

The College of Wooster - OH

HLC ID 1544

OPEN PATHWAY: Mid-Cycle Review

Visit Date: 6/12/2017

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Context and Nature of Review

Visit Date

6/12/2017

Mid-Cycle Reviews include:

- The Year 4 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Biennial Review for Applying institutions

Reaffirmation Reviews include:

- The Year 10 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Review for Initial Candidacy for Applying institutions
- The Review for Initial Accreditation for Applying institutions
- The Year 4 Review for Standard Pathway institutions that are in their first accreditation cycle after attaining initial accreditation

Scope of Review

- Mid-Cycle Review

There are no forms assigned.

Institutional Context

The College of Wooster, founded in 1866 by Presbyterians who wished to prepare men and women who would "mold society and give shape to all its institutions," originally was named the University of Wooster. The institution in its early history offered both undergraduate and graduate programs (thus the University title), but in 1915 the trustees closed the graduate programs to concentrate on offering an undergraduate liberal arts education. Almost sixty years ago, in 1948, the institution began its signature experience of Independent Study, in which all seniors conduct research or develop a creative expression of inquiry. Accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) in 1915, the College has been continuously accredited with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association since that date. In 2007 it had a focused visit on assessment of student learning, with an outcome of the team recommending that no further commission follow-up was needed.

The College of Wooster is presently an independent undergraduate liberal arts college enrolling approximately 2,000 students. It has one main campus and offers no online programs or courses.

Interactions with Constituencies

Chief Information and Planning Officer (via email)

Additional Documents

FY_2017-18_Budget_Proposal.pdf

Sampling_of_1617_AY_syllabi.pdf

Sustaining_Our_Momentum_The_College_of_Woosters_Self-Study_2013_to_team.pdf

Course_Evaluations__Teaching_Improvement_Request.pdf

College_of_Wooster_Organizational_Charts_2016-17.pdf

Learning_outcomes_to_courses_maps.pdf

College_of_Wooster_Faculty_Transcripts_Sample.pdf

College_of_Wooster_Faculty_Transcript_process__statistics.pdf

Recent_Program_Reviews.pdf

Clarification_IS_course_teaching_credit__faculty_course_load.pdf

Distribution_Policy_for_IS_work_among_faculty.pdf

Course_Assessment_Linked_to_Student_Learning_Outcomes_Depts__Programs.pdf

Synod_Renewal_Status_Follow_Up.pdf

Graduation_rate_6_yr_target_follow_up.pdf

Civic_engagement_initiatives_follow_up.pdf

Faculty_leaves_participation_follow_up.pdf

Hewlett-Mellon_Projects_follow-up.pdf

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The mission, vision, and core values, adopted in 2009 after an inclusive process including faculty, staff, students, trustees, and alumni, continues to guide the College's operations in its planning and curricular offerings.

The College of Wooster's *Graduate Qualities* include Independent Thinking, Integrative and Collaborative Inquiry, Dynamic Understanding of the Liberal Arts, Effective Communication, Global Engagement and Respect for Diversity, and Civic and Social Responsibility—all directly linked to the College's Core Values, which stem from the mission. The required general education program is mapped to these graduate qualities to make sure that all students, regardless of their major, take one or more courses that help the students develop the expected general qualities. In addition, the stated goals of every academic program are also mapped to these graduate qualities.

The Mission of the College is woven into each student's experience intentionally. In best practice, departments and programs align their learning goals with those of the College via a clearly articulated map as evidenced by the example from the Biology Department. A regular cycle of self-study directs areas of the College to maintain and review this alignment as part of their commitment to a mission and core-values based approach to planning that it adopted in May 2009.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The mission statement can be found online, in the College's catalogue, and in marketing materials. First-year students and their parents who participate in ARCH, the new student orientation, read and discuss the meaning of the Mission statement in the part of the ARCH program titled, *Goals of a Wooster Education*. As well, graduates and their guests are reminded of the mission, which is published each year in the commencement program.

The College's *Core Values*, which stem from the mission and on which the *Graduate Qualities* are built, include Education in the Liberal Arts Tradition, a Focus on Research and Collaboration, a Community of Learners, Independence of Thought, Social and Intellectual Responsibility, and Diversity and Inclusivity. These *Core Values* drive the academic and out-of-class expectations and opportunities for the students, as can be seen from the priorities set forth each year to support the Strategic Plan. The September 13, 2016 memo from the President to the Board members, Alumni Board members, and the College community provides evidence that these priorities are informed by the mission and are shared with the community.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

Two of the College's six *Core Values* include Social and Intellectual Responsibility and Diversity and Inclusivity. Processes and expectations for enrollment, hiring, curricular, and co-curricular work of the College are informed by these two as well as the other four core values. Since 2009 when the College began to focus on planning to the mission, the percentage of enrolled international and domestic minority students has jumped from the low teens to 28.5% in 2015 according to the provided enrollment data and verified by IPEDS. This outcome has been influenced by The College of Wooster's participation in the Posse Program and through the scholarships it has available for African American students who exhibit academic achievement and leadership qualities.

During this same time period strides have been made in attracting diverse faculty to the College. According to the argument statement and verified by IPEDS, of the 33 new tenure-track faculty members hired between 2009 and 2015, 17 have been international or domestic minorities. In 2016 a \$1M gift was received by the College to support the hiring of diverse faculty as well as diversity efforts in general. According to an email sent to the College community from the chair of the Board of Trustees and the President, the funds were made available, in part, because it is "crucial that the experience of faculty, staff, and students of color at the College is fully equitable and welcoming."

The Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI), which replaced the Center for Diversity and Global Engagement, has the following mission: "The Center for Diversity and Inclusion works in concert with the College's student life and academic programs to promote a diverse, welcoming campus climate for the College's students, staff, and faculty and to foster global understanding and commitment to global engagement for all members of our community." This mission is implemented through coordinating efforts across campus with other offices, such as the Office of Sexuality and Gender Inclusion, the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, the Office of International Student Affairs, and the Office of Interfaith Campus Ministries. According to the website, this work includes training and workshops for students, offering of diversity-related celebrations on campus, and coordination of student-run celebrations and activities.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The College's *Mission*, *Core Values* and *Graduate Qualities* all focus on the expectation that The College of Wooster educates students who will influence an interdependent global community. These words are put into actions in various ways. The College's speakers are open to the public. According to a press release, dated January 18, 2017, The *Great Decisions* lecture series, developed as a joint venture between the College and the community in 1981, "examines international affairs and foreign policy by bringing in experts from a variety of backgrounds." This year's series included five speakers offering presentations on "Environmental Challenges to the Global Community." Another example includes the *Wooster Science Café*, co-supported by The College of Wooster and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center of The Ohio State University, which, according to an August 11, 2016 news release, offers eight monthly events that bring together "scientists and non-scientists in a casual setting for lively, engaging conversation—all in plain English—on current science topics of interest." Now in its fourth year, the 2016-2017 series included discussions titled, "Earth's Most Dangerous Volcanoes" and "The Art and Science of Fly Fishing...and Tying."

The College supports learning through service in a myriad of ways. Several courses on campus include service learning components, with about half of the graduating seniors reporting having taken at least one course with this component. In addition, the *Wooster Volunteer Network*, whose mission is "promoting volunteerism, cultivating a culture of service, and raising social awareness both on The College of Wooster campus, and in the greater Wooster community," facilitates the linking of students (321 in a typical week, according to the argument statement) to volunteer opportunities.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Evidence

The College of Wooster continues to be guided by its mission. The curricular and co-curricular offerings are informed by the components of the mission; the students, staff, faculty, and prospective students find the mission prominent in many publications; and the mission focuses on preparing its students to become leaders and influencers of an interdependent global community.

Since the 2013 reaffirmation of accreditation, the College has continued its work on creating programs and processes to attract and include diverse groups of students and faculty as well as reaching out to the community through service projects and programming.

The College of Wooster, through guidance by its Mission, Core Values, and Graduate Qualities, engages the community and the larger world in all of its complexities. It speaks with candor in addressing historical, contemporary, and emerging issues of social justice, diversity, and inclusion. Strategic Planning materials outline specific goals and means for assessing the outcomes.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The *Scot's Key*, the official student handbook, contains over thirty pages of student life policies and procedures related to nondiscrimination, alcohol and illicit drug violations, disability accommodations, and so forth. This document is available on the College website and also available in paper copy by request. Transparency of billing processes and payment options are also included in The *Scot's Key* (p. 8). This document details how and when students will receive a bill and instructions for working with the financial aid office by certain deadlines to receive the appropriate aid. In addition, the student handbook contains a substantial section on codes of community and individual responsibility. These include the Wooster Ethic, a civility statement, codes of academic integrity and codes of social responsibility.

Evidence of integrity is also supported by a Conflict of Interest Policy, approved in 2011 by the audit committee of the Board of Trustees, which guides procurement expectations for all board members, administrators, faculty, and staff. An annual re-commitment to this policy is expected. Purchasing system access is suspended for individuals who do not complete an updated Conflict of Interest form each year. In addition, a comprehensive and detailed budget document is approved by the board and outlines income and expenses, including reserve accounts and capital expenditures planned for FY18.

Expectations for academic integrity are found in the faculty handbook, notably the Statute of Instruction (section 1) and selected College policies (section 7). As indicated in the handbook, "the Statute of Instruction is a statement of the duties and rights of the Faculty as defined and adopted by the Board of Trustees after consultation with Faculty. It shall be binding on both Faculty and Board of Trustees until modified by the Board, and shall be part of the contractual relationship between the College and the faculty member." This document contains seven sections related to academic integrity: faculty membership, delimitation of functions, conditions of employment, dismissals, academic freedom, grievances, and academic service. In addition, the faculty handbook section 7 includes selected College policies that also directly relate to academic integrity including evaluation criteria, academic honesty, and code of academic integrity.

In 2008, the College created an Ethics Hotline to receive calls concerning suspicions of accounting or auditing fraud, theft, misappropriation of assets, conflicts of interest, unethical behavior, and other serious issues. Callers may remain anonymous or identify themselves, at their discretion. The hotline, which is available 24 hours a day, is provided by an independent, third-party service, ComplianceLine, which will document any caller's concerns and forward them to the appropriate College entity.

Multiple examples are provided in the argument statements that demonstrate auxiliary function integrity, with particular attention to the integrity of the bookstore, dining service, conference center, and lyrical theater company. For example, the bookstore follows a Code of Buying Ethics which, along with the Conflict of Interest policy, each employee must acknowledge and sign.

The Wooster Ethic, located on the student life section of the College website, publicly articulates the College's commitment to ethical student behavior. The statement is signed by incoming students and states: "I hereby join this community with a commitment to the Wooster Ethic upholding academic and personal integrity and a culture of honesty and trust in all my academic endeavors, social interactions, and official business of the College. I will submit only my own original work, and respect others and their property. I will not support by my actions or inactions the dishonest acts of others." The pervasiveness of this document is evidenced by several examples of its reference in College policies (Copyright Infringement policy), student life groups (for example, the K[no]w group, which promotes awareness and prevention of sexual assault), and campus committees, such as the committee for a sustainable campus, which notes a particular emphasis on "ensuring that the teaching and the research conducted by members of our community meet the highest standards of environmental responsibility."

Civility expectations are also publicly accessible in the College catalog, which states: "We pledge to stand united against hate by creating and contributing to safe learning environments in our community. We respect and value the commonalities and differences among us — celebrating the uniqueness of each individual and recognizing it takes all people to make a college community."

Substantial evidence is provided that Wooster is attending to sexual violence prevention. In 2016-17, the College reportedly strengthened the training of the hearing panel that adjudicates these cases; put in place multi-faceted mandatory training for all new students on consent, bystander intervention, and how to get help; developed and provided additional education and training for groups of faculty, staff and students; brought an expert outside investigator in to perform all investigations of sexual violence on campus; and established an on-line "Campus Climate Notification System." They have recently added a full-time Title IX Coordinator and established a permanent working group to regularly assess both the climate of the campus and the effectiveness of the programs and policies. In Spring 2017, they updated the College's "Sexual Misconduct Policy."

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

Clear and complete presentation of programs is evidenced by a link to the course catalog, located on the College website. Each of the programs of study are detailed with a program description, program outcomes, names of the department chair and faculty, requirements for the major and minor, and course listings. In addition, the "consumer information" link on the website provides an extensive menu of options intended to provide a clear and consistent message to internal and external constituencies. For example, Wooster provides a link to several external websites that provide general yet consistent College information for prospective students.

Students can obtain information on College pricing and financial aid through the College's Admissions and Financial aid website, which includes an Early Aid Estimator and Net Price Calculator to assist students in estimating how much financial aid they will receive. This link is easy to locate and navigate.

The College of Wooster provides clear and complete information on accreditation relationships as evidenced by descriptions on the College website under "consumer information." According to this page, the College upholds regional accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission and specialty accreditation with the National Association of Schools of Music (since 1947) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). As well, it is noted that Wooster's Chemistry program is approved by the American Chemical Society.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The Board of Trustees at Wooster is sufficiently autonomous as evidenced by individual committee charters and a review of meeting minutes from 2013 through 2016. With particular note, evidence of autonomy is found in the Academic Mission Committee charter with a clear distinction in roles between faculty, administration, and the board. In this document, "the Board of Trustees, through the work of the Academic Mission Committee, is broadly responsible for stewarding the quality of the College's core mission by reviewing evidence brought forward by the Faculty and Administration..." Another example is the composition of the Audit Committee, as described in this committee's charter as, "the Audit Committee shall be comprised of at least five independent members of the Board of Trustees, each of whom shall have no relationship to the College, or to the executive officers of the College or its subsidiaries or affiliates, that may interfere with the exercise of their independence from management and the College, and shall not be compensated for any consulting, advisory or other services performed..."

Evidence of priorities in deliberations is found in the Strategic Framework (version 6.0, September 2010), which details context, objectives, and initiatives for strategic planning at the level of the Board of Trustees. Matching this framework (specifically, the objectives and initiatives) are the educational topics for board retreats. For example, the most recent board retreat (March 2017) focused on educating board members about diversity and inclusion and financial aid/pricing philosophy. This is clearly linked to the strategic initiative on diversity and inclusivity and strategic objective #2 with regards to strengthening the foundation of the College. In addition, the full board meets three times per year with strategic discussions as a regular part of these meetings. As indicated in the board minutes from March 2016, the board subcommittee on diversity led a discussion related to this topic, and the October 2016 meeting had an expert-led discussion on financial aid optimization. These examples provide evidence of a clear link between strategic priorities and actual board deliberations reflecting these priorities.

The Board of Trustees at The College of Wooster also considers the interests of internal and external constituencies as evidenced by the diversity of the board composition and through the work of committees, particularly the Committee on Conference with Trustees, a faculty forum for voicing concerns with the trustees, and the Student Development Committee of the Board, which provides a time for students to meet with trustees. The agendas from February 2015, October 2015, and March 2017 denoted the following agenda items, demonstrating a commitment to communicating effectively with the faculty constituency: principles for faculty retirement, proposed changes to the Statute of Instruction, faculty budget concerns, and perspectives on instructional technology. All meetings reportedly include an open dialogue session.

Protection against undue influences is found in the Conflict of Interest Policy and questionnaire, most recently updated in June 2017, completed and signed by each board member annually. The last review was performed by the Audit Committee as evidenced by the committee minutes of June 2, 2016. In this review, no board members have had conflicts of interest that were not disclosed.

The relationship between the Presbyterian church is another source of potential undue influence. This relationship is guided by the The Covenant between The College of Wooster and the Synod of the Covenant (last renewed in 2011). The Covenant outlines expectations for mutual resource sharing, consultations, financial contributions, and cooperation.

Clear delegation of day-to-day management of the College is evidenced by the Academic Mission Committee charter, which details the role of the board, faculty, and administration in the academic operations of the College. In addition, minutes of the board demonstrate management-level reports provided by administration and faculty as appropriate to the board's deliberations. More specifically, the Statute of Instruction details faculty duties and responsibilities and clearly outlines the role of faculty in overseeing academic matters. In section 2 (Delimitation of Function), the Statute of Instruction states, "The Faculty shall have the power to legislate with respect to admissions policies, curriculum, educational policies, and other matters relating to the teaching and welfare of the College." The committee structure also provides additional evidence of faculty oversight of academic matters. Specifically, the following committees are directly related to this core component: Educational Policy Committee and Strategic Planning and Priorities Advisory Committee.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

Three major documents were provided that demonstrate a commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. The College's core values "Independence of Thought" and "Social and Intellectual Responsibility, emphasize social and intellectual responsibility. These values highlight not only high expectations for personal and intellectual integrity but also a commitment to humanity and the environment.

The Statute of Instruction (p. 18) specifically articulates the expectations for faculty to pursue freedom of exchange of thoughts but to do so respectfully and conscientiously as noted in subsection A, which states, in part: "The faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing his or her subject, but he or she should be careful not to introduce into his or her teaching controversial matter which has no relation to the subject."

Coupled with these documents is the Handbook of Selected College Policies. This handbook states that "each member of The College of Wooster community has an individual right to freely express his or her views on any subject, including advocating for or against candidates for public office." The handbook continues by noting, "the College may not endorse or oppose a candidate, contribute to a political campaign, or take a position on any issue in any campaign for the purpose of assisting or opposing a candidate. The College may take public positions only on matters directly related to its mission."

The College is also taking steps proactively to improve the clarity of policies and procedures related to freedom of expression by convening student, staff and faculty groups in the upcoming academic year with a goal toward greater understanding of freedom of expression in an equitable and inclusive learning environment.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

Upon review of the website, the College provides ample evidence of effective research oversight and support services. Two major committees review and approve research on the campus—a human subjects review committee (HSRC) and an animal care and use committee. According to these policies and procedures, faculty members, staff members, or students who are planning research projects involving human subjects are responsible for initiating the review process by submitting their research proposals to the HSRC member designated for their department who has been designated as the "area reviewer" for their department. Faculty members supervising student research have a responsibility for introducing the students to The College of Wooster's guidelines. A standardized checklist (Proposal Checklist for Principal Investigators) directs all of the required steps in this process.

Ethical conduct of research is supported by required research ethics training created through the National Center for Professional and Research Ethics, which includes on-campus presentations and a required on-line training course for all faculty and soon to include students in the sciences. As found in the Responsible Conduct of Research Policy & Resources: "Each Investigator must complete training on this Policy prior to engaging in research funded by PHS, and at least every four years thereafter. Investigators must also complete training within a reasonable period of time as determined by the Dean for Faculty Development in the event that this Policy is substantively amended in a manner that affects the requirements of Investigators, or if it is determined that the Investigator has not complied with this policy or with a management plan related to their activities. The Office of Academic Affairs shall keep records of Investigators who are trained and the date of the training."

Evidence of student guidance in the ethical use of information is provided through the library website and course expectations for all First Year Seminar students. In addition, students in research courses may attend informational sessions in the library and/or with course professors. Prevention of copyright infringement is supported through annual provision of policies and guidelines regarding illegal acquisition or sharing of copyrighted media and enhanced firewalls. The College reports "few, if any" RIAA violations.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Evidence

The College of Wooster has provided sufficient evidence to have met the core components and therefore the second criterion. Strengths in this criterion were the visible commitment to ethical behavior, particularly as it comes through the Wooster Ethic and faculty/staff/student handbooks. The board exhibited sufficient autonomy within its minutes and displayed a consistent focus on strategic decision-making. The College exhibited focused attention to issues such as sexual violence prevention and diversity/inclusion.

The College website provided a clear and complete presentation of academic and consumer information. Handbooks were provided for students, faculty, and staff, which provided comprehensive information on expectations for all constituencies. Three major documents were made available that demonstrate a commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. The core values of the College emphasized social and intellectual responsibility.

The College identified areas of improvement: 1) volume and organization of policies and procedures; 2) potential for missing policies; and 3) managing electronic files. However, documented throughout this criterion were indicators that the College was proactively taking steps to improve the clarity of policies and procedures. For example, questions about the academic freedom policy will be addressed by convening student, staff and faculty groups in the upcoming academic year with a goal toward greater understanding of freedom of expression in an equitable and inclusive learning environment.

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

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

According to the website, The College of Wooster offers 39 undergraduate academic programs that can culminate in one of three degrees: the Bachelor of Arts, the Bachelor of Music, or the Bachelor of Music Education. Each of these three degree options has differentiated course requirements, which are clear and readily accessible on the website. There are no graduate programs. There are no distance learning courses.

Currency of programs are assured through a rigorous and comprehensive program review process. A review of all program reviews completed since 2013 (Africana Studies, Archaeology, Art and Art History, Biology, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, English, Music, Religious Studies, and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies) demonstrates adherence to the expectations for promoting currency and rigor across these programs. Recently (January 2017), the College modified its Department/Program Assessment and Review Guideline. Programs are now expected to create a mission statement, a set of learning goals, and a map of how the learning goals and the graduate qualities link to the specific courses offered. Currently, 60% of the departments and programs have curricular maps available. In addition, two departments have received specialty accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (April 2010) and the National Association of Schools of Music (December 2016). As well, the College's program in Chemistry is approved by the American Chemical Society (January 2016), (Program reviews are further evaluated in Criterion Four.)

Currency and appropriateness of courses are evidenced by policies and procedures that promote multi-level review and approval. Every proposed course must offer a rationale for how "the course

aligns with the program's or department's objectives, helps to fulfill the College's mission, and works toward one or more of the College's graduate qualities." The Educational Policy Committee reviews applications and, with support from Department Chairs, approves courses. A sampling of ten course syllabi demonstrated adherence to the Educational Policy Committee's expectations.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The College of Wooster defines its philosophy and the requisite components of a liberal arts education admirably in the Course Catalogue. Survey data from ARCH and NSSE suggests that this message is clearly received by the students. As articulated, all students are expected to complete academic coursework in traditional areas such as critical inquiry, writing, global and cultural perspectives, religious perspectives, quantitative reasoning, and learning across disciplines.

Connecting the broad framework of liberal arts and general education to the more specific skillset expected of Wooster students are what Wooster defines as their Graduate Qualities: Independent Thinking, Integrative and Collaborative Inquiry, Dynamic Understanding of the Liberal Arts, Effective Communication, Global Engagement, and Justice and Civic/Social Responsibility.

The current general education requirements are appropriate to the Mission and within current practice. In place for sixteen years, the College is in the process of reviewing and revising its program of general education. This process is under way and changes may be in place by the time of the site visit in 2023. The successful implementation of this general education review process provides an opportunity for the College to find ways to include learning goals on each syllabus for every course every semester.

The College touts itself as “America’s Premier College for Mentored Undergraduate Research.” Wooster places emphasis and point of pride on students’ demonstrating the integration of this skillset through the much-lauded Independent Study/research project required of all seniors. The Independent

Study requirement and one-on-one tutorial model promote a culture of scholarship and creative work.

The Mission of the College explicitly recognizes the expectation to prepare its students for an “interdependent global community.” The Core Value, “Diversity and Inclusivity,” informs the Graduate Qualities of Global Engagement and Justice and Civic/Social Responsibility. Together they recognize the human and cultural diversity of the world in which the students live. A *Wooster Education* provides an intentional framework for investigating cultural difference, and the regularly available array of course offerings provides opportunities for students to pursue their investigation in depth. Students and faculty alike report via multiple surveys that the College has contributed to their “development of Global Engagement and Respect for Diversity and Intercultural Knowledge and Competence.”

The College of Wooster articulates its undergraduate learning outcomes in a broad and philosophical sense. In 2013, Departments and Programs were expected to map learning outcomes and document where Graduate Qualities are covered in specific courses. A review of course syllabi and department mapping endeavors suggests that this is unevenly communicated to the students. Some departments and courses provided stellar examples. Some departments’ materials were incomplete. As the College’s assessment work continues, with policies and expectations refined, the reviewing team expects that the currently lagging departments will begin to catch up.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The College of Wooster hires and retains faculty who meet and deliver high academic standards. Wooster maintains a student/faculty ratio of 11.25/1 and an average course load of 5.68 per academic year (1 course equals four semester hours). The College cites the following demands on faculty time: course load, committee work, administrative work, and advising. While the workload is comparable to peer institutions, the College is actively engaged in assessing the weight of the service component for faculty. Faculty report a heavier advising load than their peers at other institutions.

Evaluation of instructors occurs regularly and according to guidelines set out in the Faculty Handbook (revised August 2016). These guidelines are clearly stated and comparable to those found at other institutions. Faculty undergoing evaluation (including promotion) also meet with the TS&T committee, the Provost, their department chair, and, for pre-tenured faculty, the Dean for Faculty Development.

Course evaluations are a necessary part of promotion and tenure despite the ongoing conversation in academia regarding the efficacy, equity, and potential bias inherent in the format. "Two required sets of course evaluations per calendar year" must be submitted to TS&T committee. (Student Evaluation of Courses memo April 10, 2017) The course evaluation criteria include six common questions.

The College provides opportunities for professional development and encourages faculty to remain adept in their teaching and current in their discipline. The Dean of Faculty Development supports

teaching, intellectual and professional development. In support of faculty development, Wooster has a policy in place for paid research and study leaves that is available to tenure and pre-tenured faculty. The number of leaves per year is capped at 10% of the faculty body. According to the policy and the number of full-time faculty, this converts to about thirty semesters of leave available each year. In a typical year twenty faculty take leaves—with a mix of full year and semester-long leaves. Of these leaves, between 20% and 45% have been awarded to pre-tenured faculty members over the last five years. Financial resources are also readily available for conference travel and professional development and range from individual travel expenses to the Hewlett-Mellon Fund for Institutional Renewal (\$120,000).

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The College of Wooster provides a full array of student learning and support services to meet the needs of its students, as listed in the 2016-17 Resource Guide. These services include APEX (Advising, Planning, EXperiential learning), tutoring, athletics, bookstore, career services, dining services, learning center, math center, writing center, multicultural student affairs, residence life, sexuality and gender inclusion, STEM support, student retention/academic engagement, undergraduate research, wellness center, volunteer network and others.

The College of Wooster has an established process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared. Students take placement exams in one or more subjects (Math, Biology, and Chemistry) prior to the summer advising and registration (ARCH) program. On the first day of the ARCH program, language placement tests [Spanish, French, German, Latin] are given to determine appropriate entry levels for those courses. Results are shared with faculty advisors and the ARCH staff. Students whose first language is not English have several services available including tutoring, workshops, and a summer English Engagement Seminar. Adjustment to College-level work for all students is supported through 0.25 credit writing seminar, global engagement seminar, and STEM seminar.

If students are determined to be at risk, the College has two mechanisms for support. The First Watch program identifies students with academic or personal difficulties. These students are supported by a group of faculty and staff to address the problems. Students having difficulty in a course are referred to the Dean of Students via Interim Reports submitted by faculty. An individualized remediation plan is then developed with that student.

Most students at Wooster have four primary advisors through their time at the College. Prior to

beginning courses, first-year advising is conducted by faculty, staff and students during the two-day summer ARCH program. Students transition to a first-year faculty advisor (who is also the First Year Seminar in Critical Inquiry instructor). After declaring a major, students then are assigned a faculty advisor in that major. Finally, students are appointed a senior independent study advisor to support completion of the senior capstone project. The Handbook for Faculty Advisors and the Educational Planning and Advising Booklet are important resources for faculty in addressing student concerns and intricacies of academic credit.

The presence of suitable advising services is also evidenced by the APEX (Advising, Planning, and Experiential Learning) Center, which serves as a one-stop shop for students with a comprehensive menu of advising services. According to the APEX 2015-16 Year in Review newsletter, success of the Learning Center was demonstrated through an academic/football focus program. "Twice a week the Learning Center staff provided academic mentoring that helped first-year football players transition to the challenges of managing both a demanding sport and rigorous academic curriculum. [In Fall 2015], 24 first-year players participated. The average all-team GPA significantly increased since the implementation in 2010. At the start of the program, the all-team GPA was 2.75 compared to 3.04 this past fall."

The College of Wooster is attentive to the facility resources needed for teaching and learning. The Campus Facilities Master Plan (2012) identified areas for improvement to the campus. Most recently, space in Andrews Library was renovated to create a suite of four rooms now housing the Wooster Digital Studio. The Scot Center combines space for wellness activities with meeting spaces as well as one of, if not the largest array of solar panels on any College campus. Currently under construction is the Ruth W. Williams Hall of Life Science.

Promotion of effective use of research and information is initiated in the First Year Seminar and carried throughout the student's program of study, culminating in the Independent Study. Although detailed student outcome data were not provided, it is evident that the infrastructure is in place to support students' effective use of information and research.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.E - Core Component 3.E

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students as evidenced by the core value narrative, array of options, time spent, and student perception of these activities. The Community of Learners core value states "the learning process unfolds on our campus and beyond, in conversations in classrooms and residence halls, libraries and studios, laboratories and on playing fields, and through the relationships that develop between and among students, faculty and staff and which endure long after graduation. We recognize that the very process of living together educates, and that much of the learning that is part of our mission takes place through artistic expression, the performance of music, theater, and dance, athletics, community involvement, and in the myriad student organizations that infuse vitality in campus life. We embrace a holistic philosophy of education and seek to nurture the physical, social, and spiritual well-being of our students."

In support of this core value, the A-Z listing of student organizations, numbering over 120, fills six pages of options, enabling students to join a wide-range of existing clubs and/or create new ones. Also, according to 2015 NSSE data, Wooster seniors spend about nine hours a week on co-curricular activities. Nearly half of the students participated in intramural sports and about one-fourth played on one of the 23 Division III teams. Almost one-third of all Wooster students participated in a musical group on campus.

Evidence that the College is achieving claims made about an enriched learning environment is provided through the senior survey. Wooster identifies 15 graduate qualities desired at graduation including teamwork, problem solving, ethical thinking, global engagement, effective speaking, critical thinking, and so forth. As evidenced by the 2016 Senior Survey, Wooster graduates identify co- and extracurricular activities as contributing "frequently" or "a lot" to these graduate qualities. Students consider many of the co- or extra-curricular activities more influential in building some of the graduate qualities than academic classes in areas like: teamwork, problem solving, intercultural knowledge and competence, global engagement and respect for diversity, and ethical reasoning.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Evidence

The College of Wooster provides a high quality undergraduate, residential, liberal arts education with a niche independent study research program required of all students.

The College of Wooster has begun the process of review and revitalization of its general education program: A Wooster Education. The current model is firmly situated within the range of offerings for liberal arts institutions but has been in place since 2002.

The faculty and the student bodies have grown more diverse and inclusive and reflect more fully the Mission of the College. Support for diversity and inclusion remain a priority for the future.

Wooster hires well-qualified faculty and provides them with resources to maintain high levels of teaching and research.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

As evidenced by the Department/Program Assessment and Review Guidelines, the College requires that "each department and program submit biennial assessment reports and review these findings every five years, including a full curriculum review every ten years." This document goes on to describe "the process and the procedures for these reviews and the ways in which the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement (DCAE), the Director of Educational Assessment (DEA), the Educational Policy Committee (EPC), and the Educational Assessment Committee (EAC) assist departments and programs in these reviews." The guidelines are comprehensive, complete, and adhere to common practice in higher education with regard to program review. Specifically, it examines the structure of a department's/ program's curriculum, as this is reflected in its course offerings and

requirements and as it is supported by its staff, facilities, and other resources. It asks that departments/programs consider the relationship between the responsibilities that they have to their students (majors and non-majors), to the liberal arts core curriculum, and to the College's overall mission.

New initiatives are underway to improve course-level assessment, including participation in a collaborative project with AAC&U and the GLCA. Made possible by a funding grant from the Sherman Fairchild Foundation, faculty from ten departments volunteered and others were encouraged to participate either in a pilot program or workshops in 2016.

Similar to the course-level assessment process, program-level assessment is undergoing review and renewal. The current model includes aspects of the ten-year review, curricular mapping of student learning goals, comprehensive annual reports to the Educational Assessment Committee, and direct and indirect modes of assessment and faculty reflection. Some departments, such as Philosophy, have taken additional steps to create a robust and vibrant assessment process. As reported in the Assurance Argument, other departments are struggling with documenting their assessment process and feedback loop. According to the argument statement, 60% have completed curricular maps and 55% of departments and programs have filed their assessment report with the EAC. Several examples of completed maps and reports were provided, which can be used to help the remaining departments and programs move forward in implementing these processes in the next couple of years.

Institutional-level assessment is centered on the Graduate Qualities. Using student survey data, the EPC saw evidence that co- and extra-curricular and off-campus experiences enhance a student's "global engagement and respect for diversity." Similarly, survey data of Graduate Qualities among alumni revealed that "Civic Engagement" was below the mean. According to an email from EPC to the college community, a curriculum task force has been created to focus on "Justice and Social Responsibility" in the curriculum. As well, starting July 1, 2017, the College now has a Director of Civic and Social Responsibility.

Policies for Transfer Credit are clearly articulated and appropriate to the institution and are found in the Course Catalogue and on-line. By policy, department chairs evaluate courses for quality before recommending they be eligible for students to receive credit.

The College's Program Review process and faculty approval of programs and courses provide evidence that the College maintains and exercises authority over prerequisites, rigor, expectations, access, and faculty qualifications. As stated earlier in the evidence statements, The College of Wooster also maintains specialized program accreditation in music (National Association of Schools of Music) and education (the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education).

The Career Planning Office administers two surveys; *First Destinations* and *Five Years Out*, to collect information on students' further education and employment. Of the students who responded in the Class of 2015, 27% were continuing their education while 6% were seeking employment. The College also collects information on its students who pursue law and medical degrees from the Law School Admissions Council and the Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine.

The current standardized course evaluation forms could do more to assess student-learning goals. The College follows the traditional approach of surveying student satisfaction with the instructor and the course. However, they do not ask questions directed to specific course-related learning goals. The exception is the question tailored to diversity and inclusion in the classroom. Individual faculty members have the opportunity to add questions to the forms but it is not clear the extent to which this

happens or how such information is used.

According to the argument section, Academic Affairs Services and Student Affairs are now engaged in continuing assessment efforts, many successfully. The Assurance Argument identifies Student Affairs as an area of the College that requires attention for institutional-level expectations for assessment efforts. Staff turnover and limited oversight should be rectified with the new Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students, with evidence of built and implemented policies and procedures available in 2023.

A new assessment model, detailed in Department/Program Assessment and review Guidelines, was developed through conversation with departments and the HLC and was approved in January 2017. It is intended to reduce “assessment burnout” and align short-term goals with long-term program review. Plans are in place for this approach to be ready for the HLC site visit in 2023. Compliance with the new model is to be monitored by the EPC. Hopefully departments and programs will follow the lead of Philosophy and engage with assessment as means of self-improvement and regulating compliance will not be necessary. During 2016-17, faculty members had several opportunities to train and learn about effective assessment techniques.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The College of Wooster clearly establishes its goals for student learning as its Graduate Qualities. These qualities are derived from the Mission Statement and are readily available in College materials online and in print. Departments and programs are strongly encouraged to draft mission statements and departmental learning goals that are linked via curricular maps to these Graduate Qualities. Academic Affairs and Student Life are included in this process of assessment.

Departments such as Philosophy, History, and Communication have used a variety of assessment methods effectively to evaluate student achievement of the learning goals and to modify their curriculum to improve student outcomes. Academic Affairs, such as Advising and ARCH, have used survey and research data to improve the students' experience with the advisors, their first year seminars, and community engagement.

Within governance, the College has tightened up the information loop between the EAC, the EPC, and the Strategic Planning and Priorities Advisory Committee. One key result of this was the creation of a subcommittee to review through rigorous assessment the general education program, *A Wooster Education*. This group focused on targeted learning goals such as experiential learning and culture "C." Work continues on a fresh approach to general education to present to the faculty.

Funded through an NSF grant, faculty in the Science and Mathematics departments have studied student patterns in STEM courses and noticed a retention concern among those intending to major. This led to a plan to provide additional tutoring in the STEM Zone. The faculty and staff also focused on increasing participation from traditionally underrepresented groups through a program called S-Stem, providing evidence that the College uses information to improve student learning.

As mentioned in Component 4.A, although a substantial number of faculty and staff participate, The College of Wooster is in the process of revising and revitalizing its assessment process to increase participation of faculty and other instructional staff. The College also looks forward to stabilizing staff in Student Affairs so they can resume a regular process of assessment in keeping with the rest of

the institution.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

EB;

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Evidence

Assessment continues to be a focus for The College of Wooster, with improvement in the past several years, but with continuing work important. Since 2013, the College's model for assessment practices has been informed by best practices and in conversation with the HLC. The model continues to undergo changes. The faculty approved the most recent iteration in January 2017. It focuses more on actionable items and results than reports and clarifies governance issues relating to oversight. This model is intended to increase voluntary participation and to change the culture from one of compliance to excitement.

Several departments and individuals are deeply committed to assessment culture and are engaged with the process for the positive results it can yield. Historically other departments and programs have struggled to document their assessment efforts. With the infusion of funding and structure from the Sherman Fairchild Foundation grant, the College has the opportunity to deeply engage the curriculum with an eye to Graduate Qualities and to continue the process of revitalizing the general education program, *A Wooster Education*.

Advice regarding student evaluation of faculty: Mid-semester assessment is a good option that could also benefit from questions targeting student-learning goals for the course. Additionally, some (two are cited) departments are using either standardized tests in the field or pre/post tests. This type of assessment can provide insight to curricular effectiveness over a longer arc.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The College of Wooster is in good fiscal health, with the HLC Composite Financial Index Scores over several years being very good, clean audits, and relatively high and steady Primary Reserve Ratios. The College has also experienced small operating surpluses over the past several years and held operating expense increases under 2% each year. These events have allowed the College to achieve a \$3.7 million operating reserve at the end of FY 2016. The goals, efficiencies, and monitoring avenues the College has implemented, together with projected revenue enhancements, will help to preserve and expand core elements of institutional quality. The College will have to continue to be diligent regarding cost structures, and tuition, and other self-generated revenues.

The College of Wooster's mission and vision statements, found on their website, state that the institution is "working together to prepare students to become leaders of character and influence in an interdependent global community" and have the core values of "Education in the Liberal Arts Tradition, A Focus on Research and Collaboration, A Community of Learners, Independence of Thought, Social and Intellectual Responsibility, Diversity and Inclusivity." The strategic planning document, "Strategic Framework v. 6.0," is built on this foundation, and resources allocated to admissions and retention are helping to achieve this.

It appears that the College's staff is adequately qualified and trained. In the review in 2013, the HLC Visiting Team noted that "the College's staffing levels appear high relative to peer institutions" and suggested that the College's current work in "reviewing staffing levels and positions may present an opportunity to conserve and realign resources." Per the argument section the College was able to achieve the following results:

- Improved student: staff ratio by 1.4 from fall 2009 while across the GLCA, the student: staff ratio declined by 0.4
- Were the only institution among the GLCA that increased enrollment, increased faculty, and reduced staff
- Affected changes in staffing across the College that reflected priorities and needs, such as appropriately staffing the Advancement function and adding staff in Student Affairs and Athletics, while restructuring other areas.

The College's process for creating a budget includes the collection of needs and wants, the prioritization of these by area heads, and a review of the priorities by the Strategic Planning & Priorities Advisory Committee and the College's Cabinet. As with most budget preparations, the President proposes an annual budget to the Board after weighing the best interest of the institution, including expected cost of living increases, institutional priorities, and all institutional needs and wants. The final budget for the year is approved by the Board at the June meeting. The College's processes and dashboards are set up to monitor the actual results compared to budget expectations.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The Board of Trustees' meetings includes 11 standing committees (excluding the executive committee), almost all of which include College administrators (with the exception of the Faculty Relations Committee) who make reports at each meeting to keep the Board members up to date on current issues. Also, each new Board member is oriented to the board role through discussion of the College's mission and goals and the board orientation program. The College is a member of the Association of Governing Boards, which also supports the Board members to learn their roles and responsibilities.

The College has a system to engage its internal and external constituencies. Several groups, which include a combination of faculty, administrators, students, and board members, have defined constituencies and meet on regular bases. These include the Board of Trustees, which meets regularly on set dates throughout the year; Campus Council, which meets throughout the academic year to make recommendations to the president and administrators; the Faculty, which meets monthly; Student Development Committee of the Board, which includes students. Although the Board is the final authority on most things, it receives input from administrators, faculty, and shared governance committees as part of the fact-finding process.

During the 2013 HLC review, the Visiting Team observed that "the Board's committee leadership does not rotate frequently." This observation, along with the sentiment of the Board that more members would like opportunities for committee leadership, led to increased attention on rotating committee chairs. Per the argument section, the chairs of six of the committees have changed at least once since 2013, as have the board chair and vice chair.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The College of Wooster demonstrates an ongoing commitment to linking its mission to planning processes as evidenced by the *Wooster's Promise Campaign* and the *Strategic Framework* document. The *Wooster's Promise Campaign* focuses on resourcing numerous projects and initiatives aligned with the College's mission and priorities, including increased financial aid for students, The Wooster Fund, academic/faculty support, experiential learning, and the new life sciences building. There appear to be clear and explicit links between these planning processes, evaluation of operations and academic programs, and allocation of resources. The 2014-15 Sustainable Budget planning process represents a broadly inclusive effort to tackle the realities that the College faces regarding enrollment, costs, self-generated revenues, and internal/external support. The College has been especially proactive in seeking to align revenue sources with technology and student support services.

These efforts appear to have positioned The College of Wooster well to respond to emerging circumstances. Based on the material provided by the College, it was observed that there is a widespread understanding of both the reasons for and implications of the campaign and the Sustainable Budget planning process. There are sufficient reserves available to allow the institution to avoid drastic cuts, but the College is positioned to continue to look for and make permanent reductions in expenditures and enhancements in revenue in the coming years without negatively affecting operations.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The College provides evidence that it is fiscally responsible and has reduced its expenditures without compromising its mission to serve students or lay off additional personnel. This continued fiscal stewardship in the form of regular reviews on progress made, as well as regular expectations in moving strategic initiatives forward, is to be commended and could serve as a model of effective institutional management. Additionally, the College's strategic planning specifically highlights sustainable/efficient management and identifies additional revenue sources and ways to attract students to the College. The College has built a set of strategic priorities within divisions to safeguard its continued ability to fulfill its mission.

The College provides evidence that the institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable mission fulfillment through a system of consensus-based decision-making tactics. The College provides evidence that it engages in systematic and integrated planning through divisional objectives with strategic and tactical planning observed; a continued proactive strategic planning process that includes environmental scanning; routinely monitored KPIs; and a system of senior leaders accepting specific issues for action and follow-up.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Evidence

The team read the arguments and examined an array of documents cited in the argument that was made available online. The College of Wooster has been a good steward of the resources entrusted to it by the students, alumni, donors, faculty, and staff. The College has kept costs to students reasonable, but has also undertaken multiple strategic initiatives around enrollment, endowment, voluntary support, and resource stewardship, seeking to strengthen and leverage resource foundation in order to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of educational offerings and prepare itself for the emerging challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century. The College has done so within the context of robust and effective governance that appropriately recognizes the different roles of the Board, the faculty, students and staff in authorizing policies and procedures that support the institution in achieving its mission. These efforts have positioned the College to move forward into the future with realism and optimism.

Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.D	Core Component 1.D	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	Met
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	Met
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.E	Core Component 3.E	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	Met
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	Met
5	Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.D	Core Component 5.D	Met
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	Met

Review Summary

Conclusion

The College of Wooster has provided evidence that its mission is clear and articulated publicly and that the operation of the College is guided by the mission. Policies and procedures are in place and implemented to allow the institution to act with integrity with conduct that is ethical and responsible, and the College provides a high-quality education to its students. As well, The College of Wooster demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, striving to promote continuous improvement. The College's resources, structure, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities while planning for the future.

Although there is still work to be done in specific academic and co-curricular areas, the College has continued to make strides in implementing assessment strategies and helping faculty and staff see the value in the process.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation

Met

Sanctions Recommendation

No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation

Not Applicable to This Review

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.