

Assurance Argument



Review date: 3/22/2021



1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Argument

1.A.1

Lake Superior State University's mission is: *"We equip our graduates with the knowledge, practical skills and inner strength to craft a life of meaningful employment, personal fulfillment, and generosity of self within an inclusive atmosphere, all while enhancing the quality of life of the Great Lakes region and the world."* Appropriate to the context of the institution, LSSU's mission is closely linked with its vision statement: *"We believe in an innovation-driven, transformative education for all. We identify potential, enable success, drive social mobility, and develop students into professionally prepared graduates who excel locally, nationally and globally."*

LSSU's mission, vision, and core values have evolved over time, and those statements are fully integrated within the University's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan Development committee conducted "listening sessions" and surveys with the campus, local, and tribal communities, and the mission and vision statements were updated during that process. The Board of Trustees approved the current mission and vision statements in April 2020.

1.A.2

The University's mission and related statements are periodically reviewed to ensure that they remain current. In 2020, LSSU added the words "and the world" to its mission statement, reflecting its plans to expand beyond its previous focus on the local region; this addition underscores the University's unique multinational location adjacent to Canada, two U.S. tribal nations, and Canadian tribal nations, and it emphasizes an expanded commitment to diversity and inclusion. This small change recognizes that an increasing number of LSSU students now come from other regions, go on to work in careers on global issues, or leave the area for careers all over the world. The mission and vision further recognize that 66% of our students are first-generation, more than 59% are low-income, and 69% of the first-time-in-college freshmen who register for math classes in their first semester test into a developmental-level math class.

The formal statements of the institution emphasize LSSU's commitment to equip students for successful careers and upward social mobility by prioritizing student learning through a wide range of academic, professional, cultural, and social opportunities. Tying into the mission and vision, the Core Values intentionally address the needs of LSSU's students:

- Excellence in Teaching and Learning: *Student learning is our first priority and focuses on providing student/faculty interaction, learning, and research in current, relevant programs.*
- Opportunity: *Students have a wide range of opportunities to grow academically, professionally, culturally and socially. Opportunities are provided via work-study assignments, student organizations, internships, community outreach and leadership.*
- Diversity: *Students experience a campus community environment that is inclusive and welcoming.*
- Ethics and Values: *The University promotes an environment that values freedom of expression, the pursuit of truth, honesty, openness, and courteous behavior where everyone is treated with respect.*
- Stewardship: *LSSU provides a framework in which to leave the university and region financially and environmentally sound for future generations of LSSU students, alumni, and friends.*

Emphasizing that student learning is the first priority at LSSU, Section 10 and Appendix C of the Faculty Agreement summarize exemplary characteristics of instruction, advising and student support, and scholarly activity and service. Section 8.7.6.2 establishes teaching as 60-85% and the primary focus of faculty workload, while advising, professional development, and service can each constitute from 5%-20% of workload. Section 8 also ensures that faculty evaluations consistently measure performance and promote effective practices in all those areas, and outlines evaluative processes to ensure quality of instruction in clinical service settings.

The Strategic Plan "Pillars" reference and align with the core values of the institution; for example, Pillar 1, "Culture of Student Learning and Development" aligns with Core Value 1 to prioritize student learning. Student learning is well-supported in small class sizes that facilitate faculty and student interaction. Experiential learning and undergraduate research reinforce student learning through a variety of community partnerships. Students showcase their academic

achievements, scholarship, research, and creative works in many ways, such as the annual Research Symposium, annual writing competitions, the Snowdrifts undergraduate literary magazine, and School of Engineering projects. In keeping with the mission, LSSU promotes opportunities for students to develop and practice “generosity of self” and to grow culturally and socially through numerous community outreach and leadership opportunities with United Way, Superior Analytics, the Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE), and more. For example, CFRE sponsors the Freshwater Stewardship Corps, where students lead activities like local river clean-ups, World Water Day, and water policy forums.

1.A.3

The mission statement provides the framework for delivery of University programs for all students, based on available resources and the needs of the students served. Transformative education that “drives social mobility” addresses the needs of LSSU’s predominantly first-generation, low-income, and underprepared students. The University currently offers degree programs at the associate and baccalaureate levels, as outlined in the HLC institutional accreditation status report. In 2020-2021, LSSU offered 50 baccalaureate degrees, 25 associate degrees, 63 minors, and 8 certificate programs in an extensive range of disciplines. This broad range of programs meets the widely-varied needs of LSSU’s students, offering options from entry-level to pre-grad school to help students “craft a life of meaningful employment” and “personal fulfillment.” Most programs feature strong undergraduate research, clinicals, practical application components, specialized facilities, and regional opportunities to strengthen the knowledge and practical skills that will be meaningful to students’ future careers. Prescribed by strategic plan strategy 1.4.5, High Impact Practices are embedded throughout program curricula, including: First-Year Experience courses, common intellectual experiences (*e.g.*, Campus Read), Diversity/Global Learning integrated in general education, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments, ePortfolios, service learning, internships, and capstone courses/projects. Supported by strategic plan strategy 1.1.6, the Institutional Learning Outcomes help increase practical skills; they are listed on all syllabi and are assessed university-wide to promote “a culture of cyclical and systematic assessment to drive continuous improvement and innovation.” Practical skills are also strengthened in facilities like the crime lab, shooting range, Superior Simulation Center for nursing, exercise performance lab, robotics lab, Superior Analytics environmental lab, Cannabis Center of Excellence, and fish hatchery.

High Impact Practices may also be funded externally, as are CFRE’s 15+ undergraduate research positions working side-by-side with scientists addressing Great Lakes environmental issues. Programs like Environmental Science, Fisheries/Wildlife, Conservation Biology, Parks/Recreation, and Geology utilize nearby natural resources to study, enhance, and conserve “quality of life in the Great Lakes region.” Discipline-specific senior research and senior projects expand knowledge and skills and are required in most disciplines including math, computer science, biology, fisheries/wildlife, business, engineering, psychology and political science. Through these and many other active-learning opportunities, LSSU works to fulfill its mission and vision with “innovation-driven, transformative education” for its students.

LSSU's primary focus is on excellence in teaching through undergraduate education, which informs its degree programs and curricula, faculty qualifications and scholarship, and faculty reviews. The Faculty Agreement supports that core value with high expectations for teaching and advising that affect promotion/tenure, and continuation of probationary (pre-tenure) or term/adjunct faculty. This commitment to teaching excellence is further evidenced with 88% of courses taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty in 2019-2020. Additionally, the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETAL) supports teaching excellence with professional development, learning communities, communities of practice, resources, and training materials.

1.A.4

LSSU's mission and enrollment profile direct and inform academic offerings and student support services. The general education and career-focused programs are appropriate for LSSU's many first-generation students. In 2020 LSSU received the First-Gen Forward designation in recognition of its commitment to first-generation student success. With 69% of students testing into developmental math, LSSU redesigned its developmental math program so that underprepared incoming freshmen can enroll in a 7-week Beginning Algebra course (MATH088) in their first semester and co-register for a 1-credit "Building Mathematics Confidence" course. The MATH088 course incorporates proficiency-model homework tests for each chapter, and students may retake that test until they achieve a passing score. Incoming students can opt to enroll in the full-semester or the 7-week MATH088 course, but the 7-week course allows students to enroll in Intermediate Algebra (MATH102) for the second half of the semester. Those who co-register for the Building Mathematics Confidence course gain additional benefits from social-emotional learning supports and practical application math-based activities. This approach is purposefully constructed to bolster students' self-assurance and critical thinking skills, and also allows many students to earn math credits and complete their developmental math sequence sooner than was possible in the past.

LSSU strives to help students "craft lives of meaningful employment and personal fulfillment" with a diverse mix of degree programs affording many options to choose a field that truly interests them. To ensure quality and excellence of instruction to fulfill that mission, academic programs are regularly reviewed and alignment to the mission is evaluated. Program reviews are documented on LSSU's assessment webpage. For example, a nursing program review underscored alignment of that program's mission "to graduate competent students who are prepared to safely provide compassionate nursing care utilizing theory and evidence-based practice" with the University's mission to "equip our graduates with the knowledge, practical skills, and inner strength to craft a life of meaningful employment, personal fulfillment, and generosity of self."

LSSU's mission is the foundation for the mission of each college and school. Program websites that provide examples evidencing this include webpages for the Chemistry Department, the School of Arts and Letters, and the School of Education. Proposals for new programs to the Curriculum Committee require explicit descriptions detailing how the program will help the University, School, and College achieve their stated missions.

Student support services are also consistent with LSSU's mission:

- Academic Success Center – free tutoring, supplemental instruction, and walk-in math and writing centers for registered students.
- Shouldice Library – active-engagement Learning Commons, computer labs, library instruction, research assistance, online databases, workshops/speakers, online or phone-in assistance, and electronic device checkout.
- Campus Life – creates a vibrant and welcoming environment so students feel a sense of belonging at the University. Campus Life support services, oversight for student organizations, activities, and programs facilitate student engagement and connectedness. “Laker Success” and IPASS programs are geared toward student development and retention. The Student Engagement Center (SEC) hosts success coaching programs for resident and commuting students. Residence halls offer common study spaces for individual and group work; Resident Success Coaches mentor students throughout dedicated study areas around campus. Campus Organizations encourage student involvement in the campus community, with more than 60 existing organizations and opportunities for students to easily start new organizations according to their likes.
- IPASS – (Individualized Plan for Academic Success) assists students based on their specific needs. Assistance can come in the form of ADHD learning support, time management skills, study and note taking skills, and how to communicate effectively with professors. Students work with staff to identify issues and to create a personalized plan to work through challenges; students make connections with appropriate offices and resources to receive needed supports.
- Career Services – job placement resources, job search strategy workshops, online career resources and job posting sites, potential employer connections.
- Counseling Center – free confidential services for short-term psychotherapy, outreach/education, resources and referrals, and consultations. Students receive assistance to identify and resolve barriers to their sense of personal well-being, sense of belonging, and/or academic success. The Center offers a weekly support group for LGBTQ students. Center counselors train professional and student Residential Life staff, as well as Nursing students, to address mental health crises and QPR (suicide prevention intervention).
- Health Care Center (HCC) – provides wide-ranging no-cost services to registered LSSU students, including: urgent care, diagnostic care, family planning, immunizations, lab services, physical exams, and more. HCC works with multiple campus partners to offer programming like the “Let’s Talk” series to address health issues affecting student populations, and offers the small “Mom in a Bag” care package with self-care guidance and information for students who are sick. The Center was strongly positioned in 2020 to conduct COVID-19 testing for the campus and surrounding communities, using rapid diagnostic testing technology to deliver results in 15 minutes. Working seamlessly with Chippewa County Health Department (CCHD), positive test results were received by CCHD to conduct contact tracing, and to daily monitor the condition of COVID-19 patients.
- Accessibility Services – oversees and assists students with accommodations and works to ensure that students with disabilities can participate as fully as possible in programs, services and activities.

- Financial Aid Office – provides resources, information, and assistance to help students responsibly meet their educational expenses.
- Study Abroad Office – provides resources and educational opportunities to interested students; expands cultural and diversity awareness; scholarship resources and partner programs across the globe.
- University Housing – male, female, or coed residency options; living-learning communities; apartment-style units; and varied facilities with Resident Advisors and Resident Success Coaches. Staff create community through programming, strengthening students’ sense of belonging, enhancing their experience of support, and increasing their satisfaction.
- International students – offers extensive support and resources to attend LSSU.
- University Recreation – (UREC) coordinates activities emphasizing regional natural resources and providing co-curricular, extracurricular and social opportunities.
- Native American Center – (NAC) provides space for LSSU’s Native American students, and a centrally located facility on campus for programs dedicated to sharing the history, language, and culture of Native people in the region. Native American Heritage month is one of many events sponsored and promoted by the NAC.
- Public Safety – provides 24/7 support for students, faculty and staff.

Enrollment Profile:

LSSU’s mission pledges to equip graduates to serve the “Great Lakes Region and the world.” The total census-day student headcount at LSSU in fall 2020 was 1909. The enrollment profile derived from the 2020 census-day headcount provides a breakdown of enrollments by region and ethnicity, and that data is also published on the Institutional Research webpage. New student enrollments for fall 2020 represent a 13.5% increase over the previous year.

New Student Enrollment Profile 2019-2020

Student Type	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Percent Change
First Time in College (FTIC)	320	338	5.6%
Transfer	123	161	30.9%
Readmit	52	39	-25%
Early Middle College (13th Year)	4	18	350.0%
Dual Enrollment (1st Time Only)	13	25	92.3%

Total New Student Enrollment	512	581	13.5%
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Increasing enrollment and providing access is an institutional priority. LSSU offers programming at five additional locations in Michigan: Escanaba (Bay College), Iron Mountain (Bay College-West), Petoskey (North Central Michigan College), St. Helen (adjacent to Charlton Heston Academy Charter School), and Hessel/Les Cheneaux. The Hessel/Les Cheneaux location offers only a Culinary Arts Chef Certificate, while all other locations mirror select offerings from the main campus. These additional locations support LSSU's mission by providing expanded educational opportunities for students in those areas while better serving the needs of the broader northern Michigan region.

Proactive initiatives to increase enrollments include:

- One-Rate tuition for all students
- Hired new Dean of Admissions and Marketing in spring 2020
- Opened two new locations in 2018 and 2020
- Global outreach through study abroad partner programs
- New academic programs in Robotics Engineering, Cannabis Chemistry, Cannabis Business, and Culinary Arts
- New Club Sports program, including men's and women's hockey

The new Dean of Admissions and Marketing brings an extensive background in broadening access for pell-eligible students and enhancing international partnerships. The University's strategic plan prioritizes development of a comprehensive internationalization plan, with strategic goals focused on international partnerships, Canadian recruitment, and expansion of partnerships with charter schools and study abroad.

1.A.5

LSSU's mission, vision, core values, institutional learning outcomes, and strategic plan are publicly posted on the University website and in the catalog. The mission statement is also displayed in the lobbies of academic buildings on the main campus. The strategic plan transparently lays out its goals and detailed strategies for achievement of those goals. Administrative units across the University assume responsibility for achieving specific goal strategies, with unit administrators working with staff members to link personal and professional goals in their employee self-evaluation documents directly to one or more strategic plan goal strategies. Staff members commit to working on strategic plan goals and are well-situated to articulate that plan to both internal and external constituencies.

All academic syllabi identify at least one Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO) for in-course assessment. Cocurricular areas also assess ILOs, which are focused on "knowledge, practical skills, and [development of] inner strength to craft a life of meaningful employment, personal

fulfillment, and generosity of self." This threading of ILO assessment throughout University programs illustrates and articulates LSSU prioritization of its mission.

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1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

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

Argument

1.B.1

LSSU was established in 1946 to serve returning World War II veterans and the people of the Eastern Upper Peninsula. The current mission statement reaffirms that commitment to “enhance the quality of life of the Great Lakes region” as well as the world. The large number of first-generation LSSU graduates are evidence that the institution is helping to drive social mobility in the region. The knowledge and skills students acquire in LSSU's highly career-focused programs equip many of them to work in rewarding careers that serve the public good. Community, state, and regional partnerships in the arts, sciences, and health care fields support LSSU students as they grow academically, professionally, culturally and socially. Many staff members also extend LSSU's educational influence through public service agencies; for example, Dr. Ashley Moerke serves as President of the Society of Freshwater Science and serves by governor's appointment to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, and Dr. Jason Garvon was appointed in 2020 to the Michigan Wildlife Council.

LSSU responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by partnering with Bay Mills Indian Community Health Center, War Memorial Hospital, Chippewa County Health Department, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and the Michigan National Guard. In August 2020, this partnership brought Michigan's National Guard to campus for community-wide COVID-19 testing and instructions for infection prevention, testing procedures, and interpreting test results. In January 2021, LSSU and the county health department brought the local community on campus to deliver COVID-19 vaccines.

The institution serves the public good and educates external constituencies through its Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE). A new state-of-the-art center will open in 2021 to provide educational opportunities to students and to local, regional, and global constituents. CFRE extends LSSU's educational role to serve the public through:

- The Freshwater Stewardship Corps, a student-community outreach of CFRE

- Partnership with high schools educating students through its Natural Resources Career and Technology Education program;
- Collecting data for MIWaterNet, monitoring water quality and hydrology in streams across northern Michigan;
- Conducting research with other universities and with state, tribal, and federal agencies in the U.S. and Canada to better understand and manage Great Lakes aquatic ecosystems;
- Annually raising and releasing 25,000-40,000 Atlantic Salmon into the St. Marys River, together with Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Cloverland Electric Cooperative.

CFRE's clean water initiatives and research with MiWaterNet partners with local citizen scientists and groups to collect and analyze data that increases watershed awareness, data literacy, and stewardship of Great Lakes environmental resources. Current partnerships include the Anglers of the Au Sable; the USFS Hiawatha National Forest; EUP Intermediate School District; Les Cheneaux Schools; and Brimley-LSSU Career and Technical Education in Natural Resources. CFRE's hatchery research and work on invasive species management also serve the public good, helping maintain and sustain quality of life, natural resources, and recreational opportunities in the Great Lakes region. Through programs like these, CFRE discharges its mission, "Partnering to sustain Great Lakes resources through education, research, and community engagement."

Other LSSU labs also serve the public good, as evidenced by the Superior Analytics Lab. This lab serves the public good by providing state, federal, and local environmental analyses through contracts that support monitoring programs that meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality analytical protocols. Superior Analytics Lab provides students, faculty, and staff opportunities to collaborate with external agencies in environmental research projects. It also supports new industries like cannabis chemistry and provides the community with technical assistance for water quality analysis and monitoring. Another exemplary facility serving the public good is LSSU's Simulation Center, which partners with War Memorial Hospital to provide immersive simulation training for nurses, paramedics, and other health care professionals from across the region. Offering the latest medical simulation technologies, the WMH/LSSU Superior Simulation Center promotes knowledge acquisition, skill proficiency and patient care expertise for learners in the healthcare field.

Strategic Plan goals 4.4.6 and 4.5.3 also underscore LSSU's commitment to the public good by "expanding programming at the University Arts Center to target K-12 students" and increasing LSSU's support for the arts and cultural exchanges in the region. Open to the public, the Arts Center offers educational and enrichment opportunities through theater productions, concerts, art exhibits, displays, and hosting varied visiting artists and performers. The Arts Center Gallery hosts regional and national artists specializing in oil paintings, metal, oil, and dirt pieces, as well as Native American and Western Art. The Educational Series draws children into the theater to see diverse performances, such as renowned pianists and Tibetan Monks performing music and dance selections. LSSU's student performances are also open to the public.

LSSU also serves the public through hosted events. The University hosted the 2020-2021 Upper Peninsula Teaching and Learning Conference (UPTLC), which was successfully converted to virtual format through collaboration with Northern Michigan University and Michigan Technological University. Delivered through Zoom, LSSU took the lead to deliver a year-long series of virtual workshops focused on "Teaching in Uncertain Times." Presenters from institutions across Michigan and Ontario shared insights and strategies on this timely issue with attendees from all across the region.

LSSU's Shouldice Library is open to the public, granting borrowing privileges to the entire region. Collaborative partnerships with regional public libraries offer joint library cards accepted at all locations. Also open to the public, the library hosts the Scholar Series, Sustainability Series, Culinary Series, Poetry Series, Visiting Writers Series, and a bi-weekly Campus Colloquium series with faculty and staff presenting their own research. A bi-annual TEDx event has been well received by the community, and the Visiting Writer Series brings acclaimed authors and poets to campus to showcase creative writing to the campus and community. Most library-sponsored events are available as podcasts on LSSU's LakerCast portal.

1.B.2

As explained more fully under criterion 1.A.2, LSSU prioritizes student learning, and the institution's educational responsibilities take primacy. As a public, non-profit, autonomous state institution, 70% of the general fund FY2020 budget was allocated to academics, undergraduate research, and student support services. Nearly 38% went to academics and undergraduate research, and the remaining 32% went to student support services, including counseling, accessibility, student aid, academic services, and library services. Facility maintenance allocations were about 15%, as were institutional support expenditures. Allocating 70% of the general fund budget to academics and student support demonstrates LSSU's commitment to student learning.

1.B.3

LSSU engages with industry leaders and with companies that hire its graduates. LSSU strives to effectively equip its graduates with "the knowledge, practical skills, and inner strength to craft a life of meaningful employment," and its career-focused academic programs are designed to achieve that goal. Many programs consult with advisory boards to identify employer needs, and to help ensure that those programs remain current and are successfully educating students to fill employers' needs after graduating. The Lukenda School of Business Advisory Board is comprised of 19 business professionals from throughout Michigan. The School of Engineering and Technology Industrial Advisory Board is comprised of 26 professionals who actively participate in developing and promoting LSSU's engineering and technology programs. The School of Nursing Advisory Board is structured around "Communities of Interest" in the region, including hospitals, clinics, Sault College (Ontario) and other constituencies in health service

fields; nursing faculty meet regularly with select individuals from those Communities of Interest to discuss clinical issues, disseminate program assessment findings, and solicit input for program planning. The Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE) is closely affiliated with the Cooperative Institute of Great Lakes Research, which also provides CFRE with insights on employers' needs. The Fisheries & Wildlife Management program meets requirements for The American Fisheries Society and The Wildlife Society, enabling students to certify as Fisheries Associate professionals or Wildlife Associate professionals.

LSSU's also engages with discipline-specific accrediting agencies to ensure that students graduate with current and relevant knowledge and skills that meet the needs of employers. Meeting standards and criteria of discipline-specific accrediting agencies confirms the rigor of those programs. A full listing of program-specific accreditations is posted on LSSU's accreditation webpage.

Most programs at LSSU require senior research/projects as evidence that students are well equipped and ready for career placement. Senior projects in many programs are hands-on "work for hire" for external constituencies, with an end-product provided to the contracting company. This engagement with external constituencies provides real-life experience for students, while also meeting public needs. Recent senior projects developed within this framework by engineering and computer science students include:

- Prototype mobile or laboratory robotic cells for private companies;
- Portable gantry solution with machine vision system for an automotive company;
- Prototype of an automated fastener delivery system for an aviation company;
- Accelerator actuator prototype for an engineering company;
- Integrated Room Reservation System for the Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District.

Other programs are equally engaged with external constituencies, creating products or providing services to meet specific needs. A Fisheries and Wildlife Management senior project worked to remove an invasive stalk-producing alga (*didymosphenia geminate*, aka "rock snot") from the St. Marys River, and to reduce its harmful impact on benthic macroinvertebrates. Recent Fire Science senior projects developed site plans for hazardous materials sites and emergency plans for school districts. Just as senior projects can respond to the needs of external constituencies, many LSSU students also get hands-on training in the CFRE hatchery or Superior Analytics Lab, working collaboratively with external agencies in research projects involving relevant environmental problems. The hatchery employs about 11 students and hosts 3-6 lab apprentices and approximately 10 volunteers each year.

The LSSU Health Care Center serves the general public, alongside LSSU students and employees, with services ranging from acute/urgent medical care, chronic illness care, treatment of anxiety or depression, communicable disease evaluation and treatment, annual physicals, allergy injections, and immunizations. As explained under Criterion 1.B.1, LSSU's Health Center collaborated with the National Guard, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Chippewa County Health Department, and War Memorial Hospital to provide free COVID-19 testing to Chippewa County residents on LSSU's campus. The National Guard

administered 544 COVID-19 tests, with 119 tests performed for members of the public. That first clinic initiated ongoing collaborations for COVID-testing and education with external constituencies throughout 2020-2021.

The Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) Certification Program engages each year with Great Lakes Optometry, Medical Arts Optical, Sault Hearing, and War Memorial Hospital Occupational Health to provide local vision screenings, hearing screenings, and pulmonary tests for candidates as part of the health and vision standards. CFRE's Education and Community Engagement staff visited over 45 K-12 classrooms in 2019-2020 to teach about Great Lakes topics like lake sturgeon ecology and invasive species. Laker Student Discounts is another partnership with community businesses, offering students discounts at local businesses such as motels, auto repair shops, coffee shops, salons, restaurants, and florists.

Additional engagements with external constituencies occur through public outreaches, activities, and community-focused programs. Accounting students enrolled in Income Tax Practicum volunteer to prepare free tax returns for community members through the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program; students train on VITA software and earn certification from the IRS, and community members schedule appointments through United Way. The Norris Center facilities are open to the public for a small membership fee, featuring an indoor pool with open swim times and lessons, an indoor field house with 6-lane track and gym equipment, a full ice sheet for local groups' hockey tournaments and practices, and a gymnasium. The Regional Outdoor Center (ROC) is also open to the public, offering highly affordable rental equipment, including camping gear, bikes, cross country skis, snowshoes, canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards, and guided tours of several unique recreational area attractions. Superior Edventures and summer camps offer a wide range of enrichment opportunities for all ages through programs led by LSSU Faculty and staff in aquatic ecology, biomedical science, creative writing, science camps, various sports camps, and more.

LSSU's museums are open to the public and for K-12 class field trips. The Gil Gleason Natural History Museum in Crawford Hall features mounts of wildlife native to the Eastern Upper Peninsula and beyond, including wolves, black bear, fox, and a polar bear. A Kodiak Grizzly bear was donated by an LSSU student's grandfather in 2018. The adjacent Ernest Kemp Mineral Resources Museum showcases impressive rock and mineral specimens, displaying local geology along with unique pieces from across the world. The Ben Long Planetarium in Crawford Hall offers astronomy shows.

Program internships and placements in areas of need also exemplify LSSU's community partnerships and engagement. The School of Education partners with local districts to place teacher candidates in the classrooms throughout K-12 schools in Michigan and Canada. The Early Childhood program places students in the Superior Start School Readiness Center, in joint partnership of the EUP Intermediate School District. The College of Nursing places nursing interns at War Memorial Hospital and other medical facilities in the region, and the Kinesiology program places students in facilities including the Sault Tribe Recreation Center, War Memorial Rehab Center, and other locations throughout the state and Ontario.

LSSU engages with external constituencies by hosting conferences and events like TEDx events, the PARC conference for the Parks and Recreation program, and the 2017 Superior Accounting Conference, presented by LSSU's Student Chapter of the IMA (Institute of Management Accountants). LSSU hosted the 2017-2019 FIRST Robotics Competitions, and hosts annual Regional Basketball and Swim Meet Competitions. The University partners with Michigan Special Olympics and is a long-time partner with United Way, hosting many of their events on campus.

Off-campus events also illustrate LSSU's high level of engagement with external constituencies. The Kinesiology program participated in 2018 and 2019 with the SPartners Heart Health Project through Michigan State University, with students and faculty members making weekly visits to fifth-grade classrooms in Rudyard, Michigan, to perform pre- and post-testing and to talk about nutrition and physical activity. LSSU faculty, staff, and students serve on numerous boards and advisory councils, including:

- Superior Alliance for Individuals with Disabilities-Native American Disability Coalition;
- Michigan Committee of Juvenile Justice;
- MiSTEM Network; Rural and Ready Committee;
- Chippewa Health Access Coalition; Girls on the Run Boards;
- League of Women Voters;
- Arrowhead Model United Nations;
- Fiction Juror for the Sustainable Arts Foundation;
- Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation;
- International Association of Clinical Simulation and Learning (INACSL) Outreach Committee;
- Health Occupations and Hornet Health Center Advisory Committee;
- School of Engineering Industrial Advisory Board;
- Lukenda School of Business Professional Advisory Board.

LSSU cultivates extensive and varied relationships with external constituencies to serve the students, faculty, and community. The University reaches beyond its own unique, rural location to foster relationships that support its mission to the best of its capacity, to provide innovation-driven and transformative education for all, and to enhance the quality of life of the Great Lakes region and the world.

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1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Argument

1.C.1.

LSSU's mission and vision emphasize transformative educational experiences and practical skills that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success. Program curricula promote active learning and real-life application opportunities. Career-focused instruction is central to success, retention, and completion, as evidenced by high job placement rates and graduate surveys. Transformative preparatory instruction examples include:

- Education students develop and deliver lesson plans and learning activities they can use after graduation.
- Chemistry students practice laboratory investigative skills in the Superior Analytics Lab.
- Health science program students practice taking blood pressure, phlebotomy, and treating injuries.
- Computer science students write and design programs and apps.
- Liberal Arts students write, perform, and create on a daily basis in their classrooms.
- Fisheries and Wildlife Management students gain first-hand experience at one of the few student-run fish hatcheries in the country, managing water quality, fish disease ecology, and fish rearing methods that will translate to careers with private and government agencies.
- Geology students attend 1-2 week field trips across the country and into Canada.
- Nursing students experience real-world practicums in LSSU's state-of-the-art Simulation Center.
- Criminal Justice, Fire Science, Nursing, and Paramedic Technology students experience an interdisciplinary training event simulating a mass casualty, multi-car accident with multiple victims.

Internships, co-ops, and clinicals also equip students with knowledge and practical skills that prepare them for lives of meaningful employment, as exemplified in nursing clinicals, student teaching, positions in the Center for Freshwater Research and Education, and business

internships. Kinesiology internships are tailored to students' career goals, ranging from physical therapy clinics to sports compliance offices. Student teachers gain practical experience in the classroom. This list covers only a few ways in which LSSU's curricular activities prepare students for workplace success.

In addition to preparing students for careers, curricular activities promote informed citizenship, as evidenced by:

- A new Science for Citizens (NSCI108) course was recently added in the School of Natural Resources and Environment.
- Conservation Biology and Fisheries/Wildlife students conduct extensive in-the-field research on a number of bodies of water with LSSU's Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE).
- Political science students take part in a Model United Nations course, allowing students to apply what they have learned about different countries laws and politics.
- Kinesiology Students volunteer with Special Olympics to further broaden their experiences working with a variety of populations.

Campus Life cocurricular activities also prepare LSSU students for informed citizenship and workplace success. Campus Life provides both on-campus and commuter students with abundant opportunities to engage with the campus community. In fall 2020, more than 56 different clubs and organizations were available, and many emphasize informed citizenship and community involvement, including: ACS On-Campus (American Chemical Society), Black Student Union, 4H Collegiate Club, Student Educators Against Sexual Assault, Fisheries and Wildlife Club, and more. Career-focused clubs that help prepare student for workplace success include: Accounting Club, American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Cannabis Studies Club, Chemistry Club, Geology Club, Investment Club, and Marketing Club, among others. LSSU also promotes informed citizenship with donation opportunities to serve students in need through Seamore's Food Pantry and Seamore's Closet. The Pantry provides food for struggling students, and Seamore's Closet supplies students in need with professional business attire for job interviews, internships, and more.

The University's long-standing partnership with United Way affords numerous opportunities for students and faculty to engage with the community and serve others; opportunities include Global Youth Service Day, Giving Thanks food distribution, the Citizens' Review Panel, the Reading Buddies program, and Light the Lamp and Feed America for United Way. LSSU's prolific involvement with United Way earned the 2019 Community Builder Award, and LSSU Athletics earned the 2019 Community Partner of the Year Award.

Another community partnership with War Memorial Hospital and Michigan State University provides the Health Lecture Series, covering informed citizenship topics such as addictions, diseases, and keys to healthy development. Further promoting informed citizenship are:

- The Scholar Lecture Series, bringing in professionals from a variety of fields to discuss emerging issues and trends in the world.

- Shouldice Library's Documentary Film screening events on current issues and themes, followed by open discussions.
- TEDx events that have highlighted relevant local or global issues and ideas.
- Sustainability Series lectures discussing important environmental issues.

1.C.2

Diversity, inclusion, and equity are inherent to LSSU's mission, vision, core values, and strategic plan. LSSU's statement on diversity pledges to "promote diversity, inclusion, and belonging that respects and celebrates the uniqueness of its students, staff, and faculty," and to sustain "a rich, vibrant campus community that enhances the overall student experience, enriches students' learning, and creates constant moments of encounter and interaction with new worldviews, backgrounds, and perspectives." The general education program's Diversity Learning Outcome refocuses students so they can "view the world from cultural perspectives other than their own," and it defines culture as anything characterizing a person or group, such as "race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, age, disability, or other related categorizations." Fostering inclusivity and equitable treatment of diverse populations, general education courses across curricula teach to and assess this diversity outcome.

LSSU's proximity to two tribal nations and Canada provides unique opportunities to inform and prepare students for citizenship in a diverse world. LSSU's Native American Center brings cultural performances, meals, lectures, art shows and exhibits onto campus every year. U.S. and Canadian flags are displayed in the Taffy Abel Arena, and sporting events and commencement exercises open with both the U.S. and Canadian national anthems. National flags from student's native lands are displayed in the Quarterdeck dining hall to celebrate the diversity of our student body. Multiculturalism is embraced in many University operations, traditions, and events, as illustrated in the annual University commencement featuring both Scottish bagpipers and Native American drummers.

LSSU celebrates Native American Month every November with events including lectures, food tasting, and traditional ceremonies. The Scholar Series celebrates Native American culture through presentations like "Blood Feud: The Ethics of Researching Native American Genetics" with Bryan Newland in 2018. Native American Art is displayed often in the Art Gallery, and food tasting events sponsored by the Native American Center typically include Native American music. On campus, a Native American Spear Point sculpture honors the region's rich Native American culture, and memorializes archeologist and former LSSU president, Thomas Pleger.

Multicultural events on campus also promote diversity, inclusivity, and equity, as demonstrated in the following examples:

- The Arts Center hosted a one-week Tibetan Monk Residency in fall 2019, with well-attended weekly events including lectures, meditation, traditional sand painting, basketball with the LSSU women's team, art displays, music and dance.

- In fall 2019, LSSU hosted the theater production *Commencing*, a play examining issues of gay and straight women and emphasizing the need to treat all people with respect and equity.
- LSSU's yearly campus read frequently focuses on diversity and inclusion. In 2018-2019, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* generated conversations across campus about race relations, medical ethics, health medicine, science, and engineering topics. In 2019-2020, *What the Eyes Don't See* inspired events and conversations exploring the inequitable treatment of economically disadvantaged people, as seen in the Flint Water Crisis. In 2020-2021, *The Round House* is raising awareness about tribal culture, exploring themes like sexual violence against Native American women, tribal law, and Chippewa spirituality.

Campus Life sponsors numerous events emphasizing diversity and inclusion. Incoming freshmen each fall sign the Laker Pledge, taking personal responsibility in the statement, "I will help foster a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere that values diversity." Sense of belonging activities focus on accepting every individual's uniqueness. Cultural awareness activities allow students to enjoy the crafts, foods, and traditions of diverse cultures, including Chinese, Black, Native American, and Mexican. In conjunction with Title IX, Campus Life hosts several sexual assault prevention awareness events, sharing resources and practices to help prevent sexual violence and promote tolerance. Students, faculty, and staff complete yearly Title IX training that includes resources to recognize gender-based discrimination or sexual misconduct, and guidelines to take action in those cases.

Culturally inclusive support groups and resources are offered through Counseling Services, Student Life, or Academic Services, including:

- National Coming Out Day
- Mental health awareness and suicide prevention support groups
- LGBTQ community support groups
- The Black Student Union
- Native American Heritage Month
- Native American Showcase
- Accessibility Services provides training resources to faculty and staff to be cognizant of and responsive to the needs of students with disabilities

Fostering university-wide inclusivity and equity, the Accessibility Coordinator provides training to Admissions staff to ensure they are knowledgeable about Accessibility Services and resources. New Student Orientation forms invite students to request contact from Accessibility Services, reducing potential stigma related to self-identifying for an accommodation. The Accessibility Coordinator meets with each self-identified student to collaboratively build their accommodation plan and remove any barriers, while also providing guidance to help students become their own self-advocate for accessibility accommodations. Accessibility Services strives to make physical spaces accessible and to foster an inclusive and equitable campus environment for all students. That office sponsored workshops in 2017 and 2018 to train staff to assist students with seizure disorders; the workshops promoted fundraising efforts for the Leah Marie Bollin Scholarship to assist students with seizure disorders or other disabilities.

Further promoting equity and diversity at LSSU, Academic Affairs oversees the King-Chavez-Parks Initiative Future Faculty Fellowship, assisting those who are academically or economically disadvantaged to pursue graduate studies. This opportunity also gives faculty an option to pursue degrees that expand the breadth of courses the faculty member is qualified to teach.

1.C.3

LSSU strives to foster a climate of respect for everyone, as evidenced in the second Pillar of the Strategic Plan:

LSSU's "diversity reflects the many ways in which individuals and communities uniquely identify – socioeconomic, first-generation status, veteran status, religious, racial, sexual orientation, ethnic, or political – contributing distinct and valuable experiences and perspectives to the makeup of the university."

The strategic plan has committed to implement five overarching goals for diversity, inclusion, and belonging, with 31 fully outlined strategies to meet those goals. Example strategies outlined in the plan include:

- 2.1.4 Create opportunities for open presentations on diversity for students, faculty, and develop a Diversity Speaker Series.
- 2.1.5 Assess the cultural relevance of courses and curricula with the goal increasing cultural literacy.
- 2.1.8 Create a leadership development program for faculty and staff – in particular women, minorities, and members of underrepresented populations – to provide added opportunity to position themselves for professional advancement within the University.
- 2.2.2 Enhance the physical and technological infrastructure that provides accessibility for all university members.
- 2.5.6 Establish a new academic program in Native American studies that emphasizes the history of the Great Lakes Region and Native American history and culture.

LSSU is committed to promoting and advancing diversity as an institution, as evidenced in its Diversity Statement. The University pledges to "foster an environment in which members of the University community are accepted and respected for who they are," and does this by investing energy and commitment to providing opportunities that increase cultural literacy through University led efforts as described and evidenced throughout this criterion discussion.

LSSU implemented a diversity expansion plan in 2018 that included increased diversity training, educational workshops, and ongoing work to secure external funding to deepen diversity opportunities and dialogues. Campus Life sponsors student organizations with far-ranging student interests, including special interests that promote diversity. Students can form new clubs with five or more peers, a faculty or staff advisor, and an application with Campus Life, which always supports and encourages students from diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives to participate. Despite COVID-19 restrictions, Student Affairs was able to promote diversity in

2020-2021 with the celebration of Native American Heritage Month, Black History Month, Latin American Heritage Month, National Coming Out Day, and International Student Day, among other annual commemorations of diversity.

The University's diverse community includes faculty, staff and students from widely varied backgrounds. LSSU's third core value pledges to foster "a campus community environment that is inclusive and welcoming." Hiring practices and student recruitment practices are being expanded to potentially increase diversity. The University's One-Rate tuition plan opens doors for students from many cultures to attend LSSU without increased financial burden, potentially broadening cultural diversity at LSSU. The Athletic Department continues to recruit a growing number international student athletes. In 2019-2020, athletic rosters listed 43 international student-athletes, hailing from Canada, Sweden, Japan, Slovakia, Germany, France, Latvia, Finland, Pakistan, England, Ukraine, Jamaica, Argentine, and India.

LSSU assesses students' respect for diverse persons and cultures through its general education diversity learning outcome and its Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). The general education diversity outcome is structured to enlarge student's perspective of the world, equipping them to engage with the world in ways that respect and appreciate the differences they encounter. The outcome is taught in fourteen approved general education diversity courses, and students must take at least one diversity course to meet the general education requirement. Courses include SOCY103-Cultural Diversity; BUSN308-Managing Cultural Differences; EDUC250-Student Diversity and Schools; and HIST231-Natives and Newcomers, among others. As described fully under Criterion 4.B.1, the diversity outcome assessed in general education courses produces data for evaluation by the General Education Committee; the committee determines how continuous improvement action plans will be implemented to increase the effectiveness of instruction for that outcome. The "professional responsibility" Institutional Learning Outcome also prepares LSSU students to apply professional ethics and intercultural competence both before and after graduation. The professional responsibility ILO helps fosters a climate of respect throughout the campus community, emphasizing skills of "intercultural competence" in diverse situations and settings. As explained under Criterion 4.B.2, students' intercultural competency skills are assessed annually through student worker evaluations, student athlete evaluations, and in program-specific senior capstone courses, ensuring that ILO assessments capture university-wide curricular and cocurricular experiences.

Ongoing work continues to foster an inclusive campus culture that values and respects diversity, as evidenced in the 2019-2020 assessments for the general education diversity outcome and intercultural competency for ILO-4. More than 55% of general education students fully achieved the diversity outcome, while another 37% partially achieved it. ILO assessments in 2019-2020 measured how well graduating seniors could "articulate insights into how their own cultural rules and biases influence their participation in &/or understanding of experiences in their profession." More than 85% of student athlete/student worker graduating seniors fully achieved that outcome, while 14% partially achieved it; 58% demonstrated "excellent" levels of intercultural competency, 32% were "very good," 7% were "good," and less than 3% were "marginal." LSSU's consistent assessment of diversity and intercultural competence helps engender a university-wide culture that values and respects diversity.

Described under Criterion 1.C.2, Campus Life fosters an inclusive climate of respect through diverse student organizations with far-ranging student interests. Students can apply to form new clubs with a group of five or more, and an identified faculty/staff sponsor; Campus Life always encourages groups from diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives to apply. Also detailed under 1.C.2, multicultural events are welcomed. LSSU seeks out and brings in speakers from diverse backgrounds to present culturally informative perspectives to the University and local communities through the Issues and Intellect Fund. For example, the Issues and Intellect Fund co-funded the 2019 Tibetan Monk Residency event, which was highly attended by faculty, staff, students, and local community members. Although COVID-19 forced cancellations of many spring/fall 2020 multicultural events, several socially-distanced events included:

- A Library Art Gallery exhibit on Women’s Suffrage in Michigan
- The NEA Big Read/Campus Read of *The Round House*, by Louise Erdrich, allowed for a socially-distanced keynote address by Bryan Newland, Chairman of the Bay Mills Indian Community, and a screening of “This River,” a documentary covering searches of the Red River for the bodies of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

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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

The mission of Lake Superior State University aligns closely with the strategic plan, vision, and core values of the institution. These statements and documents are frequently reviewed to ensure they remain current in addressing the needs of the students and community served by LSSU. They affirm LSSU's commitment to fulfill its educational responsibilities. The current strategic plan, mission, and vision were developed collaboratively from input received in 35 "listening Sessions," attended by over 300 campus and community constituents.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

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

Argument

2.A.1

Since its 1990 transition from college to university, LSSU has reviewed and revitalized its mission as needed. Each iteration of LSSU's mission statement has been approved by the Board of Trustees. The current Strategic Plan, Mission, and Vision were developed in 2019 with input gathered through listening sessions with the campus, local, and tribal communities. Recognizing that a growing number of LSSU students are out-of-state or international, and that graduates frequently work in globally-connected fields or leave the region to start careers across the globe, feedback suggested a change in the mission statement to include a more global perspective. Revisions were proposed accordingly, and the Board of Trustees approved the current mission statement in April 2020.

2.A.2

LSSU operates with integrity in its financial operations. While the ultimate responsibility for financial oversight rests with the Board of Trustees, the Vice President for Finance and Operations oversees day-to-day financial operations through the Business Operations Office. Financial transactions are conducted with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and financial records are made public on the Business Operations webpages.

Annual Financial Reports are the basis of annual audits. LSSU received unqualified opinions on financial audits for both FY2019 and FY2020, in accordance with the U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. Audit results document the integrity of LSSU's financial operations; the Board of Trustees reviews and approves the fiscal reports, as evidenced in Board minutes. Following Standard and Poor's wide scale outlook adjustments for the higher education sector from stable to negative in the aftermath of COVID-19, LSSU's current bond rating is BBB+.

The University operates with integrity in its academic functions. Academic policies are clearly outlined in the catalog, including policies on credit hours, course prerequisites and placement, credit load, add/drop, dual enrollment, repeating a course, course withdrawal, attendance, course auditing, prior learning credit, grade appeals, graduation requirements, FERPA, academic standing, academic integrity, and academic forgiveness. Faculty, staff, and students participate in processes to establish institutional policies, as demonstrated in the development of the Academic Forgiveness Policy by the 2017-2018 Retention Committee; that committee membership included representatives from all key areas of the institution. LSSU's academic policies are publicly posted, clearly defined, and readily available to all faculty, staff, students, prospective students, and members of the public through the catalog links on the University website and Provost's webpage.

LSSU's commitment to integrity is also evident in its processes to safeguard students' rights, such as the right to appeal any sanctions or charges made against them. Students have recourse to challenge financial aid revocation through the Financial Aid Appeal process, and to refute charges of academic dishonesty through the Academic Appeal process. Students may also submit grade appeals if they believe they have received an unfair grade. The Presidents' Council of Students oversees funds received through student fees, ensuring that those funds are used appropriately for student activities and needs. Student Government also oversees the Student Assembly budget, and provides standing student members for University committees to ensure student input is included and student interests are represented in institutional decision-making processes.

Human Resources (HR) operates with integrity in all hiring and employment policies and procedures. Hiring procedures for faculty are outlined in Section 7.3 and Appendix B of the Faculty Agreement. LSSU has clearly stated and posted policies for Equal Opportunity Employment, Prohibited Discrimination, and Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct. All policies are prominently visible on the Human Resources website, and all hiring decisions are reviewed for compliance with those policies prior to approval of hiring recommendations. Prior to candidate reviews, HR staff provide training for all employees engaged with the hiring process. HR staff also ensure that all hiring practices comply with state, local, and federal laws, as well as applicable University policies and best practices. All search/selection committee members must complete an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO form) prior to making a hiring recommendation, detailing the candidates interviewed and summarizing the relevant candidate qualifications. In cases where a minority candidate is not selected, the EEO memo also requires evidence that all equal opportunity and non-discrimination policies were followed.

Auxiliary functions of the University operate with integrity, meeting high ethical standards that support the well-being and success of all students. The Board of Trustees reviews and approves the Annual Auxiliary Budget each year to ensure fiscal responsibility in the operations of those areas. Larger auxiliary units connected to Student Affairs include Housing, Food Services, Residential Life, the Health Care Center, and the Counseling Center. Athletics stands as its own auxiliary unit, and includes one NCAA Division I team (men's ice hockey) and 11 NCAA Division II teams. These teams conform to NCAA regulations and ethical principles for

recruiting, fundraising, administration, eligibility, staff recruiting and conduct, academic expectations, remuneration, and student-athlete conduct.

As posted in the student handbook and on its webpages, the Housing Office establishes and administers policies governing student placement, damage control, entry and search procedures, harassment and bullying, and courteous conduct towards roommates and hallmates. LSSU's Living Learning Communities, or "Row Houses," are small residence halls for students majoring in specific disciplines; each has an application process and House-specific policies for residents. For example, the Honors Program publishes rules for living in the Honors House (Ontario Hall), which exceed general Housing standards of conduct. Resident Advisors (RAs) in student residence halls, including those for the Row Houses, undergo extensive training on Ethics and Role Modeling, Communication, and Community, including role-playing scenarios. The student handbook, currently under revision, is published by the Office of Student Life and publishes policies concerning many ethical matters, a small sample of which include:

- Assembly
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Discrimination and Prohibited Conduct Investigation Process
- Drugs
- FERPA
- Gender-based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct
- Hazing and Initiation Policy
- Indecent Behavior
- Student Code of Conduct
- Theft
- Tobacco Use
- Treatment of Others

Campus Life oversees recreation, student clubs/organizations, student success programs, and Resident Life. All registered student organizations must follow Campus Life Office policies and procedures, including a non-discrimination policy, an anti-hazing policy, and financial integrity policies. Food Services works with Accessibility Services to ensure allergen-free food options for students with those needs; if Food Services is unable to meet specific dietary needs, that student is exempted from purchasing a meal plan.

The Health Care and Counseling Centers both operate in full compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The Health Care Center provides basic health care to students, employees, and the public, with most services free to students. Its website posts all services and policies, provides clear policy explanations, and includes a link to Title IX resources. The Counseling Center provides free basic and short-term services to enrolled students, and safeguards the rights and confidentiality of its clients. The Center's website outlines all available services, explains how to access all services, and provides FAQs with information and resources for faculty, staff, family members, friends, and athletes who are seeking assistance for themselves or others.

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

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

Argument

2.B.1

The University website and Academic Catalog clearly present information to students and the public about academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships. The Academic Catalog is the definitive source for current information on academic programs, academic policies, academic requirements, and course descriptions. The web-based catalog is seamlessly embedded into the University website, and the catalog is updated annually to ensure accuracy of information; electronic copies are publicly available through the website. The Registrar's Office maintains the catalog, with guidance and review on academic issues from the Curriculum Committee, School Chairs, and Deans.

Website content is regularly updated to provide extensive documentation about policies, programs, faculty and staff, governance structure, and accreditation relationships. Under the direction of the Marketing and Communications Department, trained faculty and staff manage webpage content to ensure that information is current regarding the following:

- Academic programs
- Staff directory and faculty qualifications, cost of attendance, including tuition and fees, and a scholarship calculator
- Financial aid
- Accreditation relationships
- Institutional assessment
- University governance, including the Board of Trustees, the President, and the Provost

The offices of the Registrar, Financial Aid, Human Resources, President, Provost, and Vice Provost for Accreditation and Assessment maintain webpage content for their own areas or provide information to marketing and communications to ensure that content stays current. For example, information about recent changes to the tuition plateau was prominently noted and highlighted on the tuition and fees webpages. LSSU contracts with Monsido to regularly monitor content accessibility on the website and verify functionality of hyperlinks.

The Academic Affairs Directory provides a current roster of faculty and staff in the LSSU's academic division, and is publicly posted on the Provost's webpages. Deans and Chairs verify accuracy and approve the roster before publication. The Provost's webpage also provides a current list of all faculty and their qualifications. The web-based personnel directory includes degrees held by each faculty member, and Human Resources regularly updates the directory with information provided by the Provost's Office.

The current governance structure of the institution is clearly posted as an Organizational Chart on the President's webpage. Department-level organizational charts are posted on that same webpage for Finance and Operations, Human Resources, and Academic Affairs.

LSSU's accreditation webpages include current HLC accreditation information and lists all other discipline-specific accreditations. Consistent with Assumed Practice A.7.A, the posted information clearly conveys the distinction between regional and discipline-specific accreditations.

2.B.2

Undergraduate research is robust and dynamic at LSSU, and student research is showcased every spring at an annual Research Symposium. Required by most programs at LSSU, Senior Research/Project Presentations showcase discipline-specific knowledge and skills and offer evidence that students are equipped and ready for career placement. Senior Research/Projects are required for math, computer science, biology, business, fisheries/wildlife, engineering, psychology, and political science, among other programs. Projects completed by seniors are often hands-on "work for hire" for external constituencies, with an end-product provided to the contracting company. Those projects provide real-life experience for LSSU students, while also meeting public needs. Examples of senior projects developed within this framework by engineering and computer science students include:

- Prototype mobile or laboratory robotic cells for private companies;
- Portable gantry solution with machine vision system for an automotive company;
- Prototype of an automated fastener delivery system for an aviation company;
- Accelerator actuator prototype for an engineering company;
- Integrated Room Reservation System for Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District.

Other Schools and programs also engage with external constituencies by conducting research, creating products, or providing services to meet specific needs. Noted under criterion 1.B.3, one such senior project worked to remove an invasive alga from the St. Marys River. Also described under criterion 1.B.3, Conservation Biology students, Fisheries/Wildlife students, and students working with the Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE), Superior Analytics, or the Cannabis Center of Excellence receive hands-on training through collaborations with external agencies for research studies, conservation projects, and laboratory services. Fire Science Senior Projects work with local communities and school districts to develop site plans

and emergency plans. LSSU's home webpage also advertises "cutting edge career opportunities" in Cannabis Chemistry and Cannabis Business. Promotional materials and program-specific webpage content support LSSU's claims about providing hands-on, real-world learning experiences for students, as do discipline-specific webpages depicting students practicing actual field-specific skills. This claim is further substantiated by the following:

- Approximately 30% of all LSSU courses include labs.
- Mandatory laboratory, field-based, or industry/client-partnered senior projects in the following degrees:
 - Biology, including Pre-medical and Pre-veterinary concentrations
 - Computer Science
 - Conservation Biology
 - Early Childhood Education
 - Engineering, including Robotics, Electrical, and Manufacturing Engineering, as well as Mechanical and Computer Technology
 - Fisheries and Wildlife Management
 - Medical Laboratory Science
 - Political Science
 - Psychology
 - Social Science
- Mandatory practicums in the following degrees:
 - Fire Science
 - Early Childhood Education
 - Elementary Education
 - English Language and Literature-Secondary Education
 - Medical Laboratory Science, Clinical Concentration only
 - Nursing
 - Parks and Recreation
- Special facilities available to LSSU students:
 - Cannabis Center of Excellence
 - Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE)
 - On-campus shooting range
 - Robotics Laboratory
 - Superior Simulation Center

In addition, LSSU plans to expand opportunities for students to acquire practical experience in their fields of study, as evidenced by strategic plan goal 4.1.3: "Assign a liaison to facilitate interaction between LSSU and the community for internship opportunities, job shadowing, and hiring after graduation." While many students engage with global and regional communities through research opportunities, community engagements through clinical and internship placements also contribute greatly to student learning at LSSU. As described under criterion 1.B.3, clinical and internship placements in community service areas include Superior Start School Readiness Center, War Memorial Hospital, the Sault Tribe Recreation Center, and War

Memorial Rehabilitation Center. Students also demonstrate “generosity of self” and leadership through numerous community outreaches, such as United Way, Freshwater Stewardship Corps water clean-ups, World Water Day, volunteering at Special Olympics, and providing VITA free tax return services.

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Argument

2.C.1

Lake Superior State University was established as an autonomous public institution of higher education governed by a Board of Trustees through Michigan Act 26 of 1969. With advice and consent from the Michigan Senate, the governor appoints eight Michigan residents to the Board to serve staggered, renewable, eight-year terms. Trustees serve without monetary compensation. Defined in Section 390.391 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, the Board of Trustees retains all legal authority in the University. The Board is ultimately responsible for general supervision of the University, including control and direction of all expenditures from the University's funds, the right to sue and be sued, and adoption or altering of a seal.

Board members all have experience leading organizations, typically as an owner or executive officer of a business or nonprofit organization. The Board regularly participates in ongoing training and review, as evidenced by individual orientations for new board members (held with the University president), a 2017 Board Retreat, annual briefings with the governor for the President and Board members in connection with the Michigan Association of State Universities (MASU), and most essentially by working group sessions held for all Board members and Senior Management Team (SMT) members prior to scheduled board meetings. The annual MASU briefing with the governor was cancelled in 2020 due to coronavirus restrictions, but several LSSU Board members attended the 2019 annual briefing with Governor Whitmer. Integral and vital to sustaining and supporting a well-informed Board, LSSU's Senior Management Team members meet with the Board in working sessions the day before each scheduled board meeting. Individual SMT members present comprehensive, highly detailed informative reports about current operations, initiatives, and activities in their areas. These half-day (or longer) working

sessions ensure that LSSU's Board members are knowledgeable and well prepared to make informed decisions on behalf of the University.

At the first board meeting of each fiscal year, the Board establishes a schedule of at least six regular open meetings for that year. Additional special meetings may also be called to address unanticipated needs, as occurred in April 2020 to address COVID-19 issues and to approve the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. Closed meetings are called only if warranted by unusual circumstances. Through open meetings, the Board ensures that all interested parties and constituencies have an opportunity to provide input into the decision making process. The Board secretary publicly posts the annual schedule of regular meetings. The Board secretary also notifies LSSU faculty and staff about all upcoming meetings and provides meeting agendas via campus e-mail. Agendas include public comment periods to ensure that internal and external constituents can raise relevant issues. Minutes of all regular and special meetings are publicly available in the Shouldice Library and on the Board's webpage.

The Board fulfills its fiduciary responsibilities by maintaining the financial health of the institution and by protecting and preserving the assets of the University. Actions taken by the Board to fulfill this trust include: annual review and approval of each fiscal year's Structure of Rates for tuition and other student costs; review and approval for Capital Outlay projects such as the Center for Freshwater Research; emergency approval of a \$3 million Line of Credit Resolution to have on-hand if needed during the COVID-19 crisis; and annual review and approval of the General Fund and Auxiliary Budgets. The Board approved the FY2021 general fund and auxiliary budgets for FY2021 in November 2020, as discussed under criterion 2.A.2.

In the Preamble of its Bylaws, the Board pledges to uphold responsible and ethical conduct both for its own membership and for the University. Board members closely adhere to their bylaws and "pledge to uphold all principles of law and sound government in performing its responsibilities." The Board meets its legal responsibilities through governance that includes oversight of collective bargaining and contract approvals, oversight of all University properties, oversight of the University's financial policies and fiduciary commitments, and fulfilling all other legal responsibilities defined in the bylaws. Specific University policies and procedures approved and observed by the Board ensure the integrity and legality of Purchasing Office activities, Financial Aid Office activities, and solicitation of financial transactions and bids. Members of the Board, along with the Senior Management Team and senior-level budget managers, must annually sign a conflict of interest declaration form. LSSU's Conflict of Interest policy and Section 4.02(3) of the Board of Trustees Bylaws preclude any "personal financial interest in any financial transactions with the University." LSSU's Code of Ethics, published in the University Catalog, is closely followed by the Board and applies to all members of the University community.

2.C.2

The preservation and enhancement of the University is the top priority of the Board of Trustees, as reflected in the following examples:

- Board approval to expand One Rate tuition to international students.
- The Board acted immediately to preserve the institution after the unexpected death of the University President in 2017 by appointing a temporary Acting President, and then quickly conducting a search and hiring a 1-year Interim President. The appointment of Dr. Peter Mitchell as an interim president brought 24 years of experience as a college president to LSSU.
- The Board's search for a new President in 2018 further demonstrated its commitment to preserve and enhance the institution. The Board established a clear timeline to conduct the search, and a succinct Presidential Prospectus for candidates. The Board sought input from students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees and community and tribal leaders in 22 different "listening sessions" to construct the prospectus. The resulting document presented potential candidates with a clear picture of expectations for the position, and openly communicated what the campus and regional constituents expected from the new President in experience, leadership style, and priorities (Prospectus, p. 14). The prospectus also underscored the Board's resolution to hire a President with "a clear strategic direction and vision for the University that is inspiring and compelling to all stakeholders" (Prospectus, p. 1). Dr. Rodney Hanley took over as LSSU President on June 1, 2018, and has provided extraordinary leadership to the University, as evidenced by:
 - Development and adoption of a detailed and comprehensive Strategic Plan with a clear vision for LSSU's future success;
 - Development of a strong Senior Management Team, qualified and capable of leading institutional growth;
 - Proposed a General Fund Budget with a surplus for his third year of service;
 - Increased new student enrollments by 13.5% by the start of his third year of service, despite ongoing declining enrollments averaging 10-15% at other institutions;
 - Led an exceptionally effective COVID response effort and developed a safe and viable return-to-campus plan for face-to-face instruction while other institutions moved most instruction online;
 - Introduced new programs and added two new locations to draw more students to LSSU;
 - Stayed on target for the scheduled 2021 completion of the new building for the Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE) despite construction challenges raised by COVID-19;
 - Increased emphasis and focus on strengthening the culture of assessment at LSSU, in alignment with a strong commitment to accreditation standards.
- The establishment and construction of the Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE) to leverage LSSU's unique location at the nexus of three Great Lakes, capitalizing on LSSU's work in the Atlantic Salmon Hatchery and the Aquatic Research Laboratory. The CFRE project was unanimously approved by the Board, and LSSU's Foundation launched a fundraising campaign for \$4.35 million to supplement an approved State of Michigan Capital Outlay of \$8.85 million. In spring 2020, CFRE also received \$956,858 in CARES Act recovery assistance to purchase lab equipment, to be matched with \$239,215 in local funds.

- In response to Michigan’s new cannabis legislation, the Board reviewed and approved new degree program proposals designed to equip graduates with knowledge and business skills to succeed in cannabis science and business enterprises. LSSU now boasts 75 students majoring in its cannabis programs, with growth evidenced by the 41 students who enrolled with majors in cannabis programs in fall 2020.

2.C.3

The Board reviews reasonable and relevant interests of multiple constituencies prior to and during scheduled board meetings. The day before a scheduled open meeting, the Board meets with the Senior Management Team to review detailed reports from each management area. The Board engages in deep discussions with each Senior Management Team member to fully explore and understand the fine points of those reports. At the scheduled open meetings on the following day, the Board receives summary formal reports from the Senior Management Team members representing the financial, academic, human resources, admissions and marketing, student affairs, and developmental operations of the University. Members of the University community and the public have the opportunity to address the Board at the beginning of open meetings. Examples in which the Board demonstrated that it considers and responds to reasonable and relevant interests of internal and external constituencies include:

- Approval to set a new tuition plateau in accordance with input received from the LSSU student body and Senior Management Team.
- Prior to approving the new Strategic Plan in April 2020, the Board reviewed feedback received from over 300 campus and community constituents who attended 35 “listening sessions” soliciting input for the strategic plan. Input was received from students, faculty, staff, Tribal Leaders, advisory boards, alumni, and community members before finalization of the strategic plan.
- The Board reviews detailed reports from each Senior Management Team member prior to scheduled board meetings.
- The Board solicited input from the University and local communities in 22 “listening sessions” when developing the Prospectus for the 2018 Presidential Search.

2.C.4

To preserve independence and guard against undue influence on the part of donors or other constituencies, the Board adheres to specific bylaws that protect the University from potential conflicts of interest. Section 2.A.1 of the bylaws require members of the Board to sign a conflict of interest declaration form each year; further restrictions outlined in LSSU’s Conflict of Interest policy and Subsection 4.02(e) of the bylaws prohibit Board members from having personal financial interests or transactions with the University. Board members are required to “inform the University of any outside interest, consulting service, or other relationship that might interfere with his/her University duties and responsibilities, or raise a question of conflict of

interest” and “abstain from voting on any matter that would place, or appear to place, the Trustee in a conflict of interest situation. The minutes of Board meetings shall record all such abstentions.” Moreover, as of January 2017, the Board outlined a policy of interacting with the Faculty Association only in open forum settings to preserve its independence from undue influence, and does not “recommend individual interactions.”

2.C.5

The Board-appointed University President, chief executive officer of the institution, is responsible for the day-to-day management of the University, and serves as an ex-officio non-voting member of the Board. As authorized by Section 4.01 of the Board’s bylaws, the President assumes day-to-day responsibility for all of the University’s educational, financial, and administrative functions. The President is charged to ensure that the institution operates according to the policies established by the Board, and also to determine and communicate the needs of the University to the Board, the campus, and the community. As Chief Executive Officer, the President is the primary spokesperson for the University.

The President delegates authority over key operational areas of the institution as follows: the Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs; the Vice-President for Finance and Operations; the Dean of Student Affairs; the Dean of Admissions and Marketing; the Director of Human Resources, Title IX, Safety, and Risk; the Executive Director of the Foundation; the Director of Athletics; and the Government Relations Officer. These positions comprise the Senior Management Team of the University, all of whom are well qualified to responsibly manage the day-to-day administration of the institution.

The Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement is further evidence that the Board appropriately delegates leadership in academic matters. Clearly outlined in Section 13 of the Faculty Agreement, faculty are actively involved in decisions to ensure students receive high quality educational experiences and opportunities. Faculty are responsible for curriculum development within their academic schools and colleges, which is further guided by the Curriculum and General Education Committees. As described in Sections 8 and 9 of the Faculty Agreement, faculty also conduct peer-reviews for their peers and their programs, laying the groundwork from which recommendations are made to senior administration on issues of evaluation, promotion and tenure. The Board is solely authorized 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 academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

Clearly stated in LSSU's Core Values, LSSU's first priority is teaching that is focused on "providing student/faculty interaction, learning, and research in current, relevant programs" and in providing them with "a wide range of opportunities to grow academically" as they prepare for the future. The institution demonstrates its commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning for all its constituencies.

Self-expression is supported and encouraged through the many diverse student organizations. These organizations span far-ranging student interests, including social, athletic, academic, economic, racial, political, religious, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Students with literary propensity can also find free expression in the annually published campus literary journal, Snowdrifts.

Students are encouraged to pursue truth in learning through numerous research opportunities or hands-on development projects. The Undergraduate Research Committee (URC) promotes, supports, recognizes, and oversees student research as well as the Undergraduate Research Fund. The Fund awards grants of up to \$500 from the LSSU Foundation to support student research requiring equipment, supplies, or travel. Discipline-specific knowledge and skills are expanded through Senior Research and Senior Project Presentations, which are required in most disciplines across the University. Explained under Criterion 1.B.1, students enrolled in the College of Science and the Environment engage in research at the Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE), working with MiWaterNet in the Superior Analytics Lab, or working in the fish hatchery to investigate invasive species in the Great Lakes and other environmentally urgent issues. Also detailed under Criterion 1.B.1, students enrolled in the College of Innovations and Solutions learn through hands-on "work for hire," producing innovative products for contracting companies such as prototype robotic systems and innovative computer applications and products. Nursing students pursue truth in learning at the Superior Simulation Center, as do students from Criminal Justice, Fire Science, and Emergency Responders programs who participate with nursing students in a simulated Mass Casualty Incident each year.

Also in pursuit of truth in learning, students are encouraged to suggest guest speakers and other events to bring to campus. Speakers spotlighting topics about diversity raise campus awareness on important issues such as tribal law and crime, as demonstrated by recent presentations by the Chairman of the Bay Mills Indian Community and the Chief Judge of the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians for the fall 2020 campus read (Big Read) kickoff event. Knowledgeable speakers from varying backgrounds and with diverse perspectives are brought to campus through the Issues and Intellect Fund, exposing students and faculty to a broad range of ideas and cultural viewpoints. Many events include interactive opportunities in which faculty and students can

engage with the presenters and expand their knowledge of the world. Among other events, the Issues and Intellect Fund co-funded the weeklong residency of Tibetan monks from the Drepung Losung Monastery in fall 2019. Another residency/learning event offered several unique workshops with the internationally renowned Second City improv troupe to promote team building and communication skills, including skill-building workshops for job interviews and workshops with team-building activities to help students develop new approaches to problem solving and cooperative practices.

The academic freedom provision in Section 6 of the Faculty Agreement ensures that faculty members can also pursue truth in teaching and learning. Section 11 of the Agreement references the American Association of University Professors' 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, explicitly safeguarding freedom in research and publication of results, and freedom in the classroom. This provision highlights LSSU's commitment to ensuring that faculty can exercise freedom of expression in research, in publication, and in the classroom. Further assurances and protections for faculty's right to academic freedom are outlined in the grievance policy and procedures in Section 11 of the faculty agreement.

LSSU financially supports faculty pursuit of truth in teaching and learning in research and scholarship. Section 14.3 of the faculty agreement provides each full-time faculty member with \$1200 for professional development in FY2021, increasing to \$1400 in FY2022. Part-time faculty receive pro-rated professional development funds each year. Faculty may carry over funds annually for a total balance of \$4,500. Professional development fund balances for faculty demonstrate LSSU's support for faculty pursuit of truth in teaching and learning through research and scholarship. Faculty use these funds for professional development purposes ranging from conference attendance, equipment or materials purchased to facilitate teaching, or to pursue new avenues of scholarship or research. Many faculty also apply for grants from the Issues and Intellect Fund to bring guest speakers to campus. In addition, faculty may receive up to three semesters of sabbatical leave at full pay to conduct "applied or theoretical research related to professional activities and the advancement of knowledge within disciplinary areas," as defined in Section 14.4 of the Faculty Agreement. In recognition of pursuit of truth in teaching and learning, many faculty research publications and professional presentations are publicly posted on the Provost's Office webpage.

Through the Office of Sponsored Programs, faculty and staff can seek and secure external funding sources "that will strengthen the quality of the University's academic programs and support services." The goal of the Office of Sponsored Programs is to help "identify, secure and successfully implement grant-funded projects" at LSSU. As an additional resource, faculty have access to extensive on-site professional development resources through the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning, including a large collection of teaching-focused materials; online resources that support excellence in teaching, innovation and professional development are also available.

LSSU supports, values, and encourages the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning through faculty scholarship, which is integrated into the promotion and tenure process described in Section 8.7.4 of the Faculty Agreement. Faculty members complete annual Self-Reflection and Self-Evaluation documents, included as Appendix C of the faculty agreement. The School

Retention, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) Committee provides feedback to probationary faculty on faculty performance in four areas, which includes scholarly and creative activities (Section 8.7.5). The four areas evaluated by the committee constitute the basis for their recommendations for faculty tenure and/or promotion.

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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, staff and students.

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

Argument

2.E.1

The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and Business Office oversee adherence to requirements for regulatory compliance, ethical behavior, and fiscal accountability for externally funded research. The OSP assists with all aspects of proposal development and implementation. All agreements with external funders are reviewed and approved through an internal process, which ensures the terms and conditions safeguard the interests of LSSU faculty members and students, protect institutional interests, are consistent with the University's policies, and are consistent with all applicable state and federal laws. Agreements are reviewed through the appropriate chains, including President, Provost, Purchasing, Business, Risk Management, Human Resources, and the participating department, as appropriate. Proposals undergo additional review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), as necessary. The OSP assists with budgetary requirements for external grants to uphold fiscal accountability, and provides support to award-holders from the grant's execution to its closeout. The Office sends report reminders, and corresponds with faculty/PI in regard to budget revisions, changes in state and federal guidelines, and inquiries throughout sponsored projects. The OSP maintains University accounts within sponsor databases (NSF, NIH, etc.) to oversee faculty associated awards. All faculty/staff sign a conflict of interest statement aligning with the University conflict of interest policy. University external funding policies are in place to guide development/implementation of external grant funding.

The approval process for an internal grant proposal includes questions to identify financial match obligations and potential research including human and animal subjects. For all internally initiated research, the University carefully maintains professional standards and ensures regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability in research. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews and approves any proposed research, whether by students or faculty, to ensure protection of human subjects, according to the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45: Public Welfare, part 46 requirements (45 CFR 46). For the protection of animal

research subjects, the IACUC reviews and approves any student or faculty proposed research involving vertebrate animals.

As noted in Criterion 2.D, students may receive funding for their undergraduate research through the Undergraduate Research Fund established by the LSSU Foundation or through Student Government. The Undergraduate Research Committee (URC) carefully reviews and administers student research budgetary requests and funds to ensure fiscal accountability.

2.E.2

Undergraduate research is entrenched within most academic programs at LSSU. Research support resources and services within programs may vary, depending on the program's research expectations. For example, Engineering uses Professional Standards models to guide seniors through their research projects, clearly specifying the standards to be followed. Senior Research/Senior Project Presentations are also required in most disciplines, including math, computer science, biology, fisheries and wildlife, business, engineering, education, criminal justice, fire science, English, general studies, psychology and political science. The computer science and computer networking associate programs also require research papers or projects in their sophomore capstone courses. Along with resources provided to students from within their programs, additional support services to ensure students are able to demonstrate integrity in their research are available through the Writing Center (located in the Academic Success Center), and through in-class instruction provided by librarians upon faculty request.

To further ensure integrity of research and scholarly practice, LSSU purchased a subscription to the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) online training and certification system, including modules on human subjects research, animal research, laboratory safety and security, responsible conduct of research, and more. All training modules are free to LSSU students and staff. Anyone submitting a proposal to the IRB or IACUC committees is required to show a certificate of completion of modules relevant to their proposal.

To additionally support scholarly practice among faculty and students, LSSU's library recently updated its database subscriptions to expand access to full-text scientific journals; faculty have noted the higher quality resources, which have a direct impact on their scholarly research. The library also supports students and faculty with information literacy instruction and personalized research assistance.

2.E.3

Several freshman courses lay a foundation to begin guiding students in the ethics of research and use of information resources. Composition I and II include a learning outcome targeting academic use of information resources and appropriate citation style. The introductory engineering course includes learning modules covering research ethics, and senior engineering

courses requiring Senior Research Projects include another research ethics module. Faculty across disciplines also train students in research ethics, and that guidance is typically reinforced through course assignments. Many LSSU faculty require students to complete one or more CITI training modules as a course assignment. Several programs provide additional guidance in the forms of handbooks as well, including Biology and related programs (Conservation Biology, Fisheries/Wildlife Management, Medical Laboratory Science, Nursing, and Sociology). The Sociology program embeds the principles in the ASA Code of Ethics throughout the whole curriculum, beginning with the introductory course.

Academic Services provides additional guidance to students on research ethics and use of information resources. Student tutors in the Writing Center work with students on all aspects of their research papers, including structure, content, formatting, citations, source credibility, and more. The library staff provides in-class research and literacy information training designed to help students “learn to be adept in their collecting, analyzing and communication of information, as well as ethical in their use of it.” Faculty request the specific content and the level of information literacy instruction needed in their courses, and the librarians construct and deliver the requested instruction to the students. Since 2018-2019, LSSU librarians have conducted at least 30 sessions annually and provided ethical research guidance to approximately 1300 students.

2.E.4

LSSU’s Academic Integrity Policy evidences a clear commitment to academic integrity. The policy defines specific kinds of unethical behavior including cheating, plagiarism, and obtaining an unfair advantage, and it outlines the procedure in cases of unethical behavior. The policy is referenced in course syllabi and is posted in multiple locations on the University website, including the online academic catalog, the Registrar’s Office webpage, and the Provost’s Office webpage. The latter webpage also posts the faculty form for Integrity Incidents, and a student form to appeal an academic integrity record of action. FAQs are also posted with guidance for academic integrity reporting processes. From 2014-2020, the Provost’s Office received 60 Academic Integrity Incident Reports. Possible sanctions for academic integrity infractions may range from a verbal warning to expulsion, as outlined in the posted policy.

Sources

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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 preserves the integrity of the institution with policies and processes that ensure ethical and responsible conduct. The Human Resources Department of the University ensures that the Board, administrators, staff, and students follow policies for fair and equitable practices in all areas. Undergraduate research is prioritized at LSSU, and the University has safeguards in place to ensure that faculty and students adhere to high standards of academic integrity and ethical conduct.

The institution maintains full transparency on its website with publicly posted information about the actions of the governing board, administrators, faculty, and staff. That transparency encompasses accurate information about its academic opportunities, academic offerings, academic requirements, faculty qualifications, costs to students, governance structure, and accreditation relationships.

The Board of Trustees posts all meeting schedules, meeting agendas, and meeting minutes on the website, and these documents offer evidence that the Board acts responsibly to meet its fiduciary responsibilities and to make informed decisions to preserve and enhance the institution.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Argument

3.A.1

LSSU's mission and focus is to provide high quality undergraduate programs to its students. In 2020-2021, programs included 50 baccalaureate degrees, 25 associate degrees, 63 minors, and 8 certificates in wide-ranging disciplines. Program-specific accreditations help ensure programs remain current to provide students with requisite skills and knowledge for those fields. LSSU is industry-accredited in the schools of business, education, and nursing, and for these programs: computer, electrical, and mechanical engineering; electrical and manufacturing engineering technology; chemistry; medical laboratory science; emergency medical technician; and firefighting.

Faculty stay abreast of industry changes through discipline-specific professional development and through regular engagements with industry leaders on advisory boards such as the Lukenda School of Business Advisory Board; the Industrial Advisory Board for the School of Engineering and Technology; the Cannabis Business Advisory Board; the Cannabis Chemistry Advisory Board; the School of Education Advisory Board; and the School of Nursing Advisory Board. Responding to the changing needs of industry, LSSU recently added the following programs:

- Bachelor in Robotics Engineering;
- Associate in Pre-Professional Studies;
- Associate in Geospatial Technology;
- Bachelor and Associate programs in Cannabis Chemistry;

- Chef Certificate in Culinary Arts;
- Bachelor in Cannabis Business;
- Cannabis Production Certificate.

As appropriate for each credentialed award, LSSU confirms the quality and rigor of courses and programs through its curriculum review and approval process. Program faculty submit curricular change proposals to their Schools and then to their Deans, including proposals for new courses or programs, with final approval required from the Curriculum Committee and Provost. Curriculum change forms require proposed student learning outcomes and outcome assessments; the committee and Deans verify that expectations for student performance are appropriate for the course or program level. Course levels are differentiated by number with each level (000-400) to correspond to the appropriate level of Webb's Depth of Knowledge and Bloom's taxonomy. The five-year Program Review cycle, including program-level Annual Assessment Updates, provides systematic review of assessment data for Program Learning Outcomes and Institutional Learning Outcomes. Review of data may generate program changes to ensure programs and learning outcomes remain current and appropriate. For example, assessment data review for the Learning Disabilities program in the School of Education led to development of a new course, ensuring that learners achieve outcomes aligned with Michigan's Department of Education and Council for Exceptional Children requirements. Assessment data review also brought about the restructuring of the developmental math program, including the addition of a new support course, as described under Criteria 1.A.4 and 3.D.2.

3.A.2

LSSU currently has no graduate programs, and focuses fully on postsecondary undergraduate programming. Programs offering credentials at varying levels must establish learning goals and outcomes aligned appropriately to the level of the credentialed award (described under 3.A.1). Many associate degrees provide an option for students to continue into the baccalaureate program when they are ready. This supports LSSU's many first-generation and low-income students (66% and 59% of LSSU's students, respectively), who often need to set incremental objectives before achieving their final goals. Additionally, it helps many eligible students qualify and apply for Tuition Incentive Program funds to complete associate/certificate-level programs without incurring heavy debt. Learning outcomes for programs with multiple credentialing levels are appropriate to those levels, as illustrated by the following examples:

International Business Certificate Program Outcomes	International Business Bachelor Program Outcomes
<p>Apply international business knowledge in the areas of management, marketing, economics, and business law.</p> <p>Analyze how cultural, economic, geographical and political paradigms impact</p>	<p>Apply international business knowledge in the areas of management, marketing, economics, and business law.</p> <p>Analyze how cultural, economic, geographical and political paradigms impact ethical issues in</p>

<p>ethical issues in various international business decision processes.</p> <p>Function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity. This includes awareness of own cultural intelligence and awareness of the cultural intelligence of others.</p>	<p>various international business decision processes.</p> <p>Evaluate nature, significance and context of managerial activities as undertaken by leadership in various organizations in international business contexts.</p> <p>Work in teams, use critical thinking to analyze and solve problems and effectively communicate legal issues pertaining to international business law and international business operations.</p> <p>Function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity. This includes awareness of own cultural intelligence and awareness of the cultural intelligence of others.</p> <p>Apply knowledge of business core subjects.</p> <p>Apply skills in research, communications and critical thinking.</p>
<p>General Studies Associate Program Outcomes</p>	<p>General Studies Bachelor Program Outcomes</p>
<p>Clearly express ideas relevant to their chosen studies in written and oral presentations.</p> <p>Gather and process evidence to answer questions or solve problems within the content of their chosen studies.</p> <p>Synthesize evidence, ideas, or works of imagination to answer questions or create an appropriate end-product within their chosen studies.</p> <p>Apply ethical concepts and intercultural awareness when answering questions, solving problems, or completing assigned tasks related to their chosen studies.</p>	<p>Develop and clearly express complex ideas relevant to their chosen studies in written and oral presentations.</p> <p>Identify the need for, gather, and accurately process the appropriate type, quality, and quantity of evidence to answer a complex question or solve a complex problem within the content of their chosen studies.</p> <p>Organize and synthesize evidence, ideas, or works of imagination to answer an open-ended question, draw a conclusion, achieve a goal, or create a substantial work of art as appropriate to their chosen studies.</p> <p>Apply professional ethics and intercultural competence when answering a question, solving a problem, or achieving a goal related to their chosen studies.</p>

Health/Fitness Specialist (Kinesiology) Associate Program Outcomes	Kinesiology Bachelor Program Outcomes
<p>Design individual level programs that promote physical activity, health, and improve quality of life.</p> <p>Critically utilize scholarly material and apply an evidence-based solution to a current problem in Kinesiology.</p> <p>Critically evaluate and organize scholarly material to present philosophical dimensions of physical activity.</p> <p>Analyze the discipline and sub-disciplines of Kinesiology selecting and describing an area of concentration.</p> <p>Demonstrate technical competency in the evaluation of exercise and physical activity.</p>	<p>Design individual and group level programs that promote physical activity, health, and improve quality of life.</p> <p>Critically evaluate scholarly material and design an evidence-based solution to a current research question in Kinesiology utilizing the scientific method of inquiry.</p> <p>Critically evaluate and organize scholarly material to present an evidence-based point of view specific to cultural, historical, and philosophical dimensions of physical activity.</p> <p>Analyze mechanisms for the delivery of physical activity at the individual and group level across various health, social and inter-generational stratification.</p> <p>Analyze and communicate personal assets and deficiencies in the creation of professional career goals and objectives.</p> <p>Evaluate, analyze, and demonstrate technical competency in the application of interventions at the individual and group level.</p>

3.A.3

LSSU offers courses and programs on the main campus, online, and at five regional locations. The University also offers an Early College Program in partnership with the Eastern Upper Peninsula School District and with Charlton Heston Academy in St. Helen, Michigan. High school students completing the five-year program earn either an associate's degree or a Michigan Early/Middle College Association technical certificate. The program offers concurrent and dual enrollment options.

Concurrent enrollment courses are taught at high schools by high school faculty with 18 or more graduate credits in the subject area. Instructors meet LSSU's posted faculty qualifications policy, with transcript reviews corresponding to those conducted for on-campus adjunct faculty. Syllabi are provided by their managing Deans. Dual enrollment courses are taught on-campus or via Zoom by LSSU faculty, and incorporate both high school and college students.

Deans ensure that syllabi and learning outcomes across all delivery modalities and locations are consistent and meet standards of program quality, with clearly measurable and approved learning outcomes. All course syllabi use an authorized template, and all courses are approved as described under Criterion 3.A.1. Regardless of modality or location, processes for developing and assessing measurable Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) are the same for all faculty; assessment procedures are detailed under Criteria 4.B.1 and 4.B.3.

Regional Center Coordinators report directly to the Dean of the College of Education and Liberal Arts, except for the Hessel location, which reports to the Dean of the College of Innovations and Solutions. The Deans work with the Provost to address needs at those locations. Coordinators assist instructors and students at locations with any needs or issues that arise, and can communicate issues their Deans if necessary. HLC’s 2019 multi-location visit review noted that LSSU’s Regional Center Coordinators were very effective in their roles, and the “use of Regional Center Coordinators should continue and could be expanded. It was clear to the reviewer that the RCCs were critical to LSSU’s success at Regional Centers.”

Faculty at off-campus locations, including concurrent enrollment faculty, follow the same reporting structures as faculty on the main campus. The instructor of record listed in Banner/Anchor Access (*i.e.*, faculty or dean) reports those grades in that system, and learning outcome assessment data is reported in Nuventive™ Improve. Nuventive™ is managed and moderated by the Vice-Provost for Accreditation and Assessment and the Deans. Data from assessment is used to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction in all courses. Faculty are accountable to report all assessment findings and to propose actions they will take to improve instruction based on those findings. Within Nuventive™, course outcomes can be mapped to program outcomes, allowing deep-level data assessment within programs.

Students at regional locations complete end-of-semester course evaluations identical to those completed at the main campus. Evaluation data are shared with instructors and used by supervisors as part of the evaluative process prescribed by the Faculty Agreement, Section 8.

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

Argument

3.B.1

LSSU's mission is to "equip our graduates with the knowledge, practical skills and inner strength to craft a life of meaningful employment, personal fulfillment, and generosity of self within an inclusive atmosphere, all while enhancing the quality of life of the Great Lakes region and the world." These concepts are central to the purposes of LSSU's general education program, which endeavors to prepare LSSU students "for a lifetime of learning" through the "development of general skills and knowledge" that are supported throughout the curriculum. Well-defined learning outcomes and assessment processes ensure that program content is appropriate to the diverse undergraduate programming offered by the University. The program's purposes, content, and learning outcomes are clearly outlined in the academic catalog.

The general education program is strategically framed to equip LSSU's undergraduate students with a broad range of essential skills that align with its mission and with the widely diverse programs offered by the institution. LSSU offers bachelor, associate, and certificate programs, and general education requirements vary appropriately in accordance with the degree level. Baccalaureate degrees require 34-36 general education credits; associate degrees require 24 general education credits; associate of applied science degrees require 15 general education credits. LSSU's general education requirements align with statewide guidelines in the Michigan Transfer Agreement. As a publicly funded university, these requirements are appropriate and effective to fulfill the institution's stated mission through its undergraduate programs. Students and faculty are able to monitor completion of general education requirements through My Degree Plan. General education requirements are established by the General Education

Committee, as defined in Section 13 of the Faculty Agreement. Highlighting the interconnectedness of learning outcomes at LSSU, syllabi for general education include the specific general education outcome, course-level outcomes, and institutional learning outcomes that will be addressed in the course.

The purposes of the general education program are sustained through seven foundational categories: Written Communications, Oral Communications, Humanities, Mathematics, Natural Science, Social Science, and Diversity. LSSU's robust general education program is purposefully structured to meet the educational needs of its predominantly first-generation student body, emphasizing learning outcomes that broaden students' worldview and strengthen their skills in communication, critical thinking, and analytic thinking. General education subcommittee members work with program faculty to ensure that each of the seven foundational learning outcomes integrates suitably with other course-specific learning outcomes. General education faculty assess student learning through a clearly established process, using collaboratively constructed common rubrics. The outcomes and their assessments support a well-rounded education appropriate to LSSU's mission and to its undergraduate programs, as described under criterion 4.B.

3.B.2

LSSU's general education learning outcomes are adapted from the America Association of Colleges and Universities' Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative. The program imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts grounded in several key LEAP initiatives:

Key LEAP Initiative	General Education Learning Outcome
Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world.	<p><u>Diversity:</u> LSSU graduates will be able to view the world from cultural perspectives other than their own.</p> <p><u>Humanities:</u> LSSU graduates will be able to analyze, evaluate, and explain human aesthetics and its historical development.</p>
Intellectual and practical skills such as critical thinking and quantitative literacy.	<p><u>Social Science:</u> LSSU graduates will be able to think critically and analytically about the causes and consequences of human behavior.</p> <p><u>Mathematics:</u> LSSU graduates will be able to analyze situations symbolically and quantitatively in order to make decisions and solve problems.</p> <p><u>Written Communication:</u> LSSU graduates will be</p>

	able to analyze, develop, and produce rhetorically complex texts.
Integrative and applied learning.	<p><u>Humanities:</u> LSSU graduates will be able to analyze, evaluate, and explain human aesthetics and its historical development.</p> <p><u>Natural Science:</u> LSSU graduates will be able to incorporate empirical evidence in the analysis of the causes and consequences of natural phenomena.</p> <p><u>Written Communication:</u> LSSU graduates will be able to analyze, develop, and produce rhetorically complex texts</p>
Personal and social responsibility.	<p><u>Diversity:</u> LSSU graduates will be able to view the world from cultural perspectives other than their own.</p> <p><u>Oral Communication:</u> LSSU graduates will be able to communicate competently in a variety of contexts.</p>

Seven foundational areas (written communication, oral communication, humanities, mathematics, natural science, social science, and diversity) lay the groundwork from which students will build broad knowledge, intellectual concepts, skills and attitudes essential to their futures. The work and standards of the General Education Committee ensure that all seven of its student learning outcomes support and align with degree-specific program goals and the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). For instance, the program’s oral and written communication outcomes link closely to ILO 1 - Formal Communication; the mathematics, humanities, and natural science outcomes link closely to ILO 2 - Use of Evidence; the mathematics, humanities, social science, and natural science outcomes link closely to ILO 3 - Analysis and Synthesis; the diversity and social science outcomes link closely to ILO 4 - Professional Responsibility. Degree programs build on the foundational general education courses and tie them to program-level learning outcomes as well as the ILOs.

LSSU’s commitment to a strong and transformative general education program is also reflected in the Strategic Plan. For example, goal 1.1 resolves to “revitalize and supplement academic offerings that respond to student needs and promote transformational growth.” Goal strategy 1.1.1 is specific to general education: “Analyze, assess, and refresh traditional general education and liberal arts courses to accentuate their intrinsic value and add appeal and relevancy to current students.”

LSSU’s internal framework for general education allows for growth as needed. In response to evolving education opportunities, faculty propose general education courses to Schools and

Deans using an approved template form. With Dean approval, the proposal is forwarded to the General Education Committee. The faculty-developed common assessment rubrics for each foundational area track each semester's assessment data (as described under criterion 4.B), and the committee determines how best to use that data to make improvements to the general education program.

3.B.3

LSSU fosters a culture that values diversity and prepares students to thrive in a multicultural world. LSSU's Diversity Committee worked in 2020-2021 to revise and strengthen the University's Diversity Statement, which was approved by the President in February 2021. The University's core values endorse "a campus community that is inclusive and welcoming" to everyone. The strategic plan affirms LSSU's commitment to support "the many ways in which individuals and communities uniquely identify – socioeconomic, first-generation status, veteran status, religious, racial, sexual orientation, ethnic, or political – contributing distinct and valuable experiences and perspectives to the makeup of the university." Pillar 2 of the strategic plan is Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, which contains 32 definitive action strategies prescribed under five overarching goals, including the following:

- Goal 2.1 – Integrate and advance the celebration of diversity across the University.
- Goal 2.2 – Sustain a University climate that promotes retention and success of students, faculty, and staff; and that makes all feel welcomed, supported, included, and valued.
- Goal 2.3 – Increase awareness of student social mobility and the challenges associated with it, and increase support activities for socioeconomically disadvantaged groups.
- Goal 2.4 – Design activities, themes, and traditions that define what it means to be a Laker, that enhance campus identity, and that build a sense of belonging.
- Goal 2.5 – Incorporate history, traditions, languages, and cultures of Indigenous peoples in all University service areas.

The general education program includes a diversity student learning outcome to ensure that all LSSU students experience classroom learning opportunities that broaden their understanding of other cultures and prepare them to live and work in a multicultural world. The diversity learning outcome states, "LSSU graduates will be able to view the world from cultural perspectives other than their own," and it defines culture as anything characterizing a person or group, such as "race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, age, disability, or other related categorizations." General education courses across curricula teach to and assess the diversity outcome. In addition, LSSU's Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO) for Professional Responsibility assesses students' ability "to apply professional ethics and intercultural competence." This ILO is addressed and assessed in program capstone courses across the University, and in student worker and student athlete evaluations.

Many students transfer to LSSU from nearby Bay Mills Community College, a tribal institution, and from Sault College, a 2-year institution in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. LSSU welcomes and embraces the diversity these students bring to the University. Historically, LSSU serves a larger

percentage of Native American students than any other Michigan university, with more than 8% of the student body identified as Native American. The University values its connection with the Native American culture, and is proud to share that culture with staff, students, and the community through many events on campus that promote cultural diversity awareness.

In Fall 2019, “Laker Week” highlighted a native showcase that included Indigenous drumming, dancing, and food tasting. The Native American Center on campus hosts a variety of activities that are open to everyone during Native American Heritage Month every November. The 2020-2021 “Big Read” at LSSU is “The Round House,” by Louise Erdrich, centering on Native American culture, customs, and law; events for the Big Read included a keynote address by Bryan Newland, Chairman of the Bay Mills Indian Community, a screening of the documentary film “This River,” and a panel discussion featuring Bryan Newland and Jocelyn Fabry, Chief Judge of the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

Students in the Study Abroad program also experience far-ranging growth opportunities preparing them to live and work in a multicultural world. Recent study abroad trips include a 2019 Study Abroad in China, 2018 Marine Biology in Belize, 2018 Nursing in Ireland, and 2019 Cultural, Ecological, and Human Health Issues of New Zealand. An interdisciplinary course planned for Summer 2020 was cancelled due to COVID-19. Students can also study in one of more than 50 countries through a partnership with the College Consortium for International Studies.

LSSU values the enriching diversity brought to our community by individuals of every age, ethnicity, gender, physical ability, race, sexual orientation, gender expression, socioeconomic level, educational/regional background, religion, or any other experience that defines their self-identity. In keeping with its mission to provide an inclusive and welcoming community to all, LSSU offers:

- A full range of accessibility services to support inclusivity for students of all abilities. Working with Accessibility Services, admissions recruiters, staff, and faculty help connect students with needs to the Accessibility Services Office. This office works to have accommodation services, plans, and any necessary devices in place at the start of each semester. Services are tailored to each student’s needs and may include testing accommodations, appropriate audio technology tools in classrooms, speech-to-text software, audio notetaking, LiveScribe pens, or other options.
- More than 56 student organizations span far-ranging student interests, including social, athletic, economic, racial, political, religious, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
- The Native American Center sponsors cultural performances, meals, lectures, art shows and exhibits every year, and hosts food tasting and traditional ceremonies on campus during Native American Month every November.
- The 2020-2021 Big Read and LSSU’s Scholar Series promotes multiculturalism through presentations like “Blood Feud: The Ethics of Researching Native American Genetics” with Bryan Newland in 2018.
- Multicultural art is often on display in the Art Gallery.
- The Counselling Center supports inclusivity through group meetings, such as the weekly LBGTQ Peer Support Group (currently meeting virtually).

3.B.4

LSSU strongly supports student research, and the Undergraduate Research Committee (URC) is charged with “promoting and recognizing the student research efforts that occur across campus, as well as encouraging new efforts.” The URC oversees the Undergraduate Research Fund, which provides grants of up to \$500 to support senior capstone projects. LSSU’s annual Senior Symposium has showcased student and faculty research since 2015, formally presenting that research to the campus and community. Student research at LSSU is prolific, with Senior Research/Project Presentations required in most disciplines across the University, including math and computer science, biology, fisheries and wildlife, business, engineering, education, criminal justice, fire science, English, general studies, psychology and political science.

Apart from Senior Symposium, LSSU students also showcase their academic achievements, scholarship, research, and creative works in various ways, such as annual writing competitions, an undergraduate literary magazine called Snowdrifts, and School of Engineering projects. The Arts Center and Shouldice Library galleries often display creative works of students as well.

Faculty scholarship and research are also robustly supported at LSSU. The University’s flexible view of faculty scholarship is defined by Boyer’s Model of Scholarship, and Section 8.7.4.4.c of the Faculty Agreement lists scholarship categories that include peer-reviewed publications, public exhibitions/performances/presentations, patent applications, patents executed, and public contributions to one’s field. As evidenced on the University’s Faculty Publications and Presentations webpage, LSSU faculty are active in various modes of scholarship in their fields.

Faculty contractually receive a professional development allowance (Agreement, Section 14.3.1) of \$1200 in 2020-2021, and \$1400 in 2021-2022. Section 14.3.5 of the Agreement states that professional development fund balances up to \$4500 can be carried over from year to year. Furthermore, the University supports faculty in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) through the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETAL). Faculty Learning Communities (FLC) and Communities of Practice (COPs) started in 2017, with a FLC focused on creating effective First Year Experiences. Another FLC formed in 2018 focused on improving teaching methods among pre-tenured faculty. In 2019, three FLCs met to explore Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Online Teaching and Learning, and Early Career Faculty. Fall 2020 communities worked on Teaching Strategies, and in spring 2021 the topic was “Bandwidth Recovery - Reclaiming Cognitive Resources.” CETAL also offers workshops on active learning strategies to support and improve student engagement and success. Math students and staff present or attend weekly CETAL sessions for “Talk Math 2 Me” seminars on varied topics in mathematics. Additionally, many LSSU faculty members share their work through monthly colloquia and other scholarly presentations held in the Library Commons, which are open to the campus and the local communities. Recent colloquia and presentations made by LSSU faculty the University’s Scholar Series have included:

- Dr. Jason Garvon: "We Only Pay Attention When Something Happens" explored subtle environmental changes that may have profound impacts on wildlife and recreation of the north woods.
- Tyler Detloff: shared readings and insights from his book, "*Belly-Up Rosehip: a Tongue Blue with Mud Songs.*"
- Dr. Russ Searight: "Professor, You Talked Way Too Fast Today" Formative Teaching Assessment by Student Peer Educators.
- Dr. Jason Garvon: "Million Dollar Birdie" discussed Great Lakes Piping Plover recovery efforts.
- Dr. Russ Searight: "The Institutionalization of Elsie Lacks: Psychiatry, Social Control, and the African-American Community" examined how psychiatry has been used and misused through American history, often to the detriment of minorities.
- Gina Hoben: "Once Upon A Time, A Woman Developed Very Special Cells..." A Look At What Makes A Compelling Story.
- Dr. Rob Kipka: "A Village of Henriettas" analyzed the feasibility of Rebecca Skloot's theory on Henrietta Lack's cells and how long it would actually take them to grow abundant enough to wrap around the Earth several times.
- Dr. Melissa Shaffer-O'Connell: "Legal Foundation of Isms: Classism, Racism, and Sexism in *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks.*"
- Dr. Ron Hutchins: "'I don't see what their problem is... Medical staff always treat me well': The History and Hazards of Healthcare in America for People of Color."

LSSU expected to host the May 2020 Upper Peninsula Teaching and Learning Conference (UPTLC) to explore effective teaching and learning, and many LSSU faculty and staff were scheduled to present. Due to COVID-19, the on-site conference was cancelled and the UPTLC was restructured as a series of online workshops. LSSU hosted the virtual conference, in collaboration with Northern Michigan University and Michigan Technological University. As other conferences also moved online, many LSSU faculty took the opportunity to attend the virtual Lilly conference, and the School of Math and Computer Science hosted the Upper Peninsula Mathematics Conference.

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

Argument

3.C.1

Hiring processes established by the Human Resources Office strive to ensure that LSSU's faculty and staff reflect human diversity. These processes include:

- Department request to fill a position.
- Request requires approval from the Vacancy Management Committee, Vice President of the relevant area, and the President.
- If approved, the position is posted both locally and internationally through agencies such as HigherEdJobs, AcademicKeys, Academic Network, and the Chronicle of Higher Education.
- A search committee is appointed, and follows a specific process to select candidates:
 - Search team members undergo training.
 - Search committee receives guidelines to ask only non-discriminatory Interview Questions.
 - Search committee documents all candidate selection decisions through the "PeopleAdmin" software, which outlines the needs of the constituency and the qualifications of the applicants.

- Search committee recommends 1-3 candidates. If a candidate is approved by the president, the individual is hired. If unapproved, a “failed search” is declared and the process repeats.
- Committee chairs complete an Equal Employment Opportunity form that details the candidate selection process.

This hiring process is appropriate to LSSU’s mission, ensuring that a culture of diversity and inclusivity are cultivated at the institution. LSSU's statement on diversity pledges to "promote diversity, inclusion, and belonging that respects and celebrates the uniqueness of its students, staff, and faculty," and the overall composition of faculty and staff reflects that commitment to diversity and inclusion, and reaffirms that commitment and culture to students.

A diverse and welcoming community is fundamental for LSSU’s economically challenged (59%) and first-generation (66%) students. Many staff and faculty, including LSSU’s president, are also first-generation in college, enabling them to relate well to our students and help them break barriers that will facilitate their social mobility. That shared experience among LSSU's faculty, staff, and students is highly appropriate to LSSU's mission.

3.C.2

In fall 2020, LSSU employed 92 full-time faculty, 7 part-time faculty, and 50 adjuncts. The University upholds student-focused instruction through its 16:1 ratio of students-to-faculty, affording students and faculty extensive opportunities for deep-learning engagement. Continuity is evident in the number of tenured and tenure-track faculty; 89% of fall 2020 faculty were tenured or tenure-track, and 68 have been with LSSU more than five years.

The University utilizes tenure, tenure-track and term-appointment faculty for the majority of instructional load, as illustrated in the 2019-2020 Load Report data in the table below. In 2019-2020, adjunct instructors taught only 12% of LSSU courses, with most of the remaining 88% taught by full-time faculty. Occasionally, Deans or staff also teach a few courses, and that number is included within the faculty load report data:

	<i>Contract Hours delivered by</i>	<i>Student Credit Hours delivered by</i>	<i>Percentage of Courses taught by</i>
Faculty	86.2%	88.1%	88%
Adjunct	13.6%	11.9%	12%

Outside the classroom, faculty fill key roles in curriculum oversight and the assessment of student learning. Section 13 of the Faculty Agreement requires that both the Curriculum Committee and the General Education Committee must have one serving faculty member from each School. Co-chairs of those committees are also tenured faculty members, serving alongside the Provost in that capacity. Stipulated in Section 13.2 of the Faculty Agreement, curriculum proposals must originate with school or department faculty, with participation from affected departments and faculty members. Proposals to either committee must receive majority vote approval from the faculty of the submitting School, as well as Dean approval, before being submitted to the appropriate committee. These committees oversee all curriculum work, including adding, changing, or removing courses or programs. To obtain approval, all curriculum modification proposals require supportive evidence based on existing or proposed course or program learning outcomes.

Faculty members work collaboratively within schools and programs to establish clear expectations for student performance at the course and program levels. Those expectations are set forth in their course syllabi, using a university-wide syllabus template. Expectations for student learning are developed from faculty resources housed on the Provost's Office webpages, including the faculty handbook. The handbook and other supporting materials provide faculty with guidelines for teaching that include recommendations for establishing student learning expectations; setting a grading scale; curriculum development; and assessment of student learning. Course syllabi from fall 2020 demonstrate the faculty's ability to clearly communicate their learning expectations for students. Textbook information on course syllabi and on the campus bookstore website also reinforce course-level learning expectations; course-level grading scales are outlined on syllabi, and the institution's grading system is explained in the academic catalog.

Faculty members oversee the assessment process within their classrooms, but also share in the responsibility for institutional assessment. LSSU updated its assessment processes in 2019, setting new base-level standards by which faculty assess course, program, and institutional outcomes:

- Course learning outcomes (CLOs) are approved by Deans, and faculty assess those outcomes in their own courses. Nuventive™ Improve is the primary reporting tool for assessment data. Assessments are conducted every time a course is taught; with School, Chair and/or Dean approval, some outcomes may be assessed bi-annually or on an agreed upon schedule, especially for courses with numerous outcomes. Faculty use assessment results to determine continuing improvements actions for each course, to be implemented in the next cycle of instruction.
- Program learning outcomes (PLOs) are developed collaboratively by Schools, and faculty review the PLO assessments in annual meetings. CLOS can be mapped to PLOs in Nuventive™. Collectively, program faculty evaluate assessment data and make recommendations to improve the curriculum at the program level.
- PLOs also map to the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) in Nuventive™. The links between types of learning outcomes are outlined in course syllabi. The full assessment process is described in greater detail under criterion 4.A.1.

Faculty are essential to the annual assessment process of the general education learning outcomes and institutional learning outcomes. Course-level general education outcome assessment data are recorded by faculty, and then submitted to the General Education Committee using an approved reporting form. That committee, comprised primarily of faculty, evaluate the data to determine future directions and improvements for the general education program. Course-level assessment data is also reported by faculty for ILO assessments conducted in capstone courses, and the University Assessment Committee reviews that data to determine institution-wide action plans; two faculty members represent faculty viewpoints and interests on that committee.

Through the Faculty Association, the Faculty Agreement, and academic school meetings, faculty participate in establishing academic credentials approved for instructional staff in their programs. Section 7.2.1 and section 10.2 of the Agreement outline the faculty-approved qualifications for each type of instructional appointment to the University. Faculty within schools also establish minimal credentials and qualifications they deem appropriate for their respective areas. All qualification standards set by faculty meet at least the minimum qualification standards specified in LSSU's Faculty Qualifications Policy, as posted on the Provost's webpage.

3.C.3

As described in LSSU's faculty qualifications policy, the University appoints all faculty members to positions based upon predetermined qualifications. Outlined in Faculty Agreement Section 10.2, qualifications are established by academic transcripts and professional experience and licensure. All University instructors, including adjunct, dual-credit, and concurrent enrollment instructors, are evaluated by program faculty and academic administration to ensure they are qualified, in accordance with the process described in Section 7.2.1 of the Agreement. The search process for hiring faculty is outlined in Appendix B of the Faculty Agreement, and national-level searches for all faculty positions ensure that LSSU meets the standards set for hiring qualified faculty. The Provost's Office maintains documentation of each faculty member's qualifications in connection with courses they are eligible to teach. Described in Appendix D of the Agreement, these Teaching Qualification Forms (TQFs) enable faculty to update their qualifications and request assignment to additional courses if they are eligible. LSSU publishes a full list of faculty and their academic credentials on the Provost's webpage, in accordance with HLC's Assumed Practice A.5.G. The University also publishes summary information on faculty and staff through the Employee Directory.

3.C.4

The University conducts faculty evaluations on a stated schedule in accordance with Section 8 of the Faculty Agreement. As outlined in Section 8.3 and section 8.6, probationary faculty are

evaluated annually, with a mid-probationary review conducted in the faculty member's third year of appointment (section 8.3.2). As described in Section 8.4, tenured faculty complete an annual Faculty Self-Evaluation, which is reviewed by their immediate supervisor. Faculty on Performance Improvement Plans also complete Annual Goals Assessments and report to their immediate supervisors on their progress to achieve those goals (section 8.5). The individual receives feedback from their immediate supervisor in a Goals Assessment Summary Evaluation. Section 8.7 of the Agreement lists the documents and the qualitative rating used for all evaluative processes. School faculty annually review adjunct lists to determine if they will receive future instructional appointments. Adjunct/Term faculty members receive an instructional evaluation at least once in each academic term they teach. The evaluations may be completed by an LSSU faculty member or by the College Dean. At least once each academic year (or after two non-consecutive semesters of teaching), adjunct/term faculty will receive a Summary Evaluation by the College Dean. Instructor evaluations are maintained electronically in the offices of the Deans.

3.C.5

To help faculty stay current in their disciplines and in their teaching practices, LSSU supports faculty professional development through provisions in Section 14.3 of the Faculty Agreement. Full-time faculty members receive \$1200 annually for professional development, increasing to \$1400 in 2022. Part-time faculty receive pro-rated professional development funds annually. Faculty may carry over funds from year to year for a total balance of \$4,500. Professional development funds are typically used for discipline-specific professional memberships, technology support, conference or research travel, or may be used in any way set forth in the Faculty Agreement. Faculty use of professional development funds in 2018-2019 are summarized in table below:

Faculty Use of PD Funds 2018-2019

Classification	Amount	Percentage
Travel out-of-state	\$38,677.74	41.3%
Travel in-state	\$13,896.83	14.9%
Professional Development	\$11,604.46	12.4%
Memberships	\$10,591.00	11.3%
Conferences	\$8,139.08	8.7%

Supplies-Other	\$4,040.90	4.3%
Computer Hardware	\$2,584.46	2.8%
Reference Books	\$1,976.85	2.1%
Miscellaneous	\$2,051.33	2.3%
Total	\$93,562.65	100%

Many faculty and staff participate in professional development each fall, as evidenced by the ‘Professional Development Day’ programs and feedback surveys from 2017-2019. LSSU also invites guest speakers to campus for professional development, as occurred for the 2019 faculty convocation featuring noted author Todd Zakrajsek. Additionally, the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETAL) hosts various professional development opportunities each year and provides extensive resources for improving teaching pedagogy. CETAL’s dedicated space can also be reserved by faculty to host meetings, trainings, or other events in support of professional development.

New-faculty orientations provide pedagogical professional development, along with overview trainings and resources to acclimate faculty to the campus community. This day-long orientation includes familiarizing faculty with LSSU resources and services, enhancing strategies in teaching and pedagogy, using the learning management system (Moodle), and understanding the importance of a syllabus. Post-orientation surveys provide CETAL staff with feedback to improve future faculty orientations. Moreover, Section 8.6.2 of the Faculty Agreement encourages probationary faculty to request one or more tenured faculty as faculty mentors to provide assistance, guidance, and ongoing evaluation. Further supporting new faculty in strengthening their teaching practices, Section 8.7.4.4.b of the Agreement excuses them from advising students during their first year at LSSU. In recognition of teaching proficiency, LSSU students and staff annually nominate deserving faculty for the Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award, honoring those faculty members who go above and beyond the norm to serve and support their students.

3.C.6

LSSU’s 16:1 student-faculty ratio gives students greater access to faculty. LSSU has no graduate assistants, and students interact regularly with their course instructors. Section 10.3.11 of the Faculty Agreement requires faculty to schedule at least five office hours weekly to assist students with course-related inquiries or academic advising. Office hours are published in course syllabi and outside faculty offices. Many LSSU faculty frequently exceed their minimum required office hours. Part-time/adjunct faculty are required to hold pro-rated office hours.

LSSU faculty members serve as academic advisors to students in their programs, and as advisors for student-led clubs or organizations and living-learning communities. Section 8.7.4.4.b of the Agreement details typical faculty-student advising tasks, including formal and informal academic advising, supervising student organizations, and assistance with career placement, graduate school applications, scholarship and other funding applications.

Faculty also are accessible to support students in their research, internships, or practica. Despite 2019-2020 coronavirus restrictions, 128 students completed internships, practica, or apprenticeships, for which faculty carried equivalent load as defined in Section 10.3.14.1 of the Faculty Agreement. Program-specific research further increases student-faculty interaction beyond the classroom, with faculty members working closely and collaboratively on research projects with students, as described in greater detail under Criterion 1.A.2. and 2.B.2. Examples of student-faculty and faculty-mentored research include:

- Prototype mobile or laboratory robotic cells for private companies;
- Portable gantry solution with machine vision system for an automotive company;
- Prototype automated fastener delivery system for an aviation company;
- Accelerator actuator prototype for an engineering company;
- Integrated Room Reservation System for Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District;
- Fisheries/Wildlife student's research project to remove an invasive stalk-producing alga from the St. Mary's River;
- Fire Science senior projects developed site plans for hazardous materials sites and emergency plans for school districts.

3.C.7

LSSU employs qualified students with a minimum-threshold GPA as tutors in the Academic Success Center (ASC). GPA thresholds vary slightly, depending on the position or courses to be tutored. Tutor training includes ASC policies, procedures, in-person/online customer service protocols, and skill workshops on active listening, practicing patience and sensitivity, establishing learner expectations, presenting a positive learning environment, and holding students accountable to practice what they learn. Trainees also practice applying those skills and strategies in role-playing scenarios. Supplemental Instruction tutors receive guidance and support from the faculty member(s) teaching the subject-specific course(s). COVID-19 safeguard training was added in fall 2020 to ensure health safety standards are met during tutor-student interactions.

Resident Advisors (RAs) in residence halls undergo extensive training on ethics, role modeling, communication, and community-building. Laker Success also employs student workers as Resident Success Coaches (RSCs) and Commuter Success Coaches (CSCs); student coaching staff training sessions include mental health awareness, building connections with students, safety management, and diversity. Laker Success training for RAs, RSCs, and CSCs includes

best practices for checking in with students, growth mindset support, and academic support strategies, among other services they must prepare to provide.

Campus Life staff participate in multiple training and professional development events. Administrative staff participate in professional development events through GEAR UP, Michigan Housing and Dining Service Officers, the Association of College and University Housing Officers, the Midwest and the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA), and many other organizations. Staff may attend virtual or on-site conferences, such as the Great Lakes Student Success Conference, the Higher Education Assessment Conference in Indiana, and First-Gen Forward courses. Many also attend job-specific webinars, Title IX Investigator training, Bystander training, ASIST suicide prevention training, or Adirondack software training, and other events.

Financial Aid staff and advisors receive on-the-job training under supervision from veteran staff, and may also attend conferences. Business Operations staff receive annual training to stay current with yearly requirements and changes. New personnel, including staff providing student support services, receive “onboarding” materials from Human Resources with their appointment letter, orientation documents, and resources. Human resources representatives thoroughly review orientation materials with each new-hire to explain University policies, Title IX, payroll, and benefits. New staff members receive on-the-job training specific to their position, and some may also attend professional development conferences related to their job. Examples of this additional training include Health Care Center and Food Service staff.

Faculty serve as academic advisors. Since 2018, the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning has provided multiple professional development workshops on academic advising, with sessions covering My Degree Plan, Using the Anchor Access Faculty Tab and Resources, Advising Methods (led by a previous Advisor of the Year recipient), and an Advising Panel forum. Section 8.7.4.4.b of the Faculty Agreement excludes first-year probationary faculty from advising, but beginning in their second year, Deans and peer faculty train probationary faculty members to help students register for classes, use My Degree Plan effectively, develop suitable advising materials, assist students with graduate school or scholarship applications, and more. The Provost’s webpage provides a faculty-developed advising handbook as an additional supporting resource.

LSSU faculty and staff complete annual Title IX training through a series of online modules. Students also receive Title IX training each year. Additional professional development opportunities are open to all personnel through the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETAL), including Professional Development Day, offered one week prior to the start of fall semester. In spring 2017, LSSU also brought Skillpath trainers to campus for non-faculty professional development.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

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

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

Argument

3.D.1

LSSU's student support services are wide-ranging and meet diverse student needs, including the large population of first-generation students. The University's Strategic Plan calls for systematic assessment to drive continuous improvement in student services (strategy 1.1.6). It also gives direction to equip students with tools that promote self-advocacy and growth mindset (strategy 1.1.7). Strategy 1.3.1 fosters further development of support services to address the unique needs of LSSU's many first-generation students. The plan also targets ongoing improvements to support services for: accessibility in physical and technological infrastructure (2.2.2); food insecurity (2.3.2); financial literacy education (2.3.4); emergency funding for students in need (2.3.5); optimal operational hours for support services (3.3.1); and other initiatives to continue improving support services to meet the needs of students.

With more than 59% of students identified as low-income, LSSU offers unique services to support those students. Provisions for low-income students include the Bud Mansfield Student Emergency Fund, an emergency food pantry, and clothing resources. During the pandemic, the emergency fund provided financial assistance to students unable to return home, or those lacking food, housing, and access to technology. LSSU's Foundation raised these emergency funds through a Match-and-Mask Campaign, which offered LSSU-themed protective masks for donations of \$30 or more. A \$10,000 challenge-grant was also issued if donations exceeded that amount by August 10, 2020. Funds raised by the Foundation to help LSSU's low-income students totaled more than \$38,840. The University added to that amount with over \$15,000 raised through its Giving Tuesday outreaches. Economically disadvantaged students can find "gently used" professional business attire for networking, career fairs, and interviews at Seamore's Closet. Student Government (SGA) allocated funds to purchase additional business attire in a wide range of sizes for this cause, and the Fisheries and Wildlife Club expanded the

Closet even further with the addition of winter-weather clothing for students who need it for coursework requiring outdoor activities. The Health Care Center also supports LSSU's economically disadvantaged students through its student health fund, which covers services for un-insured students as well as co-pays, deductibles and non-covered services of an insurance company; this ensures students have no out-of-pocket costs that would prevent them from seeking medical attention.

Addressing the financial needs of LSSU students, financial literacy is embedded in LSSU's strategic goal (2.3.4). The Financial Aid Office assists students to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and to navigate all aspects of financial aid processes. The department also supports current and prospective students through multiple resources and opportunities, including training webinars, seminars, workshops, open houses, entrance/exit counseling sessions, and FAFSA Fridays. Department staff frequently teach mini-sessions in first-year-experience University Seminar (USEM) courses. Staff are also continually developing new strategies that promote learning, leadership, and educational resources about student aid, budgeting, and financial health.

Students who struggle academically have access to tutoring through the Academic Success Center (ASC), or through the Individualized Plan for Academic Student Success (IPASS) program. The ASC provides free in-person or online tutoring for 100-200 level courses and select higher-level courses. Supplemental instruction (group tutoring) sessions are offered for historically challenging courses. Walk-in or scheduled appointments are available for the Writing Center and Math Center. IPASS works with struggling students to develop a plan to fit each student's unique needs, whether that requires developing better study habits, time management skills, help scheduling tutoring appointments, or regular support meetings with the IPASS coordinator. Information about the ASC and IPASS is published in all syllabi to ensure students know these services are available to support them.

Shouldice Library, Accessibility Services, Career Services, Testing Services, Registrar, Fletcher Center, Admissions, Student Affairs, Campus Life, and University Recreation provide additional student support services. While all service departments strive to meet students' needs with excellence, several areas structure services to meet unique needs of LSSU students:

- Shouldice Library personalizes assistance in-person or through online-chat, phone-in, and email. Librarians and library staff work individually with students, taking time to talk them through locating high-quality sources for academic projects, using software and technology tools effectively, citing references correctly, and supporting students with all things academic.
- Accessibility Services helps students with disabilities participate as fully as possible in University programs, services and activities. This office provides individualized assistive learning technology and other support as needed to students with documented needs. Accessibility Services and Testing Services also work together to coordinate accommodated testing.
- Testing Services offers convenient hours, and ensures that students with accessibility needs receive appropriate accommodations. This office also provides space to students taking makeup tests with permission of their instructor.

- The Laker Success program offers high-quality online resources as well as services with personal support, including Resident or Commuter Success Coaching and IPASS.

LSSU supports students in maintaining mental, physical, and social well-being through its University Recreation program (UREC), providing physical activity opportunities at varying levels of skill and intensity throughout each year for students. UREC activities include broomball, volleyball, basketball, disk golf, eSports, and a climbing wall. The Regional Outdoor Center (ROC) provides additional services of this kind through daytrips, workshops and sporting equipment rentals. When possible, an outdoor ice rink is also set up for students and staff.

Campus Life services receive dollars through the Student Activity and Media (SAM) Fee, paid by students enrolled on the main campus. SAM fees fund the University Activities Board, Student Government, and five other major student organizations recognized by the Student Constitution (i.e., The Big Seven), all of which coordinate activities. Typical student activities include Jitters Café events with live musical guests, Mackinac Bridge walk, outdoor movies, Lakerpalooza, visiting comedian performances, a Sault Locks Boat Cruise, first-year experience services like Laker Success, Title IX training, and goal-setting sessions. Snowfest, normally scheduled two weeks after students return to campus in January, offers Northern Michigan regional favorites like snow-tubing, skiing, snowboarding, and giveaways at hockey games. Each student pays \$45 per semester for access to all athletic events (based on space availability).

Campus Life hosts weekly events or social activities support students socially and recreationally. The “Jitters” coffee house and Laker Cinema movies are very popular with students. In 2018, Campus Life purchased the Involvio app to promote campus events and student activities on campus, and to track student attendance at events. This app also provides support for the Michigan King-Chavez-Parks Select Student Support Service (4S) grant, which funds trainings for LSSU staff that provide services to students transitioning to campus life. Lastly, Residential Life provides Seamore Shuttle to run select hours of transportation to many local stores, entertainment venues, and restaurants.

Prior to the spring 2020 semester, the IT Department doubled LSSU’s bandwidth capacity to provide better service to the University community; this upgrade was already in place when COVID-19 restrictions were put into place, easing LSSU’s transition to online instructional delivery. The IT Department developed and provided extensive support services to students and staff throughout the COVID-19 crisis, as described under criterion 5.B.1. Many other web-based student support services were expanded during the pandemic as well. For example, the Counseling Center sponsored virtual support group meetings and offered Telehealth appointments to serve students during that time. The Center also provided mental health wellness services and emailed mental health support resources to the campus community. The University website provides daily updates on the coronavirus dashboard to provide up-to-date information and announcements about COVID-19. The Academic Success Center provided fully online tutoring during the COVID-19 restriction period, and the library continued to serve students’ needs online and in-person. The Superior Simulation Center expanded hours to better meet

students' learning needs. The University purchased Zoom licenses for the entire campus and updated or added cameras and other hardware in classrooms and on faculty computers to support and ensure continuity of learning. These are just a few examples of how LSSU responded to the COVID-19 crisis to ensure that student support services were sufficient to meet the needs of its students.

3.D.2

LSSU provides learning support and preparatory instruction for all incoming students. ACT or SAT scores and/or the ALEKS math online placement test score (taken during orientation) direct initial student placements in math. Academic advisors use the placement scores to ensure entering students are directed into the courses and programs for which they are prepared. Placement scores, self-evaluations, writing samples, and sometimes previous experience, determine student placements into math, English, and reading courses. During orientation, students meet with a discipline-specific academic advisor who helps them register for the appropriate classes. If verbal and written skills indicate a student would benefit from additional support, they are urged to take a skill-building composition workshop course (ENGL105) in conjunction with First Year Composition I (ENGL110). Lower ALEKS, ACT or SAT math scores result in a recommendation to co-register for a one-credit "Building Mathematics Confidence" course in conjunction with MATH088. Transfer student orientations also include time working with academic advisors to ensure students are placed correctly into programs or courses for they are prepared; in addition, students receive instructions and information about policies, procedures, and support services to help facilitate their success.

Further ensuring that students enroll only in courses and programs for which they are adequately prepared, course requirements and prerequisites are clearly delineated in the catalog. Academic advisors work closely with students to enroll them in classes for which they meet minimum criteria. Anchor Access (LSSU's portal for the Ellucian Banner system) has built-in validation which only allows students to register in courses for which they satisfy the corresponding pre/co-requisites.

Data from previous years showed that 69% of the first-time-in-college freshmen who register for math classes in their first semester at LSSU test into a developmental-level math class, such as Beginning Algebra (MATH 088). Based upon that data, the mathematics department hired an instructor in 2019 with a strong background in teaching developmental math courses and implementing math-related student success strategies. This new faculty member has been instrumental in constructing developmental math approaches to serve LSSU's underprepared students more appropriately. The program addresses the needs of students who need extra support to achieve math skill levels that will allow them to move forward in their programs of study, and facilitates rapid progression through the developmental math course sequence. Incoming freshmen who need developmental math are encouraged in their first semester to enroll in the 7-week Beginning Algebra course (MATH088), and co-register for the "Building Mathematics Confidence" course. MATH088 incorporates proficiency-model homework tests at the end of each chapter, and require a minimum score of 80% to prove proficiency with the

chapter's concepts. Students may retake that proficiency test until they achieve a score of 80% or better. While students still have the option to enroll in the full 14-week Beginning Algebra course, taking the 7-week course allows students to enroll in Intermediate Algebra (MATH102) for the second 7-week half of the semester. Additional benefits are gained for students who co-register for Building Mathematics Confidence with the Beginning Algebra course. Providing both social-emotional learning supports and practical application math-based activities, this two-sided approach is purposefully constructed to improve students' self-assurance alongside their critical thinking skills. Many students are able to earn math credits sooner than was possible in the past, getting through their developmental math sequence in their first semester and moving forward in their second semester to take program level courses; this also increases the likelihood of completing their degree on time.

For several years, select LSSU programs have included first-year experience courses in their curriculum, and in fall 2019 the University moved to require first-year experience courses (USEM) for all freshmen. This decision was motivated by postsecondary research findings that support the effectiveness of first-year experience courses for students transitioning into college life. Each first-year experience course offers several unique elements, but all include outcomes designed to help students find and access the many support resources available to them at LSSU. All include elements to help students develop success strategies and connect with others on campus. Example syllabi from USEM courses illustrate the emphasis LSSU places on providing appropriate learning support and preparatory instruction to meet the academic needs of its students.

3.D.3

LSSU faculty serve as academic advisors, and are signally qualified to assist the students in their own programs to navigate the process to degree completion. Like LSSU's 16:1 student-faculty ratio, this faculty advising model underscores the value the University places on student-faculty relationships. Students are typically assigned a faculty advisor who teaches within the school of the student's major; exceptions may occur if a student requests a specific faculty advisor or another valid reason for an advisor change arises. First-year probationary faculty are not assigned advisees. LSSU's many first-generation and low-income students benefit from this advising model as they frequently work with their advisors on career placement, filling out graduate school or scholarship applications, and applying for funding (Faculty Agreement, 8.7.4.4.b).

LSSU launched a Class Climate[®] common advising survey instrument in 2015 that accommodates the distributed nature of advising at the institution and encourages consistent and relevant advising for each student. Early assessments led to revisions and improvements of the survey instrument questions. The current advising survey, presented in Appendix C of the Faculty Agreement, was adopted for the spring 2020 registration cycle; it covers faculty and student preparedness, thoroughness of advising session(s), and student recommendations to improve the advising process. Student advising surveys provide feedback to help faculty advisors continually improve their advising practices. The surveys also corroborate nominations for the

annual Faculty Advising Award, awarded each year to deserving faculty nominated by their advisees and colleagues.

As one of the four key areas of faculty effort, the Faculty Agreement states that 5%-20% of a faculty member's efforts will be dedicated to advising (Section 8.7.6.2). The majority of that effort is devoted to academic advising, although some portion may be allocated to advising student groups or organizations. As an identified essential areas, faculty evaluate their advising practices annually in their contractual Self-Evaluation and Reflection, which includes self-assessment of advising practices to identify those that are successful and those that should be targeted for improvement (Faculty Agreement, Appendix C). Advisors and advisees use My Degree Plan, an online degree-auditing tool maintained by the Registrar's Office, to correlate with each of the University's degree programs. Advisors and advisees can easily track degree completion progress through this My Degree Plan, and faculty training sessions for this tool are offered on Professional Development Day each year; students receive training during orientations.

An LSSU 2015 Momentum Points freshman survey discovered that many students were inadequately equipped to execute their academic plan each semester due to unposted midterm grades. The University responded quickly to ensure that advisors and advisees had access to midterm grades to plan appropriately for the next semester and for degree completion. Academic administrators worked with faculty to improve midterm grade reporting, and by fall 2020, the percentage of courses reporting midterm grades had reached approximately 95%. As explained in the embedded retention report under Criterion 4.C.1, LSSU also responded to student feedback and scholarly research by expanding its first-year experience USEM program across all curricular areas. USEM courses afford additional opportunities for faculty and staff to advise students informally in a classroom setting, engaging students in goal-setting activities and fostering help-seeking behaviors. The posting of midterm grades and the groundwork laid in USEM courses strengthen LSSU's student-centered advising processes. Additionally, the Faculty Advising Handbook, updated in 2020 by the Chairs' Committee on Advising, supports faculty with resources and guidelines to provide individualized, student-centered advising. Program Chairs collaborated to ensure that the updated handbook includes supporting content and resources for using My Degree Plan and Degree Works, both of which were launched 2018 to strengthen the advising processes at LSSU.

Non-academic informal advising also occurs through student support areas like Career Services and the Counseling Center, and frequently through casual staff-student interactions. Career Services provides student access to the Central Network (CCN) online job portal, and to "Seamore's Closet," furnishing "gently used" and new professional business attire. Career Services also gives guidance for career fairs, interview assistance, résumé and cover letter writing, and paid work experience opportunities arranged through Michigan Works and local employers. The Laker Success resident success coaches in the dorms and commuter success coaches in the Laker Success offices provide peer mentoring, with support services that include mental health and growth mindset support, as well as academic support strategies. The IPASS program (Individual Plan for Academic Student Success) supports struggling students by providing one-on-one counseling and strategies to help students reach their academic goals.

3.D.4

Technological Infrastructure

LSSU's technological infrastructure was strengthened in January 2020 by doubling the bandwidth capacity of the University. The institution had sufficient technology infrastructure in place to meet the challenges of COVID-19. The Information Technology (IT) office responded with purchases of Zoom licenses for the entire University, available to all students, faculty, and staff. IT also provides quality classroom technology to support effective teaching and learning, including instructor computers and associated hardware, network connectivity, webcams, and document cameras. All PC's in computer labs are leased, and are always less than five years old. IT staff maintain and provide support for all University computers and install all software, and IT staff are trained for all AV classroom setups. WiFi (802.11g) hotspots provide campus-wide coverage, and IT's 10-year budget plan ensures all network equipment is current and suitable for the institution's needs. Four on-site staff are dedicated to manage the Banner SIS system, which supports underlying functions required to carry out effective teaching and learning.

Students and faculty use the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS) for online, blended, and face-to-face courses. LSSU's Moodle is hosted by Moonami Learning Solutions and provisioned on Amazon's AWS high performance, multi-tier fault tolerant, auto-scaling cloud hosting architecture. Embedded supporting tools for effective teaching and learning include Turnitin (plagiarism checker), BigBlueButton (virtual classroom), Zoom (meetings/virtual classroom), iClickers (student classroom feedback), H5P (increase student engagement), and Remote Proctor Now and Respondus for online test proctoring. Many faculty choose to use publisher content for their Moodle courses, including coursepacks from Cengage, McGraw Hill, Pearson, and McMillan. Many faculty-requested Moodle also plugins also benefit faculty and students. Asynchronous student support is available primarily through the preparatory Student Moodle Orientation module. Asynchronous faculty support is available through the Faculty Moodle Resources module. LMS training opportunities are offered synchronously, asynchronously, and individually to faculty and students as needed, covering topics such as effective online lecture delivery, online test proctoring, and bridging the digital divide. Online LMS resources typically include how-to videos, and additional synchronous support is available to faculty and students through the Helpdesk and Moodle Support, Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, and via email outside of those hours. In addition, users receive informational emails several times each semester from the LMS administrator to help them navigate and use Moodle successfully.

Facilities Infrastructure

Strategic plan strategies 5.B.1 and 5.C.3 laid the groundwork to augment and support teaching and learning on campus through adjustments to lighting and temperature environmental conditions in the buildings. LSSU's Johnson Controls initiative has provided learning-conducive brighter LED lighting and greatly improved electrical and temperature infrastructure across campus. Additionally, this initiative installed card access entry to many laboratories, residential

halls, academic, and administrative buildings, and has also installed more efficient HVAC in buildings. These improvements support effective teaching and learning by reducing extraneous cognitive load that might otherwise interfere with those processes.

Laboratories and Active-Learning Facilities

LSSU has many technical labs and specialized facilities that invigorate teaching and learning. Discipline-specific technological labs and facilities offer hands-on experiential learning, as evidenced in:

The Robotics and Engineering Lab, located in CASET Hall, extends high quality learning opportunities to students:

- LSSU ranks highly among top public universities in the nation with an industrial automated robotics systems specialization at the undergraduate level.
- The \$2 million Robotics and Automation Laboratory was recognized by the Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission (ETAC) of ABET as one of the more complete and advanced of its kind in the country.
- The Robotics Lab is one of the best educational facilities in North America, with modern equipment including collaborative robotics, vision systems, sensors and rotary index tables, using a variety of software and programmable logic controllers. (PLCs). Limited enrollment provides extensive personal experience with state-of-the-art equipment.
- More than 75% of engineering classes, including robotics, have a laboratory component using industrial grade equipment.
- Companies involved in robotics and automation specifically seek out LSSU graduates.

Nursing labs include a full cadre of assessment technologies from laboratory grade measures (e.g. VO₂, ECG, blood chemistry profiles) to performance (e.g. force production, movement analytics) to therapeutic modalities (e.g. laser therapy, ultra sound, electro-stimulation) and more.

The Superior Simulation Center in the Arts Center building provides an immersive clinical simulation learning environment in a hands-on healthcare setting. The Center presents learners with real-world scenarios and conditions, empowering them to use critical thinking and research-based knowledge as they make judgments to implement quality care actions in a safe environment. These active-learning practice conditions ensure graduates will be well equipped to facilitate disease prevention, health promotion, health maintenance, health restoration and rehabilitation. The Center provides challenging, immersive simulation training for nurses, paramedics, and other health care professionals in LSSU's healthcare-related programs, for healthcare workers in surrounding regions, and through continuing education and competency assessments for staff at War Memorial Hospital.

The Cannabis Chemistry laboratories are funded by Agilent Corporation, with state-of-the-art facilities that provide students with practical hands-on experience using the latest chemical instrumentation to prepare and test complex plant material for contaminants. The lab offers:

- Liquid Chromatography Mass Spectrometer/Mass Spectrometer
- Liquid Chromatography paired with Time-of-Flight Mass Spectrometer
- Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometer (ICP-MS)
- Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) Spectrometer
- Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometer
- High Performance Liquid Chromatograph (HPLC)

The Geographic Information System (GIS) Lab provides hands-on experience with a variety of GIS systems, including the Environmental Systems Research Institute's (ESRI) suite of tools; the basics of geospatial analysis; and advanced skill development in interpretation of remote sensing data and aerial photographs, spatial statistics, and geospatial programming.

LSSU's science labs offer modern instrumentation and facilities rivaling larger institutions in the region, along with the Superior Analytics Lab providing environmental analysis services to state, federal, and local environmental monitoring programs.

The Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE) supports Goal 1.1 of LSSU's strategic plan to revitalize and supplement academic offerings and promote transformational growth. CFRE's own strategic plan establishes six goals to foster that growth. The Center promotes LSSU as a leader in high-impact education, and serves as a Great Lakes region research hub. It provides real-world, transformational undergraduate education in freshwater science and stewardship, and is an internationally-recognized research program in Great Lakes freshwater science. The Center's education program also produces freshwater stewards among pK-12 students and community members. Scheduled to open its new facility on the St. Marys riverfront in 2021, CFRE will provide office spaces and research labs dedicated to fish culture and management, emerging contaminants, and invasive species, as well as dedicated spaces for public outreach, community engagement, and a K-12 discovery room.

LSSU is a member of Apple's University program, and students have 24/7 access to the computer science labs and the software to learn how to create mobile applications for Apple devices. Students in the mobile applications programming course use Apple laptops to develop iPhone applications. Using VMWare and virtual machines, students gain experiences across multiple operating systems and programming languages; students learn multiple programming languages including Python, C/C++, Java, Perl, Lua, JavaScript, PHP, Swift, SQL (MySQL/SQL Server), and ASP with MVC.

Library

Shouldice Library resources for teaching and learning include quality personalized information and educational services provided directly by staff. Informational and instructional resources also include:

- Learning Commons and computer labs
- Research assistance
- Library instruction in the library or classrooms
- Course reserves
- Library Collections (+130,000 print volumes, +220,000 ebooks, +100 research databases, a map collection, and extensive collection of regional historical materials)
- Library Outreach Programming with speakers to stimulate non-traditional learning
- Electronic devices checkout (Laptops, iPads, video cameras, Swivl, digital audio recorders, presentation clickers, etc.)
- Academic Success Center – Free tutoring for enrolled students, Writing Center, Math Center, and Supplemental Instruction
- Testing Services – accommodated testing and makeup exams
- Accessibility Services – accommodations and support resources for students with documented needs
- Career Services – access to the online job portal Central Network (CCN), and to “Seamore’s Closet” (free professional business attire for interviews, career fairs, etc.). Assistance for interviewing, résumé/cover letter writing, and paid work experience opportunities through Michigan Works and local employers.
- CETAL: The Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning – faculty support and resources, and a venue for staff and student events
- Study Abroad
- Study and meeting rooms, including four video-conference rooms
- Joint library card program with local libraries
- Multimedia Studio under development for faculty and students to create and edit their own digital materials

Performance Spaces

LSSU’s Art Center provides “international enrichment experiences through the Arts with programming designed specifically to meet the needs of students.” Performance spaces include a 674 seat ADA compliant auditorium and stage performance area of approximately 2000 square feet. The Center also offers the Black Box Theater, a music and dance studio, and a main lobby that hosts performances or exhibits as needed. As evidenced in scheduled events from 2019-2020, the Center brings a variety of high quality performers to campus. Artists hosted by the Arts Center in 2019-2020 broadened student understanding of other cultures, and fostered learning for LSSU’s “intercultural competence” institutional learning outcome.

Museum and Gallery Collections

The Arts Center Gallery also offers culturally enriching exhibits through its permanent collection of Native American and Western Art and distinctive shows by various artists ranging from “The Landscape of the Guitar” and “Painting Wilderness” to “M.O.D. Metal-Oil-Dirt Show”. The Arts Center Gallery and the Library Art Gallery both exhibit art from regional artists and from LSSU students. University museums and galleries also include the Ernest Kemp Mineral Resource Museum, focusing on exhibits of geology, resources, and society, and the Gil Gleason Natural History Museum, both housed in Crawford Hall.

Internships, Practicums and Clinical Placements

Many LSSU programs offer expanded learning opportunities to students through internships, practicums, and clinical placements. These opportunities include:

- Medical Laboratory Science, Clinical Concentration – clinical experience is included in the MLS-Clinical Concentration degree through four clinical sites: the laboratory at War Memorial Hospital in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan; the laboratory at Helen Joy Newberry Hospital in Newberry, Michigan; the laboratory at Mackinac Straits Health System in St. Ignace, Michigan; and the laboratory at Schoolcraft Memorial Hospital in Manistique, Michigan. Student rotations at these sites require performance of routine clinical laboratory testing in clinical chemistry, hematology/hemostasis, blood bank, microbiology, immunology/serology, and urinalysis. As required by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS), student clinical experience must include those elements.
- School of Education – clinical experiences include fieldwork in local K-12 schools throughout the program. Teacher candidates begin fieldwork in their second Education course, working with individual students and small groups to mature their teaching perspectives and practices. Clinical experiences align with Course Learning Outcomes assessed in related assignments, and responsibilities increase as students progress through the program. Prior to senior year student teaching, candidates have already taught multiple lessons in a K-12 setting through these clinical experiences, preparing them to quickly and effectively assume classroom responsibility in their student teaching semester. Clinical experiences vary, and candidates are placed at various levels in multiple schools to gain diversified perspectives about teaching. To further support effective learning for teacher candidates, subject-specific focus groups were formed in 2019-2020 with School of Education faculty, Eastern Upper Peninsula teachers and administrators, and Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District curriculum specialists to examine assignments related to fieldwork. Assignments in Literacy, Mathematics, Science, and Special Education were refined or reworked to align more fully with current instructional practices.
- Lukenda School of Business – internships throughout Michigan, other states, and Ontario are available to students in accounting, marketing, finance and economics, management, entrepreneurship, and marketing programs. Accounting students may also enroll in a one-credit Income Tax Practicum course and volunteer to prepare free tax returns for community members through the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program; students train on VITA software, earn IRS certification, and community members schedule appointments through United Way.

- School of Criminal Justice – students intern in agencies of their own choosing, depending on the career path they have chosen. Internships include placements in local police or sheriff departments, state policy agencies, federal agencies (e.g., forestry service or FBI), district attorney offices, or an alternative track a student might choose.
- Fire Science – students choose placements based on personal interest, such as private agencies conducting fire safety inspections, insurance companies conducting investigative work, local fire departments, areas assigned to wildland fire control, etc.
- School of Nursing – nursing interns learn at War Memorial Hospital or other regional medical facilities. Primary clinical nursing experiential learning is obtained at local hospitals and community agencies and in the surrounding area, or in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. Multiple clinical placements are required throughout the second, third, and fourth years of study. Diverse clinical experiences provide nursing students with a broad foundation in the many focus areas in healthcare careers.
- Kinesiology – internships are selected based on students’ career goals, ranging from physical therapy clinics to sports compliance offices. Volunteer work with Special Olympics is another opportunity for students to broaden their experiences working with a variety of populations. Placements throughout the community include working at the Sault Tribe Recreation Center, War Memorial Rehab Center, and other locations throughout the state and Ontario.
- Parks and Recreation – students are typically placed in state parks, serving in a variety of roles ranging from campground or park maintenance to serving as guides or conducting park activities.

LSSU’s hands-on learning opportunities afford students an innovation-driven, transformative education, enabling them to demonstrate their potential, encourage their success, and facilitate their social mobility as they prepare for their future careers.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

LSSU provides high quality undergraduate programs to its students, offering 50 baccalaureate degrees, 25 associate degrees, 63 minors, and 8 certificates in wide-ranging disciplines. All programs are carefully developed by faculty in the appropriate School, and reviewed for approval by Deans, by the University Curriculum Committee, by the Provost, and by the Board of Trustees. All faculty must meet the qualifications set forth in the University's Faculty Qualifications Policy and by the established School and program requirements. Full-time faculty are evaluated according to the process outlined in the Faculty Agreement, and adjunct faculty are evaluated on a set schedule by program faculty or Deans.

Faculty have access to professional development through University events and through an annual professional development fund allowance. Facilities and resources for faculty and students are well able to meet educational needs, and LSSU trained staff support students through services that include tutoring, testing services, financial aid advising, academic advising, cocurricular activities, the Health Care Center, the Counseling Center, funding sources, a food pantry, and a clothing resource.

The general education program assesses seven distinct learning outcomes designed to impart broad knowledge, growth opportunities, and lifelong skills that equip students to live and work in a multicultural world. The General Education Committee reviews assessment data each semester to drive continuing improvements for student learning within the program.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

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

Argument

4.A.1

As directed in LSSU's 2016 Reaffirmation Review and 2018 Focused Visit Team Report, Criterion 4.A.1 comprises the University's embedded report on program reviews. The following embedded report details actions taken by the institution to strengthen its program review and assessment practices in support of the University's continuous improvement efforts.

Embedded Report: Program Review

Program reviews are conducted on a five-year cycle at LSSU, with the most recent 2018 cycle posted on LSSU's assessment webpage, along with connected assessment.

Academic Programs

- Arts and Letters - Academic Programs Review
- Business - Academic Programs Review
- Criminal Justice and Fire Science - Academic Programs Review
- Education - Academic Programs Review
- Engineering - Academic Programs Review
- General Studies - Academic Programs Review
- Kinesiology and Social Sciences - Academic Programs Review
- Math and Computer Science - Academic Programs Review
- Natural Resources and Environment - Academic Programs Review
- Nursing - Academic Programs Review
- Science and Medicine - Academic Programs Review

Cocurricular Programs

- Library/Academic Services - Cocurricular Program Review
- Student Life and Retention - Cocurricular Program Review

Administrative Units

- Athletics Department Assessment Review
- Business Operations Assessment Review
- Center for Freshwater Research and Education Assessment Review
- Enrollment Management Assessment Review
- Foundation Assessment Review
- Human Resources, Safety and Risk Assessment Review
- Regional Centers Assessment Review
- Registrar's Office Assessment Review
- Sponsored Programs Assessment Review

Program-specific actions taken after their program reviews include:

- Lukenda School of Business used program review to evaluate data from the Major Field Test given to all seniors. Results identified low student scores in Quantitative Business Analysis and Information Systems areas. Actions taken include hiring a management professor with a strong quantitative background, and adding courses in information systems and analytics to the common professional component of all business bachelor degrees.
- Computer Science and Computer Networking program reviews identified weakness in students' professional communication skills. Actions taken include adding a requirement for ENGL306 for the BS Computer Science program. Noticeable improvements in student performance within one year led faculty to make the same changes in the BS Computer Networking program in the following year.
- The Engineering program review evaluated student feedback on a professional ethics outcome, which students argued took too much time and attention away from effective

capstone project completion. Faculty determined an appropriate action to address this issue was to bring in a qualified philosophy and ethics instructor from LSSU's College of Education and Liberal Arts to teach an ethics unit to seniors. After one year, the 2018 program review evaluated follow-up student feedback on that action, which was positive, and are continuing that practice.

- The Psychology program review helped guide full restructuring of that program. Faculty members revised the curriculum to adopt the American Psychology Association's standards as program outcomes and corresponding assessments. The changes follow a STEM approach and expose students to a research focus early in the program. Capstone research project work now starts in the junior year. Additional lab courses have also been incorporated into the curriculum.
- The Biology program discussed concerns about low acceptance rates to graduate schools for students majoring in the veterinary concentration. Because there is only one veterinary medicine school as compared to six medical schools in Michigan, LSSU graduates applying to veterinary schools face lower chances of acceptance than medical school applicants. Until recently, there was no clearly-defined alternative training route for these students, so LSSU developed a new "Animal Health" concentration to the Biology program that focuses more on animal-related experience and connections with local vet clinics and farms, rather than on veterinary school academic prerequisites. Program faculty expect this concentration to attract new students and to equip existing students with skills and professional connections for success in a variety of animal-related occupations.

LSSU program reviews inform planning and budgeting decisions, with provisions to accomplish that written as action initiatives in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. Strategic plan strategy 3.1.2 emphasizes the value LSSU places on program review, and calls for regular evaluation of academic programs "for overall effectiveness, financial viability, and enrollment growth potential." Goal strategy 1.1.6 resolves to strengthen assessment practices across the University to drive continuous improvements in all programs and services. Five-year program reviews in 2018 used an approved template tailored to each type of unit.

In keeping with LSSU's commitment to continuous improvement, the program review process was reevaluated following the 2018 review cycle closure. The University Assessment Committee examined the alignment of LSSU's 2018 program review process to HLC's revised Criteria for Accreditation, and reaffirmed the importance of fostering the University's culture of continuous improvement driven by assessment. Feedback received from Deans, Chairs and faculty who filled out the 2018 academic program review documents recommended adjustments to improve the process and to make it more meaningful and timely. Based on that feedback, the University Assessment Committee will revise the program review templates for the 2023 reporting cycle. The revised academic program review template will include a reporting section for program-level data-driven action plans; the data will be integrated into the five-year program reviews from meeting minutes recorded in a newly initiated Annual Assessment Update meeting cycle. The Annual Assessment Update meetings for academic programs were approved by the University Assessment Committee in fall 2019, and will help redistribute some of the data collection requirements included in the five-year reviews. Annual academic program update materials will include meeting minutes and four-column assessment reports from yearly

program meetings, which will be consolidated and embedded within the full five-year program reviews. The annual updates completed by academic program Deans and Chairs expand LSSU's ongoing loop of assessment-actions-assessment and help foster a culture that values and relies upon assessment. Chairs compile and draw the previous year's assessment data for course-level, program-level, and institutional learning outcomes from Nuventive™ Improve (formerly Tracdat). Chairs present the assessment findings to their faculty at the annual program meetings held within the first few weeks of each semester; faculty review, discuss, and make program decisions based on the previous year's assessment data contained in those presentations. Action plans for programs may include continuous improvement initiatives, program budget decisions, or program changes. The charge to record minutes at annual program assessment meetings was new in 2019-2020, but deemed important to the Annual Update process by the University Assessment Committee and the Provost Council. Some spring 2021 and fall 2020 meeting schedules were impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, and annual assessment update processes were extended throughout the fall 2020 semester.

As a part of the five-year program review process for academics, the Annual Assessment Update meetings provide opportunities for faculty to make data-driven decisions about their programs. Section 13.2 of the Faculty Agreement authorizes faculty to propose program changes to Deans and to the Curriculum Committee; this includes changes to existing courses, additions of new courses, suspensions of single courses or entire programs, and budget requests to support programs. Faculty plan for and track program improvement and program budget actions in the annual assessment update meetings tied to the program review process. Faculty may propose and submit the appropriate change request forms to the Curriculum Committee and/or the General Education Committee. Examples of meeting minutes from LSSU's first year of annual update reporting provide evidence to illustrate a strong commitment among LSSU faculty to use program review and program assessment to continuously improve their programs. In late spring or early summer each academic year, program-level annual update meeting minutes and Tracdat reports are reviewed by the University Assessment Committee to provide feedback and recommendations to the faculty.

Program/departmental review and assessment for cocurricular or administrative areas is similar to that conducted in the academic areas. Administrative and operational unit five-year reviews will incorporate annual assessment data and departmental meeting minutes or notes. Departments are encouraged to share data in regularly scheduled meetings, and to use that data to plan for continuing improvements of operations and services and to determine budget needs. The five-year Departmental Reviews for all units is analogous to the cycle for Academic Program Reviews. Data can be tracked in Nuventive™ to generate 3-column reports, which can help direct continuous improvement planning within units. All 2018 completed five-year reviews are posted on the University's assessment webpage.

Co-curricular, extracurricular, and support service programs perform annual assessments to inform and guide decisions and planning, providing diverse data for program-specific assessment as well as LSSU's Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) assessment. Data are reported in Nuventive™. Corresponding to academic program assessments, assessment data collected in other areas are used each year to make continuing improvements. As with academic annual

updates reports, these assessment reports will constitute a part of the broader five-year Program Reviews. Examples illustrating data-driven improvements include:

<p>Accessibility Services:</p> <p>1) Student survey responses and housing requests both indicated ongoing annual increases in the number of requests for Emotional Support Animals (ESA). ESA requests increased by 89.4% over the past three years (2018-2020).</p> <p>2) Student survey responses and housing requests both indicated ongoing annual increases in the number of requests for private rooms / private restrooms increased by 55.5%.</p>	<p>Assessment-driven action plan:</p> <p>1) LSSU elected to make LSSU a “Pet Friendly” campus in late fall of 2020, allowing any student desiring the support of an animal to bring one to reside on campus with them. This change also eliminates any prior stigma attached to ESA requests.</p> <p>2) The Living Learning Community Row Houses underwent a renovation to increase accessibility by adding a private ADA compliant restroom near the students' living area. This update makes the Living Learning Community Row Houses another residential option to LSSU’s disabled students.</p>
<p>Academic Success Center:</p> <p>While online tutoring was available prior to COVID-19, the crisis provided an excellent opportunity to re-evaluate those services. The Writing Center was chosen to pilot a fully-online and full service tutoring model.</p>	<p>Assessment-driven action plan:</p> <p>The Writing Center developed and tested online form submissions and an online appointment scheduling system through Google Meets. Through the success of this pilot, the ASC was able to adapt services for the Math Center and for all SI and tutoring through Google Meet. The ASC is continuing to research ways to expand marketing for these services in order to more fully engage the entire student population.</p>
<p>Career Services:</p> <p>Student usage for the Symplicity online job board and career services management platform was assessed, with results showing low student usage (only 300 students and 38 employers) over a 5-year period.</p>	<p>Assessment-driven action plan:</p> <p>After reviewing other platforms to compare features and cost, LSSU adopted the lower-cost College Central Network career services platform. This platform also benefits students through tools like a resume builder, e-portfolio builder, internship specific job board, and a library of career/job search podcasts, videos and articles. The new platform was implemented in August of 2019, and after just over one year of use, a total of 403 students and 260 employers have activated an account.</p>

<p>In-Class Library Instruction:</p> <p>Per faculty requests, librarians present services and information literacy instruction in classes. Post-instruction surveys indicated 84% of students gained knowledge and confidence to complete assignments.</p>	<p>Assessment-driven action plan:</p> <p>To provide more help to the 15% of students who did not feel confident after instruction, and in response to open-ended responses requesting additional research-skills instruction, the library now offers: drop-in sessions in the instruction lab, and now promotes the sessions via the Communicate newsletter, social media channels, the LSSU app, and the digital signage monitors in the east and west lobbies of the Library building. In fall 2020, librarians also began to bring several print resources into all instruction sessions so that students can see the types of materials the library carries for their use.</p>
<p>Athletics:</p> <p>Data identified lower than expected student-athlete recruitment and student-athlete retention figures.</p>	<p>Assessment-driven action plan:</p> <p>Plans to rectify low recruitment and retention among student-athletes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering multi-year contracts to Head Coaches with bonuses based on performance benchmarks: a) team success, b) academic improvement, c) retention rates, d) balanced budget. Athletic team performance overall was improved for hockey, volleyball, women's basketball, men's and women's tennis, and cross country. GPA has been climbing upward at 3.112 in 2017-18 to 3.278 in 2019-20. Retention is consistently over 90% annually. • Improve student-athlete experience and retention with Alumni Mentoring programs, piloted 2018-2019. • Improve student-athlete retention by strengthening community bonds. Athlete volunteer programs are increasing student connectedness through events like United Way of the EUP Thanksgiving food distribution project, Annual White-Out Sexual Violence event with Diane Pepler Center, and the United Way Reading Buddies program for the EUP.

<p>Laker Success:</p> <p>Session data reporting student improvements in study skills, time management, financial literacy, and self-care are self-reported through post-session surveys. (Annual assessments are also subject to evaluation by external grant evaluator).</p>	<p>Assessment-driven action plan:</p> <p>2019-2020 post-session survey data led to adjustments and improvements discussion prompts, activities, and worksheets for 2020-2021 sessions.</p>
<p>Living Learning Communities:</p> <p>2019 data: indicated high connectedness with advisors for students in the Fisheries/Wildlife LLC and the Chemistry/Environmental Science LLC; less than 40% in Honors or First Responders LLCs. Social connectedness with LLC peers was higher in Chemistry/Environmental Science, Engineering/Technology, and Fisheries/Wildlife LLCs. Data in LLCs that scored highly provided more opportunities for residents to participate in academically-related experiences greater involvement with LLC advisors correlated with greater academic success among students.</p>	<p>Assessment-driven action plan:</p> <p>2021 increased support to LLC advisors to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule more time in advising engagements with students. • Increase community-centered programming. • Promote community collaboration. <p>2021 also opened two new LLC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laker Leadership. • Laker Spirit (1st-generation students) <p>Honors LLC scheduling monthly discussions on current topics, coordinating fundraising for Relay for Life, and sponsoring holiday events. Chemistry/Environmental Science LLC has new LLC Faculty Advisor.</p> <p>Emergency Responders LLC has new LLC Faculty Advisor.</p>

4.A.2

LSSU's Registrar's Office is responsible for transfer course equivalencies, and the University has a clear process for evaluating all the credit it transcripts. Staff from the Admissions Office and Registrar's Office coordinate the evaluation of previous earned credits equivalencies. Faculty members (typically school chairs) review any course(s) in question to determine transcribed credit. The Admissions staff oversee the process of transfer credit evaluation until classes begin in the student's first year at LSSU. Additional transcribed credit following the add/drop period of the student's first LSSU semester is processed in the Registrar's office, such as summer course credits earned by students at another institution.

LSSU's Transfer Equivalency Tool, housed within the Banner Student Information System, includes an up-to-date comprehensive list of all course equivalencies. Once transferable credit is confirmed with the equivalency tool, Registrar or Admissions staff enter the transferable credits into Banner. Using links on Anchor Access or the Admissions Webpage, prospective students can also use the transfer equivalency tool to determine if or how credits earned at other institutions credits will transfer to LSSU. While this tool provides a good overview of potential credit transferability, students are directed to verify all credit transfer information with the Registrar's Office and in the University's policy for approval of transfer credits.

The University's Prior Learning Policy, published in the academic catalog, outlines conditions under which LSSU will award credit for skills and knowledge gained through experiences outside of postsecondary education. The policy lists several options for experiential credit:

- successful completion of standardized examination programs, (e.g. CLEP, Advanced Placement, DAN TES)
- prior learning through credit recommendations of the American Council of Education
- successful completion of departmental examinations

LSSU may also award credit to students upon successful completion of an individual Prior Learning Portfolio. The portfolio must clearly "demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes for a specific course or set of courses," must be evaluated by program faculty, and must be approved by the Dean. Credits awarded under the prior learning policy are evaluated and processed as transfer credits.

LSSU relies on World Education Services (WES), or in some cases may also use Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE), to translate international transcripts received in languages other than English. The WES service provides LSSU evaluators with translations as well as information about degree and GPA equivalencies. LSSU faculty members (generally the school chairs) use this translated information to determine appropriate assignment of transcribed credit. These guidelines and related details are published in the Admissions section of the Academic Catalog under "International Students."

4.A.3

LSSU's policies ensures the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer. First transfer credits must be carefully evaluated by Registrar and Admissions staff and by program faculty, as described under criterion 4.A.2. Faculty members, Chairs, and/or Deans also must thoroughly review any courses submitted for transfer credit evaluation to measure equivalencies in comparison to an existing LSSU course. Policies for transfer credits are posted on the LSSU Admissions webpages, stating students must earn a C- or higher in a course in order to transfer the credit to LSSU. To provide policy guidance for transfer students, the University's Admission Transfer Student Information webpage clearly outlines GPA requirements, transfer credit options (equivalencies), financial aid and application info, and links to specific program transfer

requirements. This resource also references LSSU's general education policies related to its current transfer agreements, including:

- Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA),
- Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (MACRAO) transfer agreement,
- GECERT transfer agreement from Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology, located in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada.

The MTA and MACRAO agreements facilitate transferability of general education credits from Michigan community colleges to LSSU. Under these agreements, students transferring to LSSU with an associate degree awarded from a Michigan community college have their general education requirements marked as completed. LSSU will award credit for work completed while in high school when the criteria are met by students who have completed their Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in Michigan. As CTE articulation agreements are established and approved, they are posted on LSSU's Provost page, Academic Affairs: Career Technical Education.

4.A.4

Course Prerequisites and Rigor

LSSU ensures academic program and course quality through administrative oversight and the actions of the Curriculum Committee, as outlined in Section 13.2 of the Faculty Agreement. School faculty design the curriculum to ensure all courses meet appropriate levels of rigor. All new course proposals, as well as course or program change proposals, are submitted to the Curriculum Committee as directed in Section 13.2.3-13.2.5 of the Faculty Agreement. Standard curriculum change forms are available to faculty on the Provost's Faculty Resources webpage, and are submitted by school faculty to the Curriculum Committee. If the committee approves a proposal, it is forwarded for administrative review. Change forms require clearly stated listings of relevant prerequisites and measurable learning outcomes clearly stating expectations for student learning, ensuring that appropriate standards of rigor are being met. Course prerequisites are also listed in the academic catalog's course description. All syllabi must be approved by Deans, and must include prerequisite requirements and expectations for student learning, as evidenced in examples from fall 2020 syllabi. LSSU provides a standard institutional syllabus template, along with a template guide to assist faculty in preparing their syllabi. Rigor of courses is also maintained by Academic Dean reviews of student course evaluations, through program review, and through faculty collaborations in annual meetings scheduled as part of the program assessment update processes described under Criterion 4.A.1.

Expectations for Student Learning

Expectations for student learning are clearly outlined in Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), and Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). All program

and institutional learning outcomes are published yearly in the academic catalog. The ILOs are also publicly posted on the University's assessment webpage. LSSU's assessment processes verify and ensure that expectations for student learning are being met. As explained fully under criterion 4.B, those assessment processes include faculty reporting of course learning outcomes assessment and continuous improvement plans at the end of each semester, annual program assessments conducted at program meetings, and annual assessment of ILOs by curricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular areas, which are evaluated annually by the University Assessment Committee.

Access to Learning Resources

Students and faculty have ready access to comprehensive on-site and online learning resources through the library. Library staff assist faculty and students in-person or online, and library webpages provide easy-to-navigate and nimble connections to learning support resources. The library's Academic Success Center (ASC) provides visible and easily accessible learning resources for students, including writing and math centers, individual and group tutoring, and supplemental instruction for traditionally challenging courses. Library and ASC services and resources are available to all LSSU faculty and students from the main campus or off-campus.

The ASC Coordinator also works closely with Campus Life to coordinate learning support services for struggling students. Support services include "Laker Success," which is funded by a KCP grant and provides students with Academic Success Coaches in the residence halls and in the Student Engagement Center. Additional academic support is available through the IPASS Program, which "assists students in developing an Individualized Plan for Academic Success." Information about the IPASS program is included on the syllabus template used for all courses. All Laker Success programs are readily available and accessible to students in their dorms or in the Cisler Student Center; additional Campus Life learning-focused initiatives and events are offered at many locations across campus as well, ensuring high visibility for the programs.

LSSU's commitment to undergraduate research affords students additional opportunities for learning, and the University makes those opportunities more accessible through an undergraduate research fund. The fund grants students up to \$500 for research equipment, other research costs, and may also be used to cover travel expenses to present research findings at conferences. The Undergraduate Research Committee is comprised of faculty members from various disciplines, and funds are awarded twice each year.

Faculty Qualifications

As outlined in Section 7.2.1 of the Faculty Agreement, minimum academic credentials and relevant experiences relating to faculty qualifications are clearly defined for all faculty teaching at the institution. LSSU's Faculty Qualifications policy is aligned with HLC's Assumed Practices, and is a product of collaboration between the LSSU administration and the Faculty Association. As agreed by these bodies, each department has identified course-level faculty qualifications for full-time and adjunct faculty, as well as for faculty teaching in certification programs, Early College, or concurrent enrollment courses. HLC's most recently revised

Assumed Practices guided LSSU's faculty in the development of matrices that define minimum academic credentials and relevant experience expected for faculty who teach at LSSU. Led by the Deans of each College, this initiative produced specified qualification criteria for faculty teaching within programs. A full audit of faculty credentials and experience was conducted in 2017-2018 using these matrices, and all programs are staffed with faculty meeting these qualification criteria. Chairs and Deans verify that faculty teaching dual credit courses and other programs for high school students meet LSSU's faculty qualification standards.

Dual Credit Courses and Early College

Courses with enrolled dual credit students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to the University's established curriculum standards, as guided by Section 13.2 of the Faculty Agreement. Faculty collaboratively lead in the development of course or program learning outcomes within their schools and programs, as guided by resources posted on the University's assessment webpage or with direction from the office of the Vice-Provost for Accreditation and Assessment. As explained earlier for this criterion, all faculty-initiated proposals for new courses, new programs, and current course or program changes must be submitted on an approved form to the Curriculum Committee. Course learning outcomes are approved by the committee and by Deans, verifying that the learning outcomes are appropriate for the course or program. This process ensures equivalency of learning outcomes and expected levels of achievement across all iterations of a course.

The Director of Early College Programs works with Deans in each College to confirm every teaching candidate's credentials and experience, ensuring that the instructors and the courses taught for Early College meet equivalent standards as established for standard courses. The Upper Peninsula Early/Middle College Program is a partnership between LSSU and the constituent school districts of the Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District (EUPISD), and also with Charlton Heston Academy in St. Helen, Michigan. This five-year high school program allows students to earn a high school diploma and college credits simultaneously, leading to an associate's degree from LSSU or a Michigan Early/Middle College Association (MEMCA) technical certificate. LSSU has established agreements with twenty-one charter schools, including several high schools, and in some cases the University offers concurrent classes to students at those locations to earn LSSU course credit. Courses with enrolled dual-credit students, as well as off-campus courses taught at Charter Schools or at Eastern Upper Peninsula ISD schools, are taught either by vetted and qualified school staff members or by qualified LSSU faculty. Courses and programs offered for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to those same traditionally delivered courses and programs in the University's higher education curriculum.

4.A.5

Specialized accreditation are earned and maintained for specific programs at LSSU, in evidence of quality curriculum programming and education. A full list of specialized accreditations is posted on LSSU's accreditation webpage, including links to the accrediting

organizations. Feedback from specialized accrediting agencies helps guide the continuous improvement processes within the programs. Specialized accreditations include:

- Business: Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP)
- Chemistry, Forensic Chemistry, and Biochemistry: The American Chemical Society Committee on Professional Training
- Computer, Electrical, and Mechanical Engineering: Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC) of ABET
- Education: Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)
- Electrical and Manufacturing Engineering Technology: Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission (ETAC) of ABET
- Emergency Medical Technicians: CoAEMPS
- Firefighting: ProBoard Accrediting Agency
- Medical Laboratory Science: National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS)
- Nursing: Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)

4.A.6

As evidence that credentials awarded by the University meet appropriate standards for graduate preparedness for advanced study or employment, many LSSU graduates score equal to or higher than national averages on standardized qualification exams for their disciplines. Graduate preparedness is also evaluated through scores reported on the GRE and MCAT. Since 2010, the Lukenda School of Business pass rates for students taking the Major Field Test are typically above the national average. In fact, in spring 2019, the institutional percentile rank was 90% or above in seven out of nine categories, and 80% or above in the other two categories. LSSU students taking the national Fundamentals of Engineering exam had a 90% pass rate as compared to the national average of 78%. Nursing students taking the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN) also score well, with a 2014-2019 average first-time pass rate of more than 80%, and a 99.6% pass rate over the same period for students taking the exam more than once.

In addition, LSSU internally evaluates the success of its graduates to ensure that the credentials granted by the institution accurately represent the graduates' qualifications. Six months after degree completion, graduates receive an email invitation from Deans to complete a graduate survey. The email and survey instrument are standardized templates used across all Schools. Program faculty, Deans, and administrators use survey data to track placement rates and to obtain formative feedback from graduates; feedback is shared with program faculty to facilitate ongoing improvements within programs. For example, in Spring 2019, the graduates of the College of Science and the Environment had 100% placement in a job or graduate school for majors in Biology, Conservation Biology, Environmental Science, and Parks and Recreation. The overall response rate in the college was 74.1%. In the School of Education, 100% of graduates obtained employment, based on data from all graduates. Between 2017-2019, Michigan's three-year state effectiveness rankings place LSSU teacher education graduates as

“highly effective” or “effective” within the first two years that they taught in the state of Michigan. In the School of Nursing, 57.1% of graduates responded, and 100% of those respondents reported job placement. Using data from Fall 2018-August 2019, 97.6% of graduates in the Lukenda School of Business were employed or in graduate school with a response rate of 70%. In the School of Computer Science and Mathematics, 100% were employed or in graduate school based upon a 76.2% response rate. Lastly, 100% of graduates in the School of Engineering and Technology were employed or in graduate school based upon a response rate of 95.8%.

For graduates in the Spring 2020 cohort, the Dean’s Council under the leadership of the Provost set a goal of increasing the response rate in all areas and making the reporting and analysis of the data more uniform across the university as a whole. They also added a question related to the impact of COVID on the survey. The overall response rate for graduates was 84.1% and the response rates by College ranged from 70.5% to 98.5%. Of those that responded 89.5% were employed or continuing their education or both. Regarding the question “Has the COVID-19 pandemic caused the loss of a job or a job offer to be rescinded?” 30.8% of respondents answered in the affirmative.

While graduate survey data provides strong indicators for graduate success, those data alone are insufficient to gauge the effectiveness of LSSU’s academic programs. LSSU faculty look at multiple indicators to evaluate the success of graduates, and work collaboratively within their Schools and Programs to improve and ensure graduate success. Two other sources of data are exit interviews and programmatic advisory boards. Exit interviews are held for many programs including business, engineering, mathematics, nursing, and education. The data that these tools provide can result in programmatic changes. For example, in the School of Education data from surveys indicated the graduates did not feel confident in differentiating lessons for learners. To rectify this, material was added on differentiation in a required course and completing a book study; this action ensured that all faculty were more familiar with the topic and able to adjust their teaching to address that topic. As another example, discussions with the Professional Advisory Board for the Lukenda School of Business provided data that identified weak Excel skills among graduates. Based on that feedback, additional Excel learning activities were implemented in multiple business core courses.

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- INST_Registrar_Transfer_Credit_Requirements (page number 2)

- INST_Registrar_Transfer_Credit_Requirements (page number 5)
- INST_Registrar_Transfer_Credit_Requirements (page number 6)
- INST_Registrar_Transfer_Credit_Requirements (page number 8)
- INST_Registrar_Transfer_Credit_Requirements (page number 10)
- INST_Registrar_Transfer_Credit_Requirements (page number 11)
- INST_Registrar_Transfer_Credit_Requirements (page number 13)
- INST_Registrar_Transfer_Credit_Requirements (page number 14)
- INST_Strategic_Plan_2020-2025
- INST_Strategic_Plan_2020-2025 (page number 7)
- INST_Strategic_Plan_2020-2025 (page number 11)
- ST-AF_Commuter_Success_Coaching_2020
- ST-AF_Laker_Success_IPASS_2020
- ST-AF_Laker_Success_Programs_2020

4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Argument

4.B.1

As directed in LSSU's 2018 Focused Visit, Criteria 4.B.1 and 4.B.2 comprise the University's embedded report on assessment processes. The following embedded report details actions taken by the institution to strengthen its assessment practices in support of the University's continuous improvement efforts. Criterion 4.B.2 provides numerous examples illustrating how LSSU uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

Embedded Report: Assessment Processes

Learning-Focused and Measurable Learning Outcomes

Since 2016, LSSU has worked to restructure assessment processes to ensure that course and program learning outcomes are measurable, consistently articulated, and used to produce data that drives continuous improvements through an ongoing assessment–actions–assessment loop. LSSU's comprehensive Assessment Plan uses Nuventive™ Improve (formerly Tracdat), a hosted relational database for assessment, to collect, aggregate, and report all assessment activities, findings, and continuing improvement action plans. Leveraging the available tools in Nuventive™, faculty, staff, and administrators compile their assessment data to create reports that facilitate data review that helps guide decisions related to student achievement and institutional effectiveness.

Since 2018, all course, program, and institutional learning outcomes have undergone review and revision to verify they are learning-centered and measurable. To ensure each semester that all course learning outcomes (CLOs) are measurable and focused on student learning, faculty submit syllabi to their Deans for outcome reviews in week one of the semester. After reviewing the syllabi, Deans oversee any necessary faculty revisions to learning outcomes if they have not been approved as learning-centered and measurable. As a resource to guide effective CLO

development, faculty also receive the syllabus template and syllabus guidelines, which include detailed instructions for writing outcomes that are specific, student-focused, and measurable. Faculty are responsible to keep their CLOs updated on their course units in Nuventive™, and to outline the methods used to assess those outcomes. At the end of each semester, faculty report CLO assessment results in Nuventive™ along with a plan of action (called “Use of Results”) for continuing improvements based on those results. Nuventive™ enables faculty, Chairs, Deans and administrators to generate four-column assessment reports; those reports can be used by individuals and schools to evaluate current learning effectiveness and to direct changes as needed to improve student learning. Further assuring that CLOs are robust and appropriate to courses and programs, the Curriculum Committee must approve CLOs when a new course is proposed or course changes are proposed; this process also verifies that CLOs are measurable, and that they map suitably to the program learning outcomes.

LSSU’s 2020-2025 Strategic Plan supports the use of assessment data to drive institutional planning and budgeting, stating categorically that LSSU relies on “a strong culture of assessment and data-informed decisions to drive student success and University growth” (p. 9). Strategy 1.1.6 affirms LSSU’s “culture of cyclical and systematic assessment to drive continuous improvement and innovation in curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs and services.” Strategy 3.4.5 advances “budgeting that integrates planning, innovation, and assessment” based on “effective data for decision-making.” LSSU’s assessment practices align with these strategic plan goals. The learning-focused and measurable CLOs used for assessment of student learning within programs help facilitate and accomplish those goals at the course and program levels.

Academic Program Learning Outcomes and Assessment

Programs with specialized accreditations assess program learning outcomes (PLOs) appropriately to their specific accrediting agencies. In these programs, PLOs frequently must adhere to or directly reflect specific learning outcomes prescribed or recommended by those agencies. All PLOs are learning-focused and measurable, and are assessed using instruments or activities that accurately measure those outcomes, as illustrated in the following examples:

Program	Learning Outcomes	Measures
Elementary Education-Early Childhood BS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate content area knowledge in the design, implementation, and evaluation of experiences that result in developmental and learning outcomes for each child.. 2. Apply knowledge and understanding of young children's typical and 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing Intensive Assignment: large group/small group activity plans; MTTC Subject Test. 2. Writing Intensive Assignment: Individual Learner Assessment and

	<p>atypical developmental needs to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments for each child.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Demonstrate knowledge of systematic observations, documentation, and assessment strategies through the effective use of these techniques to promote positive outcomes for each child. 4. Demonstrate their understanding and value of the important and complex characteristics of children's families and communities in their development of respectful, reciprocal relationships and partnerships. 	<p>Plan; Student teaching final evaluation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Writing Intensive Assignment: Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) Integrated Report. 4. Writing Intensive Assignment: Family Involvement Plan; Student teaching final evaluation.
<p>Business Administration-International Business BS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply international business knowledge in the areas of management, marketing, economics, and business law. 2. Analyze how cultural, economic, geographical and political paradigms impact ethical issues in various international business decision processes. 3. Evaluate nature, significance and context of managerial activities as undertaken by leadership in various organizations in international business contexts. 4. Think critically to analyze and solve problems and effectively communicate legal issues pertaining to 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Term paper; capstone business plan. 2. Major Field Test (MFAT); Exit survey. 3. Case study analyses; Exit survey. 4. Written: Shipping document with terms; Exit survey. 5. Standardized Cultural IQ Quiz; Exit survey. 6. ETS Major Field Test in Business. 7. Capstone Business Plan project.

	<p>international business law and international business operations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity. This includes awareness of own cultural intelligence and awareness of the cultural intelligence of others. 6. Apply knowledge of business-core subjects. 7. Apply skills in research, communications and critical thinking. 	
Nursing BSN	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appraises a solid base in liberal education for nursing practice. 2. Synthesizes knowledge and skills in leadership, quality improvement, and patient safety to provide quality health care. 3. Evaluates research for potential application for evidence-based practice. 4. Designs knowledge and skills in information management and patient care technology in the delivery of quality patient care. 5. Analyzes health care policies, including financial and regulatory, directly and indirectly influencing the nature and functioning of the health care system. 6. Appraises communication and collaboration among health care professionals and patients to deliver high quality and safe patient care. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation: NURS 436 Critical Analysis paper 2. NURS 435 Nursing Management and Leadership capstone project and paper. 3. NURS 436 Critical Analysis Paper. 4. NURS 431 Cardiogenic Shock and Sepsis Simulation, VSIM (Virtual Simulation), DocuCare Electronic Health Record. 5. NURS 435 Financial Projection and Feasibility Study Paper. 6. NURS 431 Clinical SBAR Tool and Evaluation Tool; NURS433 communication simulations (2) (Suicidal /substance abuse & Delusional/Schizophrenia). 7. NURS 432 Ongoing Veterans Health Project; NURS 433 Family Assessment and OMAHA CCP. 8. NURS 431 Clinical Evaluation Tool.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Determines health promotion and disease prevention at the individual and population health levels. 8. Emulates professionalism and inherent values of altruism, autonomy, human dignity, integrity, and social justice. 9. Synthesizes nursing practice with patients, individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations across the lifespan and across the continuum of health care environments and the variations of care, the increased complexity, and the increased use of health care resources inherent in caring for patients. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. NURS 432 Clinical Evaluation Tool.
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In the same way that PLOs are assessed in programs with specialized accreditation, faculty in all programs work collectively to assess student learning through their stated program learning outcomes (PLOs). Assessment results for PLOs can be recorded in Nuventive™ each year; reports are generated and used to support data-driven decisions that facilitate continuing improvements for student learning in programs. Program outcomes are listed in the Academic Catalog under the program descriptions. In 2018 and 2019, faculty reviewed those outcomes to ensure they are learning-focused and measurable. Methods of assessment were aligned to PLOs to accurately measure each learning outcome. The table below provides example PLOs and measures of assessment for programs without specialized accreditations, as reported in Nuventive™:

Program	Learning Outcomes	Measures
Kinesiology BS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design individual and group level programs that promote physical activity, health, and improve quality of life. 2. Critically evaluate scholarly material and design an 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development and delivery of exercise prescription for community members. 2. Capstone research project.

	<p>evidence-based solution to a current research question in Kinesiology utilizing the scientific method of inquiry.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Critically evaluate and organize scholarly material to present an evidence-based point of view specific to cultural, historical, and philosophical dimensions of physical activity. 4. Analyze mechanisms for the delivery of physical activity at the individual and group level across various health, social and inter-generational stratification. 5. Analyze and communicate personal assets and deficiencies in the creation of professional career goals and objectives. 6. Evaluate, analyze, and demonstrate technical competency in the application of interventions at the individual and group level. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Writing Intensive Assignment. 4. Field Placement/Internship Evaluation. 5. Portfolio Review. 6. Field Placement/Internship Evaluation.
Biology BS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research and synthesize the primary literature for information relevant to a current scientific investigation. 2. Design and conduct a scientific investigation of a testable hypothesis or methodology using appropriate tools and techniques. 3. Communicate the results or outcomes of their scientific investigation in multiple formats. 4. Engage in professional activities related to the study 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capstone research project. 2. Capstone research project. 3. Capstone research project; research presentation. 4. Capstone research project; engagement in professional activities.

	<p>of biological sciences and practice good professional ethics in the execution of their senior research projects.</p>	
<p>Culinary Arts Chef Certificate</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate a repertoire of the basic principles behind the methods and techniques of preparing food for a commercial food and beverage operation. 2. Meet the expectations of patrons and regulatory agencies regarding sanitation and safety in a food and beverage operation, as well as, Implement a service plan to ensure assigned goals and expectations are met. 3. Explain and apply basic management principles of the food and beverage industry. 4. Demonstrate a repertoire of advanced culinary techniques in the food and beverage industry. This includes yeast breads, desserts, charcuterie, ethnic cuisines, salt-water fish and shellfish. 5. Apply basic front of house concepts and common practices to varying styles of service, describe basic bartending techniques and recipes, and explain the basic requirements of what it takes to give quality hospitality and service. 6. Explain the principles behind what a nutritionally balanced diet is, explain how to apply nutritionally balanced principles to the implementation of any food and beverage menu, and list 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Laboratory, Clinical, Skill/Competency Assessments; Exam/Quiz. 2. Exam/Quiz, both in-course and standardized. 3. Exam/Quiz, in-course. 4. Laboratory, Clinical, Skill/Competency Assessments; Exam/Quiz. 5. Exam/Quiz, both in-course and standardized. 6. Exam/Quiz, in-course. 7. Field Placement/Internship Evaluation.

	<p>the common dietary concerns of which chefs and restauranteurs need to be aware.</p> <p>7. Apply the skill and knowledge learned in the chef trade to the real time and fast-paced environment of the restaurant industry.</p>	
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The program-level assessment cycle timeline corresponds to the course-level assessment timeline. Early in each fall semester, program faculty attend an “annual assessment update meeting” to review program assessment data for the previous year. Program Chairs generate and use reports from Nuventive™ to lead discussions on PLO assessment. Deeper data reports map CLO and PLO data within the program, and PLOs can also be mapped to institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) to facilitate deeper discussions. In annual assessment update meetings, all faculty have the opportunity to participate in making data-driven decisions within their programs. This includes recommendations for course changes, program changes, budget requests, adjusting PLO assessment measures/methods, spending allocations, and work on program accreditations if that is needed. Meeting minutes record those recommendations, and minutes are later incorporated into the full-cycle five-year Program Review process, as described under criterion 4.A.1. This faculty-led procedure exemplifies LSSU’s culture of shared governance.

Assessment data for program concentrations are also reviewed in annual meetings to determine how effectively student learning needs and career goals are being met. Degree programs assess outcomes for concentrations in accordance with their overarching program goals. For example, the Elementary Education and Elementary Teaching Programs have three concentrations, each of which has specific outcomes to assess apart from those of the overarching Education BS program; however, the Biology Program assesses its concentrations through direct connections to the larger program learning outcomes. The table below illustrates these two different approaches used within programs to assess learning outcomes in concentrations areas.

School of Education	
<i>Concentration:</i>	<i>Concentration-Specific Outcomes:</i>
Elementary Education with Early Childhood Concentration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Candidates demonstrate their content area knowledge in the design, implementation, and evaluation of experiences that result in developmental and learning outcomes for each child. 2. Candidates apply their knowledge and understanding of young children's typical and atypical developmental needs to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments for each child.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Candidates demonstrate knowledge of systematic observations, documentation, and assessment strategies through the effective use of these techniques to promote positive outcomes for each child. 4. Candidates demonstrate their understanding and value of the important and complex characteristics of children's families and communities in their development of respectful, reciprocal relationships and partnerships.
<p>Elementary Education with Language Arts and Math Concentration</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Candidates will make instructional choices that consider the integrated nature of the language arts, the socio-cultural and dynamic nature of language, and the principles of rhetoric and communication. 2. Candidates will apply and value both prescriptive and descriptive grammars and conventions of English, demonstrating an appreciation for the dynamic nature of English as a language shaped by historical, social, and cultural influences. 3. Candidates will synthesize knowledge of genre, craft, and criticism to analyze texts. Candidates will value, apply, and recommend effective literacy and scholarship practices. 4. Candidates will be able to use mathematical processes, axiomatic systems, computing, algorithms, and logical reasoning to solve problems and communicate mathematical ideas. 5. Candidates will describe, analyze, and generalize patterns, algebraic relationships and functions using the tools of algebra and calculus. 6. Candidates will apply geometric principles in Euclidean, analytic, transformational and vector geometry to analyze geometric objects, form conjectures, solve problems and prove theorems. 7. Candidates will organize, analyze and interpret data, sets and relations using the tools of statistics, probability, and discrete mathematics. 8. Candidates make instructional choices that reflect the integrated nature of mathematical concepts and mathematical practices within and among the mathematical domains.
<p>Elementary Teaching with Concentration in Special Education</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Candidates utilize appropriate methods and instruments in conducting assessments of individual strengths and needs of students with learning disabilities. 2. Candidates develop, implement, and amend Individual Education Programs, Individualized Family Service Plans, and transition plans for students with learning disabilities.

	3. Candidates implement instructional and behavioral intervention strategies to create and maintain an effective learning environment for students with learning disabilities.
Biology – School of Science and Medicine	
<i>Concentrations:</i>	<i>Concentration-Specific Outcomes:</i>
BS in Biology: PreVet and PreMed Concentrations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students in the Biology, B.S. program, including the Pre-med and Pre-vet concentrations, will thoroughly research and synthesize the primary literature for information relevant to a current scientific investigation. 2. Students in the Biology, B.S. program, including the Pre-medical and Pre-veterinary concentrations, will design and conduct a scientific investigation of a testable hypothesis or methodology using appropriate tools and techniques. 3. Students in the Biology, B.S. program, including the Pre-med and Pre-vet concentrations, will effectively communicate the results or outcomes of their scientific investigation in multiple formats. 4. Students in the Biology, B.S. program, including the Pre-med and Pre-vet concentrations, will engage in professional activities related to the study of biological sciences and practice good professional ethics in the execution of their senior research projects.

General Education Learning Outcome Assessment

The General Education Committee reviews, analyzes, and regularly reports on assessment of student learning in the general education program. Built upon VALUE rubrics from the American Association of Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U) "LEAP Initiative" (Liberal Education and America's Promise initiative), the committee restructured its assessment processes over a three-year period from 2017-2020. The committee began developing its own internal assessment rubrics in 2017 to reflect LEAP's data-informed guidelines. Assessment rubrics were piloted and tested by faculty between 2017 and 2019 to verify reliability and construct validity. Faculty feedback from that review of the instruments resulted in revision to several rubrics to better suit the needs of the program. The rubrics were approved by the General Education Committee in 2019-2020 for full adoption, with a three-stage reporting process using template forms. The seven general education learning outcomes are listed in the Academic Catalog.

The three-stage assessment process adopted by the committee ensures that student learning is continually being assessed within the general education program, and that the program's learning goals are being met:

1. Form A, completed at the end of each semester by general education faculty, includes the internal assessment rubric instruments.
2. Form B, completed by general education subcommittees, compiles faculty data and are used by subcommittees to conduct a preliminary evaluation of all faculty data reported for each of the seven outcome areas.
3. Form C is a formal reporting tool presented by each of the seven subcommittees to the larger General Education Committee; form C reports the subcommittee's aggregate findings and preliminary recommendations for changes or improvements.

The General Education Committee reviews aggregate findings for each outcome area, discusses the subcommittee recommendations, and develops data-driven action plans, which are sent to the appropriate general education faculty members and Deans. In 2019-2020, examples of the committee's general education action plans to improve student learning in specific outcome areas included:

- Written communication: with many students failing to achieve citation/formatting proficiency, a citation formatting learning module is being created for the written communication general education courses;
- Mathematics: with only 72% of students achieving satisfactory scores for symbolic learning, common assessment questions were developed to assess symbolic learning across course sections and courses and grading disparities were eliminated; emphasis is being increased on symbolic learning in courses.
- Mathematics: to further improve student achievement on symbolic learning, faculty in MATH 111 College Algebra implemented a new online homework system called XYZHomework to improve student fluency with symbolic mathematics and to provide students with timely formative feedback on their progress.
- Natural Science: The previous assessment question for this outcome was too undefined to produce meaningful assessment. The assessment question was made more rigorous for fall 2020 by requiring the students to derive the equation. Preliminary 2020-2021 data indicate students are meeting this outcome. The current textbook will be replaced for fall 2021 to adjust topic coverage to include a more forensic science perspective.
- Natural Science: In response to unsatisfactory assessment results for the general education outcome in CHEM108, the ALEKS system (adaptive artificial intelligence system that continually probes student learning) was introduced in fall 2020. Students receive individualized feedback and reinforcement for this learning outcome. Early data indicates the system was successful in helping students achieve the general education outcome. However, the question pool will be refined to eliminate complex multi-part questions which discouraged students early on. Additional resources to assist students to specifically overcome the formatting issues with the online system are needed.

In 2019-2020, the committee's general education action plans to improve the collective program included: scheduled meetings with subcommittee members and faculty in outcome-specific

general education areas; subcommittees ensuring that assessment data is not reported solely on the basis of a single assignment; and Deans following up with adjuncts to ensure their Form A reports are submitted.

Institutional Learning Outcome Assessment

While each program or administrative unit is responsible to internally evaluate its own assessment data each year, assessment reports are also reviewed by the University Assessment Committee. The committee membership broadly represents both academic and administrative areas, further promoting a culture of institution-wide commitment to assessment. Committee members include: Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Vice-Provost for Accreditation and Assessment, Director of Human Resources, Vice-President of Finance and Operations, Director of Athletics, Director of Financial Aid, Dean of Student Affairs, a Dean and two faculty. As one of its primary roles, the University Assessment Committee closely reviews all assessment data connected to the Institutional Learning Outcomes. Committee findings and recommendations are presented to the relevant departments and to the University's Senior Management Team, with the expectation that those findings and recommendations be used to improve student learning and student services across the institution.

LSSU's four Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) were developed by a general education subcommittee comprised of four faculty and two administrators, and were adopted by the Board of Trustees in November 2017. They are:

- **Formal Communication** - Students will develop and clearly express complex ideas in written and oral presentations.
- **Use of Evidence** - Students will identify the need for, gather, and accurately process the appropriate type, quality, and quantity of evidence to answer a complex question or solve a complex problem.
- **Analysis and Synthesis** - Students will organize and synthesize evidence, ideas, or works of imagination to answer an open-ended question, draw a conclusion, achieve a goal, or create a substantial work of art.
- **Professional Responsibility** - Students will demonstrate the ability to apply professional ethics and intercultural competence when answering a question, solving a problem, or achieving a goal.

LSSU assesses its ILOs broadly across the University. The University Assessment Committee reviews ILO assessments gleaned from capstone courses, student worker evaluations, student athlete evaluations, general education assessments, and cocurricular and non-academic assessments, as evidenced in meeting minutes and the committee's annual report, which is posted publicly on the LSSU assessment webpage. The Annual Report of the committee includes summaries of data-driven actions taken across the University.

In academic areas, ILOs are formally assessed in Senior-level capstone courses with a rubric developed by the General Education Committee. Assessment data collected from students nearing degree completion provides clear insights into how well the University as a whole is equipping those students for life after graduation. Capstone course ILO assessment data are also

reviewed in annual program assessment meetings. This enables all faculty to collaboratively review and evaluate the effectiveness of current assessment practices at multiple touchpoints for their program. Lukenda School of Business used ILO assessment data to improve student learning in the BUSN466 and MRKT480 capstone courses. To enhance student success for ILO-3 (Analysis and Synthesis) and improve discussion board posts, students were asked to relate theories from strategic management into their capstone project. To improve student learning for ILO-2 (Use of Evidence) in MRKT480, a research project was implemented in Fall 2020 that requires the students to design tools for data collection, then collect the data and formally communicate the results.

ILO assessments of student learning is conducted university-wide among student workers, student athletes, and other areas. The Student Employee Evaluation assessment instrument was piloted and tested in spring 2020 to verify reliability and construct validity. Athletics, Academic Services, and Business Operations all participated in the pilot, and the University Assessment Committee used their feedback to adjust the assessment instrument to incorporate department-specific evaluation criteria in AY2021. The instrument developed for university-wide ILO assessments among student workers was redesigned to create athlete evaluations, with a primary focus on ILO 4 to assess multiple characteristics of “professional responsibility.” Student-athlete evaluations allow coaches to assess student learning on multiple characteristics beyond ILO 4 as well, but only the ILO assessment results are currently reported to the University Assessment Committee; other assessment data on the form are used for internal reviews within the Athletic Department.

Actions taken based on ILO assessment data are noted in the University Assessment Annual report, posted on LSSU’s assessment webpage.

Cocurricular, Student Support, and Extracurricular Assessment

Cocurricular, extracurricular, and student support areas conduct assessments annually, some of which also measure student learning of ILOs, as shown by the examples below:

Unit	Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Results	Use of Results
Testing Services	<i>ILO 4 – Professional Responsibility</i> Students will be able to make and keep appointments effectively as well as manage their schedule in order to ensure appointments do	Data tracking	96% of the 610 students successfully made and completed their Testing Services appointments without running over into class time.	In 2020-2021 we will make the registration process more straightforward and user friendly to further reduce the number of students whose testing appointments run over into class time.

	not run over into scheduled class time.			
Career Services	<p><i>ILO 1 – Formal Communication</i></p> <p>Students requesting resume, cover letter, and portfolio assistance will produce professional, employer-ready documents.</p>	Creation of professional, employer-ready documents.	52 students submitted resumes and cover letters to the Career Services Coordinator for review during the 2019-2020 academic year.	To increase the number of students who submit appropriately formatted resumes in the 2020-2021 academic year, Career Services will hold 2 weekly drop-in, or virtual as Covid-19 conditions allow, resume, cover letter and portfolio writing workshops around campus.
Dining Services	<p><i>ILO 1 – Formal Communication</i></p> <p><i>ILO 4 – Professional Responsibility and Intercultural Competence</i></p> <p>Student workers will demonstrate professional-level communications and demeanor while serving customers in Dining Services.</p>	Supervisor evaluations	<p>55% had an average score of 3 or above for ILO 1- Professional Communication.</p> <p>70% had an average score of 3 or above for ILO 4 - Professional Responsibility.</p> <p>(N = 20)</p>	Supervisors will conduct mini-evaluations 3 times each semester on five questions related to ILO 4: attendance, following directions, uniform, following safety standards, and customer service. Results will be passed on to the area managers, who will implement mini-trainings to improve student skills in low-scoring areas. Second mini-evaluation results will be compared to the first, and any student worker with a below standard score will meet with the General Manager to see what steps need to be accomplished to

				improve a low-scored skill set.
Intramural Sports	<p><i>ILO 4 – Professional Responsibility and Intercultural Competence</i></p> <p>Through the sports program, students will develop a greater appreciation for equity, diversity, and inclusiveness.</p>	Self-Reporting Survey	<p>26% Strongly Agree</p> <p>26% Agree</p> <p>38% Somewhat Agree</p> <p>2.5% Disagree</p> <p>2.5% Strongly Disagree</p>	To increase student achievement of this outcome, in 2020-2021 we will create a Code of Conduct that every player must sign before participating in any intramural sport.

Since 2018, cocurricular and extracurricular areas have comprehensively updated their assessment practices beyond ILOs. The Vice-Provost for Accreditation and Assessment has worked with staff in these areas to identify overarching student learning goals and to define measurable learning outcomes. Campus Life, for example, has developed student learning assessments for Health Center services, Counseling Center services, dining services, IPASS services, intramural sports activities, Native American Center activities, and Student Engagement Center (SEC) activities. Academic Services assesses student learning in the Academic Success Center, Accessibility Services, Testing Services, Library Services, and Career Services. Assessment data are recorded and tracked in Nuventive™. Reports generated from Nuventive™ provide staff in these areas comprehensive assessment findings that are then used to inform data-driven continuous improvement efforts for student learning and for services. Continuing improvement action plans are recorded in Nuventive™ and tracked each year, as shown in the examples below:

Unit	Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Results	Use of Results
Academic Success Center	Tutored students will improve their course grade by at least one level.	Data tracking	<p>67% of tutored students increased course grade 2 levels. 8% increased course grade by 1 level. 17% maintained the same course grade.</p> <p>(N=12)</p>	In 2020-2021 we will provide subject-specific tutor training (i.e. one for math, one for history, etc.), and develop additional tutor training to provide quality tutoring in online formats.

Career Services	Students will access and use online career services resources to conduct successful job and internship searches.	Data tracking	244 students and 17 alumni have used their College Central Network (CCN) account in 2019-2020.	To increase student activations of CCN accounts in 2020-2021, Career Services will hold weekly drop-in workshops (in-person/virtually).
Library	Students will demonstrate the following information literacy skills: appropriate citation style format and layout; locating relevant research sources; ethical use of information.	Faculty survey	Per assessment survey, all 11 faculty respondents indicated that library instruction met the learning needs of students: 10 perceived higher student performance in selection of appropriate research materials; 10 perceived higher student performance in ethical use of information; 7 indicated student citation format and layout improved.	Continue current instructional methods for research material selection and ethical use of information. Spend more time covering appropriate citation format and layout.
Health Center	Students will be able to explain the appropriate use of antibiotics, and when antibiotics should not be used.	Post-medical appointment questionnaire	N=50 42 reported “perfect understanding of knowledge.” 8 reported “adequate general understanding of appropriate use of antibiotics.”	To ensure students all understand the use of antibiotics (and when not to use them), 2020-2021 we will utilize the questionnaire again to educate students about dangers of overuse of antibiotics.
IPASS	Academically struggling students will be able to set up and follow an academic improvement action plan that	Data tracking	IPASS Coordinator met with 231 students in spring 2020.	Reach out to faculty/staff for help getting students to IPASS meetings; reduce no-shows by +10%.

	<p>includes one or more of the following:</p> <p>1-on-1 support meetings; 1-on-1 faculty/advisor meetings;</p> <p>Complete skills training (note-taking, study skills, etc.);</p> <p>Utilize tutoring services;</p> <p>Utilize campus support services (Counseling, Health Center, Accessibility Services, etc.);</p> <p>Utilize Resident Commuter Success Coaching</p>			<p>As outlined in IPASS_Spring_2020</p> <p><u>Impact Report:</u></p> <p>Collect/analyze meeting data. Expand Early Alert System, both to students and faculty/advisers.</p> <p>Email students when grades show need for improvement.</p> <p>Reach out to faculty and staff w/updates about student concerns.</p> <p>Reach out to ResLife staff for help getting students to IPASS meetings.</p> <p>Supervise Commuter Success Coaches; expand support to struggling students.</p> <p>Oversee/develop support activities in Student Engagement Center.</p>
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4.B.2

Assessments at LSSU include a learning outcome or goal, data collection and evaluation, and action plans called “Use of Results” that direct continuous improvements. For academic and non-academic areas, assessment data recorded in Nuventive™ facilitates ongoing evaluation and improvement of student learning and services. Faculty use course-level assessment data to improve pedagogy, as evidenced by the following “Use of Results” examples entered in Nuventive™ after AY2020:

Course	Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Results	Use of Results
CHEM 108	Calculations - Students will successfully solve problems using chemical calculations related to moles and mass.	Exam/Quiz	64% of students were able to calculate the number of moles in a given mass of substance on the ACS final examination.	Provide more time doing calculations related to moles and mass in the classroom lecture. Continue to make homework assignments. Additionally, encourage students to attend the Supplement Instruction (SI) session for this class.
EGEE125	Use software for digital circuit analysis.	Lab	Students were unable to utilize the logic analyzer and some had to or chose to use LogiSim instead of {Quartus Prime + ModelSim-Altera}.	A student worker was hired to assist in the lab, and early results show promise that this is improving student learning in the lab setting.
CHLD225	Instructional writing - Create deliberate instructional opportunities for writing.	Exam/Quiz	Final question 4 average student score was 16/18 points.	Goal was met for this outcome. The results could have been stronger, a new emphasis will be placed on writing earlier in the field experience assignments.
MATH251	3D Surface Equations - 1. Characterize standard equations of three dimensional surfaces in rectangular, cylindrical, and spherical coordinates; describe and produce their graphs and traces; and calculate the	Exam/Quiz	Percentage corresponding to 25th percentile was 30%	Instructor will need to spend more time emphasizing equations of surfaces, particularly in how they are embedded in iterated integration problems. Formative assessment should be made when beginning multiple integration material.

	equations of spheres, lines and planes.			
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Information gained from assessment is also used by faculty at the program level to improve student learning and program value, as evidenced by Annual Assessment Update meeting minutes. Examples showing how faculty use assessment data to improve student learning include:

- Assessment of the developmental math program revealed that 69% of the first-time-in-college freshmen who registered for math classes in their first semester tested into developmental-level math. In response, the School of Computer Science and Mathematics implemented a new model for developmental mathematics in Fall 2020:
 - Improved math placement process;
 - Structural change from three courses to two;
 - Changed assessment method to allow students to continue working toward proficiency.

The new model allows students to take each of the two courses as stand-alone full-semester courses, or as accelerated seven-week courses that can be completed consecutively in a single term. Students can therefore complete a college-level math course by the end of freshmen year regardless of placement. For incoming First-Time-in-College students in AY2021, 84.5% took the placement exam compared to 16% in AY2020, resulting in better placement. Prior to AY2021, approximately 19.3% of students taking developmental math would have enrolled in Pre-Algebra. With the new model, all incoming students were able to start in Beginning Algebra or above. Despite this change, the success rate (C or above) in MATH 088 Beginning Algebra was 86.0% in fall 2020 compared to 77% in fall 2018 and 87.8% in fall 2019. Therefore, the new model had a success rate on par with prior semesters, even though it included these additional students. The success rate in Intermediate Algebra saw an increase to 86.2% in fall 2020, compared to 70.3% in fall 2018 and 77.1% in fall 2019. It is noteworthy that 31.4% of the students in developmental math took both Beginning and Intermediate Algebra in the same semester. This was not possible with the old model. Of those who took both, 97.3% were successful in Beginning Algebra and 87.8% were successful in both. Comparable student success rates were achieved on the learning outcomes in Beginning Algebra, whereas greater success rates were achieved on the learning outcomes in Intermediate Algebra. Additional math program assessment data identified specific courses with low student success rates, and a second new math instructor who has extensive experience teaching first-generation/low-income students was hired for fall 2021 to replace a math instructor with consistently low student learning achievement results.

- Assessment data gathered in the College of Science and the Environment looked at D/F grades, withdrawals, and drops; those rates hovered near 40% in the General Chemistry I and II introductory courses. College faculty took action by first assigning two faculty members to conduct one-credit recitation sessions for each of those courses. Secondly, faculty evaluations helped identify which instructors had demonstrated experience in

teaching large introductory courses with better student success rates; those faculty members were then assigned to teach the courses. Lastly, a College subcommittee is currently working to restructure the general chemistry course sequence. Plans are under development to change from one-hour sessions four days each week plus a one-hour lab to a structure with one-hour sessions meeting three days each week plus a one-hour lab, and the addition of the one-credit associated course to improve success rates. Students would take the American Chemical Society Toledo Exam on the first day of class; those scoring below a stated threshold would also enroll in the one-credit associated course focusing on dimensional analysis and problem solving skills.

- Biology faculty used graduate school acceptance rate data and determined there was room for improvement. The curriculum was changed to reflect a One-Health philosophy in the Biology B.S. programs, streamlining program offerings to share a common foundational and research core, eliminating redundancy, and maximizing teaching load efficiency. MATH207 was removed as a prerequisite for BIOL280 when data showed no correlation between MATH207 grades and BIOL280 grades. Moreover, changes to the senior project course sequence now allow faculty to work with students earlier, providing a more customized student experience. The streamlined process also allows for more program-specific electives to further personalize the student experience.
- Lukenda School of Business collected data from the “common” learning outcome for all its programs, assessing students on applications of knowledge of “core business subjects.” Core courses targeting this outcome use data from the nationally normed Major Field Test to assess it. Test data indicated weaknesses in two quantitative areas (Quantitative Business Analysis and Information Systems), which led to changes in MGMT280 and BUSN211 courses. Data reviewed by the Lukenda School of Business Professional Advisory Board showed positive initial results, and the same changes were initiated in MGMT371 in spring 2021 to expand on that success. Changes included the introduction of Course Preparation Assignments (CPAs) to all three courses, and addition of a comprehensive Excel Training Program in MGMT280.
- The general education subcommittee for mathematics reviewed assessment data and found that while more than 82% of students in general education math courses had achieved satisfactory performance scores for the quantitative learning outcome, only 72% achieved satisfactory scores for the symbolic learning outcome. This data prompted the following actions: (1) math faculty met to work collaboratively and revised the assessment questions and eliminate grading disparities across course sections, and (2) math faculty have increased emphases on symbolic understanding in the courses.
- The general education subcommittee for mathematics reviewed assessment data and identified weakness in symbolic analysis. Faculty in MATH 111 College Algebra implemented a new online homework system in Fall 2020 called XYZHomework. The goal of using the new system was to improve student fluency with symbolic mathematics. It also provided students with timely formative feedback on their progress.
- The general education subcommittee for written communication reviewed assessment data and found that students’ academic integrity and citation skills were lower than expected. Acting upon those findings, the faculty teaching first-year writing courses are meeting to work collaboratively to design a learning module for use in first-year writing courses; the module will emphasize student skills for finding, evaluating, using, and citing resources appropriately.

- Nursing faculty reviewed test score data from the National Council Licensure Examination-RN (NCLEX-RN) to identify areas where student learning might be weak. They also asked students after taking the exam if they felt well-prepared for the test. Based on student feedback and test score data, faculty determined that students would benefit from additional instruction focusing on connections between pathophysiology and pharmacology. A new elective course in Pathopharmacology was added to the curriculum.
- Culinary Arts faculty assessed student learning on the program's sanitation and safety learning outcome through the National ServSafe Managers Certification Test. Upon reviewing past results, faculty determined that students struggled with the HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) section of the test. Faculty dedicated more time to that unit in the CULN113 course and saw an increase in the overall ServSafe scores with a 100% pass rate for 2019-2020. Additional program assessment revealed room for improvement in students' quiz and test scores, which led to changes in CULN111 and CULN121. Formative quizzes with faculty feedback are reviewed with students, with that information available for students to use in studying for midterms and finals. Faculty noted improvement in student study habits as well as in summative test scores.
- The Computer Science and Computer Networking programs have a "common" learning outcome tied to the institutional learning outcome on communication, stating that students will be able to communicate effectively with clients. Assessments may include client surveys, presentation evaluations, peer and self-evaluations, project design documentation, and progress reports. Senior-level assessments identified room for improvement, and led to addition of a Technical Writing course for bachelor's programs. Marked improvement in students' communication skills prompted program faculty to increase emphases on professional communication skills at the associate level as well.

Information gained from assessment is used by the General Education Committee and general education faculty to improve student learning, as evidenced in meeting minutes. Data-driven action plans included: assigning subcommittee members to work with Deans in communicating action plans to faculty; scheduling annual/semester meetings with subcommittees and faculty to ensure consistency across assessment methods; creation of a learning module for Written Communication assessment to ensure effective instruction of citation styles; and charges to Deans to follow up with adjuncts or other faculty to ensure Form A completions.

As described under criterion 4.A.4, assessment data is used to identify needs for curriculum changes. LSSU has a clearly defined process for approving new courses, new programs, or to change existing courses or programs. Every curriculum change request must include a clearly stated rationale with evidence of need, and relevant program assessment data is a key component of that evidence. Other components of required evidence include proposed learning outcomes, proposed measures of assessment, and curriculum mapping.

Cocurricular and extracurricular assessment data is used to improve support services for both academic and community-focused areas. IPASS interactions and Resident Success Coaches check-ins provide data collected for Laker Success programs, directing decisions to improve programs to meet real-time student needs. For example, when a student reported difficulty in understanding the LMS platform, Laker Success hosted an impromptu "how-to" session for

using the LMS. Data indicated some students felt “alone” in some online courses, and Laker Success responded with targeted outreach to residential students in the online course and established group sessions and chat groups to promote connections among students.

Criterion 4.B.1 thoroughly discusses how the University Assessment Committee uses assessment data to improve student achievement of Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). The committee’s data-based recommendations to improve student learning in units across the University are detailed in its Annual Assessment Report, posted on the University assessment webpage. Criterion 4.B.1 also highlights the data-driven action plans implemented by student service areas at LSSU.

4.B.3

As LSSU’s assessment practices have matured, those practices have grown to encompass substantial participation across the University. The cycle for academic assessments, described fully under criteria 4.A.1, 4.B.1 and 4.B.2, purposively involves all faculty in designing measurable and effective course-level outcomes and assessments; those outcomes and assessments are also mapped to program and institutional learning outcomes. Faculty report and discuss their course-level assessments at program meetings, tying into their program assessment practices and providing data to determine appropriate future actions for programs. Through these robust assessment practices, faculty fully share the responsibility for, and governance of, the programs in which they teach. While giving all faculty responsibility in the oversight of their programs, this cycle of assessment also encourages peer-to-peer checks and balances (on an informal level) as a measure of quality control for instruction within programs.

Modeled after the University’s academic assessment processes, AY2020 saw a leap forward across the institution in implementing stronger assessment practices in academic support areas, co-curricular programs, student service areas, and administrative areas. As previously outlined under Criterion 4.A and under 4.B.1, multiple areas across the University actively engage in the assessment of student learning connected to institutional learning outcomes. This process has also immersed staff from all areas in the culture of assessment at LSSU, cultivating participation in, and appreciation for, the value of student learning assessment.

As previously explained, the University Assessment Committee, comprised of leadership staff from across campus, helps facilitate adoption of strong assessment practices throughout the institution. The committee implemented assessments of Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) among student workers, student athletes, and students in all academic programs, ensuring involvement and ample participation among faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant staff members in student learning assessment at LSSU.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Argument

4.C.1

LSSU's goals for retention, persistence, and completion are defined in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. A specific target of 75% student retention is set in goal 1.3 and strategy 3.2.8, with an increase of 10% for entering students who complete an associate or bachelor's degree. The Dean of Student Affairs is the designated coordinator of the University-wide retention plan, and is leading outreach retention initiatives for at-risk student groups, including first-generation, lower-income, veterans, Native American, and people of color. In support of those objectives, Goal 2.2 aims to "sustain a university climate that promotes retention and success of students, faculty, and staff; and that makes all feel welcomed, supported, included, and valued." The Senior Management Team discusses retention goals at weekly meetings in connection with strategic plan initiatives.

LSSU uses IPEDS definitions to measure retention, persistence and completion rates. The table below summarizes IPEDS retention data by academic years for LSSU's first to second year first-time bachelor's degree seeking students.

LSSU Retention Rates

	F2015 Cohort Retained in F2016	F2016 Cohort Retained in F2017	F2017 Cohort Retained in F2018	F2018 Cohort Retained in F2019	F2019 Cohort Retained in F2020

LSSU Full-Time retention	72%	67%	77%	70%	73%
Comparison Institutions - FT retention	70%	68%	69%		
LSSU Part-time retention	60%	56%	100%	0 (<i>N</i> = 1)	75%
Comparison Institutions - PT Retention	38%	37%	36%		

Data Source: IPEDS, LSSU Institutional Research

The University also set a goal for degree completion rates to be at or above national averages for benchmark schools, based upon IPEDS definitions. The table below documents LSSU graduation rates from 2016 through 2019 for full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates within 150% of normal time (4 - 6 years) to program completion as compared to the IPEDS Comparison Group. New graduation rate goals set in 2019-2020 were higher still, building on the comparative successes LSSU has already achieved.

LSSU Completion Rates

IPEDS	2016	2017	2018	2019
Graduation Rate LSSU	40%	41%	44%	54%
IPEDS Comparison Group Grad Rate	31%	32%	39%	42%

The University's goals for retention, persistence, and completion are ambitious, with clear procedures in place to make them attainable for our mission, student populations and educational offerings. Retention goals are clearly outlined in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, with specific strategies designed to achieve those goals. Current retention efforts include increased support and services for students who are first-generation, Pell Grant-eligible, veterans, or enter needing developmental coursework, including:

- Deans annually review assessment, retention, and persistence data for gateway courses; that data resulted in several strategic changes in the past few years to place highly effective faculty members in those courses;
- Updated Conditional Admit (CA) program resources to students, and CA advisors meet with their students prior to the semester start;
- Established Laker Spirit House living learning community in support of First-Generation students;
- Implemented new developmental math program in support of LSSU's high population (69%) of first-time-in-college freshmen who tested into a developmental-level math classes (as described in greater detail under Criterion 4.B.2);
- Proposed a TRIO grant to the U.S. Department of Education to support at-risk students;

- Updated My Degree Plan to enhance student academic decision-making and degree-planning;
- Assessed and restructured developmental and gateway courses to improve effectiveness;
- Standing meetings for the Dean of Student Affairs, the Provost, and the Deans Council to facilitate collaboration across these functional areas. Efforts to improve retention center upon shared assessment data to direct and initiate new interventions.
- Expansions to Seamore’s Closet with outerwear and boots.

Through Student Affairs, LSSU is also strengthening processes and services to:

- target greater accessibility through improved physical and technological infrastructure;
- provide training to faculty and staff to strengthen cultural competencies in support of diverse populations;
- maintain a website that facilitates and communicates the University’s initiatives, successes, and resources that value diversity and cultivate a culture of inclusion and belonging.

4.C.2

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

LSSU Freshman Retention Rates by Gender

	F2015 Cohort Retained in F2016	F2016 Cohort Retained in F2017	F2017 Cohort Retained in F2018	F2018 Cohort Retained in F2019	F2019 Cohort Retained in F2020
1st to 2nd Year Full-Time Retention	72%	67%	77%	70%	73%
Male	75.9%	68.3%	76.0%	67%	70%
Female	70.8%	70.4%	77.8%	72%	76%

Data Source: IPEDS, LSSU Institutional Research

At both institutional and program levels, data specific to the student populations served by this University are analyzed annually and used to direct actions that will increase retention, persistence, and completion rates for those populations. Data-driven action plans for retention are discussed more fully under criterion 4.C.3. Table 3 presents population-specific data LSSU uses to direct retention initiatives that target traditionally at-risk groups of students. Those data

sets include first-generation students and low-income students, representing a majority population at LSSU, and Native American students, representing nearly 10% of LSSU's students.

LSSU Retention Rates by Specific Key Student Populations

	F2015 Cohort Retained in F2016	F2016 Cohort Retained in F2017	F2017 Cohort Retained in F2018	F2018 Cohort Retained in F2019	F2019 Cohort Retained in F2020
1st to 2nd Year Full-Time Retention	72%	67%	77%	70%	73%
First-Generation	70%	63%	72%	67%	69%
Non-First-Generation	78%	77%	82%	73%	79%
Low-Income	67%	69%	68%	64%	71%
Non-Low-Income	81%	69%	87%	78%	75%
Native American	50%	63%	68%	69%	55%

Data Source: IPEDS, LSSU Institutional Research

Program assessments also evaluate program-specific retention, persistence, and completion data each year to ensure they are using that data to effectively plan and direct changes to improve student learning and student success for their students. As one example, the Nursing program collects and evaluates that data each semester:

Nursing Program Completion Rates

Admitted	Graduated	Number of cohort completers	Percentage completion rate
Fall 2014	S17 Grads	23 / 24	95.8%
Spring 2015	F17 Grads	20 / 21	95.2%
Fall 2015	S18 Grads	22 / 23	95.6%
Spring 2016	F18 Grads	18 / 19	94.7%
Fall 2016	S19 Grads	TBD	TBD

The Board of Trustees receives student retention data in the Student Affairs report. Data are updated and reported annually after fall semester census day. Semester-to-semester retention is supported by active, weekly monitoring and outreach efforts by Student Affairs. Students with

account holds receive personalized outreach via email and text message. Student Affairs work with campus partners to ensure students' ability to register and maintain academic progress.

The Student Affairs Office actively monitors and contacts students who have “holds” on their accounts that prohibit signing up for classes. Through multi-faceted personalized outreach to students with holds (e.g., emails/texts), Student Affairs staff remind students to contact their academic advisors to select class options, to address billing matters, or to resolve outstanding sanctions. Students can respond via email/text and receive quick responses to individual questions. Enrollment and hold reports track week-to-week progress, as well as the number of current students who have not yet registered for classes. As the number of holds diminishes, Student Affairs staff connect with Academic Deans and Advisors to request midterm grades or issue Early Alerts.

During semesters, the Behavioral Concerns Team convenes weekly to address students who exhibit disturbed, disturbing, or distressed behaviors. The multidisciplinary team, chaired by the Dean of Student Affairs, uses information about students of concern to offer support during challenging times. Laker Success uses early alert notices and midterm grade reports to contact students with low or failing grades. Through individualized plans, students receive guidance toward raising their class grades and skills development for long-term success.

Within academic programs, retention data is used to determine actions to improve within-program retention:

- Lukenda School of Business (LSB) – retention data led to initiatives to increase student sense of connectedness within their programs by bringing speakers to campus and bringing LSSU School faculty into the FYE/USEM course as “guest lecturers.” BUSN 101 Freshmen Seminar students meet many faculty, administrators, and guests from external constituencies to develop more connections at LSSU and in the field early in their studies. The FYE/USEM has also emphasized student interactions with available services and resources, including My Degree Plan, Academic Services, and the Career Services Portal.
- Culinary Arts Chef Certificate program – retention data identified connections between attendance rates and success in the program. Faculty now routinely inform students of their attendance rate; early results indicate that this information helps students gauge and track their program standing and make better decisions about attendance.
- Mathematics and other quantitative majors – retention data indicated that students who maintained better connections with peers and faculty were more likely to complete their degree at LSSU. Mathematics faculty have initiated new opportunities to increase student connectedness; examples include a Talk Math 2 Me Colloquium Series, biweekly problem solving sessions for the national Putnam exam, participation in a Mathematics Challenge competition, a new math club, and a beginning of the year meeting that connects new students with upperclassmen.
- School of Engineering and Technology – retention data led to new initiatives targeting gateway courses. Examples include:
 - team-teaching approaches that expose students to multiple viewpoints and/or have student lab assistants available for in-class help and mentoring;

- projects at the freshmen level, a high-impact practice shown to impact retention. Examples include implementing a robotics Lego challenge in the FYE/USEM course (EGNR101), an Arduino microcontroller project in EGNR140, and a human-centered design project in EGME141.
- Town Halls are held each semester to provide students with information and give them regular opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback.

4.C.3

LSSU uses retention, persistence and completion data to plan for and implement changes that benefit students. Institutional and IPEDS data for key populations led to a decision by Student Affairs to increase activities and support services at the Native American Center; improvement plans include hosting of a PowWow, and a Native American Showcase and related activities during move-in “Laker Week” on campus. The University’s retention data on first-generation and low-income students led to development of TRIO and NSF grant proposals, submitted in spring 2020 to seek additional resources in support of those students. Further initiatives based on retention, persistence and completion data include the development of training resources to help faculty better support first-generation and low-income students, as well as training for in-classroom teaching strategies that specifically support those students. As noted previously, data analyzed by faculty in the math department identified low rates for retention, persistence, and completion among students enrolled in developmental math courses. Once the problem was identified, math faculty devised improvements to remediate those low success rates among students, as described more fully under Criteria 1.A.4 and 3.D.2. Those data-driven program improvements include hiring a new math instructor with experience for improving student learning in developmental math programs, hiring another new math instructor with extensive experience teaching first-generation/low-income students to replace a math instructor with consistently low student learning achievement results, and restructuring developmental math course sequences to increase student achievement. Similar actions were taken in the College of Science and the Environment, with two new faculty hired (both of whom were first-generation college students) to bring their own knowledge and understanding of the first-generation experience to teach LSSU’s first-generation students. The Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETAL) supports more generalized efforts to increase student success rates through Communities of Practice (COPs), including a Grit-focused COP emphasizing strategies targeting first-generation and low-income students, utilizing the books *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, by Angela Duckworth, and *Mindset: Changing the Way You Think to Fulfill Your Potential*, by Dr. Carol S. Dweck.

LSSU’s high population of first-generation students, and commitment to serving those students, earned the University “First-Gen Forward” status, awarded by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) in January 2020. Working to promote retention and success among these high-risk students, Student and Academic Affairs established a Living Learning Community (LLC) for those students to foster their sense of belonging at the University. Toward that same goal, Campus Life also established the First-Gen student club in Fall 2020. Student and Academic Affairs collaborated to create "registration parties," helping

students to enroll for an upcoming semester and to remove barriers to registering. The Provost and Dean of Student Affairs reviewed data on LSSU's withdrawal process and identified specific barriers to enrollment, such as account holds, to determine alternatives and resources the University can provide to those students to help them stay enrolled. Student Affairs and Academic Affairs increased midterm and final "exam slam" events to more generalized monthly events, providing tutoring, self-care programming, and mentoring to attending students; this initiative endeavors to increase retention, persistence, and completion through enjoyable events that connect students with support services on a regular basis.

Student retention, persistence and completion data also led to expansion of First Year Experience (USEM) courses at LSSU. Many programs offered USEM courses prior to 2018, but those courses became mandatory in fall 2018. That decision was based upon a recommendation from a 2017 Faculty Learning Community appointed to investigate the impact of First Year Experience courses on retention, persistence and completion. The year-long learning community thoroughly reviewed the research in the field of higher education, and analyzed the data from existing USEM courses on campus. In late fall of 2017, the learning community presented its proposal recommendation to develop mandatory first-year-experience USEM courses in all programs, with specifically stated goals to increase student success and retention. The recommendation was approved by a joint meeting of the Curriculum and General Education Committees and announced to the campus in early spring 2018. Fall 2019 saw the realization of that goal in four new one-credit USEM courses: USEM101 - University Seminar I: Foundations for Success; USEM102 - University Seminar II: Developing Critical Thinking; USEM103 - University Seminar III: Thinking About the Discipline; and USEM104 - University Seminar IV: Professional Seminar.

4.C.4

LSSU uses IPEDS definitions to collect data for student retention, persistence, and completion. The University's Institutional Research Director collects data through the Banner student information system, and reports those data annually to IPEDS. The Senior Management Team, Student Affairs, and Academic Affairs analyze and utilize the data findings to direct efforts for continuing growth. Program Deans, Chairs, and faculty collect and analyze retention, persistence, and completion data specific to their programs. As noted under criterion 4.C.2, institutional administrators, deans, and program faculty analyze that data and use it to direct actions that will increase retention, persistence, and completion rates among the student populations served by this University.

The Laker Success program has evaluation criteria designed to support student retention, persistence, and completion. Evaluation criteria are based on improvement of GPA and academic standing, and increased numbers of students accepted into their declared major and number of students who graduate (2 and 4-year programs). Each evaluation criterion has yearly goals to meet and report. Yearly data guide program modifications for the next year.

Laker Success data for students participating in the program indicate positive overall results. Retention information is tracked not only for students who are academic/financial disadvantaged (State of Michigan requirements) but for all students who participate in Laker Success programming. Programming opportunities and outreach to all University students allow more students to have access to support services that can help with retention, persistence, and completion.

GPA tracking occurs among Living Learning Communities, intramural participants, Laker Success students, and residential students. Tracking and comparing GPA of these groups with their counterparts provides grounding for on-campus housing requirements and promotion of campus engagement.

Living Learning Communities exemplify collaborations between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. A survey conducted each semester quantifies achievement of six goals. Survey data allow Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to adjust structure of programs, selection of house faculty, and LLC housing application process. Improvements to LLCs promote retention in campus housing and in the University.

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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

Program reviews at Lake Superior State University follow a five-year cycle. Programs conduct an annual assessment update meeting in fall each year to review assessment data and to determine future actions based on that data. The discussions and actions resulting from the annual assessment update meetings are integrated into the five-year program reviews. Administrative and service departments also conduct five-year reviews to evaluate services. These units assess student learning of the institutional learning outcomes as appropriate to their areas, such as through student worker evaluations or student athlete evaluations.

Assessment data is used to develop action plans that improve and ensure the quality of educational programs. All areas of the University use retention, persistence, and completion data to drive improvements as well. LSSU's strategic plan outlines clear strategies for strengthening the institutional culture of assessment and for improved retention and completion rates. Members of the Senior Management Team take ownership of specific strategic plan strategies and report on progress in their weekly meetings and at board meetings.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Argument

5.A.1

Since the instatement of LSSU's current President in 2018, the University has adopted a broader approach to shared governance, with evidence across all institutional areas.

- The Board of Trustees meets at least six times annually, with additional special meetings called as needed. Meeting dates are posted on the University website; meeting agendas are sent via email to the campus community. As stipulated in Section 1.06 of the Board's bylaws, meetings are open to the public, and public addresses to the Board are welcomed.
- The Senior Management Team (SMT) of the University meets formally every week, and the President meets formally with each SMT member weekly; frequent informal meetings also occur between the President and SMT members throughout each week.
- The Provost meets formally every week with the Deans Council, meets monthly with all his direct-reports in Provost Council, meets biweekly with individual direct-reports, and meets frequently and informally with individual direct-reports throughout each week.
- Other SMT members typically schedule weekly or bi-weekly meetings with their direct-reports:
 - The Dean of Student Affairs meets weekly with all direct-reports as a team, and meets weekly with individual direct-reports. To address COVID-19, a second full-team meeting has occurred weekly since March 2020. The Dean informally meets

often with individuals as needed, too, including almost daily meetings with the Director of the Health Center.

- The Dean of Admissions and Marketing schedules formal weekly meetings with each direct-report, and meets with most of them informally almost every day.
- The Director of HR, Risk and Safety schedules weekly formal staff meetings with HR and with Public Safety. She meets formally with individual HR staff members weekly, and meets informally each week with the individual Public Safety staff members on rotation that week. Informal daily meetings with HR staff and the Public Safety officer on duty are frequent.
- The VP for Finance and Operations meets formally with direct-reports either weekly or biweekly, and frequently meets with them informally as well.
- The Director of Athletics conducts a weekly staff meeting with direct-reports, which also may include additional staff members of the Athletics Department. He also meets with direct-reports informally several times each week.
- The Director of the LSSU Foundation holds weekly formal staff meetings with all direct-reports, and meets informally with individuals several times each week.

These meetings ensure that all administrative personnel are engaged in shared governance. Other non-administrative meeting structures also contribute notably to LSSU's planning, policies and procedures:

- Faculty lead in academic and curriculum decisions at LSSU. Section 13 of the Faculty Agreement grants faculty a large measure of control in curriculum oversight, development, and assessment. Faculty make curriculum change proposals, faculty review those proposals, and faculty serve on committees to approve or deny those proposals. The Curriculum and General Education committees meet twice monthly, and committee bylaws guide all planning, policies and procedures that oversee curriculum.
- The University Assessment Committee oversees university-wide assessment practices. Committee membership broadly represents areas across the institution: Provost, Vice Provost, Dean of Students, Director of HR, Vice President for Finance/Operations, Director of Financial Aid, Director of Athletics, faculty, Dean, and Chair. The committee evaluates data and drives improvements based on Institutional Learning Outcome assessments by cocurricular, extra-curricular, and administrative areas.
- Student Government (SGA) conducts substantive weekly meetings, addressing issues ranging from University policies to managing student programs and activities. The SGA works closely with administrators, faculty, and staff to serve the student community and to promote growth-focused improvements at the University. The Dean of Students attends SGA meetings, along with the Director of Campus Life and Laker Success; the President and Provost frequently attend as well. The SGA president meets twice monthly with the University President, twice monthly with the Provost, and biweekly or frequently with other SMT members. Individual meetings with administrators facilitate open and candid discussions, which range from frustrations or difficulties with processes, staff, or faculty faced by students to University policies and governance. SGA is represented at all Board meetings and as voting members on the Curriculum and General

Education committees. LSSU students have an active role in planning, policies and procedures at the University, as specified in Article 2.4 of the Students Bill of Rights.

- The Faculty Association President formally meets biweekly with the Provost, and frequent informal meetings occur as needed.
- The Education Support Professional (ESP) representative formally meets biweekly with the Director of HR, and the two frequently meet informally as needed.
- The COVID-19 Response Team meets formally three times each week, and frequently as needed on an informal basis. Committee members broadly represent constituencies across the University: Co-chair - Director of HR; Co-chair – Provost; Dean of Student Affairs; Director of Facilities; Dean of Admissions and Marketing; General Manager of Food Services; Director of Health Care Center; Director of Campus Life; Director of Norris Center; Dean of College of Health and Behavioral Sciences; Safety and Risk Management Specialist; a virology professor from the School of Science and Medicine; an Athletics trainer; and a Student Government representative. The committee evaluates state and local data to guide decisions that ensure the health safety of the campus community. The committee keeps the campus community informed about decisions through the coronavirus website dashboard and emails, and maintains daily updates on LSSU’s coronavirus dashboard.

Board of Trustees (BOT) meetings are open to University personnel and the public. The Board hears reports from each SMT member, from SGA, from the Faculty Association, and from the ESP representative. Addresses to the Board from internal and external constituents are welcome, and administrative representatives are able to bring proposals or concerns from their constituents to the Board for consideration.

The SMT is comprised of nine members: President, Provost, Dean of Student Affairs, Vice President for Finance and Operations, Director of Human Resources/Title IX/Safety & Risk, Dean of Admissions & Marketing, Government Relations Officer, Director of Athletics, and Director of the Foundation. SMT members engage frequently in weekly or biweekly meetings, or informally, with internal constituents to facilitate shared governance and discuss matters ranging from budgets and personnel to progress on their assigned Strategic Plan Goal initiatives.

The University Assessment Committee further illustrates broad-based shared governance practices at LSSU. The committee initiates improvements in institution-wide practices based on assessment data reviews, emphasizing Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO) assessments. ILO assessment includes data collected through Student Worker Evaluations, Student Athlete assessments/self-assessments, and a cross-disciplinary rubric for capstone courses. The committee also reviews academic Annual Program Assessment reports, which are directly managed by program faculty and include program initiatives, budgets, and decisions. Within this process, faculty assess program-level learning outcomes (PLOs) and link them to Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), further advancing LSSU’s culture of shared governance through assessment that guides continuous improvements at program and institutional levels.

LSSU's shared governance processes are evident in the development of the University's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. The planning committee incorporated university-wide representation, including the Dean of Student Affairs, an academic dean, a faculty member, the student government president, an academic librarian, an academic assistant, and an admissions recruiter/international specialist. Beginning in fall 2019, the committee led 35 "listening sessions" and surveyed students, faculty, staff, Tribal Leaders, advisory boards, alumni, and community members to seek input in planning for the future directions of the University. The committee and the SMT relied heavily upon that input to carefully construct the current strategic plan; the Board also reviewed the input from both internal and external constituencies prior to approving the plan in April 2020. In less than one year, LSSU's forward momentum in implementing strategic plan goals is evident, as SMT members track those goals in their individual units. Every SMT member is the primary owner of specific assigned goal strategies; where appropriate, many goals are assigned to secondary owners as well. Every SMT member details their area's strategic plan achievements in their full reports at Board meetings. At SMT meetings, one SMT member presents a full progress report on strategic plan goal achievements for their area. The President's assistant records goal progress data in Nuventive™ for all SMT areas. Within individual SMT areas, tracking and reporting follows the same model. For example, Academic Affairs direct-reports typically share their strategic goal progress reports at monthly Provost Council meetings. As data are reviewed, discussed, and assessed in administrative meetings across the University, action plans are initiated to accomplish specific goal strategies. Data affirm that LSSU has been successfully achieving numerous strategic goals over the past year, invigorated by the wide-ranging insights and recommendations of internal (and external) constituencies for institutional planning.

A "listening session" model was also used successfully to engage LSSU's constituencies in the 2018 Presidential search. The Board sought input from students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, community, and tribal leaders in 22 "listening sessions," with resulting input used to develop the Presidential Prospectus (Prospectus, p. 14). The resulting prospectus document presented candidates with broad, comprehensive information that clearly outlined expectations held by the Board, staff, faculty, students, and community. The detailed presidential prospectus document ensured that candidates applying for the position were well-informed and well-prepared for the multiple interview sessions they experienced with diverse groups across the University and community. Following those interviews, the Board also sent university-wide surveys to gather and consider additional feedback from all constituencies.

LSSU's Provost position was open concurrently during the Presidential search, and followed similar processes to identify and interview well-qualified candidates. Like the Presidential Prospectus, the Provost Prospectus was developed with feedback received from internal and external constituencies, ensuring that faculty, students, staff, administrators, and the larger community had a part in determining expectations for that position.

Students at LSSU formally participate in shared governance through Student Government's (SGA) reports at Board meetings, SGA weekly meetings with the Dean of Students, SGA biweekly meetings with the President and Provost, and through voting membership on the Curriculum and General Education committees. SGA's involvement in institutional planning, policies, and procedures was exemplified in the 2019 new tuition plateau

decision. The tuition plateau previously allowed full-time students to take up to 17 credits per semester for the cost of 12 credits. In late spring 2019, SMT proposed lowering the tuition plateau from 12-17 credit hours to 12-15 credit hours. SGA presented SMT with data showing that a 12-16 credit hour tuition plateau would be more appropriate to student needs. Data showed that numerous LSSU courses (including general education) are four credits, and SMT agreed that establishing a plateau topping out at 16 credits would more aptly meet students' needs. This constructive and collaborative working relationship between SMT and SGA resulted in a data-driven and well-supported proposal from the President to the Board, requesting and receiving approval to lower the tuition plateau from 12-17 credits to 12-16 credits.

As another example of broad-based shared governance at LSSU, the COVID-19 Response Team has met three times each week since March 2020 to ensure appropriate, nimble, and timely actions across campus. COVID-19 planning, policies, and procedures are discussed at every Board meeting, every SMT meeting, every Deans Council and Provost Council meeting, frequent one-on-one meetings between staff and SMT members with the President and Provost, and frequent meetings of other SMT members with their staff. The coronavirus website and dashboard, along with frequent emails to the campus community, demonstrate LSSU's commitment to fully engaging with all its internal constituencies to establish and implement plans, policies, and procedures that are in the best interests of all University constituents.

Formal shared governance occurs in contract negotiations at LSSU with the Educational Support Professionals and the Faculty Association. These collaborative negotiations define agreed upon hiring processes, pay and benefits, workloads, performance evaluations, grievance procedures, professional development, leaves of absence, tenure, management and employee rights, seniority and promotion, work conditions, and more. Contract negotiations also facilitate and ensure shared governance through collaborative development of grievance procedures, intellectual property policies, University travel policies, search committee and hiring procedures, tenure system procedures, standing committee procedures, and other matters in which the parties have vested interests.

5.A.2

The Vice President for Finance and Operations (VP-FO) monitors the institution's enrollment reports, housing reports, retention reports, and state revenue estimation reports to develop revenue estimates for future budget development. The VP-FO works closely with the Provost to review that data in combination with data from Actuals Budget reports and Annual Financial Reports. The data is foundational to the development of each year's budget, and data-informed decisions led to the careful and methodical transition from the deficit budgets of FY2019 and FY2020 to the balanced budget of FY2021. That forward-looking transition, with budget cuts and fund reallocations implemented for increased financial stability and sustainability of the institution, was achieved through careful review of financial data at every operational level.

LSSU uses data systematically to improve operational effectiveness. College deans work with faculty to review program data annually to make decisions in the best interests of the University. For example, three years of data gathered in the mathematics program revealed that 69% of the first-time-in-college freshmen who register for math classes in their first semester place into a developmental-level math class. Additionally, data showed that time-to-degree-completion was extended for many of those students. In response, two new faculty with backgrounds and expertise in teaching developmental math and first-generation students were hired, and the math department redesigned its developmental math program. Incoming freshmen who need developmental math are encouraged in their first semester to enroll in a 7-week Beginning Algebra course (MATH088), and to co-register for a 1-credit “Building Mathematics Confidence” course. Benefits gained for students who co-register for those two courses include confidence building exercises for math skills, social-emotional support structures, and instructional activities to improve critical thinking skills. The MATH 088 course learning outcomes remain unchanged. Preliminary data collected after the first year show that student grades and success rates have improved using this new approach. Furthermore, this restructured program enables students to successfully complete their developmental math sequence in their first semester, allowing them to move forward in their second semester to take program level courses and advance more quickly to degree completion.

Data is used to drive decisions in all academic programs, as evidenced in suspensions or additions of programs. For instance, the Athletic Training Program was suspended after the National Athletic Trainers Association Strategic Alliance announced mandatory Master’s Degree requirements for those programs after 2020. Three years of data for LSSU’s bachelor’s program indicated insufficient enrollment potential to offset the costs of developing a Master’s level program, resulting in its discontinuation after teach-out of the current program. Based on similar data analyses, other academic programs have also been suspended due to low enrollments, including sociology, history, medical laboratory science, and communication. Review of program enrollment data for the web development minor and the web concentrations for the Computer Networking BS and AS degrees, those programs were discontinued in AY2021. Conversely, data trends in the robotics industry prompted engineering faculty to propose a new Robotics Engineering BS program, which opened in fall 2018. Data driving that decision showed increasing growth in industrial robots from 1.3 million to 2.5 million units between 2013-2018, and 30% growth per year in service/mobile robots. After two years, demand remains high for LSSU’s robotics engineering graduates. LSSU’s Robotics Lab offers an attractive package to students attending nearly 500 Michigan high schools with FIRST robotics programs; those schools actively promote degree programs in the robotics field after high school graduation. With over \$2 million in automation equipment and software, including 18 industrial robots and 10 mobile robots, LSSU is the only university in North America offering an undergraduate robotics concentration, and one of only two public universities in Michigan offering a Robotics Engineering BS degree. In 2020-2021, LSSU has 29 students majoring in Robotics Engineering. As another example, LSSU responded quickly to the legalization of cannabis in Michigan and Ontario in 2019 and rapid growth in that industry. The Curriculum Committee reviewed data in support of the proposed Cannabis Chemistry program, and that program was approved by the Board in January 2019. Early data confirming the success of the Cannabis Chemistry program, along with expanding opportunities in Michigan’s cannabis marketplace, led to additional cannabis-specific offerings in business and science, and a certificate program in Cannabis

Production. As of fall 2020, 75 students are majoring in LSSU's new cannabis programs, with 41 new incoming students enrolled in those programs for fall 2020.

For over a decade, LSSU's enrollment data has shown significant percentages of high-risk and first-generation students. Recent initiatives to meet the needs of high-risk student populations include a strengthened IPASS program (Individual Plan for Academic Student Success), residence hall and commuter Success Coaches, and a restructured developmental math program. Additionally, actions taken several years ago continue to provide effective and successful support services for LSSU's underprepared students. The University's 2014-2018 Title III grant moved the Academic Success Center (ASC) to a highly visible centralized location in the main floor Learning Commons of the library. Annual data recording the number of students using tutoring and supplemental instruction services each year confirm the success of that move. Housed within the larger Learning Commons, the ASC provides one-on-one tutoring services to registered LSSU students, as well as a walk-in math center and writing center, and regularly scheduled supplemental instruction for traditionally challenging courses.

Annual data is collected, reviewed, and used to develop the University's marketing plans. Fall 2020 marketing was based on a review of application and enrollment numbers over the previous three years, as compared to the current year. Year-by-year and county-by-county data comparisons from in-state applications and enrollments provided Yield Percentage Rates for each county, and those data were used to market strategically within the highest-yield counties. This strategy proved to be in the best interests of the institution, contributing to increased enrollments of first-time students at LSSU for fall 2020.

Student survey data collected in 2019-2020 among LSSU's Living-Learning Communities (LLCs) showed that while some students in LLCs felt connected to their faculty advisors, that was not true for all students. Data indicated high connectedness with advisors for students in the Fisheries/Wildlife LLC and the Chemistry/Environmental Science LLC, but fewer than 40% of students living in the Honors or First Responders LLCs met with their in-house advisors. Social connectedness with LLC peers was also higher for students in the Chemistry/Environmental Science, Engineering/Technology, and Fisheries/Wildlife LLCs, with emphases placed upon interactions to improve academic achievement. For example, the Fisheries/Wildlife LLC Advisor schedules weekly office hours on-site, holds biweekly officer meetings, hosts professional meet-and-greet events, and most of the students participate in local environmental activities like the Ashmun Creek Cleanup. Among the LLCs that scored highly, data show trends for higher involvement and opportunities to participate in academically-related experiences, and greater academic success among students who had greater degrees of involvement with their LLC advisors. Based on these data, 2021 efforts will focus on supporting LLC advisors to:

- schedule more time on academic and advising engagements with students
- increase community-centered programming
- promote community and collaboration within and among the LLCs

Data led to the fall 2020 opening of a new Living Learning Community (LLC) for leadership and the Laker Spirit LLC for first-generation students, which will provide students with workshops and guidance in study skills, time management, and library research skills. Data-driven action

plans for the Honors LLC include scheduled monthly discussions on current topics, coordinate fundraising for Relay for Life, and sponsor holiday events. In addition, the Chemistry/Environmental Science LLC and Emergency Responders LLC both received new LLC Faculty Advisors in fall 2020.

Informed by data collected for the American Association of Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U) "LEAP Initiative" (Liberal Education and America's Promise initiative) and VALUE rubrics, LSSU's General Education Committee developed internal rubrics for its general education learning outcome assessments. AAC&U's data on its 16 VALUE rubrics for the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes support the effectiveness of those rubrics; the rubrics align with best practices in instructional design and pedagogy, and strategically drive continuing "improvements for student learning and to increase completion rates for all students." Using the VALUE rubrics as models, LSSU's General Education Committee began writing its own internal assessment rubrics in 2017 to reflect LEAP's data-informed guidelines. The current general education learning outcomes and associated rubrics are now central to the assessment practices of this institution, with faculty spearheading assessments within that program.

Data has been essential to LSSU's COVID-19 response, directing decisions made in the best interests of the institution and its constituents. LSSU's fall 2020 Return to Campus Plan was developed from a thorough review and analysis of state and county statistics for reported cases of COVID-19. Chippewa County data recorded only two known cases in the region as of April 2020, and LSSU moved forward to provide face-to-face instruction for fall semester. No new cases were reported in the county until late June and early July, with the total number of new cases still low enough to continue planning for students to return to campus in August. Data continued to confirm that LSSU's remote location offered students and staff a fairly safe haven from the virus. With additional data indicating student preferences for face-to-face learning, the Senior Management Team recommended that most classes be delivered face-to-face as long as the safety of the University community could be assured within reason. Contingency plans to shift to online instruction delivery were also developed, should future data indicate that the institution could no longer ensure the safety of the campus community in a face-to-face environment. Fall 2020 census day enrollment data confirm this decision has met student needs and preferences, with LSSU new incoming enrollments up 5.6% and transfers up over 30% while almost every other public institutions in the state experiencing declines in both those datasets.

Exercising caution and planning for safety, the Faculty Union Executive Committee and the Provost agreed to restructure LSSU's 2020-2021 academic calendar without any holiday breaks, starting classes two weeks earlier in August and sending students home before Thanksgiving to eliminate the risk of travel-related COVID infections breaking out on campus after holiday breaks. The COVID-19 Response Team worked closely with Campus Housing and the Student Affairs Office to bring students back to campus in August by stages, with assigned move-in dates that kept close interactions to a minimum. Data and recommendations from the CDC and the state of Michigan were the basis for LSSU's "Four Pillars of Laker Safety" requiring social distancing, wearing of masks, handwashing, and a charge to promote personal and social responsibility. The Four Pillars were implemented as safeguards for the health and well-being of the campus community. Other elements of the planning process also utilized enrollment and course registration data to determine how spaces and facilities could be allocated and redesigned

to ensure the University could meet the 6-foot distancing recommendations of the CDC and the state of Michigan. LSSU's Coronavirus Dashboard updates case data daily for the campus community to ensure that everyone has all the information at-hand to make decisions to safeguard their own health as well. When case numbers began rising throughout the county in November 2020, the institution responded to the data quickly and implemented its contingency response plan, arranging to conduct the final week of classes and final examinations online.

5.A.3

LSSU encourages the full participation of students, faculty and staff in open and collaborative dialogues for institutional planning. The University community's widespread participation in shared governance is described fully under Criterion 5.A.1. As established in the Faculty Agreement, faculty lead in setting academic requirements, using data to determine academic directions and requirements for their respective programs. Requirements and processes for curriculum development were collectively negotiated by administration and faculty, and are clearly defined in the Faculty Agreement. When program faculty, Schools, and Deans determine a need for program or course changes, Section 13.2.1 of the Faculty Agreement stipulates, "All Curriculum Committee proposals shall originate within the appropriate department or school with the participation of affected departments and faculty members. All proposals must be approved by a majority vote of the faculty in the submitting School and be approved by the Dean overseeing the School before being forwarded to the Curriculum Committee." Change proposals are submitted through the appropriate change forms to the Curriculum Committee, including proposals for new courses, new programs, course changes, or program changes. Actions taken by the Curriculum Committee on change proposals are recorded in meeting minutes. All change forms submitted to the committee must include all School-approved changes, including course or program requirements, prerequisites, levels/numbering of courses, and learning outcomes; this process ensures that faculty lead in setting the academic requirements and policies for their own programs.

Review and approval of general education course proposals by the General Education Committee parallels the processes of the Curriculum Committee. As stated in Section 13.3.2 of the faculty agreement: "All general education proposals shall originate within the appropriate department or school. All proposals must be approved by a majority vote of the faculty in the submitting School and be approved by the Dean overseeing the School before being forwarded to the General Education Committee." Faculty comprise a greater part of the general education and curriculum committees, but both committees also have appropriate staff and student representatives, including the Provost, two Deans, and two student government representatives; ex officio members are the Registrar and the Vice-Provost for Accreditation and Assessment.

In some programs, students and faculty work together to set academic requirements and policies. For example, the nursing program bylaws require student representation on its standing committees, allowing students to propose curriculum changes and to review services and program facilities (e.g., clinical sites, labs, etc.). In one recent instance, faculty of the Nursing Program requested student input to compare against several years of scoring data from the

National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN). Lower scores in the pathopharmacology section of the exam correlated with student feedback that indicated many students felt underprepared for that section of the exam. Based on these data, the Nursing program faculty proposed and sought approval for the addition of a new pathopharmacology course in fall 2018. After receiving approvals from the School, Dean, Curriculum Committee, and Provost, the new course was introduced as an elective to help students synthesize what they had learned in pharmacology and pathophysiology courses and improve performance on the NCLEX-RN exams.

As explained under Criterion 5.A.1, students and staff are integral to LSSU's shared governance culture. Board meetings are open to all, and faculty, staff, and student addresses or petitions to the Board are encouraged. As outlined under Criterion 5.A.1, frequent meetings between Senior Management Team members and their staff promote collaborative engagement within departments. Regular and frequent meetings of the Student Government Association (SGA) or SGA president with administrators facilitate productive dialog and collaboration, while SGA voting membership on committees like Curriculum and General Education ensure students are actively participating in policymaking. University-wide representation on the COVID-19 Response Team ensures that all internal constituencies are working collaboratively to determine appropriate emergency response plans and to enforce those policies for the safety of the campus community. "Listening Session" processes employed for the presidential search in 2018 and for strategic plan development in 2019 (described fully under Criterion 5.A.1) further illustrate LSSU's commitment to involve all faculty, staff, and students in making decisions for the betterment of the University. Additional collaborative structures through which faculty are involved in setting academic requirements, policies, and processes include non-contractual committees like Scholastic Standards, Financial Aid Appeals, and Late Withdrawal. Faculty also participate in the approval process for Sub-Waivers, and contributing feedback on recent revisions to the Academic Integrity Appeal process; both students and faculty comprise the membership of the Grade Appeal committee as well. These examples enumerate many ways in which LSSU's administration ensures that faculty, staff, and students have appropriate opportunities to collaborate in setting academic requirements, policy and processes for the institution.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Argument

5.B.1

Regardless of the location or modality in which courses or services are offered, LSSU has sufficient resources to support its operations. Faculty and staff working from additional locations meet the same qualifications and follow the same procedures as those required for main campus employees. Faculty, staff, and administrators work collaboratively to determine staffing needs. Requests for new positions or for refilling an existing position are submitted to the Vacancy Management Committee, comprised of the Director of Human Resources (HR), Vice President for Finance and Operations, and the Provost. The recommendation is then forwarded to the President, and if approved, HR posts the position online and a search committee is appointed; committee members receive training through HR. This process ensures that LSSU staffing remains proportionate to the institution's needs. As reported by the Department of Institutional Research, categorical breakdowns of employment at LSSU are shown in Table 5.1:

LSSU Employment

Number of Employees	Employment Category
92	Full-Time Faculty – fall2020
7	Part-Time Faculty – fall2020
50	Adjunct Faculty – fall2020
143	Administrative Professionals –January2021
76	ESP – Education Support Professionals – January2021

The hiring process begins with online applications, followed by committee screening of applicants prior to conducting interviews. Only qualified applicants are selected by the committee for interviews, ensuring that new-hires are competent to fill the position. The Equal Employment Opportunity form is completed by the committee and filed with Human Resources. New personnel receive “onboarding” materials from Human Resources with their appointment letter, orientation materials, and informational resources. New staff members receive on-the-job training from experienced coworkers, and current staff members receive additional training as needed (e.g., new software or updated processes). In some cases staff may also attend professional development conferences, as occurs for Health Care Center and Food Service staff. LSSU supports and encourages faculty training and professional development, as evidenced in Section 14.3 of the Faculty Agreement, which provided \$1200 in professional development funds to full-time faculty members in 2019-2020 and \$1400 in 2020-2021. Criterion 3.C.5 details the types of professional development and training received by faculty through those funds.

In addition to training and professional development available to staff and faculty under normal conditions, COVID-19 responses generated even more professional development opportunities. Deans met regularly with personnel in Informational Technology in “Tech Meetings” to facilitate effective communication between IT and academic areas; this ensured that technology was provided and supported to meet the expanding teaching and learning needs of faculty and students. The IT department also provided extended support from its Helpdesk across the University; the Helpdesk assisted faculty, staff, and students to set up new hardware and software, and provided training as needed. The administrator of the Moodle learning management system (LMS) developed and provided instructional materials, and met virtually with faculty as needed, to prepare them to deliver synchronous and asynchronous lectures or instruction; these training opportunities were well attended. Instructional professional development training materials for LMS and online teaching included guides and how-to videos for: Big Blue Button (videoconferencing platform in Moodle), Zoom, Screencast-o-matic, Respondus Lockdown Browser and Remote Proctor Now (online test proctoring), and additional tools in Moodle to enhance online teaching. The LMS administrator sent regular emails out to both faculty and students to offer assistance and notify them of training resources and opportunities. Library staff helped train faculty to use video cameras for instructional delivery, and provided them with technology tools to facilitate effective online teaching; tools and training included Wacom tablets, Surface tablets, ipads, document cameras, and Zoom. Laptops and distance learner support services were available to students with those needs. Library staff also provided training and support to faculty and staff to demonstrate use of the five new rooms they set up and dedicated to asynchronous distance learning.

Additional training and professional development completed by faculty during the COVID-19 pandemic encompassed:

- Communities of Practice sponsored by the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETAL).
- Upper Peninsula Teaching and Learning Conference (UPTLC) virtual sessions, hosted by LSSU.

- Virtual professional development attended through various agencies, including the Lilly Conference, the ASEE (American Society for Engineering Education) Conference, and the Upper Peninsula Mathematical Association of American Conference (hosted by LSSU’s School of Mathematics and Computer Science).
- Many faculty reached out to colleagues within the LSSU community and peers within their own disciplines at other institutions for individualized professional development. Examples of LSSU faculty-to-faculty support include:
 - College of Innovations and Solutions faculty collaboratively experimented with available technology, training each other and setting up document cameras to their remote classroom platforms, ensuring they could continue working problems with and for students in authentic synchronous environments. Faculty worked together to solidify best practices for asynchronous engagement, developing videos, chat rooms, discussion forums, and converting lab exercises into online demonstrations through which students could actively engage in learning.
 - School of Nursing held virtual weekly meetings to collaborate and share effective online teaching and learning strategies that would meet or exceed clinical expectations, including resources for virtual case studies and simulations.
 - College of Health and Behavior faculty continued to pursue professional development opportunities by attending or presenting at online webinars and conferences. One individual earned her Certified Nurse Educator designation as well.
 - Deans and Chairs worked one-on-one with faculty to train them on virtual meeting tools.
 - Dr. Derek Wright used his professional development funds to set up a classroom in Crawford Hall with “HighFlex/LakerFlex/DerekFlex,” which allows science faculty to LiveStream and record their lectures for both synchronous and asynchronous delivery.

All faculty, staff, and students at LSSU receive annual Title IX training through a series of online modules, and also received informational materials for COVID-19 policies and responses prior to fall 2020. Additional professional development (PD) is available to all LSSU personnel through the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETAL) and through “Professional Development Day” during the week prior to start of fall semester. New Faculty Orientations provide training to new instructional staff during that same week. Non-faculty staff members have also benefitted from skill-specific professional development, such as the Skillpath training offered in 2017.

With a typical class size under 30 students, and a student-to-faculty ratio of 16:1, LSSU’s infrastructure is well able to support its academic operations. All faculty meet the institution’s qualification standards, and faculty qualifications are posted on the University website. The Common Data Set with all this information is also posted on the LSSU website by the Office of Institutional Research for full transparency.

Physical infrastructure is ample for classroom and lab space, as evidenced by classroom usage reports broken down by type of space (lecture or laboratory), total room utilization, and total building utilization. Not all rooms are 100% in use during available times, although some are

used more than 80% of the available time. Some rooms are reserved for special purposes or are unavailable during preparation for laboratory or other specified use, so they are used less by necessity. Physical infrastructure at regional locations is sufficient, as evidenced in the state-of-the-art culinary facility in Hessel-Les Cheneaux and in the newly constructed building in St. Helen, Michigan. LSSU's Multi-location Visit Peer Review Report for the Hessel and Iron Mountain locations noted that "all facilities were well-equipped and well maintained [and] classrooms and lab facilities have everything students need, are comfortable, and meet all student and faculty needs." The reviewer also observed that the dedicated support from the Regional Center Coordinator at Iron Mountain is very valuable to students. Hessel students reported that their faculty are excellent, as is the faculty support they receive. The reviewer's report concluded, "the processes and procedures meet the needs of all stakeholders" at the additional locations.

The Facilities Master Plan is available on the website, disclosing LSSU's future plans for physical infrastructure. As required by the state of Michigan, the 2021-2025 Five-Year Facility Assessment Plan outlines enrollment projections and future expected staffing needs (Section 3), as well as expectations for facility utilization, facility standards, structural conditions and facility planning (Section 4). Section 5 outlines implementation plans for projects, planned maintenance, and planned expenditures. Historically, LSSU's Capital Outlay Master Plans have helped ensure that infrastructure remains sufficient to support operations. For example, the 2019 contract with Johnson Controls implemented an enterprise-wide energy plan updating all water, HVAC, and interior electrical systems on the main campus (p. 17). As part of the 2017-2021 Master Plan, the renovation of the old South Hall was completed in the Spring of 2017 (p. 8). Renamed Considine Hall, the building now houses the Lukenda School of Business, nine classrooms, fourteen staff offices, one computer lab, one boardroom, one conference room, and a small cafeteria. The current 2021-25 Master Plan includes facility initiatives to complete the new Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE) and renovate the fish hatchery. CFRE will provide multiple educational and research opportunities, materials, and programming for LSSU and the surrounding community.

5.B.2

As described under Criterion 1.A.1, LSSU's Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan were constructed from 2019 input received through "listening sessions" with the campus, local, and tribal communities. The mission's goals are to (1) equip graduates with knowledge, skills, and strengths that will enable them to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, (2) provide an inclusive atmosphere, and (3) enhance the quality of life of the Great Lakes region and the world. The Vision directs institutional efforts toward innovative and transformative education opportunities for students, and a pledge to identify students' potential, enable their success, drive their social mobility, and prepare them for professional success wherever they go in the future. LSSU is realistically fulfilling its mission and vision through specific goals mapped out as achievable actions within key focus areas of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.

For example, strategic plan goal 1.1 is to “revitalize and supplement academic offerings that respond to student needs and promote transformational growth.” Subsumed within that goal are nine distinct strategies to achieve it, which include: making purposeful changes to general education to increase relevancy to students, adding new programs, expanding cannabis programming, and enhancing the culture of assessment to drive innovation and improvement in university-wide programs and services. As another example, goals 2.1 and 2.2 focus on diversity and inclusion. Strategies to achieve these goals include: developing a new diversity plan that fosters inclusivity, sponsoring multicultural events and groups, and increasing cultural literacy outcomes in courses and curricula. Goal 2.3 specifically addresses social mobility, with strategies to expand scholarships for students from disadvantaged financial backgrounds, to expand a funding source for student emergencies, and to strengthen financial literacy education for students, especially as related to student debt. These examples illustrate how LSSU is acting to achieve realistic goals aligned with its mission and vision, and appropriate to the institution’s organization, resources and opportunities.

As described under Criterion 5.A.1, LSSU is actively engaged in achieving its strategic plan goals. Individual strategies are assigned to a primary owner in the Senior Management Team (SMT), and SMT members explain progress made toward achieving those goals in SMT meetings and in their Board meeting reports. Examples of actions taken to achieve specific strategic plan goals include:

- the development and addition of new courses and programs “to add appeal and relevancy to students;”
- redesigned assessment processes that “enhance a culture of cyclical and systematic assessment to drive continuous improvement and innovation” across the University;
- growth of scholarships, emergency funds, a food pantry and clothing supplies as part of LSSU’s commitment to “increase support activities for socioeconomically disadvantaged groups;”
- opening of a new location, expansion of the Early/Middle College program, enlargement of the Center for Freshwater Research and Education, launching a new Club Sports program emphasizing regional attractions, and opening the Cannabis Center for Excellence with Agilent Technologies to “expand and diversify university revenue streams.”

5.B.3

The Vice President for Finance and Operations (VP-FO) monitors state communications and institutional factors including enrollment reports, housing reports, retention reports, and state revenue estimation reports to develop revenue estimates for future budget development. The VP-FO also develops all internal transfer budgets for debt service, abatements, plant funds, Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System (MPERS), and designated funds. He produces a master transfer document and shares it with appropriate accounting staff for entry into the system. Monthly transfers then occur via journal entry. Once accuracy for revenue estimates and transfers is confirmed, budget requests are entered into the institution’s budget development

software package (BudgetPak) using a defined budget approval and implementation process. The VP-FO and Senior Budget Analyst monitor data entry and work with budget managers to ensure budget requests do not exceed limits set by the Board of Trustees or the President. Budget managers have access to training and resources for budget development, management, or entry.

After the full budget is approved by the Board of Trustees, final budgets are entered into Banner. Funds are expended throughout the year, in accordance with approved procedures and policies for purchase orders, standing orders, spending limits, P-Card purchases, travel expenditures, capital equipment expenditures, single source, and others. Business Operations and the Purchasing Office work together to enter and monitor expenditure transactions. These offices provide training as needed if errors occur. Monthly budget reports are automatically generated and distributed via email to budget managers. Purchase Order approval reports are automatically generated twice daily and are sent to the appropriate approver via email for review and approval/denial. The VP-FO is copied on all reports and notifies immediate supervisors of any overspending, policy oversights, or related budgetary issues. The VP-FO initiates meetings with budget managers and their immediate supervisor if policies or procedures are not followed. The University promotes and practices transparency in its budgeting practices, posting its annual audits (Annual Financial Uniform Guidance reports) on the Financial Statements page of the Business Operations department's webpages. Annual Financial Reports are the basis of annual audits. LSSU received unqualified opinions on financial audits for both FY2019 and FY2020, in accordance with the U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. Audit results document the integrity of LSSU's financial operations; the Board of Trustees reviews and approves the fiscal reports, as evidenced in Board meeting minutes.

LSSU has demonstrated fiscal responsibility by working diligently to decrease its deficit, and has made good progress toward that goal since FY2016. The deficit shows an increase in 2020, due in part to unanticipated COVID-19 costs and the State of Michigan's deferral of \$1.5 million from FY2020 to FY2021. The budget deficit would have been essentially static from FY2019 to FY2020 if those conditions had not been present. LSSU's Board has approved the 2021 budget, which predicts a small surplus for FY2021. In addition, the University has received the State's deferred payment of \$1.5 million, and the year-end FY2021 actual figures are expected to be good. Year-end general fund budget deficits from FY2016-FY2020 are shown in the table below, along with the anticipated FY2021 annual surplus.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Approved 2021
General Fund Budget	(3,313,377.78)	(1,306,560.02)	(927,654.44)	(1,504,849.18)	(3,390,975.11)	16,236.00

**Parentheses indicate deficits.*

In addition, actual overall General Fund budget expenditures each year have been below budgeted amounts since 2017. Since LSSU did not receive its budgeted revenue from the state of Michigan in FY 2020, the dramatic reductions in expenditures for that year are atypical.

	General Fund Budgeted Amount	General Fund Actual Expenditures
FY 2017	34,251,196.62	32,860,715.08
FY 2018	35,276,097.49	34,359,990.16
FY 2019	35,761,777.45	34,484,782.28
FY 2020	35,495,769.00	32,523,201.27

LSSU’s 2020-2025 Strategic Plan has established clear goals for “Fiscal Resilience and Operational Excellence.” Included in those goals are explicit expectations for achieving unqualified opinion financial audits and for scoring well as an institution in financial health ratios and HLC’s Composite Financial Index. The plan outlines goals with detailed strategies to expand and diversify revenue streams, and to ensure operational effectiveness through innovation, planning, and resource allocation.

5.B.4

LSSU has worked purposefully to ensure that resources are appropriately allocated to achieve its educational purposes. Resources are distributed according to approved funding programs and initiatives, in accordance with the general fund and auxiliary budgets. Academic Affairs and the Business Office collaborate closely to construct academic budgets that are sufficient to meet all academic needs. Historically (FY2015-FY2021), core academic and research areas have comprised an average of 37.5% of General Fund expenditures. Mid-year adjustments necessitated by COVID-19 in FY2020 saw aggregated General Fund expenditure reductions of more than 8% overall, but academic areas only realized a 2.5% reduction. To every extent possible, financial support to core academic areas has been maintained despite challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Fiscal reallocations to support academic purposes in spring 2020 included doubling the University’s bandwidth, purchasing additional “Zoom” licenses to support faculty in delivering virtual instruction, increasing Helpdesk support for all University constituents as LSSU transitioned to a fully-online instructional delivery format, and increasing IT staff support to update server capacity for greater demand on the Learning Management System.

The FY2021 General Fund operating budget apportions 39% of its funds for instruction and academic support, with another 12% assigned for student services and student aid. Even when prior annual General Fund budgets showed a deficit, LSSU consistently prioritized funds to achieve its educational purposes, allocating approximately 40% of its General Fund budgets in FY2019 and FY 2020 to instruction and academic support. Moreover, specific goals in the

Strategic Plan direct future allocations of resources to achieve expanding educational purposes. Several examples include:

- Goal 1.1.1 and 3.1.1 call for the addition of new academic programs at all levels, along with delivery methods that meet the needs of both traditional and nontraditional students. Strategies implemented since 2018 to meet these goals include several new degree and certificate programs connected to Michigan’s new cannabis industry, with a Cannabis Production Certificate program primarily offered online. While some external funding helped initiate this programming, LSSU mindfully coordinated budget allocations to sustain those programs until they become self-supporting.
- Goal 1.3.1 calls for increased support and services for Veterans, First-Generation and financially disadvantaged students. Strategies implemented to meet this goal included the 2020 submission of a TRIO grant proposal to the U.S. Department of Education, which was intended to provide need-specific tutoring and services to those students.
- Goal 3.2.1 calls for establishing an additional location in St. Helen, Michigan, which was accomplished in fall 2020.
- Goal strategy 3.3.1 calls for student-centered operational hours for academic and student support services. To achieve this goal, hours were extended in the library and Academic Services. Those areas continued to offer all services online when the physical campus was closed due to COVID-19. The Superior Simulation Center expanded its hours as well to better serve student needs.

Additional fiscal allocations to meet students’ needs and achieve educational purposes include scholarships to support students, especially those in financial need. The LSSU Foundation sponsors over 175 scholarships, and the Financial Aid Office sponsors the annual Laker Gold Scholarship competition.

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

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

Argument

5.C.1

Described under Criterion 5.B.4, LSSU allocates financial resources and prepares budgets in alignment with its mission and strategic plan. Based upon enrollment histories, budget histories, and other sources of revenue, the Vice President of Finance and Operations (VP-FO) proposes annual budgets that align with the goals of academic schools, the goals of other administrative departments, the strategic plan goals, and the Campus Master Plan. Budget managers for schools and departments receive annual budget planning guidelines from their Deans or Senior Management Team (SMT) supervisor, and plan their budgets accordingly for the year. Academic budget development begins in Schools, advances to the Dean, and then to the Provost. The Provost and VP-FO must review and approve budgets before they are forwarded to the President and then to the Board for final approvals. The process is the same for non-academic units. Budgets are developed by staff and administrators, then submitted to the appropriate SMT supervisor, who forwards it to the VP-FO and Provost for review and pre-approval before sending it on to the President and Board for final approval. In alignment with LSSU's mission and priorities to provide quality instruction for undergraduates, the FY2021 General Fund budget allocates 39% of the total budget to instruction and academic support. Additionally, faculty workload is clearly outlined in Section 8.7.6 of the Faculty Agreement, with 60-85% of time and effort dedicated to teaching and the remainder dedicated to advising students, professional development, or service.

Also in keeping with LSSU's mission, research funding allocations increased 51% in FY2021. The University strongly supports and encourages undergraduate research, as described more fully under Criterion 2.B.2. LSSU has funded its "Senior Research Symposium" since 2015,

highlighting student research and providing a venue for students and faculty to present their research to the campus and community. This tradition continued despite COVID-19 restrictions, with academic programs arranging for students' research presentations through virtual venues instead. Allocations to the Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE), to the Superior Analytics Lab, and to the Cannabis Center of Excellence support LSSU's mission by providing students with valuable hands-on experiential learning opportunities. Ongoing CFRE construction is supported through the University and a Foundation Board fundraising campaign to raise \$4.35 million, supplementing an approved State of Michigan \$8.85 million Capital Outlay. Total project cost is \$14.2 million. Since 2007, the Foundation has raised almost \$4 million in support of the Aquatic Research Lab/CFRE projects, with \$3,853,313.30 available as of November 2020 for CFRE construction. Students working in CFRE's Atlantic salmon hatchery or in the Superior Analytics Lab participate in research that will increase their knowledge and practical skills for their future careers. The Superior Analytics Lab, funded through contracts and grants, provides state, federal, and local environmental analyses through contracts to support monitoring programs that meet US Environmental Protection Agency and MI Department of Environmental Quality analytical protocols. The laboratory provides students, faculty, and staff opportunities to engage in environmental research projects, including support for new industries like cannabis chemistry and technical assistance for water quality analysis and monitoring in the community. The Cannabis Center of Excellence features \$2million of specialized Agilent technologies, which were purchased by LSSU at a 50% discount from Agilent. The Center is now funded directly through the cannabis chemistry program budget and donations.

In addition to allocating resources to support student learning through research, other facilities provide hands-on experiential learning to equip students with practical career skills as well. Hands-on learning facilities include a crime lab, shooting range, nursing simulation center, exercise performance lab, robotics lab, and the Cannabis Center of Excellence. LSSU's Simulation Center partners with War Memorial Hospital to provide immersive hands-on training for nurses, paramedics, and other health care professionals from the local area and the region.

The Office of Financial Aid and the LSSU Foundation assist students through a variety of grants, loans and scholarships, as previously noted. The Foundation assists in fundraising for all entities on campus, including the Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE) and athletics. Students can apply for Foundation-funded research grants, supervised by the Undergraduate Research Committee (URC). This committee oversees individual grants up to \$500, with \$2500-\$3000 issued in total each semester. A student emergency fund monitored by the Foundation is available for students experiencing unforeseen financial challenges. LSSU's Office of Sponsored Programs helps faculty and staff secure funding opportunities from outside the University. Closely aligned with LSSU's mission and its clear emphasis on student and learning success, LSSU provides professional development funds for faculty in Section 14.3.1 of the Faculty Agreement. The contract provides a \$1400 professional development annual allowance to faculty. Fund balances up to \$4500 can be carried forward from year to year, and can be used in support of teaching, student learning, advising, or research and scholarship.

5.C.2

LSSU links its student learning assessment processes to planning and budgeting. For example, LSSU's Curriculum Committee plays a key role in academic decisions related to credits, course descriptions, learning outcomes, and requirements for courses and programs. All new course or program proposals, as well as changes proposed for existing courses or programs, must include learning outcome assessments and measures, which are evaluated by the committee. In addition, all proposal forms must detail budgetary needs, operational needs, and other relevant factors for committee review. Specific requirements for library resources, laboratory space, or other operational needs are determined and approved through this process.

LSSU adheres to a five-year program review cycle, with reporting templates completed by programs and departments across the University. Five-Year program reviews are completed by academic, co-curricular, non-academic and administrative units, and include evaluative summaries linking student learning assessment processes, operational functions, and budget planning. As part of the five-year program review process, academic programs complete Annual Assessment Updates to summarize and link each year's learning assessments to the planning of program budgets and operations for the coming fiscal year. Faculty in academic programs meet early in the fall of each year to review the previous year's program learning outcomes (PLO) assessment data, which is tracked and recorded in Nuventive™ to generate the assessment reports used for the Annual Update meetings. Student learning assessment findings help faculty direct future actions for their programs, including data to justify budget requests and changes to operational needs. Criterion 4 provides a detailed description of the Program Review process and its connected academic Annual Assessment Updates. All academic programs use Nuventive™ for course-level assessment reporting, which feeds into the program-level assessments to further inform Program Reviews and Annual Updates.

Student Affairs is currently revising its reporting structure to directly align with student learning outcomes, strategic plan goals (e.g., increased retention, increased program completion rates, club sports growth), and budget management. An active example of assessment used to direct change is evidenced in the Laker Success Program. Year one data for the Laker Success program led to adding Commuter Coaches, commuter outreach, and the Student Engagement Center (SEC). The SEC supports five Commuter Coaches responsible for programming, outreach, and mentoring for students that do not have a Resident Success Coach. Fall 2020 data showed low attendance, so spring 2021 programs are offered throughout the day to allow students to attend between classes. In keeping with the ongoing cycle of assessment, this change will be evaluated for effectiveness, with a final report at the end of spring 2021.

Cocurricular and extracurricular units also report assessment data in Nuventive™, and incorporate those assessment findings into their Program Review and annual assessment processes. All units are encouraged to generate assessment reports from Nuventive™ to help evaluate their operations conduct annual planning and budgeting. Additional linkages between processes for student learning assessment, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting are made through BudgetPak, the software used by LSSU budget managers to record their unit's budget plans each year. BudgetPak entries can include notes to justify budget requests, and budget managers are encouraged to upload assessment data as evidence of need for their budget

requests; those notes may be used to justify funding requests, and may include stated alignments to the mission or strategic plan.

5.C.3

As explained under Criteria 5.A.1 and 5.A.2, shared governance and high levels of collaborative engagement among internal and external constituent groups strengthen planning processes at the University. Internal constituent groups include the Board, Senior Management Team, Faculty Association, student government, University committees, COVID-19 Response Team, listening groups, faculty-led program reviews, employee associations, and more. Constituent groups like these work together on planning and policy development. For example, faculty, administrators, and students on the General Education Committee worked collaboratively over several years to develop the general education assessment process described under Criteria 3.B.1 and 3.B.2. As another example, the University Assessment Committee membership broadly represents many internal constituent groups who worked collaboratively to develop institution-wide assessment instruments used to measure student learning of the institutional learning outcomes (ILOs). That process and its assessment instruments are used to gather data to inform action planning in many areas, including academics, student support services, cocurricular areas, and student employment evaluations. LSSU's integrative approach to shared governance, as described under earlier sections of Criterion 5, demonstrate institution-wide participation in planning for the best interests of the University, its students, and other constituents.

As appropriate, perspectives of external constituencies are considered to facilitate partnerships and community services. Collaborative planning with the Bay Mills Indian Community Health Center, War Memorial Hospital, Chippewa County Health Department, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and the Michigan National Guard brought about campus and community COVID-19 testing on LSSU's campus. The establishment of the Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE) has relied heavily upon collaborations with Cloverland Electric, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and other state, tribal, and federal agencies from the U.S. and Canada; working with those external constituencies, CFRE enriches LSSU's environmental science and fisheries and wildlife programs while serving the region. LSSU consults with other Michigan universities through the Michigan Association of State Universities (MASU), an organization that provides all 15 Michigan universities with legislative analyses and advocacy, as well as a forum for collaboration and consulting among its member institutions. LSSU's active agreement with the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, instated in 2003, is yet another example of University planning in collaboration with an external constituency. The large Sault Chippewa Indian tribal community offers recreational, fitness, and educational programs to its members at LSSU, and pays an annual all-tribe membership fee to the University for access to Norris Center facilities and participation in summer Youth Camps.

External constituent groups play an important role through advisory boards for academic schools and programs. Perspectives from community, regional, and business groups provide valuable insights that program faculty rely upon and utilize for program planning. Examples of LSSU's

active advisory boards are discussed fully under Criterion 1.B.3, and include: the Lukenda School of Business Advisory Board; the Industrial Advisory Board for the School of Engineering and Technology; the Cannabis Business Advisory Board; the Cannabis Chemistry Advisory Board; the School of Education Advisory Board; and the School of Nursing Advisory Board.

Described under criteria 5.A.1 and 5.B.2, the development process for the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan further documents that LSSU's planning processes solicit and consider perspectives from internal and external constituent groups. The strategic planning committee conducted 35 "listening sessions" and surveys with both internal and external constituencies. Prior to the Strategic Plan's approval in April 2020, the Board of Trustees reviewed the feedback received through those listening sessions from students, faculty, staff, Tribal Leaders, advisory boards, alumni, and community members. The resulting Strategic Plan is a comprehensive document mapping out achievable forward-thinking goals for the University.

5.C.4

As directed in LSSU's 2016 Reaffirmation Review, Criterion 5.C.4 comprises the University's embedded report on enrollment and budget. The following embedded report demonstrates the institution's integrity in its financial functions. This report includes current census day enrollment figures for degree-seeking students as of fall 2020, comprehensive student retention figures for AY2018-2019 and AY2019-2020, retention projections for AY2020-2021, the University's operating budget deficit/surplus numbers, budget projections, and the status of repayment of the general fund debt.

Enrollment

LSSU carefully evaluates all sources of revenue when planning its annual budgets and future directions. Fluctuations in enrollment are comprehensively analyzed to calculate statistically sound projections for future enrollment as a part of the budget planning process.

Fall 2020 Enrollment Comparison Data

	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Percent Change
Student Type			
FTIC (First-Time-in-College)	320	338	5.6%
Transfer	123	161	30.9%
Readmit	52	39	-25.0%
Total New College Students	495	538	8.7%
Early Middle College (13 th Year Only)	4	18	350%

Dual Enrollment (1 st Time Only)	13	25	92.3%
Total New Student Enrollment	512	581	13.5%

	In-State	Out of State	International*	Canada
FTIC (338)	88%	7.6%	2.6%	2.1%
Total New College Students (538)	89.7%	6.7%	3.5%	2.6%
			<i>*Includes Canada</i>	
	ACT/SAT	No Test		
FTIC (338)	86%	13.1%		
Total New College Students (538)	69.5%	30.4%		
	Female	Male	Not Available	
FTIC (338)	58.7%	42.3%	0.0%	
Total New College Students (538)	54.5%	45.2%	<1%	
	American Indian	Asian Pacific Islander	Black Not Hispanic	Hispanic
FTIC (338)	6%	<1%	0%	<1%
Total New College Students (538)	6.3%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	Nonresident Alien	Did Not Know	White	Did Not Answer
FTIC (338)	<1%	0.0%	37%	54.1%
Total New College Students (538)	<1%	<1%	36.8%	54.2%

Confirming the upswing in new student enrollment overall at LSSU, spring enrollment for 2021 also shows increases:

	Spring 2020	Spring 2021	Percent Change
Student Type			
FTIC (First-Time-in-College)	16	28	75.0%
Transfer	38	45	18.4%
Readmit	24	28	16.7%
Total New College Students	78	101	29.5%

The Dean of Admissions and Marketing develops marketing plans based on careful analyses of enrollment numbers over the previous three years as compared to the current year, as well as data for applications and enrollment from within Michigan, broken down by counties and by years. Using that data, the Dean of Admissions and Marketing calculated Yield Percentage Rates for each county and developed marketing and financial aid strategies that targeted the highest-yield counties most heavily. This decision ensured that marketing expenditures were in the best interests of the institution, yielding the highest rate of return on those expenditures.

The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan outlines detailed enrollment projections over the five-year lifespan of the plan. Strategic Plan strategy 3.2.1 sets a 2025 enrollment target at 2,400. To achieve that goal over the next four years, LSSU has implemented several strategic initiatives that are already seeing results:

- LSSU restructured its academic calendar for fall 2020 to meet COVID-19 demands, which enabled the University to add the fully-online accelerated winter term running from December 7, 2020 to January 8, 2021. General education courses were primarily planned and offered for this term, with a budget projection anticipating 100 student enrollments; actual enrollments were 136 students. The projected budget revenue was \$110,000, but the realized revenue was \$180,000. With the combined revenues from fall and winter 2020, enrollment revenue was within 1% of LSSU's annual projection.
- LSSU has developed several new programs attuned to market demands. Enrollment data is the basis for those decision-making processes, directing actions for program discontinuation, restructure, or expansion and development. For example, since spring 2019 LSSU has launched new programs in Cannabis Business, Cannabis Chemistry, and Robotics Engineering. In fall 2020, 75 students were majoring in the new cannabis programs, and 29 students in Robotics Engineering.
- LSSU expanded its "One Rate at Lake State" tuition plan to all students. One-rate tuition allows students from anywhere in the world to earn a college degree at LSSU for the same cost as in-state students.

- LSSU opened two new additional locations in 2019 and 2020, with the new St. Helen and Hessel – Les Cheneaux locations reaching new markets. The Hessel site broadened LSSU’s appeal to students interested in regional tourism careers with its Culinary Arts Chef Certificate program, and the St. Helen site fills a postsecondary education gap for an underserved region in Michigan. Additional research on this region revealed that the largest demographic is potentially first-generation in college and Pell-eligible, which closely matches the profile of LSSU’s typical student.
- LSSU hired a new Dean of Admissions and Marketing in December 2019. Targeting markets in which enrollments are typically highest at LSSU, such as first-generation and low-income students from nearby regions of the state, the new Dean of Admissions and Marketing increased new-student enrollments by 13.5% in his first year of service. This increase in enrollments is striking in contrast to the typical average enrollment declines of 10-15% experienced during this same period at other colleges and universities across Michigan. LSSU was able to maintain this upward enrollment trend during the COVID-19 crisis. While conscientiously prioritizing the health safety of the University community, LSSU planned carefully to best meet the needs of its students. With first-generation students accounting for 66% of enrollments, circumspect plans were put in place to meet the needs of those students by conducting a majority of classes face-to-face in fall 2020. Students responded positively to that decision, with first-time-in-college enrollments increased by 5.6% and transfers increased by over 30%; once again, LSSU’s enrollments increased while almost every other public institution in the state of Michigan saw declines in fall 2020 for both those datasets.
- LSSU hired a new Club Sports director, strategically developing club sports that specifically attract new students to the University. Data analysis projects Club Sports will be net revenue positive, with revenues gained from new student enrollments exceeding the cost of the program. Focusing on club sports characteristic to the University’s unique regional location (e.g., men’s and women’s hockey, target and skeet shooting, etc.), this program differentiates LSSU from its competitor institutions and has already begun to attract and recruit students who would not otherwise have chosen this University. The program calls for coaches to reach “hard recruitment targets” and increase retention at LSSU by bolstering students’ sense of belonging at the University.
- LSSU will soon hire full-time person to recruit and serve neighboring Canadian students, and launch new outreaches and services to the local Native American communities.

Despite COVID-19, LSSU has raised new student enrollment through strategic, creative, and effective initiatives based on careful analyses of enrollment data. LSSU’s Enrollment Management and Marketing team has developed a multi-year enrollment strategy to continue that upward trend by generating greater enrollment yield through more strategic use of data, analytics, technology, process, and target-marketing strategies. LSSU will continue developing new articulation agreements with community colleges and Canadian colleges, and increase promotion of its “one-rate” tuition plan in out-of-state markets. Strategic initiatives to reach non-traditional adult-student markets more effectively are planned over the next five years, including expansion of distance learning to better serve the needs of those students. Adding to the new cannabis-focused and robotics engineering programs developed in recent years to meet market demands, LSSU will continue to evaluate and adjust program offerings to support and increase

enrollment growth for the University. LSSU is committed to continuing its strategic enrollment growth at all its locations and in all modalities over the next five years.

Student Retention

LSSU has a clearly set target to increase first-year student retention to 75%, as stated in strategic plan goal 1.3. The University collects retention data through Argos reports, drawn from the Evisions™ Banner Student Information System, and Banner continually updates student information to ensure it is current. Retention data is collected, analyzed, and used to drive program and institutional improvements that will increase retention.

Comparisons of comprehensive retention figures, broken down by class for full-time bachelor degree seeking enrollments, provide data that have informed action plans to increase student retention.

		2018-2019	2019-2020
Full-Time Enrollments	Previous Year's Freshman		
	Cohort Retained	77%	70%
	Previous Year's Sophomore		
	Cohort Retained	100%	86%
	Previous Year's Junior		
	Cohort Retained	50%	83%

With many part-time LSSU students working full time and taking classes sporadically to complete their degrees, the institution looks more broadly at all student types and all degree or certificate seeking types when evaluating part-time retention figures.

		2018-2019	2019-2020
Part-Time Enrollments	Previous Year's Freshman		
	Cohort Retained	35%	31%
	Previous Year's Sophomore		
	Cohort Retained	26%	15%
	Previous Year's Junior		
	Cohort Retained	23%	32%

The full impact of COVID-19 on retention for 2020-2021 is unclear, with no data as yet to determine how many students may have elected to skip a year of education while waiting out the pandemic. Initial data collected on retention for 2020-2021 is positive:

*Full-Time Enrollments		*Part-Time Enrollments	
2020-2021		2020-2021	
Previous Year's Freshman		Previous Year's Freshman	
Cohort Retained	73%	Cohort Retained	25%
Previous Year's Sophomore		Previous Year's Sophomore	
Cohort Retained	73%	Cohort Retained	1%
Previous Year's Junior		Previous Year's Junior	
Cohort Retained	100%	Cohort Retained	25%

**Full-Time Enrollment figures = full-time bachelor degree seeking students. Part-Time Enrollment figures = all student types and all degree/certificate seeking types.*

The following examples illustrate how LSSU uses retention data to improve programming and services:

- The Dean of Student Affairs uses the data to report on retention to the Senior Management Team and the Board of Trustees. Data are used for budget planning, to adjust marketing plans, to adjust academic and cocurricular programming, and to address Goal 2.2 in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan: strengthen programs and services to increase retention through a climate that makes students feel welcomed, supported, included, and valued. To that end, Student Affairs hired three new full-time staff in 2020 and implemented the new Club Sports program.
- Academic Affairs most recent high-impact initiatives to increase retention over the past few years have included:
 - Restructuring the developmental math courses to provide additional support to students and to help them move through the math courses sequence more quickly (described under Criteria 1.A.4 and 3.C.1).
 - Overhauling the math placement process to ensure that all students are adequately prepared for their courses and that they have appropriate learning support to meet their needs (as described more fully under Criterion 3.D.2).
 - Reassigning faculty in gateway courses to ensure that the most effective teachers are in place to support those students.

- Hiring new faculty with backgrounds and experience teaching first-generation, low-income, and other high-risk student populations. In mathematics, one new instructor brought skills to restructure developmental math, while another brought significant experience teaching first-generation and low-income students.
- In the College of Science and the Environment, two faculty with backgrounds as first-generation college students were hired to bring that experience, along with discipline-specific knowledge and skills, to benefit LSSU students.
- Implementing My Degree Plan, an online degree-auditing tool used by the registrar's office, by advisors, and by students to more effectively plan and track degree completion progress.
- Strengthening teaching pedagogy and practice by providing faculty development opportunities (e.g., bringing in speakers, supporting faculty attendance at Lilly and other professional conferences, and increasing collegial support resources in the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning).
- Increasing the University's focus on High Impact Practices through tracking, marketing and support, as outlined in Strategic Plan strategy 1.5.5.
- Ongoing assessment of, resources for, and improvements to advising, as explained under Criterion 3.D.3.

Operating Budget

LSSU has made significant progress toward reducing and eliminating deficit budgets. The University's final budgets for FY2019 and FY2020 were still in deficit. However, the deferment of State of Michigan funding to state universities due to COVID-19 was the primary causal factor in the large net deficit total for FY2020.

	FY2019	FY2020
Total Revenue	\$37,737,736	35,533,224
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(563,439)	(3,390,975.11)

The Board of Trustees approved University's operating budget for FY2021 with a projected total revenue of \$36,244,236 and a total cost of \$36,228,000, leaving a small Net Surplus of \$16,236. Since that time, FY2021 revenues have been higher than expected, primarily due to increasing new student enrollment and to LSSU's commitment to establish a balanced budget by making difficult decisions to cut costs in alignment with the University's strategic plan. In addition, the deferred funding from the State of Michigan, plus expected COVID-19 relief funding, will further increase cash flow into the University. LSSU's Board of Trustees and Senior Management Team are regularly reviewing those funding sources, and expect that some portion of those funds can be used to reduce, or possibly eliminate, the general fund debt of the University.

Budget projections through FY2023 anticipate level funding from the State of Michigan for FY2021 and FY2022. Estimated revenue for FY2021 through FY2023 is expected to steadily increase:

FY2021	FY2022	FY2023
\$36,244,236	\$37,164,383	\$38,062,389

Projected costs for FY2021 through FY2023 remain at or below LSSU's projected revenue. The Board, President, Vice President for Finance and Operations, and Provost are committed to a balanced budget or slight surplus every year, in alignment with the institution's strategic plan. It is noteworthy that LSSU has worked diligently and made significant progress since 2016 to decrease its deficit. While the 2020 budget shows a COVID aftermath deficit, that budget would otherwise have been essentially static from FY2019 to FY2020. Year-end general fund budget deficits from FY2016-FY2020 are shown in the table below, along with the anticipated FY2021 annual surplus.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Approved 2021
General Fund Budget	(3,313,377.78)	(1,306,560.02)	(927,654.44)	(1,504,849.18)	(3,390,975.11)	16,236.00

In addition, actual overall General Fund budget expenditures each year have been below budgeted amounts since 2017. Since LSSU did not receive its budgeted revenue from the state of Michigan in FY 2020, the reductions in expenditures for that year are atypical. This reaffirms LSSU's commitment to containing annual expenditures to budgeted amounts.

	General Fund Budgeted Amount	General Fund Actual Expenditures
FY 2017	34,251,196.62	32,860,715.08
FY 2018	35,276,097.49	34,359,990.16
FY 2019	35,761,777.45	34,484,782.28
FY 2020	35,495,769.00	32,523,201.27

In planning its budgets, LSSU apportions expenditures within the estimated revenue for each year. The University is appropriately "addressing its mission and priorities by allocating its

resources to ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.” Historically (FY2015-FY2021), core academic and research areas have comprised an average of 37.5% of General Fund expenditures. In FY20, mid-year adjustments were necessary due to COVID-19. While all General Fund areas reduced expenditures during the pandemic, those reductions were minimal in academic areas; LSSU ensures that financial support to core academic areas is maintained, regardless of challenges.

LSSU’s 2020-2025 strategic plan includes allocation (or reallocation) of resources to realize the highest priority items within the plan. The new cannabis programs prompted reassignments for existing faculty, and led to equipment purchases valued at \$2 million (at a 50% discount through Agilent); that equipment was dispersed to cannabis and other science programs. LSSU’s new Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE) facility, scheduled to open fall in 2021, has multiple funding sources, including a grant from the State of Michigan, fundraising projects of the LSSU Foundation, and the University. This \$14.2 million project will house research staff and equipment and oversee a student-run fish hatchery. Prior to adoption of the strategic plan, LSSU’s two-year performance contract with Johnson Controls instituted upgrades and improvements to reduce overall operational spending and energy use through replacement of outdated heating systems, upgrades to HVAC equipment, upgrades to security systems, and reduced deferred maintenance costs; the project was completed in June 2020.

Repayment of General Fund Debt

As previously noted, LSSU’s Board and Senior Management Team expect to use some portion of the FY2020 deferred funding from the State of Michigan and federal COVID-19 relief funding toward repayment or possible elimination of the General Fund debt. In addition, most of the General Fund debt accrued in FY2020 due to COVID-19 was reversed in FY2021 under the currently approved budget.

As detailed under criterion 5.A.2, revenues have been increasing through growing enrollment as a result of innovative and creative initiatives, such as the addition of a winter term and the opening of new programs to attract new students. Beyond enrolling new students, LSSU can continue to maintain revenue streams through strategic retention initiatives, such as the 2018 expansion of First-year Experience courses (FYE/USEM) and the new Club Sports program.

LSSU’s Five-Year Capital Outlay Plan and Strategic Plan are sufficiently flexible to accommodate possible fluctuations in sources of revenue and enrollment. The Capital Outlay Plan maps out future directions of the institution based upon critical reviews of factors including capacity, programming, staffing, and faculty needs. The strategic plan established realistic and achievable goals through which LSSU will continue to increase revenue and enrollment. Specifically, goal 1.3 lays out four strategies to increase retention and enrollment, while Section 3 presents four overarching goals and 37 strategies focused on fiscal resilience and operational excellence. As explained under criteria 5.A.1 and 5.C.6, Senior Management Team members and staff are actively engaged in developing, implementing, and tracking progress on action plans to meet those strategic plan goals.

5.C.5

LSSU plans for changes in technology, as evidenced in regular updates to systems integral to the operations of the institution, such as Banner, Argos, Moodle, and Nuventive™ Improve. Additionally, LSSU anticipated evolving technology advancements through:

- Ongoing improvements to the University website to ensure that the site and its content remain accessible for all types of devices. Contracted services with *Monsido* scan the University webpages regularly and provide content managers with weekly reports detailing any issues discovered for accessibility, broken links, or readability. This service supports LSSU's commitment to consistently maintain a user-friendly website.
- Tools that have been incorporated into the LMS over the past several years include Turnitin (plagiarism checker), BigBlueButton (virtual classroom), Zoom (meetings and virtual classroom), iClickers (student classroom feedback), Remote Proctor Now (online test proctoring), Respondus (online test proctoring), H5P (increasing student engagement), and publisher content integrations upon request by faculty.
- The *Involvio* app gives students instant access to LSSU resources, information updates on campus events, and facilitate engagement with other members of the campus community.
- *Degree Works* provides students, faculty, advisors, and staff with clear planning tools for degree completion planning, easy-to-access degree audits, and clear transfer articulation overviews.
- Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, the IT department doubled LSSU's bandwidth capacity to accommodate expected increases in technology demands.
- Quickly responding to the COVID-19 crisis, LSSU purchased full-institutional Zoom licenses to support the University community and to ensure continuity of instruction despite the many pandemic challenges. All staff and students now have Zoom accounts. Cameras, screens, and other hardware were also updated or added in classrooms and to faculty computers.

In response to new emerging markets and explosive growth in robotics worldwide, LSSU opened enrollment into its new Robotics Engineering BS program in fall 2018. Data reviewed by the School of Engineering had shown substantial growth in industrial robots from 1.3 million to 2.5 million units between 2013-2018, and growth of over 30% in service/mobile robots each year. LSSU's state-of-the-art Robotics Lab houses over \$2 million in automation equipment and software, including 18 industrial robots and 10 mobile robots. Approximately 80% of the equipment and software were obtained through grants, donations, and industrial support. In response to another growing market, legalization of cannabis in Michigan and Ontario prompted LSSU to move quickly in developing its high quality baccalaureate programs in Cannabis Chemistry and Cannabis Business; in fall 2020 LSSU added a certificate program in Cannabis Production. Recognizing the important role tourism plays in northern Michigan's economy, LSSU partnered with a local culinary school in 2018 to develop and offer its Culinary Arts Chef certificate program. Anticipating ongoing growth in environmental science fields, LSSU has responded with an expansion project for the Center for Freshwater Research and Education (CFRE). Filling some of the vacuum in the field of education in northern Michigan,

LSSU maintains an agreement with Bay College in the western Upper Peninsula to provide a bachelor degree completion program for elementary education majors in the region.

As globalization continues to alter economies and expand job opportunities, LSSU's One Rate tuition plan and study abroad partner programs are being strengthened to increase the reach of the University into the global community. Transfer agreements with Canadian colleges, such as the School of Kinesiology's agreement with Sault College, expand LSSU's international reach as well. The Strategic Plan includes a goal to "develop a comprehensive internationalization plan that takes LSSU to the world, and brings the world to LSSU" (Goal 1.2). As a key strategy to achieve that goal LSSU plans to create an Office of International Engagement and to "establish educational partnerships with global institutions for study abroad opportunities and faculty exchange." Although travel for Study Abroad was suspended in 2020 due to COVID-19, partnership programs have historically provided popular opportunities for our students to share in unique educational experiences around the world.

Expecting ongoing changes in the global economy and in other factors that continually transform career opportunities, LSSU assumes much responsibility to serve populations that are unfamiliar with career options afforded by higher education. In 2020, LSSU was named a First-Gen Forward institution by the Center for First-Generation Student Success. The program's mission is to advance the success of first-generation students through evidence-based practices, professional development, and knowledge creation for the higher education community. This designation recognizes LSSU's leadership and commitment to the success of its first-generation students, which comprise 66% of its student body. A key Aspirational Value of the University's Strategic plan is "Social Mobility," affirming that commitment to first-generation students.

Many LSSU students benefit from the Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver, and the University values the close relationship it has with its two neighboring tribes. LSSU is committed to providing continuing quality higher education opportunities to those students. In comparison with other Michigan state-funded institutions, LSSU proudly serves the highest percentage of Native American students.

Quickly responding to evolving COVID-19 conditions, LSSU appointed a COVID-19 Response Team with broad membership from key areas across the University. The University community has access to up-to-date COVID-19 information on the LSSU website and coronavirus dashboard. The response team stays current with evolving factors in virus management and control, and issues timely emails to ensure people are well informed about safety policies, infection rates in the region, available testing, Return to Campus plans, Classroom Management Plans, revisions to the 2020-2021 academic calendar, and procedures put in place for isolating or quarantining people if necessary. The clear, thorough, and up-to-date information provided on the coronavirus dashboard and in emails to the campus community are further evidence that LSSU's institutional planning anticipates and responds appropriately to evolving external factors.

5.C.6

Initiatives for systematic improvements across the University are clearly outlined in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. Each Senior Management Team (SMT) member is assigned “ownership” of specific strategies in the plan to facilitate goal completions by appropriate departments or units. Implementations of strategic plan goals are ongoing, with staff throughout the University tracking and reporting goal achievement progress to their SMT representatives. For example, key Academic Affairs personnel use a template to report on progress they have made each month toward achieving their assigned goals. Other departments employ varying methods to similarly track their goal progress, and each SMT member regularly reports on that progress in SMT meetings. The administrative assistant to the President receives those reports, tracks and records all progress made on each goal strategy, and supplies the report to the President. The President updates the Board on strategic plan progress at every board meeting.

Prior to the adoption of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, LSSU had already begun implementing pivotal changes to improve operations and student outcomes. Early examples of decisive restructuring prior to 2020 include:

- 2015-16: expansion of the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETAL) to provide faculty and staff with greater access to the facility and its resources;
- 2017: approval for the Center for Freshwater Research and Education, scheduled to open in 2021;
- 2017: relocation and renaming of tutoring services to the Academic Success Center to highly visible location on the main floor of the library;
- 2017: relocation of the Nursing program’s Superior Simulation Center to a larger facility that can accommodate and train health care professionals from across the nation;
- 2018: relocation of IPASS office (Individualized Plan for Academic Student Success) to the Cisler Student Center to increase visibility and increase student access to services for students facing serious academic challenges;

Systematic improvements to operations and student outcomes are also driven by university-wide assessment processes, as described under Criterion 5.C.2. The five-year program review cycle is completed by academic, co-curricular, non-academic and administrative units, and the process includes evaluative summaries that link the unit’s student learning assessment processes, operational functions, and budget planning. All department units are encouraged to record data and action plans in Nuventive™ Improve, and to generate reports through that resource for evaluating operations and for annual planning and budgeting.

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

Lake Superior State University takes a broad approach to shared governance, with frequent interactions and collaborations among all constituents. Faculty, staff, and students all have opportunities to participate in setting academic requirements, policy and processes. The University relies upon data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents, ranging from LSSU's own enrollment data that informs marketing plans to detailed analyses of global and regional data that informs the development or changes in academic programs. Assessment data informs course-level, program-level, and institutional action plans as well. The University has established realistic and achievable goals in its strategic plan.

LSSU is committed to making difficult decisions to cut costs in alignment with the University's strategic plan and maintain a balanced budget. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances, and has sufficient resources to support its operations in all locations and modalities. As evidenced in multiple years of budget reports, core academic and research areas typically comprise nearly 40% of General Fund expenditures. This is in keeping with the primary mission of the institution to equip graduates for successful and rewarding careers, and to systematically improve operations and student learning. Processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting are interconnected, relying on data to anticipate and plan for fluctuations in revenue sources, economic changes, demographic shifts, and other external factors.

Sources

There are no sources.