

Assurance Argument
Valparaiso University - IN

10/6/2017

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Argument

1.A.1.

The nature and culture of Valparaiso University (Valpo) is not unlike that of a closely-knit family. Founded in 1859 as the Valparaiso Male and Female College, but purchased and re-envisioned as Valparaiso University by a group of Lutheran laymen in 1925, Valpo had for decades a faculty, staff, and student body drawn largely from the Lutheran midwest. More recently the university community has become far more diverse, but the spirit of family remains, meaning that transparent, widely-shared participation in university governance is assumed. That shared participation includes development of the mission and the Strategic Plan that supports it.

The mission statement of Valparaiso University was [adopted in 2004](#) by the Board of Directors under former president, Alan Harre:

"Valparaiso University, a community of learning dedicated to excellence and grounded in the Lutheran tradition of scholarship, freedom, and faith, prepares students to lead and serve in both church and society."

The arrival of a new university president, Mark Heckler, in July 2008 provided the opportunity for campus-wide review of the Strategic Plan that undergirds that mission statement. After a year-long "Future Search Conference" which allowed faculty, students, staff, alumni, and friends to articulate a "most desired future" for Valpo, a process and timeline for developing a new Strategic Plan was presented in [September 2009](#). One year later the Strategic Plan, including mission statement, vision statement, nine area vision statements, core values, and goals and objectives, was [formally adopted](#) by the Board of Directors. These statements and documents will be referred to henceforth as the [university mission](#).

Previous strategic plans were adopted as static five-year documents. The Strategic Plan adopted in 2010 differed in that it would be in constant and dynamic flux based on annual assessment of the university's achievements. That annual assessment has allowed all faculty, staff, and students to

contribute to the plan and to help guide its evolution; for that reason there is both broad awareness of the mission and transparency about how the Strategic Plan develops.

The process for that evolution is as follows. The [Strategic Planning Committee](#), comprised of all deans, vice presidents, elected leaders of the faculty and student body, representatives of the Chapel, hourly staff, and salaried staff, meets in retreat for several days every May to assess the collective progress on meeting goals of the Strategic Plan. Accomplished goals are noted and celebrated, opportunities are assessed, and proposed initiatives are identified and tested against the mission. A second review is undertaken in July by the President's Council. Finally, members of the university community, including students, are invited to comment on proposed changes. The Strategic Planning Committee takes these comments into careful consideration before making its annual recommendation to the Board of Directors. The fifth iteration of the [Strategic Plan \(2016-2020\)](#) was approved by the Board of Directors in October 2015. This inclusive and transparent process has repeated each year since 2010 and is suited to the nature of Valpo's tightly-knit community.

But even as the evolving Strategic Plan seemed poised to guide the university over a decades-long horizon, stakeholders began in 2015 to express a desire for a simpler, more focused, less compartmentalized, less burdensome Strategic Plan. In response, the president introduced a [proposal](#) in September 2016 to revise the Strategic Plan's structure. Instead of a framework with five overarching goals, each of which contained a series of objectives which, in turn, contained a set of action statements, the proposed new structure would rely on an easily understood set of "why," "what," and "how" statements.

At the time of this writing, the university has just finished developing that new structure. The "why" and "what" statements are complete, though development of the "how" statements will continue well into the fall 2017 semester. In the spirit of transparency and openness, faculty, staff, and students were all involved in the process, beginning with a two-day "summit" in September 2016 and concluding with approval of the [newly-structured Strategic Plan](#) by the Board of Directors in [April 2017](#). The goal has not been to change the university's mission, but to find a way to move implementation of that mission from a compartmentalized and centralized approach to a more inclusive and integrated approach. This move will enable departments and units to engage more fully in implementation of the unwavering mission.

1.A.2.

Multiple strategies aim to ensure that the institution's mission is understood by those who develop and deliver its academic programs and student support services and by those who recruit the student body.

Members of the faculty develop and deliver academic programs. As they are [recruited and hired](#), the mission is presented to them as an essential feature of the institution. Once employed, new tenure-track faculty members participate in a comprehensive, year-long orientation program that culminates in a ten-day [seminar in Cambridge](#), England (site of one Valpo study-abroad center). Throughout the year new faculty are oriented not only to the more mundane aspects of employment, but are also given [opportunities to reflect](#) on the character, meaning, and purpose of their own work as teacher-scholars in the context of Valpo's mission. The capstone Cambridge Seminar is led by senior members of the faculty who help participants gain a deeper understanding of the connections between their work as educators and the university's mission. That understanding, in turn, informs faculty members as they shape and develop the academic programs for which they are responsible. The Cambridge Seminar has had the added positive effect of creating cohort solidarity that extends across departments and colleges; participants can better see beyond narrow departmental concerns to the broader mission of

the institution.

Valpo's mission to prepare students to "lead and serve" compels the institution to offer academic programs that emphasize both professional and liberal learning. Almost all graduate programs offered at Valpo are professional in orientation and have as their underlying purpose the preparation of future servant leaders. The MBA program, for example, features a strong foundation in values-based leadership, and the MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling provides research and applied experiences to students whose interests lie at the intersection of counseling and pastoral care.

The university's mission is also central to the work of the Student Affairs staff. Members of that staff are oriented to the mission, not only during their initial recruitment, but also during regular staff meetings and in-service training. One training event was an abbreviated version of the Cambridge Seminar for faculty members, ensuring that staff members deliver programs that mirror the mission and complement academic programs delivered by faculty.

Appropriate student recruitment is central to Valpo's bid to create a learning community that embraces the mission. The mission is communicated to prospective students in several ways: it is prominently featured on the university's general website along with a brief narrative ("[Embracing the Journey](#)") that helps students understand what the mission means for them as individuals; the print viewbook weaves themes from the mission statement into both text and image; and [campus tours](#) follow a list of points that include topics related to themes of the mission statement.

The mission calls for a diverse student body, and careful recruitment strategies have led to an increase in the number of [students from diverse backgrounds](#), both with regard to national origin and US diversity, in the last ten years. The percentage of undergraduate international students in the fall 2015 semester was 7.4% (compared to 2.2% ten years earlier), and the percentage of domestic minority students in the same ten-year period grew from 8.4% to 19%. A total of 34.6% of the student body, including undergraduates, law students, and graduate students, come from diverse backgrounds.

Once students have been recruited and are enrolled at Valpo, they are regularly reminded of the mission. New students are welcomed at their June orientation program by the president or provost, who use language of the mission to explain how students will find their vocation and be equipped to lead and serve in church and society. Two months later, a convocation marks the opening of the academic year. The president's remarks again use the language of mission to connect mission to [individual goals](#) that new students have. The convocation concludes with two rituals that reinforce the mission: all new students participate in both a formal pinning ceremony that features an interpretation of Valpo's "[Shield of Character](#)," and in the signing of Valpo's Honor Code statement in books that are archived in perpetuity.

1.A.3.

Planning and budgeting priorities are closely aligned with the institution's mission and are discussed, respectively, in (5.C.2.) and (5.C.1).

All budget requests, including requests for faculty and staff positions, are reviewed and evaluated against the university's mission to ensure that budget decisions further the mission. To request a new faculty position (or permission to continue a vacated position) department chairs and deans must address the relationship of the position to the mission in a [Position Request Form](#) submitted to the provost. Not only does this requirement ensure that colleges and departments plan in a manner consistent with the mission, but it also allows the university to ensure that proposals in competition for necessarily-limited resources are evaluated in an efficient and consistent manner against the

mission. Requests for new staff positions or to fill vacated staff positions are similarly evaluated, as described in (5.A.1).

Because the Strategic Plan calls for a diverse community of learners, initiatives in support of diversity throughout faculty and staff hiring and student recruitment have been adopted. These initiatives will be described in (1.C.2.).

Several units of the university have developed mission or vision statements of their own that guide unit planning and budgeting; each of these statements align, in turn, with the university mission. Examples include:

- 1) Valpo Athletics' [Strategic Plan](#) includes four core values aligned with the mission. One (Stewardship) refers not only to being trustworthy stewards of the university reputation and the student experience, but also of the resources it manages.
- 2) The [Student Affairs Vision Statement](#) explicitly affirms the mission of the university.
- 3) [Facilities Management](#) plans, develops, budgets for, and maintains the physical environment of the campus. In doing so Facilities Management recognizes the importance of compliance, of managing priorities, and of providing proper stewardship of facilities, landscape, utilities, and staff.
- 4) Campus technology needs are met centrally through the Office of Information Technology. Planning for those needs is driven by the [IT Strategic Plan](#). Faculty input is received through the Academic Technology Advisory Committee, which makes annual recommendations to the provost regarding classroom technology priorities.

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1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

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

Argument

1.B.1.

Valpo's website includes two key documents that articulate the university mission publicly: the Strategic Plan (full text with mission statement, vision statement, area vision statements, and core values) and a second major planning document, the Master Plan. The [Master Plan](#) guides the physical development of the campus (buildings and grounds) and does so by intentionally and actively supporting two area vision statements from the Strategic Plan: student experience and regional engagement. Valpo's website also features a page called "[Mission and Values](#)" which characterizes the mission in shorthand by highlighting several relevant programs and initiatives.

The president annually delivers a well-attended State of the University address, open to all and covered by local media outlets. [Highlights of the address](#) are made widely available in a print piece distributed at the time of the address and to local community leaders (Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, and Rotary Club, among others).

Two campus buildings invite visitors to engage with Valpo's mission. Heritage Hall, an historic campus building, provides exhibits about Valpo's Pre-Lutheran years (1859-1925). The Duesenberg Welcome Center, dedicated in September 2013, serves as a front door to the university and prominently displays photographs and texts that highlight the founders and early leaders who shaped the university and its mission in the Lutheran years (1925 to present). The exhibits in Heritage Hall and the Welcome Center were explicitly developed to introduce the university's heritage and mission to prospective students and other guests.

Donors and other friends of the university are made aware of the mission through the work and publications of the Office of Advancement. Gift initiatives and capital campaigns, including the [campaign](#) currently underway, are explicitly tied to the mission.

1.B.2.

The Strategic Plan is assessed annually and always remains current because of the document's continuing multi-year horizon. As action items (now called "how" statements) become institutionalized, they are dropped from the Strategic Plan; likewise, new items are added as opportunities are identified. The annual assessment process is described in (1.A.1.).

[Nine area vision statements](#), along with the institution's mission and vision statements, serve as preamble to the Strategic Plan and as guides to those aspects of mission that the university wishes to emphasize. Despite the recent change in the structure of the Strategic Plan, these statements are unwavering. They are: academic excellence, Lutheran leadership, student experience, diversity and inclusion, internationalization, faculty/staff, regional engagement, economic vitality, and engaged alumni.

1.B.3.

The mission statement, vision statement, area vision statements, and core values together make clear the nature and scope of the institution's programs and services. Valpo provides an intellectually-rigorous, innovative education grounded in the arts and sciences, integrating liberal education and professional studies. The institution also engages with the regional community in activities and initiatives that enrich the social and cultural environment and provide students with meaningful service opportunities that help them prepare for lives of service to church and society.

Beginning in 2010, Goals 2 and 3 of the Strategic Plan identified the intended constituents of Valpo's academic programs and services. Goal 2 described a university constituted by people of many and various beliefs and backgrounds, bound together in common pursuit of truth and in formation of personal and professional identity. Goal 3 called for a growing student body of diverse backgrounds. By learning and working with people from a variety of cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives, Valpo students would be prepared for the challenges they would face in the wider world.

As explained in (1.A.1.), the structure of the Strategic Plan has recently changed and the language of "goals" has been replaced with "what" statements. But the intended constituents of the university remain constant. The [second of four "what" statements](#) in the new structure requires that the university be welcoming and inclusive and that it consciously create a community that is rooted in the Lutheran identity, while reaching across many faiths and cultures.

Sources

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1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Argument

1.C.1.

Two of the university's nine area vision statements are directly related to the diversity of society and parallel two administrative units devoted to promoting and safeguarding that diversity.

Housed together in the Gandhi-King Center for Diversity and Global Engagement in the new (2009) Harre Student Union, the [Office of Multicultural Programs](#) (OMP) corresponds to the "diversity and inclusion" area vision statement and reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs; the [Office of International Programs](#) (OIP) corresponds to the "internationalization" area vision statement and reports to the Assistant Provost for International Affairs. The OMP, with a professional staff of three, plans and coordinates programs that promote inclusiveness, cross-cultural and inter-cultural communication, racial harmony, multicultural education, and an understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures, while the OIP, with a professional staff of seven, is dedicated to serving the special needs of international students and helping to create a supportive environment in which to live and study. The OIP also supports Valpo's study-abroad opportunities and the students who participate in them.

The first Assistant Provost for Inclusion at Valpo was appointed in July 2015. One of her first acts was to propose creation of the [Presidential Commission for an Inclusive Valparaiso University Community](#) (CIVC). Approved in the fall of 2015, the CIVC was constituted in the spring of 2016 with the goal of unifying the many diversity and inclusion committees that existed on the Valpo campus. The new integrated structure allows for better strategic planning, internal and external communication, and broader participation among students, faculty, and staff on behalf of diversity and inclusion efforts. The CIVC includes 22 faculty members, administrative staff members, and students, as well as seven *ex officio* members, including the Assistant Provost. The CIVC reports directly to the president, suggesting the high priority placed on diversity and inclusion.

Appointment of an Assistant Provost for Inclusion and the development of the CIVC is only the most recent step towards building a community of diversity at Valpo. Several administrative offices and elected committees ensured sustained attention to diversity issues for many years previous to these most recent developments. Their projects include the following examples:

1. An annual [Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration](#) has taken place every January since 1990. The week-long celebration culminates with a full-day event that includes a nationally-known keynote speaker (Cornel West in 2017), workshops, focus groups, exhibitions, and a community-service project. Participation is high (regular classes are cancelled so that students can attend) and hundreds attend from the surrounding community. The MLK Celebration Committee is one of only two committees that report directly to the president, suggesting the high priority placed on the event from its inception.

2. A broad-based visioning process in 2009-10 led to a new positioning for the Lutheran identity of Valparaiso University, moving from a model of hospitality (a university for Lutherans inviting others into community) to one of constitution (a Lutheran university constituted by people from many backgrounds and beliefs). This new vision aligns more closely with the current body of students, faculty, and staff, and positions the university to serve future generations of increasingly diverse students. The president addressed this model in a Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education [Chaplaincy Conference](#) in 2014, saying: “Because it is a community of learning constituted by people of all faiths, Valparaiso shall minister to the spiritual needs of all students, including those of non-Christian faiths, in providing for their worship life and in supporting many other activities that address the spiritual lives of students.”

3. The [Welcome Project](#) is a web-based resource developed by two professors, one each from Art and English, that collects first-person audio and video clips of students and others telling stories about diversity challenges and opportunities they have faced. The stories are paired with facilitated conversation to foster curiosity about difference and to forge stronger communities as those communities become increasingly diverse. Since 2009, the Welcome Project has interviewed over 300 participants and posted 230 stories to its website; reached over 4,200 people through conferences, presentations, workshops, training, and exhibitions; and reached more than 11,800 users across the globe through its website, launched in 2012.

In 2015, the Welcome Project embarked on a digital humanities initiative centered on the changing racial and economic demographics of Northwest Indiana, beginning with the rise of black political power and opportunity in the 1960s, the “flight” of white residents and businesses to the suburbs, and the automation and consequent underemployment of the steel mills. In 2016, the Welcome Project received an NEH Digital Projects for the Public grant and an Indiana Arts Commission grant to support its work on a new project known as Flight Paths.

4. The workshop series “Building a Culture of Equity and Inclusion” had trained 58 faculty and staff members to become diversity facilitators by the summer of 2015. Over the course of 16 hours, facilitators learned to lead activities, discussions, and scenarios related to diversity and inclusion; these facilitators, in turn, provide 90-minute interactive sessions on diversity to any university department or class that requests one. Participants learn strategies to create safe, inclusive spaces in the classroom and work environment. Between August 2013 and August 2015, about 1,600 campus community members had attended one of 87 sessions offered by diversity facilitators.

5. In 2015, at the annual faculty workshop, guest speaker Sandra Moore (human rights commissioner, Commonwealth of Kentucky) focused on pedagogical approaches to creating an inclusive learning environment. The focus on inclusive academic content complemented well the safe space focus of the “Building a Culture of Equity and Inclusion” project, both featured at the workshop.

6. Student organizations supported by the OMP include: Asian American Pacific Islander Coalition, Black Student Organization, Latinos in Valparaiso for Excellence, and Alliance. Student organizations supported by the OIP include: International Students Association, African Students Association, Indian Students Association, Kurdish Students Organization, Muslim Students Association, Saudi Students Association, and Chinese Students Association. These organizations sponsor multiple events like Hispanic Heritage Month, Diwali Indian Celebration, National Coming Out Day, and Chinese Moon Festival.

7. Two councils support and enhance development of inter-religious efforts and programs on campus: the Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue and Spirituality, a faculty and staff group established in the

spring of 2012, attends to observance of sacred days, diet needs, and public community events; MOSAIC (Mobilizing Of Students Advocating Interfaith Cooperation), a student programming group established in the spring of 2013, attends to events focused on inter-religious literacy, service, activism, and dialogue.

1.C.2.

Student recruitment and faculty/staff hiring procedures seek to ensure that the Valpo community reflects both the rich diversity of northwest Indiana and the commitment expressed in area vision statements about “inclusion and diversity” and “internationalization.”

The provost’s office is responsible for faculty hiring. Revisions made in 2014 to the [Guidelines for Interviewing, Tracking, and Hiring Full-Time Faculty](#) add proactive strategies that facilitate recruitment of diverse candidates. The Assistant Provost for Inclusion, a position allocated and filled in 2015, and the Diversity Advocate, normally a member of the hiring department, together ensure that the department is favorable to diversity, takes steps to enhance the diversity of the candidate pool, and determines candidates’ commitment to diversity in both education and attitude. The provost has access to discretionary funds should an opportunity hire in support of diversity present itself.

Despite attempts to achieve greater diversity in the faculty ranks, diversity among the faculty lags behind that of the student body. In 2015 the difference was 12% (faculty) versus 34.6% (student body). The institution is aware of this disparity and for that reason the initiatives described above were instituted.

The Office of Human Resource Services (HR) is responsible for establishing guidelines and best management practices in the area of staff recruiting and selection. As these relate to Valpo's strategic diversity and inclusion initiative, HR has established a job posting partnership with the Urban League of Northwest Indiana and has developed similar relationships with other representational organizations to target job postings at underrepresented groups. HR has also established incidental relationships with on-campus groups promoting diversity in an effort to increase referrals among minority employees and to broaden minority exposure to prospective employment opportunities.

Through the use of voluntary data collected through Open Hire, the online application platform, HR assesses whether and when a diverse candidate pool has been achieved for a posted position. The general practice is for a position posting to remain open until a diverse candidate pool is achieved. HR alone has access to applicants’ EEO statistical data; that information remains confidential from the hiring manager.

During a five-year period (2010-2015), four of ten admission counselors hired by the Office of Enrollment Management came from underrepresented groups.

Attention is also given to recruitment of a diverse student body, both with regard to international and domestic diversity. The Office of Admission allocated two positions for international recruiting (2010 and 2017) and strategies to recruit students of domestic diversity have been in place for many years. The Office of Financial Aid works with domestic diversity students on an individual basis in order to take into consideration relevant financial and other circumstances.

[Multiple offices](#) offer programs that address the needs of Valpo’s increasingly diverse student population: [Academic Success Center](#), [Access and Accommodations Resource Center](#), [Hesse Learning Resource Center](#), [Language Resource Center](#), and [Judith L. Beumer Writing Center](#). The [Persistence and Success Program](#), initiated in 2015 and supported by the Indiana Commission on

Higher Education, provides personalized attention and mentoring to selected Indiana students. Counseling Services offers peer-education groups that focus on fostering a culture of respectful relationships, healthy choices about alcohol, and emotional well-being. These offices and efforts support retention of the diverse community of students the university seeks to graduate.

As a result of this attention and mentoring, Valpo has been identified by Chicago's North Lawndale College Prep High School as a "success college," a place where low-income, minority students are more likely to graduate in four years than at other institutions. NLCP graduates who attend designated "success colleges" receive [Phoenix Pact](#) scholarships that bridge the gap between the financial aid package offered by the university and a family's ability to pay. Valpo's partnership with the Phoenix Pact project meant that the first four NLCP graduates enrolled as freshmen in 2015; three of the four are still enrolled two years later and are doing well. Two additional Phoenix Pact students enrolled as freshmen in 2016 and 2017, respectively.

Valpo students are encouraged to study abroad to experience diversity in other settings. In 2008, Valpo was one of five institutions to receive the [Senator Paul Simon Award](#) from NAFSA (Association of International Educators); the award recognizes Valpo as a model for other institutions of higher education in preparing graduates with strong cross-cultural skills and global awareness. Valpo was also featured in NAFSA's publication "Internationalizing the Campus 2009: Profiles of Success at Colleges and Universities."

Military veterans also bring diversity to campus. The Office of Veterans Programs and Services has the stated mission "to help our active duty and reserve military personnel, military veterans and dependents graduate from college quickly and successfully." The office is a one-stop resource for veterans for academic, personal, and social needs. Valpo's designation as a [Military Friendly School](#) in 2016 affirmed the university's support for this group.

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1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

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

Argument

1.D.1.

An ethic of service to the public is deeply embedded in Valpo's culture and articulated in the mission to "prepare[s] students to lead and serve in both church and society." That service has been repeatedly recognized by the President's Higher Education [Community Service Honor Roll](#). In 2015, for example, Valpo students logged over 260,000 hours of service. In that year the [Washington Monthly](#), which measures what colleges do for their country, ranked Valpo first in the nation among master's universities for contributions to the public good.

The university is intentional in its goal to serve the public and to prepare its students to do the same. The [Institute for Leadership and Service](#) was established in 2012; its speaker series, summer internship program for CAPS (Calling and Purpose in Society) Fellows, coursework, and reflection opportunities lead students to a deeper sense of purpose and calling by helping them understand the relationship among studies, service, and plans for the future.

The university seeks explicitly to address a shortage of secondary school math and science teachers by offering an undergraduate program called [Mathematics and Science Education Enrollment and Development \(MSEED\)](#). Supported in part by a grant from the National Science Foundation, the program provides scholarships, paid internships, and diversity experiences for students seeking both a STEM degree and teaching licensure.

Many Valpo organizations provide students with service opportunities along with opportunities to reflect on the relationship between education and service. Those organizations include:

[Social Action Leadership Team](#) (SALT): Sponsored by the university chapel, SALT members learn the basics of fund development by annually identifying a project from among solicited proposals and by developing and implementing a fundraising program in support of that project. In 2015-16, SALT raised \$30,000 for "The Hope Underground" which funds the training of Syrian medics to staff field hospitals run by "Promise Relief and Human Development," an American-based aid organization. In 2016-17 the project aided Mercy Medical Center in Bukasa, Uganda. Additional volunteer work, spring break service trips, and church-based community organizing cultivate the skills that will help students lead lives dedicated to social justice and positive change.

[Community Research and Service Center](#) (CRSC): A program of the Department of Political Science,

the CRSC allows students to apply research skills on behalf of not-for-profit organizations, local government, and schools. More than one dozen projects are normally completed in a given year. Examples include: a study on the condition of women in Porter County, the tracking of bias-motivated incidents in Northwest Indiana, and a study completed for the Visiting Nurse Association to determine the need for a youth bereavement center in Porter County.

[Hilltop Neighborhood House](#): Created in 1995 by university faculty in partnership with community leaders, Hilltop Neighborhood House offers support services to families in need. More than 350 Valpo students volunteer annually with programs offered at this site, located adjacent to the university.

Fraternity and Sorority Life: Members of the fifteen fraternities and sororities at the university participate in both local and national philanthropic events, raising both funds and awareness about a variety of issues. In 2016-17, fraternity men and sorority women contributed 13,927 hours of service and raised \$87,465 for local and national non-profit organizations. In 2017 they raised more than \$69,000 for the Lurie Children's Hospital (Chicago) through sponsorship of the annual Dance Marathon, which has totaled more than \$170,000 over the last five years.

Additional volunteer opportunities are associated with professional colleges within the university:

College of Engineering: The Valpo chapter of Engineers Without Borders established eleven wind-powered, clean-water systems in Kenya (2004-08) and rehabilitated an 80-year-old irrigation canal in Tanzania (2009-12). Rebranded on the Valpo campus as [WAVES](#) (Working Across Vocations Everywhere through Service), the chapter continues its work jointly with students in other academic disciplines, currently in both Haiti and Costa Rica. Project participants intentionally work side-by-side with host villagers as a mutual learning experience, providing technical skills and educational programs in exchange for immersion in the local culture.

College of Nursing and Health Professions: Students of nursing and pre-medicine participate in a spring break service trip to Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Working with licensed medical professionals, students perform basic health checks, identify primary health problems, make diagnoses and distribute medications in both urban and rural communities.

School of Law: The [Law Clinic](#), established in 1969, serves the Valparaiso community as a licensed law firm. Advanced law students represent clients without easy access to legal services and do so at low or no cost. Typically the Law Clinic handles more than 400 cases annually in eight sub-clinics: Appellate, Criminal, Domestic Violence, Civil, Immigration, Juvenile and Family, Sports Law, and Tax Clinics.

Cultural events, including music, theater, lectures, and sporting events, are open to the public, in many cases with no admission fee. The Christmas concert regularly attracts an audience of over 2,000 people, many of whom are from the local community. The Valpo chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America includes community members and attracts over 300 people to each of three or four lectures annually. The Kade-Duesenberg German House and Cultural Center interacts with members of the community by offering after-school German classes for grade-school children (*Kindern lernen Deutsch*), an annual German-language drama competition for area high school students (*Theaterfest*), and Friday afternoon conversation practice over coffee (*Kaffeestunde*). The Confucius Institute at Valparaiso University sponsors an annual Great Lakes Music Festival, attended by some 500 high school students. Athletic events, men's basketball in particular, draw large audiences from the community.

1.D.2.

The university is an independent institution and has neither investors nor a related or parent organization. Thus, all resources are dedicated to the core educational mission of the university. As described in (2.C.3.), a policy statement ensures that the university does not enter into any partnership that does not enhance and support the mission. Further, all members of the Board of Directors abide by a Policy Statement on Conflicts of Interest and annually disclose potential conflicts of interest, as do key members of the university administration.

1.D.3.

Valpo has two key external constituencies: regional neighbors, especially the City of Valparaiso, and prospective employers of Valpo students and graduates.

The Town and Gown Committee is one of the president's executive committees. It provides a forum for representatives of the city to meet with Valpo faculty, staff, and students to discuss matters of mutual interest, share perceptions, correct false information, and advise the mayor of the city and the president of the university. In addition to this formal link between city and university, faculty and staff members are also actively engaged as private citizens in the regional political landscape, serving as elected officials on town boards, on the Valparaiso City Council, on community boards and commissions, and as members of local civic clubs. The president's office annually sponsors a mid-level staff member to participate in Leadership Northwest Indiana, a program whose mission is to increase awareness of regional issues among leaders in the community.

The city's [Human Relations Council](#), established in 2008, includes several members of the university faculty and staff, and has been chaired consecutively by two faculty members. The council's mission is to provide counsel and assistance to the mayor on matters related to discrimination based on race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status.

Valpo faculty and staff played a key role in the 2015 resolution of a situation that occurred near campus involving a police officer and a Valpo alumnus. The resolution came about through a statement signed by the sheriff of Porter County and the Valpo alumnus, admitting mistakes and resolving to do better. The agreement is almost unprecedented and came at a time of national tension and unrest over police practice and minority communities.

Valpo responds to the needs of prospective employers of Valpo graduates through the Career Center, which works strategically to develop connections between those employers and Valpo students. Through career fairs and expos, social media, company information sessions, occupations panels, on-campus interviewing, and networking receptions, the Career Center helps employers gain visibility on campus.

A multiyear grant from the Lilly Endowment allows the institution to contribute actively to a statewide initiative designed to encourage students to live and work in the State of Indiana after graduation. Since 2013, a collaboration between academic and career services has helped Valpo students in all academic majors to develop skills in demand by Indiana employers and to deepen their knowledge of and affinity for the state. Specifically, [IN_Advance](#) has initiated programs that couple academic and career advising, that introduce students to Indiana employers and industries through funded course modules and regional and statewide Career Treks, that increase opportunities for students to pursue internships for academic credit, and that make it possible for increased numbers of nontraditional students to complete Valpo degrees.

Employers increasingly look for specific, essential skills in prospective employees. Valpo has therefore responded by developing eleven [Professional Skills Courses](#). Students learn to solve problems, make sound decisions based on pertinent information, communicate ideas effectively, contribute to a diverse team of people, and develop leadership skills.

Each college in the university, including the Law School, calls on its National Council for advice on how best to prepare Valpo students for a life of leadership and service. The National Councils are comprised of alumni who are exceptional leaders in their fields who can provide the respective deans with expertise, advice, and useful critique of the college's programs, mission, and direction. The colleges can then respond by developing courses or programs that better prepare students for work and service after graduation. Although the Graduate School does not have a National Council, some graduate programs, including CyberSecurity and Arts and Entertainment Administration, have Community Advisory Boards.

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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

Valparaiso University has a long-standing, clearly-articulated mission statement that is effectively disseminated and energetically promoted both within the organization and publicly. The principles articulated in the mission statement, vision statement, area vision statements, and core values are reflected in the Strategic Plan. Those principles drive university policy, budgets, and other decision-making structures, including campus development and land use. Furthermore, the decision-making process is collaborative and transparent.

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

Argument

2.A.

In an increasingly uncertain higher education environment Valparaiso University recognizes the importance of ethical and responsible stewardship of financial resources as a prerequisite for long-term sustainability. The Strategic Plan adopted by the Board of Directors in 2010 called for development and implementation of a sustainable business model as the means of achieving all other goals of that plan, thus explicitly linking responsible financial planning with the Strategic Plan. Even as the structure of the Strategic Plan has shifted from the language of goals to the language of "what statements," achievement of "long-term institutional sustainability" remains central for moving the university forward with integrity.

The president prepares annual budget recommendations for the Board of Directors in consultation with two internal bodies: the [President's Council](#) and the [Budget Review Committee](#). The Budget Review Committee, comprised of a member from each college or school of the university, a representative of the library, and three members elected by the Provost's Council, is charged with providing an academic perspective on budget recommendations. The [Board of Directors](#) is charged with exercising fiduciary responsibility, approving the budget and tuition and fee levels, approving endowment investment and spending policies, and establishing guidelines for resource allocation, always in accordance with strategic priorities. The Audit Committee of the Board provides oversight of the annual audit of financial statements and the preparation of other reports and tax returns. The [external audit](#) of financial statements is conducted annually by the firm of BKD, LLP. All of these bodies serve as checks and balances to ensure financial integrity. [Moody's assignment](#) of an A3 (stable) bond rating is further external evidence of responsible financial planning.

The president transparently updates faculty on financial matters, including his budget recommendations to the Board of Directors, at both the April faculty meeting and the May Faculty Workshop. Staff members are similarly updated at the quarterly University Leadership Forum. The provost annually presents additional financial performance measures across time and in comparison to [peer institutions](#) at a Faculty Senate meeting open to all faculty members.

The [faculty](#) of the university has collective and individual jurisdiction over all academic functions, including curriculum, degree standards, professional programs, and academic graduation requirements; the faculty also advise the president on matters concerning appointment, promotion, and tenure of members of the faculty. Appropriate elected and appointed committees oversee these

responsibilities to ensure that established procedures are followed.

Recruiting and hiring those who embrace the university's mission is paramount to maintaining ethical conduct among staff members. The Office of Human Resource Services (HR) features the mission statement on its website where potential employees first see it; [HR's own mission statement](#) seeks to ensure that relationships are "respectful, fair and consistently supportive." Upon employment, staff members receive a Staff Employee Handbook that opens with a foreword, penned by the president, reminding all employees of Valpo's mission to prepare graduates to lead and serve church and society, thus linking all university employees to that mission. New employee orientation includes a presentation by the Assistant Vice President for Mission and Ministry called [What it means to be a lutheran university](#).

Auxiliary functions, while expected to yield a surplus of revenue over expense, take place within the broader context of ethical and responsible behavior. Staff for summer camp events have appropriate background checks, for example. When Administration Services proposed purchasing a Chick-fil-A franchise as an auxiliary enterprise, a thoughtful conversation about Valpo as an inclusive institution took place among constituencies of the campus: Chick-fil-A's chief operating officer had earlier made public comments opposing same-sex marriage, and many members of the university community believed that support of the company would imply support of those public comments. After open discussion, the decision was reached not to purchase a franchise. A core belief at the university is that open discussion best leads to resolution of issues and the university worked with integrity and according to its own principles by resolving the issue in that way. Preliminary planning for future use of vacant university-owned land includes possible construction of an assisted-living or nursing home; the university is focusing on possibilities that could support the city's needs even as it seeks a revenue stream through such property.

The Board of Directors approved its own [Policy Statement on Conflicts of Interest](#) in 2010.

Faculty members are held to high standards of professional integrity with respect to the constituencies they serve: the [Faculty Handbook](#) is explicit in characterizing professional standards and ethical responsibility to the disciplines, students, colleagues, the university, and society. Faculty members are guided in development of course syllabi by a set of [required and recommended components](#), thus ensuring that all courses are fairly represented to students. The ethos of the university is a key part of the extensive faculty orientation program, described in (1.A.2.).

Because the university values the honesty and integrity of its research community, a [policy and procedures](#) are in place to review, investigate, and report allegations of research misconduct among any member of the faculty, staff, or student body.

The [Staff Employee Handbook](#), mentioned above, includes both a section on Standards of Conduct and a policy statement on ethics that calls for the highest standard of ethical behavior. One of the opening pages of the university website pledges a [Commitment to Ethical Behavior](#), stating that fair and ethical practices are fundamental to a sound academic environment. A link from that page to an anonymous reporting tool, [EthicsPoint](#), allows employees to report illegal or unethical practices in financial transactions or as they relate to the health and safety of members of the university community. Students are also expected to embrace the university's core values and to lead lives defined by integrity, and their Student Guide to University Life includes not only General Tenets of Student Behavior, but also a [Personal Integrity Code](#). The Student Academic Fair Practices policy, described in (2.D.), appears in the Student Guide and in the [Graduate Catalog](#). In situations where integrity and ethical behavior fall short, multiple channels of redress exist. These include grievance procedures for [students](#), [staff](#), and [faculty](#).

The university complies with requirements of Title IX and since 2014 has employed a [Title IX Coordinator](#) responsible for monitoring, advising, and overseeing complaints involving Title IX violations. The Coordinator is also responsible for assessing the campus climate, coordinating remedial or interim measures, and providing training and education to campus community members. The Coordinator maintains a website that provides links to complaint and response forms, policies, educational materials, and appropriate faculty, staff, and student handbooks.

Complementing the services of the Title IX Coordinator is the Sexual Assault Awareness & Facilitative Education (SAAFE) Office. As the acronym suggests, the [SAAFE Office](#) provides a support system for those affected by sexual abuse.

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

Argument

2.B.

The General Catalog and the Graduate Catalog, updated annually and available [online](#), and the university [website](#) are the primary vehicles for sharing information about the university's academic programs, degree requirements, tuition and fees, financial aid options, accreditation relationships, controlling body, and faculty and staff.

The General Catalog includes a list of [university personnel](#) (faculty and administration), members of the [Board of Directors](#) and the college-based National Councils, and [accreditations](#) and major affiliations. A link from the provost's web pages includes the same list of [university personnel](#). A list of members of the Board of Directors is linked from a page called [Leadership and Governance](#), which clarifies that the university is independent and governed by that Board.

Both the General Catalog and the website also provide information about academic programs, student life, and admissions requirements. Department web pages introduce faculty members, including their credentials, research publications, teaching interests, and photographs. The full university staff is searchable by name and department within the website.

The university maintains social media accounts, including a primary university account for [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), Snapchat, and YouTube, for sharing information about current programs, events, and academic accomplishments of Valpo students, faculty, and alumni.

[Integrated Marketing and Communications](#) (IMC) is a central office that ensures that the university communicates with one voice that reflects clearly the Valpo brand. IMC assists departments with strategic communications, print and web communications, and social media. Print and digital publications produced annually are accessible through the university website and are also housed on a [third-party site](#) used by many higher education institutions. Key informative publications include a 60-page viewbook for prospective Valpo students, a 75-page academic brochure, and VALPO magazine. IMC has also produced [videos](#), available on valpo.edu and through the university's YouTube account.

The Cresset, an [award-winning](#) review of literature, the arts, and public affairs first published in 1937, found its home at Valpo in 1951. Since then, *The Cresset* has highlighted connections between Christianity and culture in five issues per year; in doing so, the institution behind the publication presents itself to its readership. Most readership is now online, with over 20,000 user visits to the site during the spring 2017 semester; an additional 2,000 print copies of each issue are distributed to off-campus readers. The [Journal of Values-Based Leadership](#), published online by the College of Business, is more recent; launched in 2008, the journal is issued twice annually and its mission is to "promote ethical and moral leadership and behavior."

The [Office of Institutional Effectiveness](#) maintains a website that provides reliable data about costs to

students, graduation rates, and accreditation relationships. Valpo follows financial aid policies and practices that prevent its students from being overly-burdened by debt and prominently features a Net Price Calculator linked through “Student Right to Know” on that same website. Valpo graduates have [less debt](#) than students from peer institutions.

Recently an error was discovered in the university’s Graduate Catalog: a new graduate program (Health Care Administration) was omitted in its first year, perhaps because of the similarity in name to the Master of Health Administration. When the lapse was discovered it was immediately corrected and added to the 2015-16 Graduate Catalog. Procedures in place normally prevent such errors; the registrar or designee is always present at Faculty Senate meetings to ensure that course or program changes are added to the General Catalog. Beginning immediately after this error was discovered, the registrar or designee began attending Graduate Educational Policy Committee meetings as well, to ensure that a similar error will not be repeated. Attention to detail is crucial for the university’s reputation as an ethical and transparent institution.

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Argument

2.C.1.

Valpo is an independent Lutheran institution governed by its Board of Directors. No external religious denomination exercises any control over it. As set forth in the [Board's Bylaws](#), the authority and responsibilities of the Board of Directors include oversight of the governance of the university and exercise of fiduciary responsibility. As such, the Board's deliberations reflect the priorities of the institution and its responsibility to protect and maintain the integrity and mission of the institution.

The agenda and minutes of Board meetings and subcommittee meetings are retained permanently in the university archives. They reflect the Board's involvement in developing the Strategic Plan, authorizing construction of new facilities, development of financial campaigns, and appointing the president. At a January 2017 [Board of Directors retreat](#), for example, members of the Board addressed the new structure of the Strategic Plan, with a three-hour discussion of the "why" and "what" statements. Feedback from the Board was shared with the Strategic Planning Committee and more broadly with the campus community during the spring and summer of 2017. Thus the planning process is quite interactive between Board members and the campus community.

An example of a recent Board action in response to external pressures that threatened the institution is as follows. The nationwide 40% drop in the number of students taking the LSAT and the simultaneous drop in the scores of those who did, required that the Board take appropriate action for Valpo's Law School. The Board evaluated the best interests of Valpo's Law School, and in [January 2016](#) decided to reduce the size of the Law School. Board directives were to reduce the faculty size through a voluntary retirement buy-out package, to reduce staff and additional faculty positions, to trim operating budgets, to reduce faculty and staff salaries, and to involve faculty more intentionally in the life of the university, all while maintaining ABA standards. This proactive decision was made not only to preserve the Law School, but also to enhance its quality, and predated [official notification](#) of public censure from the ABA in November 2016 (Standard 501a and 501b). The Board continues to monitor the situation closely even as the Law School works towards compliance. The current status is described in (4.A.5.).

2.C.2.

Eight standing committees of the Board work closely with one or more assigned members of the university administration to discharge responsibilities associated with that committee. Those assigned members of the administration prepare reports for committee members before each quarterly meeting, ensuring that Board members are particularly knowledgeable about that facet of the university. The committees are: Academic and Student Affairs; Advancement, Enrollment, and Marketing; Capital Planning and Investment; Athletics Oversight; Finance and Administration; Audit, Executive; and Governance.

Additional reports prepared for members of the Board are frequent and intentional. Members of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, for example, receive annual updates regarding key [academic dashboard indicators](#) and [faculty salary and compensation](#), benchmarked against a carefully-chosen, Board-approved [peer group](#). These and other annual reports, including an annual update on progress towards goals set in the Strategic Plan, guide the Board as it makes budgeting decisions. All senior administrators provide four written reports to the Board annually.

Faculty, staff, and students regularly attend and present at meetings of the full Board and Board committees. Panel discussions, led by faculty, staff, and students can range, for example, from the narrowly focused (Experiential Programs in the College of Nursing and Health Professions) to the broadly focused (Greek Life and its Impact on Academics).

Most members of the Board of Directors are alumni of the institution. But the Board is intentionally constituted so that members represent a diversity of interests and professions, including ministers, engineers, physicians, and businesspeople. [Members of the Board](#) are therefore engaged in conversations about higher education with a variety of external constituencies. External consultants from higher education, business, leadership, and other areas are regularly invited to Board meetings and retreats to complement Board expertise and to address issues about which the Board must make specific decisions. Recent examples include inclusion and diversity efforts and Law School decisions.

The Governance Committee of the Board approved a [Board Development, Management and Continuing Education Plan](#) in January 2016 which outlines the means by which new members are mentored and then moved into leadership positions.

2.C.3.

Because the institution is independent and has no parent entity and because most Board members are "[public](#)," as defined by the HLC in Assumed Practice A.8., no interested party may have control over the Board; it is fully in control of the university.

The Board of Directors Bylaws includes a clear [Conflict of Interest clause](#) (Article XVI). Board members are annually required to [review](#) the 2010-approved [Policy Statement on Conflicts of Interest](#) and to execute a [disclosure form](#). Attention to possible conflicts of interest is thus ongoing.

A [policy statement](#) ensures that the university does not enter into any partnerships that do not enhance and support the university's mission and ethos.

2.C.4.

The president of the university and designated staff are responsible for all day-to-day [educational and managerial affairs](#) of the university; the president has the authority to execute all documents on behalf of the university and the Board consistent with Board policies and best interests of the university.

The faculty, represented by the Faculty Senate and its committees, has exclusive jurisdiction over academic affairs, including curriculum, degree standards, accreditation, certification, professional programs, academic graduation requirements, and matters which lie within the provinces of the following committees: Academic Freedom and Tenure Hearing Committee, Faculty Concerns Committee, Committee on Creative Work and Research, Committee on Assessment, Committee on Academic and Professional Standards, Committee to Enhance Learning and Teaching, Educational Policy Committee, and Graduate Educational Policy Committee. The faculty also has the exclusive right to advise the President on all matters affecting the appointment, promotion, and tenure of members of the faculty.

Although the faculty oversees academic matters, Board members must also be conversant in those areas. For that reason, the president, the provost, the chair of the Faculty Senate, the director of Institutional Effectiveness, and a member of the Board attended an Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges workshop called Improving Board Engagement with Educational Quality (September 2012). The goal was to involve Board members in substantive conversations on academic topics in partnership with Valpo's faculty. An outcome was to shift the make-up of Board committees from purely operational categories to strategic categories. Since starting this initiative in 2012, Board members report being better informed and more engaged, based on this improved shared governance model.

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

2.D.

Freedom of expression and freedom to pursue truth wherever it leads is at the heart of Valpo's sense of community, uniting its academic and spiritual missions. The Faculty Handbook guarantees members of the faculty the [freedom to investigate, teach, and publish](#) in their areas of competence without fear of retaliation or fear of offending a dominant social group or transient social attitude. If a faculty member believes there has been a [violation of academic freedom](#), she or he may submit a complaint to the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure Hearing, an elected committee of Faculty Senate. The procedure for [filing a complaint](#) is detailed in the Faculty Handbook.

The right of free expression is guaranteed to students in the [Free Speech Policy](#) in the Student Handbook. Students are charged with pursuing truth in their studies and are guided in doing so, as described in all three subcomponents of (2.E.). The preamble to the Student Academic Fair Practices statement in the Student Guide encourages students to develop their capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth; it then outlines the rights, freedoms, and responsibilities essential for realizing that goal. If students believe their freedoms have been threatened, they have recourse through a [student grievance procedure](#). These rights also extend to graduate students, as stated in (2.A.).

The Board of Directors affirms the principle of academic freedom for both faculty and students in its own [policy](#).

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2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

Argument

2.E.1.

The [Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research](#) (OSUR), several faculty committees, and multiple policies are in place to ensure the integrity of scholarly practice. In addition to assisting the campus community in obtaining funding for research, the OSUR also provides resources concerning responsible conduct of research, both generally and with regard to human subjects. OSUR's website explains National Science Foundation (NSF) requirements regarding responsible conduct of research and states clearly how the institution ensures that those requirements are addressed. The [Policy on Conflicts of Interest in Sponsored Projects](#) and the [Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement Form](#) are available on that office's website.

The [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB), whose members are appointed by the president, protects human subjects participating in research conducted by faculty, staff, students, and other professionals affiliated with the university. It assesses the scientific merit and methods of each research project to promote fully-informed and voluntary participation by potential subjects and to maximize the safety of subjects after they are enrolled in a project. Processes are in accord with federal regulations and all submissions to the IRB include documentation that researchers have successfully completed human subjects' ethics training. Training completed at Valpo is recognized by other institutions for purposes of required ethics training, allowing faculty members to collaborate efficiently with colleagues at other campuses.

The [Animal Care and Use Committee](#) reviews and approves research and teaching activities that involve use of live vertebrate animals to ensure those activities meet federal guidelines for humane treatment. Individuals in the university community provide an additional voice for ethical treatment of animals: there is an active [Voices for Animals](#) group at the institution and one faculty member was recognized nationally by the American Bar Association for her work in [animal law](#), specifically laws regarding companion and service animals.

[ValpoScholar](#) is an institutional repository that provides access to research by university faculty and students. The ValpoScholar website provides links to copyright information, including the Valparaiso University Copyright Policy. The Faculty Handbook provides additional guidelines concerning intellectual property ownership (copyrights, patents, and trademarks) and corresponding rights and privileges. An [Intellectual Property Policy](#) also appears in the Faculty Handbook; it clarifies what intellectual property rests with the faculty, what intellectual property rests with the university, and under what circumstances the university and faculty member must consider partnering with each other to bring faculty-created intellectual property to patent, market, and/or sale, and to come to a resulting

revenue-sharing agreement. The Graduate School has a Thesis Manual that guides students and faculty in the research process, including the final deposit of the thesis on ValpoScholar.

Information Technology includes an [Acceptable Use Policy](#) on its website. It provides guidelines on the use of computing resources for instruction, research, and other official work of faculty, staff, and students, requiring that such resources be used appropriately and in a manner consistent with objectives of the university. The policy also contains a section on copyright compliance.

2.E.2.

Even before students come to FOCUS (June orientation for incoming students) they receive weekly e-mails that include messages about ethical collection and use of information. Those messages are reinforced during FOCUS when students attend [Campus Resource Presentations](#) offered by Academic Support Resources and the Christopher Center for Library and Information Resources (CCLIR).

The Freshman Core, a two-semester, five-credit-per-semester, general-education experience, is infused with guidance on ethical collection and use of information. This early focus is particularly relevant since Core establishes the foundation upon which students build their undergraduate education. Because Core is a writing-intensive experience, guidance in this area is a critical dimension of the course's pedagogy. The parallel course for students in Christ College (the honors college) is similarly infused.

Valpo has a dedicated Writing Center that offers a full array of programs and resources. The ethical collection and use of information is central to the Writing Center's message and programming; among its resources are [workshops and website support](#) that teach students to produce honorable work and to identify, avoid, and correct inappropriate citation and plagiarism. All academic support offices and structures provide comparable guidance about the appropriate use of information.

The CCLIR offers a full array of resources to help students use information ethically. Those resources are [online](#), in the form of workshops, and in individual attention provided by librarians.

All students who conduct funded summer research on campus are required to take ethics training. In addition to training required by the NSF, the OSUR also provides an [ethics presentation](#) as part of summer programming.

Open to all, but required of all international graduate students, the course [GRAD 500](#) focuses on academic practice, integrity, and expectations in the American higher education and cultural context.

2.E.3.

One of the defining features of Valparaiso University is its [Honor System](#), established in 1943 by students with support of the faculty. Under this system students pledge that they have "neither given or received, nor have [they] tolerated others' use of unauthorized aid." This pledge is signed by every first-year student at the opening convocation and again on each piece of graded work assigned in a course. Students are expected to report violations they become aware of to the Honor Council, a group led by students with assistance of faculty advisors, for adjudication.

In the spring of 2014, changes were made to the Honor Council to ensure continuous improvement. A part-time staff position was allocated to improve the logistics of communication and scheduling of hearings. In addition, two highly-capable students were recruited as Executive Chair and Appeals Chair for the 2014-15 academic year. As a result, Honor Code allegations were being processed in a

more timely and effective way. The time to process an allegation decreased as did the number of dropped cases and appeals, and by the 2015-16 academic year, the time to process an allegation was reduced to about two weeks.

To guarantee the sustainable quality of the system's effectiveness and efficiency and to develop student leadership and membership for the Honor Council, freshman CORE classes are used as recruiting portals and increased attention to the educational function of the Honor System is paid among freshman students, both domestic and international.

The [Graduate School](#) and the [Law School](#) have separately-operating Honor Systems described, respectively, in the Graduate Catalog and the Law School Student Guide.

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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

Policies and processes articulated in bylaws and handbooks for faculty, staff, students, and Board members ensure that all members of the university community conduct themselves with integrity.

The university has a transparent budgeting process and clear conflict-of-interest policies; makes “Student Right to Know” data publicly available; and ensures that faculty, staff, and students all receive appropriate guidance in ethical use of information resources. Valpo is proud to be among the few universities to operate under a student-initiated and student-run Honor System, now in its 74th year.

Sources

There are no sources.

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

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Argument

3.A.1.

Internal procedures are in place to ensure that courses and programs are current and meet the evolving needs of students. College curriculum committees review courses and programs being introduced or changed so each course or program is aligned with the relevant student learning objectives, and all undergraduate courses and programs are additionally [reviewed by the Educational Policy Committee](#) (EPC) and the Faculty Senate when introduced or changed. The Graduate School and the School of Law have parallel procedures.

External review of undergraduate programs also takes place regularly. The three professional colleges (Business, Engineering, and Nursing and Health Professions) and some departments in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) maintain [program accreditations](#), which ensure that those programs have appropriate and current curricula. Information gathered for external accreditation is also used for internal program review in the professional colleges. In the CAS, three departments undergo external review each year, rotating such that each department is reviewed about once every seven years. Christ College (the honors college) conducts a review every six years. Review begins with an internal self-study in advance of an [external reviewer visit](#). Additionally, each college has a National Advisory Council whose members provide the respective deans with expertise, advice, and useful critique about the college's programs, mission, and direction in the broader national context. The National Advisory Council for the CAS can stand as an example of the wide range of professional expertise and geographic diversity represented on these [external advisory councils](#).

The Graduate School has a similar internal review process. Members of the Graduate EPC, an elected committee, review each graduate program when created or modified and then report that review to Faculty Senate. External review of individual programs takes place on a [regular rotation](#).

The Law School regularly reviews its curriculum to ensure that it meets the evolving needs of students and aligns with requirements of the American Bar Association (ABA). The Law School

Curriculum Committee first reviews course change requests to ensure compliance with the ABA. The Committee's recommendations are then presented to the faculty as a whole, which is responsible for approval and implementation of curricular changes. In 2013, for example, the Law School introduced an innovative curriculum that reflects the needs of today's legal marketplace; it is praxis-heavy and promotes itself as a curriculum for the millennial generation.

Valpo's undergraduate courses and programs set the achievement bar at an appropriate level that allows students to do well after graduation. Students perform well when measured by external standardized exams or when they compete for prestigious scholarships.

From 2010 to 2016, 89% of engineering students who took the [Fundamentals of Engineering](#) exam passed it; during the same time period, the national pass rate was 78%. Nursing graduates consistently score above the national mean on NCLEX. The pass rate for 2015 was 89%; for January-March 2016, it was 100%. Valpo students who take the [MCAT](#) score at the national mean; that was true both before and after January 2015, when a new form of the exam with a different grading scale, was instituted. The CPA exam pass rate for accounting students exceeded the national average in three out of four recent years: 43% in 2010-2011 (below the national average), 51.7% in 2011-2012, 64.1% in 2012-2013, and 55.4% in 2013-2014.

The CAS tracks students who make successful application to [prestigious fellowship programs](#). From 1987 to 2016, 20 students were awarded a Fulbright Research Fellowship and 28 became English Teaching Assistants in a program administered by Fulbright. Six additional students in the past ten years participated in a comparable program in France (Teaching Assistant Program in France). Twelve undergraduates have won DAAD Undergraduate Research Grants (Germany) since the program's inception in 2004. One student each won a Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship (2002) and an Alexander von Humboldt German Chancellor Scholarship (2004), and nine undergraduates have received an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship since 2011 (four from the College of Engineering and five from the CAS).

The CAS was judged to have high standards by [The Phi Beta Kappa Society](#), which established a chapter at Valpo in 2004.

3.A.2.

In 2009 the Faculty Senate adopted a set of ten [university-wide student learning objectives](#) (USLOs). A [task force](#) was charged to review the USLOs in 2015-16 with a four-fold goal: to reduce the number of USLOs, to be consistent with the national dialogue about higher education, to assure appropriateness for a 21st-century education, and to assure that the USLOs align with the mission to prepare students to lead and serve. The recommendations of the task force, which included reduction from ten to six USLOs, were [adopted by Faculty Senate](#) in 2016.

The [six USLOs](#), which appear prominently at the front of the General Catalog, apply to all colleges, departments, and programs, including undergraduate, graduate, and law. They are not designed to be measured directly, but instead to serve as a guide to all colleges, departments, and programs as they develop precise objectives that can be measured and assessed. Thus, differentiation is introduced at the college, departmental, or program level, even as an overarching set of goals is in place for the entire university. Serving as examples are the SLOs of the [MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Program](#), the [BSN Program](#) in the College of Nursing and Health Professions, and the [Department of Music](#).

The elected Committee on Assessment meets monthly and reports to Faculty Senate. Among other

duties, the committee ensures that undergraduate departments develop appropriate SLOs for each program. The processes of the committee are described in more detail in (4.B.1.).

The Law School and programs in the Graduate School also have SLOs and assessment plans. The Graduate School long had a single set of overarching SLOs that applied to all programs (called [GSSLOs](#)), but during the 2015-16 academic year each degree program in the Graduate School additionally developed a set of [program-specific SLOs and assessment plans](#).

3.A.3.

Distance-delivered courses undergo the same scrutiny by appropriate committees as do other courses; course proposal forms must always include the course SLOs.

Several [graduate programs](#) have distance-delivered components or are fully distance delivered. In those cases, the programs receive the same review by the Graduate Educational Policy Committee and the Assessment Committee as do onsite-only programs. Not only SLOs, but also a full assessment plan must be submitted along with the program proposal. When the MS in Cyber Security was launched in 2014, the [curriculum was designed](#) so that its program-specific SLOs could be met by both the [online](#) or [onsite](#) options.

Some courses are offered on a compressed timeline, during a two-week international experience, for example, or in formats that are otherwise nontraditional. The proposal and approval process for such courses, which requires listing of course SLOs, is the same as for traditional, onsite, semester-long courses. The Carnegie definition of a semester credit hour still holds for these courses, but a clear [university policy](#) describes how instructors should estimate time on task for the courses. Either the Educational Policy Committee or the Graduate Educational Policy Committee makes the final determination regarding the number of credits assigned to courses delivered in a non-traditional format.

The Master of Health Administration (MHA) was previously offered in Chicago, but that location is now being phased out. HLC [approved the offsite location](#) in 2012; in 2017 it [approved the closing and teach-out plan](#) for the four remaining students at that location. The MHA remains available onsite in Valparaiso.

Two consortial agreements have been developed with other accredited universities:

First, a consortial agreement with the University of Notre Dame provides students an opportunity to join either the Air Force or Army ROTC. ROTC courses (both academic and leadership laboratory courses) are offered on the Notre Dame campus and are largely in addition to those required to complete the Valpo degree; a restricted number of [ROTC credits](#) may count toward the Valpo degree, depending on the college. The Air Force ROTC curriculum and courses were reviewed by the EPC and approved by Faculty Senate in March 2000; the Army ROTC curriculum and courses received the same vetting and were approved by Faculty Senate in December 2006.

A second consortial agreement, between Valpo's Department of Geography and Meteorology and Indiana University Northwest's Department of Geosciences, has allowed students at both universities to major in geology by enrolling in courses at both institutions. Because of low enrollments on both sides, the [geology major](#) is no longer offered (as of the fall 2017 semester). The consortial agreement will remain in effect, however, until all currently-enrolled students have completed their degree program.

An [articulation agreement](#), developed with Dalian Jiaotong University in China, means that Valpo has provided faculty and curricular support for engineering and English language courses on the Dalian Jiaotong campus since 2014. Beginning in 2016, the partnership allowed up to 20 carefully-vetted Dalian Jiaotong students to come to Valpo to complete their studies. The articulation agreement between the two universities allows Dalian Jiaotong students to transfer up to two years of coursework toward a Valpo engineering degree.

The university has four contractual arrangements, described in (3.C.2.). As reported there, the university could not ensure adequate oversight of one of those arrangements; therefore the current contract with The Connecting Link will be discontinued when it expires in January 2018.

The university does not participate in any dual-credit programs.

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

Argument

3.B.1.

Eight overarching categories of the general education program (Freshman Core, theology, cultural diversity, humanities, social sciences, quantitative analysis, natural science, and health and wellness) are aligned with one or more of the [general education SLOs](#) (GESLOs), developed in 2010 with both the mission and vision statements as guides. A ninth category, intensive writing, is gradually being implemented and will be discussed in (3.B.3.). Initially, assessment of the GESLOs was somewhat ad hoc; some departments began assessing general education courses against relevant GESLOs immediately and others did not. But by 2013-2014, assessment plans for all GESLOs had been approved and a regularized cycle of review began. The first full cycle of review will be completed by the end of 2017-18, at which point the university intends to review both the GESLOs and the general education program that undergirds them. That upcoming review is particularly timely in light of the recently-revised (April 2016) university-level SLOs. Reasons for the upcoming review are discussed more fully in (3.B.2.).

Specific general education requirements are customized in some academic programs, but the GESLOs nonetheless guide those modified requirements. Students enrolled in the honors college, for example, enroll in a separate set of [enhanced general education courses](#) in the humanities and social sciences, but those courses still align with the GESLOs. General education requirements in the College of Engineering are also modified in light of the math and science requirements in its curricula. But all students have multiple opportunities to meet learning objectives in all nine overarching categories of general education.

3.B.2.

The content of the university's general education program is described in both the [General](#)

[Catalog](#) and within the website of the [College of Arts and Sciences](#); its purpose is articulated in the [Student Guide to University Life](#); and intended learning outcomes are available, along with SLOs for all academic programs, on the website of the [Office of Institutional Effectiveness](#).

The university's current general education program has been substantially in place since 2004-2005, several years before either the USLOs and GESLOs or corresponding assessment plans were crafted. The university is well aware, then, that the general education cart came before the learning-objective horse and that development of both SLO sets was a backward build. Nevertheless, the university determined that one full cycle of assessment of the general education program should be completed before embarking on a review and possible redesign of the GESLOs and, by extension, the general education program. By the end of the 2017-18 academic year, that one full cycle of GESLO assessment will have been completed, by which time a full review of GESLOs and the general education program will be underway. The [stated goal](#) is to complete that review in time to launch a potentially-revised general education program in the fall of 2020.

Thus, within the next several years the backward build will have been remedied: any revision of GESLOs or the means of their assessment will be based equally on the 2016-approved USLOs and on the full cycle of general education assessment that will have been completed by the end of the 2017-18 year. The [General Education Committee](#), an appointed standing committee of the faculty, will lead the upcoming review.

3.B.3.

The [USLOs](#), particularly SLO 2 (concerning information fluency) and 4 (concerning communication skills), address these skills.

Beginning in the freshman year, students in all degree programs are engaged in projects that enhance their ability to collect, analyze, and communicate information. Freshman Core is a two-semester, five-credit-per-semester general education course. The writing assignments in both semesters introduce students to fundamental information literacy and writing skills, such as the ability to identify a source's argument and to fact-check an author's claims. In the Christ College Freshman Program (a program parallel to Core for students in the honors college), students gather and critically evaluate information during the second semester as they prepare for a mock debate and write original research papers in topics seminars.

The library provides research support for both first-year programs. In the fall semester, librarians introduce students to the basics of finding and understanding peer-reviewed journal articles. In the spring semester librarians work with Core students to help them evaluate sources based on authority, timeliness, and relevance. The librarians also work with Christ College freshmen at least three times during the spring semester to introduce them to the fundamentals of devising a search strategy, evaluating sources critically, understanding publication processes, and citation. Furthermore, the library provides custom, web-based research guides to support all freshman students as they gather sources for their research papers; these guides are available on the [Valpo Core LibGuide](#) and on the [Christ College LibGuide](#). Another library guide specifically supports [First-Year Information Literacy](#).

A task force on student writing was established in 2010 by the provost. The task force's [July 2011 report](#) recommended establishment of a faculty position for a university-level writing director with expertise in composition, rhetoric, design of writing curricula, classroom pedagogy, and teacher training. The position was allocated and filled in 2012. Since that time, a [vertical writing program](#), embedded in the Freshman Core and the Christ College Freshman Program and in sophomore-level writing-intensive courses (WICs), has been developed and [approved by Faculty Senate](#). Junior-level

writing-in-the-discipline courses (WIDs) are currently under review and are expected to become the next level in the vertical scaffold. Faculty members who teach WIC and WID courses participate in five-day (20-hour) workshops which have been offered regularly since the summer of 2013.

Valpo students are also expected to collect, analyze, and communicate quantitative and scientific information, and several general education courses ensure that this expectation is met.

All students enroll in at least one university-level course in quantitative analysis. Students not adequately prepared to take such a course, must prepare themselves either by taking a lower-division course first or by completing online tutorials linked to the [assessment exam](#). Completion of the university-level quantitative analysis course is a prerequisite for most science courses.

All students enroll in at least two laboratory-based science courses. Students not majoring in a science field may enroll in beginning science courses alongside students majoring in those fields, but they also have the option to enroll in interdisciplinary courses that increase scientific literacy in real-life contexts. Called [Natural Science](#) courses (rather than Biology or Chemistry courses, for example), they include Science of the Indiana Dunes, Introduction to Forensic Science, and Practical Stream Stewardship: How to Save the Planet One Trout at a Time. In each case, the courses take advantage of a particular faculty expertise and/or the environment of northwest Indiana. Students are introduced to fundamental principles of science and learn how those principles apply to life outside the laboratory.

[Senior-level capstone courses](#), creative work, or design projects provide students the opportunity to apply what they have gradually mastered. Depending on the discipline, the culminating product varies. In the case of [engineering](#), for example, small teams of senior students work all year on a design project that utilizes skills acquired in previous semesters. Teams work independently to conceptualize, design, build, test, and assess a project; they must work with an assigned budget in order to learn about real-world financial constraints. Music majors must pass juried performances and perform in regular recitals, a requirement in support of the [department's mission](#) to prepare students for active roles in professional life, in schools, in churches, and in the community. A recent capstone course for French majors required them to use already-acquired French language skills and to acquire new skills in XML coding in order to produce and publish a [digital scholarly edition of a French Renaissance cookbook](#).

Graduate programs also include final projects or creative work appropriate to their programs. The Doctor of Nursing Practice program requires a thesis, as do some master-level programs. Students in other master-level programs, while offered a thesis option, tend to opt for a course-based project or paper. The Digital Media program, for example, asks students in Communication 700 (Graduate Project in Digital Media) to select a local company or organization for which they build a multi-media project incorporating digital video, digital audio, web design, and/or print publication. The final project is shared with the client organization and all materials are presented publicly. One such capstone project focused on a local bakery; another told the story of the Brauer Museum of Art at Valparaiso University.

3.B.4.

USLO five states that students will engage in cross-cultural dialogue and experiences so that they may succeed in a diverse, global community. On the curricular level all students enroll in at least one Cultural Diversity course; students in some degree programs also enroll in foreign language courses. The [Department of International Studies](#) includes majors in Chinese and Japanese Studies, Global Service, International Economics and Cultural Affairs, and Latin American and Latino Studies.

Valpo has been recognized as a leader in study abroad and was presented the [Senator Paul Simon Award](#) in 2008 in recognition that students graduate with strong cross-cultural skills and global awareness. Just over 36% of undergraduate students in the class of 2016 participated in a study-abroad experience of some type, about 24% in a short-term travel experience and about 12% for a full semester or year of study. Programming of the Gandhi-King Center for Diversity and Global Engagement, which addresses both domestic and international diversity, is described in (1.C.1.).

In addition to study abroad, domestic cross-cultural trips enhance students' understanding of diversity within the U.S. Spring break lasts for two weeks at Valpo, an amount of time that allows for meaningful educational opportunities. Spring break trips have included a civil-rights trip to Selma and multiple [service-oriented trips](#).

The Office of Residential Life coordinates programs to foster appreciation of human and cultural diversity and also supports several [Living-Learning Communities](#) with a diversity focus. Compass is an international-experience community for students who want to develop an awareness of global issues and to learn about different cultures; residents engage in internationally-focused programs and activities. French and German language houses provide an immersion experience for students who live in them. The Kade-Duesenberg [German House](#) and Cultural Center is a specially-built facility that includes not only the residential immersion experience, but also classroom space for German courses and special programming.

3.B.5.

Faculty scholarship is expected and is celebrated at the Annual [Valpo Authors' Reception](#). Faculty authors of books, textbooks, articles, essays, and creative work are recognized and their works are displayed. Since 2016 a funded Award for Excellence in Research and Creative Work has been given annually to one senior faculty member whose body of work is deemed especially worthy of recognition.

[Internal grants](#) support faculty research and travel to conferences. Tenured faculty are regularly given the opportunity to take [sabbatical and other kinds of leaves](#) to focus on scholarship or creative work. Additional on-campus, internally-funded, non-sabbatical opportunities provide reduced or no teaching for a semester when circumstances warrant it. It is assumed that high-quality scholarship enhances the primary teaching mission of the faculty and is the second of four areas in which faculty members are [evaluated](#) (teaching, scholarship, professional development, and campus citizenship). University-wide activities such as VITAL workshops, writing circles, and faculty learning communities promote creative work and research.

Faculty are also encouraged to seek external grants to support their creative efforts. The [Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research](#) (OSUR) helps identify grant sources and prepare grant documents.

Undergraduate students are also supported by the OSUR, which administers both [Undergraduate Research Grants and Summer Research Housing Grants](#). In the summer of 2016, 56 students remained on campus to conduct research under the guidance of a faculty mentor. To honor that and other undergraduate research, Valpo hosts an undergraduate research symposium twice annually: students present their projects and receive feedback from a panel of faculty, staff, and alumni. Twenty-seven research projects were featured in 2016 at the Summer Interdisciplinary Research Symposium and 77 research projects were featured in the spring 2017 Symposium on Undergraduate Research and Creative Expression. During the academic year 2016-17, around 200 students completed research projects, either as departmental honors projects, independent study projects, or senior research

projects. Working in small teams, all students in the College of Engineering complete a design project during the senior year

Valpo students have participated in national undergraduate research conferences for some 20 years. In the spring of 2017, 16 students presented their research at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research and 30 students did so at the 29th Annual Butler University Undergraduate Research Conference.

The [Valparaiso Experience in Research by Undergraduate Mathematicians](#) (VERUM) brings nine students to campus each summer to conduct original mathematics research under the guidance of mathematics faculty. VERUM is funded by the National Science Foundation and students are selected from a nationwide pool with preference for students underrepresented in mathematics (women, first-generation college students, minority people groups).

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Argument

3.C.1.

The majority of faculty members are [full-time](#): tenured, tenure-track, visiting, or lecturers. Adjunct faculty members are normally hired for occasional or unanticipated needs or because of their professional expertise. The university continues to hire tenure-track faculty to meet the needs of students and appropriates new faculty positions on the basis of program growth. Recent new positions were added in the College of Engineering, the Department of Computing and Information Sciences, the Department of Psychology, and the College of Nursing and Health Professions (CoNHP).

[Standing committees](#) of Faculty Senate, comprised of elected or appointed full-time faculty members who have served the university at least three years, ensure continuity for the non-classroom roles of faculty. The Educational Policy Committee, the Committee on Academic and Professional Standards, the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, and the Committee on Assessment oversee curriculum, academic credentials, academic freedom issues, and assessment. At the departmental level, continuing faculty develop curricula, establish program-level SLOs, and assess the programs that standing committees oversee.

Faculty have always been responsible for establishing appropriate credentials for instructional staff, but beginning in 2015 the informal procedures were gradually formalized: program or department faculty now draft qualification standards that are reviewed first by the respective deans and then approved by the Faculty Senate. By [October 2016](#) the Faculty Senate had approved qualification standards for all undergraduate and graduate programs.

3.C.2.

The Provost's Office ensures that new instructors are appropriately qualified when they join the

faculty; a record of those qualifications is maintained by his office throughout the faculty member's employment. Every instructor is either qualified by having attained an appropriate academic degree or by a combination of academic preparation and appropriate professional experience. [Formal faculty qualification standards](#) indicate what degrees are appropriate in each field (the M.L.S. and the M.F.A., for example, are appropriate non-doctoral degrees) and how professional experience is evaluated.

The university is in [multiple contractual agreements](#), the majority with hospitals and clinics in support of the CoNHP; in each case a regular university faculty member supervises the instructional setting. In some cases the agreement is with internship locations in support of the Department of Social Work.

The following four programs serve as examples of contractual arrangements:

1. The MS in Healthcare Administration is offered in contractual relationship with Bisk Education. Bisk provides technology services and marketing for the program, but all courses are taught by fully-qualified [Valpo faculty members](#).
2. Several degrees in the field of [Humane Education](#) are offered in a contractual relationship with the Institute for Humane Education. All [faculty teaching in the program](#) are hired and vetted by Valparaiso University and have earned at least a master's-level degree, but also bring appropriate professional experience to the classroom.
3. One contractual arrangement is with Eagle Aircraft, a local flight training facility, to offer both an [Associate of Science degree with a concentration in aviation](#) and an [undergraduate minor in aviation](#); both were approved by Faculty Senate in 2016. The AS program includes 26 credits (eleven courses) and the minor consists of 20 credits (seven courses) taught by faculty from Eagle Aircraft. Faculty who teach aviation courses are reviewed by the program's Faculty Advisory group; they have the necessary FAA certifications, including being an FAA Certified Flight Instructor and either having (or currently earning) a master's degree. The program and contractual agreement were [approved by HLC](#) in January 2017; this is the only contractual agreement requiring such approval.
4. A contractual agreement offered for professional educators through the university's Department of Education is with [The Connecting Link \(TCL\)](#). TCL coordinates faculty from several universities to offer onsite and online courses to satisfy continuing education requirements for educators. Each instructor's qualifications are reviewed by the chair of the Department of Education, who has access to that information through TCL's learning management system. Despite this oversight, the university determined that it did not have sufficient oversight over admissions and assessment processes to ensure compliance with best practices. Therefore the institution intends to allow the contractual relationship to end in January 2018, when the current contract with TCL expires.

Two consortial arrangements, one each with the University of Notre Dame and Indiana University Northwest, are described in (3.A.3.). Both institutions are fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, and their faculty meet the requirement of having either an appropriate terminal degree or academic preparation plus appropriate professional experience.

The university does not offer dual-credit opportunities.

3.C.3.

Full-time, tenure-track faculty members are [evaluated annually](#) on teaching, scholarship, professional

development, and campus citizenship. The Faculty Handbook outlines the procedures that must be followed to carry out this evaluation. Faculty members address each category of evaluation in an annual Activities Report, which is submitted to and reviewed by the department chair. The Activities Report includes self-reflection about work accomplished in the preceding year and a work plan for the ensuing one. Within one month of submitting the report, the faculty member and chair meet to discuss it, noting weaknesses and strengths in each of the four categories of evaluation. The chair then forwards the report to the dean of the college; after review, the dean forwards the report to the provost.

Pre-tenure faculty members undergo a more thorough review during the spring semester of the third year. If progress towards tenure is found to be grossly lacking, the chair and dean may recommend non-reappointment. If progress towards tenure is satisfactory, the faculty member will continue to the tenure review, normally during the fall semester of the sixth year.

Tenured faculty members whose performance is deemed substandard at the time of the annual review may be asked to prepare a performance improvement plan in consultation with the chair and dean. Procedures, including recourse the faculty member has, are described in the [Faculty Handbook](#).

Adjunct faculty members do not undergo the annual review described above, but are regularly evaluated on their teaching by peers and students. Full-time, non-tenure-track faculty members (visiting faculty and lecturers) are evaluated on teaching, professional development, and campus citizenship, using the same procedures as are used for tenure-track faculty members.

3.C.4.

The evaluation described in (3.C.3) provides annual opportunities for review of faculty members' teaching ability and currency in the discipline throughout their careers. Checkpoints at the end of the third year ([third-year review](#)) and at the beginning of the sixth year (tenure review) allow for a more thorough evaluation before the granting of tenure.

Faculty members are entitled to an annual budgeted amount in support of documented expenses to attend conferences related to their respective disciplines. They are also encouraged to apply for internal grants in support of both scholarship and teaching ability. The [Creative Work and Research Committee](#) reviews proposals for research in the disciplines. The [Committee to Enhance Learning and Teaching](#) reviews proposals for professional development in teaching and learning. Faculty members may also apply for [sabbatical leaves](#) when they become eligible. Faculty members also receive assistance in applying for external grants from the Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research, which employs a full-time staff member.

In addition to financial resources in support of research and teaching excellence, Valpo also provides professional development opportunities for faculty members through the [Valparaiso Institute for Teaching and Learning](#) (VITAL), whose mission is to support, promote, and enhance Valpo's community of learning. In addition to offering regular workshops, VITAL also consults with individual faculty members on topics concerning [faculty development](#), [instructional design](#), and [instructional technology](#).

3.C.5.

All Valpo faculty members are required to offer at least [six hours per week](#) of office hours. Most faculty offer an open-door policy: students are invited to enter whenever the office door is open. Senior students report high satisfaction with their [engagement with faculty](#) on the National Survey of

Student Engagement. The fact that the level of satisfaction is higher among seniors than among freshmen suggests that senior projects and capstone experiences provide significant opportunities for meaningful interaction between students and faculty members.

External voices affirm that faculty members are devoted to teaching and engaging with their students. U.S. News & World Report has ranked Valparaiso University either first or second for [Best Undergraduate Teaching](#) (Midwest Regional Universities) in each of the last five years.

Although engagement with students through teaching is the highest responsibility of Valpo faculty members, emphasis is also placed on engaging them in scholarly work outside the classroom. As described in (3.B.5), faculty guidance of student research often leads to presentation, both on campus and at national undergraduate research conferences. Faculty members also guide students in departmental Honors Work or independent study courses. In addition, faculty members serve as advisors to more than [100 organizations](#) across campus, where they are also available to students.

Law School faculty members also interact with students outside of the lecture hall. They coach moot court and trial teams; serve as advisors to note-writers for the Valparaiso University Law Review; advise some 25 student organizations, such as the Black Law Students Association and the Christian Law Association; provide informal career counseling; and participate in co-curricular events such as the [Louis F. Bartelt, Jr., Professionalism Series](#), a series of lectures designed to reinforce the values and ideals of the legal profession.

Graduate School faculty advise chapters of discipline-related honor societies, arrange special activities outside of the classroom, and engage with students in creative work and research. Examples include: three Analytics and Modeling students attended the 2016 Do Good Data Conference with an instructor; one Arts and Entertainment student co-presented a paper with two instructors at a 2016 conference of the Association of Arts Administration Educators; and two Digital Media students collaborated with an instructor on a 2014 award-winning documentary (*Kawergosk*) about life in a Syrian refugee camp near Erbil, Iraq.

3.C.6.

The Council of Directors of Academic Support Centers (CODASC) is comprised of the directors of: the [Academic Success Center](#), the [Language Resource Center](#), the [Judith L. Beumer Writing Center](#), and the [Hesse Learning Resource Center](#). The directors have appropriate degrees and experiences and receive financial support to allow for professional development through conference attendance. In regular CODASC meetings, directors share best practices and coordinate services to serve students most efficiently.

The Law School also offers its students an [Academic Success Program](#); it is staffed by two full-time faculty members who work to facilitate academic excellence by easing the transition to law school.

Student Financial Services staff members (six administrative and four hourly employees) have appropriate degrees and professional experience. All administrative and one hourly staff members have bachelor's or master's degrees and average twelve years of experience in Valpo's financial aid office. All regularly participate in professional development activities, including national, regional, and state financial aid conferences, webinars, and special workshops. All staff members have at least one such opportunity each year, and usually more than one.

A Quality Initiative, approved by the Higher Learning Commission in the summer of 2014, focuses on improving the academic advising experience through [discipline-embedded professional advisors](#).

The College of Business and the College of Nursing and Health Professions each have three professional advisors; the College of Engineering has two professional advisors who advise beginning students until they transition to faculty advisors in their chosen engineering field; the College of Arts and Sciences has four professional advisors serving pre-medical and pre-allied health students, and students majoring in education, biology, biochemistry, chemistry, physics, kinesiology, psychology, social work, art, theater, communication, and international studies. These advisors are trained by relevant department chairs, and ensure that students progress steadily towards graduation, leaving faculty members free to mentor students in career discernment, graduate school applications, and life decisions, as appropriate. The professional advisors also have a thriving developmental program on campus via the Council of Academic Advisors and external professional development opportunities through the National Academic Advising Association.

Additional professional advisors for large departments like English or political science will be added as resources allow. Other departments have developed unique approaches to advising and prefer to continue with faculty advising. Meteorology, for example, has developed a collective approach to academic advising.

Carefully-selected faculty members and professional advisors are charged with the crucial first advising session with freshman students when they participate in the two-day June and August orientation (called FOCUS). The advisors meet twice before FOCUS to refresh their knowledge of and learn about changes in the various curricula, ensuring that students leave campus with a carefully-planned fall schedule in hand.

A peer-ministry program in the residence halls is coordinated by one member of the pastoral staff, an experienced ordained minister. Upper-class peer ministers act as guides and mentors in each first-year student residence hall to support holistic student development, including issues of spirituality and vocation.

Additional co-curricular activities are provided under the auspices of many offices, including the Harre Union, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Residential Life, Intercollegiate Athletics, Intramural Sports, Recreational Sports, Chapel of the Resurrection, Multicultural Programs, and International Programs.

Student Affairs staff members, who supervise many of these co-curricular opportunities, are appropriately prepared for their responsibilities both through education and experience. In the case of professional staff members, all have either a master's degree or doctoral degree in an appropriate area. In addition to formal education, on-going professional development is emphasized as a way to keep staff members current with developments in their fields and in higher education generally. Staff members participate in on-campus professional development programs offered by their specific departments, by Student Affairs generally, or by the university. Attendance at state, regional, or national professional conferences and participation in webinars and other online offerings are encouraged and supported and are considered in the formal evaluation process. In addition to on-going professional development, a number of staff members are active at the regional and national levels of appropriate professional organizations, including service as program evaluators, program presenters, committee chairs, and board members.

Staff of the Counseling Center and the Student Health Center, described in (3.D.1), are also appropriately credentialed and trained.

The Office of Human Resource Services (HR) regularly consults with department heads and hiring managers to identify, recruit, and maintain qualified staff. Prior to and concurrent with the recruiting

and selection process for all staff positions, HR and the hiring manager collaboratively review job descriptions to evaluate the appropriateness of degree requirements, experience levels, and related, qualifying criteria essential for the position. The job description then serves as a measure of an applicant's threshold qualification for the position. If, subsequently, an employee needs to improve performance or to develop new skills to meet modified expectations in the position, HR collaborates with the supervisor in crafting a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) or Personal Development Plan (PDP). Both PIPs and PDPs serve as a game plan, as well as a tool, in helping the employee achieve a higher degree of job proficiency.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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

Argument

3.D.1.

In addition to the four student academic support centers described in (3.C.6), Valpo also has an [Access and Accommodations Resource Center](#), whose mission is to provide students with disabilities equal access to an education and university life.

A 2015 grant from the Indiana Commission on Higher Education allowed Valpo to develop a student success program for 21st Century Scholars and for Frank O'Bannon Grant recipients, all of whom are Indiana residents. The [Persistence & Success Program](#) (PSP) provides academic support for these Indiana grant recipients along with a modest financial incentive to encourage participation. Because of the program's promise, the university continued it after the one-year grant period ended. After one year, 88.7% of the PSP scholars who started the program in August 2015 were registered for the fall 2016 semester compared to about 79% of students in the control group. An August 2015 [report](#) provides detail about the program's start-up.

Students also receive support in their residence halls from trained student Resident Assistants and full-time professional staff members called [Residential Learning Coordinators](#) (RLCs). The RLCs are charged with promoting student learning in the residence halls, enhancing the quality of life for students living on campus, and with overseeing the daily functions of a residence hall or group of halls. Students can also turn to the [pastoral staff](#) of the Chapel of the Resurrection and to counselors at the [Counseling Center](#). The on-campus [Student Health Center](#) provides medical care. The Office of Multicultural Programs and the Office of International Programs, discussed in (1.C.1), provide support for students of diverse backgrounds and for international students, respectively.

The Law School identifies students who need additional support after their first semester of study. Those students enroll in a Legal Methods course which focuses on thorough review of academic skills that may not have been fully mastered in the first semester: critical reading, case briefing, class preparation, outlining, essay writing, and exam preparation. Each student enrolled in Legal Methods receives individualized feedback about discrete skills reviewed and practiced. A second intervention takes place after one full year of study, when the lower half of the class, based on first year grades,

enrolls in Advanced Legal Analysis. Designed originally as an elective bridge course to the second year, it is now required of half the class. Finally, a six-credit course prepares third-year students for the Multistate Bar Exam. Bar Exam Strategies is a streamlined and cohesive approach to bar preparation and skills and was taught for the first time in 2016.

The Graduate School coordinates with the university's Writing Center to ensure that students receive assistance in major writing projects. Several strategies are in place for courses that enroll large numbers of international students. Some course SLOs, for example, address development of professional-level English-language skills. A one-credit course in the International Economics and Finance program, designed especially for international students, models high-level discussion of current problems in economics and finance. In this course and others, Supplementary Instruction sessions allow students to review a lesson with help from a successful student from a previous semester.

3.D.2.

Before incoming students register for their first semester they attend a two-day orientation program in June called FOCUS. In preparation, students take [online placement assessments](#) in chemistry and a foreign language and are placed into a quantitative analysis course based on a combination of ACT and SAT scores and on high school preparation. Students who hope for a higher placement in quantitative analysis have the option of taking an online assessment; that program allows students to participate in online tutorials to improve their placement. International students take an English writing placement exam. Based on the students' scores and on personal advising sessions at FOCUS, students enroll in the appropriate level of these courses. Studio music placements for non-majors take place in the fall.

Incoming students who may be inadequately prepared for the academic rigor of college-level courses are directed to enroll in [General Studies 100](#) (Strategies for Academic Success), a 1-credit course designed to offer skill development and success strategies to enhance and promote academic achievement. Students directed to GS 100 are those enrolled in the PSP, described in (3.D.1.), and those whose composite scores (a combination of GPA and SAT/ACT scores) place them in the lowest quintile of an entering class, a cohort that has had a lower first-to-second year retention rate according to institutional data. After GS 100 was implemented, an internal study was conducted to assess whether the course improved the retention rate: data across four freshman cohorts (2011-2014) showed that the retention rate ranged from 77-85% for those who completed GS 100, but 66-72% for those who did not.

Students who are insufficiently prepared in quantitative skills are advised to take [Mathematics 110](#), Quantitative Reasoning, before attempting any other mathematics or science course. All beginning science courses have Mathematics 110 (or a higher mathematics placement) as a prerequisite; science programs thereby ensure that students who enroll in their courses have the mathematics foundation needed for success.

Similarly, students who are insufficiently prepared for the two-semester Freshman Core may be advised to enroll first in Core 105, a course designed to strengthen their reading and writing skills. Assignment to Core 105 is based on high school GPA (a variable highly correlated with difficulties in Freshman Core) and on a diagnostic assessment administered on the second day of class. Success in Core 105 helps ensure that students are adequately prepared for the university's vertical writing program, described in (3.B.3.).

Professional programs ensure adequate preparation through pre-enrollment prerequisites. The

Department of Music, for example, requires a performance audition and theory placement for entry into the [music major or minor](#). The College of Engineering requires four years each of math (including at least pre-calculus), science, and English before admission is granted; students without that background may be admitted to a [pre-engineering program](#) while they complete the prerequisite courses.

The registrar maintains an early-warning system, so that faculty can alert academic advisors and deans when a freshman student is struggling within four weeks of the start of the semester; similarly, faculty assign mid-term grades for first-year students so that additional intervention is possible. COMPASS, described in (4.C.3.), intervenes on behalf of the student as soon as a struggling student is identified.

International students are encouraged to enroll in [General Studies 105](#) (Transitioning to Valpo for International Students) and in a [Reading and Writing for Non-Native English Speakers](#) course. Based on the results of an assessment exam, international students may be required to take the beginning, intermediate, or advanced level of that course.

Graduate students are also required to attend new student orientation. International graduate students additionally attend extended, faculty-led sessions, offered in collaboration with the Office of International Programs, to help them transition to American higher education and culture. The course GRAD 500, Graduate Academic Success, is open to all but required of international students; it is described in (4.C.3.).

Four academic support centers are described in (3.C.6.); the Access and Accommodation Resource Center is described in (3.D.1.). A fifth academic support center, The Math Center, will be added as resources become available.

3.D.3.

As part of Valpo's new-student orientation program, every incoming student meets with an academic advisor to plan her or his first-semester schedule of courses; students are then assigned a permanent academic advisor (in many cases the same person), with whom the student meets at least once each semester for four years. About 200 faculty members serve as academic advisors, each to a modest number of students. Professional advisors have taken on academic advising responsibility in certain areas, including in all professional colleges and for large pre-professional programs like the pre-medical programs. The addition of these professional advisors is an outcome of a Quality Initiative approved by the Higher Learning Commission in the summer of 2014; it is described in (3.C.6.).

3.D.4.

Valpo's award-winning Christopher Center for Library and Information Resources (CCLIR) serves as an impressive symbol of the university's commitment to providing excellent facilities for both library services and information technology services. The [information literacy program](#) further underscores the close collaboration, not only between library and information technology, but also with the writing program. The Library has the capacity to store 600,000 volumes and provides 155 public computers. The [Office of Information Technology](#) (IT) ensures that internet, phone, and computer technologies function efficiently and effectively. Two library classrooms and a collaborative alcove are equipped with presentation technology, as are 100 additional classrooms throughout the campus. Several dedicated spaces in the library and elsewhere allow faculty and students to record themselves. Faculty use these facilities to record lectures for online courses; students use them to rehearse for classroom presentations.

The Department of Geography and Meteorology is housed in [Kallay-Christopher Hall](#), a superb facility with a weather center, nearby Doppler Radar, a weather observation deck, a radiosonde system, and a total sky imager. The building is connected by a glass walkway to Schnabel Hall, which houses a weather studio where meteorology students can learn the technology of TV weather broadcasting. The geographic applications laboratory is also located in Schnabel Hall.

Until recently, Neils Science Center, constructed in 1967, housed all three natural science departments and their laboratory spaces: [Biology](#), [Chemistry](#), and [Physics and Astronomy](#). But in the fall of 2017, a 55,000-square-foot [science facility](#) opened, primarily housing wet laboratories for chemistry, biochemistry, and biology, and increasing opportunities for strong interdisciplinary collaboration and research in natural sciences. Neils Science Center is being renovated and will continue to be used for classroom and other teaching spaces, primarily in the sciences; the renovation will be complete by the spring 2018 semester.

Students in the College of Nursing and Health Professions (CoNHP) have access to the Virtual Learning Center, which offers state-of-the-art areas equipped with high-fidelity simulation equipment. The CoNHP opened a 12,000-square-foot facility in July 2017 for a new program, [Physician Assistant Studies](#), anticipated to matriculate its first class in August 2018. Students will have access to two classrooms that can accommodate distance learning; conference rooms; and a state-of-the-art simulation center, including four exam rooms for standardized patient encounters and two universal simulation rooms, all with audio-visual and recording equipment.

In addition to having appropriate laboratories for bioengineering, civil, mechanical, electrical, and computer engineering, the College of Engineering has recently opened the [Fites Innovation Center](#) (2011), which received a Platinum LEED certification for environmentally-conscious design, and the [Markiewicz Solar Research Facility](#) (2013). Both engineering facilities support advanced student research. Valpo is the only undergraduate institution in the country with a solar furnace.

The Valparaiso University Center for the Arts (VUCA), dedicated in 1995, houses facilities for art, music, and theater. Three [theater spaces](#) and supporting facilities were designed as studios for the teaching of theatrical techniques; theater faculty offices are all located close to the theaters and other instructional spaces in support of close working relationships between faculty and students. [Studio and performing space for music students](#) is available not only in the VUCA, but also in the Chapel of the Resurrection, where the orchestra and four choral groups often perform. The Helge Center, a 2015 addition to the chapel, has rehearsal space for one choral group that provides regular musical support for chapel worship services. The VUCA's smaller Duesenberg Recital Hall seats 170 and hosts not only faculty or guest recitals, but also regular student recitals. The [Brauer Museum of Art](#), where student work is displayed alongside the permanent collection and exhibitions by various hosted artists, is also located in the VUCA. Art students have specialized studio space for work that ranges from graphic design and photography to sculpture and painting.

3.D.5.

One USLO addresses information literacy explicitly. For that reason development of information literacy skills is included not only in each degree program, but also in general education courses.

Students receive guidance in the use of library and information resources from both discipline-based faculty and library faculty. Many incoming students attend a Campus Resource Presentation about library resources during FOCUS, the June orientation program. After classes begin, library faculty provide discipline-related instruction that enables students to learn about the breadth of library resources available to them. Librarians create [library guides](#) for disciplines, specific courses, and even

specific writing assignments. The Freshman Core, a five-credit-per-semester, two-semester course for freshman students, intentionally guides students to becoming effective users of library and information resources. The First-Year Experience Librarian maintains a research guide for Core and collaborates with other librarians on another guide for the Christ College Freshman Program, to guide students through the steps of gathering, evaluating, and using the information for their research projects.

Library Services has established a subject [liaison program](#) that fosters a partnership between academic programs and librarians with special expertise in that program. Library faculty support students who need subject-specialized assistance through one-on-one research consultation or in classroom settings.

The following can stand as one example of collaboration between an academic department and library faculty. Members of the faculty from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and Library Services participated in a 2013 workshop called Information Fluency in the Disciplines, sponsored by the Council of Independent Colleges. One result of that initiative was the department's development of a fourth SLO for foreign language majors: "Students will find, evaluate, engage with, and correctly cite sources of information in both the target language and in English, mindful of how these sources support their own academic work." The department identified key courses in which to build a [four-year scaffold of information fluency instruction](#), culminating in the senior seminar. The department now assesses for this learning objective.

All students who participate in the Summer Undergraduate Research Program are required to complete ethics training, which addresses proper use of sources, citation, and appropriate use of resources. Students whose research also includes human subjects also complete human subjects' ethics training. These two training events are discussed in (2.E.2.) and (2.E.1), respectively.

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3.E - Core Component 3.E

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

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

Argument

3.E.1.

Valpo's mission to prepare students who are ready to lead and serve in church and society is supported by co-curricular activities across campus. Student organizations, programs in the arts, chapel activities, and intramural activities all provide leadership and service opportunities; the 260,000 hours of service logged by students in 2015 bear witness to that. The Institute for Leadership and Service and the Social Action Leadership Team, described in (1.D.1.), are both examples of programs that intentionally focus students' co-curricular activities on leadership and service.

Sophomore student-athletes participate in a leadership program instituted by Valpo Athletics in 2015. The Crusader L.E.A.D Team (Learn, Encourage, Attitude, Drive Change) is designed to equip student-athletes with the leadership qualities they will need on their team, on campus, and in life. The Crusader L.E.A.D Team meets monthly to learn about current leadership models, to participate in leadership team-building, and to develop a community service event.

Many of 100 or more co-curricular activities provide students with the opportunity to enhance their educational experience by learning new professional skills. Examples include: understanding the complexity of environmental problems by restoring stream channels in the [Biology Club](#); practicing design and build skills through [Engineers without Borders](#); and learning effective ways to raise funds through the annual [World Relief Campaign of SALT](#), a student group of the Chapel of the Resurrection. These and other activities create opportunities for developing both social skills and networks for future career and vocational development. Additional examples appear in (1.D.1.).

Students can also affiliate with discipline-linked honor societies, many of which offer speakers or other educational opportunities for members. Valpo hosts chapters of dozens of discipline-linked [national honor societies](#), along with the appropriate honor society for each professional college and for the College of Arts and Sciences.

3.E.2.

The university's mission statement promises students an education grounded in the Lutheran tradition of scholarship, freedom, and faith, and the university fulfills that promise. The clearest symbol of the university's Lutheran character is the Chapel of the Resurrection which is located at the center of campus. Not only is it one of the largest collegiate chapels in the nation, it has recently been renovated (2015) and expanded to improve opportunities available to students and the campus community. The chapel staff includes three ordained ministers, one of whom serves at the Assistant

Vice Presidential level and two of whom comprise the pastoral staff.

Opportunities are available for students to express their faith through a variety of [Campus Ministries](#), such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, the St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Student Center, and Campus Crusade for Christ. The [Office of Church Relations](#) provides an essential communications link between the university and other Lutheran institutions and churches throughout the world. The [Center for Church Vocations](#) provides support and professional mentoring for students who plan a career in a religious vocation. The [Lutheran Deaconess Association](#), an independent non-profit organization adjacent to campus, gives students an opportunity to become a Lutheran deaconess as part of their educational experiences at Valpo.

Inter-faith and non-Christian faith groups are also a part of the Valpo community. To support and advance inter-religious diversity, the Inter-Religious Council on Dialogue and Spirituality, comprised of faculty and staff, was established under the auspices of the Provost's office. The Council regularly assesses resources, services, and needs relating to religions and religious communities at the University and makes recommendations to individuals, groups, committees and offices that can take appropriate actions. In addition, a student programming group called MOSAIC (Mobilizing Students Advocating Interfaith Cooperation) engages in literacy, dialogue, service, and activism. MOSAIC's mission is to foster respectful conversation about what people believe, why faith matters, and how cooperating together can empower people to mobilize for dialogue and understanding. Finally, the campus community has been actively involved with the President's Interfaith and Community Service Challenge. Interfaith service has resulted in significant efforts between the Social Action Leadership Team (a social justice Christian group) and the Muslim Student Association. Spring break mission trips have included interfaith reflections. An inter-religious calendar and multi-religious prayer spaces have been developed.

The university's mission statement also promises to prepare students for lives of leadership and service. The co-curricular programs described in (3.E.1.) contribute to fulfillment of the promise. The Institute for Leadership and Service, along with its CAPS Fellows program, described in (1.D.1.), also contributes to fulfillment of the promise.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

A qualified faculty oversees all aspects of the curriculum and ensures that undergraduate and graduate courses and programs, whether offered onsite or online, on campus or at study-abroad centers, are at an appropriate level and have clearly-articulated student learning objectives.

Valpo's commitment to both liberal and professional education allows students to become broadly knowledgeable, but also to develop skills that can be applied both now and in the future.

The institution ensures that competent academic advising, a range of help centers, and a modern infrastructure support students and faculty alike, as they teach and learn together.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

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

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

Argument

4.A.1.

Valparaiso University regularly reviews all major-granting programs and select other programs (such as [Freshman Core](#)). The professional colleges (Business, Engineering, and Nursing and Health Professions) and some departments in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), such as chemistry, music, social work, and education, maintain individual [program accreditations](#) or recognitions, which ensure that those programs are regularly reviewed. Similarly the Law School is accredited by the Association of American Law Schools and the American Bar Association. Information gathered in preparation for external accreditation review is also used for internal review.

For most CAS programs, no such accrediting bodies exist. Therefore a seven-year rotation has been established, such that three CAS departments per year prepare an internal self-study in advance of an external reviewer visit; the [rotation schedule](#) is available on the intranet of the CAS. Qualified individuals from other institutions are contracted to serve as external reviewers. After the external reviewers submit their reports, members of the department under review meet in retreat to discuss the

internal self-study, the site visit, and the external report. Furthermore they determine what actions, if any, need to be taken in response. One review, that of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, can stand as an [example of a self-study](#) (2010-11) that yielded a significant outcome. The [external reviewers](#) concluded that the department's computer science major was outdated; allocation of a new tenure-track position in computer science was a first step towards the eventual establishment of a new department: Computing and Information Sciences.

Christ College, the honors college, also maintains a regular schedule of program review and last conducted one in [2012](#). In keeping with the six-year cycle, the next review will be in 2018.

Graduate programs that are accredited externally are reviewed regularly by the relevant accrediting agency, in some cases in conjunction with undergraduate degrees: examples include programs leading to the MBA (AACSB), to the MA or JD/MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CACREP), and to the M.Ed. in Instructional Leadership, Primary Education, or Secondary Education (CAEP). Graduate programs in the College of Nursing and Health Professions are reviewed on an ongoing basis by the faculty of that college to assure that accreditation standards are met; data are reported annually except for alumni satisfaction data, which are collected every three to five years.

Graduate programs that do not have external accreditation reviews will begin to be reviewed on a regular rotation beginning in the 2017-18 academic year, by which time each program will have an assessment plan approved by the university Committee on Assessment. The process that led to development of assessment plans for each graduate program, and by extension to a regular [program review rotation](#), is discussed in (4.B.1.).

4.A.2.

Valparaiso University evaluates and transcripts credit from: its own courses and experiential learning programs, transfer credits from other institutions, and credit by examination. [The Committee on Academic and Professional Standards](#) is charged with the responsibility to monitor and, if necessary, recommend standards for credit by examination, advanced placement, and credit by transfer.

The University's own courses are developed by qualified faculty and approved by various oversight committees, including college-level curriculum committees, the university-level Educational Policy Committee, and the Faculty Senate or, in the case of graduate courses, by the Graduate Educational Policy Committee.

Many programs at Valparaiso University offer experiential-learning courses, including internships, co-ops, and practica, all of which must be vetted by the same college and university bodies that vet more traditional classroom courses. A qualified third-party supervisor may guide an internship, co-op, or practicum, but only qualified faculty with relevant educational and/or practical experience evaluate the learning experience of each student enrolled, oversee course outcomes, and assign grades. When third-party supervisors are involved, they are vetted and selected by the faculty of the departments offering these programs or experiences. Students in the College of Business (CoB), for example, must enroll in either a [cooperative-education experience or an internship](#) during the junior or senior year. The Dean of the CoB and the Practical Experience Coordinator jointly monitor the work experience and the student's written work; the dean assigns a grade (satisfactory or unsatisfactory) for the experience, based in part on that monitoring and in part on the [employer's evaluation](#) of the student.

Students at Valpo's study center in San José, Costa Rica, have the option of enrolling in an internship. The Study Center director monitors both the work experience and the student's written work and consults with the instructor of record, in this case the chair of the Department of International Studies,

to assign a grade for the internship. The director also monitors the experience more generally to ensure that the [Student Learning Objectives](#), developed specifically for the internship, are being addressed.

4.A.3.

The evaluation of transfer credits is managed by the Office of the Registrar in consultation with relevant faculty. In the usual case, the relevant faculty is the dean or chair of the college or department which offers the course most similar to the one being considered for transfer credit. In other cases, a designated faculty member other than the dean or chair is in charge of evaluating transfer credit. The Teacher Education program, for example, has a Licensing Director who is charged with this duty.

Students who wish to transfer credits from foreign universities must submit detailed descriptions of their coursework in English; the university may require evaluation by a professional evaluation service such as World Education Services or Educational Credential Evaluators before transfer credit is [granted](#).

The [transfer policy](#) is available on the website of the Office of the Registrar, where current and prospective students can consult it and the [Transfer Credit Equivalency Database](#). That database lists all previously-established transfer equivalencies. From the same web page students can also access tools like [Transfer Keys](#) and the [Transfer Credit Approval Form](#).

Credit may also be granted through examinations administered by external agencies; the university publishes accepted [score-credit equivalencies](#) for the following exams: the Advanced Placement Program and the College Level Examination Program, both administered by the College Board, and the International Baccalaureate Program administered by International Baccalaureate North America.

Advanced placement and/or credits may be granted through the university's course credit program, which offers placement exams to incoming students (freshman or transfer students). Students who place into advanced courses and complete those courses satisfactorily may be granted additional credit for one or more lower-level course in mathematics and foreign languages.

4.A.4.

Authority over course prerequisites and rigor, as well as expectations for student learning, reside primarily with the faculty. This authority is maintained and exercised through curricular approval and review processes. These processes are initiated by faculty at the department or program level and then continued and completed as proposals move through department or college-level curriculum committees, to either the Educational Policy Committee or the Graduate EPC and finally to Faculty Senate.

Standardized forms for proposing addition or revision of a [course](#) or [program](#) ensure that proposals from all departments and colleges across the university receive the same appropriate review from these faculty committees. Rationale for the proposal or revision must be supplied, along with a full description of the course or program. If the proposal concerns a single course, then its prerequisites, credit configuration, grading type, and Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) must also be included. If the proposal concerns a program rather than a single course, the assessment plan must also be included on the form. After a course or program addition or revision has been approved by the appropriate committees, the Committee on Assessment monitors that SLOs are being assessed regularly.

The university makes a variety of learning resources available to students. These include its libraries (the [Christopher Center for Library and Information Resources](#) [CCLIR], and the more specialized [Law Library](#)), the [Brauer Museum of Art](#), the [Judith L. Beumer Writing Center](#), the [Academic Success Center](#), the [Language Resource Center](#), the [Hesse Learning Resource Center](#), and the [Access and Accommodations Resource Center](#).

The university also makes IT-based learning resources available to students. All residence halls and the Harre Student Union have 24-hour computer sites. The CCLIR also has multiple computer stations available during open hours and wireless connectivity is available throughout campus. Adaptive technology workstations are available in some locations for the visually- or aurally-impaired members of the university community and an IT Help Desk, located in the CCLIR, provides training and technology support for the campus community. Many classrooms are equipped with various forms of instructional media, including a growing number of smart classrooms. Finally, instructors have the option of providing access to courses via Blackboard, the learning management system.

The institution maintains and exercises authority over access to these resources primarily via the qualified faculty and staff charged with operating each of these resources and appropriately maintaining the content provided.

[Faculty qualifications](#) are described in the Faculty Handbook. The office of the provost maintains records on qualifications of all faculty, including transcripts, and, when applicable, statements from relevant deans and department chairs concerning a faculty member's qualification by a combination of academic preparation and appropriate professional or tested experience. [Faculty Qualification Standards](#) were prepared by the faculty of each academic unit and [approved by Faculty Senate](#) in October 2016. Faculty qualifications are evaluated upon hiring and are subject to periodic review thereafter to ensure continuing qualification in the face of changing teaching needs and assignments. Instructors associated with the university through contractual or consortial arrangements also have their qualifications evaluated; those arrangements and means of evaluating the instructors are described in (3.C.2.).

Valparaiso University does not offer dual credit courses in high schools. The university does allow [qualified high school students](#) to enroll in up to eight credits of coursework at Valparaiso University during the junior or senior year in high school.

4.A.5.

The university's mission statement calls for a community of learning dedicated to excellence. Therefore many university programs have sought accreditation for external validation of that excellence. The Higher Learning Commission accredits all programs of the university. Professional programs are additionally accredited by the following bodies:

1. College of Business: Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.
2. College of Engineering: Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology.
3. College of Nursing and Health Professions: Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.
4. School of Law: The American Bar Association.

In November 2016, the ABA determined that the Law School was out of compliance with Standards 501(a) and 501(b) and was publicly censured. In response, the Law School filed an [Admission Plan](#)

that addressed Standard 501(a); additionally an ABA Fact Finder conducted a February 2017, on-campus review to examine and [report](#) on the Law School's efforts to bring itself into compliance with both standards. In [June 2017](#) the university was officially notified by the ABA that the Law School was in compliance with Standard 501(a). A second filing to the ABA, addressing Standard 501(b) and submitted on August 23, 2017 (ahead of the November 15th deadline), provided data that show that the Law School is complying with the plan. The ABA's accreditation committee has tentatively agreed to address this latest report at its September 2017 meeting.

5. Department of Education: Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.
6. Department of Music: National Association of Schools of Music.
7. Department of Social Work: The Council on Social Work Education.
8. Graduate School and Psychology (M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling): Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs.

The American Chemical Society has approved Valpo's chemistry and biochemistry programs, meaning that all graduates from those two programs have degrees certified by the American Chemical Society.

The requirements and schedule for accreditation and reaccreditation are established by the relevant accrediting bodies themselves. Although The Phi Beta Kappa Society is not an accrediting body, the selection of Valparaiso University to shelter a chapter in 2004 was a one-time affirmation of excellence in the CAS.

4.A.6.

The university's Career Center generates an annual [Graduate Report](#) that provides employment and placement data about undergraduate degree recipients, excluding international degree recipients. Data is collected via online surveys, telephone and email solicitations, alumni records, social media research, and input from faculty and staff. For the 2015-16 report, data were collected on 610 of 651 graduates (93.7%), a "knowledge rate" substantially higher than the nationally-recommended minimum knowledge rate of 65%. Thus, information about Valpo students' preparation for employment or advanced study is relatively complete.

The overall placement rate for the 2015-16 graduates was 96.1%. Of the 610 graduates for whom there are data, 473 (77.5%) were employed, 111 (18.2%) were in graduate or professional school, 24 (3.9%) were still seeking employment, and 2 (0.3%) were not seeking employment. A rolling [five-year comparison report](#), which shows an average of 93.3% placement for the most recent five-year period, is available on the website of the Career Center. These numbers compare favorably with peer institutions, at least two of which do not even track outcomes; Valpo's placement rate has exceeded 90% for 24 consecutive years with an average knowledge rate of over 90% each year.

The Law School also generates an [annual employment summary](#). Among those who provide employment information, the percentage who take positions that either require passage of a state bar exam or for which the law degree is an advantage, increased each year over a recent three year period (2013-2015). The percentage of graduates who take full-time, long-term positions also increased over the same time period, with Illinois and Indiana providing the largest number of positions; Michigan and Florida vie for third place.

The Graduate School has not traditionally tracked employment rates of its graduates, largely because many graduate students are concurrently employed full time. An initial attempt to collect data was initiated in 2016, but in 2017 a more systematized data collection process, using the Handshake technology system, was initiated in collaboration with the Career Center; results are pending as of summer 2017.

Potential employers and graduate schools value the preparation received by Valpo students. Well over 100 companies, universities, and volunteer organizations are typically represented at the Fall Career Fair hosted by the Career Center. Specialized fairs, like the Valpo Engineering Fair and the Part-Time Jobs Fair, are also held annually. Attendees include widely-known companies (Target, Motorola, Walgreens, Prudential Insurance, Sherwin-Williams), hospitals (Mayo Clinic, Rush University Medical Center, Franciscan Alliance), financial institutions (1st Source Bank, Northwestern Mutual), volunteer organizations (Peace Corps, Lutheran Volunteer Corps), universities (DePaul, IIT, Notre Dame Law, Marquette, Indiana University), and government agencies (US Secret Service, Indiana House of Representatives, Indiana State Police, US Army Healthcare). Most of these employers or universities return to Valpo's career fairs year after year, suggesting satisfaction with Valpo graduates.

The university has a strong history of graduating students who win prestigious fellowships for advanced study. Specific information about students who have been granted Fulbright, DAAD, NSF, and other national or international fellowships and opportunities is provided in (3.A.1.).

The university seeks to graduate students who are prepared to lead and serve in church and society. In the 2014-15 Graduate Report, 20 respondents reported full-time service employment: four with AmeriCorps, nine with Lutheran Volunteer Corps, and the others with service organizations like the American Red Cross, Catholic Charities, and Jesuit Volunteer Corps; two additional students enrolled in seminaries. Of 16 elementary education graduates, 15 were employed in schools. Of 107 employed nursing graduates, virtually all were serving in hospitals and other health-care-related institutions. The Calling and Purpose in Society (CAPS) program, described in (1.D.1.), helps students who feel called to service to reflect on connections between their studies and future service careers.

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Argument

4.B.1.

University Student Learning Objectives

[Six university-wide Student Learning Objectives](#) (USLOs) appear prominently at the front of the General Catalog. These six USLOs, abstract and broad in scope, apply to all colleges, departments, and programs, including undergraduate, graduate, and law. They are not designed to be measured directly, but instead to serve as an overarching guide to all colleges, departments, and programs as they develop precise objectives that can be measured and assessed.

The six USLOs recently replaced a longer list of ten USLOs that first appeared in the General Catalog of 2010-11. That list was simply too focused on the undergraduate programs, especially general education outcomes, and was not broad enough in scope to be applicable to the Graduate School and Law School programs. Furthermore the list of ten USLOs had the appearance of a document that was generated without reference to the university's mission. The provost recognized the need to revisit the USLOs and charged a ten-member Task Force in the fall of 2015 to revise the USLOs with the goal of 1) shortening the list, 2) being consistent with the national dialogue about higher education, 3) assuring appropriateness for a 21st-century education, and 4) affirming that they align with the mission as we prepare students to lead and serve. The [full report of the Task Force](#) was completed in spring of 2016 and [approved by the Faculty Senate](#) in April 2016. The provost was uniquely positioned to see the inadequacies of the original ten USLOs because he was new to the campus in the fall of 2014.

General Education Student Learning Objectives

The current [general education Student Learning Objectives](#) (GESLOs) were approved by Faculty Senate in 2010 and therefore align with the ten, now-superseded USLOs, rather than with the six USLOs approved by Faculty Senate in April 2016. But by the end of the 2017-18 academic year, those GESLOs will have undergone one full cycle of assessment, providing the perfect moment to review both the GESLOs and the general education program. Being mindful not only of the unwavering university mission, but also of the revised USLOs, the reviewing body will determine which, if any, adjustments should be made to the GESLOs so that they align better with the new USLOs. Simultaneously, needed adjustments can be made to the general education program so that

the GESLOs can better be met. The process for reviewing the GESLOs and the general education program is described more fully in (3.B.2).

Program-level Student Learning Objectives

Relevant faculty members identify SLOs for the program or department level. At the course level, SLOs are found in syllabi. [Assessment plans](#) for each program or department, as well as for general education and for student affairs units, are located on the web pages of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Two university committees and the provost's office ensure that student learning, based on the SLOs described above, is appropriately and annually assessed. The [Committee on Assessment](#) (CoA), an elected committee of Faculty Senate, is charged with establishing general academic assessment objectives, regularly and continually monitoring and reviewing assessment procedures, providing support and expertise related to assessment, ensuring continuity of assessment activities, and ensuring responsiveness of programs to assessment findings. A fundamental task of the CoA is to review assessment plans submitted by departments to ensure that program-level SLOs align with USLOs. A second fundamental task is to [review any annual assessment reports](#) that the Director of Institutional Effectiveness deems to be deficient in any way. [Minutes of the meetings](#) are available to faculty through the university's intranet. Examples of several ways in which various departments and colleges carry out assessment are provided in (4.B.2.).

The second committee that oversees assessment is the [General Education Committee](#) (GEC), an appointed standing committee of the faculty. In addition to overseeing all aspects of the university's general education program, the committee is charged with advising and assisting the CoA with assessment of the overall effectiveness of the general education program. Specifically, the GEC ensures that courses designated as fulfilling a component of the general education requirement are assessed appropriately to ensure that the courses are meeting the relevant GESLOs. Examples of how the GEC reviews different components of the general education program and then reports to the CoA are provided in (4.B.2.). [Minutes of the meetings](#) are available to faculty through the university's intranet.

The provost's office includes two administrators whose portfolios include, among other responsibilities, oversight of assessment. The Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs serves as General Education Officer. He monitors additions or changes to all courses within the general education program, and ensures that assessable SLOs are clearly articulated in proposals for new courses or programs and that assessment plans are included in proposals for new programs. The Executive Director of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) provides leadership and support to departments as they assess their programs. Until 2016 one staff member provided additional support to the director of the OIE, but in that year funds were allocated to add a data analyst as well, allowing the executive director to focus more fully on assessment.

Every program has developed and implemented an assessment plan that measures whether students are meeting the SLOs the program has set for itself. Although the USLOs guide departmental SLOs and assessment plans, each assessment plan is necessarily unique to the program, meaning that evaluation is meaningful and responsive to disciplinary content. The SLOs are measurable and data are collected annually by faculty or department chairs, who analyze and review findings to determine whether students are meeting the learning objectives. The annual assessment reports of each department or program are then submitted early each fall semester to the Director of the OIE. If, after review, the director determines that a department is deficient in some way with regard to assessment, he asks the CoA to conduct its own review and to make recommendations to the deficient department.

As needed, courses and programs are adjusted so that SLOs are met by ever higher numbers of students; similarly, the assessment plan might be adjusted so that SLOs are more accurately measured. The assessment plans of all departments or programs are available through the website of the OIE.

Non-departmental programs are also assessed. The Summer Undergraduate Research Program, for example, is also assessed on an ongoing basis; it is described in (4.B.2.).

The Graduate School and the Law School have appropriate parallel assessment plans for their programs.

The Law School SLOs are guided not only by the six USLOs, but also by the [American Bar Association's Standard 302](#) (Learning Outcomes). Faculty members include course-specific SLOs in each course syllabus, indicating how and when the outcomes will be assessed. The Law School Bulletin also alerts students to the fact that some Law School courses require specific formative assessment. Examples of outcomes that are assessed within specific courses include a heavily-commented draft in [LAW 312](#) and participation in alternative dispute resolution simulations in [LAW 412](#). The Law School Curriculum Committee examines the SLOs and assessment plans for all new courses and for any course being revised.

As described in (3.A.2.), Graduate School programs were previously guided by a single set of Graduate School SLOs. But additional program-specific SLOs with accompanying assessment plans were developed in 2015-16, all of which had been approved by the CoA by the end of the 2016-17 academic year.

4.B.2.

The processes described in (4.B.1.) are not simply on the books, but are indeed ongoing annual activities carried out by all programs in the university.

Early each fall, departments submit their annual assessment report to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). The executive director of the OIE reads all reports and if he determines that a report is deficient in some way, members of the CoA conduct a second reading and make [recommendations](#) to the relevant department. During the 2016-17 academic year, for example, the executive director of the OIE found one academic department to be deficient; the report was not filed in a timely manner, was lacking in detail, and offered a confused timeline of assessment activities. He requested additional review by the CoA, which then determined that the committee's chair should work with the department's chair to revise the report. That revised report was then submitted and approved at the April 2017 meeting of the CoA.

The assessment plan of each program is unique. Examples of some assessment activities across programs follow:

The assessment plan of the College of Business (CoB) includes the [Assessment Center](#), a full-day experience that takes place early in the freshman year and again in the senior year. Built into the first and last classes a CoB student takes (BUS 100: The Business Experience, and MGT 475: Business Policy and Strategy), the event simulates business situations which require students to demonstrate skills they will need to succeed as business professionals and that are among the SLOs in the [CoB's General Skill Areas](#). Trained evaluators review the several-hour video of the simulated event and compile [individualized reports](#) that highlight both the student's strengths and areas on which to improve. Students are evaluated on the soft skills of decision-making, teamwork, written and oral

communication, leadership initiative, planning and organizing, attention to detail, and prioritization. Because the Assessment Center works with [Collegiate Assessment Partners](#), Valpo students can measure their results against some 10,000 peers from around the country. More significantly, they can compare their progress from freshman to senior year. And even more significantly, the CoB can assess whether program or course revisions are needed in support of student learning.

The Summer Undergraduate Research Program allows students to remain on campus to work closely with a faculty mentor on an extended project. The director of the Valparaiso Institute for Teaching and Learning and faculty sponsors have been engaged with assessing the program since 2011 and have a continuous improvement plan in place to upgrade the quality of the experience. Using [Grinnell College's SURE surveys](#) (Survey of Undergraduate Research Experiences), program leaders were able to see that Valpo students lagged considerably behind national averages in many of the 21 learning gain areas in 2011. The scores have improved since then, in part because summer programming is continually being adapted to address areas where students need to grow. By summer of 2015, Valpo students scored below national averages in only three learning gain areas, including the ability to understand primary literature. Proposals to address that learning area in the summer of 2016 included: 1) initiating a journal club for students and 2) using the model of journal article "dissection" that one faculty member had experienced as a graduate student.

All general education courses and categories are assessed. The GEC, described in (4.B.1.), assesses each category of the general education program on a three-year rotation, with a report and recommendations submitted each April to the CoA. During the 2015-16 academic year, for example, outcomes for the SLOs associated with [Quantitative Analysis, Health and Wellness, the Freshman Core, and Cultural Diversity](#) were reviewed. Assessment of the Quantitative Analysis requirement is complex because several departments contribute courses that address the relevant general education SLOs: mathematics, philosophy (logic), and several departments that offer courses in statistics. Despite that complexity, Quantitative Analysis outcomes were deemed to be good. On the other hand, several recommendations were made with regard to assessing student learning in the area of Health and Wellness. Essentially, the GEC determined that the data collected failed to align with the relevant SLO; after a second set of data was collected and assessed the report was approved. In the same 2015-16 report the GEC concluded that the Freshman Core seeks to attain and assess virtually all USLOs and has done so beyond the standard that the committee has encountered in other assessment reporting. As admirable as that might be, the GEC suggested that exposure to the full range of USLOs may not reflect the kind of success that a first-year foundational course should be expected to provide. The GEC concluded that the university community may wish to reevaluate what expectations might form a more reasonable basis of assessment. Reevaluation of the SLOs for the Freshman Core is now ongoing, and the appointments of a new Director of Writing (2016) and a new Director of the Freshman Core (2017) means that the timing for that discussion is ideal.

Christ College (CC), the honors college, enrolls students from all undergraduate colleges of the university. Those students take a high percentage of their general education courses through the honors college, including the course that is equivalent to the Freshman Core. Assessment plans for CC's Freshman Program (called Texts and Contexts) and all other CC courses that are part of the general education program for honors students (largely courses in the Humanities and Social Science) are now in place; assessment associated with Texts and Contexts will undergo its first review by the GEC in 2017-18.

The Office of Student Affairs assesses learning outcomes associated with co-curricular programs. [Assessment plans](#) are in place for the career center, residential life, fraternity and sorority life, volunteer programs, leadership programs, orientation, multicultural programs, counseling services, the health center, student conduct, commuter programs, and the student union. The Associate

Director of Study Abroad recently developed an [assessment plan for the university's four overseas Study Centers](#) (Reutlingen, Germany; Cambridge, UK; Hangzhou, China; San José, Costa Rica); data collection began in the fall of 2016 for students who were to study abroad in the spring 2017 semester and following.

The Graduate School and the School of Law also carry out the assessment procedures that they have put in place.

The Law School engages in assessment in compliance with the American Bar Association's Standard 314 (Assessment of Student Learning), which requires that a law school "utilize both formative and summative assessment methods in its curriculum to measure and improve student learning and provide meaningful feedback to students." The Law School's 2014 ABA Site Visit Report found that its new first-year curriculum assessed effectively with "a typical array of challenging questions with a combination of essay and multiple choice questions in [appropriate proportion](#)." It also found sufficient rigor in the Law School's upper-level [final exams](#). On non-exam assessments, such as papers produced for various legal writing courses, the Site Visit Report described student work to be of sufficient "[quality, depth, and rigor](#)."

As noted in (3.A.2.), the Graduate School previously had a single set of Graduate School Student Learning Objectives (GSSLOs). But assessment of those GSSLOs was not consistent: programs with national accrediting bodies were exemplary in assessment activities, but other programs were not. Now that program-specific SLOs and appropriately-aligned assessment plans have been developed, regular assessment of each degree program in the Graduate School is assured going forward.

Sometimes the CoA determines that a department is not assessing its programs or is delinquent in providing annual reports. This determination is being made less often than in the past, but two interventions were undertaken by the CoA in early 2015 after the annual fall 2014 reviews of department reports revealed that it was necessary. All faculty members in two different departments were required to attend separate Saturday workshops, led by the chair of the CoA and the Director of Instructional Design. Both departments now have appropriate assessment plans and began to fully assess student learning outcomes in the 2015-16 academic year. The CoA continues to monitor these and all departments to ensure that they are actively assessing programs; the university does not simply assume that assessment plans, once in place, will be acted upon by each and every department on an annual basis.

4.B.3.

Creation of the Task Force on Student Writing is a prime example of how assessment led to significant changes in the general education curriculum. NSSE results over a period of several years indicated that graduating Valpo students believed they had been assigned less formal writing than their peers at other institutions. This information, together with outcomes from participation in HLC's Academy for Assessment of Student Learning, led to establishment of a Task Force on Student Writing, which recommended allocation of a faculty position for a university-level writing director. Since 2012, when the position was allocated and filled, a scaffolded set of writing experiences, beginning with redesigned writing assignments for Freshman Core and Christ College Freshman Program and continuing throughout the four-year curriculum, has gradually been implemented, as described in (3.B.3.).

Beginning in 2013-14, the writing director began collecting and assessing random writing samples from students in both semesters of Freshman Core and the Christ College Freshman Program. New assignment prompts are yielding writing that emphasizes academic argument and analysis more

than in the past and students are, without question, doing more writing and more formal writing than in the past. They receive more peer and instructor feedback, and they respond well to that feedback in revisions of their work.

Assessment in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics led to development of the sophomore-level course [Transitions in Mathematics](#) (Math 266), which has as its overarching goal to prepare students to become professional mathematicians. Previously, students were learning to solve routine problems well, but were often inconsistent in their ability to make a successful transition to the kind of abstract thinking that would allow them to write sophisticated mathematical proofs in upper-level abstract mathematics classes. The course is tied to the Mathematics Colloquium: freshman and sophomore students attend the colloquium and learn to critique presentations made by older students; seniors lead the colloquium with their own presentations. Math 266 is designed to help students make that transition from being observers and critics to being presenters of mathematical ideas and proofs. Preliminary assessment of the new course points to improved outcomes.

The Law School introduced an innovative new practice-oriented curriculum in 2013. Described in (3.A.1.), the new curriculum sought to address graduates' pass rate on the Bar Exam, the preparedness and needs of current students, and the changing market for law graduates. The Law School curriculum assesses far more often than the traditional American law school model, and it uses the results of those assessments to: 1) allow for intra-course remediation; 2) direct students to academic support; 3) require supplemental coursework; and 4) inform student advising regarding graduation and bar passage.

4.B.4.

Faculty members have regularly sought the assistance of external experts to learn how to develop Student Learning Objectives and how to assess whether students are meeting those objectives.

Until 2009 valiant, but ineffective, efforts were made by faculty and staff alike to implement assessment. Members of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures remember recording student interviews in the target language, but having no idea what to do with the stacks of cassette tapes that accumulated. Many faculty members remember weekend workshops led, in good faith, by our own colleagues, who could not clarify the difference between grading and assessing. But a sea change came on January 5-6, 2009, when Dr. Barbara Walvoord, Professor Emerita at Notre Dame University, was asked to present a [workshop on assessment](#) to representatives from each department on campus. Almost overnight, departments that had struggled even to understand what assessment was were able to submit full plans.

Tapping this expertise led to development of standard templates used for departmental assessment plans, for assessment reports, and for curriculum mapping.

Just months after Dr. Walvoord's workshop, five faculty and staff members began to participate in HLC's four-year "Academy for Assessment of Student Learning." This group, comprised of the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness, the Director of the Teaching Resource Center, and three faculty members who chaired relevant committees, sought to build on the January presentation by tapping the expertise of additional external sources of information about good practices in assessment. An additional set of faculty and staff members attended a second HLC event, this time the 2014 "Making a Difference in Student Learning: Assessment as a Core Strategy."

A final good practice involves proposal of new or modified courses or programs. As described in (4.A.4.), new or modified courses or programs must be reviewed by a series of committees, moving

from the department through the college to the university-level Faculty Senate. The standardized electronic form on which the proposal is described and justified now includes a window in which course-level or program-level SLOs must be listed. In the case of a new or modified program, the full assessment plan must also be included. This practice was instituted in the 2014-15 academic year.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Argument

4.C.1.

The provost constituted a Task Force on Student Retention and Success (RTF) in the fall of 2015 and charged its members to recommend strategies that would increase the student retention rate (spring to fall, freshman to sophomore) from 82% to 87% as measured from 2015. This goal was added to the university's Strategic Plan at the same time. Further, the recommendations were to focus on both short-term tactical approaches that could be implemented immediately and on a longer-term overall strategy for improving retention over the following five years and beyond. The [RTF's report](#) was submitted to the provost in March 2016 and presented to the faculty two months later at the annual [May workshop](#). Although the emphasis of the task force's work was on the freshman to sophomore retention rate, recommendations also concerned persistence and successful completion of a degree program. In response to the charge, the report included both targeted initiatives that could be approved and [implemented quickly](#), and initiatives that could be [implemented over the longer term](#). Initiatives that were implemented immediately, even before the formal presentation of the report to the faculty, are described in (4.C.3.).

The goal to increase the retention rate was based on careful data comparison with Valpo's 26 official [peer institutions](#), taking into special consideration peer institutions with academic profiles most similar to Valpo's. Providence College, for example, had a retention rate of 91%, almost 10 percentage points better than Valpo's, despite the fact that the two institutions had a similar academic profile. That fact, along with the fact that Valpo historically had a retention rate significantly higher than 82%, gave reason to believe that the goal of raising the rate again was not impossible. That goal was achievable and realistic, the RTF concluded.

The university had previously made a commitment, articulated in the Strategic Plan, to serve a diverse student body and it has been successful in doing so, as described in (1.A.2.). But with that diverse academic profile come challenges to retention. Commuter students, many of whom are first-generation college students from Latino families, present a special challenge, not only because there

are less-expensive options than Valpo in northwest Indiana, but also because studies show that students who live on campus retain at a higher rate than commuter students. But the decision was firm to maintain and retain the diverse student population: retention efforts were to provide avenues for academic and social support for these and all students. That support is described, in part, in (4.C.3.), but also in the task force report.

Valpo is careful during the admission process. The university believes that all students it admits can persist and succeed to graduation and there is no desire to admit students for whom that would not be possible. The RTF's recommendations were based on that assumption and offered strategies for making success possible.

4.C.2.

The decision to constitute the RTF in 2015 was based on retention data collected by the university: in 2011 the freshman to sophomore retention rate was 86%, but by 2015 it had dropped to 82%.

The Retention and Graduation Report, which includes first-year retention rates along with four- and six-year graduation rates, is gathered each year. These statistics are reported annually by the executive director of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) to the Board of Directors and by the provost to the Faculty Senate along with other performance measures across time and in comparison to 26 peer institutions. But until recently the retention rates in the performance measures were always reported as an aggregate. Not until the RTF began to disaggregate them in 2015 did the university begin to have a clearer picture of how to focus retention efforts.

In response to one recommendation of the RTF report, a position for an Executive Director for Retention and Student Success was allocated and filled in June 2017. A primary responsibility of that director is to collect, analyze, and appropriately disseminate disaggregated data relevant to retention and success to those who can use it best.

Many offices collect and analyze smaller pools of information about retention. The director of the Academic Success Center, for example, assesses the effect on retention of the one-credit course called Strategies for Academic Success. She compares the retention rate of students who successfully complete it with the retention rate of those who do not. That process and the results of her analysis are described in (3.D.2.). Similarly, retention rates among students enrolled in the Persistence & Success Program, described in (3.D.1.), are also collected and analyzed.

The OIE analyzes retention and graduation rates by graduate program. The Graduate School additionally tracks persistence and success data, differentiated between domestic and international students, and develops appropriate action plans for intervention.

The Law School collects student retention data and reports it annually to the American Bar Association under ABA Standard 509. The Law School characterizes attrition as taking place either for academic or non-academic reasons and also tracks students who transfer to other law schools. Retention and attrition rates are analyzed to improve student advising, properly set grade normalization, and establish appropriate academic probation and retention standards.

4.C.3.

The Persistence and Success Program, the Higher Learning Commission Quality Initiative on Advising, the course GS 100 (Strategies for Academic Success), the course GRAD 500 (Graduate Academic Success), and the Task Force on Student Retention and Success, will serve as five

examples of how the university has responded to information about student retention, persistence, and completion.

The Persistence & Success Program (PSP)

Described in (3.D.1.), the PSP targets both 21st Century Scholars and recipients of the Frank O'Bannon Grant. Although many students in this group have an academically high profile, they are often students who are challenged by higher financial need and/or by being first-generation college students. The program seeks to assist these students as they transition from high school to the university. A report, filed in August 2015, describes the start-up plans for the program.

Higher Learning Commission Quality Initiative on Advising

Described in (3.C.6.), the HLC Quality Initiative on Advising sought to address uneven advising experiences reported by students, both during the annual June orientation program for freshman students and generally throughout their academic career at Valpo. The full report about implementation of the Quality Initiative was submitted in July 2016.

GS 100 (Strategies for Academic Success)

When GS 100, described in (3.D.2.), was offered for the first time in 1998, it was a 0-credit course called VU Strategies, a course designed by the Counseling Center and meant to serve as a support system for students who were already struggling academically. After the Academic Success Center (ASC) was established in 2009, the course was altered: it became a 1-credit course, was taught under the auspices of the ASC, and was marketed more positively to students as a transition to college course. Assessment data collected by the director of the ASC indicates that students who successfully complete the course retain at a higher rate than students who do not complete it. As of 2016, some 200 incoming students enrolled in the course each fall semester. Only students in the PSP are required to enroll in the course, but additional targeted and non-targeted students also enroll. Targeted students are those whose composite scores (a combination of GPA and SAT/ACT scores) place them in the lowest quintile of an entering class, a cohort that has had a lower first-to-second year retention rate, according to institutional data.

GRAD 500 (Graduate Academic Success)

International graduate students are required to enroll in GRAD 500 during their first semester. It is designed to introduce international students to the American higher education system, academic integrity, resources on campus, and graduate coursework expectations. International graduate students in the College of Nursing and Health Professions enroll in a comparable course that also addresses their specific needs in the healthcare context.

Task Force on Student Retention and Success (RTF)

The recommendations of the RTF, described also in (4.C.1.), were not formally submitted until March of 2016, but because of the unsatisfactory retention rate observed in the data, several tactical strategies to improve retention, persistence, and completion were implemented even before that formal submission. Longer-term strategic initiatives are being implemented gradually.

The RTF recommended a collaborative approach to the problem, leveraging resources already in place, while adding new elements as appropriate. The core of the new retention strategy focuses on four interlocking committees, each tasked with a particular component of retention, and the

appointment of an Executive Director of Retention and Student Success (EDRSS) to spearhead retention efforts. Funds were allocated for that new position, and it was filled in June 2017. The RTF also addressed the use of new technology and software to support retention and student success.

The first step in implementing this collaborative approach was to establish four committees with clear, distinct, and complementary tasks. Those committees, constituted of staff and faculty members already located in student support positions, would allow for greater communication about students in need of assistance. Three of the four committees began their work in 2016-17, even though the EDRSS was not appointed until June 2017. The four committees are:

COMPASS (Committee on Motivation, Persistence, and Student Success): This committee receives information about students in crisis, or potentially headed for crisis, from various constituencies on campus. COMPASS meets weekly to discuss each at-risk student as an individual case and to coordinate an action plan to address the student's needs. Faculty and staff who have concerns about an individual student's academic, social, or medical situation have a clear point of contact for referral.

CODASC (Council of Directors of Academic Support Centers): As the committee title suggests, this group is constituted of directors of the four student support centers described in (3.C.6.). They manage and coordinate services offered by their respective centers; review and evaluate the efficacy of academic support efforts; and communicate trends, staffing needs, and measures of effectiveness to the EDRSS and to the Retention Advisory Board. The council receives pertinent demographic information about incoming students and receives information regarding students needing help from faculty, students, and staff.

COFYE (Committee on First-Year Experience): The committee develops and implements programming for the first year in light of demographic and cultural changes in the student profile. COFYE also develops long-term first-year strategies to ensure that best practices are in place at VU. The first-year experience now also includes [Envision Your Future](#), a program to assist students in exploring majors and career possibilities under the headings of Discovery, Decisions, and Destiny.

RAB (Retention Advisory Board): Now that the first EDRSS has been appointed, this group will be convened for the first time on September 20, 2017. The EDRSS may choose to modify the role of the RAB, based on onsite experiences, but the intention is for the RAB to oversee retention efforts and develop long-term university strategies and policies to support reaching the university's retention goals. The RAB will also receive information from each of the three committees described above and disseminate specific demographic information about students to the college deans, who can, in turn, disseminate it to college personnel. That information will include spoken and written facility with English as a first or second language and quantitative skills. The deans, in turn, can bring information percolating up from faculty, advisors, and staff to the attention of others. The RAB, serving as the oversight body for retention, will report regularly to the Provost's Council and the President's Council.

4.C.4.

The university follows IPEDS definitions not only for analysis and tracking of university-wide undergraduate retention, persistence, and completion [rates](#), but also for analysis of retention and graduation rates for subgroups such as [U.S. minorities](#) or [international students](#), or to distinguish variation between [genders](#). The university also tracks undergraduate matriculation (retention and graduation) at the program, college and university levels. For example, students entering the [College of Engineering](#) or the [College of Nursing and Health Professions](#) are tracked to determine retention and graduation rates both within the colleges as well as retention and graduation of students who may

have left those colleges, but remained enrolled and/or graduated from the university. There are certain instances where custom retention and graduation reports are useful for programs or colleges. One example is the report based on enrollment in specific prerequisite courses annually prepared for the [College of Nursing and Health Professions](#).

IPEDS does not provide standard definitions or guidelines for tracking retention and completion rates for graduate students. Because many graduate students enroll as part-time students and sometimes are away for several consecutive semesters for work or family reasons, the university found it difficult to track their matriculation. For that reason, the university developed its own model for analyzing this group. In development for a full year, it now allows tracking not only for the Graduate School overall, but also for [several of the larger programs](#) within the Graduate School. The model is consistent with best practices and aligned with the goals and expectations of the Graduate School; it is similar to the undergraduate model but incorporates variation necessary for tracking student matriculation at the graduate level. The Graduate School also performs an [annual review](#) of practices to determine issues, identify areas of concern, and develop strategies for promoting student success.

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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

The institution ensures that programs meet high quality standards through specialized accreditations and a clear rotation of external program review at both the undergraduate and graduate levels; deficits identified in the review process are addressed.

Internally, the Committee on Assessment and the General Education Committee ensure that all programs, including the general education program, have clearly-articulated student learning objectives and an assessment plan that tests whether students meet objectives. Annual reports prepared for those committees explain how programs or courses are adjusted to address identified deficiencies in student learning.

The Persistence and Success Program; an HLC Quality Initiative on Advising; four interlocking committees, each tasked with a particular component of retention; and an Executive Director of Retention and Student Success all work together to support student learning.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Argument

5.A.1.

A Moody's credit rating of A3 (stable outlook) demonstrates that the fiscal health of the university is strong. [Moody's most recent report](#), dated May 17, 2017, recognizes credit strengths that include healthy enrollment (8% growth since 2012), sound cash flow with sufficient debt service coverage, and a stable and seasoned management team that is overseeing a period of significant capital investment and a \$250 million fundraising campaign. As guided by the Master Plan, significant strategic capital investments were made during the past decade, resulting in enhanced and competitive facilities and an associated reduction in near-term deferred maintenance. A combination of donor gifts and the ability to leverage historically-low interest rates made this recent investment in capital assets possible.

These significant investments, over \$100 million in the past decade, resulted in a substantial increase in associated non-cash depreciation expense which, in turn, contributed to a two-year period of operating losses. Operating losses are also anticipated for the fiscal years 2017 and 2018. The planned investment in capital assets during the period of low interest rates, a decline in enrollment associated with demographic shifts in the midwest, an increase in tuition discount, and a decline in retention together contributed to these losses.

Several initiatives are in place to address these losses. New undergraduate retention initiatives are described fully in (4.C.); the Graduate School additionally aims to [increase retention](#) and enrollment in both domestic and international enrollment. The Net Tuition Revenue Working Group, drawing together representatives from the Offices of Finance and Administration, Academic Affairs,

Enrollment Management, and Institutional Effectiveness, reviews data and other sources of information about net tuition revenue, per student and overall, to recommend goals and specific practices related to achieving those goals. The group was first convened early in 2017 and continues to meet going forward. Implementation of the first set of recommendations with regard to increasing net tuition revenue is underway at the time of this writing; the group will continue to work across departments and units to address and meet goals for net tuition revenue.

But even as losses have been incurred and initiatives to address them are being implemented, cash flow remains strong, as Moody's report points out. In addition, the current comprehensive fundraising campaign, *Forever Valpo*, with a goal of \$250 million, had already reached the \$132 million mark at the public launch in September 2016 and \$157 million by July 2017. The campaign is designed to increase the endowment with the ultimate goal of providing increased support for scholarships, professorships, and programs.

The [fiscal year 2016 audit report](#), for the year ending June 30, 2016, is available for review; the audit report for fiscal year 2017 will be available by late October 2017. The [Department of Education Stability Ratio and Default Rate](#) together show financial responsibility. After years of strength, a recent decline in the [Composite Financial Index](#) was not unexpected; the strategic investment in facilities and associated debt led to that decline.

Human capital resources are carefully managed, always with an eye toward mission and strategic goals. Requests to fill a vacated position or to approve a new one are carefully reviewed using established processes so that obsolete positions are not continued at the expense of those that become necessary. In the case of faculty positions, the provost reviews all requests in direct consultation with the president and the chief financial officer. In the case of staff positions, the stand-alone Position Review Committee, supported by the Office of Human Resource Services, does so. In recent years funds were made available to support the following (and other) new positions: Assistant Provost for Inclusion, University Director of Writing, Executive Director of Retention and Student Success, Assistant Coordinator in the Academic Success Center, and faculty positions in computer science, engineering, chemistry, biology, nursing, and psychology. The university continues to recruit full-time faculty members and reserves part-time faculty positions for occasional or specialized instructors, despite the relative expense of the former. With 279 full-time faculty members, the student to faculty ratio is 14:1, with an average class size of 21. All courses are taught by faculty members and not teaching assistants. Compared to peers, the university employs a [higher percentage of faculty on a full-time basis](#). Over 600 mostly-full-time staff employees further support student needs.

The university is located on a single [350-acre campus](#) with more than 60 academic and residential buildings. Significant [renovation and construction projects](#) to enhance the physical infrastructure of the university have been undertaken in recent years. Although major projects are normally planned years in advance and budgeted for in the context of the [Campus Master Plan](#), the university does have support mechanisms to respond when unexpected opportunities or needs are identified. A \$15 million gift from two alumni, announced in May 2011, was one such opportunity. The gift allowed for [significant renovations of the Chapel of the Resurrection](#) and for a 9,000 square foot addition, now called the Helge Center, for meeting and office space; both were completed by June 2015. Support for programming meant an expanded role for campus ministries in leadership and service activities, church vocations, church and congregational relations, and interfaith and inter-religious dialogue, all aligned closely to the university mission.

The [technological infrastructure](#) supports both administrative and educational operations sufficiently. Information Technology (IT) conducted an April 2016 survey to gauge community satisfaction with

campus technology; a [summary](#) of the hundreds of pages of raw response data is available on IT's website. One outcome of that report is a revised charge to the Academic Technology Advisory Committee; that charge requires the committee to provide an annual [prioritized list](#) of faculty technology needs to the provost, beginning in December 2016. The university's Office of Continuous Improvement, described in (5.D.2.), is housed within IT in recognition of IT's role in providing smooth and efficient operations, especially where processes cross departmental lines.

These fiscal and human resources, along with physical and technological infrastructure, also support online courses and programs, four study-abroad centers, and several off-campus venues.

Five distance-learning classrooms with WebEx technology and three distance-learning mobile carts currently support 17 distance learning classes across four graduate programs.

Each of four study-abroad centers is configured differently with regard to infrastructure. Legacy programs in England and Germany, opened in 1968, have had stable housing situations for students and faculty directors since then. In [Reutlingen](#) the university rents the director's apartment from the city and student housing from building owners; classroom space is provided by the host institution. In [Cambridge](#), students have both housing and classroom space in a facility owned by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England.

One off-campus venue is at Porter Regional Hospital (PRH), a hospital that now requires all RNs employed there to complete a BS in Nursing. PRH supports these nurses with tuition so that they may enroll in Valpo's [RN to BSN Plan](#). In exchange for these students and their tuition, some required RN to BSN courses are offered at the PRH campus. But the venue is the only difference: faculty and curriculum are the same on both campuses.

5.A.2.

The university's educational purpose is the primary consideration during the budgeting process. The Budget Review Committee, a committee convened by the president and comprised of faculty members, offers an academic perspective on budget recommendations and ensures that the president hears that perspective with a strong and clear voice as he prepares his annual budget recommendations for the board of directors.

That voice is heard and recognized: the annual [Functional Statement Table](#) shows five years of stability with regard to the percentage of total operating expenses supporting instruction, with no trends that show any diversion of resources away from the core academic enterprise of the university. IPEDS data show growth in [expenditure per student](#). This and other benchmark information is shared annually in the fall with both the Board of Directors and with the Faculty Senate, giving members of those bodies the opportunity to observe and react to trends in the allocation of resources. Members of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Directors have an additional annual checkpoint when they can intervene if operating expenses begin to deviate from support for the core educational enterprise of the university. This committee closely monitors faculty compensation as compared to the university's [benchmark institutions](#).

A Chicago-based professional services and investment management company, Jones Lang LaSalle, was commissioned in 2016 to make recommendations on how the university might leverage non-campus university property to maximize income. That work has been completed, and when those properties are eventually developed, some 10-20 years hence, the income generated will be dedicated to the university's core enterprise.

Valparaiso University does not have a superordinate entity and therefore does not disburse revenue to any such entity.

5.A.3.

The fifth and final goal of the Strategic Plan (and the fourth “what” statement in the new Strategic Plan structure) clearly states that the university will develop and implement a sustainable business model in order to achieve all other goals in the plan. Achieving that sustainable business model means that resources are available to support the goals of the Strategic Plan. Two recent and significant initiatives that support strategic goals will serve as examples:

First, establishment of a five-year [BS Health Science/MS Physician Assistant Studies](#) program in the College of Nursing and Health Professions required a considerable up-front investment, including allocation of three new faculty positions and acquisition and renovation of a facility that was previously used by a local hospital. The program aligns with the university’s mission to prepare students for lives of leadership and service, but also promises to provide a strong revenue stream in the future. Thus, the sound business model that allowed allocation of resources for the Physician Assistant program will, in turn, provide revenue to support future mission-aligned initiatives. The university has applied for Accreditation-Provisional status from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) and for approval from HLC and anticipates enrolling its first class of Physician Assistant students in August 2018.

Second, the university has had the financial resources to respond to students’ growing interest in the STEM fields. Facilities for engineering students were upgraded in 2011 and 2013, when loyal alumni provided significant gifts that allowed construction of the [Donald V. Fites Engineering Innovation Center](#) and the [James S. Markiewicz Solar Energy Research Facility](#), both described in (3.D.4). But facilities for the natural and physical sciences were not updated at that time. For that reason the university committed significant resources to construct a [55,000-square-foot facility](#) designed to house wet laboratories for chemistry, biochemistry, and biology. The new facility was completed in time for the fall 2017 semester, with renovation of the current science facility scheduled for completion in time for the spring 2018 semester. When this construction and renovation project began, it was in support of the first goal of the Strategic Plan, which included a commitment to graduating students who understand science and the scientific method.

Because of the sound business model called for in goal five (now known as the fourth "what" statement), these and other major initiatives that align with mission can be supported financially.

5.A.4.

Qualifications, evaluation, and professional development of faculty members are described in (3.C.2.), (3.C.3.), and (3.C.4.).

The university has procedures in place to ensure that staff members are also appropriately qualified and trained. Department supervisors prepare [Position Description Questionnaires](#) (PDQs) for every staff position at the university. The PDQ defines the essential functions of the position and clarifies the qualifications and/or experience expected of a staff member in that position. When a position is vacated, the PDQ and organizational charts are first revisited and revised to reflect any needed changes; the Position Review Committee then determines whether the position will, in fact, be continued. A PDQ is also prepared as part of any request for allocation of a new position. During the hiring process the PDQ is referenced to ensure that the [published job description](#) includes the skills, experience, or educational level required for the position. Candidates are also made aware of the

identified qualifications and all new employees therefore have a clear understanding of the standards they must meet. A PDQ may also be revised to account for changing expectations of continuing staff members.

Staff members have access to new employee orientation, online certifications, and training workshops, typically offered by Human Resource Services, Information Technology, the Staff Employee Advocacy Council, and the University Safety Manager. [Training workshops](#) are often recorded and remain available to staff members online. Staff members may also take training in computer software programs through Lynda.com. Federally-mandated training, such as Title IX training, is also required of and provided to staff members. University departments each have professional development budget lines that allow individuals to attend appropriate offsite conferences or workshops where they might develop new skill sets or learn best practices in their areas. Staff members also have access to tuition remission and exchange, allowing them to enroll in courses and even complete degree programs at the university with no cost to the employee; the university understands this benefit as a key investment in its employees that will, in turn, benefit the university.

5.A.5.

The annual budget process, described briefly in (2.A.), begins at the department level and ends with approval by the Board of Directors. Budget officers for each department receive an [instruction document](#) from the Office of Finance and Administration (OFA) each December, six months before the new fiscal year begins on July 1st. The instruction document describes the process, sets general guidelines, and provides both a timeline and a set of definitions. Additionally, a budget partner from the OFA, who works closely with budget officers to ensure a well-informed and efficient process, is assigned to each department. Between December and March, department budget requests are submitted and reviewed at the dean and provost/vice-president levels and by the Director of Budget Operations before being submitted to two key committees that advise the president. After review by members of the President's Council and the Budget Review Committee, the preliminary budget is submitted to the Board of Directors at its April meeting for approval.

The president of the university has introduced two substantive changes to the budgeting process since his inauguration in 2008.

The first helps ensure that the university keeps its core mission at the center of the budgeting process. The Budget Review Committee (formerly known as the Budget Advisory Committee) is no longer a group that reviews specific budget requests; instead its purpose is to monitor key expenditure ratios. If any trends away from a focus on the core educational mission are noted, it is the committee's responsibility to examine or halt those trends.

The second ensures that the budget reflects and responds to net tuition revenue more accurately. Previously, final approval for the budget was given in April, more than four months before the enrollment census for the academic (and fiscal) year could be determined. Thus, the budget was partially based on an educated guess about enrollment. The new timeline considers the April approval to be preliminary, and allows for some adjustment in the budget after census figures are known. Thus the final approval now comes during the Board of Director's October meeting, almost four months after the start of the fiscal year, but only weeks after census figures are known.

The monitoring of expenses is an ongoing process. It begins at the micro-level, in the departments, where each expenditure for goods or services, including all travel-related expenses and all credit-card purchases, must be approved by designated faculty or staff members who review the expenditure within the context of operational necessity and budget. Fiscal reviewers within the OFA then test the

expenditure against institutional policy, authorizer, coding, and budget before approving it. Expenditures beyond certain levels (\$1,000 for departmental chairs, \$5,000 for deans, and \$7,500 for assistant vice presidents) must receive vice-presidential approval. Expenditures beyond \$10,000 must be routed to the provost, vice president for finance and administration, or the president.

Monitoring continues at the macro-level. Financial projections are prepared, at a minimum, on a quarterly basis and compared to the board-approved budget. In addition, a thorough review and analysis of anticipated income and expenses is performed relative to the budget cycle. This analysis is performed early in the year, based on information available at the time. As new information becomes available, changes are made to ensure that expenses align with expected revenue. Early in 2015, for example, during the budgeting process for fiscal year 2016, it was determined that a reduction in expenses would be needed. As a result, university leadership acted diligently to identify areas where reductions could be made, while continuing to support strategic investments in key faculty positions.

Quarterly financial statements, projections, and analyses are provided to the university's Board of Directors in advance of their scheduled meetings. The Finance and Administration Committee of the Board of Directors receives additional financial information and verbal reports during quarterly webinars and meetings. In addition, the university's chief financial officer presents a treasurer's report to the Board of Directors during its quarterly business meetings.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Argument

5.B.1.

The Board of Directors continually works to ensure that its knowledge of the university is strong. As described in (2.C.4.), the president, the provost, the chair of Faculty Senate, the executive director of Institutional Effectiveness, and a member of the Board attended an Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges workshop called Improving Board Engagement with Educational Quality (September 2012). Among other outcomes from this workshop, the Board's Governance Committee developed and approved a 2016 document called [Board Development, Management and Continuing Education Plan](#). That document includes a year-long New Member Board Orientation Plan, a Board Member Development Plan that involves long-term mentoring between veteran and novice members, and actions for engaging directors emeriti. Key to these plans is the goal that novice members "harvest" knowledge about the university from veteran members. These changes have resulted in members of the Board expressing the opinion that they are better informed and more engaged.

The Board meets on a quarterly basis and also meets regularly in retreat to address strategic topics or initiatives. One or more designated member of the university administration assists each standing committee of the Board with its work and delivers a report to committee members in advance of each Board meeting, ensuring that Board members are particularly knowledgeable about that facet of the university. Board committees often meet via web-conferences between quarterly face-to-face meetings, thereby increasing the flow of information to members of those committees. Key dashboard information is regularly provided to committees and to the Board as a whole, as described in (2.C.2.) and (5.D.1.); the Board's decisions are based on detailed data.

Board members provide oversight of financial and academic policies and practices through four of eight standing committees, and do so according to processes clearly defined in the respective committee charters. Finances are overseen by committees on [Finance and Administration](#), [Audit](#), and [Capital Planning and Investment](#). Academic policies and practices are overseen by the [Academic and Student Affairs Committee](#).

In addition to these standing committees of the Board, occasional ad hoc committees are formed. Most recently, ad hoc committees made recommendations regarding financial aspects of the strategic plan and regarding non-core property development.

The Board of Directors' authority also encompasses its general, academic, and financial policy-making functions and its ultimate responsibility to ensure the university's overall welfare and financial health and hence its ability to fulfill the core educational mission. The legal and fiduciary responsibilities of the Board are clearly articulated in the Board Bylaws, Board Policy Handbook, Administrative Guidelines, and Committee Charters, all available to members in the [Board Resource Library](#) on a secure server. New members of the Board are [trained](#) to exercise these legal and fiduciary responsibilities during their year-long orientation period, as described in the Board Development, Management and Continuing Education Plan.

5.B.2.

The university's internal governance structure is clearly articulated in [An Instrument for the Internal Governance of Valparaiso University](#), a document readily available to all members of the university community through a link on the home page of the university's [Internal Governance web pages](#). From there, bylaws of the [Faculty Senate](#), [Student Senate](#), and [University Council](#) are also accessible. These structures, which will be described in (5.B.3.), provide administration, faculty, staff, and students the opportunity to engage in internal governance.

[Bylaws of the Board of Directors](#) and [general university policies](#) are also readily available, in this case through the web pages of University Counsel.

Handbooks also outline policies and procedures that affect all members of the university community. The [Faculty Handbook](#), the [Staff Employee Handbook](#), and the [Student Guide to University Life](#) are all readily accessible through the university website.

The means by which the policies and procedures result in the engagement of internal constituents in effective governance is discussed below.

5.B.3.

The representational bodies called for in the bylaws and handbooks described in (5.B.2.) come alive when they are populated with students, staff, faculty, and administrators. The home page of the university's Internal Governance web pages provides a link to the [records of each of the three major governing bodies](#): Faculty Senate, Student Senate, and University Council, and to the committees that report to each of them.

The faculty, represented by the Faculty Senate, is responsible for all matters concerning the academic curricula of the university. Proposals for new courses or programs, or for changes in courses or programs, are reviewed first at the departmental and college levels, before being forwarded for further review to the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) or Graduate Educational Policy Committee. These committees then report to Faculty Senate. Students are also provided input into, though not control over, academic requirements through minority representation on the EPC. The somewhat unusual constitution of the EPC is meant to enhance collaboration between faculty and students, though ultimate authority still lies with the majority faculty members.

Policies are also set by these governing bodies. One interesting case demonstrates how policy is sometimes set jointly by interaction between faculty and student governing bodies over many decades. In 1943 the Valparaiso University Honor Code was established under the leadership of the first woman to be elected president of the student body. The student body proposed the system through their own governance structure, and sought approval of it through the faculty's governance

structure. Revision of the honor system's constitution in 1982 and a general review in 1990 each required and received approval by both the faculty and student bodies. Today the Honor Council Committee reports to the Faculty Senate, but is comprised of both faculty and student members, and a 2012-13 [Task Force on the Honor System](#), convened by Faculty Senate, was comprised of 14 members, six of whom were students from Student Senate or the Honor Council.

The University Council is the governing structure in which all members of the university community are represented: students, staff, faculty, and administrators. All members of the Faculty Senate are University Council members *ex officio*. Additional members include the university president and student body president *ex officio*; 13 students, including representation from the Graduate School and Law School; and 13 staff members, including representation from the President's Council, the Council of Deans, and the Staff Employee Advocacy Council. The University Council's portfolio includes topics of interest and import to all members of the university community; the Campus Community Policy Committee, the Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics, and the Student Academic Fair Practices Committee all report to the University Council.

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

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

Argument

5.C.1.

The fifth goal of the Strategic Plan (and fourth “what” question in the new Strategic Plan structure), calls for a [sustainable business model](#) and is explicit in requiring that allocation of resources support the mission of the university: “The reason for crafting this Strategic Plan is to position Valparaiso University to make fundamental choices that will enable it to be a thriving and sustainable organization that serves its mission and pursues its vision.” Both the budgeting process itself and the Board of Directors’ newly-formed ad hoc Committee on Financial Sustainability work to ensure that allocation of resources aligns with mission.

The budget process, described in (5.A.5.), requires that the Budget Review Committee (BRC) monitor and intervene if key expenditure ratios trend away from the core mission of the university. Convened by the president and comprised of faculty members, the BRC ensures that the president hears the academic perspective on budget recommendations as he finalizes them for presentation to the Board of Directors. As reported in (5.A.2.), the annual [Functional Statement Table](#) shows five years of stability with no indication that resources are being diverted from the core academic mission of the university. Comparison with peer institutions also suggests stability with regard to expenditure per student.

The Board of Directors’ ad hoc Committee on Financial Sustainability was charged with development of a financial sustainability plan. Members of this committee reviewed multiple data points, macro trends, and detailed analyses in the development of their recommendations to the president. The recommendations address broad categories related to enhancement and diversification of revenue, endowment growth, and cost containment, and also provide specific action items in support of the Strategic Plans's overall goal to ensure financial sustainability. These recommendations were shared with the full Board of Directors during their 2017 strategic retreat, at which time all committees were invited to provide additional feedback.

As reported in (1.A.1.), the structure of the Strategic Plan was recently changed (April 2017). Instead of a framework with five overarching goals, the new structure relies on a set of “why,” “what,” and “how” statements. But the mission statement, vision statement, area vision statements, and core values

have not changed, nor has the university's commitment to aligning resources to the priorities articulated in those statements and values.

5.C.2.

Several university offices, committees, and task forces work together to link assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting. For example: [the Office of Institutional Effectiveness](#) provides support to academic departments, not only as they prepare or revise assessment plans and prepare annual assessment reports, but also as they conduct program review, as described in (3.A.1.); the [Office of Continuous Improvement](#) evaluates and improves the efficiency and effectiveness of university processes; several bodies contribute to the annual budgeting process, including the President's Council, the Budget Review Committee, and the Finance Office; [various task forces](#) appointed by the president or provost often address planning, as did the Master Plan Task Force, which developed the [2012 Campus Master Plan](#) that guides the long-term physical development of the campus. But it is the Strategic Plan and the Strategic Planning Committee that link the reports and recommendations of the various offices, committees and task forces.

Three examples will characterize how the university links these processes.

The 2010-2015 Strategic Plan called for the university "to send forth undergraduates who understand science and the scientific method so they will become scientifically informed citizens." A STEM Task Force, comprised of faculty members not only from the STEM fields, but also from the university's Department of Education, was therefore convened to determine how best to achieve this objective within the curriculum and ["based on the definitions and assessment measures that were approved by the General Education Committee."](#) With the curriculum and student learning assessment measures in mind, the study group concluded in its [October 2011 report](#) that a new science facility would best encourage strong, interdisciplinary collaboration and research, consistent with the curriculum and assessment objective identified by the General Education Committee. Not simply a new building for a department or group of departments, the facility is primarily about collaborative laboratory space and has only one traditional classroom. Ground was broken in September 2015 for the 55,000-square-foot science facility that opened in the fall 2017 semester. The Campus Master Plan of 2012, responding to that earlier STEM Task Force report, had already envisaged a "Science and [Science] Education Village," grouping new STEM facilities near the buildings that already housed engineering, mathematics, geography, and meteorology. For that reason it was an easy decision to locate the new facility in what is becoming the science village. Allocation of funds for administrative and other support personnel in the new building is being handled through the regular budgeting process. This example demonstrates the intersections among assessment of student learning, operations, and budgeting as part of institutional planning.

As described in (4.A.1.), a 2011 program review of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science concluded that the department's computer science curriculum needed updating. That assessment led to allocation of a new tenure-track position in computer science, the first step towards the eventual establishment of a new department and approval of an updated computer science curriculum. Evaluation of operations soon concluded that the new department would need physical space not available in the Gellersen Engineering and Mathematics Center, so planning began for renovation of appropriate space in an adjacent building. Allocation of budget resources for the renovations soon followed and several faculty members are now housed in that space. In this case, assessment of a program and student learning needs led to curricular changes linked closely to planning and budgeting, not only for a new faculty position, but also for renovated physical space.

Mueller Hall, a classroom and office building dedicated in 1970, was in need of an accessible

restroom in its main corridor. Planning for that upgrade was completed in anticipation that the budgeting process would eventually provide for the renovations. When a generous donor expressed interest in financing renovation of adjacent portions of the building, the university was therefore in a position to propose adding the accessible restroom as well. In this case, the advance planning allowed the university to take advantage of an [unanticipated opportunity](#) provided by a donor.

5.C.3.

As described in (1.A.1.), the Strategic Plan, adopted in October 2010, was the product of a two-year discussion which included faculty, staff, students, alumni, members of the Board of Directors, and friends of the university. An annual review of the Strategic Plan, led by the Strategic Planning Committee, but with input from all sectors of the university, not only allows the plan to evolve, but also provides an opportunity to remind less-engaged members of the community what the mission and core values of the university are. Everyone in the community is annually invited to provide input to the plan as it evolves.

Also described in (1.A.1.), the structure of the Strategic Plan has recently (April 2017) been revised so that it is simpler, more focused, less compartmentalized, and less burdensome. Instead of being comprised of five overarching goals with subordinate objectives and action statements, the new structure relies on a set of “why,” “what,” and “how” statements. The mission and vision statements and the core values that guide the Strategic Plan have not changed.

In order to engage both internal and external constituent groups in the process of [rethinking the structure of the Strategic Plan](#), the president convened a Campus Summit on September 30-October 1, 2016. At that summit, participants crafted possible guiding “why” statements, discussed the types of “what” statements that could comprise the revised Strategic Plan, and began to develop a set of possible “how” statements designed to advance the “what” statements. All members of the university community were invited to attend the summit, including students, staff, and faculty members. During the 2016-17 academic year, multiple forums were held, ensuring that all members of the community, including members of the National Advisory Councils, described in (3.A.1.), had multiple opportunities to participate in decisions and to provide input as the new structure evolved. The Board of Directors approved the new structure and the “why” and “what” statements at its April meeting, and implementation is now underway. Eighteen “how” statements have since been adopted for use by units across the university over the next several years; multi-unit activities have also been identified for nearly all of those “how” statements.

The university also engages with representatives of the City of Valparaiso whenever topics of mutual interest or concern need to be addressed. Often that engagement is through the Town and Gown Committee, described in (1.D.3.). The following examples serve to show ways in which university planning takes into account the mutual goals of city and university.

When the university's Helge Center, an addition to the Chapel of the Resurrection, was built, creative collaboration with the City of Valparaiso Fire Department led to construction of an access road to the new facility that was structurally strong enough for heavy fire equipment, but virtually invisible as it wound its way through a beloved meadow that is a front door to the university. The university's strong desire to keep the meadow looking pristine and the Fire Department's need for reliable access to the building were both met by this collaboration between city and university.

The university provides financial support for the city's relatively-new bus service, the V-Line. In return, not only do students, faculty, and staff have free ridership opportunities, but the university may also collaborate on development of routes for the V-Line. For example, many international graduate

students found that the most affordable housing opportunities were on the opposite end of town from the university, but that the scheduled V-Line buses to that area quit running before the end of evening classes. The university was able to collaborate with the city to extend the schedule and modify the route slightly to accommodate those students' needs. In a collaboration begun in spring 2017, the university receives monetary support from the city in return for allowing the city to place bike-sharing stations at campus locations.

The university's chief financial officer and members of the Board have collaborated with city officials to determine optimal roadways and pedestrian crossings in areas surrounding the campus. In addition, a partnership regarding affordable housing initiatives is currently under consideration.

5.C.4.

The university has a clear understanding that its endowment needs to grow in order to offset fluctuations in enrollment, changes in the economy, or reduction of state support. Because of this recognition, the university determined that the focus of the current major campaign would be on increasing the endowment. Launched publicly in September 2016, more than half of the \$250 million goal is designated to support student scholarships. The ability to offer funded scholarships will help the university absorb enrollment fluctuation while simultaneously continuing to support students significantly. The president has succeeded in the potentially-difficult task of explaining that growth in the endowment is currently of greater significance than construction of otherwise-unplanned-for facilities. By July 2017, \$157 million had been raised. In addition, the university's endowment spending policy includes factors that smooth the annual spend so that endowment support does not fluctuate widely during times of significant market volatility.

Growth in the endowment will help lower the discount rate, but the university is aware that the annual budgeting process must also address the discount rate. As indicated in (5.A.1.), initiatives are underway, led by the Net Tuition Revenue Working Group, to increase retention and student net tuition.

But even as the university recognizes the need to increase endowment and net tuition revenue, it has nonetheless been able to address unexpected financial situations. During the recession of 2007-2009, the university was able to increase support for students who experienced a reduction in support from the State of Indiana. In FY2010, the state reduced scholarship support to Valparaiso students by approximately \$1.2 million from FY2009 levels. Although the university could not have planned for this reduction in state support for its Indiana students, it was nonetheless financially prepared to offset that decline through increased institutional aid. This came at a time when many students' families were most in need.

A sound understanding of capacity includes not only finances, but also physical plant. Careful analysis of the facilities needed by the physical and natural sciences departments, compared to actual capacity, guided planners as they prepared a three-phase proposal for a new Science Center. Described in (5.A.3.) and (5.C.2), the first phase of the science initiative was completed for the fall 2017 semester; phases two and three are included in the Campus Master Plan.

5.C.5.

Valparaiso's planning and actions also focus on technology, demographic shifts and globalization. The university's broad and inclusive approach to strategic planning means that members of the Office of Information Technology (IT), the Office of Undergraduate Admission, and the Office of International Programs not only carry out the relevant actions, but also have a voice in planning for

them.

The university recognizes that the Office of Information Technology must play a leadership role, not only in providing the entire range of resources available through technology, but also in guiding users of that technology to use it effectively and ethically. IT plans strategically and has its own [mission and vision statements](#). In recognition of the importance of technology in allowing for efficient processes, the university has housed the Office of Continuous Improvement, to be described in (5.D.2.), in IT. Those involved in budgeting for the university recognize the importance of a strong IT and have allowed for [significant upgrades](#) in campus technology.

Several members of IT also contribute to the education of the next generation of information technologists. In recognition of the growing and global interest in technology among students, the university now offers MS degrees in [Information Technology](#) (since 2008), [Analytics and Modeling](#) (since 2013), and [Cyber Security](#) (since 2014). Many students in these degree programs are international students whose presence on campus also contributes to the diverse student population.

The university is aware of shifting demographics in the State of Indiana and in the Midwestern states generally. The university does not see these demographic changes as a burden, but instead as an opportunity. The Strategic Plan calls for a diverse student body, and recruitment strategies had already increased the percentage of domestic minority students from 8.4% to 19% in the ten-year period ending in 2015-16. The university anticipates that this percentage will continue to grow and is preparing for the increasingly diverse student body.

Several initiatives support the diverse students who comprise the changing demographic: African-American and Latino students, transfer students, and students who are the first in their family to attend college. The Task Force on Student Retention and Success, described in (4.C.1.), recommended appointing an Executive Director of Retention and Student Success whose responsibility is to coordinate activities of four interlocking committees, each tasked with a different component of retention and support. Funds were allocated for the position and the position was filled in June 2017. Additional initiatives to support student success are described in (4.C.3.), including support for international students and students in the Graduate School and Law School. An additional staff member was also added to the Academic Success Center.

The university is also in dialogue with other Indiana universities and colleges that face the same demographic shifts. The [Independent Colleges of Indiana](#) hosted a day-long forum in April 2017 dedicated to sharing best practices in recruiting, retaining, and graduating Indiana's Latina and Latino students. The university was represented there by the president, one faculty member, one staff member, and one student.

The university has long been attentive to globalization. In 2008 the NAFSA-Association of International Educators recognized the university with the [Senator Paul Simon Award](#) for outstanding preparation of graduates with strong cross-cultural skills and global awareness. The Strategic Plan, adopted two years later, called on the university to build on that distinction by [enhancing international initiatives](#), and in 2012 the university participated in an American Council on Education project to prepare a [Strategic Plan for internationalization of the campus](#). Just over 36% of undergraduate students in the class of 2016 participated in a study-abroad experience of some type, about 24% in a short-term travel experience and about 12% for a full semester or year of study. Thus, a substantial number of students have an international experience. But it is the university's goal to increase that number, and it has joined the Generation Study Abroad initiative launched by the Institute of International Education (IIE). In 2013 the IIE's Open Doors Report ranked the university in the top 40 master-level institutions by percentage of undergraduate participation in study abroad.

Several years of careful planning led to an articulation agreement with Dalian Jiaotong University in China. The goal of the articulation agreement was to ensure that 20 carefully-vetted Chinese students per year were prepared both linguistically and technically to conclude their engineering studies at Valparaiso after two years at their home campus in China. To help prepare those students for the U.S. experience, the university provides curricular support for both engineering and English language courses on the Dalian Jiaotong campus. The first group of Dalian students arrived at the university in the fall 2016 semester and are scheduled to graduate in May 2018. The articulation agreement allows the students to transfer up to two years of their coursework toward a Valparaiso University engineering degree.

During the fall 2016 semester the president convened and began leading a working group focused on the recruitment and support of international students. The group recommended adding a staff position in the Office of Undergraduate Admission for an international recruiter; a Position Description Questionnaire was developed and the position (Associate Director for International Recruitment) was filled in May 2017. A longer-standing international recruitment committee, comprised of representatives from the Graduate School, the Office of Undergraduate Admission, and the Office of International Programs, carefully monitors the number of international students coming from each country and then strategizes about which countries to target for additional recruitment. Increased participation in college fairs in targeted countries has been one strategy for increasing enrollment from those countries.

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5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

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

Argument

5.D.1.

The [Office of Institutional Effectiveness](#) (OIE) is responsible for collecting and compiling data about enrollment, retention and graduation rates, student demographics, academic profile of students, faculty data, and institutional data; for preparing reports that demonstrate data trends over time; for disseminating information; for informing decision-making and providing support for and contributing to assessment efforts; and for preparing reports in support of accreditation. The OIE also supports reporting to the NCAA and ensures that the university is compliant in key areas. Many of these reports are available through the web pages of the OIE, including [enrollment data by semester](#), [longitudinal enrollment data](#), the [Common Data Set](#), and [assessment plans](#) for each academic unit.

The Office of Finance and Administration (OFA) is responsible for preparing the financial ratio tables, described in (5.A.). In addition to quarterly and annual financial statements and analyses, the OFA also prepares benchmark data for various committees of the Board, including audit, investment, financial operating, and administrative performance data. Financial analysts also prepare college-level financial statements at the end of each semester. The provost annually presents [financial performance measures](#) across time and in comparison to peer institutions in the form of dashboard measures at the November Faculty Senate meeting; these dashboard measures are developed jointly by the OFA and the OIE and are additionally reported to the Board of Directors.

But comparisons with peer institutions are not limited to financial reports. Student performance, graduation rates, faculty composition, library services, organizational charts, and staffing levels are also areas that are regularly examined. When, for example, the registrar requested that students be required to pay a higher fee for official transcripts, she was asked first to compare the institution's current fee with that of peer institutions. Proposals for new academic programs must include a study of competitor institutions in the region in order to gauge the potential success of the new program.

5.D.2.

A relatively-recent initiative at the university was the January 2016 establishment of an [Office of Continuous Improvement](#) (OCI). Located in IT, the four-member OCI has a primary goal to improve efficiency and effectiveness at the university, especially where processes cross departmental divides. Automating time-cards for hourly employees (the KRONOS system), expanding credit card acceptance at point-of-sale locations across campus, unifying campus scheduling and calendars through implementation of a central event management system, and improving employee purchase card functionality by automating approval processes are examples of projects initiated in the OCI's first year. The OCI utilizes Six Sigma techniques and tools to promote process improvement and offers regular training sessions to expand and promote the use of these methods across campus.

Additionally, IT formed a Document Imaging and Management unit in 2016, which assists units in becoming paperless in their operations, in digitizing and organizing existing documents, and in becoming more environmentally sustainable. The efforts of this unit have already resulted in a reduction in the number of printers on campus, in lower consumption of paper, and in more efficient use of limited office space.

The OCI constantly seeks processes that can be enhanced or practices that can be improved. Sometimes the OCI becomes aware of inefficiencies because they are easily observable. In other situations a department or departments submit an online request for action.

Even before establishment of the OCI, the institution sought to identify ways to improve processes. For example, a cross-departmental team with representatives from the offices of Undergraduate Admission, Registrar, Financial Aid, Auxiliary Services, IT, and the Graduate School was convened to determine how better to improve, integrate, and expand student financial services. Based on the team's assessment of student experiences with respect to these offices, outcomes included implementation of direct deposit for students, faster processing of refunds, and development of a [Student Account Center](#).

In order to coordinate support for members of the community who have experienced discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct, and based on increasing Title IX compliance requirements and federal enforcement of them, the university allocated funds to support a 2/3-time Title IX Coordinator, beginning in 2014. The Title IX coordinator directs complainants to [confidential and non-confidential resources](#), provides faculty and staff training on Title IX responsibilities, has a thorough understanding of the university's grievance processes, assesses the campus climate, and counsels students about their Title IX complaint options. During the 2016-17 academic year, all students and employees were required to complete an online training that has greatly increased campus-wide knowledge and understanding of key Title IX related issues.

Based on comparative data of cost per square foot for energy and BTU/sq. ft., an Energy Engineer in Facilities Management implemented a building audit initiative in collaboration with students in the College of Engineering, setting goals for a reduction in energy consumption which led to decisions resulting in a permanent reduction in energy costs.

The university also takes advantage of external expertise to evaluate operations. A recent external [review of the Office of the Registrar](#) revealed, for example, that the office was understaffed for an institution of our size and complexity; an additional staff member was added to the office.

These internal and external reviews of processes took place before establishment of the OCI; with its establishment, however, review of processes is now institutionalized.

Sources

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

Valpo's seasoned management team, qualified faculty and staff, financial health, modern infrastructure, and attention to efficient processes allow the institution to fulfill its mission to educate students to lead and serve.

The current \$250 million campaign will allow continued fulfillment of that mission by increasing the endowment in support of scholarships, professorships, and programs.

Sources

There are no sources.