGL235  Survey of Native Literatures
- ENGL236 Literature and Culture
- GEOG306 Cultural Geography
- HIST203 Chinese Cultural Diversity
- HLTH328 Multicultural Approaches to Healthcare
- POLI234 Women and Politics Around the World,
- POLI334 Middle East Politics
- SOCY103 Cultural Diversity

- SOCY213 Introduction to Anthropology
- SOCY225 Native Cultures of North America
- SOCY321 Sociology of Women.

In addition to general education offerings, the institution provides culturally diverse course offerings in several fields that add a domestic or international research component to the learning experience, as evidenced in records of program participants from recent semesters. Available through the Study Abroad Office are faculty-led trips such as BIOL300: Tropical Ecology in Belize, and Study in China (multi-course). The Study Abroad Office has recently added the Experience Scotland program through a partnership with the 'Wisconsin in Scotland Program' at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. For students looking for a more individualized program, the institution can customize an experience through the Consortium for Critical Interdisciplinary Studies, Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE & CCIS) or the Japan Center for Michigan Universities.

The institution recognizes that accessibility to education is important to all individuals. LSSU is committed to assuring equal treatment for all individuals irrespective of their limitations. The LSSU Accessibility Services office, within the Academic Services Department, helps to ensure that students with disabilities are treated fairly and respectfully in terms of both opportunity and participation in all campus programs and services.

LSSU is unique among Michigan universities, benefiting from a large population of students from the neighboring Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and various Canadian First Nation tribes. This connection between LSSU and the tribes enriches our culturally-diverse campus. The institution leads the State in education of Native American Students, both in percent of all students, and in absolute number of Native American students enrolled. As a result, the institution also serves a higher percentage of individuals who qualify for the Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver. The LSSU Native American Center was created in 1986 to provide educational, financial, and other support to native students on and off campus.

### 3.B.5

LSSU faculty members are actively engaged in scholarship, creative work and discovery as evidenced through regular campus updates published by the Provost's Office. Examples include the fall 2015 update, also available in archive form on the website . Although LSSU is considered a teaching institution, faculty are strongly encouraged to participate in research and activities that contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge. During the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 academic years, a total of $4,303,125 in grant funds were awarded to the University faculty and staff for various research projects across many disciplines. In accordance with the University mission, students are highly involved with faculty research to "help students develop their full potential" and give them real-world experience in their disciplines.  Faculty also give presentations, author scholarly publications, and author and edit professional books.

Students are supported in pursuing individual research at the institution through the Undergraduate Research Committee (URC). The URC has a competitive grant program that

awards students up to $500 to support senior capstone project/research-based equipment, supplies, and travel.  In the spring semester of 2015, a University-wide undergraduate research symposium was initiated to provide an opportunity to showcase these projects from across campus. Compilations of the presentations from 2015 and 2016 document the wide diversity and depth of disciplinary engagement that these students and their supervising faculty have demonstrated.  Participating programs included athletic training, biology, chemistry, engineering, mathematics and computer sciences, political science and psychology/sociology, among others. Many of these projects involved collaborative efforts between LSSU and federal, state and local agencies, as well as community groups and industry. The senior research symposium expanded in 2016 as 97 students came together to share their research and creative endeavors.

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# 3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

## Argument

### 3.C.1

LSSU employed 108 full time faculty in the 2014-2015 academic year, as documented in the IPEDS report. The institution strives to maintain a student focused instructional setting with high levels of faculty-student engagement through a 13:1 ratio of students to instructional staff. An analysis of all courses delivered in fall semester of 2015 reflects a slightly higher 16:1 ratio as a function of the grouped averaging.  However, it is clear that regular faculty deliver the majority of courses, and that class sizes for faculty and adjuncts are similar.

Of the 108 full-time faculty employed in 2014-2015, 95% had either obtained tenured status or were in a tenure track position. Combined with 74 part-time faculty, the institution has sufficient continuity and capacity to maintain our high quality programs. The University had, at the time of the IPEDS report, 61 tenured faculty which is indicative of the continuity and capacity of our faculty to carry out both classroom and non-classroom roles.

The University utilizes faculty (tenure, tenure track and term appointment) for the majority of instructional load, as illustrated in the following table derived from the fall teaching assignments documented on instructor load reports. In fall 2015, just 13.46% of course student credit hours were delivered by adjunct instructors, representing the high level of full-time faculty engagement in instruction. The table below summarizes data from fall 2015.

|  | **Contract Hours delivered by** | **Student Credit Hours delivered by** | **Percentage of Courses taught by** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Faculty** | 83% | 85% | 82% |
| **Adjuncts** | 17% | 15% | 18% |

The University sets clear expectations for faculty, adjuncts and students. Instructor expectations are delineated in handbooks for faculty members and adjunct instructors that contain valuable information regarding resources available for teaching and expectations on grading, curriculum and assessment of student learning. Additional information on assessment is provided under Criterion 4.B. Faculty communicate course-expectations through their course syllabi, based on a university-wide template that outlines the course curriculum, student learning outcomes, and overall expectations of the course. Course syllabi from spring 2015 (part 1, part 2, part 3 and part 4) demonstrate our adherence to these standards, and communicate clear expectations to students along with information on support services and relevant policies. Faculty also select the textbooks used in their respective courses, titles of which are displayed in the course syllabi and via the bookstore website. The institution's letter grading policy is clearly defined in the LSSU catalog and included on the syllabus template.

The University establishes faculty qualifications through contractual and policy-based processes which are consistent with the Assumed Practices, Criteria for Accreditation, and HLC guidelines. Section 11 of the Agreement states that faculty will be assigned based on qualifications that are established through academic credentials and documented professional expertise. The qualifications of adjuncts are similarly established in Section 7, and the list of approved adjuncts is reviewed by the faculty members by March 31 of each year. The university maintains a database of faculty members and their specific course qualifications. All faculty members are granted access to review this database through an ARGOS report that identifies faculty members who can teach a specific course, or all the courses a specific faculty member is qualified to teach. Moving toward compliance with the 2017 Assumed Practices related to faculty qualifications, the University has increased faculty responsibility in determining the minimum credential or experience required to teach specific courses and for determination of individual faculty qualifications through a new implementation process, consistent with existing contractual language.

Faculty members are responsible for conducting assessment of their individual courses and for using that data, collaboratively with their colleagues, to inform and guide instruction and to improve curriculum at the course and program levels. It is recommended that faculty members collect and report on outcome data every time a course is taught, but it is not required that every outcome receive a full assessment analysis every semester. Faculty members review, at the school level, assessment data from across all courses and use that data to effect meaningful change to courses and programs in their areas. Evidence of faculty engagement in assessment is documented through individual course assessment reports like those for BIOL240 or BIOL243. Assessment activity is documented on the assessment committee website. Additional evidence related to the assessment of student learning is found under Criterion 4.B.

**3.C.2**

The institution appoints all faculty members to positions based upon the qualifications of the individual. Qualifications are established by academic transcripts and professional experience and licensure. Procedures for initial appointment, as well as faculty review of adjunct qualifications, are defined in Section 7 of the Faculty Agreement. All university instructors, including both regular and adjunct faculty (and dual-credit and concurrent enrollment instructors), are appropriately qualified based on a thorough review by the faculty and academic administration prior to making instructional assignments, consistent with the process described in the previous subsection. Securing highly qualified faculty is supported through the consistent use of national-level searches for all faculty positions. The University makes information available through a full list of all instructors and their academic credentials on the provost's web page in accordance with Assumed Practice A.5.g. The University also publishes information on faculty and staff through the Employee Directory.

**3.C.3.**

Faculty evaluations are an important part of the institution's desire to achieve student success. Evaluations are conducted systematically, regularly and in accordance with Section 8 of the Faculty Contract using the Instructional Setting Evaluation Form. The Provost's Office, with the academic deans, maintains a master list of evaluation schedules that identify the date of last review, outcomes of that review, if any, and date for the next review. Tenured faculty are evaluated at least once every 5 years on a rotating basis and probationary faculty are evaluated once each year. Adjunct faculty are evaluated annually through course evaluations and a faculty review of their performance, and those evaluations are used to determine whether or not they will receive future instructional appointments.

**3.C.4.**

The University supports the professional development of each faculty member  through processes and resources as defined in the Faculty Agreement and through institutional activities. Each full and part-time faculty member at the institution receives a contractually-defined allocation for professional development activities. These funds can be accumulated across multiple years and used for professional memberships, technology support, conference or research travel, or any other purchase associated with ongoing professional development as set forth in the Faculty Agreement. Nearly $13,000 was approved in 2015. Faculty and staff also participate in professional development activities each fall as evidenced by the programs (2013, 2014) and exit surveys (2013, 2014).  Beginning in fall 2015, the professional development day was coordinated through the Faculty Center for Teaching.

The Faculty Center for Teaching explicitly works to promote faculty excellence and to support faculty as they become increasingly adept in their teaching roles.  In fall 2013, the institution received a five-year $1.86 million Title III Strengthening Institutions grant. A primary activity of this grant included the development of a Faculty Center.  The Faculty Center for Teaching was created to facilitate and encourage improved teaching through the use of technology and training materials with the ultimate goal of improving student learning at the institution. Activities and

growth of the Faculty Center for Teaching are documented in its quarterly reports, and in a summary of sessions held from March 2014 through spring 2016.

Additional diverse activities, beyond the Faculty Center for Teaching, addressed through the institution's Title III Strengthening Institutions grant include:

- Increasing advising support for faculty and students
- Changes to the Learning Management System (LMS)
- Identification of student momentum points to degree completion
- Development of a Student Learning Commons

**3.C.5**

Faculty support, promote and are accessible to facilitate all forms of student inquiry at the institution. As a primarily-undergraduate university, the institution uses only full-time faculty or part-time adjunct instructors (no graduate assistants). This means students interact daily with their instructors. In accordance with the 2014-2017 Faculty Contract, full-time faculty are required to hold a minimum of five office hours per week to assist with all forms of student inquiry, including assisting with curriculum and advising. Office hours are published in the course syllabi (spring 2015 syllabi: part 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b), and at the offices of each faculty member. Adjunct faculty are required to hold one office hour per week for every class taught throughout the semester. The contractual and policy minimums are often exceeded, as evidenced in an informal study conducted by a chemistry faculty member that documented approximately 1200 office visits with students in one semester. Outside of the formal classroom, faculty are engaged in supporting student research, a requirement of many degree programs, and supervision of internships and practica. In fall 2015, a total of 144 students completed internships and practica which equated to over 3 FTE of full time faculty equivalent load. Evidence of faculty-student engagement is found in all disciplines, as evident at the spring university-wide Senior Symposium (2015, 2016). Faculty serve as mentors and co-researchers as students complete research projects as the culmination of their degree programs. Additional examples include:

- Political Science senior research presentations 2015, 2016
- Athletic Training and Exercise Science posters 2015, 2016
- Mathematics and Computer Science presentations 2015, 2016
- Social Science poster presentations 2015
- Biology senior posters 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016

**3.C.6**

The Human Resources department maintains a database of all administrative professional and support positions at the institution. Minimum credentials for each position are determined by the hiring department and are based on a number of factors, including scope of duties performed and current laws pertaining to minimum experience. All open positions are posted on the Human Resources website and other forms of media in accordance with the institution's hiring policy. The department or hiring committee is responsible for ensuring that the candidates interviewed

and hired meet all minimum qualifications and must send a Position Qualification [Verification Form](#) to Human Resources to verify this.

Staff professional development is supported at the departmental level and every employee is encouraged to participate. Offices such as [Financial Aid](#), [Business Operations](#), and the [Registrar's Office](#) all incorporate some form of professional development into their respective budgets. Staff members are also invited to participate in training opportunities, e.g. the recent [customer service](#) webinar, offered by the Faculty Center for Teaching at no cost to the department. Since it's inception, the Faculty Center for Teaching has led the delivery of a wide range of [professional development](#) activities for faculty and staff.

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# 3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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

## Argument

### 3.D.1

Students at Lake Superior State University have access to a wide range of services that collaboratively support students as they work to achieve their educational goals. Support services are provided from one or more of the following, all of which support the mental, physical, and educational well-being of students:

- University Health Services, including the Counseling Center and Health Care Center
- Academic Services, including the Academic Success Center (formerly the Learning Center), Accessibility Services (formerly Disability Services), Career Services and Testing
- Fletcher Student Service Center, including Financial Aid, Business Operations and Registrar
- Enrollment Services and Student Affairs, including Admissions, Orientation, Marketing, University Recreation, and Campus Life

Beginning in fall 2016, LSSU established a comprehensive student service center called the Fletcher First Stop (FFS), housed in the Fletcher Center.  FFS is the student's first stop for services related to bill payment, parking passes, Registrar Office functions, Financial Aid, and general questions.  The FSS serves as a conduit for students to the university as a whole.  FSS representatives assist with directing students to the appropriate department or office for problem resolution.

The Counseling Center is currently located in a home adjacent to the LSSU Health Care Center. In 2011, the Counseling Center recognized an increasing need for their services in an environment that could provide appropriate client privacy. At the time, a relatively low number of students sought support - only 5.9% of the institution's students - in part because the former location was centrally located in the Library. This change in location has provided an opportunity to increase outreach and service to our students. In addition, the university expanded staffing to include both full-time 9-month and part time mental health clinicians. The new space affords additional opportunities for expanded support services, which now include in-person counseling, light box therapy, massage chairs and biofeedback systems. The Counseling Center has continued to increase its outreach opportunities to help make students more aware of the services available and to educate students on ways to combat stressors that a student may face during a college career. At certain times of the year, student stress, and a desire for counseling, keeps the staff very busy, as evidenced through a waiting list of individuals to see certified staff. However, to ensure that students in the most need get help when needed, Counseling Center staff have continued to partner with other areas, such as the Campus Life Office, to recognize high-risk students. Once a high-risk student has been identified, the professional staff within the Campus Life Office will work with the Counseling Center to get the student in to the Counseling Center as soon as possible, most of the time within the same day.

The Student Assistance Response Team (START) is a committee whose membership changes to address specific and critical student needs. The membership of the committee may vary depending on the nature of the situation. The director of the Counseling Center leads the team to evaluate high-risk student behavior, and to create a plan of action to provide support and help the high-risk student, and any other student(s) affected by the situation.

The Health Care Center (HCC) provides a broad range of medical and health related student support services and programs to both the University community and the local community at large. Committed to continuous quality improvement, the Health Care Center has used surveys to analyze how students view their services to make adjustments to ensure that the department is meeting the needs of students and the general public.  From the information collected in these surveys, the Health Care Center has made adjustments that include changing its schedule to accommodate more students during their lunch time and changing office furniture to provide a better waiting space for students to relax in before their appointments.  These changes have demonstrated to students that their opinions do matter and that the Health Care Center continuously seeks out their input.

Accessibility Services (AS) is committed to the academic success of individuals with disabilities, ensuring their full opportunity to participate in the institution's academic programs. It provides assistive learning technology support, advocacy, and assistance to the student as they develop and document their individual needs. AS provides equal access to programs of study, services and activities, and assists students by:

- Providing information to students seeking assistive services on campus
- Verifying student documentation to establish eligibility for disability related services
- Providing a Letter of Accommodation for students to present to faculty that includes accommodations identified for individual students

- Providing support to students with disabilities via counseling, advocacy, referral, etc
- Coordinating and administering accommodated exams and Testing
- Providing disability-related technical assistance, auxiliary aids/services, etc
- Clarifying student and faculty roles and responsibilities

Accessibility Services also houses the *Ability Center for Exceptional Students* (ACES) providing a work and study area for students with disabilities. All services are provided free of charge to students.

The University supports the overall physical well being of a student through the University Recreation department, a part of the Campus Life Office. This program provides activities for our students at varying levels of physical activities and throughout the academic year. University Recreation activities include broomball, volleyball, basketball, ping-pong, and pool tournaments. The institution continuously reviews participation levels, however some sports have reached capacity and the staff are looking at ways to utilize other options. In the case of broomball, the Recreation staff have been looking at using our outdoor ice rink as an option to allow for more leagues and increased student participation.

The University provides student support services through Campus Life, supported by General Fund expenditures, and through the Student Activity and Media (SAM) Fee. Students enrolled on the Main campus pay a SAM fee of $65 per semester. In part, that funding then supports the Activities Board and Student Government who then provide activities to our students, informed by student input at events throughout the semester. Some of these activities are scheduled during Laker Week and Winter Carnival. Laker Week starts on the day the new freshmen move in and continues through Labor Day. Activities during Laker Week include the Mackinac Bridge walk, a fun day at the beach, comedians, and a Soo Locks Boat Cruise. All activities are funded through the SAM Fee budgets (FY14, FY15, FY16), so there is no additional event-specific cost to the student. During Winter Carnival, which occurs the second full week after the students return in January, activities include tubing, skiing, snowboarding, and giveaways at hockey games.

Outside of the themed weeks of entertainment, LSSU provides activities such as a coffee house series called *Jitters* and a movie series called *Laker Cinema*. Events are scheduled to ensure there is some event each week during the academic year.

The Academic Success Center (ASC), formerly the Learning Center, provides "academic support services and strategies for success for all enrolled students. Services assist students in achieving academic success, gaining scholastic independence, improving self-esteem, and preparing for graduate study. Students who want to make the most of their university experience take advantage of academic support services" (ASC Mission). Many of the support services under the direction of the Academic Success Center came to fruition after listening to the needs of the students. Peer Mentoring services for first year students, funded by the Title III grant, are available through the Students First program. The ASC markets its services during LSSU's Laker Week along with the Student First and Campus Connections programs (each funded by a Title III grant). The latter of these programs is designed to support both residential and commuter students in succeeding at LSSU. Once a student is at the institution, the ASC provides other

types of support services such as peer tutoring, supplemental instruction and math and writing drop-in labs to help students. LSSU also offers students the opportunity to complete developmental math requirements through the web based ALEKS® program. This self-paced program provides students with a low cost alternative to semester long courses and prepares them to take the math department exams.

Many of the student support departments at LSSU -- such as the Academic Success Center, Housing, and the Health Care Center -- have taken great strides in implementing mechanisms to gather student feedback in order to analyze if the department is in fact meeting the needs of the student population. Examples include the Academic Success Center's student satisfaction surveys (Spring 2014a, Spring 2014b, and Spring 2015.) The Housing department conducts the Educational Benchmarking Inventory (EBI) Resident Assessment every other year to assess different areas of the on-campus experience. The 2014 survey garnered a 38% response rate, and actions based on those findings led to changes in the area of Resident Adviser (RA) programming as evidenced in the programming budget, training and programming model for our residential services. LSSU is committed to a process of continuous improvement and although the last survey provided useful information, the 2016 survey findings will be important as the institution examines further changes to the campus experience.

Support services at the institution are enhanced through online and print material including the student handbook and code of conduct, information on how to start a new student organization, and our web pages.  Ensuring that the essential information from the institution's support services are communicated effectively, the institution began a transition to a dynamic web page structure that is supported by both computers and mobile devices**.**

A key institutional publication, in addition to the Academic Catalog, is the student handbook.  In previous years, the student handbook was moved to a web-based format.  However, to ensure that every student would know where to find the handbook, starting in the 2014-2015 academic year, hard copies have been made available to all students, faculty and staff.  All incoming-resident students receive a copy of the student handbook in their move-in packet. In the more than 100 pages within the handbook the majority of policies and procedures are covered.  As policies may need to change mid-year, the handbook does reference websites for students to get the most up-to-date information. Through supporting our students' educational pursuit, the printed format has proven useful when meeting with students throughout the year on a one-on-one basis.

The Campus Life Office is working on the development of a new publication called the *Laker Voyage at Lake Superior State University*; the purpose of this publication is to have a central printed location for life at LSSU to further communicate our support services with our student population. Slated for publication in fall 2016, the publication will be divided into four categories including academic services, student services, getting involved and wellness.  The goal is to use this publication to engage students at different points throughout the year and to encourage the repeated use of the publication.  For example, the publication will have the general education requirements defined, and a space for a student to plan their next semester schedule so they may take that plan to their next appointment with their academic advisers.

The Financial Aid department provides student support through training and public outreach opportunities. Financial Aid outreach programs, regularly reviewed for their effectiveness, provide opportunities for incoming and current students to ask questions and to better understand the financial aid process.  During the spring semester, financial aid provides outreach throughout Northern Michigan by providing financial aid workshops to assist incoming college students to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form and navigating the financial aid process as a whole.  For current students, financial aid has undertaken 'FAFSA Fridays' to provide drop in opportunities for students to come in with their financial aid questions and assistance in filling out the form for the following year.

The University continues to identify new opportunities for growth and improvement, using feedback provided by students from a range of sources.  The University has used the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) survey (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014) wherein first year and senior students are selected and asked a variety of questions about their experience at LSSU.  Analysis of the NSSE results has identified some common and recurring themes:

- Advising concerns:the request was for more hands-on advising and more consistency
- Learning Center not having sufficient prep for the next steps out of college
- Inconsistent transfer credit evaluations
- Slow processing of paperwork by various departments (Financial Aid, Registrar. Housing)
- Road blocks to getting involved - risk management
- Requests for more room for liberal arts classes in a BS/BA degree to make the education more rounded

Using the NSSE findings, LSSU has begun to improve institutional effectiveness.  Staff training, including the new Leadership Luncheon series, has focused on assessment of non-academic unit operations. The Title III grant, discussed earlier in the Argument, has explicitly focused on the issues of advising and removing road-blocks (momentum points). LSSU will continue development of effective systems for characterizing our services and the needs of our student population to improve the student services offered.

All students receive admission to athletic events on the basis of a one-time fee of $135. This single-fee allows students entrance to athletic contests for up to 6 years while they are full time students. Throughout the fall and winter, home athletic events are hosted almost every weekend.

**3.D.2**

In order to promote student success, LSSU provides developmental courses that are designed to strengthen learning and prepare for university-level success. Courses numbered less than 100 (e.g. MATH088, ENGL091 and READ091) do not award credit toward graduation but do count in the student's schedule and toward eligibility for full-time enrollment. Students can challenge course placements, which are generally based on ACT/SAT scores, through online tools like the COMPASS test. As the COMPASS test will soon be phased-out, the University is now holding discussions to determine the best mechanism for placement testing in the future.

LSSU provides courses dedicated to helping students achieve a solid start to their academic careers. The University Seminar courses, for example USEM101_CJ1 is a section for criminal justice students, helps to introduce first year students to the college life in that discipline. Other courses taught by faculty within Career Development focus on helping students match their interests and strengths with possible careers. Within these courses, topics such as time management and study methods are addressed that help students make the successful transition into college. In addition to University Seminar classes, the Academic Success Center takes these topics further and provides success seminars and a range of resources for students who may need or simply wish to delve deeper into particular topics.

### 3.D.3

Lake Superior State University is purposeful in providing appropriate academic advising to every student and focused advising support through the Office of Recruitment and Retention, a new unit formed in summer 2016. Every student has an academic adviser at LSSU; the role of the adviser is to assist the student in navigating the process toward their college degree. The University implemented a new common advising survey in spring 2015 using a template published in Appendix C8 of the faculty contract. In addition, the Retention Committee has surveyed the faculty and students to gather information as to their opinions about advising and completed a comparative analysis of those findings that will inform our actions in the coming year.

Apart from academic preparation, LSSU has recognized a need to help students adjust to the campus environment at the institution and to help them create new relationships that can develop into support systems throughout their college career. To that end, the Campus Life Office works with student organizations to sponsor programming like "Laker Week" (2014, 2015, 2016) which is held during the first 13 days of each fall semester. Some of these events are required of students to provide opportunities for them to get acclimated to their new environment and to create connections to help in their college careers.

LSSU Campus Life provides resources for commuter students designed to provide similar opportunities to develop relationships and connections that on-campus students engage in, including networking with faculty and staff. The goal is to provide a more targeted approach tailored to the needs of the commuter student and the obstacles they may encounter.

In 2013, as part of a Title III grant, the LSSU Faculty Center for Teaching (FCT)was established with the goal of providing resources for faculty to improve teaching. The FCT is designed to facilitate the development of professional learning communities, discussions, seminars and workshops, print and electronic resources for teaching enhanced use of classroom technology, conference participation, and funding for innovative practices through a mini-grant program.  At the FCT, faculty are able to share experiences and knowledge with colleagues to improve instruction and advising. Learning communities around topics such as *Teaching First Year Students* and *Advising* help facilitate this communication. The Faculty Center for Teaching is directed by two faculty coordinators with input provided by a work group of faculty from across campus as well as key academic support and advising staff members.  Resources and training materials, such as books, journals, and videos, are housed within the FCT. This enables LSSU to

maximize space, centralize resources to support faculty development in teaching and advising, and utilize enhanced technology programs to deliver content for adviser development and training.

### 3.D.4

The institution provides experiences for a student to learn through technical labs and technology based software, clinical placements, performance spaces and museum collections that support the student's academic career. The University implemented the new Student Learning Commons area within the library which has quickly become a focal point for student activity. The institution has many disciplinary technological based labs, described below under the heading Facilities and Infrastructure, for our students and faculty to receive and promote hands-on experience. These labs help to support effective teaching and learning both in the classroom and within any clinical sites and practicums in which the student will be required to partake. To support this endeavor, the sciences have instituted a Dean's Fund designed to support the infrastructure needs.  The support for student and faculty resources and infrastructure extends also to the arts where performance spaces and museum/exhibit display opportunities are available.

LSSU Moodle, a Title III project, has been completed and the campus has now fully transitioned from the expensive Blackboard course management system to a more cost effective third-party vendor-hosted Moodle-based course management system.  The Title III Strengthening Institutions Program Grant facilitated this changeover to the Moodle e-learning platform. Faculty and student user resources have been developed, and frequent trainings were ongoing throughout the 2015-2016 one year transitional period. This change provides a more user-friendly and cost effective adjustment to our technical offerings and is fully implemented for fall 2016. As previously discussed, the Moodle plugin integration for Turnitin and the opportunity for instructors to use RemoteProctorNow also add value to Moodle.

The introduction of Moodle follows through on the third of three goals for the Title III grant.  The other two goals seek to improve success of LSSU's first year students and to Identify and remove policies and procedures that unnecessarily act as barriers to degree completion. LSSU plans to fulfill these goals with five strategies: a Faculty Center for Teaching (FCT) that will provide faculty development in teaching and in advising; advising support for students and faculty through development of better information resources and peer mentoring; a Student Learning Commons (SLC) to enhance learning and student engagement via peer-mentoring, access to technology, and opportunities for shared experiences; managing barriers via a systematic analysis of "momentum points" in students' progression towards degree completion; and enhancing productivity and reduce costs per student served by converting from a proprietary LMS to an open-source system.

**Facilities and Infrastructure** - the university provides a number of distinctive opportunities, internship/practicum and educational facilities to support our academic programs. These include:

*Dean's Fund:*  The Dean's Science equipment fund was established to repair/replace/purchase new larger pieces of equipment/ instruments for the sciences. The $10 per credit hour program

fee is collected on all science classes (BIOL, CHEM, ENVR, GEOL, PHYS, NSCI prefixes). The original intent was so the sciences could replace many of its aging and expensive pieces of equipment. The fund also is used to pay for emergency repairs of the larger equipment and fund two technicians in the natural sciences. Currently, LSSU has already spent over $200,000 since this fund's inception to repair/replace equipment.  The original intent was to have the schools put together a strategic list for replacing the equipment, however repair expenses have taken priority based on pressing need.

Robotics:

- LSSU is one of the top public universities in the United States with an industrial automated robotics systems specialization at the undergraduate level. Companies involved in robotics and automation specifically seek out our graduates.
- Our Robotics and Automation Laboratory was recognized by TAC of ABET as one of the more complete and advanced of its kind in the country. It is one of the best educational facilities in North America, with modern equipment including vision systems, sensors and rotary index tables, using a variety of software and programmable logic controllers (PLCs). Limited enrollment provides plenty of personal experience with state-of-the-art equipment.
- More than 75 percent of engineering classes have a laboratory component, including robotics, using industrial grade equipment.

Aquatic Research Laboratory: The mission of the Aquatic Research Laboratory (ARL) is to combine education and research on aquatic biota and their associated habitats within the Great Lakes basin to serve the academic, scientific, and public communities.  The specific goals of the ARL are to:

- provide scientific information to further advance our understanding of regional water bodies and issues of concern
- provide logistical and technical support for faculty and researchers from LSSU and other institutions engaged in freshwater research
- promote and conduct hands-on training for undergraduate students in freshwater science.
- foster information transfer between scientists and local communities regarding water resources of the northern Great Lakes region

Simulation Center: The mission of the LSSU Simulation Center is to provide an immersive learning environment using clinical simulation for the enhancement of education and practice in the healthcare setting. The Simulation Center vision is to ensure growth in future healthcare professionals; that they are able to make judgments and carry out safe, quality care based on critical thinking and research based knowledge to facilitate disease prevention, health promotion, health maintenance, health restoration and rehabilitation. The Center provides a high fidelity learning environment for LSSU students and health providers within the region. The primary educational focus is for nursing and allied health students. The Center also supports continuing education, competency assessment and enhancement for staff of War Memorial Hospital.

Internships, Practicums and Clinical placements

LSSU provides hands on opportunities through internship, practicums and clinical sites.  Some of the majors which provide these opportunities include the Lukenda School of Business (2014, 2015), and specific programs including Athletic Training, and Medical Laboratory Science programs. Medical Laboratory Science-- Clinical Concentration is currently pursuing accreditation from the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS). In accordance with NAACLS requirements, a clinical experience is included in the MLS-Clinical Concentration degree. Presently, LSSU has two clinical sites: the laboratory at War Memorial Hospital, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., and the laboratory at Helen Joy Newberry Hospital, Newberry, Mich. These sites were chosen because they perform routine clinical laboratory testing in all of the following categories: clinical chemistry, hematology/hemostasis, blood bank, microbiology, immunology/serology, and urinalysis.  The above-listed testing categories are standard for full-service clinical laboratories and NAACLS requires that students receive training in each category as evidenced in the MLS student handbook.

*Education:* The School of Education uses field placements for classroom experiences in several courses. The goal is to provide diverse field experiences for teacher candidates as they progress through the program. Therefore, elementary candidates have placements in kindergarten through 5th grade, and secondary candidates experience middle school and high school as well as content areas in their major and minor areas. Students are encouraged to make requests about placements and will often request a grade or a school they have not seen before.

## *Performance Arts*

The Arts Center's vision statement affirms the goal to "engage our communities in aesthetic experiences that advance the culture of the mind, body, and spirit - reminding us all of what it is to be human." Through a new Center mission statement the University affirms its support of effective teaching and learning in the creative arts as foundational to the liberal arts based education.

*Museum Collections:* The collections in the Arts Center and the Kenneth J. Shouldice Library provide areas to exhibit art from regional artists and students taking art classes.

LSSU also provides experiential learning opportunities in the form of performance spaces in the Arts Center and Kenneth J. Shouldice Library.  The Arts Center performance spaces include a 674 seat, ADA compliant, auditorium with a total stage performance area of approximately 2000 square feet.  In addition to the main auditorium, the Arts Center offers the Black Box Theater, a music and dance studio and the main lobby - which has highlighted performances in addition to the static performance spaces.

LSSU's commitment to experiential learning opportunities is evident in our commitment to provide infrastructure and resources to programs across the campus.

## 3.D.5

The LSSU Library supports the campus community by providing quality personalized information and educational services and creates an active learning environment that embraces

the sifting and winnowing of ideas in order to provide for lifelong learning as evidenced through its Vision Statement. The library provides both online and in person assistance for research and information gathering.  If the library does not have one of the needed materials for a student, a student can use the inter-library loan program to receive the item from a partner library.

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# 3.E - Core Component 3.E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

## Argument

### 3.E.1

The mission of Lake Superior State University States that the efforts of the institution will help develop students to their 'full potential' by 'launch[ing] students on paths to rewarding careers. This is done not only through academic activities but through co-curricular initiatives which support their academic endeavors. Each student is encouraged to pick an organization to get involved in through the Campus Life, *Pick One* campaign. Many of these students choose organizations in their academic fields or in areas of professional development.  These organizations, under the guidance of their faculty advisers, continue to provide enhanced and unique opportunities to allow the students to have hands-on experience throughout their university careers.

Co-curricular activities at LSSU occur through student organizations and programming outside of the classroom.  Many organizations and activities provide added training and professional development for the students, faculty and staff who partake in the opportunities.  Each Registered Student Organization (RSO) at LSSU submits budget requests annually (2014, 2015, 2016), and our distribution of RSO funds is analyzed and used to guide future distributions. Each RSO must have a full-time faculty or staff adviser to assist the students in growing and running the organization.  This not only provides students an additional opportunity to work closely with experienced faculty and staff,  but also allows all parties to have an opportunity to go to conferences, workshops or other trips related to academics that would not normally be available due to lack of general fund dollars.

To support co-curricular activities, each organization or programming opportunity is invited to submit a budget, based on demonstrable need, to Student Government and/or Presidents' Council within the Student Assembly. The Presidents' Council is comprised of the club president from each recognized campus student organization. Each main campus student at LSSU pays a $65 per semester Student Activity and Media (SAM) Fee.  This fee is divided among the 7 major student organizations that comprise the Student Assembly.  Two of these organizations, Student Government and Presidents' Council, are the only two designed to support more than just their own organization.  Presidents' Council oversees all smaller student organizations and their goals for the upcoming year.  Every August, prior to the start of the new academic year, Presidents'

Council submits a tentative budget (FY14, FY15, FY16), to Student Government that will outline needed funding to support its organizations.

Within Presidents' Council, academic organizations hold the largest percentage of the budget at 35% for 2014-2015. Over the past two years (2013-2014 and 2014-2015) it has received over 57% of all funds, almost $60,000, mostly used for professional development in the form of conferences, lectures and hands-on experience. This funding has been used to send students to conferences and other training opportunities in their academic fields. Faculty accompany their students to these events, enhancing the student interaction with LSSU faculty and providing a unique opportunity for training outside the classroom.

**3.E.2**

Students have various leadership opportunities through executive positions within the Student Assembly (e.g., Activities Board, The Compass, Inter-Greek Council, Presidents' Council, Student Government, Judiciary Board and WLSO Radio Station).  These executive positions teach students how to lead an organization, balance and plan a budget, and execute event planning. Students who hold executive positions attend a leadership summit during August before the start of every fall semester.

Beyond student organization opportunities, students have opportunities through their academic fields in the form of practicum sites, simulation labs, and the Product Development Center (PDC). These sites provide additional hands on experiences and continue to develop a well-rounded co-curricular experience in addition to the classroom-academic experience. Students work with faculty or experts in their chosen academic fields to gain additional expertise and to allow the students to use their in-classroom learning in a real-world experience.

Work-study opportunities, funded through federal financial aid, provide students obtain additional experience by working in departments that will assist in their academic endeavors. Examples of these work-study teaching experiences include an accounting student working in the Business Operations office, or a marketing student working with the Sport Information Office within Athletics. Through these varying co-curricular programs, LSSU continues to redefine the classroom.

The Core Values of LSSU indicate the institution's commitment to *"Excellence in Teaching and Learning"* where teaching is the top priority along with meaningful student/faculty interaction both inside and outside the classroom and the *"Opportunity"* to give students the chance to grow academically, professionally, culturally and socially.  These Core Values are strengthened by the opportunities given to students through co-curricular programs in the form of student organizations, out of classroom practical experience, and work-study placements.

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# 3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

## Summary

Lake Superior State University offers courses and programs that are appropriate to our mission and serve the needs of our students as evidenced through clear faculty engagement in oversight of curriculum and through specialized programmatic accreditation where applicable. The University has established learning goals which apply across all modes of delivery and in all locations. LSSU has articulated program and course-level learning goals which engage faculty and students in the exercise of intellectual inquiry, acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills, as evidenced in part through the breadth and diversity of our student senior research projects. Specifically the institutional learning outcomes are the general skills and knowledge through which students demonstrate the ability to:

- Analyze, develop, and produce rhetorically complex texts
- Communicate competently in a variety of contexts
- Analyze, evaluate, and explain human aesthetics and its historical development
- View the world from cultural perspectives other than their own
- Incorporate empirical evidence in the analysis of the causes and consequences of natural phenomena
- Think critically and analytically about the causes and consequences of human behavior
- Analyze situations symbolically and quantitatively in order to make decisions and solve problems

LSSU employs a mix of full-time, part-time and adjunct faculty who are appropriately qualified and who are engaged in a wide range of scholarly pursuits supported in their professional development by the institution.

The institution is mid-way through implementation of a $1.86 million Title III, Part A, Strengthening Institutions Program grant which has provided funds to improve and strengthen college and university academic quality, institutional management and fiscal stability, as well as build a framework to help students complete their degrees.

## Sources

*There are no sources.*

# 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

## 4.A - Core Component 4.A

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

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

## Argument

### 4.A.1

Regular and systematic review of academic degree programs has become an integral part of school-level assessment. In fall 2013, after nearly a year of discussion and review, the deans and chairs finalized the reporting guidelines and schedule for program reviews. To assist with program review, a template was developed, circulated for initial feedback, and continues to be used as the institution enters the fourth year using this process. For example, the Fisheries and Wildlife program review completed in 2014 was deemed to have met expectations and their next report is due in five years, in May of 2019. The template is currently under review by the

Assessment Committee which is looking at the alignment of the program review template to the Criteria for Accreditation. The Assessment Committee provided support in developing the course and program assessment reports needed for section 4 of the program review, as well as resource documents on the topics of assessment at the course and program level.

The program review plan calls for 20-25% of programs to be reviewed annually, so that all programs would be reviewed once every four-five years. In addition, some programs align their program review with external accreditation cycles, up to a six-year duration. The status of program reviews is publicly available on the program review page of the LSSU website which reflects that 32 program reviews had been submitted by the fall 2016, about 1/3 of all baccalaureate and associate degree programs now active. The Provost Council (Deans and Chairs) provides feedback and recommendations related to the program review report. Monitoring reports have been used to collect feedback on progress when program reviews identified areas for additional focus.

**4.A.2.**

Transfer Credit

LSSU evaluates all the credit it transcripts. The Registrar's office has overall responsibility for transfer course equivalencies.  Together with Admissions, the Registrar's office sends course descriptions (from various universities/colleges)  to the appropriate school chairs to determine how the particular courses transfer to LSSU. Following our policy for the approval of transfer credits, review begins in Admissions where previously earned credit is evaluated using the list of transfer equivalencies. The Registrar's office, working with school faculty, has developed a list of common course transfer equivalencies so that the Admissions staff, or Registrar's staff, can simply look up the equivalent course at LSSU and transcript the credit as counting for that specific LSSU course. When a course is not on the transfer equivalency list, faculty members (typically the school chairs) review the course(s) in question to determine transcripted credit. The Admissions staff oversee the process of transfer credit evaluation until classes begin in the student's first year at LSSU. The Admissions webpage for transfer students lists the criteria for transfer credits, including a link to the list of transfer equivalencies. Following the add/drop period of the student's first LSSU semester, any additional transcripted credit, such as when a student takes a summer course at another institution, is processed in the Registrar's office using the same tools and process.

Experiential/Prior Learning

The LSSU Prior Learning Policy, published in the academic catalog is evidence of the institution's commitment to award credit for expertise, skills and knowledge gained through individual study, employment, military training, community service or other experiences outside of the normal college setting. LSSU credit may be awarded for prior learning through successful completion of standardized examination programs, (e.g. CLEP, Advanced Placement, DANTES), credit recommendations of the American Council of Education, or successful completion of  "departmental examinations". Credit may also be awarded upon successful completion of an individual Prior Learning Portfolio that documents the demonstration of

learning outcomes for a specific course or set of courses. Credits awarded under the prior learning policy are considered as transfer credit.

Third Party Services

LSSU uses the services of World Education Services (WES) for translating international transcripts in languages other than English. WES provides translations plus information about degree and GPA equivalencies. The translated information is then used by LSSU faculty members (generally the school chair) to determine the appropriate assignment of transcripted credit.

**4.A.3**

The University has effective policies regarding the evaluation and transcription of credits transferred received from other institutions. Faculty members and/or deans conduct reviews of courses submitted for transfer credit evaluation to determine if they are equivalent to an existing LSSU course. As detailed on the LSSU Admissions website, students must earn a C- or higher in courses in order to transfer the credit to LSSU. The transfer equivalency is determined by academic faculty or dean review. LSSU's transfer information page references our general education policies related to the Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA), the Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (MACRAO) transfer agreement, and the GECERT from Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology, located in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

**4.A.4**

LSSU ensures the quality of our academic programs through the actions of the Curriculum Committee and administrative oversight. Faculty at the school-level design the curriculum/courses and the University Curriculum Committee oversees course creations, changes, and deletions through approvals using standard curriculum forms which are posted to the Provost's web site. For example, the "new course proposal" form requires that prerequisites and student learning outcomes must be listed, ensuring appropriate content development and establishing prior knowledge needed for success in the course. Prerequisites are also clearly listed with the course description in the academic catalog, and on course syllabi (for example, ACTG333, BUSN308 and CHEM226). Expectations for student learning are stated in course syllabi, as evidenced in examples from spring semester 2015: part1, part2, part3, part4. LSSU provides a standard institutional syllabus template.

Access to many learning resources at LSSU is centralized through the Academic Success Center which offers tutoring services, success seminars, and tools for students as a part of the Student Learning Commons developed through the Title III grant. The Academic Success Center also coordinates programs such as Student First, a peer mentoring program, and IPASS, a student-specific individualized plan for student success. Access to laboratory resources is primarily controlled by faculty teaching the laboratory courses. Students taking lab courses and students involved in undergraduate research may access the facilities needed consistent with school policies.

In addition to information required by the syllabus template, faculty are a primary source of information about where students can seek help or access to learning resources. The institution's philosophy about learning resources is that they be used to empower students. This aligns with the University mission statement regarding helping students to develop to their full potential and is evidenced by the frequent efforts of faculty to empower students to use resources available to them. An example of empowering students is the commitment to undergraduate research. There is an undergraduate research fund that grants students up to $500 for research equipment, other research costs, and even travel to conferences to present research findings. The undergraduate research committee, composed of a dean and faculty members from across disciplines, evaluates student grant requests and awards the funds.

The University exercises control and oversight of the curriculum through an inclusive and collaborative process, as evidenced by a recent change in the requirements for 300/400-level coursework in academic degrees, certificates and minors.  In response to HLC requirements, and an issue raised by a school chair, the University reviewed the structure of all degrees and minors.  A report was developed to examine the current requirements in programs and related requirements at sister institutions. The question of raising the minimum number of upper-division credits was referred to the shared governance policy committee which made recommendations that were reviewed by the faculty chairs and deans and the Provost's Council in February 2013 and again in March 2013.  The recommendation to establish minimum requirements for upper division courses was taken to the University Curriculum Committee for review and approval was granted to change the Bachelor's degree upper-division requirement and to the Registrar for implementation.

FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

The institution maintains and exercises authority over instructor qualifications, including full- and part-time faculty, and adjunct instructors, including concurrent enrollment instructors, through provisions in the Agreement Section 11 for faculty, and faculty review of adjuncts consistent with the Agreement Section 7.3.3. In spring semester 2016, the president approved an implementation plan to move the University toward compliance with the September 1, 2017 Assumed Practices and Guidelines for Faculty Qualifications. In spring 2016, school faculty developed matrices defining the minimum academic credential and relevant experience by course or group of courses as a precursor to a full audit of the credentials and experience of faculty to be conducted during 2016-2017.

**4.A.5**

Several LSSU programs have earned and maintained specialized accreditation, including Nursing, Engineering, and Environmental Health. Programs with external accreditation are listed on the LSSU accreditation webpage with links to the organizations providing and evaluating the accreditation. Typically, accrediting organizations provided specific feedback after an audit, and the LSSU programs house those letters as they use them for continued improvement. Examples include letters from both the US (EHAC) and Canadian (CIPHI) accreditors of our Environmental Health program and the Fire Science accreditor. Common threads across accrediting bodies include a need for greater emphasis on assessment linking course-level

learning to program-outcomes, and the role and oversight of advisory bodies - both are areas for continued institutional focus and attention.

## 4.A.6

The Career Development Center at LSSU has published a yearly first destination report since 2010. The report is based on graduating student survey data regarding first career position or graduate school. From 2012-2014, the return rate for the student survey for past three years was 48%, 56%, and 54%, respectively. In those same three years, the LSSU Center for Career Development lists that at least 97% of graduates seeking employment are hired and that 12-14% of LSSU graduates attend graduate school  The first destination reports also contain salary data (2013, 2014, 2015) for graduates hired into career positions. Most, if not all, departments on campus keep track of graduates informally, for example, with school-level surveys. Students often communicate directly with faculty about their plans after graduation and then about their first position when they get hired or attend graduate school. Information on student employment, salaries, and graduate feedback provided informally to faculty members, indicates to us that the institution has moved successfully toward achieving the overall mission of LSSU. The LSSU Alumni Association webpage celebrates the success of LSSU alumni, highlighting the employment, awards and other features for our graduates.

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# 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

## Argument

### 4.B.1

Lake Superior State University has clearly stated student learning goals at multiple levels, including institution-wide, program-wide, and course level. These goals for student learning support the University's larger goal of providing Educational Delivery Toward Excellence (Goal C). The University's General Education curriculum is designed around the idea that "in a diverse and changing world, college graduates must be prepared for a lifetime of learning in a variety of fields", and to do so requires "the development of general skills and knowledge that are further developed throughout the curriculum." The General Education Committee, a shared governance and contractually defined committee, is composed of one faculty member elected by the faculty members of each school, two students chosen by Student Government, the provost, and two deans, with the registrar and associate provost  serving as ex-officio members. The General Education Committee promotes, and documents through its website and minutes, curriculum development and instructional innovation in general education and determines whether courses proposed achieve the outcomes of general education. This committee has established the six general education goals, which are published each school year in the current, official LSSU Academic Catalog.

All syllabi are required to inform students of both general education and course-specific learning goals. The syllabus guidelines related to the LSSU Syllabus Template provides detailed instructions for faculty on how to create clearly articulated individual course goals in their syllabi (Spring 2015 - part1, part2, part3, part4). Effective course goals are the start of meaningful assessment planning, and disciplinary reports on course assessment, including the Tracdat report on BIOL courses as one example, document outcomes established for each course, as well as the assessment findings and actions.

In addition to general education goals, Lake State's degree programs have also developed specific, measurable, and realistic program objectives and learning outcomes. Curriculum

Mapping is a required element of all program proposals and program changes, as evidenced through the forms used by the University Curriculum Committee (noted below), and is used to ensure courses advance program outcomes. The Curriculum Committee promotes effective evaluation and presentation of outcomes, mapping, etc, by establishing specific guidelines for the creation of new courses, new programs, course changes, and program changes. Faculty have led development of specific course learning outcomes using resources provided by the University and the guidance of the Assessment Committee. Resources for further guidance on development of outcomes are also posted on the University's assessment website.

As a participant in The HLC Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning Project, LSSU has set realistic goals for course and program assessment based on a ramped implementation timeline.  Our progress through the Academy has been extensively documented on the Academy website, including progress reports tracking the growth of institutional assessment activity. Not only does LSSU have clearly stated goals for student learning for its courses and programs, it also has an effective process to document assessment efforts, and to use what is learned through assessment to make an impact on student learning and institutional effectiveness. The University completed the Assessment Academy in June 2016, including the submission of the final Impact Report. The reviewers concluded that the University "has made a great deal of progress."

At the time of the last HLC visit, the visiting team summarized, "that assessment had not been articulated across campus" and the commission required a follow-up monitoring report including development of an assessment plan. This plan would outline "a clear process for collecting, disseminating and implementing assessment results." One of the broad concerns was the lack of a centralized repository for the collection, aggregation, and reporting of assessment data. Since then, LSSU has implemented a comprehensive Assessment Plan. The plan defined a four-year process whereby the university formalized course-level and program-level assessment. The Assessment Committee is scheduled to review and update the plan in fall 2016, reflecting the substantial progress made by the institution and laying out a plan for the next three-five years.

LSSU also committed to use of Tracdat, a hosted relational database for assessment developed by Nuventive that provides a fully integrated interrelated system for the collection, aggregation and reporting of assessment activities, findings, and resultant action plans. This one-stop system for assessment provides report capabilities necessary for faculty, staff, and administration to review assessment findings and to make decisions related to student achievement and institutional effectiveness. Since Tracdat was introduced, the focus has been on establishing the importance of assessment of student learning and equipping faculty and staff with the knowledge and tools necessary to use assessment data to drive improvement. The process to be used for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals is clearly laid out in documents on the institutional assessment website, which provides transparency regarding the university's assessment goals and activities, and assessment plans.

### 4.B.2

The University is making progress, as evidenced by our Academy Project poster, toward effective assessment of student learning for its curricular and co-curricular programs. In

accordance with the Academy Project  timeline, the goal was that documented assessment activity would be present in Tracdat representing 90% of courses having defined outcomes by Spring 2016. As of January 2016, nearly 91% of courses had defined outcomes established and entered into the assessment database, demonstrating that the Academy goal for course outcomes were met. The University is also on track to meet or come close to meeting its goals for courses with measures, findings, and actions. The HLC Academy Project goal at the program level was for 90% of programs to have defined outcomes and 60% to have programs with defined methods of measurement by Spring 2016. As of the writing of this report, 100% of programs have defined program-level outcomes and methods established and entered into the assessment database, demonstrating that this goal was not only met, but exceeded.

The preliminary Impact Report, prepared in the summer 2015, noted that the University was also on track to meet or come close to meeting its goals for programs with findings and actions. Updated for the summer 2016, the table below summarizes the project goals, and the status during our last system audit in late spring semester 2016 as percentage of all courses taught which had, respectively, defined learning outcomes, defined measures, documented findings related to the assessment of student learning, and actions derived from those findings. These findings are discussed in the final Academy Impact Report.

| COURSES | Outcomes | Measures | Findings | Actions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spring 2015 goal | 80 | 60 | 60 | 40 |
| April 2016 Actual | 92 | 74 | 66 | 55 |
| Spring 2016 goal | 90 | 80 | 80 | 60 |

The table below similarly summarizes the percentage of programs with each stage of assessment. The Academy poster presented graphical representations of our growth during the Academy Project.

| PROGRAMS | Outcomes | Measures | Findings | Actions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spring 2015 goal | 80 | 40 | 40 | 10 |
| April 2016 Actual | 100 | 100 | 43 | 33 |
| Spring 2016 goal | 90 | 60 | 60 | 40 |

Since 2008, the General Education Committee has reviewed, analyzed, and regularly reported on general education assessment for each of the six general education outcomes and reported its findings on the General Education Assessment website. The general education assessment process is an interwoven process relying on course-level student learning outcomes targeting the general education specific outcomes, and broader institutional goals assessed across all student

groups. Tracdat builds relational linkages between specific course-level outcomes and the higher-level general education outcomes. These course-level findings are aggregated and combined from across many courses through high-level general education roll-up reports. Analysis and report generation has also been completed as a part of the Academy project.

Over the years, the assessment process has sometimes posed significant challenges at LSSU. In fact, the previous HLC visiting team report states: "The team was unable to discern any demonstrable evidence regarding either the assembling, or the integration, of constituent assessment activities that were taking place on campus into an institutional database, or any locally preferred equivalent."  Since this time, however, as the results discussed above show, LSSU has made a commitment to addressing those challenges and  has been successful in making strides toward a culture of assessment. Initially, faculty and staff were not adept at using Tracdat, and this lead to some frustration. A focus on additional training, including presentations, customized training events, and professional development at the department, school, and University level, has helped to address these challenges.  Resources have been made available on the LSSU website and materials continue to be developed and updated.

To better understand perceptions on assessment across the campus, the Assessment Committee conducted surveys in spring 2015, with administrative support and co-curricular staff (staff survey, staff findings) and the LSSU faculty (faculty survey, faculty findings), using a series of questions related to their perceptions on the topics of departmental goals, institutional assessment, planning, and policy making. The survey feedback shows that LSSU faculty and staff are generally committed to the importance of assessment itself (with, for example, a 4.5 weighted average out of 5 for "faculty have a professional obligation to assess what [individual] students are learning"), but did not generally believe the Tracdat system was easy to use (2.14) and did not necessarily believe the University had an atmosphere conducive to faculty cooperation and interaction (2.75).  The survey was instrumental in helping to identify areas where there were persistent misconceptions about assessment and areas where additional faculty and staff training should be implemented. The Assessment Committee reviewed the survey results and is using that information to carefully tailor the committee's activities to specific assessment needs for the years ahead. Examples of changes utilizing this feedback led to a greater role for the Faculty Center for Teaching to lead faculty professional development in assessment, including spring PD sessions and an April Tracdat party.

One of the Assessment Committee's additional responses to the surveys has been increased communication. Information sharing about assessment is now regularly facilitated through more frequent communications including "Assessment Matters" e-mail messages with topics such as "Grades as Assessment?", "Faculty Evaluation and the practice of Assessment", and "To Tracdat or Not to Tracdat", which are also archived on our assessment website. These frequent informal contacts have helped to foster a dialogue about assessment, expectations, and best practices. An additional response to the survey was to create an alternative to direct entry of data into TracDat, allowing faculty and staff  to instead send their assessment findings to the Office of Assessment using an easy-to-follow form. The Office of Assessment can then ensure the assessment that has been taking place is being documented in Tracdat and is available to decision makers across campus. The Assessment Committee has also engaged in a systematic process to provide feedback on assessment practices through reports and reviews documented on the Academy

Project website. Included have been course-specific feedback for each school (e.g. ACTG132), program feedback (e.g. BIOL programs), and a series that was published under the tag-line "you don't get a baby to grow by weighing it" which addressed course assessment, program assessment, program review, and general education assessment.

While much attention has been paid to academic assessment, the assessment of programs has also been ongoing and is showing signs of growth. According to findings from a 2015 Assessment Committee survey, a weighted average of survey results indicated 4 out of 5 staff believe that "My department has clearly stated meaningful goals," a weighted average of 3.59 out of 5 believe "My department has defined how we will measure progress to achieve our goal," and a weighted average of 3.58 out of 5 believe "My department regularly evaluates (assesses) how well we are achieving our goal." While these numbers show much room for improvement, they are evidence that a culture of assessment for co-curricular programs is developing. The Office of Student Life has been developing an assessment structure its programs and activities; however, it is clear that much work is left to be done to ensure robust assessment is occurring for all co-curricular activities across campus.

Examples of co-curricular assessment include that student club and organization activity is being broadly assessed by Student Affairs, and some activities, such as the LSSU Bass Fishing Club, which serves as a co-curricular for our fisheries and wildlife management students, have also been assessed individually. However, other co-curricular activities, such as student involvement in the *Compass*, the University's online student newspaper, are yet to receive significant documented assessment in the Tracdat system. Examples of other co-curricular activities taking place on the LSSU campus that complement the learning experiences of students in the classroom include: theatrical performances, arts shows, dance shows, study abroad, the Visiting Writer's Series, the Superior Children's Book Festival, the Pep Club Band, undergraduate research presentations, and the use of work study students in places such as labs and the Academic Success Center. Many of these co-curricular activities have been captured in the Provost's Reports, but ongoing assessment by club advisers and project coordinators has not necessarily been documented in the Tracdat system. Currently, the University is reviewing ways to make it more clear who is responsible to assess these co-curricular activities and where and how such assessment data can be reported, stored, and analyzed in a manner most likely to lead to an improvement in student learning.

Overall, as affirmed by Sandra Harris, the Primary Mentor of LSSU's Academy Project, and seconded by HLC Senior Scholar Gloria Rogers, Lake Superior State University "has sustained its goal of developing a culture of assessment" (*HLC Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning, Response – Version 5, 2014-09-25*).

**4.B.3.**

The second main concern of the HLC Review Team in 2011 was evidence of the use of assessment data in institutional decision making. Specifically, in the last HLC Report, the team indicated it was not "shown evidence that whatever data that were either available to, or acquirable by, the institution were being analyzed to inform the planning and execution of academic, administrative, and support programs, and other activities that are important to

LSSU's future." Since that time, LSSU has implemented several policies to encourage the use of such data, and hired two new institutional research data specialists to strengthen our capacity to collect, interpret, and use institutional data in decision making. While more can and will be done to increase documentation of reliance on such data, these efforts provide good evidence that LSSU is working to facilitate a culture of assessment-driven decision-making.

The first important change toward this goal was to require that submissions to the Curriculum Committee for course and program changes be accompanied by assessment data. The committee's charge is to review proposals submitted for changes to existing courses and new courses, review proposals to create or modify academic programs, and to make recommendations to schools or departments regarding renewal or deletion of programs.  The course change proposal template developed by the Curriculum Committee requires schools to "Attach appropriate evidence of course and program assessment to support this proposed change"; "Provide a rationale for the proposed change. The rationale should address how assessment activities and findings support and led to the proposed change and address the proposed impact on student learning.   Specifically address the assessment plan and findings from the attached assessment report"; and "Describe any changes to the course student learning outcomes, and to the assessment of those outcomes." A new program proposal must include curriculum mapping. A program change proposal must include the "Unit Course Assessment Report – 4 Column" report for the most recent review cycle from each affected program.  Once these forms are properly completed and submitted, members of the Curriculum Committee review and consider the assessment data before any action is taken to recommend the addition, change, or deletion of a course or program. Curriculum committee agenda packets, like this from December 2015, include the substantial documentation required for this review, and committee minutes document each action.

The Curriculum Committee forms were also revised to make sure that faculty members submitting proposals also include proposed student learning outcomes and suggested measures at the time a request for a new course or program is made. These items are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee for feedback and their inclusion makes it easier for faculty to quickly add the new outcomes and suggested measures into the Tracdat system as soon as the new course or program is approved.  This requirement has also helped faculty to see the relationship between assessment and making changes to curriculum to improve student learning.

Another LSSU policy that has been designed to encourage decision making based upon assessment data is a change to the forms and process used for submitting an issue to the Shared Governance process. The form that documents this process includes a section that requires documentation of the rationale and supporting evidence for the recommendation. This ensures that it is clear throughout the process whether available assessment data is being used, where applicable, in decision-making.

Of course, some of the strongest evidence that LSSU uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning can be found in the course and program assessment documentation in Tracdat. In addition, the Accreditation Review Team (ART) has highlighted many such examples in the ART newsletters.

Further evidence that LSSU has been making progress on closing the loop on assessment can be gleaned from the surveys conducted by the Assessment Committee. In the 2015 Survey "Assessment Perceptions – Academics," (Survey, and Findings), faculty responded with a weighted average of 3.58 out of 5 to the statement "My School uses assessment data to improve student learning." In all, 58.49 percent of faculty agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.  Fewer faculty, however, perceived the assessment data was being used by the institution in "shaping academic planning and policy-making," with only a weighted average response of 2.75 out of 5.  This is an area, as noted previously, where more work can and will be done. In the similar survey sent to staff at the same time, staff responded with a weighted average of  3.57 on a 5 point scale to the comment "My department uses the results of assessment to  improve our unit's effectiveness," and a weighted average score of 3.02 to the comment "Our university uses student assessment in institutional planning and policy-making."  While these surveys show that there is still much room for improvement, they also show that LSSU has made significant progress in striving to ensure that the institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

**4.B.4.**

 LSSU's current processes and methodologies for assessment, which rely on targeted assessment, reflect good practice. The University has established respectable assessment practices by becoming informed and educated on testing and other forms of assessment that are used in a variety of institutions of higher learning across the country.  Training has been provided to ensure that all constituencies are given the opportunity to understand good assessment practice. This has included professional development sessions, beginning in 2010 and earlier and continuing to date, which are posted on the institution's Assessment Committee website. LSSU's efforts to expose the campus to good practices in assessment have also included customized training events, campus and outside speakers, online resources, as well as funding through mini-grants of assessment-related projects. To encourage knowledge of good practices, the members of the Accreditation Review Team and others involved in the practice of assessment attended the 2015 HLC Conference, and the Academy Team has continued its project. Good practice also continues to be encouraged through the work of the Assessment Committee such as feedback letters that accompany each program review submitted and through oversight and guidance provided by Provost's Council, which has undertaken Program Review evaluation to provide constructive feedback to constituencies. This oversight should help lead to improved assessment methodologies that are more meaningful and conducive to improving student outcomes.

Faculty involvement is an integral part of the assessment process. The University has committed to making assessment open and collaborative as faculty serve on both strategic and task committees within the shared governance structure. Faculty serve on the Assessment Committee, the Curriculum Committee, and the General Education Committee.  Faculty and other instructional staff members within departments and schools have been largely given the lead with respect to academic assessment at the course and program level. This has led to increased efforts to identify gaps in collection data, choose the best methods to assess the student learning experience, and to ensure that the processes and methodologies being employed are the best practices available. One area where there is room for improvement is the participation of adjunct

faculty. Getting adjunct faculty members more invested in the culture of assessment will be one of the challenges that LSSU will focus on in the years ahead.

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# 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

## Argument

### 4.C.1

The University is committed to continuous educational improvement through ongoing attention to important metrics of student success including student retention and degree completion.  The university set a goal in the 2012 Strategic Plan, "Charting Our Course" (updated in 2015), to increase first year retention rates. Specifically, the goal is for first-year retention to be at or above national averages for benchmark schools, as described in the 2012 Strategic Plan Balanced Scorecard. The University uses IPEDS definitions for their determination of persistence and completion rates, and as documented in reports from 2010-2015 retention rates have steadily increased, and are now above the national bench-marking group, both for full-time and part-time students. The University also generates internal reports from Banner that provide an opportunity for greater disaggregation of the data, although the definitions, and thus, absolute values, differ slightly from IPEDS data.

| IPEDS | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Full-time Retention** | 69 | 68 | 69 | 70 | 75 | 75 |
| **Comparison Retention** | 66 | 67 | 66 | 66 | 67 | 67 |
| **Part-time Retention** | 20 | 55 | 67 | 29 | 67 | 64 |
| **Comparison PT Retention** | 44 | 43 | 41 | 42 | 40 | 44 |

The table below summarizes retention data for new full-time FTIC students from 2007 through 2015. The percent retained in fall 2015 (%retainedF15) represents the absolute percentage of students in the fall 2014 cohort who returned to campus in fall 2015.

| | % return Fall07 | % return Fall08 | % return Fall09 | % return Fall10 | % return Fall11 | % return Fall12 | % return Fall13 | % return Fall14 | % return Fall15 | 5-yr ave |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| New Full-time FTIC | 61 | 68 | 67 | 67.96 | 67.82 | 68.23 | 74.53 | 73.96 | 70.11 | 70.93 |
| female | 67 | 72 | 67.33 | 69.38 | 69.7 | 72.91 | 77.16 | 77.4 | 78.13 | 75.06 |
| male | 55 | 64 | 66.67 | 66.67 | 66.42 | 63.33 | 72.29 | 70.35 | 62.34 | 66.95 |

The University set a goal for degree completion rates to also be at or above national averages for benchmark schools, based upon IPEDS definitions. The chart below documents LSSU graduation rates from 2010 through 2015, indicating some success in raising the completion rates of our graduates to a point well above the national benchmarks.  These successes, while measured and offering the opportunity for continued improvement, are evidence that the institution has set realistic and appropriate goals for the LSSU graduate.

| IPEDS | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Graduation Rate LSSU | 26 | 36 | 35 | 38 | 42 | 46 |
| Comparison Grad Rate | 34 | 33 | 33 | 31 | 34 | 36 |

**4.C.2 and 4.C.4**

The Office of Institutional Research collects information on retention, persistence and completion rates through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). LSSU's information is available on the Institutional Research website and IPEDS data is available from its website.

The Office of Advising and Retention has collected and analyzed information on retention and completion, led initiatives on retention, coordinated the new student orientation programs, and led other initiatives. The Retention Committee, chaired by the director of Advising and Retention, meets regularly to analyze student retention data and provide input into policy and procedures affecting retention as evidenced in its committee minutes.

In fall semester 2013, the Retention Committee conducted a survey of faculty which achieved a 67% response rate from the 107 faculty members. The 25 questions in this survey examined five categories, but used a non-sequential order to test for consistency of student responses.  The survey format addressed the potential issues of acquiescence bias, used Likert scale responses, and used more sophisticated levels of amalgamation – collapsing categories of "strongly agree" and "agree" to account for stronger levels of agreement. The categories for questions in the survey included:

1. The Importance of Advising
2. Potential Role of Other Staff in Advising
3. Student Responsibilities in the Advising Process
4. Promotion of Student Engagement/Rapport in the Class, and at the University
5. Training for Advising and Current Advising

The Retention Committee analysis and conclusions from this survey provided clear insights. The Committee noted many strengths and areas of common understanding about advising from faculty members, but also noted that there was not agreement on whom should bear responsibility for advising and a perception of inadequate training and commitment to the advising process.

In spring semester 2015, the Retention Committee conducted a survey of student perceptions related to the advising process, and 328 students responded . Based on an analysis of the findings, the Retention Committee noted that the vast majority of students felt they were prepared for meetings with advisers, and most perceived advising as academic in nature. There was general consensus that students were not helped through their advising contacts in areas of building study skills, opportunities for out-of-class experiences, or issues related to financial aid or university policies. In a follow-up report, the Retention Committee compared faculty and student responses and concluded that there are clear deficiencies in the current advising process and an immediate need for improvement. Recommended changes include clearer delineation of the roles and nature of advising at the University, clarification of the expectations upon faculty, staff and students in advising, and engagement with the broader campus to explore alternate advising models beginning in spring 2016.

## 4.C.3

The University is committed to continuous educational improvement through the effective use of our institutional data. In four years of the previous six years (2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014), the institution has administered the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and used this data to inform recommendations and activities related to student retention, persistence and completion. Analysis of the NSSE data by the Retention Committee noted that 18% of students reported spending 5 hours or less on homework each week, and only 26% of students reported working on research projects with faculty. The Retention Committee has accessed the NSSE findings, as reflected in its minutes (i.e. February 2015, September 2014, April 2014, January 2014, January 2013) and made recommendations for changes in student advising as noted elsewhere.

During the summer orientation programs, students and their families are asked to complete a survey. Faculty advisers and staff presenters involved in the summer programming are also asked to complete a survey at the conclusion of summer. During the month of October, a post-orientation survey is administered electronically to all new students enrolled in the fall semester. All of this information is tabulated, shared and reviewed with the Orientation Committee and used to adjust future programs

Orientation is a first-year experience to help new students successfully make the transition to LSSU. The Orientation Committee uses information on retention and persistence in the planning of and assessment of fall and summer orientation activities. This three-step process begins with summer orientation, continues with Laker Week (2014, 2015, 2016) and the first year, through academic and social programming, as evidenced in the committee minutes. The Orientation Committee has been meeting monthly during the academic year for over 10 years and presents information to students and parents on their website, in the university catalog, and through their published minutes. Membership on the committee is broad and includes representatives from: Advising, Retention & Orientation; Registrar's Office; Campus Life; Admissions; Financial Aid; faculty; vice president for Enrollment Services and Student Affairs, and provost.

During the summer orientation programs, students and their families are asked to complete surveys on the day of the program.  Faculty advisers and staff presenters involved in summer programming participate in their own surveys at the conclusion of summer.  During the month of October, a post-orientation survey is administered electronically to all new students enrolled in the fall semester.  All of this information is tabulated, shared and reviewed with the orientation committee and used to adjust the content and formatting of future programs. The Orientation Committee has held discussions on student learning, assessment using learning outcomes, and facilitating student degree completion. The committee is now focusing on program needs for 2017, which include revisiting the information presented in the Student Orientation 2015:  Evolving Best Practices webinar. Examples of changes based on feedback include the following:

- decrease time for general session
- increase time for Honors Program for adding tour of learning community house
- increase time for Anchor Access demos for course registration, bill and payments, financial aid, adding online degree audit, and include parents in demonstrations
- increase time for one-on-one consultations with Financial Aid and Business Operations
- increase time for Resource Fair
- change Parent Panel to Q&A session; added IT to panel
- add breakout session during Financial Aid for our international (Canadian) families to meet with Registrar and Admissions for SEVIS I-20
- increase time for MAP-Works
- add Business Operations to Parent Panel

The Retention Committee also uses information on retention and persistence to make recommendations related to the student's curriculum options.  In Fall 2011, the committee on reviewing an Admissions Enrollment Report, postulated that a high point in retention may have been linked to a pilot First-Year Experience (FYE) course. The committee initiated an examination of FYE course content and desired outcomes, a discussion of outcomes at peer institutions, led a professional development session on common reading initiatives, and reported on a presentation at the fall 2012 Faculty Development Day. Committee minutes noted in October 2012 that three schools had implemented FYE courses, and several more were in development. Additional initiatives include approval of MAP-Works in fiscal year 2013, as evidenced in Retention Committee minutes, and reports on the fall Transition Survey.

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# 4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

## Summary

Lake Superior State University exercises responsibility for the quality of its programs through regular and systematic program reviews, policies and practices for the awarding and acceptance of credit, and specialized accreditation of select programs. The University has invested substantial resources into ensuring the educational achievement of our students and the continual improvement of metrics related to student retention and completion. The University has demonstrated its commitment to assessment of student learning and achievement through voluntary membership in the HLC Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning, acquisition of assessment software, support for professional development, ongoing attendance at the HLC annual conference, the creation of a University Assessment Committee, and creation and implementation of the LSSU Institutional Plan for Assessment.

The University has demonstrated a commitment to encompass continuous improvement through a systematic approach to assessment practices that encompass academics, co-curricular, retention/completion, and strategic planning. Through the institutional assessment database format, the University has established clearly stated and measurable goals, measures to achieve those goals, periodic findings related to that achievement and institutional improvement, and actions wherein the institution uses that information for continuous improvement.

## Sources

*There are no sources.*

# 5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

## 5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

## Argument

### 5.A.1

### Fiscal Resources

Whether the University's programs are delivered in a traditional classroom setting on campus, at approved locations in our region, or online, there are sufficient resources to support the institution's operations. With respect to fiscal resources, the institution strives for a balanced budget to support delivery of excellent programs.  The FY16 budget was balanced at the time it was approved but it incorporated a structural deficit. The FY17 budget (awaiting finalization at the time of this report) is balanced, does not incorporate a structural deficit, and begins to address the cumulative general fund deficit. The University's cash flow is managed well; the University is fiscally secure at this time. The University administrators recognize the challenges presented by declining enrollment, a contributing factor leading to a structural deficit. Both the President and Chief Financial Officer have taken steps to alert the University community and

address the deficit through events like the fall leadership forum and through numerous all campus communications.

To ensure sufficient support for new and continuing initiatives, units make requests for new funds to support operations aligned with the mission and strategic plan. These requests are  reviewed by the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee and funding determinations are prioritized, within the limits of institutional capacity. Academic program fees have been implemented for high-cost areas, such as nursing and engineering, to support equipment and other needs of those programs.  Course and program fees are reviewed annually and approved by the Board of Trustees.

The University's current budgeting system, XLerant's BudgetPak, was used to document actual expenses beginning with the 2012 fiscal year, as well as approved budgets beginning with the 2014 fiscal year.  Budget managers have budget and spending history available to assist in building budgets to effectively support the needs of the department and its programs.  The University accounts for the annual carry-over of unspent operating funds from one year to the next, but only for academic programs and some selected funds. This allows units to plan for larger purchases. The University general fund budgets and financial audits are publicly available on the Business Operations web site.

 **Human Resources**

To ensure the University employs sufficient faculty and staff for the delivery of its programs, schools initiate requests for new faculty or new staff lines in the budget as needs are identified. The requests are evaluated by President's Cabinet and, if approved, a posting for the position is entered into the employment tracking system. The most recent year of enrollment growth at LSSU was  2011. The faculty *Agreement* provides for the creation of a new faculty position when adjunct or term-appointment student credit hour production exceeds 40% or more of the school's instructional load.  During a time of increased enrollment, the university added two new English faculty members. In addition, one new physics faculty, and two science technician positions were filled, as well as new positions to ensure compliance with state or federal regulations. For example, a health/safety position was created to be in compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations, and within the past year, a new Title IX coordinator/NCAA Compliance position was created.

 Analogous to the creation of new positions being based on student need, the University recently offered an incentive program in which the buy-out conditions included approval by administration to ensure minimal disruption to the academic offerings of the University. A total of 11 employees took advantage of this, allowing the University to adjust staffing levels through attrition and retirement.

The University provides to students, and the public, information on the qualifications of instructors through the website. As of November 1, 2014 LSSU, employed 312 full time employees, including 107 full-time teaching staff and 205 full-time non-teaching staff.  In addition, at the time of this report, the university employed 73 adjunct (part-time) instructors. In

fall 2014, the instructional load taught by tenured or tenure track faculty comprised 82% of sections, 83% of contract load, 84% of student credit hour generation.

|         | Contract Hours | Student Credit Hours | Courses |
|---------|----------------|----------------------|---------|
| Faculty | 83%            | 84%                  | 82%     |
| Adjunct | 17%            | 15%                  | 18%     |

**Physical Infrastructure**

Classroom use on the LSSU campus is evaluated each semester and reported by type of space (lecture or laboratory), total room utilization, and total building utilization. While some classrooms are used more than 80% of the available time, no rooms are used 100% of the available class times. The report examines both classrooms and labs used for classes. The institution recognizes that rooms with low utilization often have specialized uses or may be off-line during preparation for a lab or a specific course. Therefore, the physical infrastructure related to classroom and lab space at LSSU is sufficient.

LSSU plans for the future of the physical infrastructure and makes publicly available information on institutional planning through the Master Planning website. There is one newly renovated academic building projected to be ready in spring 2017, South Hall. The South Hall project will renovate approximately 32,000 square feet of historic building and add another 12,000 square feet in new atrium and study spaces. Additionally, the facilities master plan for 2017-2021 will serve to focus the University resources to meet the physical infrastructure needs for the next five years.

**Technological Infrastructure**

The University has made substantial gains in its development of technology supporting academic programs.  The lack of IT planning was noted as an area for increased organizational attention in the October 2011 Higher Learning Commission site visit. As a result the University, as evidenced in the IT monitoring report, developed and implemented the Information Technology Strategic plan. The activities described in the IT plan continue to be implemented and progress reported using the institutional assessment database.

Significant progress has been made in areas outlined in the IT strategic plan, aided in part bythe Title III Strengthening Institutions grant. Strategy two of the IT plan addresses the need to provide tools and services to support innovative teaching and student centered learning. The University has established a classroom technology standard and set about to update instructional spaces to meet that standard.  This has provided faculty members with a more consistent environment in the instructional classrooms. Classroom technology includes a standard set of equipment: a projector, computer, media switch, HDMI and VGA capability, and document camera. The computers used by students in labs and at kiosks are maintained by IT staff and scheduled for replacement on a 5-year cycle.The University has completed the transition from Blackboard 9 to Moodle as our institutional learning management system. Moodle training ensured that faculty members were prepared for the full launch to Moodle in fall 2016. A new instructional technologist position was hired to work with the Faculty Center  to

assist/train faculty who want to use Blackboard or Moodle and faculty who want to try more innovative instructional ideas. The instructional technologist position, the Faculty Center startup costs, and some of the classroom technology updates were funded by the $1.86M Title III Grant awarded to LSSU.

**5.A.2**

The goal of resource allocation at LSSU is to accomplish the University mission. University organizational structure and processes are in place to insure that resource allocation is in line with the mission. The organizational structure of LSSU represents our implementation of a system of checks and balances managed through the Business Operations office. The vice president for finance is the chief financial officer for the University, and oversight of Business Operations, Purchasing, Physical Plant, Norris Center Operations, and the Barnes & Noble Bookstore at LSSU. The vice president for finance is a member of the President's Cabinet and serves as the Treasurer for the Board of Trustees and LSSU Foundation. Final budget approval is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees.

The two areas of substantial elective resource allocation include athletics and the LSSU Foundation. Allocations to athletics and the LSSU Foundation are approved by the Board and are aligned with the University mission statement. The resources allocated to these areas enhance the educational experiences of students as well as the development of successful careers and satisfying lives.

**5.A.3**

The goals set forth by the University are realistic and achievable for a 4-year, public institution of our size and with our strengths.  The University has established a resource allocation process which focuses on meeting its mission and core values. Administrative units, and academic schools have developed their unit-level mission statements as documented in our institutional assessment database (Tracdat), and generally also posted to the University website by unit.

The unit-level mission statements are well aligned with the institutional mission, as documented in Criterion 1.A.2. Additional examples reiterate this alignment. For example, the Shouldice Library states its mission and goals, has a strategic plan for achieving the goals, and connects the mission and goals to the institutional strategic plan. In the School of Engineering, the mission and goals are stated, and the program-level and student-level outcomes align to the overall school mission and goals. The faculty and/or staff in each area, with administrator support, are responsible for establishing mission statements and goals. Since the goals are collaboratively created by the people performing the work to meet the goals and assessing whether the goals are being met, the goals tend to be realistic so that they can be accomplished with the existing institutional organization, the available resources, and within opportunities that exist.

**5.A.4**

An appropriately qualified and trained staff is integral to the functioning of LSSU. Staff positions are classified as Educational Support Personnel, a collective bargaining unit, or as

Administrative Professionals.  Each staff position has a job description. The hiring process includes an online application process followed by committee screening of applicants for stated qualifications, and then committee interviews to insure qualified candidates are hired.

Training for staff members is important to LSSU. When new staff members are hired, they undergo on-the-job training for the time period necessary for them to learn the position. When new software or processes are adopted, training opportunities are offered, as evidenced by the BudgetPak End User Training documents. Staff may also attend conferences for professional development related to their job, as evidenced by staff training records.

The process of writing our assurance argument exposed a need for ongoing professional development opportunities for staff on campus. The institution hosts an annual half day professional development opportunity for faculty and staff, but in discussing this opportunity with staff as this argument was in development, it was clear that the sessions are more faculty than staff focused. Some staff members do attend the event each year. The University sees an opportunity for increased staff participation through professional development activities focused on the academic support and student support facets of the University.

**5.A.5**

LSSU has a well-developed budget policy and other procedures needed for sound operation. These include a policy on budget cycle, and a policy on budget transfer. Budget guidelines are published each year, and budget managers are provided training by the Business Operations staff. Budget managers can monitor their budget lines, approve expenses, and authorize purchase orders through Banner directly, or using paper authorizations. The University has a well developed travel policy and documentation is required for all expenses. The Business Operations staff provide accounting support for grant activities, and assist budget managers in the oversight and management of their budget. Budgets for the coming year are developed using BudgetPak, and monthly transactions from Banner are posted to BudgetPak to facilitate the development of the next budget cycle.

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# 5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

## Argument

### 5.B.1

The LSSU Board of Trustees is regularly informed and kept knowledgeable about all aspects of the University through regular board meetings, board workshops, periodic updates prepared by the administration, and reports from the Faculty Association, Educational Support Personnel, and Student Government, as evidenced in Board minutes. The Board provides leadership and oversight in setting LSSU's financial policies and practices, tuition, room and board, as evidenced by the recent change in policy to establish one tuition rate at Lake State for all students in North America. The Board also oversees the academic policies and practices as evidenced by minutes approving new academic programs, the budget, promotion,sabbatical, emeritus, and tenure decisions. The Board has an annual calendar of business. For example, academic program fees have been historically discussed and approved in January 2016, and the annual audit is typically reviewed in the September meeting. At the April/May 2016 meeting, the Board adopted a new investment policy which will be used to manage the University's portion (non-Foundation) of its endowments, totaling approximately $10M. The Board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities and the Board's bylaws govern their processes.

### 5.B.2

The University engages our internal constituencies through a "true shared governance [that] attempts to balance maximum participation in decision making with clear accountability." Shared governance opens a broad and encompassing dialog about the University's mission. It recognizes and supports the leadership role of the president and academic officers, the guidance of the Board of Trustees, and the critical interface of the faculty, administration, staff, and students. Student, faculty, and administration participation in most governing committees and councils was established at Lake Superior State College in 1969. A review of University catalogs from 1967 tracks the development and changes to our self-image, the development of

the institutional mission, and early models of shared governance.  A statement in the 1970-1971 catalog regarding shared governance includes this summary:

*"Policies of the College are, of course, determined by the Board of Control. This board is appointed by the State of Michigan to act for the people of the state who have placed the college in their trust. - Implementation of these policies, as well as the recommendation of new policies, is the concern of the college community. Faculty, students and administration share this responsibility. Various aspects of college affairs although the concern of all are sometimes the primary responsibility of one element of this community. Consequently, one committee may be heavily faculty, the curriculum committee for example; students may dominate another, such as the publications committee. The Faculty Senate is, of course, entirely faculty; the Student Senate, all-student; the Administrative Council, primarily administrators."*

As the University experienced a series of changes in senior administration in the mid-2000's, a new focus was brought to bear on the restructuring of our shared governance systems. In 2009, LSSU "…introduced a Shared Governance process designed to gather input from all members of the campus community and allow for broad participation in the decision making process." At the same time that the University struggled to redefine faculty and administrative roles under a new vision of shared governance, the University prepared to host the 2011 re-accreditation visiting team. In 2011, the visiting team heard considerable concern from various campus constituencies about the progress of this vision and recommended a monitoring report on the implementation of this model. The monitoring report was accepted without qualifications and the University has moved forward with implementation. The structure of shared governance was comprised of chartered committees which were defined by the Shared Governance Oversight Committee, informal working groups, and contractually defined committees (general education, curriculum and sabbatical).  Shared governance chartered committees operated under a set of common bylaws, defining the roles, responsibilities and reporting lines.  Senior administrators served as ex-officio on committees unless elected as a representative from the group of administrative professionals. Minutes were made public through the University website.

Shared Governance as an important part of our University governance continues to be affirmed, in part, through the national discourse regarding what is actually meant by shared governance, how it works, and how to improve it. These same debates are underway at LSSU and cover issues such as transparency, participation and structure. Constituents were surveyed to gauge an all campus understanding of shared governance and the results were discussed at the Shared Governance Oversight Committee. Other approaches to shared governance were recently reviewed, such as the structure at the University of North Texas. In the spring semester of 2016, the LSSU Shared Governance Oversight Committee recommended substantive updates to the shared governance structure and process.

University President, Tom Pleger, reviewed and acted on these recommendations, and communicated updates to the shared governance structure and process, with a focus on transparency, strategic goals, and more deliberate constituent participation. After the start of the 2016/2017 Academic Year, the President issued a call for nomination, initiating action to implement both an Academic Senate and a Staff Senate. New strategic committees will be

organized around the four central tenants of our strategic plan: Culture, Academics, Finance and Enrollment (CAFE).

**5.B.3**

LSSU has effective and functioning systems in place to provide for the full participation of students, faculty and staff in an open and collaborative dialogue. The University community's broad participation in shared governance processes is evidenced through the committee memberships, oversight and the chartered committees, working groups, and other contractually defined groups such as the Curriculum Committee.

Shared Governance has a clear purpose: it recognizes and supports the guidance of the Board of Trustees, the leadership role of the president and vice presidents, and the critical interface of the faculty, staff, and students. Broad institutional representation within this body of shared decision making will allow the University to be flexible and responsive in addressing the needs of our community.

The shared governance model in place through the spring 2016 utilized a University Senate: a forum where issues are vetted and voted on by the University Community. Each member of the University community, whether faculty, student, administrative professional or educational support personnel, was a voting member of the University Senate. This body convened at least twice a semester to review areas of campus-wide concern. Some issues that have been discussed at the University Senate meetings included a tobacco-free campus initiative, student involvement in safety drills, location of a proposed nursing simulation center, and Distinction by Design proposals (a task-group charged to review the one-course-at-a-time model which subsequently returned a series of broad recommendations to establish institutional identity in the educational marketplace). Following a Blackboard versus Moodle LMS discussion, the University Senate voted and sent a recommendation to the president that led to a campus-wide change to Moodle.

Beginning in the fall 2016 the University will transition away from a voting-based university-wide senate, with chartered committees and a formalized set of operational bylaws, to a more flexible two-senate model which provides input and a free exchange of ideas and concerns. This change was a direct response to substantial feedback gathered from administrative professional staff, educational support staff, students, and faculty.

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# 5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

## Argument

### 5.C.1

The University has worked with intentionality and purpose to align our resources in support of the mission, strategic plan, institutional goals, and master plan. Each year since the implementation of our current mission, vision, and strategic plan, the institution, advised by the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee, allocates resources in alignment with the mission documents in funding programs and initiatives, as well as for preparing the general fund and auxiliary budgets. Through the annual budget guidelines, we establish the role of budget managers who are required to align funding requests with our institutional priorities.

The Strategic Planning and Budget Committee reviews new strategic initiatives requiring additional funding, and advances their recommendations to administration.  Academic schools provide justification for program and course fees, and reviews the adequacy of resources and infrastructure, in alignment with their unit missions and the University mission, during their period program reviews. Allocation of resources is also aligned with other plans which are predicated on and expand the mission and institutional Strategic Plan, including the IT Strategic Plan, the annual capital outlay requests, and the Campus Master Plan which was completed in the spring of 2016. The University's budget is managed by the president and the vice president of finance and operations. After review by the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee and the President's Cabinet, the budget is presented to the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees for approval.

LSSU continues to carefully examine its enrollment history, budgetary history, and organizational history to look for opportunities to create integrated and streamlined services across the institution. In the spring/summer 2016 the University consolidated academic programs into two colleges: 1) College of Arts and Sciences, and 2) College of Professional

Studies. This change will create greater interdisciplinary collaboration and minimize hierarchical structures within the university.

**5.C.2**

LSSU intentionally links our operational and academic processes as evidenced through our established policies and procedures, committee structures, and through our continuous investment in technological systems to integrate, share and apply information on student learning, and institutional resources. These systems include Tracdat, a relational database for assessment, and BudgetPak, a budgeting software package.

The University Curriculum Committee evaluates and recommends approval for all curricular issues (credits, course descriptions, learning outcomes, major and minor requirements, etc.) Integral to the curriculum committee review is an evaluation of the student learning outcomes linked to assessment of those outcomes, budgetary needs and operational needs (e.g. library resources, laboratory space) as documented on the new-program proposal form. The University has also established a systematic approach to program review which incorporates a consistent reporting template and requires academic schools to evaluate their mission and program-level student learning outcomes, measures of program quality, assessment of the outcomes and program overall, and factors related to resource allocation, infrastructure and opportunity analysis.

The opportunity analysis section of the program review addresses qualitative and quantitative obstacles to moving the program toward its long-term goals, facilities, staffing and potential efficiency that could be obtained through collaboration or other activities. Information gathered from the program review process is used by the School to develop and justify new funding initiatives which are submitted in the annual budgeting process. Program reviews are made public on the assessment website  which documents not only the program review but also aggregates course and program assessment reports from the institutional assessment database and feedback generated from an institutional evaluation of the program review. If deficiencies are noted, programs may be required to submit monitoring reports prior to the next five-year review.

LSSU links assessment of student learning to evaluation, planning, and budgeting through the broad integrated use of our assessment database. In February 2012, the university selected Tracdat as our integrated institutional assessment database. Using a common reporting structure (define outcomes/goals, define measures/targets, document findings/results, document actions based on the findings), the university has set challenging but realistic goals to formalize our assessment of courses, academic programs, administrative units, and the university strategic plan. Links between unit goals and institutional goals are associated with documentation of budgetary impacts from that assessment.  Assessment reports, for example from the Fisheries and Wildlife program, developed from the institution's database are integral to decision making related to planning and budgeting as reflected in the Fisheries and Wildlife program review with feedback, linking assessment planning and operations.

In addition, LSSU links budgeting to operations, assessment and planning through the use of our budgeting software: BudgetPak. In the spring semester of 2013, the Budget Office rolled out this software package designed to increase the effectiveness of budget managers and the Budget Office.  The Strategic Planning Budget Committee reviewed  and supported the proposal for this software and its implementation. Budget managers now submit justifications, including alignment with the mission and strategic plan, along with any new funding requests. As evidenced in the Budget Guidelines, new funding requests are submitted on the "Strategic Initiative Proposal" which requires a narrative regarding alignment to the Strategic Outcomes and institutional goals.

**5.C.3**

LSSU has a long history of including stakeholders in planning processes and has valued shared governance from its beginning as a branch campus through to full independence. LSSU has utilized a hybrid unionized contractual committee and quasi-shared-governance structure characterized by the participation of faculty, staff, students, and administration. This process was cumbersome, and during the 2015-16 academic year a number of campus-wide discussions allowed for input on the existing shared governance process. Based upon those sessions, and recommendations from former Shared Oversight Governance Committee, the President worked with key governance stakeholders to launch a reformed and streamlined governance structure beginning in the fall of 2016.  The newly formed structure is designed to maximize inclusive input from the campus and create more efficient means of communication and decision making. The new structure will incorporate existing chartered committees while establishing Academic and Staff senates.

The Strategic Planning and Budget Committee, among the first of our modern shared governance bodies, has led to the development and implementation of our strategic plan. All members of the University can submit proposals for funding of strategic initiatives aligned with mission and institutional priorities. The committee communicates its deliberations and findings to the president and to the University community through the timely posting of minutes to the Shared Governance website

Further evidence of the broad participation in University planning is documented through a current initiative to update the Campus Master Plan and recent community-based forums. An external firm was engaged to facilitate broad stakeholder participation, bringing many perspectives to this important endeavor. In this instance, the University has contracted with TowerPinkster to facilitate discussions with groups including community and alumni stakeholders, faculty and staff, members of the shared governance Infrastructure Committee, and student life. These meetings established a common understanding of the master planning process and goals. Key topics include establishing a common vision for the University as well as defining the plan for growth and integration into the community. The final draft of the Master Plan was reviewed and accepted by the Board of Trustees at the April 2016 meeting (Executive Summary, full Master Plan) and made public through the Physical Plant website.

Institutional planning has been strengthened through the incorporation of external constituencies in dialogues related to the University and the community. In the past year the president and other

campus leaders have participated in the first of two forums of an ongoing collaboration held in the fall and spring of 2014-2015, focused on issues common to the University and the community. Out of these discussion came new initiatives such as the LSSU/City Bike Share program, development of an outdoor ice rink, and plans for new community art initiatives. Advisory boards for academic schools and programs provide an important connection to the community, region and employers. These collaborations are evidenced through examples such as the School of Engineering's Industrial Advisory Board, the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, and the Professional Advisory Board in the Lukenda School of Business.

**5.C.4**

University planning reflects a realistic appraisal of our capacity and resources. The University has faced a challenging operational environment over the past decade. In recent years, decreasing student enrollment has contributed to financial strain and led to a structural deficit that the University is continuing to address.

Recent initiatives to address revenue and enrollment challenges include the One Rate tuition plan, a request to the State of Michigan to fully fund the Native American Tuition Waiver, programs to increase enrollment of nontraditional students, and increased marketing and recruiting activities. In  July 2015, a voluntary buyout was also offered for faculty and staff in an effort to reduce operating expenses through a controlled reduction in staffing levels. Eleven faculty and staff elected to participate in the voluntary buyout program.

One key annual document that captures many of the University's planning efforts is the Campus Master Plan. Updated regularly since 2010, the plan critically examines our institutional capacity, programming, staffing, and facility needs, and lays out an implementation plan consistent with our institutional mission and vision. In Fall 2015, the University contracted with consulting firm TowerPinkster to develop a new Campus Master Plan, drawing input from across campus and the broader regional community.

The University is committed to serving Native American students in our region. The institution enrolls both the highest absolute number, and the highest percentage, of Native American Students when compared to our state peer institutions. Under the provisions of the Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver, many Native American students do not pay tuition to the university creating a dilemma described in detail in the president's letter to the State of Michigan. The University president has asked the State to increase funding in order to allow the University to sustain and expand our service Native American students.

State funding metrics developed by the Business Leaders of Michigan and adopted by the legislature, evaluate institutions on key performance metrics, and are used to develop reports used to compare institutional performance.

**5.C.5**

LSSU works with diligence to prepare the institution for change in the areas of technology, new programs and new markets. Facing escalating costs for the current Learning Management

System (LMS) (Blackboard 9) and low faculty utilization, the university incorporated a change to an open-source LMS as part of a successful Title III Strengthening Institutions grant.  Grant funds have supported a new learning technologist position, implementation and training costs for the new system, and technical support for the migration to a locally hosted version of MOODLE.  The change in LMS system was resolved through the shared governance process, and all campus constituencies had voice in the discussion. Realizing significant savings while maintaining equivalent levels of functionality and utility, the University formally adopted MOODLE as the campus learning management system in spring 2015 with complete conversion from Blackboard in fall 2016.

The University has updated our website structure as we anticipate the continued growth of the tablet/phone use by college-aged students.  The University is in the process of applying new page templates that integrate dynamic page formatting, suitable to mobile devices.  Content has been reviewed and new training delivered for webpage managers has incorporated the shift to greater mobile devices and away from traditional static page presentation. President Pleger has appointed a working group  to lead this effort  The group's charge includes implementation work associated with various aspects of the University web presence. This includes the deployment and management of items such as, software, themes, graphic standards, plugins, menu structure, servers, hardware, content, updates, security, testing, training, and other operational components, and the establishment and following of a project plan.  A second working group is committed to provide input related to strategic use, access and content, addressing topics such as: 1) Is the website currently an effective platform for internal and external communications; 2) Does the website effectively promote University events, schools and programs; 3) Does the website actively engage users; 4) Is the website content easy to find and access; 5) Does it meet the needs of various stakeholders and user groups?

The University is anticipating growth in the business program following the renovation of historic South Hall as Considine Hall, home of the Lukenda School of Business. The University has made strategic investments, supporting the School of Business as it successfully sought and was awarded programmatic accreditation through the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). In addition, the business school has developed a proposal for a master of business administration degree that will be delivered in the executive MBA format, with a significant online component. This approach was selected based on feedback from local community members, and to anticipate the continued growth and need for professional development for individuals in remote and rural Michigan.

The University anticipates the need for expanded efforts in the delivery of international programs --both study abroad and the recruitment of international students -- as an important component in our future student population profile.  To support international students, the University established an international education office, supported extended travel abroad for the international education director, and sponsored visiting faculty and administrators from international universities. The University has invested in the Study Abroad program *as* a key marketing piece for new students that is an important new recruitment strategy.  New partnerships, for example, with the Wisconsin in Scotland program, provide expanded opportunities for our students to share unique educational  experiences at around the world.

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# 5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

## Argument

**5.D.1**

The University has worked continuously to improve its performance and the institutional documentation of that performance. As a publicly funded state university, LSSU is accountable, through several performance-based funding metrics, to the legislature for its operational effectiveness and efficiency.

The University actively tracks achievement of the institutional goals and elements of the strategic plan through its institutional assessment database, Tracdat, which was developed after its last re-accreditation visit in October 2011. This new institutional database is used to document evidence of operational performance relating to the University's strategic plan. The strategic plan is comprised of 42 critical outcomes aligned to seven strategies within four overarching goals.  Each reporting unit in the University develops its individual unit mission statement aligned to the institutional mission, and its unit goals aligned to the institutional 42 critical outcomes. Not every unit contributes to every goal, but through the university's assessment software, and periodic progress report reports, for example from Information Technology or Academic Affairs, units can document their assessment activities and link them to specific goals to higher-level outcomes. Based on the seven strategies, the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee identified the 42 critical outcomes, the parties responsible for measuring the outcomes, and the target performance criteria. This committee monitors progress toward those goals, and makes the data publicly available on the assessment website.

Evidence of our efforts to develop and document evidence of our operational performance is found in reports from our institutional assessment database. For example, a comprehensive report is regularly generated to capture point-in-time analysis of progress with respect to all goals within the strategic plan; this report is organized by the reporting unit. Reports on assessment of each strategy are posted to the University's assessment website to capture point-in-time summaries by strategy. Furthermore, in 2012-2013, the president's cabinet reviewed the aggregate performance of its respective units and prepared a summary report. This initial effort to formalize assessment of our operational effectiveness was beneficial; however, it did point out substantial gaps in our reporting structure. A subsequent report in March 2015 across all units of academics, for example, shows a meaningful increase in documentation of strategic initiatives. In addition, a series of reports prepared by the Strategic Planning and Budget committee used a

form of gap-analysis to examine the distribution of assessment reporting across all units related to the strategic plan. These reports include:

- **Strategic Summary Pivot by Outcome Type** - A report based on strategic outcome (e.g. Strategic Outcome 1. Collaborative, Committee Campus Community) that summarizes assessment activity for each critical outcome (e.g. outcome 1.3 Collaborations) within that strategy, identifying the number of entries for goals, measures, findings, and actions
- **Strategic Summary Pivot by Type** - A report that identifies which organizational unit (e.g. Cabinet Assessment (VP-ESSA) – Disability Services) is contributing assessment evidence for each of the critical outcomes (e.g. 1.2 Internal Communications). The report summarizes the number of reported entries by goal, measure, finding and action
- **Strategic Summary Pivot by Unit** - A report organized based on the reporting unit (e.g. CABINET (PRES) – Office of the President) to identify which critical outcomes (e.g. outcome 1.3 Collaborations) are currently actively being assessed within that unit.

The Strategic Planning and Budget Committee used these reports as the basis of an evaluation that was used to provide feedback to academic units.

**5.D.2**

Lake Superior State University works systematically to improve its performance by learning from its operational experience and applies learning from a review of financial performance, operational effectiveness and sustainability. Many of these changes are broadly defined in the President's summer memo related to the "transformation plan" which focused on opportunities to improve
service, address a structural budget deficit and better meet the needs of our students. Financial performance and enrollment trend data was shared with the campus community and with the Board of Trustees through periodic reports (January 2016, July 2016, September 2016). The Board of Trustees requested that the University take active steps to address and, as practicable, eliminate a structural deficit, as evidenced in Finance Committee reporting (April 2016, July 2016). In addition to spending controls to better regulate spending, a review of staffing and organizational structure was undertaken. Information was shared with the entire campus community (employee update, staffing update), and input was requested. A number of work areas were affected by assignment changes, which focused on alignment and support of goals. Some key areas included: creation of a Student First Stop; alignment of separate public relations offices into an Integrated Marketing team; alignment of safety and risk offices into a coordinated team; integration of student recreation and sports activities into an aligned set of offerings as branded as University Recreation (UREC). Restructuring within academic affairs, as summarized in a campus email to faculty, including combining numerous student academic support offices into a coordinated Academic Success Center, and the implementation of a two college model including the College of Arts and Sciences and College of Professional Studies.

The University learns from the assessment of its operational processes as documented in our institutional assessment database. The Strategic Planning and Budget Committee (SPBC) reviews institutional assessment related to the strategies and critical outcomes and provides direct feedback to departments and schools. SPBC provides feedback and guidance on potential

sources of evidence, the relevance of findings and actions, and other aspects with the goal to strengthen institutional assessment of the strategic plan. Examples of institutional learning can be shown in the Review of Strategies Report.

The significant investment of time and effort put into documenting operational performance has allowed the University to learn valuable lessons which have resulted in improved performance. The University's operational assessment efforts have led to significant improvements related to Student Life office's programming, and levels of student participation in movie night. Student Life staff analyzed evidence of inappropriate student behavior off campus to determine if there were patterns related to when this conduct was occurring. Next, the Office of Student Life compared the data from those nights with the data from nights when free movies were being offered in Peacock Cove. The analysis showed a direct correlation: incidences of unacceptable student behavior were reduced when students were given the healthy alternative of staying on campus to enjoy a movie. As a result of this finding, a decision was made to offer more movie nights, especially on nights that are traditionally known to have high incidences of inappropriate student behavior.

The University makes strategic investments to achieve the institutional goals. The Strategic Planning and Budget Committee has made recommendations for special strategic initiative funding for new projects or activities aligned with the mission. Initiative requests require justification and alignment with the strategic plan. The committee then reviews the effectiveness of these projects as related to the institutional strategic plan and the anticipated project impact.  Recipients of the special initiative funding submit summary reviews which serve as evidence of our use of operational experience. Examples of projects funded by the strategic initiative process are described in a recent Laker Log article and in a committee report.

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# 5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

## Summary

Lake Superior State University has met or exceeded all the core components described within Criterion Five. LSSU has the resource base to support current programs and to realize substantial institutional growth in the future. The University has a highly qualified faculty and staff to support instruction, student support and operations, and a governance/administrative structure sufficient to fulfill our mission. The University has instituted a robust assessment structure capable of guiding our systematic and integrated planning and has made substantial progress in this area. The University has faced challenges due to declining enrollment and a structural budget deficit in previous years; however, it has responded to these challenges, and several new initiatives hold promise for future growth.

At the same time, LSSU has examined its enrollment history, budgetary history, and organizational history to look for opportunities to create integrated and streamlined services across the institution.  This has resulted in consolidation four colleges into two: 1) College of Arts and Sciences, and 2) College of Professional Studies to create greater interdisciplinary collaboration and to minimize hierarchical structures within the University.

LSSU has also combined the areas of Student Life and Student Enrollment into a single division to enhance recruitment and retention functions as well as to better serve students.

While we believe we have satisfied the requirements of Criterion Five, we also acknowledge that there are opportunities for continued growth.  These include the following:

- The University has faced substantial enrollment declines and works with diligence to expand our outreach to non-traditional and international students.  The university is seeking approval to expand our programmatic offerings at the graduate level, initially through an executive MBA, and also through partnerships with other institutions.
- The University needs to effectively communicate its role in the educational marketplace and leverage its many strengths to move forward.

## Sources

*There are no sources.*

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