Shaping the Future

Wilmington University
Middle States Self-Study
2023-2024

Self-Study Report Prepared for

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Executive Summary

Since it was chartered in 1967 as a nonprofit, four-year institution of higher education, Wilmington University has remained committed to serving traditional and non-traditional students with respect, integrity, and compassion. As an open-access institution, Wilmington University has welcomed all students seeking an education. For more than 50 years, the University has maintained its mission of providing excellence in teaching, relevancy of programs and offerings, and individual attention to students. We live that mission every day.

Wilmington University has flourished academically and technologically, from its inaugural class of 194 students in 1968 to the more than 20,000 students enrolled today. The path for distance learning opportunities was carved as early as 2007, setting the stage for pioneering efforts in online education that would lead to global prominence. We enroll students from 49 states and over 40 countries and offer more than 120 fully online programs and 165 degree and certificate programs, both in-person and online.

Our President, Dr. LaVerne Harmon, has led the institution since 2017. The first African American woman to be named President of a university or college in Delaware, she shepherded the University through the pandemic, managing a sudden and seamless shift to all-remote instruction. Throughout her tenure, she has worked collaboratively with an engaged Board of Trustees, an experienced Executive Team, and dedicated faculty and staff to inspire significant growth in academic programs, financial reserves, technology, security, corporate and academic partnerships, athletics, professional learning opportunities, and multilayered processes for evaluating staff effectiveness, all of which will be detailed in this Self-Study Report. While we proudly remain one of the region's most affordable private, nonprofit universities, one thing will never change: We will always be a student-centered institution.

In the winter of 2022, Wilmington University began its Self-Study process for 2023-2024 accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Its theme, "Shaping the Future," represents our deep commitment to students and the vision to propel that commitment forward. While we will also detail areas for improvement, we believe that Wilmington University is positioned for a promising future with many exciting new offerings, such as the Wilmington University School of Law, the construction of a convocation center, and the University's Criminal Justice Institute.

Our future starts now, grounded by meaningful strategic initiatives focusing on students, expanding opportunities, enhancing academic excellence, strengthening our organization, and investing in our future. And that future, one that is academically sound, forward-thinking, and supported by financial sustainability, looks bright.

Shaping the Future: Summary of Standards

Standard 1: Mission and Goals
Examination of this standard demonstrates that Wilmington University's mission, goals, and strategic plan are clearly communicated to internal and external constituencies. Vision 2025, the University's strategic plan, includes the strategic initiatives that guide the identification of the University's Annual Institutional Priorities each fiscal year. Following approval, these priorities are communicated to all areas of the University and guide each area in developing operational goals. The goals are all related to the University's mission.

- **Opportunities to Shape the Future**
  - **Design a Fresh Approach to Vision 2030.** Approach and create Vision 2030 with new ideas to inform strategic initiatives and annual institutional priorities, positioning Wilmington University for future success.

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity
Examination of this standard demonstrates the University's belief in ethics and integrity. These core values guide us academically and administratively, as evidenced by policies celebrating freedom of expression, intellectual property rights, and academic freedom. Ethics and integrity principles are developed collaboratively and communicated to students and staff via multiple platforms. Ethical practices also include fair and impartial grievance policies and hiring practices, truthful advertising, publications and admissions materials, and transparent information for students seeking funding and scholarships. Title IX efforts adhere to federal regulations and ensure all members of the University's diverse community are welcomed and valued.

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
Examination of this standard demonstrates the University's commitment to delivering rigorous, consistent, and affordable programs in-person and online. Our students' learning experiences are enhanced by robust academic collaboration and a dedicated staff that sustains a foundation on which students thrive. Qualified faculty are practitioners whose authentic workplace experiences enrich instruction via certificate, undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs. Curricula are informed by job market trends and adjusted regularly to strengthen opportunities for students starting or advancing their careers. Evidence will confirm new programs, improved learning resources, innovative academic assessment plans, and professional faculty development opportunities.

- **Opportunities to Shape the Future**
  - **Continue to Explore Differentiated Instruction.** While Mastery Paths, a Canvas tool being piloted in PHI 100 that helps instructors personalize and adapt students' learning experiences based on mastery of course content, offers several potential benefits, the successful implementation in courses will require a commitment to resource allocation, technology support, and faculty training and collaboration.
  - **Revise Graduation Competencies and General Education Courses**. Uniform curricular maps among programs will enable a more comprehensive approach to

assessing, documenting, and analyzing our General Education student learning outcomes and graduation requirements.

- **Expand Automated Assessment**. Automating data collection will streamline our assessment efforts, standardize the process, enable us to pull data directly from Canvas, and allow the focus to be placed on data analysis and improvement versus data collection.
- **Automate the Process to Display the Generic Master Syllabus for Each Course.** Automating the method of providing the generic master syllabi for the public website will streamline the process and ensure accuracy and currency.

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Examination of this standard demonstrates the University's expertise in providing affordable and accessible education to traditional students starting college, non-traditional students, and working adults seeking career changes or professional advancement. Evidence will detail extensive work dedicated to the student experience, including innovative new-student and online orientations, equitable opportunities for student-athletes, proactive approaches to advising, nationally-recognized transfer processes, and outreach programs identifying and supporting at-risk students. Aligned with Wilmington University's inclusive admissions policies, we offer challenging programs to all learners and comprehensive remedial programs to those less prepared for college. We believe that all students can succeed academically with support and personal attention.

- **Opportunities to Shape the Future**
  - **Implement a New Portal to Offer Information from Multiple Systems More Efficiently**. Our current portal is static, meaning users cannot modify their dashboards, and the University determines the information displayed. This new tool will be personalized, and users will customize their dashboards to fit their needs.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Examination of this standard demonstrates the University's focus on assessment as a core component of its culture and commitment to continuous improvement. Evidence will include the Academic Affairs Outcomes Assessment Plan, which measures teaching effectiveness, learning outcomes, student satisfaction, and promotion of educational values. All University academic programs create a yearlong program snapshot that assesses enrollment, retention, and graduation data, and every college utilizes individual assessment processes. The University's assessment strengths are also evidenced in teaching expectations reports, the Academic Affairs Outcomes Summit, and alumni surveys examining job placement rates post-graduation.

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

Examination of this standard validates the University's holistic approach to strategic planning. Guided by Vision 2025, the University's strategic initiatives approved by the Executive Team and Board of Trustees, the process demonstrates broad representation from University leaders who encourage institution-wide collaboration to develop goals and priorities stated succinctly, assessed properly, linked to our mission and used judiciously for planning and resource allocation. Other evidence includes strategic enrollment management, annual institutional priorities tied to strategic initiatives, multiple-level financial planning and budgeting processes,

physical and technological infrastructure information, and clearly defined decision-making processes that assign responsibility and accountability at every level.

- **Opportunities to Shape the Future**
  - **Develop a New Strategic Plan.** As the University nears the end of its current five-year strategic plan, we must examine the opportunities and challenges that will impact the University's future direction and adopt a new strategic plan.
  - **Gather Accomplishments in a Central Location.** Accomplishments are collected in several ways (board reports, Year-in-Review reports, Compass, Annual Institutional Priorities, and others). We can store achievements in one central location and summarize them for the strategic plan.

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration
Examination of this standard demonstrates the University's transparent, collaborative, and collegial system of governance, as evidenced by President Harmon's knowledgeable Executive Team, Administrative Cabinet, Academic Council, Faculty Senate, and University Coordinating Council. These colleagues emulate the University's mission, vision, and values and dedicate themselves to student success. Leadership also extends to students represented by the Student Government Association and Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. An organizational chart displays University governance led by an active and supportive Board of Trustees who delegate critical authority to the President.

Institutional Profile
In FY 2013-2014, Wilmington University reached an unduplicated headcount enrollment of 19,116, offering 97 programs. At the time, 58% of our students were enrolled in at least one online class, and 85 of our degree and certificate programs could be completed entirely online. The FY 2014-2015 annual budget was $110,946,000; in June 2014, the endowment was $60,241,532.

Today, our unduplicated headcount is 20,069. Compared to fewer than 100 programs in 2013-2014, we offer over 165 programs encompassing professional development courses, certificates, associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, and our recently added Juris Doctorate. Currently, 93% of our students are enrolled in at least one online class, and 75% attend fully online. We offer more than 150 programs that can be completed entirely online. The FY 2022-2023 annual budget was $108,903,621, and our endowment has grown to $162,338,307. From FY 2013-2014 to FY 2022-2023, Wilmington University's unduplicated headcount grew from 19,116 to 20,069, an increase of 5% over 10 years.

During the pandemic, we pivoted quickly to 100% online instruction, enabling our entire workforce to work remotely. We also became more strategic in terms of budget and operations. In 2021, three vice presidents retired, reducing the size of the Executive Team, and we did not fill those positions. We reorganized departments, aligning them with existing vice presidents, then evaluated and transitioned over 100 employees in Student Service roles, contributing to student growth and allowing us to offer even more individualized student services. As we continue to work in a hybrid format, we reduce aspects of the budget. For example, we negotiated lower fees with Canon for printers, limited conference travel since most conferences

are available virtually, and decreased security costs during off-work hours. We also benefited economically by replacing our physical phone handsets with Microsoft Teams for inbound and outbound calls for all employees. Therefore, we streamlined processes and operations to yield improved efficiency overall. Finally, we improved our IT security stature, thus realizing a cost saving to the budget.

Overall, we streamlined processes and operations to yield improved efficiency. During the 2018-2019 academic year, before the pandemic, 50% of students attended classes entirely online, and many others were enrolled in at least one online course. Because all faculty were already required to receive online training, we were well prepared to offer all courses online. Student services were also already available remotely. When the pandemic occurred, President Harmon convened a Response Planning Committee and oversaw an immediate and seamless transition from in-person to remote instruction that safeguarded academic integrity, ensuring uninterrupted learning and services. Compared to many other institutions during this unprecedented time, we only experienced a slight decrease in enrollment during the pandemic and are now back to seeing enrollment continue to increase.

2022-2023 Academic Year
- 65% of students were enrolled at the undergraduate level, 32% at the master's level, 3% at the doctoral level, and less than 1% in non-credit professional development programs. 62% of enrolled students were female, 37% were male, and 0.4% were unreported. Male students increased by 10% in the past five years; female students declined by 9%.
- 48% of enrolled students self-identified as White, 45% as minority, and 7% as undisclosed. Enrollment of Hispanic students increased by 82% in the past five years.
- 24% of all students are 24 and under; the balance is non-traditional students ages 25 and over.
- 41% of students live in Delaware. However, over the past five years, the percentage of enrolled students who live outside of the Delaware region (Delaware, Northeastern Maryland, Southern New Jersey, and Southeastern Pennsylvania) increased by 168%.
- Fall 2023 was the inaugural year for the Juris Doctorate program, with 20 students enrolled.

Table 1: Top Five Programs of Study

Top Five Programs of Study for the 2022/2023 Academic Year			
Undergraduate		Graduate	
Program	**Enrollment**	**Program**	**Enrollment**
Computer Science, B.S.	1,185	Information Systems Technologies, M.S.	1,408
Business Management, B.S.	1,031	Business Administration, M.B.A.	1,406
Cybersecurity, B.S.	877	Leadership, M.S.N.	524
Behavioral Science, B.S.	693	Management, M.S.M.	423
Human Resource Management, B.S.	626	School Leadership, M.Ed.	357

<u>Uniqueness</u>

- Almost all our programs at the undergraduate level are open admissions. Generally, students are not required to submit SAT or ACT scores for admission.
- We are a career-oriented institution.
- Consistent with our mission, we rely heavily on adjunct faculty from the workplace to provide instruction, and they play a crucial role at the University. We utilize adjuncts by choice, not chance, and these instructors bring knowledge of community issues and market trends to provide relevant teaching examples.
- We are non-residential.
- 75% of our undergraduate students transfer from community colleges or other institutions. Of those, over 62% attended at least one community college.
- 22% of our undergraduates and 29% of our graduates were full-time in 2023.
- Only 11% of our entering undergraduates in Fall 2022 were first-time, full-time freshmen.
- Our students are more mature. Only 20% of our undergraduates are traditional age. Our undergraduate mean age is 31.
- We have a liberal transfer credit acceptance policy of 90 credits, of which 75 credits can be awarded via credit for prior learning.
- We offer courses in seven-week blocks, 15-week semesters, and weekend modular formats. Our tuition is low compared to other four-year institutions, both public and private. Currently (in fall 2023), an undergraduate student can enroll full-time (12 credits) for a total of $4,938 which includes tuition and fees. The comparable rate for a full-time (nine-credit) graduate student is $4,726.
- 30% of our undergraduates were awarded Pell grants in 2022.
- We have an exceptional, ongoing approach to institutional effectiveness through our Proof Positive 3 (PP3) model.
- In 2017, the University entered a partnership with Guild Education, which connects employers and education providers, thus providing access to thousands of employees nationwide.
- The international student population is growing after several years of decline due to outside factors. In 2022-2023, applications from international students increased 268% from the prior year. Enrolled international students increased by 12.6% for undergraduates and 81.1% for graduates in that same timeframe. The percentage of international students enrolled at all levels for 2022-23 made up 11% of the total population.

University Leadership and Organizational Structure

Wilmington University President Dr. LaVerne Harmon has led the institution since 2017. A collaborative leader, she sets the tone. The President meets weekly with the Executive Team and monthly with the Cabinet and University Coordinating Council (UCC), which consists of director-level and above staff and college deans. The Executive Team, comprising three senior vice presidents and four vice presidents, are University stewards who prioritize institution-wide perspectives, including academic and administrative concerns, enrollment, and program proposals. The Cabinet, comprising five college deans, 15 assistant vice presidents, and the

Executive Team, is a high-performing group that supports decision-making structures and cultures that function efficiently and serve students compassionately and comprehensively.

Our Self-Study Design

Thematically, "Shaping the Future" symbolizes our innovations in student learning, professional development opportunities, increased program offerings, and student support services. However, a secure future also represents a commitment to improvement, which will be necessary to ensure financial stability and continued academic excellence in a society changed by the pandemic and influenced by expanding technologies.

Wilmington University chose a standards-based approach that comprehensively evaluated the MSCHE Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation. With oversight from the President and Senior Vice President/ Chief Operating Officer, the Wilmington University Self-Study is led by two co-chairs: the Assistant Vice President of Admissions and Academic Support Services and the Senior Director of Student Systems. The University appointed the co-chairs because of their backgrounds in assessment, knowledge of operating systems, and abilities to facilitate processes that garner positive results. A Steering Committee consisting of two co-chairs per standard, along with workgroup members comprising administrators, faculty, staff, and students, helped prepare the Self-Study. An outcome aligned with the "Shaping the Future" theme is providing individuals from various areas and levels across the institution with more knowledge and leadership development, which is why the Steering Committee and workgroup membership include long-time employees and recent hires. Board and student representatives are also workgroup members within appropriate standards. This structure has ensured that all constituencies of the institution are represented. More than 85 individuals have served the workgroups. The co-chairs, in consultation with University leadership, established the following Self-Study outcomes:

Self-Study Outcomes

1. Demonstrate how the institution meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation
2. Focus on continuous improvement in attaining the institution's mission and annual institutional priorities.
3. Engage the institutional community in an inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process that actively and deliberately seeks to involve members from all areas of the institutional community.
4. Reinforce the University's mission, vision, and values across all constituencies.
5. Provide institutional knowledge and leadership development of individuals from a range of areas and levels across the institution.
6. Enrich the institution's future strategic direction.

The Self-Study co-chairs led the discovery and improvement processes by reviewing the MSCHE Standards for Accreditation. The co-chairs identified the lines of inquiry per standard per criterion and prepared an initial list of general evidence. They both established a timeline, and the discovery process ensued. Steering Committee members led their workgroups by examining criteria and evidence by researching the lines of inquiry shown in the Self-Study Design. The Steering Committee met with the Self-Study co-chairs monthly to report progress,

coordinate efforts between and among workgroups, ask questions, discuss evidence, and learn. The Self-Study co-chairs regularly updated the President and Senior Vice President/COO, who provided guidance and support. The Board of Trustees also received timely progress updates. The entire University community remained informed throughout the process. In collaboration with the Self-Study co-chairs, web communication developed a Middle States webpage, and the approved Self-Study Design was made readily available, as were timelines and relevant updates in the process. Presentations were given at University-Wide meetings to ensure transparency and inclusiveness. Full community involvement, learning, and feedback were sought during the Conference on Teaching Excellence, University-Wide meetings, and by distributing the Self-Study Report draft.

- University-wide meetings with all full-time employees (April 19, 2023)
- Center for Teaching Excellence with full-time and part-time faculty (Sept. 23, 2023)
    - Review of the accreditation process
    - Review of each standard and Self-Study findings per standard
    - Breakout sessions led by Steering Committee members to gain feedback on each standard
    - Feedback from full-time and part-time faculty on what they learned
- University-wide meetings with all full-time employees (Oct. 4, 2023)
    - Review of the accreditation process
    - Review of each standard and Self-Study findings per standard
    - Table discussions and feedback on standards
    - Collection of learned information through processes and presentations
- Distribution of self-study document to the community (Dec. 8, 2023)

After the draft report was distributed to the campus community, feedback was encouraged through an online survey, campus meetings, and departmental discussions. This feedback was carefully reviewed and resulted in a more robust final product.

The Self-Study process has been healthy for the University. It has allowed us to reflect on our past, identify areas of strength and innovation, and discern areas of opportunity to shape our future.

We look forward to the visiting team's review in March of 2024 and the additional insight we expect to gain.

<h1 style="text-align:center">Standard I. Mission and Goals</h1>

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

Requirement of Affiliation: 7

Introduction

Wilmington University's institutional mission distinctly articulates who the University serves and what goals it intends to accomplish within the context of higher education. Evidence demonstrates that the University has clearly defined annual institutional priorities and goals linked explicitly to that mission. The mission and goals guide all areas within the University for program and curricular development and outcome definitions, as well as resource allocation and strategic planning for the future of Wilmington University. The mission and goals are clearly communicated and accessible to staff, faculty, students, and the public.

Vision 2025, the University's strategic plan, is guided by our mission, vision, and values built on the foundation and direction provided by Visions 2010, 2015, and 2020. Grounded by our mission, Vision 2025 offers the framework for all planning and goals. Modifications to Vision 2025 reflect the University community's commitment to a culture promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and responsiveness to all stakeholders.

The mission and values inform our inclusive admissions policies, respect for diverse individuals with varying abilities, and focus on career-oriented programs delivered by faculty practitioners with real-world experience.

CRITERION 1: Clearly defined mission and goals that:

> *Criterion 1a: Clearly defined mission and goals that are developed through appropriate collaborative participation by all who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional development and improvement;*
>
> *Criterion 1b: Clearly defined mission and goals that address external as well as internal contexts and constituencies;*
>
> *Criterion 1c: Clearly defined mission and goals that are approved and supported by the governing body;*
>
> *Criterion 1g: Clearly defined mission and goals are periodically evaluated;*

CRITERION 2: Institutional goals that are realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with mission.

Vision 2025:
The University's mission reflects a well-defined vision and institutional values that drive our daily actions to serve our students and campus community. In 2019, following input from faculty, administrators, staff, and students, a draft mission statement was vetted by various

campus constituencies. The Board of Trustees adopted this mission statement [below] in 2019-2020 as part of a strategic plan titled "Vision 2025," which provides the five strategic initiatives that guide our annual institutional priorities, planning, and resource allocations.

The primary changes between the previous mission statement and the current one include a reference to serving students regardless of geographic location and mentioning certificates in addition to traditional academic degree programs. These additions keep us rooted in our foundation yet moving forward. Similarly, we adjusted the vision statement to include an even greater focus on being responsive to market and community needs and ensuring that students can participate in learning face-to-face or online (***Approved Mission Statement Revision; Vision 2025 Revisions***).

Our Mission:

> Wilmington University is committed to excellence in teaching, relevancy of its programs and offerings, and individual attention to students. As an institution with inclusive admission policies, it offers affordable and accessible higher education to students of varying ages, interests, and aspirations through both face-to-face and various online formats.
>
> The University provides a range of exemplary career-oriented undergraduate and graduate degree programs and certificates, or customized offerings based upon market needs, for a growing and diverse student population. A highly qualified, full-time faculty works closely with part-time faculty drawn from the workplace to ensure that the university's programs prepare students to begin or continue their career, improve their competitiveness in the job market, and engage in lifelong learning.

As part of Vision 2025, the Board of Trustees also adopted a vision statement and institutional values in 2020 (***Vision 2025 Revisions***).

Our Vision:

> Wilmington University will distinguish itself as an open-access university by building innovative academic courses and programs responsive to student, community, and market needs. Created to enable professional competence, these academic offerings will be available in face-to-face and/or varied online formats so that distance, time and cost will not be barriers to learning or student-centered service. We will foster an inclusive environment where diversity is valued and understanding and respect for others is the norm.

Our Values:

> We are committed to being a University where understanding and respect for each other is paramount, integrity guides all our choices, providing educational opportunity is our primary purpose, and responsiveness to diverse community needs is key.
>
> In designing academic offerings and student services, we support innovation and actively seek faculty with experience in their fields who can provide students with an education

focused on application. We are especially committed to caring for our students as customers and partners (***Vision 2025 and Annual Institutional Priorities FY23-24***).

This mission, vision, and values (***Mission, Vision, and Values webpage***) serve as the framework for the strategic initiatives, Vision 2025, which were developed by the Executive Team and approved by the Board of Trustees in 2020 (***Vision 2025 and Annual Institutional Priorities FY20-21; May 2020 Board Minutes Showing Approval, pg. 1***). Within Vision 2025, five strategic initiatives are defined. They guide the institution with the development of Annual Institutional Priorities and all planning.

Figure 1: Strategic Planning Snapshot

Wilmington University's strategic initiatives are connected to its mission and aligned with MSCHE Standards in the chart below. Goals align with the strategic initiatives in Vision 2025 and align with the Middle States Standards of Accreditation (***Vision 2025 and Annual Institutional Priorities FY22-23; Vision 2025 and Annual Institutional Priorities FY23-24***).

Table 2: Strategic Initiatives Connection to Standards

Strategic Initiatives	MSCHE Standards						
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Focusing on Our students	⛪	⛪	⛪	⛪			
Expanding Opportunity	⛪		⛪	⛪	⛪		
Enhancing Academic Excellence	⛪	⛪		⛪	⛪		
Strengthening Our Organization	⛪	⛪			⛪	⛪	⛪
Investing in Our Future						⛪	

Wilmington University provides inclusive access to education for all those who seek it. The University strives to be the choice for students of varying ages and abilities with diverse backgrounds who can benefit from our innovative, career-oriented programs. Examples of how our initiatives connect to our mission, vision, values, strategic initiatives, and annual institutional priorities can be found throughout this Self-Study.

The mission, vision, values, strategic initiatives, annual institutional priorities, and progress on IPs are available for all faculty and staff to view on the University's intranet. Additionally, the mission, vision, and values are communicated during staff and faculty onboarding (***New Hire Orientation Outline, pg. 1***) and available in our handbooks and website (***Employee Handbook, pg. 8; Mission, Vision, and Values webpage***). University leaders also demonstrate vision, mission, and values by serving as examples and focusing on strategic initiatives.

Strategic initiatives are communicated and reinforced regularly since additional planning mirrors these initiatives (***Vision 2025 and Annual Institutional Priorities FY22-23; Vision 2025 and Annual Institutional Priorities FY23-34***). When approved, annual institutional priorities are communicated to Cabinet members via email. Cabinet members inform their direct reports.

In addition, the University's mission, vision, and values are shared with prospective and current students and family members at recruitment events, on the website, and in print (***Mission, Vision, and Values webpage; Student Handbook, pg. 2***). A link to the mission is also linked in faculty and staff email signatures.

Criterion 1d: Clearly defined mission and goals that guide faculty, administration, staff, and governing structures in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curricular development, and the definition of institutional and educational outcomes;

Wilmington University's mission, strategic initiatives, and annual institutional priorities influence all departments' strategic, operational, and budget planning. Vice presidents and assistant vice presidents develop goals for their areas guided by strategic initiatives and annual institutional priorities.

Several task forces met throughout 2021 and 2022 to create action items that became operational departmental goals (***Task Force Action Items***). Details regarding task forces are included in the Standard VI section. The Information Technology Strategic Plan (***PP3 - Information Technology - Dec 2021***), the library's strategic plan (***Library Strategic Plan***), and the Strategic Enrollment Plan (***Strategic Enrollment Plan, pg. 4***) are connected to the mission and strategic initiatives. Standard VI contains several examples explaining the link between planning and resource allocation.

Academic colleges and programs incorporate our mission into every new degree, program, or certificate proposal (***Curriculum Committee Proposal, pg. 3; State Approval Documentation***). Annual institutional priorities also provide direction for new programs and curriculum development in conjunction with community and student needs. Faculty promote these mission-driven values and practical application through curricular development and instruction (***Educational Values***).

(1) Lifelong Learning

(2) Multiculturalism
(3) Collaboration
(4) Creativity
(5) Citizenship
(6) Well-Being
(7) Civility

All department plans and budgeting requests connect to resource allocation via Compass, an internally developed tool in which department directors add early plans and funding requests. Each request ties to a strategic initiative. Outcomes of these initiatives and budget requests are also tracked in this system. Details about this process are in Standard VI.

The following graphic displays the continuous cycle linking mission, vision, and values to planning and budgeting. Annual institutional priorities, unit plans, goals, funding requests, funding allocations, tracking, and metrics are interconnected and regularly assessed to ensure we meet our goals. Related processes are flexible, allowing for adjustments during planning periods if internal or external environments require modification.
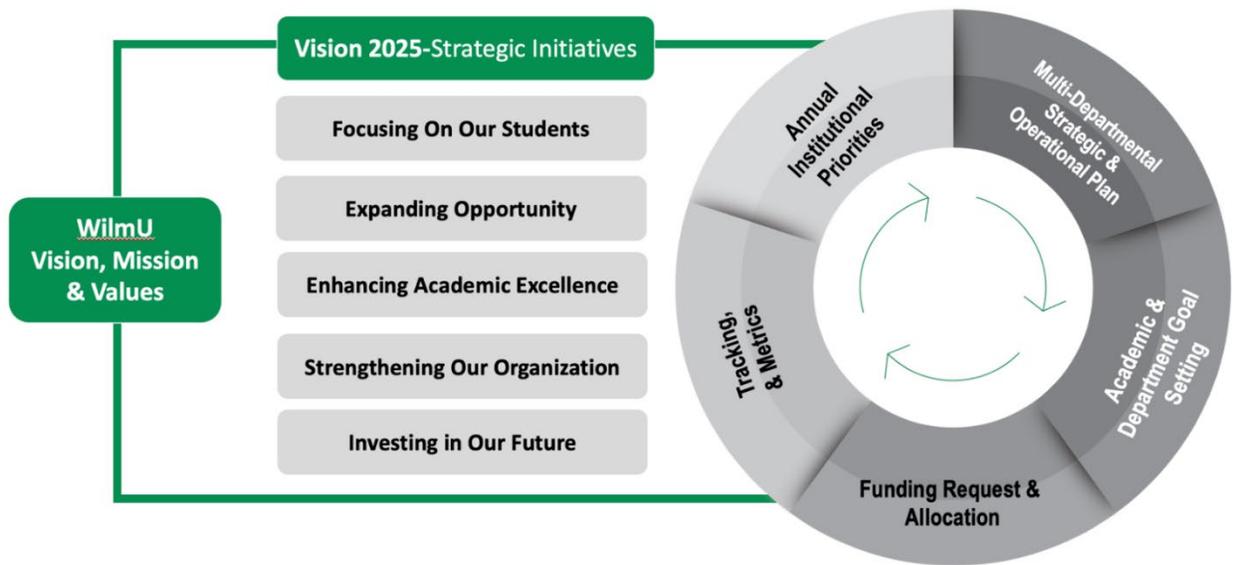
Figure 2: Strategic Planning Detail

Criterion 1e: Clearly defined mission and goals that include support of scholarly inquiry and creative activity, at levels and of the type appropriate to the institution.

Wilmington University bases its academic operations on the scholarly-practitioner model, in which qualified faculty with real-world experiences teach students embarking on or immersed in high-demand fields. The model is reflected in an Academic Affairs Strategic Plan supported by goals guided by our strategic initiatives. Elements of this plan include strengthening course development, experiential learning pathways, and developing and anticipating programs for future careers (***Academic Affairs Strategic Plan***). Developing programs that allow graduates to

be career-ready upon completion is critical since the University requires that practical application be evidenced in all academic offerings.

The Science Department, and now the Division of Natural Sciences, has been heavily involved with the DE NASA Space Grant since 2016. The director of Natural Sciences is also a NASA Delaware Space Grant associate director. Since 2016, 38 awards have been given to science students. Some students have participated in multiple activities, so the 38 awards are not for 38 unique individuals.

Since 2016, DE NASA Space Grant has supported student research at Wilmington University at $195,000. This support came in the form of undergraduate internship stipends ($119,600), graduate fellowships ($61,000), research support for the use of a DNA sequencing center ($6000) and participating in NASA RockOn! Students build and launch a rocket payload to space ($9,000). A Wilmington University student was highlighted in a local Wallops Island, Virginia, news article (June '23) for her participation in RockOn! (***Once in a Lifetime Opportunity***).

These activities have also led to the successful placement of students in jobs and graduate schools. For instance, Christiana Care's Gene Editing Institute recently recruited a student directly from the Wilmington University Space Grant lab and is developing a continuing pipeline. This partnership with NASA corresponds to our Strategic Initiatives: focusing on our students and expanding opportunity.

Wilmington University is a teaching institution focused on nurturing successful classroom environments. The scholarly-practitioner model supports full-time and adjunct faculty, beginning at onboarding and continuing with the Pathways to Instructional Excellence program available through the Center for Teaching Excellence and other professional development opportunities. "Becoming a Scholarly Practitioner," a required training for the Essential Level (the first level of faculty training), guides the creation of career-relevant course lesson plans, designing engaging class sessions, and communicating effectively with students to provide meaningful, individual attention (***PIE webpage, pg. 1***). PIE and additional faculty development opportunities are shared in Standard III.

CRITERION 3: Goals that focus on student learning and related outcomes and on institutional improvement; are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs and services; and are consistent with institutional mission.

The University focuses its academic and operational efforts on mission-driven initiatives. Several examples are illustrated below.

Accessibility, Affordability, and Recognition of Prior Learning

Starting with the 2018-2019 academic year, the University modified its transfer credit policy for undergraduate students. The policy allowed students to transfer in more credits, increasing the permissible amount of transfer credits from 75 to 90. Approximately 75% of our undergraduate students transfer credits, so this cost-saving measure shortens degree completion time and honors

previous college coursework. This policy was reviewed as part of an annual institutional priority directly linked to two strategic initiatives: focusing on students and expanding opportunities.

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society included Wilmington University on its Transfer Friendly Honor Roll for three consecutive years. This national recognition demonstrates our commitment to identifying and awarding credit for previous college work so students can save tuition and time while pursuing degrees (***PTK Honor Roll webpage***).

  <u>Innovative Academics</u>

The College of Education and Liberal Arts offers the Immersive Year-Long Residency Program (YLR) program for teacher candidates. This nationally recognized co-teaching approach provides real-life teaching experiences for candidates to manage their classrooms competently immediately upon graduation. They participate in teacher-related activities throughout the school year, including district-run meetings, parent-teacher conferences, field trips, and professional development training. Wilmington University finances 50% of participants' tuition, and external grants cover the remainder. For the 2023-34 school year, our students will receive $870,266 from Delaware State funds for their salaries while matriculating in the program (***FY22-23 Key Accomplishments Board June 2023, pg. 47***). This initiative began in 2014 to improve the clinical training of student teachers and teacher interns. The cooperating teacher's role transforms into a supervising teacher to enhance the prestige and professional dignity of that position. To date, 195 students have participated in this program. The Year-Long Residency program (YLR) prepared 188 teacher residents in elementary, middle, and high school settings. With a 99% hire rate, practically all graduates obtained employment, most candidates stayed in Delaware, and 92% of graduates have maintained employment in public school systems.

- **Teacher Quality** - Because of the enhanced preparation and the settings in which they complete the program, residents can handle more challenging environments and engage learners immediately. In addition, YLR candidates are more confident and possess the skills necessary to fully immerse themselves in the school culture and community. Delaware Teacher Growth and Support System (DTGSS) Teacher Evaluation is embedded to measure candidate quality and performance.
- **Teacher Recruitment** - Understanding the critical shortage areas identified by districts, the intent is to create employment pipelines to those critical areas as the YLR program allows for participation by various degree options, undergraduate and graduate in all K-12 settings, and content areas that include Special Education.
- **K-12 Student Achievement** - It is difficult to collect data on K-12 student achievement due to privacy issues and limited data sharing agreements. However, within the first year of employment, there are clear signs that YLR teacher candidates fare much better than their counterparts.
  - Mentor teachers and building-level administrators express extreme confidence in these candidates' positive impact on student achievement during their first and subsequent years of teaching. The development of this program supports several strategic initiatives: focusing on students, expanding opportunity, and enhancing academic excellence.

Career-Oriented Education

Wilmington University develops and delivers academic programs for students to begin or continue their careers and improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace. The Annual Alumni Survey is sent to students eligible to participate in the Commencement Ceremonies held during the previous academic year. For example, in Fall 2023, the Office of Institutional Research surveyed alumni who earned degrees in Summer 2022, Fall 2022, and Spring 2023. Since 2016, we have averaged 4,500 alumni survey recipients annually, with an average 16.4% response rate. According to the 2022 survey, 82.2% of our recent alumni are employed full-time, 67.6% work in their major fields of study, and 93.7% reported that their coursework prepared them for their careers (***Alumni Survey, pgs. 4, 6, 12***). Several colleges hold specialized accreditations and focus on preparing students for career readiness. For example, the College of Business's IACBE Self-Study provides evidence supporting career development and planning services, which tie directly to our mission (***Academic Program Reports to IACBE (COB), pg. 234***).

Work-integrated learning offered through the Division of Online and Experiential Learning helps students secure cooperative education, internships, service-learning opportunities, and senior project placements (***Work Integrated Learning webpage***). These learning offerings are built into nearly every degree program and link directly to our mission of providing career-oriented education. Assessments are completed by students and employers who participate (***PP3 - Online and Experiential Learning - Apr 2019, pg. 12***).

Student Support and Student Services

An idea generated from the Task Force Goal Development process and implemented in 2023 was the realignment of Student Services. The goal is to provide a holistic team approach to student engagement and service. Students work with an engagement team of professionals from various service areas to get the help they need. This Annual Institutional Priority is discussed in more detail in Standard IV.

The library's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan articulates the University's mission, vision, values, and strategic initiatives and focuses on diversity. A goal of the library for 23-24 is to seek funds and allocate resources to intentionally develop a collection that addresses the University's efforts to infuse global awareness and respect for cultural differences in the curriculum (***Library Strategic Plan***). Student outcomes are discussed in detail in Standard V (***College Scorecard - earnings by student and program***).

CRITERION 4: *Periodic assessment of mission and goals to ensure they are relevant and achievable.*

As shared in Criterion 1, Wilmington University's mission is evaluated every five years to ensure that we can best serve the needs of our students and community. We take a deeper look annually while developing institutional priorities since each links to our Vision 2025 Strategic Initiatives.

Assessments focused on inspiring excellence and aligned with our mission are core components of the University's culture. Service areas evaluate processes and collect student surveys.

Colleges also collect student surveys to assess student learning outcomes and educational effectiveness while responding appropriately to identified needs.

The Board of Trustees Compensation Committee establishes the University's performance objectives aligned with strategic initiatives and tied to the mission. Performance objective results are audited annually to determine initiatives and objectives for the upcoming fiscal year. (***Performance Objectives***).

Proof Positive 3 (PP3), our framework for institutional assessment, was developed in 2009 to emphasize assessment in three major areas: workplace, departmental policies and processes, and students at every stage of their life cycles at the University (***Framework for Assessment***). PP3 reports are completed on a pre-defined schedule and include information about initiatives, outcomes, budget, opportunities for improvement, and their alignment with the mission (***PP3 Guidelines***). These reports are presented at one of several meetings, depending on the report type, and are available for all faculty and staff to review on the Wilmington University intranet (***PP3 Reports***). Continuous institutional and unit improvement is encouraged throughout this process.

The Office of Institutional Research coordinates the PP3 process and supports other types of assessments, such as academic program reviews, surveys, analyses, and more. Benchmarking ensures that our efforts are competitive with peer institutions. This office provides various reports to assist in data-driven decision-making across the institution. An example of improvement tied to report review via the PP3 process (connected to our mission of providing career-oriented education) included embedding work-integrated learning opportunities into the curriculum of 13 programs in the 2021-2022 academic year. There was a decline in students taking advantage of these opportunities due to the pandemic, which forced learning to become 100% virtual. However, student interest is growing again as more opt for in-person experiences. We introduced micro-internships, an improvement from this trend, to help students gain valuable project-based experiences without committing to traditional course-length internships (***PP3 - Office of Experiential Learning - July 2023, pg. 16***). Related to our mission of affordability, analysis of searches within our website showed that the Top 10 search terms were relevant to current students, with the notable exception of "Tuition," the tenth most searched term. Prospective students are searching for our tuition, which needs to be distinctly visible. Website design should prioritize the ease of finding tuition rates on the home page and throughout the site. Therefore, we made changes to enhance transparency and findability of tuition rates (***PP3 - Web Communications - Sept 2022, pg. 4***). Additional proof of assessment and improvement from PP3 reports and other types of evaluation is demonstrated throughout this Self-Study.

Conclusion
Wilmington University's mission provides the foundation for all planning and programming. It is well-articulated and shared widely among all constituents. Additionally, the planning process, including strategic initiatives, task forces, and annual institutional priorities, is structured and communicated appropriately and ties back to the mission. The PP3 process is embedded in colleges and departments as the standard.

Areas of Innovation and Strength
- Administration, faculty, and staff live our mission in their roles and decision-making.
- Wilmington University has created a culture of assessment through the Proof Positive 3 (PP3) institutional assessment process.

Opportunities to Shape the Future
- As a tuition-dependent, private institution, Wilmington University faces many challenges in today's market. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognize that higher education will not be business as usual. Wilmington University was a pioneer in flexible course offerings, exceptional student service, affordability, and accessibility for five decades. The pandemic has forced other institutions to build similar offerings and mimic our approach to student service. We must pivot strategically to approach and create Vision 2030 with new ideas to inform strategic initiatives and annual institutional priorities, positioning Wilmington University for future success. In addition to feedback from our Self-Study report, we will conduct environmental scanning to ensure our focus yields future success.

Standard II. Ethics and Integrity

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

Requirements of Affiliation: 1, 5, 6, 13, 14

Introduction

Wilmington University is committed to maintaining a high standard of ethical practice and integrity among our students, faculty, and staff. Understanding and respect are foremost, and integrity guides all choices. The University's vision is paramount, whereby an inclusive environment is fostered, diversity is valued, and understanding and respect for others is the norm. The University embraces innovation and is especially committed to caring for students as customers and partners. Wilmington University demonstrates compliance with the fundamental elements of ethics and integrity in all institutional aspects, among all University constituencies, and as outlined in the following sections.

CRITERION 1: A commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights.

Wilmington University demonstrates respect for intellectual property rights, academic freedom, and freedom of expression. Wilmington University's commitment to developing a culture of respect and integrity is one of the institution's core values. It is clearly stated on our website along with our vision and mission statements (***Mission, Vision, and Values webpage***). The Employee Handbook contains policies that ensure that individuals may express themselves through speech, dress, and other outward methods without fear of retaliation (***Employee Handbook***). Wilmington University's Employee Handbook states, "The University recognizes the value of free speech and academic freedom (***Employee Handbook, pg. 127***)." The University provides guidance on best practices for use in social media, and the Employee Handbook explains that retaliation is prohibited. The Student Handbook provides guidelines for and expectations for students' public postings in its Public Display and Posting Policy section (***Student Handbook, pg. 122***).

In addition to the Employee Handbook, faculty may find guidance on integrity and academic freedom issues in the Faculty Handbook and the Academic Affairs Policy and Procedures Manual. The Faculty Handbook stresses the need for faculty to exemplify the highest form of professional ethics and conduct (***Faculty Handbook, pg. 38***). The University recognizes the importance of supporting a climate of academic and intellectual inquiry and affirms that all faculty members are entitled to academic freedom (***Faculty Handbook, pg. 39***). Our mission focuses on career-oriented programs taught by practitioners from the workplace and, therefore, requires our unwavering commitment to putting expert instructors who want to teach in front of students who want to learn and provide an environment that supports such exchange.

The Student Handbook, which also contains policies, regulations, and other important information, guides ethical practices for computer use, civility, and academic honesty. Ethics,

one of our graduation competencies, is defined in the Student Handbook as the ability to demonstrate knowledge and application of prescribed ethical codes and behaviors related to the student's academic discipline (***Student Handbook, pg. 72***). The Academic Integrity Policy states that students are expected to pursue learning with integrity, dignity, and responsibility toward others and with proper attribution (***Academic Integrity Policy***). Ethics is also one of the competencies measured in Outcomes Assessment assignments in courses in all programs throughout the University.

Wilmington University respects the intellectual property rights of its students, faculty, and staff. The institutional Intellectual Property Policy is available on the employee intranet and in the student handbook. The policy fosters creativity and creates a culture of trust and collaboration (***Intellectual Property Policy and Students***).

CRITERION 2: *A climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives.*

Once every three years, the Human Resources Department conducts a Campus Climate Employee Opinion Survey. Due to the pandemic, the survey was distributed in 2022 instead of 2021. The Campus Climate Survey is sent to all full-time and part-time staff and full-time faculty. The survey aims to measure the University's overall climate and how well we are doing as an organization utilizing a five-point Likert scale (i.e., strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, strongly disagree, and not applicable). Specific areas measured include communication, organizational culture, supervision, work environment, career development, and benefits and wellness.

The Human Resources Department administered and distributed the Campus Climate Survey to 376 full-time staff, 84 full-time faculty, and 218 part-time staff in the Spring of 2022. It was important to gauge the campus climate post-pandemic. There was a 47% participation rate, a 5% increase from 2018. Participation rate by employee status included 59% of full-time staff, 62% of full-time faculty, and 21% of part-time staff. Eighty percent of respondents felt that their supervisors emphasized the value of diversity in creating stronger teams. The survey rendered several key positive findings, including:

1. Employees feel there is good communication within their department.
2. Employees feel they can take time off when needed.
3. Employees feel that their supervisors are honest and ethical.
4. Employees are proud to tell others that they work at Wilmington University.
5. Employees understand what their supervisor asks of them and that supervisors are approachable (***PP3 - Human Resources - May 2022, pg. 6***).

An employee benefits survey was created and disseminated to all University benefit-eligible employees to learn what additional benefits they would find valuable. The Human Resources Department reviews the feedback and makes recommendations to the Executive Team.

The University has a diverse student population. For the 2022-2023 academic year, 62% of all students identified as female, 37% were male, and .4% were not reported. The number of

Hispanic students has increased steadily over the past five years. Forty-eight percent of students were White, 22% were Black, and 9% were Hispanic, while the rest were other ethnicities or were not disclosed. Twenty-seven percent of students are of traditional college age, and 73% were 25 or over (***Factbook, pg. 8; IPEDS Evidence - Standard II***).

Student feedback is received through the Student Government Association (SGA). Through SGA, students make an impact by planning campus events, serving as the student body's voice, and giving back through community service (***Student Government Association webpage***).

In January 2020, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) required every member institution to identify a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) designee. The University quickly appointed a designee, increasing DEI awareness among coaches and athletes and identifying opportunities for expanded departmental involvement. In January 2021, a new DEI Student-Athlete Advisory Council created a logo, mission, vision, and DEI statements. In the spring of 2023, certificates of appreciation were presented to graduating council members (***Athletic DEI Mission, Vision, Motto; Athletic Certificate DEI Council; Athletic DEI Statement***).

To better meet the needs of our diverse student body, the Center for Teaching Excellence offered BRITE IDEAS (Broad Resources to Inspire Talent and Excellence in Diversity and Equity for Academic Scholars), a professional development opportunity for full- and part-time faculty. This series helps enhance faculty and staff connections with students by focusing on diversity, equity, belonging, and inclusion. Discussion topics include:

- Identifying personal biases
- Initiating courageous conversations
- Cultivating classroom connections for all students

To date, 104 faculty and staff have participated in BRITE IDEAS, and 86 have been designated CTE Change Champions. Over 92% of participants indicated they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the program (***BRITE IDEAS Survey Results, pg. 1***).

The following are examples of efforts that support students and an inclusive environment.
- In 2019, the Office of Student Concerns created a new policy on civility. The civility statement addressed disrespectful and rude behaviors that some students have displayed toward faculty, staff, and other students. The Office worked with the Educational Technology and Web Communications teams to create a video that explained and endorsed the civility policy. It has had over 30,000 views so far. The civility statement below is found in the Student Handbook (***Student Handbook, pg. 41***).

    Wilmington University is devoted to a culture of learning and respect and to providing a safe and supportive learning environment. All students, faculty, and staff deserve to be treated with kindness, dignity, and respect. Incivility in any form is unacceptable behavior and not tolerated.

- The Safe Zone Ally Training Program is an established training session that helps participants gain awareness and understanding of LGBTQ+ terminology, and covering topics such as sexuality, gender, and language. The Student Life staff adapted the training

to include the use of pronouns and the need for gender-neutral restrooms. (There are currently 18 gender-neutral, single stall bathrooms at University locations.) We aim to create a more inclusive space for our campus community. To date, 95 faculty and staff members have been trained (***Safe Zone Training***).

- Wilmington University is committed to cultivating a diverse and inclusive community that recognizes the value of each individual and allows persons to learn and work in an environment free from harassment and discrimination. Our Title IX efforts ensure that all constituents are part of a welcoming environment. The various constituent handbooks outline the policy and reporting requirements. Title IX training is required for all first-time and full-time students and full-time staff. Information about Title IX policies and procedures is on the website and handbooks (***Title IX webpage; Student Handbook, pgs. 103, 139; Employee Handbook, pg. 80; Adjunct Faculty Handbook, pgs. 20, 56***).

- The Assistant Vice President of Human Resources and the Assistant Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs formed a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice (DEIJ) committee in April 2023 to promote and enhance efforts across the University, along with various stakeholders (i.e., Human Resources, Student Affairs, Student Services, Academic Affairs, and Athletics). This collaborative platform shares ideas, resources, and best practices while identifying and addressing areas where the University can improve its DEIJ efforts (***DEI&J Agenda and Meeting Notes***). The Committee identified an opportunity to establish a centralized hub for all approved University DEI&J events. Currently, each area markets its topics and events. A centralized hub would allow the University to direct its audiences (students, staff, student-athletes, etc.) to a central repository for more information. Committee chairs are exploring available options and will provide recommendations based on these discoveries (***DEI&J Presentation***).

- The Office of Student Concerns assists students who need direction, support, or correction regarding a wide range of issues they may face while attending Wilmington University. The Office treats students with respect and compassion by providing them with resources and tools to assist with completing their educational goals. The team provides resources for students during emergencies and crises and educational interventions when students display uncivil or inappropriate behaviors (***Student Concerns webpage***).

- During the summer of 2022, the Office of Disability Services officially changed its name to the Office of Student Accessibility Services to reflect more inclusive language and encourage more students to seek assistance from the office while reducing what some see as a stigma of disability. This office actively supports the rights of students with disabilities to have equal access to education and makes every reasonable effort to accommodate their needs. The Office facilitates equal access to Wilmington University programs and activities for students with documented physical, sensory, learning, or psychological disabilities. Students must contact and self-identify to the Student Accessibility Services team and furnish proper documentation of their disabilities to receive available services or accommodations (***Office of Student Accessibility Services webpage***). In the 2022-2023 academic year, the Office of Accessibility Services registered 265 new students, serving 149 students in the fall and 140 in the spring.

- In Fall 2023, we implemented Preferred Name Functionality in our student systems. This allows students to be called by their preferred names in online or face-to-face classes. Students' preferred names are seen on course rosters, in grading and attendance, in the

Learning Management System (Canvas), and via other systems (***Preferred First Name Policy webpage***).

- Several members of our faculty have extensive knowledge and experience with trauma-informed practices. Beginning in 2019-20, they developed and delivered training for our faculty and staff. To date, 186 employees have participated in the training, and more will be offered to faculty, staff, and students (***Trauma-Informed Approaches Training; Trauma-Informed Strategic Plan***).
- The University Safety Department keeps campuses safe, assuming responsibility for the administration of ID cards and providing 24/7 security coverage for the New Castle, Wilson Graduate Center, Brandywine and Dover sites, and the Athletic Complex.
- Wilmington University constables work with a private security firm as well as state, county, and municipal police agencies to protect each campus. All University sites are access-controlled, requiring students and staff to use an issued ID card to gain entry.

CRITERION 3: *A grievance policy that is documented and disseminated to address complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty, or staff. The institution's policies and procedures are fair and impartial, and assure that grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably.*

Wilmington University has established and made multiple grievance policies and procedures publicly available for students, staff, and faculty. The Wilmington University Student Handbook provides a Code of Conduct, which includes information about the disciplinary board, appeals process, and due process. Non-academic Code of Conduct violations and the violations review process are also explained in detail for students (***Code of Conduct webpage***). A Student Discipline Committee consisting of the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs, one full-time faculty member, one academic advisor, the Student Government Association president, and one Cabinet member meets regarding instances related to academic dishonesty or student misconduct (***Student Discipline Committee webpage***). The policies and procedures pertaining to grievances for Accessibility Services can be found on the Student Accessibility webpage and in the Student Handbook (***Student Accessibility webpage***). Contact information for MSCHE is listed for students to file complaints (***Online Learning Complaint Resolution webpage***).

The student discipline procedures ensure due process through a Student Discipline Committee, including an opportunity to be heard and present evidence and appellate rights while achieving the educational goal of settling issues as informally as possible with fairness as the guiding principle (***Student Handbook, pg. 97***).

For employees, the Standards of Conduct is an avenue for employees to address workplace concerns through problem-resolution procedures listed in the Employee Handbook. The Employee Handbook outlines the grievance procedure for all employees, including faculty. The Employee and Faculty handbooks, distributed to all new and established employees when changes are made, are readily accessible on the employee intranet site (***Employee Handbook; Adjunct Faculty Handbook***).

Our Human Resources Department is crucial in tracking individual employee relations concerns. This is vital for ensuring legal compliance, identifying trends, and facilitating early intervention.

It also enhances employee satisfaction, maintains a healthy work environment, prevents retaliation, retains valuable employees, and provides data for informed decision-making. The Chief Human Resources Officer and Employee Relations and Training Specialist regularly review this information and pinpoint training needs for employees and managers. This proactive approach to employee education ensures that our workforce is well-informed and helps us keep our policies current.

CRITERION 4: The avoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict in all activities and among all constituents.

The Employee Handbook contains the Individual Integrity/Conflict of Interest Policy. At the time of their hire and annually thereafter, employees receive an email from Human Resources containing that policy and a "Disclosure of Other Interests Questionnaire" for completion. If a potential conflict is identified, the University meets with the employee to discuss and determine whether there is a conflict of interest. In 2022, this policy was updated, disseminated to all employees, and required policy acknowledgment and questionnaire completion (***Employee Handbook, pg. 10; Conflict of Interest Policy; Annual Conflict of Interest Policy Email***).

CRITERION 5: Fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees.

The University's commitment to ethical practices is based on its values of respect, integrity, opportunity, responsiveness, innovation, experience, education, and caring (***Mission, Vision, and Values webpage***). These values guide the University and Human Resources in developing and implementing fair and impartial policies and procedures throughout the employee lifecycle.

When positions need to be filled, Human Resources posts the openings on the University website and other appropriate sites, including JobLink Delaware, DisabledInHigherEd, VeteransInHigherEd, BlacksInHigherEd, and HispanicsInHigherEd. If needed and approved, additional advertising outlets are used. The breadth of our recruitment efforts helps ensure we attract a diversified applicant pool (***Hiring and Promotion Process***).

New employees are oriented to this mission and policies during their online HR orientation. The Employee Handbook provides details of general employee policies and procedures, including sections on the following policies: equal opportunity in employment and advancement opportunities, what employees can expect from the University in terms of compensation and benefits, and what the University expects from employees in standards of conduct and the discipline process (***Employee Handbook***). Also, full-time faculty receive the Faculty Handbook provided by Academic Affairs, which details specific faculty-related policies and procedures on recruitment, promotion, faculty evaluation, and dismissal (***Faculty Handbook***).

Staff and full-time faculty are informed of changes made to the handbooks through email notifications (***Employee Handbook Update Email***), and updates to both manuals are available on the Employee Intranet SharePoint site. Faculty Senate maintains standing and ad hoc committees for ongoing Faculty Handbook evaluation. Any changes to the handbook are approved by the full Faculty Senate (***Faculty Handbook Changes 2023***). The Employee and Faculty handbooks also list avenues for employees to address concerns within the workplace. The University recently

provided updated policies regarding its Title IX (i.e., Sexual Misconduct Policy Governing Students and Employees) and Title VII policies and resolution procedures as outlined in the Employee Handbook (***Employee Handbook, pg. 80***). Various stakeholders within the University regularly assess and review the application of Title VII and Title IX policies to ensure they are effectively and consistently followed. Recommended changes are discussed and implemented as needed.

Wilmington University offers a competitive total compensation plan that emulates the University's caring culture while meeting the diverse needs of its employees and attracting new and diverse talent. Wilmington University's compensation philosophy is to provide compensation for staff and faculty that falls within the competitive pay range relative to other comparable universities. Wilmington University's salary structure and compensation packages offered to personnel match or lead the market, allowing the University to attract and retain top talent. This compensation analysis includes research from the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA). Research data is also obtained from our compensation consultant, a global health, wealth, and career consulting firm, for executive-level positions which includes data from businesses in other industries.

The Compensation Committee of the Board of Trustees is responsible for reviewing, approving, and recommending any amendments or changes to the Executive Compensation Philosophy to the full Board. This committee reviews base salary levels and actual salaries of the President and Vice Presidents while considering performance reviews, skill sets, and market data. It also must ensure that all compensation and benefits policies, packages, and plans align with the vision and mission of the University (***Compensation Committee Charter***).

Faculty promotion is detailed clearly in the Faculty Handbook (***Faculty Handbook, pg. 24***). Adjunct faculty promotion is similarly outlined in the Adjunct Faculty Handbook (***Adjunct Faculty Handbook, pg. 22***) and on the webpage (***Adjunct Faculty Promotion webpage***).

Table 3: Full-Time Faculty

Rank	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Assistant to Associate Professor	1	6	5	7
Associate to Professor	1	3	2	2

Table 4: Adjunct Faculty

Rank	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Assistant to Associate Professor	*	46	24	27
Associate to Professor	*	*	0	8

*Adjunct faculty ranks newly developed therefore no promotions

University staff and administration participate in a standardized performance management program. This program aims to facilitate interactive discussions between employees and managers, inspire professional development, encourage continuous improvement, and enhance employee engagement (***Standardized Performance Management Program site***). Before 2023, department heads had met with their employees to discuss goals, strengths, and opportunities. Beginning in 2023, a standard performance management template administered by Human

Resources replaced the former practice. The HR team provided training to all employees and managers on administering the program. Surveys will be conducted to assess this new program. Full-time faculty evaluations utilize a different, mature process as outlined in Standard III.

Human Resources also offers opportunities for faculty and staff to increase their skills, whether their goals are to maintain their existing positions or advance within the organization. Employee and manager training is available on various topics, including personal enrichment, wellness, and professional development (***Employee Training***). Training opportunities are communicated via emails sent to staff via the monthly HR Newsflash newsletter (***HR Newsflash - June 2023***). Employees are encouraged to participate in the Learn & Earn HR Training Program. Participants are entered into an annual prize drawing for each session attended.

In 2021-2022, over 80% of full-time employees, over 70% of full-time faculty, and 50% of part-time staff participated in personal or professional training sessions. During the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years, 5,990 employees participated virtually in over 436 training sessions. The most popular topics included "Customer Service in Colleges," "Dealing with Emotional Callers," "Building Healthy Connections," and 15-minute lunchtime workout sessions with representatives from the University's Employee Wellness Center (***PP3 - HR Training and Development - Nov 2022, pg. 5***).

Two leadership development programs were implemented to respond to feedback following the 2016 Campus Climate Survey. The MANAGE program was initially developed and implemented in 2017. The LEAD program followed in 2019.

Employees expressed the desire to continue leadership development opportunities beyond the current programming. Further, the University identified the value in providing managers with the essential tools and experiences to improve their management potential, thereby fostering clarity of purpose and alignment with the University's goals. These programs were introduced to strengthen peer networking, promoting open dialogue and shared knowledge of University policies and procedures, ultimately facilitating effective decision-making.

After examining pre- and post-leadership development program assessments, managers shared the desire to strengthen their managerial competencies relating to employee performance, managing productivity, conflict resolution, connecting personal and University values, managing unwanted behaviors, and understanding emotional intelligence. Therefore, overall leadership development programming was enhanced.

We partnered with Business Health Services (BHS) to oversee the program development, implementation, and facilitation. This choice was based on our existing partnership with BHS for employee professional development, established relationships and credibility with our managers, and familiarity with our culture.

Invitation-only programs such as "MANAGE" allow for cohort-style learning with small groups. As of August 2023, 51 employees have completed the program. Topics include:
- "What Managers Do"
- "Communicate Like a Leader"

- "Managing Productivity"
- "Coaching and Mentoring Employees"
- "My Influence"

(**_MANAGE Training Schedule 2023_**)

The LEAD Program is a four-month, eight-hour, culture-centric leadership development program offered through the Human Resources Office. Invited colleagues participate in four professional development courses designed to enhance leadership styles and maximize leadership effectiveness, improve communication strategies across the University, build high-performing teams, and facilitate effective decision-making strategies (**_LEAD Objectives and Outcomes_**). Twenty-two employees have completed LEAD so far.

Established in 2009 for invited full-time employees, the Wilmington University Leadership Institute has served 209 participants. The program aims to develop and prepare full-time employees for the next leadership level or expand their current roles by equipping them with the skills, competencies, and experiences they need for success. The two-day, off-campus retreat explores leadership styles, Myers Briggs assessments, and University finances, operations, and culture. The curriculum also includes interactive sessions regarding the President's role, the University's mission, vision, institutional values, strategic initiatives, and its budgeting process. A list of core leadership competencies necessary to succeed at Wilmington University is also discussed. This off-site opportunity allows complete focus and the development of a genuine bond between participants.

Participants are arranged into groups to complete a group research project selected by the Executive Team based on current needs, future growth, and program expansions, and the overall program, from retreat to project presentation, lasts from October through May. An external consultant helped plan, design, and develop the Institute. Past topics studied international student populations, building engaging alumni programming for online students, retention, career connections, the University's Hispanic population, employee training and development, and more (**_Leadership Institute Projects_**). Once cohorts complete Institute training, they are surveyed about their experiences and can suggest projects for future cohorts (**_Leadership Institute Evaluations_**). (Note: After a pandemic-driven hiatus, the Institute returned in October 2023.)

The University's administration takes the projects seriously and has made numerous changes and improvements based on their findings. New programs were added, services improved, communication enhanced, and a deeper focus was placed on sub-populations, including international students, athletes, alumni, and online students.

CRITERION 6: _Honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, as well as in internal communications._

Institutional information such as plans, catalogs, and reports are available to students, staff, faculty, and, when appropriate, the public through print, electronic, and video presentations. The Wilmington University Course Catalog is a primary resource for degree program information, course requirements, academic policies, student services, and general University information.

This resource is divided into multiple parts. Appropriately identified personnel are responsible for reviewing all content relevant to their departments annually. This periodic review is done electronically and ensures that all content is accurate and timely.

In addition, Recruiting, and University Relations (UR) departments work collaboratively to communicate the opportunities and benefits of Wilmington University to prospective students and applicants via electronic and other means (***Marketing & Recruiting Highlights UCC Nov 2023***). The UR Department comprises Creative Services, Marketing Services, and Web Communications. The teams develop consistency between design and advertorial content, embrace a rigorous review and approval process, and ensure published materials are honest and accurate (***UR Approval Process***). This confirms that materials used to recruit students and share information about academic programs are consistent and truthful. The President approves marketing campaigns and participates in discussions with the Office of Institutional Research to ensure that data used in published materials are accurate (***University Relations webpage***). UR's intranet site contains guidelines for all users related to branding, templates, marketing consulting services, and more (***University Relations SharePoint site***). During the 2021-2022 academic year, the Creative Services team completed over 6,000 creative projects (***2021-2022 Year in Review, pg. 31***).

University Relations bases its media buys on data. For example, annual media consumption student surveys help us understand their preferred methods of consuming information, inform us of effective advertising strategies, and ensure that the University spends its marketing dollars judiciously (***Media Consumption Survey***).

The University website, the primary source for prospective and current students and the public, offers information including the college catalog, consumer information, financial aid, and required federal reporting (***Wilmington University website***). The Web Communications team regularly engages departments in system-wide webpage reviews to ensure accuracy. The most recent review was completed in 2023. The reviews are annual, in conjunction with the college catalog review process.

The Public Relations Department offers news releases and blogs about academic colleges, degree programs, student and faculty accomplishments, and alumni news to various media channels, including print, broadcast, and online news outlets. The President approves all press materials via the Office of Executive Communications (***PP3 - Public Relations - July 2022, pg. 3***).

The Office of Executive Communications (OEC) was created as a central point to process and disseminate information, lead internal and external messaging, and operate within the Office of the President. Led by the Assistant Vice President of Executive Communications, a post created in 2021, the OEC's objectives include supporting the President and Executive Team in producing strategic communications and meaningful content targeted to employees, students, and other internal and external audiences. In addition, the OEC supports colleagues across the University to ensure consistency in messaging and provides leadership and counsel in producing speeches, talking points, bios, policies, emails, and other communications as needed.

The OEC produced the Wilmington University Editorial Style Guide (***Wilmington University Editorial Style Guide***) in 2021 to educate the community on how to maintain consistent voice, tone, and grammar. The guide was disseminated by mail to all full-time employees and made available digitally to all full- and part-time employees. Newly hired employees are given the guide during their orientations. In addition, the OEC produces Academic News online and WilmU Magazine, mailed to current and former students and community members. With a readership of over 65,000, the magazine is also available online (***Wilmington University magazine***).

Additional information about communication sent to students is documented in Standard IV.

CRITERION 7: *As appropriate to its mission, services or programs in place*

Criterion 7a: To promote affordability and accessibility;

Wilmington University strives to provide an affordable and accessible education, as stated in our mission, and demonstrate our strategic initiative of focusing on our students. Several examples are listed below.

As stated earlier, Wilmington University is an open-access institution that offers flexible, convenient, and affordable programs. All undergraduate programs are open access and allow for admission every eight weeks. With some exceptions, graduate-level programs are available to students with bachelor's degrees. Doctoral programs, the School of Law, and selected graduate programs operate as selective admissions programs.

Our average tuition increased by less than 2.4% per academic year from 2019 through 2024. The University did not increase tuition during the pandemic (2020-2021) (***Tuition Rate Changes***). We also charge very few fees. Title IV Financial Aid is available for qualified individuals, and information about disbursements, repayment, withdrawal, and refunds is listed clearly (***Financial Aid webpage; Official Student Withdrawals; Student Refunds webpage***).

Table 5: Tuition Rates

Price Per Credit Hour			
Academic Year	Undergraduate	Graduate	Doctoral
23-24	$409	$524	$696
22-23	$399	$512	$679
21-22	$390	$500	$663
20-21	$381	$488	$647
19-20	$381	$488	$647
18-19	$372	$477	$632
17-18	$363	$466	$617

Since 2018, Wilmington University has incorporated open education resources (OERs) and other free or low-cost alternatives to traditional supplies and textbooks into its online offerings. More than 200 online courses contain no-cost solutions for students, often eliminating the need to buy textbooks. Twelve certificate offerings and two graduate programs were developed with no-cost

instructional materials, with more to come. This measure helps remove economic barriers for students (***No Cost Instructional Materials***).

The Pandemic

Instead of accepting CARES Act funding for pandemic relief, the administration supported students using institutional funds and extended assistance to those who did not meet federal eligibility standards. The University distributed these funds for three purposes:

- Financial Aid: To help defray tuition costs.
- Emergency Grant: To assist with food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and childcare expenses.
- Cleared Student Debt: To clear selected student debt at Wilmington University.

During the pandemic, the University also established the Wilmington University Support Fund (***COVID-19 Goodwill***) for students financially impacted by the crisis. Staff, faculty, and students were encouraged to contribute to the fund. In 2020, the total amount received to support this initiative was $41,400, benefiting more than 75 students.

Scholarships

The University offers several scholarship programs. The Micro Grant Program, which began in Fall 2019, allows faculty to nominate students for grants of up to $1,500. Each year, the Academic Affairs Department receives communication following the approval of the budget regarding how much funding they have available to support the micro grants. Students can express their financial hardships directly to their faculty members, program chairs, or academic deans. Since 2019, $360,416 in micro grants have been given to 365 students. These funds are a part of our operating budget. These small grants bridge the gap for students needing additional funds for tuition or materials. Students who receive these grants retain at a high rate (***Micro Grant Outcomes; Micro Grant Scholarship Process***).

Wilmington University also offers substantial student scholarships (***Scholarships webpage***). From 2018-2019 to 2022-2023, over $325,000 was awarded to 301 students as a merit scholarship (***Scholarship Summary***). Wilmington University also awards over $2,500,000 annually in additional scholarships and financial assistance and $1,500,000 in athletic scholarships (***Scholarship Summary; PP3 - Development Office - Apr 2023, pg. 10***). The offices of Development, Financial Aid, Student Payment Services, and the Registrar award scholarships work collaboratively. A scholarship awards chart is included in Appendix C.

Through the PP3 process, we determined that changes to the scholarship process would increase awareness of their availability for students and streamline staff processes. We created a communications strategy, simplified the scholarship application process, and developed a method to track recipients and outcomes. In early 2021, the newly formed Scholarship Committee implemented these changes, including redesigning the scholarship webpage, internal communications, and the Wizehive Scholarship Software, which reports outcomes, demographic summaries, and critical attributes. These improvements have helped students to become more aware of the many scholarship opportunities available, and the number of scholarship applicants continues to grow. Over 1,300 applications were submitted for the 2023-24 academic year. Since

2020, total applications submitted per academic year have increased by over 55% (***PP3-Development Office - Apr 2023, pg. 10***).

As mentioned earlier, the College of Education and Liberal Arts offers a unique, year-long residency program as a clinical experience for future teachers. The program holds a 100% hire rate, with all participants securing employment in the school or district where the residency occurred. Scholarships and grants are available since this is intensive learning in the field that lasts over 200 days. Wilmington University provides a 50% tuition reduction for participating students. Also, a Delaware state grant offers up to $25,000 in stipends. For the 2023-2024 academic year, Wilmington University students were awarded over $1 million in grants as part of this program (***YLR Grant, pg. 16***).

The Delaware Space Grant, another innovative opportunity, offers (***Delaware Space Grant webpage***) a grant for fellowships and scholarships to college students studying STEM subjects and supports their research (***Once in a Lifetime Opportunity***). Since Wilmington University became involved in 2016, 38 students received awards totaling $195,000. This has also led to the successful placement of students in jobs and graduate schools, furthering our career-oriented mission (***Space Grant Report***).

Wilmington University continues to execute several trend-setting strategic partnerships with local and national organizations to diversify its student body, keeping its commitment to making higher education affordable and addressing the increasing demand for employer-sponsored tuition assistance for their employees (***Employer Partner Assistance***). This initiative has proven very successful and is an integral element of our strategic Enrollment Management Plan.

Criterion 7b: To enable students to understand funding sources and options, value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt.

Wilmington University uses its website to convey information about paying for tuition. Specifically, it enables students to apply to federal aid programs, outside scholarships, University scholarships, military funding, employer reimbursement, and alternative private loans. Additionally, Wilmington University offers students a payment plan that allows for monthly payments (***PP3 - Financial Aid - Dec 2021; Payment Plans webpage***).

The University also offers students complimentary financial literacy and empowerment services through its Office of Student Affairs. A designated Student Affairs resource coordinator is available by appointment to assist with setting financial goals and overcoming challenges, understanding credit reports and debt such as student loans, providing additional financial services, and helping with pathways to home ownership. In addition to coaching students through one-on-one sessions, the coordinator visits all sections of our First Year Experience course (FYE). During visits, the coordinator shares the importance of planning and managing budgets and alerts them to the University's complimentary resources (***Financial Literacy and Empowerment webpage***).

The Net Price Calculator shows prospective students their approximate attendance cost (***Net Price Calculator***). The Value Comparison allows them to compare Wilmington University

tuition with other local schools and online institutions, providing a transparent way to see the value (***Value Comparison webpage***). The Student Financial Services webpage is a complete resource for students to review everything related to education costs, including the availability of Title IV financial aid (***Student Financial Services webpage***).

Many of our students rely on Title IV financial aid (62% of Wilmington University students received federal student loans). They are responsible borrowers with a cohort default rate of 1.6% (***Cohort Default Rate NSLDS***). More details about financial aid are listed in Standard IV.

CRITERION 8: *Compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements.*

> *Criterion 8a: The full disclosure of information on institution-wide assessments, graduation, retention, certification and licensure or licensing board pass rates;*
>
> *Criterion 8b: The institution's compliance with the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation;*
>
> *Criterion 8c: Substantive changes affecting institutional mission, goals, programs, operations, sites, and other material issues which must be disclosed in a timely and accurate fashion;*
>
> *Criterion 8d: The institution's compliance with the Commission's policies.*

Wilmington University complies with all reporting requirements outlined in the Institutional Federal Compliance Report (***Federal Compliance Report***). Its Consumer Information webpage (***Consumer Information webpage***) includes information required by the Department of Education. Accreditation information is also available on our website (***Accreditation webpage***).

Wilmington University complies with all MSCHE regulations related to substantive change. The Accreditation Liaison Officer educates faculty and staff regarding requirements and participates in discussions where substantive change is needed (***Substantive Change Presentation***).

The Executive Team is responsible for compliance with policies, procedures, and federal regulations pertaining to their areas of authority.

CRITERION 9: *Periodic assessment of ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented.*

We have practices to ensure that ethics and integrity are included and evaluated in policies. Examples of those assessments and changes resulting from those assessments are described below.

University policy, processes, and general practices are reviewed from an institutional standpoint annually at a minimum or more frequently if needed. Specific adherence to compliance is observed with federal and state laws and the University's policy. Internal review with the Human

Resources Department, Academic Affairs, and counsel is included as additional compliance support. As a final measure, changes are presented to the Executive Team for discussion, review, and approval.

The ad-hoc Faculty Handbook and Adjunct Faculty Handbook Committees of the Faculty Senate meet as-needed and make recommendations for policy changes.

Before 2019, adjunct faculty could be assigned one of the following three temporary titles: Adjunct Faculty, Adjunct Professor, or Visiting Professor. The 2019 Faculty Handbook revision created the following four adjunct academic titles:

- Adjunct Instructor
- Adjunct Assistant Professor
- Adjunct Associate Professor
- Adjunct Professor

These titles provided adjunct faculty with an additional step in the promotion levels and required completion of certain levels in the Pathway to Instructional Excellence (PIE). PIE was designed to help all faculty progress through a competency-based professional development pathway and provides training workshops to offer opportunities to become more competent instructors (***Faculty Handbook Changes 2023***). The Student Handbook is updated yearly. For example, a change to the 2020-2021 handbook related to the pandemic prompted an update about remote learning and virtual meeting requirements. During the pandemic, the University remained operational using virtual meeting platforms and synchronous class sessions. Because we care about student safety and well-being, we created policies to encourage students to avoid Zoom or other learning platforms while driving. We also established a dress standard to require students to wear appropriate clothing without offensive, vulgar, obscene, inflammatory, pornographic, or misogynistic language or images (the same applied to background screens). Additionally, we required appropriate and respectful behavior during Zoom or synchronous class sessions, ensuring they have the same civility standards as traditional classrooms. Students are only permitted to share Zoom or other virtual links with classmates if asked by instructors to do so. We emailed the updated Student Handbook to our students, and members of the Office of Student Concerns staff presented these changes during individual college and department meetings. (The Employee Handbook is updated as needed throughout the year.)

As more campus workers shifted to hybrid and remote work in 2020, the Employee Handbook was updated to include a policy on mobile technology while driving. This change raised awareness of safety when using mobile devices while driving, including keeping phone calls brief. Staff are encouraged to pull over to safe areas to handle University business (***Employee Handbook, pg. 56***).

Monitoring and assessing the effects of policy, process, and practice on the Wilmington University community is measured through the Campus Climate Survey, with the most recent report completed in 2022. This survey is administered triennially and intends to gather data about employee opinions on workplace fairness, compensation, and equity. The survey results are shared within the Human Resources PP3 report, which is available to all University employees

through our SharePoint site. They are intended to provide general guidance and opportunities for change. Because of the pandemic, a pulse survey was conducted in May 2020 to better understand the impact of challenges and actions regarding remote work experiences in the University community. Employee responses are detailed in a specific section of the report (***PP3 - Human Resources - May 2022***).

As a result of the Campus Climate survey, a pandemic pulse survey, and new hire surveys, data was used to present a detailed list of improvements for discussion and implementation by the University community (***PP3 - Human Resources - May 2022, pg. 14***). These findings were also communicated to all employees at the University-wide meetings in 2022. An example is the creation of an employee New Hire Survey to assist Human Resources and managers in identifying areas of improvement in hiring and onboarding processes. Another example stemmed from employees needing to be more keenly aware of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). As a result, marketing efforts about EAP increased, and information is now included in monthly employee newsletters, monthly manager tips, and other communications. Employees were also dissatisfied with the opportunities available for recognition, so HR met with a focus group of employees to solicit input. This resulted in creating the "Employee Shout Out," a monthly electronic communication highlighting accomplishments and introducing new employees (***PP3 - Human Resources - May 2022, pg. 14***).

In response to the pandemic and to enhance the new employee onboarding experience, Human Resources implemented a cloud-based onboarding platform that grants a more streamlined, secure, and accurate way for new employees to complete their required employment-related forms. This has allowed for a more efficient and effective way of onboarding while reducing costs and improving compliance and security. Additionally, during the pandemic, the University remained diligent in developing and implementing pandemic guidelines and protocols to protect the safety and health of its community in compliance with CDC and state requirements (***COVID-19 Pandemic Guidelines***).

Conclusion
Wilmington University is proud of its students' educational opportunities and experiences and promotes those offerings with honesty and integrity. Data and approvals are in place to ensure that internal and external communications are ethical. Policies are reviewed regularly and updated to ensure best practices are used, and compliance is met.

Areas of Innovation and Strength
- Grounded by its mission, the University strives to make education accessible and affordable through clear financial aid processes, policies, and scholarships.
- The Standardized Performance Management Plan process is a great addition and links the mission, vision, values, and Vision 2025.
- Although we are compliant in our consumer disclosures, there is an opportunity to embed this information in other areas of the website that current and prospective students may more heavily visit.

Standard III. Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all programs, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

Requirements of Affiliation: 8, 9, 10, 11, 15

Introduction

Wilmington University's faculty are central to academic achievement and student success. Faculty lead the curriculum and instructional efforts to prepare students to pursue their career goals. As a vital element of the Wilmington University community and culture, faculty are carefully recruited and selected based on the diversity of their experiences. Congruent with our mission, we actively recruit faculty with professional experience in their fields who provide students with an education focusing on the real-world application of knowledge and skills. We are invested in creating an environment where faculty are valued and are offered many opportunities to develop their skills.

CRITERION 1: Certificate, undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional programs leading to a degree or other recognized higher education credential, of a length appropriate to the objectives of the degree or other credential, designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning.

<u>Overview of Academic Programs</u>

Wilmington University's academic offerings are appropriate in length, designed to meet objectives, and foster well-structured learning experiences that align with our mission through graduation and program competencies and learning objectives.

Wilmington University offers degree and certificate programs consisting of:
- 8 associate programs
- 33 bachelor's programs
- 32 master's programs
- 6 doctoral programs
- 97 certificates (undergraduate and graduate)
- Juris Doctor degree – Fall 2023 start date

Students may explore the University's academic program offerings on our website's "Find Your Academic Program" page and in its undergraduate and graduate catalogs (***Find Your Academic Program webpage; Wilmington University Catalogs***).

From FY 2013-2014 to FY 2022-2023, Wilmington University's unduplicated headcount grew from 19,116 to 20,069, an increase of 5% over 10 years. From FY 2018-2019 to FY 2022-2023, the unduplicated headcount dropped slightly from 20,555 to 20,069, a decrease of 2.4% over the most recent five-year period. Examining this trend revealed that much of our decline in enrollment occurred during the pandemic; however, enrollment is growing again.

Of the 20,069 students, 65% are undergraduates, 32% graduate, 3% doctoral, and less than 1% attend professional development programs. Enrollment by gender is 62% female and 37% male, with .4% not reported. Enrollment by ethnicity includes 22% Black or African American, 48% White, 9% Hispanic, 9% Asian, 0.4% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 4% are two or more races, and 7% are undisclosed (***Factbook, pg. 8***).

   College Realignment

When the Vice President of Enrollment Management retired in 2020, we eliminated the position and realigned the Student Services Department previously under her supervision. The College of Arts and Sciences dean (CAS) was promoted to the Assistant Vice President level to lead the Student Success areas formerly led by the retired vice president. With the vacated CAS dean position, we could examine the alignment of the colleges and programs within each. Additionally, the Director of Institutional Research was promoted to an Assistant Vice President position and absorbed the Institutional Research and Assessment areas also held by the former vice president.

To better support our student-driven mission and strategic initiatives, an administrative realignment and a college reorganization were implemented in 2021-2022. This restructuring allowed for our colleges to be modified and adjusted where some academic programs align. The College of Arts and Sciences Liberal Arts programs and general education courses shifted to align under the College of Education, now named the College of Education and Liberal Arts. The Natural Science programs now align with the College of Health Professions with the new title, the College of Health Professions and Natural Sciences. Finally, the Communications program now falls under the College of Technology. The College of Online and Experiential Learning (COEL) became the Division of Online and Experiential Learning (DOEL) to support all colleges. It does not have academic programs.

College restructure: 2021-2022

Before 2022:	**Currently:**
College of Arts and Sciences	College of Business
College of Business	College of Education and Liberal Arts
College of Education	College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
College of Health Professions	College of Technology
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences	College of Health Professions and Natural
College of Technology	Sciences
College of Online and Experiential Learning	School of Law

In addition to restructuring colleges, Wilmington University announced the formation of its School of Law in October 2022. The School of Law began offering classes in the fall of 2023, with classes taught and the administrative suite housed on the Brandywine campus in the Varsalona building. The University School of Law classes and administrative suite will remain in the Varsalona Building until it transitions to its own structure on the Brandywine campus.

Diversity within the Delaware's law profession is limited compared to the general population. To increase access to the bar, Wilmington University has designed a new law school responsive to the findings and recommendations of the Delaware Supreme

Court's Bench and Bar Diversity Committee, including establishing admission pathways to law school for students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

Wilmington University is taking a unique and innovative approach to legal education by establishing a law school centered on service to students, teaching excellence, access to the legal profession, and a curriculum reflective of the skills needed to practice law today. The University's history and mission of serving non-traditional students and expanding access to higher education make it well-suited to deliver a high-quality, low-cost law program.

Wilmington University has deliberately set very low tuition rates ($24,000 per year for full-time students and $18,000 per year for part-time students) for its law school. Our tuition is considerably lower than any other law school in the region and less than half the national average cost of $50,226 (***Average Cost of Law School***).

We have designed the program in consort with the accreditation requirements stated by the American Bar Association (ABA). The American Bar Association process for approval requires that a law school operate for one full year before application. Wilmington University enrolled its first class in August 2023, and the law school will apply for approval in August 2024. The ABA's decision concerning the application is expected in Spring 2025. The timing of this process requires two cohorts of new law students to enroll prior to approval (Fall 2023 and Fall 2024).

Table 6: Degrees Authorized to Award

Associate	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctoral
Associate of Arts (A.A.)	Bachelor of Science (B.S.)	Master of Arts (M.A.)	Doctor of Business Administration (D.B.A.)
Associate of Science (A.S.)	Bachelor of Nursing (B.S.N.)	Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)	Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)
		Master of Education (M.Ed.)	Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P)
		Master of Science (M.S.)	
		Master of Science in Management (M.S.M.)	Doctor of Social Science (D.S.Sc.)
		Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.)	Juris Doctor (J.D.)

The annual course catalog specifies the requirements for all certificates and degrees. Associate and bachelor's degrees require completion of course requirements (60 credits for associate, 120 for bachelor's) in the major field of study, including General Education Requirements (30 for associate, 42 for bachelor's). In addition, bachelor's degrees have a 30-credit upper-level requirement (300-400). Master's degrees vary in credit requirements depending on the selected

program (30-60 credits). Doctoral degree programs of study vary widely depending on the degree (48-62 credits) (***Degree Requirements***).

Wilmington University adheres to the U. S. Department of Education's definition of a credit hour for cumulative contact time per semester. Three credit hours are awarded for 40 hours of structured learning activities, with a standard expectation of at least two hours of outside study for each hour of structured learning. The definition of the credit hour applies to all courses at all levels (graduate and undergraduate) that award academic credit (i.e., any course that appears on an official transcript issued by the University) regardless of the mode of delivery.

Fully online or hybrid model courses mirror the equivalent face-to-face learning outcomes and academic standards. While students may not physically spend time in the classroom, they complete equal work. Federal regulations recognize the unique nature of online class time (***Credit Hour Definition***).

Each college oversees adherence to the policy on credit hours in its review and approval of all new courses and assures that expected student learning in courses meets the credit hour standard. Credit hours are determined when a new course or a modification to an existing course is proposed. The Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate approves the number of credits per course and program. The Curriculum Template Matrix provides the level of approval mandated for all academic programs and classes and required standardized templates (***Curriculum Committee Matrix; New Program Proposal Template; New Course Proposal Template; UG certificate in Esports proposal; M.S. in Digital Communications Proposal; M.S. in Health Sciences proposal; SOC 275 Opioids and the Sociology of Addiction new course proposal; CTA 260 IT Support Fundamentals new course proposal; CRJ 343 Restorative Justice new course proposal***).

In addition to the extensive development and approval process, credit hours are examined during ongoing academic program review processes conducted by academic deans every three years or through re-accreditation by an external body. The one-year snapshot is performed and reviewed as part of our continuing program assessments. A more comprehensive review of every program is performed on a three-year cycle and is conducted by the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs in collaboration with the academic deans (***Program and Accreditation Review Schedule; Template for Program Review Snapshot; Template for Three Year Program Review; Program Review Action Results, 2021***). The course and program assessment process is discussed in greater detail in Standard V.

CRITERION 2: **Student learning** *experiences that are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals.*

> *Criterion 2a: Rigorous and effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service, as appropriate to the institution's mission, goals, and policies.*

Highly qualified full-time and adjunct faculty teach our career-oriented undergraduate and graduate degree programs. As a student-centered teaching institution, the University actively

recruits full- and part-time educators who are practicing professionals with appropriate credentials and who focus on student success, expanding opportunity, enhancing academic excellence, and strengthening our organization.

Our Faculty Handbook outlines faculty responsibilities, including course outlines and syllabi. Chairs are responsible for recruiting and hiring faculty, ensuring the relevancy of curricula, promoting innovative instructional practices, and building academic courses and programs. The chairs also observe enrollment and labor market trends to ensure that the number of faculty is sufficient, and curricula remain current.

Two standing committees within the Faculty Senate focus on learning environment and instructional enhancement. The Learning Environment Committee promotes student and lifelong learning opportunities in a globally informed and collaborative educational environment, aligning with the University's annual institutional priorities. The committee reviews emerging instructional trends and best practices to ascertain future student needs. The Instructional Enhancement Committee focuses on the quality of class instruction and student learning and provides faculty with training, resources, and pedagogy support.

Program Development

The program chair leads the development process of courses and programs. Community and business needs are researched to ensure that outcomes and course curricula align with national industry standards, external accreditation requirements, and labor market projections. Input from faculty, adjunct faculty, and program advisory boards is valued. Adjunct faculty bring knowledge of community issues and market trends to guide course topic selection and inform learning outcomes upon which course content is built. When developing programs, the role of the Program Advisory Board is to ensure that the development process and resulting curricula are aligned with industry standards and labor market projections for related job fields. Members of the 57 Program Advisory Boards possess relevant backgrounds, are locally or nationally experienced, and are available to discuss the program's direction and how it relates to the field it serves. The dean, program chair, and college faculty meet and discuss program goals with the advisory boards to ensure that proposed programs align with our previously stated mission of excellence in teaching and relevancy of curriculum. They should also prepare students to begin or continue their careers, improve their competitiveness in the job market, and engage in lifelong learning (***Advisory Board lists; Credentials of faculty/adjuncts***).

The institution's strategic initiatives and annual institutional priorities also guide program development. For example, in 2020-2021, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) programs were explicitly identified as priorities under "Enhancing Academic Excellence" (***Vision 2025 and Annual Institutional Priorities FY20-21, pg. 16***). Until a few years ago, the University had only one degree in the sciences (B.S. in Environmental Society and Policy). We initiated a B.S. program in Biology in 2020. Since the Brandywine building was new, we could design and build science laboratories appropriate for courses, especially the 300- and 400-level Biology courses. With laboratory facilities now in place, we were positioned to offer additional degree programs in the sciences. To determine what programs should be added, we sought the expertise of the Educational Advisory Board (***EAB Evaluation – BS; EAB Pulse***

Check – MS; EAB Feasibility - MS). We added an M.S. in Environmental Science in 2023 based on that research.

Table 7: New Steam Programs

New STEAM Programs Added		
B.S.	Biology	2020/2021
A.S.	Data Analytics	2021/2022
A.S.	Cybersecurity	2021/2022
Undergraduate Certificate	Cybersecurity and FinTech	2021/2022
Undergraduate Certificate	FinTech	2021/2022
Undergraduate Certificate	UX/UI Design	2022/2023
B.S.	Applied Mathematics	2022/2023
M.S.	Environmental Science	2022/2023

Over the past four years, we have added 25 new degree programs or concentrations within programs and 25 certificate programs. A concentration comprises roughly 25-30% of the major. In contrast, a minor has fewer credit requirements (18-22) and can be in a different area from the student's major. New degree and certificate programs and program changes require review by the college faculty, Academic Council, the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee charge, the full Faculty Senate, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. New degree programs also require the review of the Executive Team and approval by the Faculty Senate and the Delaware Department of Education. In addition to new degree programs and any significant program change, the University Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee comprehensively reviews all curriculum proposals, including new courses, course title and credit changes, new minors, concentrations, certifications, and courses. The University Curriculum Committee is composed of representatives from each college. The Curriculum Committee charge is listed in the (***Faculty Handbook, pg. 47; New Program Proposal Template; Curriculum Committee Matrix***).

Program Development, Approval, and Lifecycle:
The multiple steps required for program development and approval help ensure that any new program fits our mission, vision, and values and that established graduation competencies are embedded within the program. Our undergraduate and graduate graduation competencies are general education (oral and written communication, disciplined inquiry, information literacy, and ethics) and program-level competencies. The appropriate general education requirements are adhered to during the program development process (***Program Approval Process; B.S. in Applied Mathematics proposal, pg. 24; B.S. in Applied Business proposal, pg. 10***). A visual of the program development cycle is in Appendix D.

Faculty develop expected student learning outcomes for all academic programs; students learn about those outcomes from their course syllabi. A complete list of the program outcomes is also available to students on the catalog webpage. The Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate approves expected learning outcomes (***Wilmington University Catalogs; Syllabi***).

<u>Graduation Competencies</u>
Undergraduate General Education Core:

Oral Communication
- Appraise the needs of the audience and then speak clearly and concisely.
- Research, construct, and deliver professional presentations using various communication tools and techniques.

Written Communication
- Write with clarity and precision using correct English grammar: mechanics (punctuation) and usage (sentence structure and vocabulary).
- Exhibit competence in writing for specific purposes, diverse audiences, and genres.
- Correctly and ethically present scholarly writings utilizing the selected citation and writing style deemed appropriate for the student's program of study.

Disciplined Inquiry
- Employ critical thinking strategies such as quantitative, qualitative, and scientific reasoning to analyze consequences and outcomes and determine logical solutions.

Information Literacy
- Using information in any format, research, evaluate, and ethically utilize information effectively and with appropriate attribution.

Ethics
- Demonstrate knowledge and application of prescribed ethical codes and behaviors related to the student's academic discipline.

Program-Specific Outcomes

Additional competencies are established based on program-specific outcomes. External accreditation requirements may influence the program-specific outcomes (***Graduation Competencies***).

As seen in the program development and lifecycle, each program undergoes a standardized development and program review process. Curricular maps that address undergraduate programs' general education competency assessment and the program-level competency assessment for undergraduate and graduate offerings are completed and reviewed continuously. Program curricular maps are critical to the Academic Affairs Outcomes Assessment Plan (***Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Manual, pg. 33; Academic Affairs Outcomes Assessment Plan, pg. 6; COB OA Plan; COB WU and IACBE OA Maps, COB OA Dean's report 2023***).

Projected enrollment is also established and used for planning and budgeting resources during program development. Enrollment projections, actual enrollments and labor market trends are examined through the program review process.

Another mechanism for course development to maintain cohesiveness throughout the student experience is the creation of standardized syllabi. Courses are developed with a focus on student learning and engagement, relevance of curriculum, instructional best practices, and learning activities linked to outcomes assessment. Faculty design their programs and courses by mapping the curriculum and outcomes to ensure the appropriate length and a logical sequence. Faculty as the subject-matter experts (SMEs) and online course designers from the Instructional Design Team (IDT) partner to ensure that courses meet our established curriculum design expectations

(***PP3 - Online Programs – Feb 2016; Online Learning Course Development Process; Online Course Refresh***).

Attention to the quality of online learning has been a long-standing initiative, as evidenced by the 2016 PP3 report. Today, we offer most of our programming as fully online degrees (***List of Online Degrees***) under the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (NC-SARA) (***State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement***). The University has been a member of NC-SARA since its inception. NC-SARA provides national leadership over the reciprocity agreements for distance education regulation among U.S. member states.

We recently updated our State Authorization webpage to reflect licensure requirements and the complaint process (***NC-SARA Complaint Resolutions***). Under licensure, we offer the following statement: "For more information, please refer to this list of programs that the University has identified as leading to a license or certification, or advertising as such." As an example of our ongoing efforts, in our 2022-2023 annual institutional priorities, under the Strategic Initiative of Expanding Opportunity, we established the goal to "Gain approval to offer interstate online nursing education programs that have a clinical requirement."

> ### Criterion 2b: Qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do.
> ### Criterion 2c: Sufficient in number.

The Human Resources (HR) Department completes a position analysis, conforming to the Equal Employment Act. The dean of each College and HR administrators then collaborate to post and publicize available faculty positions (***Faculty Handbook, pg. 20***). All initial faculty appointments are made for one year for the first three years. After the third full fiscal year of employment, ranked faculty are eligible for a renewable three-year contract annually. We define the adjunct faculty promotion process in the Adjunct Faculty Handbook (***Adjunct Faculty Handbook, pg. 22***).

The posting and the interview process with an ad hoc committee of faculty and subsequent interview with the Assistant Vice President and the Vice President for Academic Affairs seeks to ensure that the candidate is a good fit with the University's mission and qualified to teach in the discipline for which they have applied. All full-time faculty serve on either a one- or three-year contract.

The onboarding process covers diverse areas of the University, such as remuneration, benefits, initial training requirements (Title IX; FERPA; Basic and Hybrid and Online Training; Canvas,.), ongoing professional development requirements, technology tools, and an introduction to the Wilmington University ethos (***Employee Handbook, pg. 20***).

All faculty and instructional staff must complete all training required by the CTE and Educational Technology departments to teach online. This training includes basic and advanced Canvas and hybrid and online training (HOT) training. All faculty are trained and qualified to teach online (***Pathways to Instructional Excellence; Documentation of Canvas and HOT training***).

When part-time faculty are hired, the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE), HR, and individual colleges coordinate the onboarding process. The Center for Teaching Excellence reviews and maintains candidates' degrees and credentials during this onboarding process. The initial training requirements are the same as for full-time faculty (***Faculty Handbook, pg. 18***). Promotions for Adjunct Instructor, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Adjunct Associate Professor, and Adjunct Professor are linked to the Teaching Expectations document and PIE courses. The Adjunct Instructor promotion process is found in the Adjunct Faculty Handbook. (***Adjunct Faculty Handbook, pg. 22; The Center for Teaching Excellence Overview; Adjunct Faculty Promotion webpage; Canvas Training for Faculty; New Faculty Orientation; Hiring Process for Adjunct Faculty***).

<u>Faculty Profile</u>

Wilmington University's faculty are divided into two groups: ranked full-time and unranked part-time, referred to as adjunct faculty. We do not offer tenure. Our full-time faculty works closely with part-time faculty drawn from the workplace. This is how programs remain relevant: adjuncts are practitioners who bring tangible workplace scenarios to our students.

<u>Full-time Faculty</u>

Ranked full-time faculty members are appointed to one of four academic ranks: Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor. Currently, we have 77 full-time, ranked faculty members. The process of achieving the full professor rank is rigorous, and this designation is held by only 6.5% of our full-time faculty. Ranking criteria are listed in the Faculty Handbook.

Faculty Rank by College

	Business	Education & Liberal Arts	Health Professions & Natural Sciences	Social & Behavioral Sciences	Technology	WILMU Total
■ Professor	5	0	0	3	0	8
■ Associate Professor	6	12	7	3	2	30
■ Assistant Professor	4	9	10	9	7	39
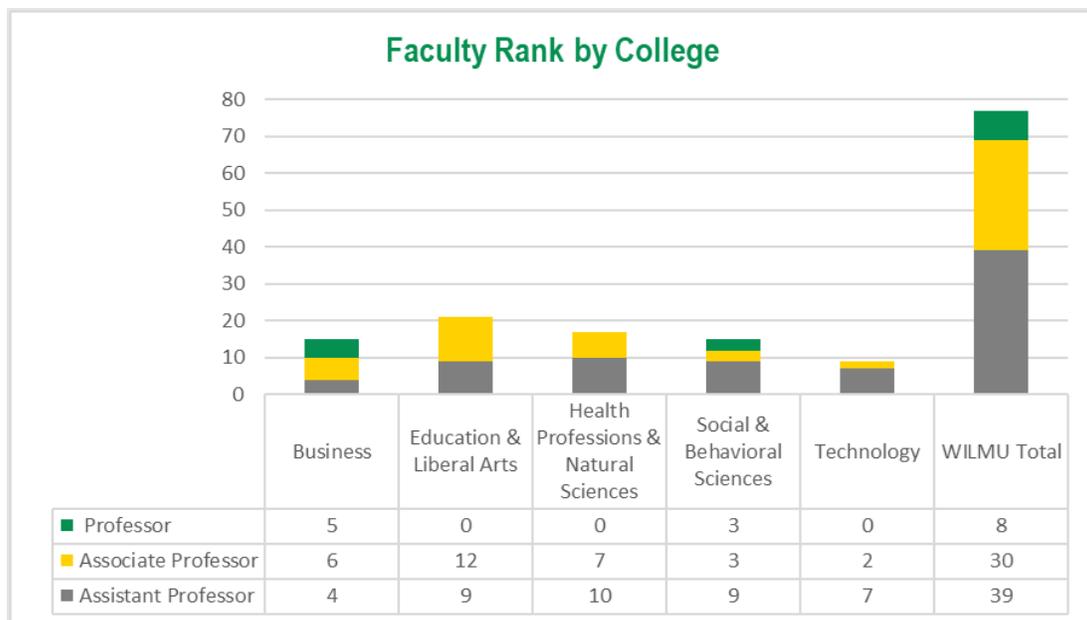
Figure 3: Faculty Rank by College

More than 83% of our full-time faculty have obtained a terminal degree (***Credentials of Faculty/Adjuncts***).
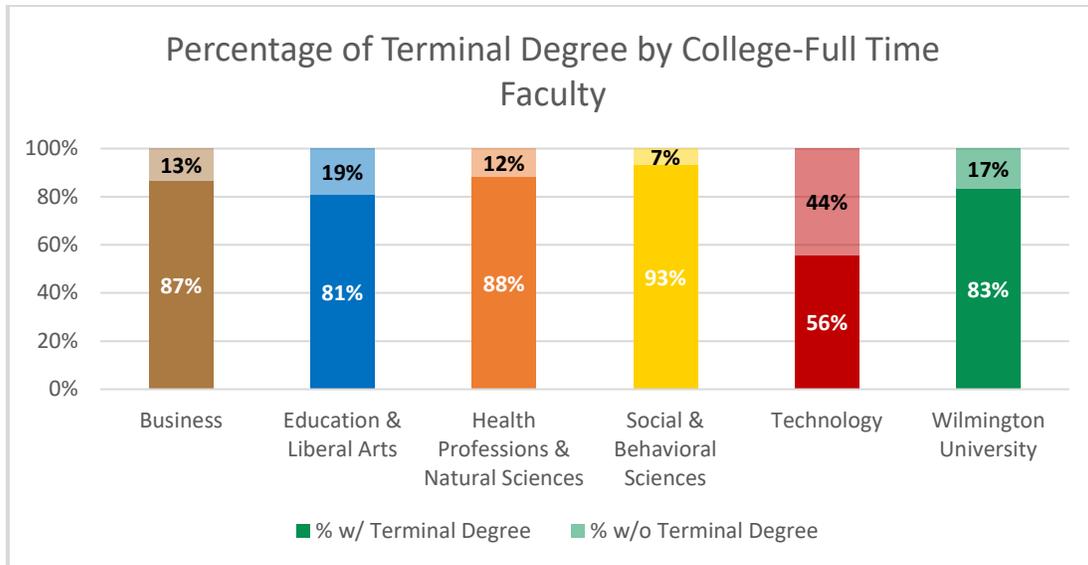
Figure 4: Full-Time Faculty Terminal Degrees

<u>Full-time Administrators with Faculty Rank</u>

Approximately 19 University administrators also hold faculty rank, including the President, Vice President for Student Affairs and Alumni Relations, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs, Assistant Vice President of Student Services, Directors, Associate Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, Director of Educational Effectiveness, and librarians. Nearly all of these full-time administrators with faculty rank have earned a terminal degree (***Credentials of Faculty/Adjuncts***).

<u>Adjunct Faculty</u>

In support of our practitioner model, the University employs over 1,300 part-time adjunct faculty. In the fall of 2019, the University began recognizing excellence in teaching by implementing an adjunct promotion process. Adjuncts are hired based on a course-by-course agreement and are appointed to one of four titles: Adjunct Instructor, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Adjunct Associate Professor, and Adjunct Professor. If an individual had previously obtained the title of Adjunct Professor, it was retained. All others were assigned the academic title of Adjunct Instructor. Adjunct faculty can petition through a portfolio process to the next rank by demonstrating competencies based on the following criteria:

- *Length of Service*
- *Teaching Quality*
- *Experience at Wilmington University*
- *Adherence to Wilmington University Policies and Procedures*
- *Use of Technology*
- *Professional Growth in Post-Secondary Teaching*
- *Professional Growth in Field of Expertise*
- *Service/Attention to Students*
- *Contributions to Wilmington University*
- *College-Specific Criteria (if applicable)*
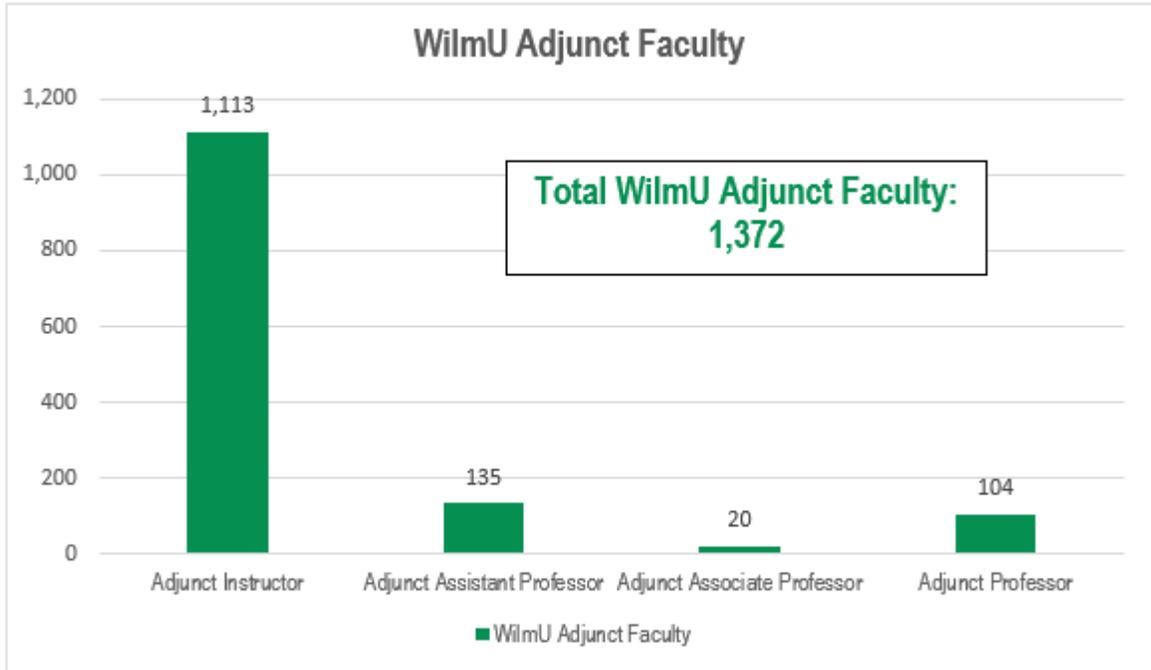
Figure 5: Adjunct Faculty

Adjunct faculty play a crucial role at the University. Consistent with our mission, our use of adjuncts is one of "choice" rather than chance. Promotion to Adjunct Professor recognizes excellence in teaching to which Wilmington University is committed (***Faculty Handbook, pg. 19***). Nearly 31% of our adjunct faculty hold a terminal degree in their respective fields (***Credentials of Faculty/Adjuncts***).
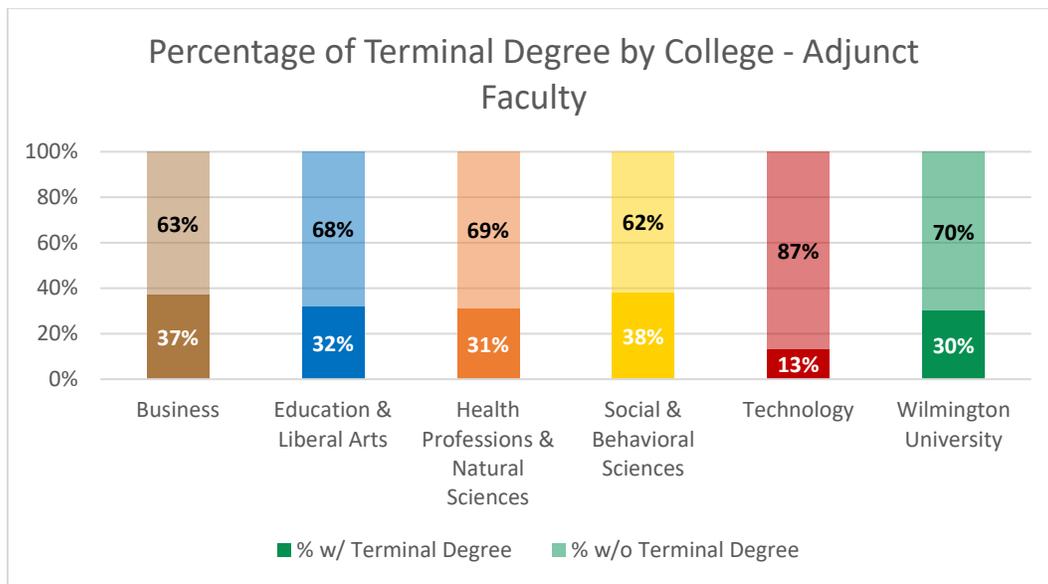
Figure 6: Adjunct Faculty Terminal Degrees

<u>Course Load</u>
Course load refers to the number of courses assigned to each faculty member. According to benchmark expectations, an adjunct may teach a maximum of two courses a block or four courses per semester for a maximum of 10 courses each academic year. The full-time faculty course loads are listed on their annual contracts. The academic year runs from Summer Block II through Summer Block I (***Faculty Handbook, pg. 21; Adjunct Faculty Handbook, pg. 20***).

Criterion 2d: Provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation.

As mentioned, Wilmington University hires adjunct faculty who are practitioners, current in their field, offering students a view into the inner workings of actual workplaces and helping them bridge gaps between theory and practice. We help faculty prepare for their first teaching experiences through the Center for Teaching Excellence, which provides a wide variety of professional development opportunities for all faculty, starting with the New Faculty Information Session and "Becoming a Scholarly Practitioner" workshop, both designed to orient them to the University's culture.

The President appoints program chairs in consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, an assistant vice president, and the specific college dean. Program chairs are responsible for managing academic program(s) and reporting to the dean in which the program(s) resides. The dean may provide a job description further specifying the role of each program chair.

Academic directors are appointed by the dean in consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs to assist the dean in the administrative operations within a specific college. Duties may include supervision of program chairs and other duties as assigned.

Newly hired chairs attend the New Chairs First Year Development (FYD) Program, including a monthly meeting, one on one mentorship, and peer group sessions designed to enhance leadership and effectiveness. After the New Chairs First Year Development Training, they attend the chairs Peer Empowerment Group, a quarterly meeting intended to support ongoing development after completing the first year (***The Center for Teaching Excellence Overview; PP3 - Center for Teaching Excellence Power Point - 2020, pg. 25***).

The Teaching Expectations document outlines the centrality of positive student experiences and offers concrete steps to take care of our students (***Teaching Expectations***). The Pathways to Instructional Excellence (PIE) faculty development training program directly aligns with teaching expectations. This comprehensive system links faculty expectations to faculty assessment and professional training.

In 2018, PIE received the prestigious Outstanding Support for Faculty or Students Award from the National Instructional Technology Council and the 2019 University Professional and Continuing Education Association (UPCEA) Mid-Atlantic Region Faculty and Staff Development Award (***Online Learning Awards and Recognition***).

PIE was created collaboratively by the library staff, the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE), and the Online Learning and Ed Tech (OLET) Department to align with teaching expectations and the Course and Teaching Survey (CATS). It guides faculty through a competency-based curriculum to develop instructional and technological skills. The four competency levels are described below:

- The Essential Level provides a basic understanding of technology and instructional strategies.
- The Proficient Level offers a clear understanding and application of andragogy and technological skills.
- The Mastery Level offers a diverse set of instructional strategies used to analyze and evaluate teaching and learning.
- The Exemplary Level provides innovative and various forms of technology and best instructional practices.

Faculty who complete the exemplary level have passed the three previous levels and showcased their learning in a capstone course (***Pathways to Instructional Excellence; CATS Faculty Guide***).

Figure 7: Mission and Student Learning

Another professional development opportunity for all faculty and adjuncts is the biannual Conference on Teaching Excellence (formerly Faculty Development Day) organized by the Faculty Senate Committee for the Advancement of Teaching Excellence. The conference is a collaborative day-long workshop encouraging faculty to network and learn more about their instructional practices through sessions with nationally known speakers and local experts. Before the pandemic, the conference was offered in a hybrid format. Therefore, it is easy to adjust to the online format when needed.

Post-conference survey results guide future topics, speakers, format, food options, and programming. Survey responses include support in improving student writing, developing engaging content for students, and enhancing skills with various educational technologies. These themes were the focal point of the following recent conferences:

- Student writing (Spring 2021; breakout sessions in Fall 2017, Spring 2018, and Spring 2020)
- Engaging instruction (Fall 2021, Fall 2022, and Spring 2023 with guest speaker Dr. Jeff Borden)
- Developing educational technology skills (Spring 2019; breakout sessions in Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Spring 2020, and Spring 2022)

Table 8: Conference on Teaching Excellence Attendance

Year and Term	Face-to-Face	Online	Total
Fall 2017	318	80	398
Spring 2018	340	108	448
Fall 2018	320	86	406
Spring 2019	463	205	668
Fall 2019	344	108	452
Spring 2020	316	197	513
Fall 2020	n/a	440	440
Spring 2021	n/a	490	490

BRITE IDEAS, a diversity, equity, and inclusion workshop series developed in the fall of 2020, responded to the rapidly shifting landscape faculty and students faced. Those who successfully meet the program competencies receive the designation of CTE Change Champion. BRITE IDEAS is discussed in detail in Standard II. To date, 104 faculty and staff have participated in BRITE IDEAS; 86 were designated CTE Change Champions. In addition, CTE has developed over 15 other workshops to support faculty engagement with diverse student populations, including CTE Learning Circles.

Full-time faculty are encouraged and supported to attend professional conferences and other professional development opportunities. Each college has allotted budget lines for conferences, meetings, and training to support faculty development. From 2018 to 2024, the University has provided over $465,000 in Wilmington University scholarships and external tuition assistance to support faculty pursuing doctorate degrees (***Doctoral support 2018-2024***).

As mentioned in Standard II, the Campus Climate Survey revealed that Human Resources offers faculty and staff many professional development opportunities. An emphasis on leadership is also evidenced through the Leadership Institute and the LEAD and MANAGE programs described in Standard II (***PP3 - Human Resources - May 2022, pg. 14; PP3 - Human Resources Training and Development - Nov 2023, pg. 8***).

> *Criterion 2e: Reviewed regularly and equitably based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures.*

During the annual self-evaluation process, full-time faculty members assess their areas of responsibility, and the director or dean provides an administrative response including data from four sources: student evaluations, classroom evaluations, self-evaluations, and administrative responses to self-evaluations (***Faculty Self Evaluation Template; Faculty Handbook, pg. 33***).

In 2019, Wilmington University shifted its course and instruction survey from IDEA to an in-house-developed survey titled "Course and Teaching Survey" or CATS. The CATS survey was developed to:

- Provide students with a teaching effectiveness survey that matches Wilmington University's mission.
- Offer actionable student feedback to faculty by pairing feedback with suggested actions within the CTE's Pathways to Instructional Excellence (PIE) program.
- Reduce costs and inefficiencies associated with utilizing the IDEA survey.

The IDEA survey results were based on comparison norms established in the 1970s before the advent of online learning, showing a distinct drop in reliability. Focus groups comprising chairpersons preferred a more user-friendly, teaching-focused instrument that accounted for the student population Wilmington University serves (***PP3 - Center for Teaching Excellence Power Point - 2020, pg. 29***).

In the last two weeks of each class, students are asked to complete the CATS Survey. This request is also embedded in each Canvas class template. CATS also aligns with the CTE's Teaching Expectations document (***CATS Faculty Guide***). All faculty can see student evaluations once classes have ended, and grades submitted. The chairs review the CATS evaluation and discuss results as needed with the full-time or adjunct member, dean, chair, or designee.

The application for promotion is an evaluative process that full-time faculty can pursue. Faculty must create a teaching portfolio and detail scholarship and service for promotion to Associate Professor or Professor (***Faculty Handbook, pg. 24***). For promotion to Associate Professor, faculty must complete PIE's mastery level. To gain the rank of Professor, they must complete PIE's Exemplary Level. Faculty directors and deans, a committee of higher-ranked faculty members, the Assistant Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and the Vice-President for Academic Affairs review portfolios.

Program chairs oversee adjunct faculty and may conduct classroom observations to assess the faculty member's teaching proficiency (***Faculty Handbook, pg. 33***). Program chairs use the teaching expectations to structure feedback for adjunct faculty and may suggest professional development opportunities such as PIE and offerings from Online Learning and Educational Technology (OLET) (***Teaching Expectations; Educational Technology Training***). Adjunct instructors' promotional pathways from Adjunct Assistant Professor to Adjunct Professor include numerous professional development opportunities (***Pathways to Instructional Excellence; Online Faculty Resources; Adjunct Faculty Promotion webpage***).

In addition, each college has a designated Educational Effectiveness Coordinator (EEC) who ensures that faculty comply with teaching expectations. The EECs monitor and work with all

courses regardless of modality. We provide tools to faculty to promote engagement and enhance student achievement. Collaboration among the Department of Educational Effectiveness, the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE), Academic Support Services, and Academic Affairs confirms ongoing data analysis and review (***Educational Effectiveness Coordinator***).

CRITERION 3: *Academic programs of study that are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution in a way that students are able to understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion.*

The Wilmington University catalog, updated annually on the website, provides the requirements for all degrees in a student-accessible format. The University process ensures accurate information when describing program requirements, including the general education core, and connects all program descriptions to the yearly updated catalog. Curriculum changes in the catalog undergo rigorous review before inclusion (***Wilmington University Catalogs; Program Approval Process; Find Your Academic Program webpage***).

We provide students with a clear course path that enables them to meet program requirements. To enhance this process, a Guided Pathways to Success committee was formed in October of 2017. The first step was to gather a group of Academic Affairs and Student Service leaders to look at Guided Pathways as a guided modality approach to help students retain, succeed, and graduate on time. The Guided Pathways concept gives undergraduate students a roadmap, helps them stay on course, and monitors their progress. In May 2018, the committee visited the Community College of Philadelphia to learn how it implemented outcomes. We then completed recommendations and presented a comprehensive plan to the Retention Committee Advisory Board, which received Presidential approval within a month. Our Guided Pathways pilot was launched in Fall 2019, beginning with the College of Technology.

Full implementation of Guided Pathways became part of Vision 2025 and 2020-2021 Annual Institutional Priorities. In the Fall of 2020, the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Health Professions, and Social and Behavioral Sciences utilized Guided Pathways. All undergraduate programs, including the Colleges of Business and Education, used the approach by Fall 2021(***Guided Pathways Operational Plan - Phase IV, pg. 2***).

The initiative includes advising for undergraduate students based on sequenced program curriculums developed by program chairs. It also enables students to obtain career counseling earlier. Enrollment counselors use First Course Selection templates to guide students through initial course selections. Students are provided with a complete educational plan in DegreeWorks, our online degree audit system (***Guided Pathways; DegreeWorks FAQ***). Students are encouraged to meet with advisors during their first semesters to review course sequences and develop personalized education plans (***PP3 - Advising - 2021, pg. 7***). Our data has shown that meeting with an advisor to establish a customized education plan positively impacts first- to second-semester and first-year retention rates (Fall to Fall). The initiative has resulted in a decline in the number of dropped courses and an increase in students taking critical courses on time (***Guided Pathways Trended Leading Metrics Su 22-Su 23***).

Program chairs are responsible for generating both new and updated educational plans, which are aligned with the two-year schedule and the University catalog. As part of the process, the program chair identifies critical courses students should complete by the time they reach 30, 60, 90 credits for each degree program and concentration. Multiple versions of each educational plan are aligned with the students' start terms and full- or part-time status. As new programs are developed, or program changes occur, program chairs update and submit educational plans through the Curriculum Committee in collaboration with the Academic Changes Workflow group.

Undergraduate students are notified of missed critical courses or if they did not meet minimum grades in those courses. The checkpoint is at the 30-credit point for associate degree programs and the 30-, 60-, and 90-course credit points for bachelor's programs. Finally, advisors perform graduation checks for bachelor-level students with the 90+ credits earned toward their degrees and associate-level students with the 45+ credits earned toward their degrees.

Wilmington University offers flexible semester, block, and modular courses via multiple modalities (***Course Schedule and Format Options***). We inform students how courses are listed while browsing or searching for courses. The following fields are identified: title and course format, subject and the course reference number (CRN), section, the part of the term, the instructor, number of credit hours, meeting times, location, the number of students currently enrolled, and the number of slots remaining before full enrollment.

Course descriptions are included in the Academic Catalog and master syllabi.
(course description, credit hours and learning outcomes) are available online (***Wilmington University Catalogs; Syllabi***).

CRITERION 4: Sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution's programs of study and students' academic progress.

Placement Testing

All first-year and transfer students must take placement tests unless they have transferred in college-level coursework in English or Mathematics or have scored above a minimum score on the SAT (480 in English, 530 in Mathematics). Students take placement exams to determine adequate placement: the Accuplacer Test is used for English and the Aleks Prep and Learning Module Program (ALEKS PPL) is used for Mathematics. We communicate this to students during orientation, via email and other informational packets, and on the Admissions webpage.

Accuplacer English

All students educated outside the United States must complete the Accuplacer Levels of English Proficiency (LOEP) assessment and participate in an interview with an International Admissions Associate before registering for courses in their intended degree program.

Instructional Facilities

Instructional facilities sufficiently support the University's academic programs. In addition to classroom and laboratory space, each location is equipped with instructional technology and supplies that enhance the classroom experience and assist faculty in delivering effective learning

experiences. Hybrid classrooms are outfitted with cameras and microphones, allowing instructors to record or share live lectures with remote students. Of note, the University has several open-access computer labs for students. These labs help those members of our student population who do not own a computer.

The Faculty Senate Instructional Resource Committee, which monitors instructional facility oversight, reviews the instructional facilities and resources efficiencies, identifies gaps, and makes recommendations to ensure instructional needs are met.

> ### The Wilmington University Library
The library demonstrates commitment to the University's educational mission by supporting learners in discovering, accessing, and using information effectively and ethically for research, academic success, and lifelong learning. The library is a student support resource that serves the University and the broader community as a part of the Delaware Library Network and the Interlibrary Loan System (ILL) (***PP3 - Library - 2019, pg. 7***). Librarian faculty members and staff work to eliminate barriers to equitable and accessible services, spaces, and resources for students, faculty, and staff; offer instruction on information literacy using all modalities available (face-to-face and online conferences, information guides, embedded video tutorial modules in Canvas courses); and create an environment conducive to research, dialogue, and scholarship. A laptop lending program that was initiated during the pandemic is ongoing. The library loaned more than 160 laptops to students, an effort that led to a 62% retention rate of those students who took advantage of the offer (***PP3 - Library - 2022, pg. 5***).

The library offers bibliographic and information literacy instruction via the services of faculty-level academic librarians. Information literacy instruction is also offered asynchronously via recorded lectures and interactive self-paced modules embedded in Canvas courses or online resource guides. Instruction is available to course sections in multiple modalities, including face-to-face, online, and multiple locations. The library ships materials directly to students' homes at no charge if necessary.

Table 9: Library Collections

Total Physical Library Collections		Total Electronic Library Collections	
Type	Number	Type	Number
Physical Books	103,095	Digital Books	271,493
Physical Media	95,815	Digital Serials	425,062

The University's Partnership Institution Agreement includes library services for students taking classes at various locations. Through partnerships with various institutions, students attending classes at other sites can use their local institutional resources and facilities and have full access to our library's collections and facilities. Locally, the library participates in the Delaware Library Catalog, which provides students with resources and access to all Delaware public libraries. Our students can also gain access to libraries at all Delaware Technical Community College sites and the Delaware State University Library. ILLiad, the interlibrary loan program, allows students to borrow materials from institutions nationwide. The Wilmington University Library is a member of OCLC Express, an international partnership of libraries guaranteeing rapid turnaround in delivering materials for our students.

Library services are available face-to-face, and via live-chat, phone, and web conferencing. These services include in-depth research consultations, especially for our graduate students. The library uses LibAnalytics to measure Information Desk activity, instruction sessions, and library usage to monitor and assess services and activity at the New Castle location. LibAnalytics data helps determine staffing needs, hours of operation, and possible shifts to more virtual consultations. The high demand for electronic databases supported the decision to purchase fewer permanent holdings and move funds to increase electronic subscriptions.

Information concerning Learning Commons and our Multimedia Studio locations and hours is posted clearly on the website (Library Hours and Locations). The Circulation and Interlibrary Loans Policy, Collection Development Policy, and Reserve Policy can be found on the Library Policies webpage (Library Policies). Allowing 24/7 access, the library maintains subscriptions to over 80 multidisciplinary and subject-specific online research databases, which include thousands of electronic journals, streaming videos, and eBook collections. The library's proxy server enables quick access to all online resources via My Wilmington University credentials (***Library Resources and More***).

In collaboration with program chairs and faculty, the library has developed online course-specific research guides called "LibGuides," which guide students directly to course-relevant and subject-specific resources and assist them in effectively developing and executing information literacy skills as they conduct research. As of June 2022, 389 LibGuides have been produced and embedded into online course templates. These guides were viewed 189,107 times in the single academic year.

The Information Literacy Program fosters a collaborative relationship between librarians and teaching faculty by developing customized information literacy (IL) instruction and online learning objects to support the curriculum and the specific IL outcomes of our academic programs. In 2021, the library received the Award for Excellence in eLearning (***Outstanding eLearning Support for Faculty or Students***) from the Instructional Technology Council (ITC), an affiliated American Association of Community Colleges council. The award recognized the collaborative efforts between instructional librarians and College of Business faculty to develop new prerequisite courses for the M.S. in Management program, which improved information literacy, research, and writing skills. The library has also collaborated with faculty to develop textbook-free courses using the library, open access, and open education resources to decrease student's financial burden. These collaborations led to more holistic creations, reviews, and deliveries of course and program-specific library resources and students' online learning skills development.

Online Learning and Educational Technology
The Online Learning and Educational Technology (OLET) team offers resources to support faculty with designing easily accessible courses and designing, developing, implementing, managing, and evaluating electronic learning methodologies and instructional technologies. These advances can improve outcomes in the technology-enhanced learning environment (***Online Learning and Educational Technology webpage; PP3 - Online and Experiential Learning - 2019, pg. 8***).

Multimedia Services

Faculty receive additional training for all third-party software that integrates with Canvas. Our OLET and multimedia teams coordinate platforms outside of Canvas, instructional and academic video and multimedia content production and management, and media production of special University events, such as commencement (***PP3 - Educational Technology Multimedia - 2018, pg. 1***). These projects connect directly to the University's strategic initiatives (***Multimedia Services for Faculty and Staff***).

Experiential Learning

An additional student support resource available to students is Experiential Learning. Interested students engage in cooperative experiences and internships. In addition, Experiential Learning assists students with rich experiential backgrounds and seeks to translate those experiences into academic credits through Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) (***PP3 - Online and Experiential Learning - 2019, pg. 12; Credit for Prior Learning***). In some cases, industry credentials also have established credit equivalencies; in others, students participate in Prior Learning Assessments (PLA) to offer documentation of above-and-beyond work projects or volunteer experiences that may translate into college credit. This area has been recognized by various professional organizations in the higher education industry for providing award-winning online programs, multimedia content, and courses (***Online Learning Awards and Recognitions***).

Student Accessibility Services

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS), a growing student-support resource, helps students with disabilities access accommodations while pursuing their educations (***Office of Student Accessibility Services webpage***). Accommodation includes extra test time, sign language interpreters, assistive technology, notetakers, and more. The Student Accessibility Services Department recently moved from a manual process of notifying faculty about student accommodations to the Clockwork software system (***PP3 - Office of Disability Services - 2021, pg. 2; Accessibility Services Handbook, pg. 9***). This platform allows faculty, students, and OSAS staff to manage the accommodation process online. The staff can generate letters that provide students' accommodations lists and can be accessed online by students' instructors confidentially.

CRITERION 5: *At institutions that offer undergraduate education, a general education program, free standing or integrated into academic disciplines, that:*

Criterion 5a: Offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field;

Criterion 5b: Offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives.

In addition to program-specific competencies detailed in Criterion Two, the General Education core centers on oral and written communication, disciplined inquiry, information literacy, and ethics, which are the foundation for success in college and life. These skills are listed in Wilmington University's graduation competencies (***Graduation Competencies***). Additionally, the General Education requirements are outlined in the degree requirements section (***Degree Requirements***).

In 2016-2017, a Faculty Senate General Education Ad Hoc Committee renewed the General Education requirements. Representatives from each college analyzed Educational Advisory Board research and compared General Education core requirements with other four-year and two-year institutions. As a result, the following changes occurred:

- Increased minimum number of General Education Core credits to 39.
- Added a section to the Curriculum Committee's new program template regarding General Education core courses and credits.
- Added an additional English Composition course.
- Decreased the Humanity requirements to six credits, still equaling 12 credits with the inclusion of a three-credit Critical Thinking course and three-credit Citizenship course. This still afforded students choices with program requirements.
- Added Citizenship competency in which students could choose American Politics (POL 300) or Contemporary Global Issues (HIS/ HUM 381).
- Decreased Social Science credits to six, offering students the choice between designated Psychology and Sociology courses, and recognizing program requirements.

Another key aspect of this work was to appoint an ad hoc committee to the Faculty Senate for periodic oversight of the general education core (***General Education Ad Hoc of Faculty Senate - 2016***).

In March of 2020, the General Education Ad Hoc Committee completed an audit of all General Education courses required by major. Any discrepancies were presented to the Curriculum Committee for approval. For the 2023-2024 academic year, an Ad Hoc Graduation Competency Committee of the Faculty Senate was established.

The General Education competencies are assessed within the designated general education classes. The College of Education and Liberal Arts dean provides a General Education assessment report during the Academic Affairs Annual Outcomes Summit. This report provides the formative outcomes assessment data for the general education courses. Additionally, each academic program performs and reports the summative assessment of the general education competencies.

The Annual Academic Affairs Outcomes Summit is a part of the systematic data collection and analysis plan outlined in the Academic Affairs Outcomes Assessment Plan (***Academic Affairs Assessment Plan, pg. 10***). The Summit allows deans to present, analyze, and discuss examples of data-based decision-making related to academic assessment. Summit attendees include the Chief Academic Officer, Assistant Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, college deans, Senior

Director of Institutional Research, and other invited guests. A summary report is presented to the Faculty Senate as part of the Institutional Assessment process (PP3).

First-Year Experience Course

Our First-Year Experience (FYE) course provides students with skills, knowledge, and direction to succeed in higher education. Those who enter with less than 16 credits must take FYE, which supports our General Education competencies. We aim to enhance students' abilities to locate and gather information and engage in critical thinking.

The current course objectives reflect four central themes:
1. Student analysis of needs and goals to transition to the University community
2. Assuming responsibility for learning and being a positive member of the University community
3. Identifying resources and support programs
4. Developing skills and strategies applicable to academics, career, and life

We review FYE every three years, which includes analyzing retention data and advisement from faculty, students, and academic affairs. As reflected in the College of Arts and Sciences 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, FYE course objectives were refined in 2020 ***(Freshmen Retention & Graduation Rates 2020; College of Arts and Sciences Strategic Plan 2020-2023, pg. 5***). FYE was modified to an open-resource course (no textbook required) to reduce student costs and add relevant topics for non-traditional populations. Faculty and students provided feedback on piloted sections of the revised course ***(First Year Experience Syllabus; FYE Update 2020)***.

Student Success Center

The Student Success Center can assist those needing help with General Education core classes. Through Tutor.com, all topics are covered by virtual appointment or drop-in with a live tutor 24/7. This platform provides less than a 90-second wait time for students. The student satisfaction rating for tutoring is consistently above 4.5 out of 5, with a 27% response rate, and 97% of those would recommend this tutoring service. Walk-in tutoring appointments are also available. Tutoring for ESL and Praxis are provided, as are learning resources such as APA paper templates, APA LibGuides, writing resources, and Technology, Math, and Science tools. The Student Success Center offers online workshops in Basic English, Microsoft, APA seminars, library skills, and more (***Tutoring webpage; Success Seminars and Workshops; Tutoring Data***).

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Wilmington University offers English as a Second Language (ESL) courses for students considering English their second language. Individual sections of the TOEFL, TOEFL Essentials, IELTS, PTE, or Duo Lingo scores determine ESL placement. These placement scores are provided to students on our webpage (***ESL Course Placement***). Once undergraduate international students placed into their ESL courses successfully complete ESL course requirements, they move directly into ENG 121. Students must still complete the general placement assessments to place in their math courses. An undergraduate or graduate student may be exempt from ESL courses upon admission. In that case, they must complete the general placement assessments to determine the math and English courses they need.

Upon admission, graduate students are exempt from ESL courses and are placed directly into classes. If needed, graduate international students are placed in program courses after successfully completing ESL course(s).

Writing Across the Curriculum

We established a Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) initiative to support our written communication General Education outcome. A WAC Faculty Senate ad hoc committee to create a plan. Guidelines that defined the steps to transform an academic program into a WAC program were established. The WAC committee developed generic writing resources to adapt the plan for any course and assignment. Committee members collaborated with program chairs across the university to initiate a WAC course in their program. The committee also provided faculty with instructions for scaffolding writing assignments, planning documents, other student support, and an adaptable writing rubric tied to the University's graduation competencies.

In addition, the committee designed three training courses within Canvas for faculty members teaching writing-intensive courses, which cover how to design, implement, and grade writing assignments. These courses were rolled out as part of the Pathways to Instructional Excellence offerings. Our undergraduate Psychology and Health Sciences programs are considered WAC offerings since they include two intensive writing courses taught by trained faculty members. Over 15 instructors have completed all three WAC training courses (***WAC evidence***).

Mastery Paths

Mastery Paths (MP), a Canvas tool that helps instructors personalize and adapt students' learning experiences based on mastery of course content, enables the creation of differentiated learning paths targeting resources, assignments, and assessments to students depending on students' demonstrated knowledge and skills. Mastery paths also allow students to progress at their own pace by receiving tailored support for optimal educational outcomes. PHI 100, for example, is a Mastery Paths course. The Philosophy chair implemented a differentiated instruction strategy using Mastery Paths with Introduction to Critical Thinking (PHI 100), a required General Education course for most students. This is an appropriate example of innovation that meets the needs of diverse online students.

In PHI 100, each online course module begins with a textbook reading assignment, followed by a concept review that assesses students' grasp of information related to course objectives. The MP tool is designed to analyze their performance automatically and assigns them to appropriate learning paths. Each path contains assignments representing varying levels of difficulty, complexity, or depth of understanding. The result is a more individualized experience leading to mastery of each week's course objectives to maximize student success in learning the course material.

As we continue to explore the potential impact of this differentiated approach, one aspect we are particularly interested in evaluating is its effect on student retention. Because PHI 100 is one of the courses most often taken by students in the University and is usually taken in freshman year, it has a predictably higher stop-out rate. By providing targeted support and individualized learning paths, we anticipated that students would feel more engaged and supported throughout the course, potentially leading to higher retention rates. Data has been collected on assignment

scores, final grades, and drop-out rates over the past two semesters to assess the effectiveness of the Mastery Paths strategy, particularly in terms of student retention.

A comparison of these results to one previous semester of the course with similar but non-Mastery Path assignments yielded only a slight improvement (1.7%), which was not statistically significant. This result suggests that since students stop-out of courses for various non-academic reasons (finances, family life concerns, etc.), a more in-depth analysis of student reasons for stopping-out would be required to control for other variables. However, in a block-by-block comparison of stop-out percentages over two semesters, data analysis showed an overall decrease in the number of stop-outs (39.1%), which warrants more evaluation over time to provide insight into potential underlying causes of the changes.

In addition to quantitative analysis, qualitative measures of students' experience with the MP approach were analyzed, such as in-course and CATS surveys incorporating course perceptions. These, along with instructor input, suggest an overall improved student experience and validate further experimentation with this approach as a potential strategy for providing more individualized student experiences online to maximize retention and academic success.

CRITERION 6: Institutions that offer graduate and professional education, opportunities for the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking, provided by faculty and/or other professionals with credentials appropriate to graduate-level curricula.

Wilmington University offers 32 master's degree programs, six doctoral programs, eight associate programs, 33 bachelor's programs, 60 undergraduate certificates, 37 graduate certificates, and several advanced study certificates at the post-bachelor's and post-master levels. Master's degrees require at least 30 semester credit hours and typically include a common core of discipline-specific courses and a concentration. New courses, program approvals, and revisions are subject to the same rigorous approval process applied to undergraduate curricular revisions. A graduate program chair leads each graduate program. The graduate catalog details information about degrees, certificates, and professional programs.

We provide graduate and professional education students various opportunities to develop research, scholarship, and independent thinking. For example, research-based assignments like case studies, literature reviews, or policy analyses can help students develop research skills and encourage independent thought. In capstone courses, students learn the fundamentals of research methodologies, data analysis, and critical thinking. These courses provide a solid foundation for independent research. Students complete thesis or dissertation work. These in-depth research projects allow students to pursue independent research on topics of their choice under the guidance of a faculty advisor or committee. The library provides access to extensive libraries, databases, and online resources. Students can utilize these resources to conduct literature reviews and gather information for their research.

The doctorate degree model fosters collaboration among fellow candidates whose diverse experiences enrich the study environment and broaden their professional networks. Students learn to conduct and translate research and use leading-edge methodologies from faculty with esteemed executive and scholarly credentials. Students work with professional partner

organizations to develop and explore a critical evaluation research project/dissertation that implements their coursework. Faculty provide close support and mentorship to ensure the capstone project is meaningful, engaging, and relevant to industry needs.

The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree program enhances the competencies of its candidates, enabling them to make significant management and leadership contributions to their organizations and make those organizations more competitive. The Doctor of Business Administration degree equips candidates to become critical thought leaders.

The Doctor of Nursing Practice program serves master's prepared registered nurses and advanced practice registered nurses. With integrated clinical and leadership skills necessary for advanced nursing practice, courses examine the relationships among health policy, informatics, population health and business practices in caring for individuals, families, and communities.

The doctoral-level Prevention Science program provides an interdisciplinary approach to researching and evaluating risk and protective factors affecting individuals, families and communities, and innovating solutions through programs and policy.

The Educational Leadership doctoral degree is designed to create innovative scholar-practitioners. The College of Education and Liberal Arts offers courses grounded in reality to prepare capable leaders and artful change agents well-equipped to address the challenges facing American schools.

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) / Doctor of Nursing Science (DNSc) to Doctor of Nursing Pathway provides Ph.D.- and DNSc-prepared nurses the ability to earn a Doctor of Nursing Practice in either a Leadership or Advanced Practice concentration upon review of prior master's and doctoral coursework.

Resources designated to Statistics and APA editing specifically for graduate and doctoral students are available through the Student Success Center (***Graduate and Doctoral Resources***).

CRITERION 7: Adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval on any student learning opportunities designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers.

Not Applicable to Wilmington University

CRITERION 8: Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs providing student learning opportunities.

Programs providing student learning opportunities are assessed regularly by developing and sharing internal Proof Positive (PP3) reports. Individual PP3 department reports are submitted every three years and include data review, usage of services, findings, actions taken, and recommendations based on assessment results.

Several examples of these assessments include:

- Library usage was identified as a positive factor on retention. Those who used our databases were retained at 65%, compared to 44% who did not (***Retention Committee UCC Presentation - March 2022, pg. 14***).
- Library eBooks – Based on assessed needs from faculty and staff, the library continued to expand available electronic content through our knowledge base, adding over 2.6 million open-access eBooks, an increase of 10%. Access to this additional content streamlines requests from program chairs, and online learning provides options for course design without textbooks (***PP3 - Library - 2019, pg. 3***).
- Due to concerns with length, question relevance, and low response rates, we replaced ACT and HERI senior surveys with a six-question survey on the graduation application form. In 2021-2022, the response rate increased from 17% and 7% in the two prior years to an 87% response rate (***PP3 - Student Satisfaction and Engagement - Feb 2023, pg. 4***).
- The Center for Teaching Excellence showed increased adjunct participation in at least one professional development activity. In 2018-2019, 70.6% of our adjunct faculty participated. In 2019-2020, participation increased to 94.6% (***PP3 - Center for Teaching Excellence Power Point - 2020, pg. 7***).
- The Faculty Development Day Satisfaction Survey indicates that in Fall 2018, 89% of the faculty were "somewhat" or "very satisfied" with the day; in Spring 2019, that number increased to 92%. Fall 2019 showed 80%, and in Spring 2020, 93% were "somewhat" or "very satisfied." Results are reviewed with CTE staff and the Academic Council after every session (***PP3 - Center for Teaching Excellence Power Point - 2020, pg. 11***).
- Skillabi:
  - Our partnership with EMSI/Lightcast allows us to review and align labor market demand data to educational opportunities. The Skillabi platform was used for reviewing and analyzing skills taught in institutional programs versus the in-demand skills in the labor market. This effort allowed the College of Business to compare individual course learning objectives with program-specific outcome measures to labor market demands. The analysis provided insights on skill surplus, skill gaps, and skill alignment.
  - Four critical advantages to a data-driven curriculum include better-aligned program content that accommodates market needs, students well equipped to market themselves, a robust program marketing to students, and more engaged employer partnerships. Due to this course and program analysis, we developed an Applied Business Program and a Sales Administration concentration. The following certificates were also created: "Essentials of People Management," "Logistics in Supply Chain Management," "Cybersecurity and Fintech," and "Fintech."

Conclusion

Our policies and assessment measures ensure rigorous standards for academic programs, faculty, and students. Learning experiences, regardless of modality, are coherent and consistent with higher education standards among all programs, certificates, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. We have a rigorous student learning outcome assessment plan and can demonstrate ongoing assessment and improvements. These efforts will be enhanced by

standardizing program curricular maps and general education outcomes assessment approaches among all colleges.

Areas of Innovation and Strength

- Wilmington University can begin to accept student applications and enroll them in classes within six months of a new program concept. Once a new idea for a program is explored, the work begins to design the program. Data incorporating anticipated enrollment, program costs, space location, faculty and staff resources, supplies needed, and technology needs are documented on the new program template. The Advisory Committee meets to discuss requirements and new student recruitment. The program is presented to the Vice President of Academic Affairs, who approves and then submits to the Executive Team for approval. The program is sent to the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee, the full Faculty Senate, and the Delaware Department of Education for review and approval. This process takes less than six months. Years ago, most of our professional development was connected to the biannual Conference on Teaching Excellence (formerly Faculty Development Day). The Educational Technology Department, in collaboration with our library and Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE), now provides extensive year-round faculty development opportunities. These opportunities explained within this standard are offered both in person and online. Over the past six years, 74% of adjunct faculty completed at least one professional development opportunity per year, and 90% of program chairs have participated in at least one professional development activity specific to their role.

Opportunities to Shape the Future

- The goal of differentiated learning in asynchronous online courses merits continued exploration of this strategy using a wider variety of approaches and assessing results carefully to ensure that students receive the appropriate level of challenge and support to foster a more tailored and effective learning experience for online students. Overall, while Mastery Paths offer several potential benefits, the successful implementation in online courses will require a commitment to resource allocation, technology support, and faculty training and collaboration.
- The graduation competencies and General Education courses will be revised in AY 2023-2025. Standardized curricular maps for all programs will be established when the General Education outcome requirements are modified. Uniform curricular maps among programs will enable a more comprehensive approach to assessing, documenting, and analyzing our General Education student learning outcomes and graduation requirements. All Guided Pathway educational plans will be revised to reflect the changes and coincide with the revisions and standardization of curricular maps.
- Collecting assessment data, particularly the General Education student learning outcomes, will become automated. Automating data collection will streamline our assessment efforts, standardize the process, enable us to pull data directly from Canvas, and allow the focus to be placed on data analysis and improvement versus data collection.
- The University's standardized course development and approval process allows for the creation of a generic master syllabus for each course. Providing the generic master syllabi for the public website could be streamlined to ensure accuracy and currency. It is recommended to explore automating the population of the syllabi on our webpage.

Standard IV. Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

Requirements of Affiliation: 8, 10

Introduction

Wilmington University is committed to the mission of providing access to education to all who seek it. We help shape students' futures through our commitment to student retention and completion via a comprehensive support system. This is sustained by engaged professionals who enhance the quality of the learning environment, contribute to the educational experience, and foster student success.

CRITERION 1: Clearly stated, ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success and are compatible with institutional mission, including:

Wilmington University welcomes applications from students of differing backgrounds, aptitudes and interests, including career-minded adults who wish to upgrade their skills or complete degree programs (***Factbook, pg. 6***).

Our recruiting policy and practices reflect our mission, vision, and values by attracting and serving every student, regardless of age, background or area of focus. The needs of our prospective students and partners are met through virtual open houses and by using digital marketing to reach prospective undergraduate students well as graduate students (***Open House Calendar***). In addition to the virtual open houses, our recruiting team offers many webinars to potential students on topics that instruct how to transfer, begin as a military student, which undergraduate and graduate programs we offer, paying for college, and a beginner's guide to online learning. We also offer students the opportunity to experience an interactive digital viewbook that provides more information including videos and testimonials (***Digital Viewbook***).

Students can find specific admission requirements for undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, international, certificate and pre-college admissions on the Admissions webpage (***Admissions webpage***). Policies inform students what they need to do by specific date and offer re-admission policies for undergraduate and graduate programs (***Admissions Policies***). The detailed policies regarding background checks and drug screening that pertain to the Colleges of Health Professions and Education are disclosed to perspective students on the curriculum pages and again during admission. Specific admission requirements for those who are homeschooled are also available.

> *Criterion 1a: Accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds;*

Another central student support resource is the Student Financial Services Department (SFS). This team is responsible for student billing and revenue collection. As an open-admissions institution, many of our students use financial aid. SFS recently shifted to TouchNet to improve our students' experience with financial aid (***PP3 - Student Financial Services - 2020, pg. 4***). TouchNet allows students to set up recurring or automatic payments and allows authorized users to pay bills. These are services made available based on student need. A connected student support resource is the Financial Aid team, which administers federal aid programs and collaborates with the Delaware Department of Education and private organizations to deliver non-federal funds to students (***How Financial Aid Appears on your Tuition Billing Statement***). The Financial Services and Financial Aid teams are responsible for keeping track of federal regulation changes.

The University website contains comprehensive tuition and fees information for students (***Tuition and Fees webpage***). The tuition costs for undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral credits by credit hour and location are defined. Students can also access a list of courses with reduced tuition rates and specific fees such laboratory fees. This webpage also includes a value comparison feature, which compares the cost of attending Wilmington University to one of 46 other area institutions (***Value Comparison***) and a net price calculator (***Net Price Calculator***) so students can determine out-of-pocket expenses by seeing the total cost of attending Wilmington University full-time and estimate the amount of federal financial aid for which they may be eligible.

Wilmington University's Financial Aid webpage (***Financial Aid webpage***) outlines policies and procedures for students, including eligibility, repayment, conditions of awards, refunds, and the impact of student withdrawals and failure due to lack of class attendance. The webpage includes the U.S. Department of Education's requirements for satisfactory academic progress, instructions for completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA), and frequently asked questions. Students plan to repay their loans and are offered exit counseling.

We are committed to helping Wilmington University students achieve their higher education goals. Information about grants, loans, and work-study opportunities is provided on the Financial Aid webpage. Several of our scholarships are awarded annually and provide support for students based on merit, financial need, and other criteria. Awarding scholarships is a joint effort among the Office of Development, Financial Aid, Student Payment Services, and the Registrar. All departments work together so that students receive excellent service. An extensive list of scholarships is found on the Wilmington University website (***Scholarships webpage***). Staff track information about the scholarships and other financial assistance awarded annually (***Scholarship and Financial Assistance by Type & Year - 2023***). The number of scholarships awarded and students who benefited over the past five years is provided in Standard II, under the Affordability discussion.

Wilmington University provides students with a payment plan option to pay their tuition and fees in monthly installments over several months within the semester. Students can choose to be placed on the payment plan within 48 hours (about two days) of registering if they have outstanding eligible charges. To further assist prospective and current students, a webinar titled

"Paying for Your Education" is offered twice a week. In FY 2022-2023, 80 sessions were provided. Four hundred twenty-seven students registered for the webinar, and 203 participated.

Criterion 1b: A process by which students who are not adequately prepared for study at the level for which they have been admitted are identified, placed, and supported in attaining appropriate educational goals;

As defined in our mission statement, Wilmington University has inclusive admission policies. Students who have transferred in college-level coursework in English or Mathematics or have scored above a minimum score on the SAT (480 in English, 530 in Mathematics) may register for college-level coursework in these disciplines. Otherwise, students take a placement exam to determine adequate placement: the Accuplacer Test is used for English and the Aleks Prep and Learning Module Program (ALEKS PPL) is used for Mathematics. Information for English as a second language placement is also provided.

Mathematics Remediation
After using Accuplacer for Mathematics placement for the last few years, we reviewed data to show that students were sometimes placed incorrectly with that instrument. In July 2021, we transitioned to ALEKS PPL to assess students' knowledge and readiness for college math more accurately and help them refresh their skills. Within the first year of using ALEKS PPL, approximately 60% of students who retook the placement assessment were placed into a higher math course. This group also showed higher passing and lower failure rates than previous semesters (***Math Placement Assessment; Accelerated Math Program Assessment***).

English Remediation
Wilmington University adopted a plan for accelerating English remediation that specifically works with its flexible scheduling model and student population. The goal is to lower failure rates, increase graduation rates, and reduce costs for students needing remediation. To meet these goals, this faculty driven initiative removed the remedial ENG 110 course from the English curriculum and allowed students who would have placed into that course to move directly into the first freshman composition course, ENG 121.

To support developmental writers in ENG 121, the remedial ENG 110 course content (instructional methods based in self-regulated strategies design) has been embedded in a new version of ENG 121. Therefore, students who would have placed into the remedial ENG 110 course can move directly into ENG 121. This change helps students needing remediation to move through the required English curriculum more quickly while receiving the additional assistance they need as developmental writers. Also, these students will no longer need to pay for an additional English course.

The ENG 121 course was redesigned during the Fall 2022 semester. In the Spring 2023 semester, the University stopped offering ENG 110, and the revised ENG 121 course ran for the first time. During Summer 2023, the outcomes from the newly designed ENG 121 sections were reviewed and compared with Wilmington's prior remedial English model. After the Spring 2023 semester, over 100 students who would have traditionally taken the remedial ENG 110 course were

enrolled in ENG 121 and successfully completed the course (***English Placement; English Placement Assessment***).

ESL

Students who would benefit from English as a Second Language (ESL) courses are identified and placed into one of four courses through TOEFL, TOEFL Essentials, IELTS, PTE, or Duo Lingo scores as outlined on the Wilmington University website (***English as a Second Language (ESL)Placement***).

First Year Experience

The University also has a First Year Experience Seminar called FYE 101, which is open to all undergraduate students as an elective and required for new undergraduate students with less than sixteen transfer credits. This academic-centered seminar introduces students to the University and provides them with skills, knowledge, and direction designed to promote academic success (***FYE 101 Syllabus***).

English for Academic Purposes Certificate

In 2019, the College of Arts and Science developed a new 15-credit, fully online English for Academic Purposes (EAP) certificate designed for students with intermediate English language skills who wish to further develop their English language skills in preparation for studying at the collegiate level. Most students enrolled receive tuition reimbursement benefits from their employers; however, the certificate is open to all students.

In 2021, the waiving of high school transcripts was approved for this certificate. Since prospective students had not submitted their transcripts, they could not enroll in this unique college-preparatory/college readiness certificate program. EAP certificate applicants submit high school transcripts or transcript evaluations at a rate of 41% or 46%, respectively. This waiver created an opportunity to continue building academic awareness and college preparedness.

The original certificate program offered First Year Experience (FYE) 101 as the final course in the program. In 2023, a new course, Academic Skill Building (ACS 150), was added as a final course option within the certificate. This course emphasizes test-taking skills for those students looking to embrace the next steps in their educational journey, such as taking the GED.

As of November 2023, of the 73 students who completed the EAP certificate, three (4%) enrolled in a Degree Program at Wilmington University. Two additional students are simultaneously enrolled in the EAP certificate and an undergraduate degree program (***Certificate in English for Academic Purposes enrollment data***).

> *Criterion 1c: Orientation, advisement, and counseling programs to enhance retention and guide students throughout their educational experience;*
>
> *Criterion 1d: Processes designed to enhance the successful achievement of students' educational goals including certificate and degree completion, transfer to other institutions, and post-completion placement.*

In the 2021-2022 academic year, a slightly different approach to developing the Annual Institutional Priorities was initiated. Four task forces were formed and charged with research and providing recommendations. This campus-wide approach welcomed student input via surveys and focus groups and resulted in recommendations for improvement. In addition to helping establish annual institutional priorities, a comprehensive list of task force action items was also developed (***Long Term View of Task Force Presentation and Results; Task Force Action Items; Engagement Task Force 2022, pg. 4***).

Task force recommendations from an Engagement sub-committee led to a realignment and streamlined approach to Student Services in 2022. Before the realignment, the critical student services areas fell under the direction of six vice presidents. After the realignment, all student service areas report directly to the Senior Vice President/Chief Operations Officer. This allowed us to examine employee strengths and job descriptions, and train employees in new functions. It gives many colleagues new professional growth opportunities while playing to their strengths. It also rendered the most comprehensive student support in alignment with the University's values and mission (***Student Services Realignment Summary; Student Services Realignment - Org charts; Student Services Plan - new or modified job descriptions***).

With the realignment of Student Services, a Student Engagement Center was formed along with six highly functional Academic College teams: one team serves each of the five colleges, and the sixth offers specialized student support. Each team comprises members from Admissions, Advising, Enrollment Services, Financial Aid, Student Financial Services, Registrar, International Affairs, Educational Effectiveness, Recruitment, Career Services, Guided Pathways, Student Success, Student Outreach, Transfer Services, and program chairs when appropriate. Each college team has engagement counselors who serve as the primary student contact within each academic college team. The Student Engagement Center approach provides a fully engaged student-focused approach and delivers an exceptional service experience that supports student success and institutional goals of recruitment, retention, and graduation. Early indicators of success are provided in this standard.

Orientations

The new student orientation event, New Student Kick-Off, presented through a collaboration between the Admissions, University Relations, and Student Life departments, became a virtual experience in August 2020. Newly enrolled students were invited to participate in these pre-recorded webinars offered several times each term. The webinar prepares students by providing Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) information, obtaining a student ID, accessing the myWilmU student portal, and navigating University services. In FY 2020-2021, eight hundred forty-six students participated in the New Student Kickoff. In FY 2021-2022, only 490 students participated. Because participation was declining, University Relations consulted with other departments and created an experience using the (***New Student webpage***).

The Online Course Orientation, provided through the Department of Online and Experiential Learning, is an interactive orientation that teaches students the common tasks they must perform to complete an online course. Topics include course navigation, using Canvas, hardware and software requirements, and a list of resources for additional assistance, including contacting the Help Desk for technical support (***Online Course Orientation for Students***).

In Fall 2020, the Office of Student Life developed a New Student Connection group in Canvas, which comprises student ambassadors who help new students and answer questions posted on the online discussion boards (***PP3 - Student Activities - 2021, pg. 3***).

Also on Canvas is a New Student-Athlete Orientation course that is accessible to student-athletes throughout their academic journeys. Content includes presentations from various student services offices, an overview of sports medicine services, and athlete-specific information regarding NCAA compliance, admissions, academic advising, behavioral expectations, and tips for academic success.

The Office of International Affairs supports new international students through virtual orientations conducted via Zoom. Multiple sessions are offered to accommodate students' schedules, including the following topics: F1 compliance requirements, course modalities, how to register for classes, and using the myWilmU portal and Canvas. International Affairs associates assist students with first-course selection and registration through a collaboration with the offices of Transfer Credit Evaluation and Academic Advising. Associates also connect graduate students in the College of Technology with their advisors by scheduling academic program planning conferences. Graduate students in the colleges of Business and Education are instructed to set up their one-on-one program planning conferences ahead of orientation.

In November 2022, the orientation topics for international students expanded to include financial information and bill paying, community resources specific to international students, and an introduction to American academic culture with guidance on some known points of cultural difference, such as professional communication with staff and faculty. To better accommodate students, the orientation format was adjusted to include a self-guided component so students could absorb the information at their own pace any time of day. After completing the self-guided orientations, students are encouraged to attend any open office hours via Zoom, where associates answer questions and provide guidance. The International Affairs Department hosts an in-person welcome event for all international students during the first week of classes (***International Student Admissions***).

Academic Advising

Efforts to improve retention and graduation rates have included a commitment to using advising technologies to provide personalized degree information and implementing proactive advising services. With the change to Banner, our new student information system, the Registrar's Office implemented DegreeWorks, the accompanying degree audit system, in 2017. This system is accessible to students through the myWilmU portal. DegreeWorks provides a list of courses required in students' degree programs, and, in real-time, shows the courses completed at Wilmington University or through transfer credit, as well as the remaining required courses (***DegreeWorks***).

The University has taken a proactive approach to advising by implementing the Guided Pathways initiative. Guided Pathways is a University-wide effort designed to improve retention and graduation rates. It begins at the application stage and continues through graduation. New students work with engagement counselors who proactively assist them with questions about admissions, financial aid, billing, career information, etc. Students then work with enrollment

counselors on their first-course selections based on their educational plans. This initiative provides templates for first course selections based on students' programs, semester start dates and whether they are attending full-time or part-time. Once they enroll in their first set of courses, their assigned college advisors assist them. The trended data show that meeting with advisors to establish customized education plans positively impacts first- to second-semester and first-year retention rates (Fall to Fall). These students are shown to drop fewer courses and complete critical courses on time as opposed to those who do not meet with advisors (***Guided Pathways Trended Leading Metrics SU22-SU23***).

Each enrollment counselor is assigned students based on specific programs within a college. Enrollment Services tracks and notes touchpoints with applicants as they move through the admissions funnel to enrollment. Once students engage with enrollment counselors, there is a 69% conversion compared to 47% of those who do not engage (***Engagement and Conversion data - Oct 2023***). Below is a summary of the increase in engagement rates for Enrollment Services as they assist applicants. Engagement and enrollment numbers increased from Spring 2022 to Summer 2023.

Table 10: Engagement and Enrolled

Term	Engaged and enrolled
Spring 2022	49%
Summer 2022	61%
Fall 2022	60%
Spring 2023	66%
Summer 2023	63%
Fall 2023	69%

With the Student Services realignment, all advisors report to the Senior Director of Advising to ensure consistency and serve students by their assigned college. Calendly links are provided to directly schedule advising and educational plan appointments. Career Services falls under Academic Advising to better achieve the key components of the Guided Pathways model.

A student's educational plan identifies courses to be completed at credit milestone checkpoints critical to the timely completion of the degree. When a student misses a critical course, the Office of Academic Advising sends an email notification encouraging them to enroll in the missed course and meet with an academic advisor to adjust their educational plan. Working closely with the Student Outreach team, the Advising group has added additional touchpoints to keep students on track, including missed critical course communications and proactive graduation checks. The Director of Guided Pathways Operations is responsible for identifying procedural gaps, resolving issues affecting students, auditing processes, and recommending measures to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the entire Guided Pathways processes.

As a direct result of the Student Services realignment, we have seen a decrease in the wait time for students receiving advisement. Advising wait times during peak advisement weeks decreased significantly from a 7- to 10-day wait period in 2022 to a 1-2 day wait period in 2023.

Under our Guided Pathways initiative, an Advising Department goal is to complete educational plans during or before the student's first term. In 2022, Advising did not finish creating educational plans for first-term enrolled students until the first week of the following semester. In 2023, after the realignment, all educational plans were completed during or before the student's first term. Advisors completed the Summer 2023 education plans early, enabling us to begin creating Fall 2023 plans during Summer 2023.

A survey was sent to advisors in November 2023 to gather feedback about the realignment (centralizing advising, advising by college teams, and adding lead advisors). There was 100% participation s. Early success indicators include:

- 100% feel that creating teams of advisors by college has improved collaboration and communication.
- 92% believe their knowledge of their degree programs has improved because they have fewer to advise.
- 92% feel they can advise more efficiently because their knowledge has improved.
- 100% feel they have built a stronger rapport with chairs/deans in their college.
- Advisors feel that adding lead advisors has improved the following:
  - Communication (92%)
  - Collaboration (85%)
  - Support System (77%)
  - Resources (77%)
  - Speed in receiving answers to questions (77%)
  - Ability to perform their jobs (62%)

Under Academic Advising, and as part of the Student Services realignment, a Director of Guided Pathways Operations position was created to further enhance our Guided Pathways initiative through ongoing assessment and audits of processes along the student journey. This position ensures that our standard operating procedures are followed and that students smoothly transition from service to service (***Director of Guided Pathways Operations; Director of Guided Pathways Audits and Actions***). The following are a few early examples of the process improvements resulting from audits performed:

- In Fall 2023, nine students transferring credits to the University were incorrectly identified as "new" (not transferring credits). The identified "Admit-type" needed correcting to ensure quality student advisement and data reporting. The Admissions Department now runs a weekly report to capture and resolve discrepancies.
- Several documents posted to Banner Document Management (BDM) were initially mislabeled. Mislabeling students' records can result in a delay or misinformation. The Senior Director of Admissions and the Admissions Manager were notified, and refresher training was provided to staff to ensure consistency in student labeling.
- An audit identified some eligible Guided Pathways students who were inaccurately identified and unable to receive educational plans. Advisors and members of the Information Technology and Institutional Research teams met and corrected the reports used to identify these students.

- An audit of graduation checks from April 25 to Aug.14, 2023, was performed for completeness and accuracy in processing and communicating with students. The results confirmed that students were sent accurate final courses they needed for graduation and details were well documented. One improvement was the update of the email template used to communicate with students to address minimum grades for remaining courses more efficiently.
- Three hundred seventeen student transfer credit evaluations were audited to identify eligible unused transfer credits. This search yielded no unused credits that could be applied to student transcripts or substitutions for required courses. One example: A student record identified Advanced Placement (AP) courses transferred to another college but not to us. That student was contacted and asked to submit their official AP score transcript, which resulted in five additional credits transferred to Wilmington University.

During the summer of 2022, a team of Student Service leaders collaborated to document the student journey. The goal was to identify gaps in service or opportunities for service improvements. Recently, the group reconvened to examine the student journey as it is today, with implemented changes since the realignment. Several examples of updated processes implemented to improve the admissions and enrollment experience for new students include:

- Applicants are now sent an automated email with additional information about the Prior Learning Assessment process and what it entails. The Division of Online and Experiential Learning Director also contacts the student to follow up.
- Once a transfer student submits all transcripts for evaluation, a text message is sent with information about the expected timeline for completion and next steps.
- Transfer Services staff now proactively review registrations for students who have registered but whose transfer evaluations are still in process. If the student is registered for courses that may transfer in, the evaluator contacts Enrollment Services to notify the student.
- Returning transfer students are now identified during the transcript evaluation process, and questions are sent to college-specific academic advisors.

Graduation checks are also a part of the proactive advising aspect. Academic advisors complete a graduation check for each student when they reach 90 credits (Bachelor's), or 45 credits (Associate's) earned toward their degree. The graduation check is emailed to the student and contains a list of remaining courses required to complete the degree program.

In November 2021, a survey assessing student satisfaction with undergraduate advising services was sent to students immediately after meetings with their academic advisors. The overall response rate for the first year was 27%, and 98% of respondents reported feeling very satisfied with their academic advising meetings. Although results have been very positive, student comments still prompt improvement. For example, a student said there was a three-week wait for an educational plan appointment. At that time, we were not scheduling educational plan appointments during the late registration period because advisors were assisting students with late registration needs. To decrease the wait for educational plan appointments, we created a system that permits a limited number of late registration periods to reserve time for advisors to

triage immediate registration needs (***Advising Student Survey Results - Spring 2023; PP3 - Advising - May 2021, pg. 6***).

Faculty advisors or graduate-level program chairs in the colleges provide academic advising services for current graduate students. As part of our efforts to retain undergraduate students and encourage them to pursue graduate-level work, Dual Credit Advantage ™ launched in 2021. This process allows students to accelerate pathways to degrees or certificates, saving them time and tuition costs (***Dual Credit Advantage***).

Career Services is a free resource for students and alumni. Those resources include information about career options, strategies for developing career plans, assistance with the steps within an employment search, and information about professional development and experiential learning opportunities. Career Services provides students access to FOCUS, a tool that helps them understand their attributes and needs and identify compatible occupations or educational programs. The office also uses an online platform, Handshake, to allow students to peruse job postings, post résumés for review, schedule counseling appointments, and access career-related information. This platform has allowed us to reach and provide career guidance efficiently and equitably. Evening workshops and information sessions are held using Handshake to correspond with students and review documents. A list of employers by major is also available (***Employers via Buzzfile; Career Services; PP3 - Career Services - 2023, pg. 3***).

Career Services regularly collaborates with other departments and assesses services based on student, alumni, and University needs. For example, following the realignment mentioned earlier, the department engaged with other Student Services areas by presenting FOCUS assessment information sessions to the Academic Advising and Enrollment Services teams to enhance career development conversations with students.

A survey assessing student satisfaction with undergraduate career services launched in February 2023. After meeting with a Career Services representative, students receive a survey link through Advise. Future survey results will be reviewed biannually. The overall response rate for the initial reporting period was 13%, with positive results in all categories regarding the student experience:

- 100% of respondents felt "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with the appointment scheduling experience and the Career Services meeting.
- 89% of students "strongly agreed" that the Career Services representative listened to their concerns and improved their overall knowledge and understanding of careers related to degree programs.
- 100% of students who met with a Career Services team member said they were "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to schedule another counseling appointment.

Student Affairs

As a student-centered institution, Wilmington University values students' successes and well-being. The Office of Student Affairs is the central resource for students seeking information and guidance about the University's policies, information about the Office of Student Accessibility Services and tools for success. Links to mental health and social services resources are available

on the website through a referral from the Office of Student Concerns (***Mental Health Support Services***).

The University subcontracts with three certified mental health counselors to meet the needs of our student-athletes and students to whom the Office of Student Concerns refers. Within the Athletic Department, student-athletes can schedule up to four counseling sessions, with another four approved following a team doctor's review. Athletes self-identify or are referred to counselors by their coaches, trainers, or team doctors. Those referred by the Office of Student Concerns can schedule up to three sessions (***PP3 - Athletics, pg. 8; Athletics Mental Health Support Services***).

The Student Resources coordinator provides students with resources on financial literacy, covering topics including personal financial goals and challenges, understanding debt, paying off student loans, and pathways to home ownership (***Financial Literacy & Empowerment***). The website includes information for students about emergency food, housing, physical health, and wellness resources.

Our students have expressed concerns about housing and food insecurity, especially during the pandemic. The Office of Student Concerns has been able to direct them to community organizations. In Summer 2021, the Office collaborated with Unite Delaware to provide 85 local Wilmington University students groceries. The University also established a food pantry called "The Den". It provides food for students and employees in need or those experiencing food insecurities. The University also offers food resources to students who study online or cannot visit campus (***Student Affairs webpage; PP3 - Student Activities - 2021, pg. 2***).

Wilmington University supports the rights of students with disabilities and makes every reasonable effort to accommodate their needs. Our Student Accessibility Services team facilitates equal access to University programs and activities for students with documented physical, sensory, learning, or psychological disabilities. Policies and procedures regarding these resources are available on our website (***Office of Student Accessibility Services webpage***).

Retention Committee

The retention committee analyzes retention and graduation rate data and proposes initiatives to increase our students' six-year graduation rates and first- to second-year retention rates. First to second-year retention rates have stayed relatively stable for the aggregate University population, from 65% for the fall 2017 cohort to 60% for the Fall 2021 cohort. At the undergraduate level, first-to-second-year retention rates dropped from 60% in fall 2017 to 53% in fall 2021. Graduate first-to-second year rates increased from 70% to 74% in that same time frame. University-wide six-year graduation rates for undergraduate students have remained stable at 53%. Graduate three-year graduation rates have increased from 54% to 68% (***Retention Committee UCC - May 2023, pg. 3***).

The Retention Committee, based on extensive disaggregation of available data and collaboration with administrative and academic areas, proposed numerous initiatives that were approved and implemented. Each initiative is assessed upon implementation and altered as needed (***Retention Committee Update Report - Jan 2023, pg. 10***). For example, data show that students who meet

with an advisor for an educational plan during their first semesters retain at a higher rate (57%) versus those who do not (37%). The directors of the Advising and First Year Experience course (FYE 101) increased the number of students with advisement appointments during their first semesters. In Fall 2023, the option to schedule an educational plan was added as a course assignment. Students are provided a direct Calendly link to schedule appointments. In Fall 2022, 23% of FYE 101 students completed educational plan appointments during the term they were enrolled in FYE. Early initiative results indicate that in Block I of Fall 2023, 45% of FYE 101 students completed an educational plan appointment, yielding a preliminary but promising 22% increase. Once fully established, this data will be presented year over year by term.

<u>Educational Effectiveness</u>
The Department of Educational Effectiveness was created in 2020 to coordinate the efforts of the Educational Effectiveness Coordinators, Student Outreach, and the Student Success Center.

Support is provided for all the colleges and areas within Academic Affairs to ensure that courses remain relevant, current, and provide students with a high-quality learning experience. A designated Educational Effectiveness Coordinator (EEC) is assigned to each academic college. They actively monitor course activity to confirm that faculty are following the (***Teaching Expectations***) guidelines outlined by Academic Affairs. Their role is to assist Academic Affairs with the monitoring of all courses regardless of modality. The established Teaching Expectations are monitored through various means: running Canvas analytics, examining courses to confirm compliance, and ongoing direct communications with faculty and chairs. This includes encouraging faculty to be highly involved in the online classroom, to engage with students, and to provide timely feedback, all of which enhance student achievement.

Faculty can send students automatic kudos or academic alert flags early in a block or semester through the Early Alert Outreach Program. These alerts include "commendable effort," "distracted in class," "inactivity in the course," "frequently tardy," "low grades" (C- or lower), and "missing assignments." Faculty can add personalized comments to automated emails (***Early Alert; Early Alert Report***).

The Student Outreach Office is committed to providing our students encouragement and support throughout their academic tenures. This supports student retention by communicating with and providing students with necessary resources that lead to academic success. Nine of the 12 annual outreach campaigns focus specifically on supporting at-risk students, improving engagement and retention. The "Timely Registration for Subsequent Term" campaign has led to 15%, 35%, and 20% registration in Summer 2022, Fall 2022, and Spring 2023, respectively. The Identified Potential Stop-Out campaign has yielded a consistent 2% of non-registered students registering. The Identified Potential Stop-Outs Close to Graduating campaign is a collaborative effort among academic colleges to contact students who have not registered but are close to graduating (60+ credits for undergraduate, 15+ credits for graduate). This outreach has inspired approximately 20% of those students to register for classes (***Student Outreach 2023, pg. 7; Timely Registration for Subsequent Term; Identified Potential Stop-Out; Identified Potential Stop-Outs Close to Graduating***).

The Student Success Center (SSC) provides academic assistance to students through tutoring and mentoring, and by providing writing and learning resources. Since its founding in 2008, SSC staff provide free tutoring for various disciplines, and also offers workshops and seminars in multiple modalities, administers placement tests, and coordinates early alert outreach (**_PP3 - Student Success Center - 2021, pg. 5; Student Success Center_**).

In May 2023, we moved from Smarthinking, the online tutoring platform, to Tutor.com, a comprehensive student support system because Smarthinking was no longer available as a platform. Tutor.com offers academic tutoring and writing, on-demand tutoring, and 24/7 tutoring availability for over 250 subjects; student success program support, including webinars on many topics, such as study skills and time management; and career services support that assists students in job searching, résumé building, and interview practice. We have integrated our face-to-face tutors into the Tutor.com platform by creating our own module. This allows for scheduling, tracking, and data analysis automation. More important, integration means that our tutors can access the student survey, gap knowledge assessments, and subtopic data (**_Tutor.com; Proposal for Tutor.com; Tutor.com Contract; SSC Update on Tutor.com - March 2023_**).

Via the Retention Committee, data indicate that students who receive tutoring retain year over year at a higher rate (57%) than those who do not (41%) (**_Retention Committee UCC - May 2023, pg. 11_**). The integration of Tutor.com was successful, and students are using it at a higher rate than with Smarthinking **_(Smarthinking vs Tutor.com data)._** Our highest usage occurred in Block I of Fall 2023, with 1,337 sessions **_(Tutor Sessions by College FA2023 B1)._** Since May of 2023, the Student Success Center has offered 3,317 tutoring sessions for undergraduate students, 355 for graduate students, and 25 for doctoral students **_(Tutor Sessions by Level)._**

With the 2022 Student Services realignment, the Department of Educational Effectiveness has had the opportunity to support students even more intentionally and proactively. Student Outreach identifies targeted groups of students; through intimate knowledge of the courses and ongoing discussions with the faculty and chairs, the Educational Effectiveness Coordinators provide insight into the class and details of the student and faculty interaction; and then the tutors and staff from the Student Success Center will make the proactive and personalized outreach to students and provide services appropriate to address the concerns.
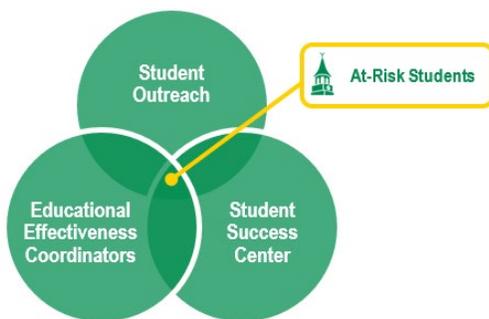
Figure 8: Student Success Monitoring

CRITERION 2: Policies and procedures regarding evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits, and credits awarded through experiential learning, prior non-academic learning, competency-based assessment, and other alternative learning approaches.

In 2021, the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society recognized Wilmington University nationally as one of 150 colleges and universities on its 2021 Transfer Honor Roll (***Transfer Honor Roll News***). Undergraduate students can transfer up to 30 credits for an associate degree or 90 credits for a bachelor's, depending on the program. When students seek to transfer credits, they typically have a minimum grade of a C and the credits from an accredited institution recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) (***Student Handbook, pg. 27***).

At Wilmington University, students can receive credits through traditional transfer credits from institutions with regional accreditations and alternative sources, including recognized alternative credit providers and prior learning assessments (***Credit for Prior Learning***). The open transfer policy and procedure for transfer credit are publicly available. They may be found on the University website and the University Catalog under "Academic Policies Courses and Credit." Students can access a credit transfer tool (***Credit Transfer Tool***) that lists previously evaluated courses that transfer into university programs. CT.net is a transfer equivalency tool allowing prospective students to identify which courses from other institutions could transfer to Wilmington University. CT.net includes a searchable institutional transfer profile that enables students to search for colleges based on entered parameters. CT.net is invaluable since 75 percent of our students transfer in credit; it helps inform students and expedites the equivalency approval process. Currently, 93,400-course equivalents loaded from over 1,400 accredited schools are available (***Transfer Credits webpage***). Transfer credit evaluators work with the program chairs to evaluate requests and award academic credit. Students receive communication about their completed transfer credit evaluations that directs them to view their (***myWilmU DegreeWorks***) through the myWilmU portal (***PP3 - Transfer Credit Evaluation - 2021, pg. 3***).

Credit for Prior Learning

Wilmington University allows up to 75 undergraduate Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credits to apply toward a bachelor's program. As part of the 75 credit PLA limit, no more than 45 credits may be applied toward a bachelor's degree from an American Council on Education (ACE)/ National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS) Alternative Credit Provider (e.g., Sophia Learning, Straighterline, Saylor) (***Credits through Alternative Providers***). Students can transfer an associate degree to be considered degree-completion students (***Student Handbook, pg. 28; Completion Degree***). The College of Education and Liberal Arts has additional qualifiers for transfer credits for undergraduates and teacher licensure candidates listed on the Wilmington University website.

Awarding credit for prior learning is a documented process with appropriate review and assessment (***Credit for Prior Learning***). Industry-recognized certifications, work-based training, and professional licenses provide students with opportunities to earn academic credit. Wilmington University faculty have approved over 150 accredited industry-recognized certifications and professional licenses for academic credit. Thus, the University has acknowledged the rigor required for students to obtain the learning, experiences, and skills to earn that credential (***Industry Recognized Credentials***).

Wilmington University's Criminal Justice faculty have evaluated many local and national police academies. As a result, law enforcement personnel can apply prior learning gained through academy training to earn college credit that applies to their degree programs. The College of Technology faculty have evaluated many industry-recognized certifications in the information technology field. IT professionals can apply certifications they earned throughout their careers to garner college credit applicable to degree programs.

Wilmington University has a long tradition of honoring credit recommendations by the American Council on Education (ACE) and the National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS). ACE and NCCRS have evaluated many training programs, certification providers, and standardized exams. We offer credit through portfolio assessment. The portfolio is a collection of materials compiled to demonstrate previous college-level learning (undergraduate) or knowledge obtained after completing a bachelor's degree (graduate) relevant to a student's degree plan.

<u>Community College Partnerships and Agreements</u>
Community college articulation and partnership agreements are collaborative processes between the University and its partners. Once these agreements are developed, they are subject to careful review with input from the Academic Partnership Office, faculty, staff and administration (***Academic Partnerships; Community College Partnerships***).

Wilmington University is proud of its extensive academic partnerships with community colleges throughout Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and other states. The Academic Partnerships Office (APO) manages partnerships with 36 colleges that encompass articulation agreements, guaranteed admissions agreements, 3+1 agreements, partner-specific scholarships, and other arrangements.

For over 40 years, the University has nurtured an onsite partnership with Delaware Technical Community College's Owens Campus in Georgetown, Delaware. Additional onsite partnerships at New Jersey community college campuses in Burlington, Camden, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Mercer counties have existed for three to 18 years.

In 2017, we added two additional instructional New Jersey locations: Camden County College and Mercer County Community College. An enhanced partnership with Camden County College in 2021 guaranteed transfer- and dual admissions for its students intent on completing associate degrees and enrolling in specific online Wilmington University bachelor's degree programs at a 25% tuition reduction. The Smart Transfer Enrollment Program (STEP) offered students one of the region's most affordable online paths to a bachelor's degree (***STEP path with Camden***).

In 2019, the University's Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, University Relations, and APO teams collaboratively analyzed our enrollment status throughout New Jersey. This analysis reviewed all New Jersey onsite partners, including the Joint Base McGuire-Dix Lakehurst (JB-MDL), and onsite seat count trends. We learned that New Jersey students were beginning to favor online offerings, and we discontinued in-person classes at JB-MDL to focus on our well-

established online programs. (The University concluded all <u>onsite</u> New Jersey offerings in the summer of 2023 to accommodate New Jersey students' preferences for online learning.)

Over the past three years, multiple factors have impacted the APO's ability to maintain transfer enrollment from its community college partners. The pandemic obviously impacted in-person enrollment, and an increase in community college partnerships with online four-year universities has certainly been a factor. However, Wilmington University has remained focused on its rich, online programs and remains committed to developing relevant offerings for its valued New Jersey students (***PP3 - Academic Partnerships - 2022, pg. 11***).

> Pre-College Programs

We offer high school students the opportunity to earn credit for college-level courses. Students meeting the eligibility standards (junior or senior status in Delaware, hold a 2.7 GPA, have an 83 or better average or a B- or better grade) may take selected introductory-level courses that are highly transferable. Over 30 transferable courses are offered at a reduced tuition rate of $96 per course (***Early College Credit; Approved Early College Credit courses; Early College Flyer***).

Dual Enrollment also gives students at designated high schools an opportunity to earn college credit while in high school by taking Wilmington University courses either on-site (at their schools) or a Wilmington University location. This initiative aligns with the state-level Delaware Pathways Student Success Plan. More than 800 Delaware high school students participated in our dual enrollment program during the 2022-2023 academic year, with more than 80 attending on-site at our New Castle campus (***Dual Enrollment; FY22-23 Key Accomplishments Board June 2023, pg. 30; Postsecondary Credit Chart***).

During the academic year 2022-2023, the Academic Partnership Office (APO) served 976 unduplicated pre-college students, generating 5,115 credit hours through dual enrollment and early college programs. Through dual enrollment partnership agreements with 17 Delaware high schools, the APO operated 96 dual enrollment course sections at school districts across all three counties in Delaware, generating 4,446 credit hours from 834 unduplicated students. In addition, 155 unduplicated students generated another 669 credit hours through the Early College program.

***CRITERION 3**: Policies and procedures for the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records.*

Wilmington University has policies, procedures, and training to ensure student records are secured following federal and state laws. Employees of the University who access student records must complete annual FERPA training (***FERPA***) and adhere to the privacy guidelines for Faculty and Staff (***Privacy Guidelines for Faculty and Staff***). Students learn about FERPA and Privacy Policies through the University website, Student Handbook (***Student Handbook, pg. 78***), and an annual notification to students about their privacy rights. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for securing student records per University policies and procedures. Students may submit a written request to the Vice President of Academic Affairs to amend their student records or report any violation of their privacy rights.

CRITERION 4: If offered, athletic, student life, and other extracurricular activities that are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern all other programs.

Wilmington University is committed to providing equitable opportunities for all student-athletes to participate in National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Division II intercollegiate athletics while successfully completing degree programs. Our Athletics mission statement, philosophy, academic standards, and guiding principles of sportsmanship and ethics are consistent with Wilmington University's mission, vision and values (***Athletics Mission Statement and Philosophy***). We abide by and uphold all rules and regulations set forth by NCAA and the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference (CACC) while striving for athletes to maintain an overall cumulative GPA of a 2.75 or better. Policies and procedures are clearly disseminated to students through our Compliance Office materials and the Student-Athlete Handbook (***NCAA Compliance; Athletic Policies and Procedures Manual, pg. 8; Athletics Compliance Manuals; Athletics Student-Athlete Handbook, pg. 21***).

Since our 2015 Self-Study, the University's NCAA Division II athletic offerings expanded to 16 NCAA-sponsored sports, including the addition of women's bowling, women's tennis, men's lacrosse, and men's and women's track & field. Adding these sports provides an opportunity to be involved for approximately 100 students per year. Wilmington University also created a new esports club team in 2019, engaging about 10 students yearly. Esports and our multiple award-winning cheerleading squad are part of the Student Life Department that is guided by a long, established history of diversity, inclusiveness and focus on academic success (***Sports, Clubs and Activities disaggregated headcount and GPAs; Student Club Advisor Handbook***).

Wilmington University's co-curricular activities contribute to development and academic success. To ensure these activities meet students' needs, programs are evaluated by an activity rubric developed to assess four areas, and (***Career Services & Student Life Event/Activity Rubric***) designed to meet strategic initiatives and educational values, support our mission, and attain graduation competencies. All of these activities must meet these competencies before approval and initiation.

Like every department, Student Life and Athletics activities are budget items that must be approved each fiscal year. The Athletic Department oversees all the sports sponsored by the University (***PP3 - Athletics - 2023, pg. 4***). The department assists all coaches in scheduling team practices, competitions, and travel arrangements. Academic success is a significant focus for the department, and policies and procedures are in place to support all athletes. The department monitors community outreach, University engagement, student-athlete enhancement and fundraising activities (***PP3 - Student Activities - 2021, pg. 1; Student Club Advisor Handbook, pg. 3***). Over the past five years, the Athletics Department has been highly successful, receiving honors, including 450-plus academic all-stars, 11 coaches of the year, and several teams participating in NCAA Tournament championships.

The University regularly evaluates curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular experiences through several departments. The Student Life department plans curricular and co-curricular student activities, surveys students about their experiences, and tracks attendance (***PP3 -***

Student Activities - 2018, pg. 2; PP3 - Student Activities - 2021, pg. 2). During the 2019-2020 academic year, the department hosted 79 events and engaged 11,324 students (duplicated) (***PP3 - Student Activities - 2021, pg. 11***).

Students can participate in many co-curricular and extracurricular groups and activities and are encouraged to create their own groups. The Student Government Association (SGA) oversees student groups (***Student Handbook, pg. 45***). The SGA president or designee attends monthly Faculty Senate meetings to report to faculty on upcoming events, Student Life program and community services outcomes, and more.

CRITERION 5: If applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of student support services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers.

Not applicable to Wilmington University

CRITERION 6: Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience.

Wilmington University consistently assesses student services, including Admissions, Advising, Career Services, Information Technology, Accessibility Services (formally Disability Services), Student Life, Student Outreach, Student Concerns, Athletics, Registrar, Student Financial Services, Financial Aid, Student Success Center, International Affairs, and Library. Support services are assessed regularly by developing and sharing internal Proof Positive (PP3) reports to evaluate services and improve student satisfaction. Individual PP3 department reports are submitted every three years, including data review, usage of services, findings, actions taken, and recommendations based on assessment results.

The Office of Institutional Research provides information to support institutional and departmental planning and decision-making, offering a reliable source for comprehensive University information and presenting annual survey findings internally on SharePoint and externally on the University website (***Satisfaction Survey: Graduating Students 2021 Report***).

University Safety
University Safety provides students a safe and secure learning environment (***Welcome from University Safety; PP3 - University Safety - 2020, pg. 1***). All safety officers are certified U.S. constables. Personnel are augmented by University safety cadets, a contract security firm, and officers from state, county, and municipal police agencies.

The University initiated the Safety Cadet Program in Fall 2019 to enhance student experiences. This program provides students interested in criminal justice and law enforcement careers many opportunities to work alongside seasoned constables who, collectively, have over 300 years of law enforcement experience. Students can receive college credits through internships and cooperative education in our Work-Integrated Learning Program while earning a part-time salary. These cadets are deployed to all campuses to gain valuable experience and assist constables.

University Safety's Central Command Center allows monitoring systems at all campuses to be handled from one location. Through the assessment and improvement processes, University Safety developed standard operating procedures for each campus so that all personnel follow processes necessary to protect the University community. University Safety and   Student Affairs teams also collaborated to write "#Wilmington UniversitySafeCampus," a campaign designed to educate students about safety (***PP3 - University Safety - 2020, pg. 12***).

Military Affairs

In 2019, Wilmington University was selected to participate in a Department of Defense (DoD) Voluntary Education (VolEd) Institutional Compliance Program (ICP). The DoD VolEd ICP review process required the University to complete a self-assessment. The purpose of the self-assessment was to confirm the institution's commitment to excellence in educating military students, which promotes compliance with the DoD VolEd Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (DoD MOU) intended to create an educational environment for our service members to excel.

The self-assessment process examined the following compliance categories: accreditation and credentialing requirements, degree plans, transfer credits and requirements, academic counseling and post-graduation job opportunities, student loans, refunds, readmission, and recurring marketing practices.

Based on the findings, recommendations included clarifying the bans on incentives and high-pressure tactics for recruiting military enrollment, improving information related to financial aid and billing staff training who work with military-enrolled students, and providing additional disclosures on the University website. DoD records reflect that these corrective actions have been reviewed and accepted. No further action is required (***PP3 - Military Affairs Office - Sept 2022, pg. 3***).

 Additional assessment samples of the Support of the Student Experience include:

- Based on the assessment of a feasibility study, in 2017, a new comprehensive Student Information System (SIS) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) suite of products was procured (***SIS/CRM Feasibility Study***). The suite of Ellucian products implemented are as follows: Banner (SIS), CRM Recruit (Recruitment and Admissions), CRM Advise (Student Success), CRM Advance (Alumni), and DegreeWorks. Additional Ellucian ecosystem products have been implemented, including Banner Document Management, International Student and Scholar Management (ISSM), and Ellucian Workflow. In 2018, we added a new Learning Management System. Additional information on assessment and advancements in Technology is in Standard VI.
- The Student Success Center reported positive ratings from personalized tutoring services (***PP3 - Student Success Center - 2021, pg. 8***). In 2021, 98% of students rated tutor feedback favorably. These results were out of 1,094 tutoring sessions with 288 unique students.

- Signal Vine two-way faculty texting, data show that 53% of students agreed that Signal Vine helped with their class experience and that 81% would like to see faculty 2-way texting as an option in the future (***Signal Vine data***).
- Our online chatbot supported the IT Help Desk and fielded 1,000 student messages in the first two months. Student satisfaction rating was 4.2/5 (***PP3 - Information Technology - Dec 2021, pg. 17***).
- In Spring 2019, we observed students placed on a closed course waitlist. In response, the Course Scheduling team developed a data-driven process that uses a formula to determine when a new section will be added to the course schedule. Online courses are monitored daily, and a new section is created when overall seat enrollment reaches 96%. From Spring 2019 to Spring 2020, we gained 7,149 seats through this process (***PP3 - Registrar - 2020, pg. 8***).

Conclusion

The dedication to providing exceptional support from a team of talented and caring individuals is a crucial aspect of fostering an environment in which students can thrive academically and personally.

Areas of Innovation and Strength

- The student service departments were realigned through a new plan that embraces the future with a strategy that serves and engages students even more purposefully in enrollment and academic success. While the most critical aspect of the realignment is student achievement and service, it also utilizes our employees' talents and strengths, giving them opportunities that align with their skills. Over 100 employees were retrained and given new job descriptions in support of this new plan.

The key areas of the realignment include:
  o **Student Engagement Center**

Formerly called the University Information Center (UIC), which operated as a call center, the Student Engagement Center now responds to students who wish to enroll. Former UIC representatives, the student onboarding team, and members of Transfer Services are now engagement counselors. The center's physical location is at the New Castle site on the first floor of the DAC. (The former Admissions window is now staffed by Engagement Center personnel.)
  o **Improvements to our Response to Student Calls**

Calls from students to the University are now answered by associates instead of the Interactive Voice Response automated system. The main line is staffed from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. Students receive a point person who addressed all their requests or concerns throughout their college careers at the University.
  o **Academic College Teams**

We now have six student service teams: one for each of the five colleges, and one for specialized student support. The engagement counselors serve as primary student contacts within each academic college team. Each team has members from Admissions, Advisement, Enrollment, Financial Aid, Student Financial Services, Registrar, International Affairs, Educational Effectiveness, Recruitment, Career Services, Guided Pathways, Student Success, Student Outreach, Transfer Services, and program chairs when appropriate.

Opportunities to Shape the Future

- **Implement a new portal to offer information from multiple systems more efficiently**. We will customize a new, more intuitive portal to provide students, faculty, and staff ease in seeking the relevant information they want, such as emergency notifications, important dates, assignments and tests, billing, financial aid, and other critical details. Our current portal is static, meaning users cannot modify their dashboards, and the University determines the information displayed. This new tool will be personalized, and users will customize their dashboards to fit their needs.

Standard V. Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.
Requirements of Affiliation: 2, 8, 9, 10

Introduction

Assessment is a core component of the University's culture. The colleges assess student learning outcomes, student satisfaction, faculty, and educational effectiveness. The departments with direct student contact evaluate student use of and satisfaction with their services. Other departments and units without direct student contact assess their contributions toward our mission by maintaining institutional commitments, effective stewardship, and integrity. The schedule and outline to document, analyze, and share these assessments are defined in our institutional assessment process.

The assessment framework stems from three primary areas: the students at every stage of their academic cycle with us; the workplace; and maintaining and following departmental policies and procedures. This institution-wide framework of this philosophy, the (Proof Positive)3 (PP3), which was mentioned earlier in this report, began in 2009 and continues today. The PP3 report schedule is ongoing, with the findings undergoing analysis within departments and presented to various audiences (***Framework for Institutional Assessment; PP3 Assessment Schedule; PP3 Guidelines***).

Figure 9: Institutional Assessment Framework

As communicated throughout this Self-Study report, Wilmington University shapes the future by embracing the culture of assessment and ongoing improvement. Departments with recruiting responsibilities track data to understand potential students' needs and interests. Academic student learning outcomes are mapped and assessed on an ongoing basis. Campus climate surveys are examined to ensure workplace fulfillment. Data about enrolled students inform us of student body growth, retention, and graduation. Data gathered from alumni provides information about program satisfaction and employment. Current students assess various aspects of their educational journeys, and their progress is assessed via our established learning outcomes (***Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Cycle***). In 2023, we received the Outcomes Award from Teege Enrollment Services' Leading Colleges. This award recognizes the dedication of our faculty and staff to being a student-centered institution (***Leading Colleges 2023 - Outcomes award***).

CRITERION 1: *Clearly stated educational goals at the institution and degree/program levels, which are interrelated with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the institution's mission.*

The Academic Affairs Outcomes Assessment Plan uses a four-pronged approach to assessment: assessing teaching effectiveness, learning outcomes, student satisfaction, and promoting educational values. As demonstrated below, the first three prongs are regularly evaluated. Promoting educational values is not directly measured; however, it aligns with our institutional principles. These values frame the standards faculty model and we strive to develop them among our students (***Academic Affairs Outcomes Assessment Plan, pg. 2***). A visual of the Academic Affairs Assessment Plan is in Appendix E.

Student learning outcomes are linked to the University Mission through the graduation competencies. Graduation competencies are developed by the Faculty Senate and divided into General Education and Academic Program competencies. The General Education competencies are assessed formatively by the College of Education and Liberal Arts (***CAS Outcomes Assessment example 2022, pg. 6***). A summative assessment of the General Education competencies is performed at the program level and the program-level competency assessment. Graduate level competencies are assessed at the program level (***Graduation Competencies***).

Regarding the General Education requirements, an ad hoc group of the Faculty Senate Committee on Information Literacy developed a rubric for programs to use for Information Literacy. Additionally, an ad hoc group within the Faculty Senate works on the Writing Across the Curriculum initiative. This group developed a rubric, and three Canvas Learning courses were designed to train faculty in best practices for developing student writing skills (***WAC evidence; Information Literacy Rubric***).

The colleges have established outcomes assessment plans found on the Academic Affairs Outcomes Assessment webpage (***Academic Affairs Outcomes Assessment webpage***). Each undergraduate and graduate program has a comprehensive outcomes assessment map of graduation competencies (General Education and program level), course-level objectives, benchmarks, and assessment measures. Student learning outcomes are assessed through identified academic courses to determine the extent to which they meet expected competencies. All programs have curricular maps with course-embedded, criterion-referenced assessments (CECRAM) (***AAOA 21-22 college scorecard; AAOA 22-23 college scorecard template***). College assessment plans are located on the Academic Affairs Outcomes Assessment webpage. All the colleges' curricular maps and outcomes assessment results are on the Academic Affairs SharePoint site. Our documentation includes a yearly dean's report on the corresponding data for the total Academic Affairs Assessment Plan (***Dean Summary Report for Summit; CSBS Outcomes Assessment Summit File 22-23; CSBS Dean's Summary Report 22-23; COB Curricular Mapping; COB OA Summary Presentation 22-23; COHPNS OA Summary Report 22-23***). We consistently review and revise the process.
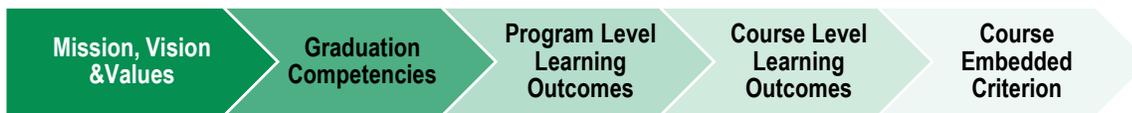
Figure 10: Mission Tied to Academics

Expected student learning outcomes in academic programs are communicated succinctly to students through academic program webpages (***Academic Programs***) within course syllabi and assessment rubrics (***Syllabi***).

The Academic Affairs Outcomes Assessment webpage articulates the process of measuring and evaluating student achievement of expected learning outcomes toward improvement of our academic programs and aligned with the institutional mission (***Academic Affairs Outcomes Assessment webpage***).

CRITERION 2: Organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty and/or appropriate professionals, evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/program goals. Institutions should:

> ***Criterion 2a: Define meaningful curricular goals with defensible standards for evaluating whether students are achieving those goals;***
>
> ***Criterion 2b: Articulate how they prepare students in a manner consistent with their mission for successful careers, meaningful lives, and, where appropriate, further education. They should collect and provide data on the extent to which they are meeting these goals;***
>
> ***Criterion 2c: Support and sustain assessment of student achievement and communicate the results of this assessment to stakeholders.***

The program chairs and faculty conduct a comprehensive three-year review on each program. The academic deans and academic assistant vice presidents analyze the results and determine what actions to take: invest, maintain, monitor, evaluate, or sunset (***Program Review Action Results 2021***). The decisions are reported to Institutional Research and the Strategic Enrollment Management Committee. The three-year review takes place in June, with a final determination in August of the same year. As part of the annual Academic Affairs Outcomes Summit, follow-up from program review actions is presented within summary reports, then an overview is presented to the Faculty Senate. The process now includes a yearly snapshot report in response to the changing external environment, explicitly examining enrollment, retention, and graduation. External bodies accredit some of our programs and require a different timetable. These schedules are clearly defined (***Program Review One-Year Snapshot template; Three-Year Program Review template; Program and Accreditation Review Schedule***). Examples of the action results of the three-year review include:

- The action result of the program review for the College of Technology's B.S. in Computer Science was to invest in the program. Trending significant enrollment growth reinforced the computer science degree as quickly becoming one of the University's largest programs. To support student service and effective management of overall program operations, we hired a dedicated program chair in November 2022. We also recognized the rapid and evolving nature of the discipline and supported a proposal to expand inclusion of artificial intelligence and invest in the hire of an assistant program chair of Computer Science and AI position in February 2023 (***COT - B.S. in Computer Science Program Review - 2021, pg. 10***).
- The action result of M.S. in Management review was to monitor the program. In direct response to an enrollment decline where graduating students exceeded new students, the program chair proposed a rebranding campaign to educate prospective students and employers on earned skills from the degree and add a new concentration in Sustainability (***M.S. Science Management Program Review - 2021; M.S. Science Management with a concentration in Sustainability proposal***). Curricular revision ensued with the program chair who earned approval of the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee on April 20, 2023, and (***CC minutes April 2023, pg. 1***), with Faculty Senate approval on May 11, 2023 (***FS minutes May 2023, pg. 4***).
- The action result of the program review for the Doctor of Social Science in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences was to invest in the program. Based on this, the recommendation is to add a second cohort to expand the program with additional personnel. Academic Affairs hired a full-time faculty member for the Doctor of Social Science Program who joined the program in November 2023. Plans to expand will commence in 2024 (***CSBS - Doctor of Social Science Program Review - 2021, pg. 5***).

Wilmington University develops and delivers academic programs for students to begin or continue their careers and improve their competitiveness in the global marketplace. The Annual Alumni Survey is sent to students eligible to participate in commencement ceremonies held during the previous academic year. Since 2016, we have averaged 4,500 alumni surveyed annually and a 16.4% response rate. In 2022, our data revealed that nearly 84% of respondents were employed full-time, part-time, or self-employed after graduation, 6% work in their major fields of study, and 90% reported that their coursework prepared them for their careers (***Alumni Survey results - 2021, pgs. 4, 6, 12***). The Office of Institutional Research disaggregates the data by degree level and college. The overall University scores are used as comparisons. An alumni survey is also administered to graduates one and five years after graduating. Data are analyzed with support from the Institutional Research team (***Student Satisfaction Survey - 2021, pg. 3***).

The survey included employment questions complied with National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) standards and protocol. During 2021, a total of 4,620 alumni surveys were sent, with a return rate of 13.39% (620 individuals). Of respondents who commented on their preparedness for their current jobs, 28.8% indicated they were "adequately prepared," 29.2% were "more than adequately" prepared, and 31.6% were "exceptionally well" prepared. Overall, 89.6% of respondents were prepared to enter their professions after attending Wilmington University (***Alumni Survey results - 2021, pg. 12***).

The annual Academic Affairs Outcomes Summit (AAOS) that began in 2007 is a one-day event that allows our deans to share student learning outcomes results, program review follow-ups, aggregated Course and Teaching Survey (CATS) results, GPAs, pass-fail rates, and any relevant student surveys. The student learning outcome assessment process begins with the design of the program and curricular mapping. Each program has an established curricular map that faculty use to guide student learning assessment. Each semester designated assessment data are gathered, analyzed and discussed among faculty, advisory boards and presented within the colleges. The AAOA held annually, includes a review of the outcomes data, discussion of program review results, as well as an examination of the outcomes assessment process itself. Attendees at the conference include the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Assistant Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, the Senior Director of Institutional Research, deans, faculty representatives, and other guests (***Academic Affairs Summit Agenda***).

Highlights from each college are included in the Academic Affairs PP3 report and reported to the full Faculty Senate yearly. College meetings and program-level advisory board meetings involve discussions about more college-specific information. Additional feedback is sought and valued. This plan is on our website, and the Academic Affairs Assessment Plan provides other guidelines for establishing outcomes benchmarks.

We offer information about individual colleges' processes to all key stakeholders and faculty. Faculty participates in regular college meetings to review assessment data and processes, celebrate successes, and discuss specific changes in curriculum, pedagogy, policy, or other areas. Academic program and course-related meetings are also scheduled throughout the year to reiterate results presented at the summit to full-time and adjunct faculty. Colleges offer assessment results to the Program Advisory Board Committee for review and input. The committee comprises community members, practitioners, faculty, and student representatives (***COELA Outcomes presentations to Advisory Boards - 2023; LES Advisory Board Meeting Minutes - 2022, pg. 4; COHP Advisory Board Presentation - 2019, pg. 4; COHPNS Newsletter 2023, pg. 3; CMHC Advisory Board Meeting - 2023, slide 2***).

CRITERION 3: Consideration and use of assessment results for the improvement of educational effectiveness. Consistent with the institution's mission, such uses include some combination of the following:

      Criterion 3a. Assisting students in improving their learning;

      Criterion 3b. Improving pedagogy and curriculum;

      Criterion 3c. Reviewing and revising academic programs and support services;

      Criterion 3d. Planning, conducting, and supporting a range of professional development activities;

      Criterion 3e. Planning and budgeting for the provision of academic programs and services;

Criterion 3f. Informing appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs;

Criterion 3g. Improving key indicators of student success, such as retention, graduation, transfer, and placement rates;

Criterion 3h. Implementing other processes and procedures designed to improve educational programs and services.

Program chairs complete program reviews by analyzing program data, including retention, graduation rate, and program demand. The faculty make recommendations for improvement based on the data. For example, a review of the Bachelor of Science in Communication degree revealed the need for a Digital Journalism focus. This resulted in new concentrations in Public Relations, Strategic Communication, and Visual Communication (***PP3 - Academic Affairs OA - 2020, pg. 4***).

<u>Assessment Examples</u>
In 2017, the B.S. in Health Sciences transitioned from the prior Allied Health completion-only degree. It was designed to serve students who had achieved associate degrees within an allied health profession and desired to complete their bachelor's degrees. During the background analysis for the program review, we determined that:

- A bachelor's degree would be the desired level of employment for ALH professionals. They wish to be considered as qualified as other health care professionals who elevated their baseline educational criteria.
- Identify new rules for graduates with bachelor's degrees in health care.
- Students seek to advance their educations toward graduate or doctoral-level study.

During the pandemic, the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences determined that students struggled to develop, describe, and analyze a logic model for a specific program or service in "Research, Design and Evaluation of Programs in Human Services (AHS 6630)." The faculty added interactive Zoom sessions within the course to assist students in mastering that competency. As a result, the proportion of students mastering the logic criterion increased. For the 2019-2020 academic year (pre-Zoom sessions), 67% met the benchmark. In the 2020-2021 academic year, with Zoom sessions implemented, 81% met the benchmark (***PP3 - Academic Affairs OA - 2021, pg. 15***).

Through its program review process, faculty in the Environmental Science program identified a need to increase data science and analysis due to the changing employment landscape. Faculty added course content specific data analysis within courses. Following this change, the assessment results related to data analytics showed improvement. Although students were originally meeting the benchmark, the assessment measure for the data analytics student learning outcome increased to above 0.9 out of 1.0 with 230 individual students assessed (***PP3 - Academic Affairs OA - 2021, pg. 5***).

The College of Education and Liberal Arts observed that local and national organizations and corporations needed skilled experts to utilize data to benefit clients and customers, improve

processes, and increase profit. The college developed and implemented a Bachelor of Science in Applied Mathematics program.

During the 2018-2019 academic year, we assessed Business Statistics (MAT 312) students' abilities to analyze data and draw conclusions. Evaluations revealed they were below the internal outcomes assessment benchmark, set at a minimum of 77% and commensurate with a passing "C" grade on the University's undergraduate grading scale. The chair hired new instructors and held workshops with instructors. The benchmark was met in 2019-2020 (***PP3 - Academic Affairs OA - 2020, pg. 5***).

We resolved inter-rater reliability issues with student learning outcomes calculations in the Bachelor of Applied Technology program by adjusting how outcomes were calculated and providing instructor training (***PP3 - Academic Affairs OA - 2020, pg. 17***).

External Accreditations
Across the University, college leaders' complete outcomes assessments to satisfy external accreditations. Self-Study reports help them evaluate, reflect, and affect curricular and instructional changes based on evidenced student learning outcomes.

College of Business

International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE)
(***IACBE Accreditation***)
Current Period of Accreditation: January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2029

We use Peregrine examination results to assess student learning for all College of Business undergraduate and graduate programs and base programs or course changes and modifications on the results annually. Results are pulled three times a year or each semester. Program reports and bi-annual chair reviews utilize examination results to identify needs or areas for improvement (***IACBE Public Disclosure of Graduation Rate 2021-2022; IACBE Outcomes Assessment Results***).

College of Education and Liberal Arts

Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) (Accredited through 2027)
(***CAEP Accreditation, pg. 3; COELA Accreditations and Recognitions; Frank Murray Leadership Recognition***; ***CAEP Report - 2020***)
- B.S. in Elementary Education (K-6)

- B.S. in Middle Level Education (6-8)
- M.Ed. in Elementary Studies (K-6)
- M.Ed. in Reading
- M.Ed. in School Leadership
- M.Ed. in Special Education
- Ed.D. in Educational Leadership

COELA: ETS PPAT (Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers)
Students have a high success rate on this exam. Modifications to pedagogical coursework and clinical experiences focused on embedding elements of assessment allowing teacher candidates to explore and prepare for the examination prior to administration during their student teaching experiences.

College of Health Professions
(*CCNE Accreditation*)

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)

The following Nursing programs are accredited through Spring 2030.
- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Doctor of Nursing Practice
- Post-Graduate APRN Certificate

Graduates of the Nurse Practitioner programs may elect to complete certifying exams through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) or the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) as available by specialty. The expected level of achievement for first-time exam takers is 80% or higher. In 2011, faculty noted national certification Nurse Practitioner exam pass rates fell "below benchmark achievement." From 2011 through 2016, several interventions including mock board exams, individualized student remediation, and cohort reviews were instituted to support student success. We are now achieving the benchmark due to the intervention method taken (*NU Pass rate timeline*).

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
(*CACREP Accreditation, pg. 1*)

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)
- M.S. Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC)

Accreditation Status: Accredited, Accreditation Expiration: March 31, 2031

The specialty area was found to substantially meet the standards with minor deficiencies related to posting the annual program evaluation report on the University website. The original CACREP Self-Study report was submitted in 2020, and the evaluation and reporting process has since been revised to address these items. CACREP acknowledged this, and Clinical Mental Health Counseling program officials will submit a check-in progress report to CACREP on Oct. 1, 2024.

**ABA Approved
Paralegal Program**

B.S. in Law, Policy, and Political Science
Reapproval Self-Study was submitted in December 2022 and is pending approval for renewal. The ABA has been extended until February 2024 (***ABA for Paralegal***).

May 2020: The Legal Studies Program received a favorable (passed with no recommendations) Legal Studies concentration of the B.S. in Law, Policy, and Political Science
- Post-Bachelor's Paralegal certificate

College of Technology

Center of Academic Excellence Designation
- Computer & Network Security

The B.S. in Cybersecurity has been designated as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance and Cybersecurity by the National Security Agency and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security until 2028 (***CAE Institution Map, pg. 12***).

CRITERION 4: If applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of assessment services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers.

Not applicable to Wilmington University

CRITERION 5: Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of assessment processes utilized by the institution for the improvement of educational effectiveness.

Our Academic Affairs Outcomes Assessment Plan was adopted in 2003. This plan has been periodically reviewed, assessed, and revised. The most current version, updated in March 2023, is on the Academic Assessment website. In Appendix A of the Outcome Affairs Outcomes Assessment Plan, we provide a complete evolution and evidence of our ongoing assessment of the assessment process. Since 2007, the Vice President for Academic Affairs has convened the annual Academic Affairs Outcomes Assessment Summit to review progress in meeting institutional goals, discuss strengths and weaknesses, and present, analyze, and discuss examples of data-based decision-making regarding the plan (***Academic Affairs Outcomes Assessment Plan, pg. 16; PP3 - Academic Affairs OA - Dec 2015, pg. 2; PP3 - Academic Affairs OA - March 2023, pg. 2***). The most recent evidence of the continual assessment and evolution of our Academic Affairs assessment process is the effort to move towards automation of assessment collection.

Systematic Overhaul of Outcomes Assessment Data Collection

In conjunction with the University-wide migration from the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS) to Canvas, Academic Affairs initiated a plan to use Canvas's centralized automated outcomes assessment feature to collect outcomes assessment data directly from faculty evaluation of student assignments in the LMS. Academic Affairs sought to realize three critical enhancements:

1. Reduce the significant time and labor in the manual collection of outcomes assessment data.
2. Reduce (and ultimately eliminate) inconsistencies in outcomes assessment data due to manual data collection processes.
3. Enhance capability to analyze outcomes assessment data and enact continuous improvement in support of student outcomes attainment.

Academic Affairs convened a committee of select individuals from Academic Affairs, Online Learning and Educational Technology, and Institutional Research to initiate the plan. This committee created a systematic approach and implemented a pilot in the Fall 2019 semester with select courses in the Liberal Arts and the College of Technology.

The core of this work consisted of creating the digital graduation and program competencies in Canvas and then tagging and mapping these competencies to embedded assessment rubrics on

the corresponding assignments in courses in the Canvas LMS. When an instructor enters grades on the embedded assessment rubric, the evaluation results are automatically collected and stored in a central data store, reducing time, labor, and risk of error reflective of a manual collection process. The Institutional Research Online Learning and Educational Technology teams connected this data store to Cognos, the University's data reporting tool. This work enabled the committee to achieve the third aim of enhancing the faculty's data analysis capability.

While still in progress, as of 2023, all formative graduation competencies within the Liberal Arts area are collected via this process, along with program competencies in select programs. In the Fall of 2023, the undergraduate Psychology program implemented this process across the entire program. A plan exists to continue expanding the automated data collection process across programs.

Exceptions to this emerging process are educational preparation and licensure programs within the College of Education and Liberal Arts (COELA). To maintain and comply with specific Delaware Department of Education and program-specific accreditation requirements, faculty in these programs have used Watermark's Taskstream system to collect, analyze, and report outcomes. However, related to the three enhancements mentioned above, as of Fall 2023, the COELA has migrated to Watermark's new system, Student Learning and Licensure. Its key feature is the ability to embed outcomes assessment rubrics within Canvas, which, in effect, matches the capabilities described above in terms of direct data collection from faculty assessment of student assignments. This specifically supports the reduction of time and effort on manual assessment data collection and reduces the risk of error in data collection.

Conclusion

The University has mature student learning outcomes assessment processes. We have developed and enhanced our assessment tools and measures for the past 15 years. As noted in this chapter, we use the learning outcomes data we collect, analyze, and disseminate to make course and program changes.

Areas of Innovation and Strength

- A positive assessment culture among all institutional areas provides the foundation to make data-informed decisions and implement changes. This is a continual process of improvement to support student success.

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

Requirements of Affiliation: 10, 11

Introduction

Wilmington University aligns its planning processes, resource allocations, and structures to fulfill its mission and goals. Vision 2025 connects the mission, vision, and values with five strategic initiatives. The annual institutional priorities enable us to operationalize the initiatives. The University utilizes assessment tools at all levels to monitor and evaluate performance consistently and sets goals to improve programs and to efficiently meet opportunities and challenges. Departments assess their processes, goals, and policies to meet student and institutional needs effectively. Findings have supported an ongoing process and culture of continuous improvement to support the University's mission, vision, and values.

CRITERION 1: Institutional objectives, both institution wide and for individual units, that are clearly stated, assessed appropriately, linked to mission and goal achievement, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, and are used for planning and resource allocation.

Vision 2025, the most recent strategic plan, was adopted by the Board of Trustees in May 2020, and builds on the foundation of previous strategic plans (***Vision 2025 and Annual Institutional Priorities FY20-21***). The University's strategic planning process begins with University administration, including members of the President's Executive Team, Board of Trustees, vice presidents, and assistant vice presidents. Individual academic and support units guide the strategic plan implementation and annual institutional priorities with department-level initiatives. This holistic approach to strategic planning demonstrates broad representation and institution-wide collaboration to develop goals and priorities that are clearly stated, assessed appropriately, linked to the mission, vision, and values, and used for planning and resource allocation. As a part of the overall mission of Wilmington University, the strategic plan is revised and updated every five years (***Vision 2025 and Annual Institutional Priorities FY20-21; Vision 2025 and Annual Institutional Priorities FY21-22; Vision 2025 and Annual Institutional Priorities FY22-23; Vision 2025 and Annual Institutional Priorities FY23-24***).

The Administrative Cabinet meets annually to monitor progress in achieving our strategic initiatives and the Executive Team updates the Board on that progress at regular meetings. The strategic initiatives are used to develop the University's Annual Institutional Priorities (***Strategic Planning at WilmU***). Individual departments, work groups, and committees assess annual institutional priorities and set goals aligned with the University's strategic plan. These goals may include opportunities to improve efficiencies through re-organization, process improvements, or revenue enhancements via strategic partnerships (***Strategic Financial Framework***).

The University financial outcomes assessment, based on the final results of the operating budget, drives the allocation of resources for major one-time annual institutional priorities. For example,

facilities assessments identified several projects to be funded over multiple years, but based on the solid operating performance of fiscal year 2023 which resulted in a net operating budget surplus of **$10.5 million,** management recommended and the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees approved funding in excess of **$1.5 million** to advance a number of these maintenance projects in-addition to **$2 million** to fund the new Athletics Training Facilities (***FY23 Proposed Distribution of Excess Revenue, pg. 5***).

CRITERION 2: *Clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that provide for constituent participation and incorporate the use of assessment results.*

Annual Institutional Priorities- which are specific goals tied to strategic initiatives--comprise the institution's multi-year strategic plan. Considering the focus on ensuring uninterrupted student learning during the pandemic, the University's Administrative Cabinet abbreviated the Annual Institutional Priorities for 2021-2022. The Annual Institutional Priorities were developed historically by the Administrative Cabinet, which consists of assistant vice presidents, deans, and the Executive Team (vice presidents and the President). To include a broader representation of staff and faculty in the planning process, in September 2021, the Executive Team created four topic-specific task forces to develop the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 Annual Institutional Priorities. (***Vision 2025 and Annual Institutional Priorities FY22-23; Vision 2025 and Annual Institutional Priorities FY23-24; Task Force Membership***) The task forces were to operate for at least one year to bridge the revised Annual Institutional Priorities and Vision 2025. The task forces, charged with proposing actions in the two-to five-year range, offered recommendations examined by the Longer-Term View Task Force (LTV), composed primarily of Executive Team members. This enhanced process was quite successful in generating innovative ideas, so a similar planning approach will continue.

Those task forces were:
1. Educating the Student and Workforce of the Future Task Force (***Report/Recommendations: Task Force - Educating the Student and Workforce of the Future***)
2. Engagement with Prospective Students, Current Students, and Alumni Task Force (***Report/Recommendations: Task Force - Engagement with Prospective Students, Current Students, and Alumni***)
3. Enrollment Pipeline Task Force (***Report/Recommendations: Task Force - Enrollment Pipeline***)
4. Post-Pandemic Operations (Technology, Facilities, Human Resources) Task Force (***Report/Recommendations: Task Force - Post-Pandemic Operations***)

The task forces comprised 45 members from all organizational levels led by seven chairs (***Long Term View Task Force Summary Presentation***). Recommendations from these task forces were included in the development of the Annual Institutional Priorities, and the University has begun implementing many of the recommendations that arose from this process, including investing in advanced communications technology of Microsoft Teams (which has been rolled out campus-wide) and Landis call center software. In addition, the creation of video-friendly conference rooms, group-friendly meetings spaces, individual workspaces (hoteling), and developing

flexible department workspaces are items in progress designed to maintain long-term stability (***Task Force Action Items May 2023 Status Update***).

As mentioned throughout this document, the Proof Positive (PP3) Reports measure the effectiveness of our departmental efforts to close the loop and provide the opportunity to report on successes. The PP3 Reports are living documents that guide evaluation in the workplace, departmental policies and processes, and student-impacting efforts at every stage of their life cycle at the University. All University departments prepare PP3 reports regularly and present their findings to the University Coordinating Council (UCC) or the Cabinet. PP3 reports are available for all staff to view on the University's Intranet (***PP3 Reports***). The PP3 reports include departmental goals, objectives, survey results, outcomes, and other information to document progress on goal achievement and make recommendations for the future based on assessment data.

Wilmington University demonstrates an open and transparent process to develop planning initiatives. Through various internal communication approaches, it freely communicates to share updates on initiatives and progress on strategic planning and annual institutional priorities with faculty and staff. For example, the UCC meets nine times yearly to discuss plans, enrollment, PP3 reports, and review recommendations for change (***UCC Minutes and Records***). Members of UCC are responsible for sharing this information with their direct reports. Progress on annual institutional priorities is reported quarterly on the University's intranet (***IP Outcomes***). The President chairs the UCC, and directors, deans, vice presidents, and assistant vice presidents provide representation to all departmental units. Other cross-departmental collaboration and planning opportunities include the Academic Council, University-wide meetings, departmental meetings, and Safety Department awareness sessions (***Academic Council Minutes; Faculty Senate Minutes***). Meeting minutes and other departmental information are available for all staff on the employee intranet to encourage open communication. An example of a recent change communicated widely is the college reorganization introduced in Standard III. This change was expressed at the aforementioned meetings and shared directly with the community (***Academic Affairs Reorganization Message***).

Academic program assessment is conducted through an annual comprehensive program review process. All programs are reviewed using data collected by individual colleges to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and alignment with the strategic plan. After the data is analyzed, a determination is made in collaboration with the dean, directors, and program chairs, and each program is placed into one of four categories. The four categories invest in additional resources, maintain current resource levels, monitor since there are some emerging concerns, and evaluate for possible redesign or elimination.

Strategic Enrollment Management
As a tuition-driven private, nonprofit institution, strategic enrollment planning is critical to preserving Wilmington University's long-term financial health. The University experienced a slightly negative impact of the pandemic during FY2021-2022, when we had an enrollment decline in our seat count of 10.5% versus the budgeted projection. In response, we established a strategic enrollment advisory group, with broad-based representation of academic and administrative leaders, to develop and recommend long-term strategies to grow and diversify our

enrollment revenue streams. This initiative has proven successful and is integral to our strategic Enrollment Management Plan (***Strategic Enrollment Management Plan***).

Figure 11: Fall 2023 Enrollment by Level
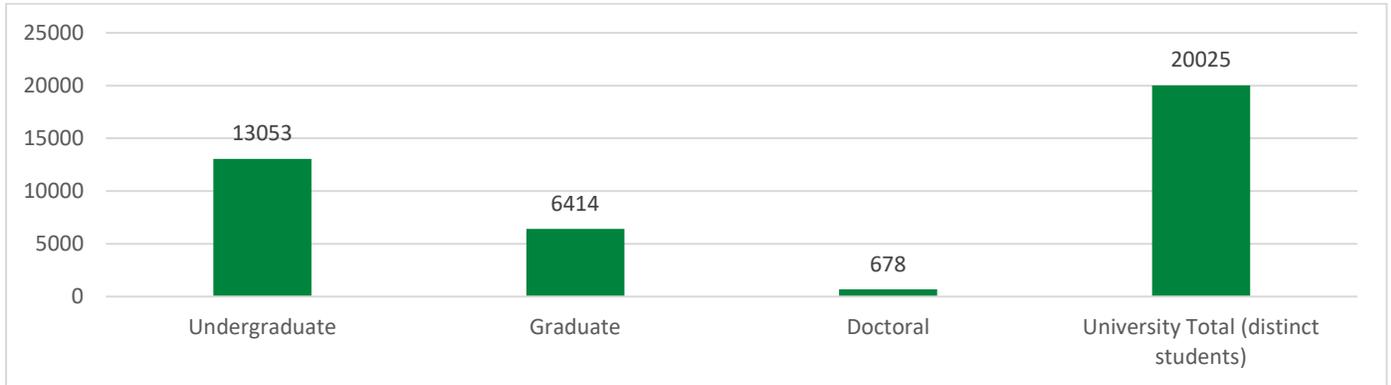
Figure 12: Undergraduate 1st-2nd year Retention (FA21 cohort), 6-year Graduation (FA17 cohort)
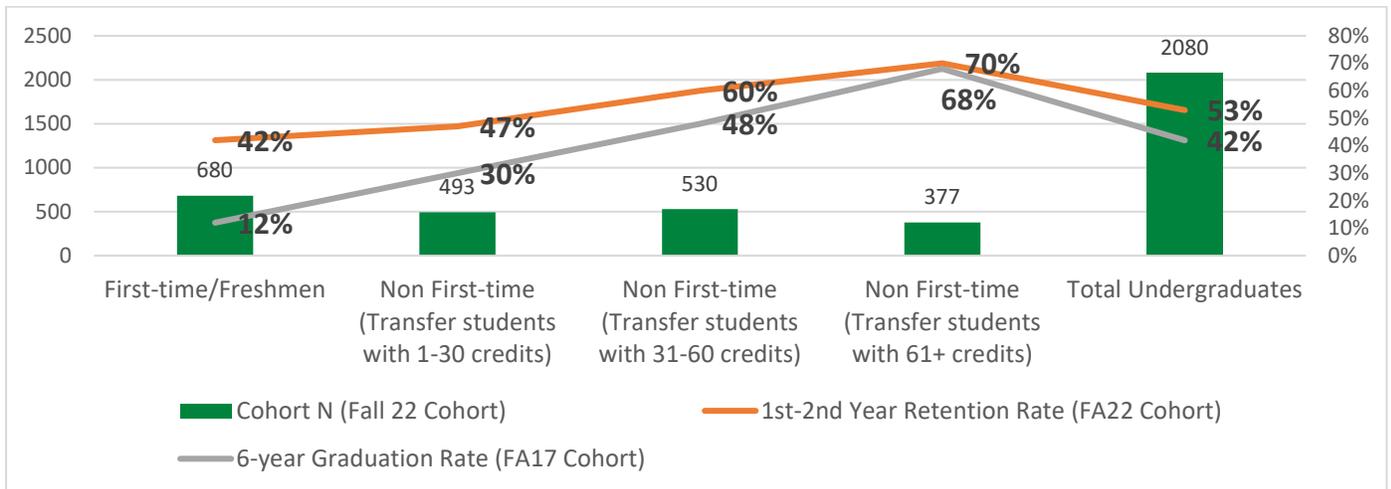
Note: Open Admissions National Rates: Retention (62%), Graduation (30%)

Wilmington University continues to execute several trend-setting strategic partnerships with local and national organizations to diversify its student body, keeping its commitment to making higher education affordable and addressing the increasing demand for employer-sponsored tuition assistance for employees (***Employer & Partner Assistance***). This initiative has also proven successful and is an integral element of our strategic Enrollment Management Plan.

CRITERION 3: *A financial planning and budgeting process that is aligned with the institution's mission and goals, evidence-based, and clearly linked to the institution's and units' strategic plans/objectives.*

The University conducts financial planning and budgeting processes on multiple levels. The long-term financial plan has a multi-year time horizon that supports our mission and strategic

capital priorities. The long-term plan is designed to inform the Board and Executive Team regarding the anticipated resource needs for implementing the capital facilities master plan. Wilmington University's strategic initiatives guide and influence the resource allocation and programmatic investments in developing the annual operating budget plan. The operating budget process is focused on fulfilling the University's core mission of serving students with high-quality instruction and affordable, accessible education. Annually, the plan designates at least 75 percent of its educational and general expenses to Direct Student Support, comprising instruction, institutional scholarships, student support, and academic program services. All these activities promote student success, enrich the academic experience, and ensure that each graduate is well-equipped to succeed in today's environment (***FY23-24 Budget Plan***).

The operating budget (including funding for deferred maintenance) is approved by the Board each spring. Since our last Self-Study visit, we have developed a new internal software system called COMPASS, our annual planning tool, to ensure financial decisions align with strategic initiatives. The system aggregates goals and funding requests by strategic initiative, allowing the Executive Team to make informative resource allocation decisions and increase transparency (***Goals by Department FY24***).

Our budget model is designed to ensure that revenue is sufficient to cover new and existing expenses, provide funding allocation that the President may deploy strategically throughout the fiscal year, and produce an operating surplus aligned with key budget performance indicators.

Since the University derives most of its revenue from tuition and fees, accurate tuition forecasting is a critical first step during budget development. Conservatively, the University bases its tuition forecast on actual enrollment seats from the prior fiscal year, even when it is highly likely that we will continue to experience enrollment growth. Keeping annual tuition increases low has been one of the most important considerations in our mission of providing high-quality and affordable programs.

The Board of Trustees approves the tuition increase yearly while maintaining this commitment to our mission.

Key expenditure planning assumptions include the level of salary increases, mandatory cost adjustments, and the amount of funding earmarked for strategic initiatives and institutional scholarships. At the beginning of the budget development process, it is not unusual for the forecasted expenditures to exceed the projected revenues. The Executive Team uses some key budget questions to prioritize resource allocation based on the University need and the annual institutional priorities and strategic initiatives (***FY23-24 Budget Plan***).

Management has evaluated and selected a new higher education budgeting and strategic financial planning software to modernize the University's financial planning processes that will automate the budget process and reporting with workflow approvals, in-year forecasting capabilities, executive-level financial dashboards and multi-year financial planning (***Executive Dashboard and Multi-Year Financials Demo***). The strategic financial planning module will leverage scenario modeling to improve rigor around decision-making and allow us to model "what-if" scenarios and create action plans to mitigate risks. The University's financial stewardship will be

enhanced with a two-year operating budget planning cycle implemented as part of the new budgeting software (***Strategic Budget Request Guidelines***).

CRITERION 4: *Fiscal and human resources as well as the physical and technical infrastructure adequate to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.*

The University's financial profile is very strong, with a solid balance sheet, as evidenced by its unrestricted cash and investments of $212.8 million as of June 30, 2023, compared to its current liabilities of $16.8 million. Prudent financial management, including revenue enhancement and containing expenses, contributed to a track record of solid operating performance, particularly given the high reliance on student tuition revenues, as shown in our Financial Outcomes Assessment (***Financial Outcomes Assessment***). Historically, the University has had a very high debt capacity, providing significant financial flexibility. With this level of wealth, in FY 2022-2023, the University was able to issue $45 million in tax-exempt bonds at a favorable fixed interest rate that will be used in combination with a portion of our strategic reserves to fund the construction of the new Law School and Convocation Center buildings (***Facilities Master Plan***).

Wilmington University currently has nearly 500 full-time faculty and staff and nearly 1,500 adjunct faculty supported by the Human Resources Department in talent acquisition, compensation and benefits, and professional development. The Human Resources Department has enacted several initiatives to support enhanced, streamlined service delivery. For example, the team implemented Alex by Jellyvision, a tool that educates employees on benefits and assists them in making decisions about health plans and tax savings accounts (***PP3 - Human Resources - May 2022, pg. 17***).

During FY 2022-2023, in collaboration with the Retirement Plan Investment Committee (RPIC), the HR Department was instrumental in implementing an auto-enrollment process to the TIAA 403(b) retirement plan to better assist employees in planning their financial futures. For eligible employees contributing less than 4% to their TIAA 403(b) retirement plans, the new process automatically enrolled them at 4% of their yearly salary unless they elected to opt out (***TIAA Auto Enroll***).

Updated technology is paramount for maintaining a stable environment for the University's workforce. Criterion 6 provides details about the work done in this area. The Human Resource Department continues to expand its role. The Campus Climate Survey highlights improving the onboarding process and employee experience. The New Hire survey was created and implemented in August 2020 to solicit feedback from new employees regarding onboarding processes. This feedback will help identify critical areas of improvement and ensure an efficient and positive experience. Also, Human Resources revamped onboarding strategies by incorporating insights gathered from new hire surveys, task forces, and industry research focused on the "Four C's" (Compliance, Clarification, Culture, and Connections). This initiative encompassed the development of a 90-day new-hire roadmap and toolkit for managers, along with the introduction of a secure electronic onboarding module. This module enables new hires to furnish personal information seamlessly, streamlining the process of completing paperwork and facilitating feedback collection through a dedicated New Hire survey for managers to

enhance existing procedures (***Campus Climate Survey Results - 2022; PP3 - Human Resources - May 2022; Vision 2025 and Annual Institutional Priorities FY22-23, pg. 15***).

Physical Infrastructure

The University facilities consist of 22 buildings comprising 481,540 gross square feet. This includes 133 classrooms and laboratory spaces, the University library, student activity spaces, and recreational facilities. Since 2015, the University has expanded its physical footprint with over $49.4 million in investments, with the Brandywine campus as its largest strategic investment. Further capital expansion is planned for the new law school, convocation center, and athletic training facilities (as discussed in Criterion 6) (***WU Physical Infrastructure; WU Footprint, Upgrades, Investments***).

Following the pandemic, approximately 80 percent of students choose to learn online. Evaluating space and making sure we use the space effectively and efficiently has been a top priority. The Wilson Graduate Center's planned sale (asset monetization) and the ability for staff to work remotely have enabled us to view office and classroom space with fresh eyes. To that end, underutilized space at the New Castle campus has been updated with the latest communication equipment, and hybrid hoteling space was added, reducing the need for individual office space (***Report/Recommendations: Task Force - Post-Pandemic Operations***).

CRITERION 5: *Well-defined decision-making processes and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability.*

Wilmington University has clearly defined decision-making processes throughout the organization, assigning responsibility and accountability at every level. The organizational chart outlines the reporting structure, and our bylaws describe the board's composition, selection, terms, and authority. It also specifies the roles and responsibilities of the University Officers (Chairman of the Board of Trustees, one or more Vice Chairmen of the Board of Trustees, a President, Secretary, and Treasurer) (***Board of Trustees Bylaws and Charter; Organizational Chart***). In addition, the Trustees periodically issue, via an authorized board resolution, the delegation of authority to specific individuals to execute agreements and contracts on behalf of the University (***Board Resolution***).

The University system of shared governance includes the Faculty Senate, which is responsible for developing and administrating academic policies and procedures. Executive Team accountability, directly reporting to the President, is established through direct reporting relationships of several assistant vice presidents and deans. Administrative financial decision-making within each department is conducted through financial approval processes, many of which are electronic workflow approvals, with final approval by a vice president, senior vice president, chief financial officer, or the President.

Decision-Making During the Pandemic

During the 2018-2019 academic year and before the pandemic, 50% of students attended classes entirely online, and many others were enrolled in at least one online course. That meant that over 75% of the University's offerings and student services were already available remotely. President Harmon oversaw an immediate and seamless transition from in-person to remote

instruction that safeguarded academic integrity, ensuring uninterrupted learning for over 20,000 students. While leading a predominantly remote workforce, Dr. Harmon convened a Response Planning Committee to develop a preparation strategy to maintain smooth operations throughout the unprecedented crisis. As a result, students maintained their academic paths.

CRITERION 6: Comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that includes consideration of sustainability and deferred maintenance and is linked to the institution's strategic and financial planning processes.

Wilmington University continuously evaluates its infrastructure using a multi-leveled approach. Capital investments are guided by our strategic, deferred maintenance and facilities master plans, with significant input from the Board of Trustees.

Wilmington University plans for the use of its facilities and related infrastructure. As of June 30, 2023, the University owned 23 buildings and several others operating under lease in Delaware and New Jersey. Decisions about facility investment have been driven by our mission of open access and responsiveness to community needs. Our primary location, the New Castle campus, cannot be expanded beyond the current footprint due primarily to county building restrictions. All but one of our other locations operate in leased facilities. As a result, space planning at our primary locations is critical to organize and use our existing square footage to its maximum in a footprint best suited for our students and staff. The expansion of the Brandywine campus was crucial to support the growth occurring at New Castle. Since our last Self-Study visit, the University has made significant investments of over $56 million in new and existing facilities funded by operating surpluses, base budget allocation, debt financing, and the strategic use of endowment funds.

The Brandywine Campus – Phase 1

In 2017, Wilmington University broke ground on its new Brandywine campus, a 41.5-acre location in North Wilmington. Phase 1 of the Brandywine expansion opened in 2019 to meet the needs of Northern Delaware and Southeastern Pennsylvania students. Starting in 2017 and before acquiring the land for the Brandywine campus, space was rented and pilot-run to build demand for our current students and opportunities in zip codes around the Brandywine areas (***Brandywine Data***). The facility includes state-of-the-art science labs that support the University's expansion of STEM offerings (computer, chemistry, and microbiology labs) and classrooms (observation, seminar, and standard). Also, the building houses reception areas, security services, a Student Success Center, private tutoring areas, group study rooms, study lounges, and a campus store (***Homsey Architects webpage***).

The site connects businesses, educators, and the community by providing industry-driven education at affordable rates in the Brandywine Valley. The total investment in Phase I was $29.1 million, primarily funded by the University's cash and investment reserves, plus a small 10-year construction loan of $5.4 million.

The Brandywine Campus – Phase II

The Brandywine Phase II expansion will include a new state-of-the-art, three-story law school building of approximately 52,000 square feet and a new Convocation Center (approximately

85,000 square feet), featuring a 2,000-seat auditorium that will host large events, including graduations and other special occasions (***Facilities Master Plan, pg. 3***).

A financing plan that identified funding sources for the new law school and Convocation Center buildings received approval from the Board of Trustees thanks to the development of an extensive analysis. The finance team coordinated a competitive process that successfully issued $45 million in tax-exempt bonds at a favorable fixed interest rate during May 2023 through the Delaware Economic Development Authority (***Capital Financing Plan***).

Athletic Training Facility and Purchase of Ballfield

In the spring of 2020, the University purchased the Stahl Post building adjacent to the New Castle Campus, along with the baseball field located nearby entirely using strategic reserves. The purchase of the adjacent facility allowed us to build an athletics training facility in one location because the University pays gym membership fees for our student-athletes to various facilities throughout Delaware.

Included in the Facilities Master Plan, the new athletic training facility of approximately 5,000 square feet will feature advanced equipment and amenities essential for a cutting-edge training facility for our student-athletes. The estimated cost of $2.3 million will be funded from unrestricted cash and investments that stand at $212.8 million at the end of fiscal year 2023 (***Facilities Master Plan, pg. 10***).

Deferred Maintenance

The University has taken a proactive approach to addressing deferred maintenance needs for the buildings by retaining an independent firm, Aramark Engineering Solutions, to perform facilities condition assessments (FCA). These assessments aim to identify the size and scope of our facilities' capital re-investment and deferred maintenance needs and prioritize those needs. The FCA report provides a starting point for making informed, data-driven decisions and the tools to develop a comprehensive facilities re-investment program. During the pandemic, the deferred maintenance needs, as defined in the 2018 FCA report, were affected by the inability to access the campuses and the global supply chain challenges.

During 2023, the University re-engaged Aramark to conduct an updated assessment. This current FCA report will serve as the framework for allocating funds to re-invest in our facilities, most beneficially, within each budget year's available capital resources (***Facilities Condition Assessment***). Due to this assessment, the University is developing a formal capital reserves funding policy to address future capital investments.

Information Technology and Infrastructure

The University continually improves the scope and quality of technical services with significant investment across IT infrastructure, networking, academic and student support services, cybersecurity and administrative systems, and user support. This level of strategic investment of over $4 million has allowed Wilmington University to keep abreast of the latest technology and functionality enhancements to better service our students and employees and a clear indication of planning and resource allocation processes linked to two of our strategic initiatives, focusing on our students and investing in our organization.

In 2017, the University implemented a comprehensive Student Information System (SIS) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) suite of products based on the assessment of a feasibility study (***SIS/CRM Feasibility Study***). The suite of products procured from Ellucian includes Banner (SIS), CRM Advise (Recruitment and Admissions), CRM Advise (Student Success), CRM Advance (Alumni), and DegreeWorks. Since then, additional Ellucian ecosystem products have been implemented, including Banner Document Management, International Student and Scholar Management (ISSM), and Ellucian Workflow. The products were implemented to secure scanned documents, assist with international enrollment growth, and provide automation within the Ellucian platform. Additionally, our constituent relationship management systems (CRM) were upgraded and moved to a SaaS platform for additional features and ease of upgrades to support applicants, current students, and alumni.

Following our implementation of a comprehensive, integrated SIS and CRM systems, we established a structure to continue the planning and decision-making among all parts of the university that serve and educate students. This led to the establishment of the Student Systems Group (SSG) with representation from functional units that have ownership of at least one area of a student system or a designated liaison from an area that interfaces with the system(s) in a significant way. The purpose of SSG is to ensure collaborative coordination of the functioning of University's student systems and to address issues, concerns, feedback from the users. Another key part of system governance is the Systems Operating Council (SOC) which oversees, reviews, and works with appropriate parties to implement system requests. This group works with departments to prioritize technology projects. The Executive Oversight Committee (EOC) is the governance group for all systems and technology and meets monthly with the SOC to discuss metrics related to project completion; The EOC and SOC guide the system decisions, planning, and implementation of future upgrades and ongoing maintenance and changes. This work affects academic and administrative policies and processes (***Technology Project Governance***). Additionally, systems and processes are audited by system owners to ensure consistency of data, access, and processes.

Another strategic investment was the Canvas Learning Management system, implemented in 2019. It provides a student learning platform that offers robust features for faculty and straightforward tools for students. In addition, these systems render a connected technology ecosystem when integrated with proper oversight (***PP3 - Educational Technology - July 2021, pg. 1***).

One of the University's approved Annual Institutional Priorities (submitted before the pandemic) was to provide a comprehensive technology package (laptop, headset, mouse, docking station, cables) for each staff member so they can be equally effective working from their office onsite or remotely. This advanced level of preparation allowed the University to pivot seamlessly to a fully remote entity over a weekend during the initial stages of the pandemic. In addition, once it was safe to return on site, the campus infrastructure was upgraded for a hybrid and flexible work environment for both on campus and remote access.

Several enhancements have been made related to communication regarding prospective and current students and internal faculty and staff. In July 2018, SignalVine two-way texting

platform for Admissions was implemented and is being used to communicate with prospective and current students. Academic Advising and Online Learning terms also use this platform. Within 18 months of rollout, prospective student engagement with Admissions increased by 35% (***PP3 - Admissions - Mar 2021, pg. 6***).

Chatbot technology was introduced in August 2020 to use artificial intelligence for quick responses to prospective students. The chatbot is housed on the admissions-related webpages and programmed to answer relatively common questions. An expansion of this technology is currently underway as a service enhancement to enrolled students. This technology allows 24/7/365 service to students to answer over 1,000 distinct questions (***PP3 - Web Communications - Sept 2022, pg. 1***).

Significant changes occurred as part of our phone/collaboration system upgrade. More than 450 employees moved from Skype for Business to Teams, eliminating the need for staff phone handsets and rendering financial savings to the University. Departments utilize Teams sites for collaboration, and nearly 100 were created. Additionally, scheduling capabilities through Bookings and resource management tools such as Planner were rolled out to several departments.

The IT server infrastructure and disk systems were virtualized and upgraded to support data growth within the University. Also, protections were put in place to combat cybercriminals and ransomware attackers.

Ongoing research and development of new technologies and systems are highlighted within the Information Technology Strategic Plan, feasibility studies, assessments, and recommendations for future enhancements (***PP3 - Information Technology - Dec 2021; Strategic Financial Framework; Strategic Budget Request Guidelines***).

Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity has always been an emphasis for Information Technology at Wilmington University. In the 2016 PP3 report titled "Protecting our Infrastructure and Data," (***PP3 - Protecting our Infrastructure and Data - Feb 2016***), it was determined that our current protocols may be vulnerable to security breaches, which could cause financial and reputational harm. Information Technology launched the following initiatives to enhance our cybersecurity infrastructure:

- Launching a security awareness program, including training.
- Meeting with vendors and IT security experts to deepen our knowledge.
- Segmenting computer servers to protect and maintain data integrity.
- Forming a Cybersecurity Steering Committee to provide governance, guidance, and bolster program and project management.
- Enabling multi-factor authentication on student, staff, and faculty accounts accessing email and other critical services.

Virtual Security Information Officer

One of the institutional priorities from FY 2018-2019 was to determine the best way to provide Information Security officer representation within Wilmington University. The nature of this staff position is difficult and expensive to fulfill and even more challenging to keep the individuals interested. The security role within Higher Education is complicated since the makeup is to secure our network and servers as much as possible without impacting the openness of education. The cost of a security officer with this unique experience— especially since they change organizations or verticals so often— becomes a financial burden over the long term. For all these reasons and knowing we had such a lean staff, IT began evaluating a virtual Chief Information Security Officer (vCISO) service.

Benefits of Virtual CISO (vCISO)

The Virtual CISO (vCISO) is a service designed to make top-tier security analysts available to Wilmington University for security expertise and guidance. The experts have decades of experience building information security programs working directly with our business objectives. The vCISO works directly with our IT Security group to show measurable improvements to our security posture from day one. The vCISO is flexible to meet University needs and available onsite, but primary support is remote. The engagement follows a cycle of assessing, planning, and remediating. The main reasons below are why we decided to pursue a vCISO service:

- Lower Cost Over Time
  - As our security posture matures, fewer hours will be needed each year.
- Extensive Industry Knowledge and Skill
  - Security officers from all verticals, including higher education, provide invaluable recommendations based on the security climate.
- Limited Turnover
  - The staff of seasoned security officers can step in when needed and solicit ideas from those inside and outside the University community.

Evaluation

Considering this was such a new idea, few Security companies were offering this service. Our current security monitoring vendor, Optiv, also the leader in this industry, was one of the three vendors we invited to the evaluation process. The other two vendors either were new to this service or only had an individual staff member handling many accounts. Optiv provided detailed information about their offerings with many security officers on their staff. the University IT Department was able to interview the manager of the vCISO service and the candidate for the role (who had worked in both higher education and other verticals as a CISO). It became apparent quickly that this service and Optiv were suitable for the University and would help build our security team and infrastructure for years.

Pricing

Negotiations between Optiv and Wilmington University continued for months until we negotiated a favorable contract. It was decided to bundle our security assessment within the vCISO service for a cost-effective way to evaluate our security architecture, provide recommendations for future projects, and evaluate the effectiveness of the service overall.

Evaluation of Service

Optiv's vCISO service has been renewed for over three years and has provided over 25+ projects (most Annual Institutional Priorities). We've expanded the role to include the security assessment and a yearly penetration testing plan, third-party risk assessments, and tabletop exercises to test our incident response plans. The Security group meets regularly to discuss upcoming projects. Our current vCISO is always available via Teams/Outlook for any security questions that may arise and is part of the expanded IT team at Wilmington University.

Over the past several years, Cybersecurity has become an increasing focal point in our resource allocation strategies. Wilmington University has significantly invested time and budget to bolster our capabilities (annual investment in $300,000). In early 2020, IT contracted with a reputable security firm to conduct a comprehensive risk assessment. This assessment's results continue to serve as the roadmap to address potential vulnerabilities and system improvements. Based on the number of improvements made to our cybersecurity infrastructure, our overall score increased by nearly a full point, and the security firm's assessment indicates that Wilmington University is at the highest level among all its higher education clients.

The Information Technology team has conducted several rounds of Cybersecurity training and achieved compliance levels of 95% and 98% in fiscal years 2022 and 2023, respectively. Additionally, the team performed multiple simulated phishing exercises with excellent results. In the most recent test, we decreased the number of users who opened and clicked on phishing emails from the previous year. The overall numbers from last year were already impressive, and the fiscal year 2023 results proved that our training is an effective measure in deterring phishing emails and attacks. Ongoing assessment, including cybersecurity training, will serve as the framework for the Wilmington University security programs over the next two to three years.

Consistency and Continuity of Operations

A multi-department example of infrastructure planning is the Continuity of Operations plan. A multi-department example of infrastructure planning is the Continuity of Operations Plan. Each department provided documentation about key items (processes, people, systems, hardware, etc.) required to maintain operations in an emergency. Tabletop sessions are held to go through various scenarios to ensure the University is well-equipped to handle various situations. Departments have process and procedure documents located centrally on the University intranet to ensure that knowledge about performing essential procedures is available to others, not just those regularly tasked with completing a specific task. This ensures that critical functions to support students can be achieved even if employees who typically perform that function are unavailable (***Continuity of Operations Plans***).

*CRITERION 7: **An annual independent audit confirming financial viability with evidence of follow-up on any concerns cited in the audit's accompanying management letter.***

The University employs internal and external controls to conduct periodic assessments and ensure the proper appropriation and accounting for all financial resources. The Board of Trustees engages an independent audit firm to conduct the annual financial statements audits, review the IRS Form 990, and confirm the existence of proper internal controls established by management. As a best practice, the Finance, Investment, and Audit board committees meet annually with the

independent auditors (a portion of the meeting without management) to review the results of audit reports and all critical accounting policies and practices.

Annually, the University must demonstrate to the United States Department of Education in its federal compliance audit report that it is maintaining the financial responsibility standards necessary to participate in the Title IV programs. One of many standards the Department utilizes to gauge an institution's financial responsibility is a composite of three ratios derived from an institution's audited financial statements. The three ratios are a primary reserve ratio, an equity ratio, and a net income ratio. The composite score reflects institutions' overall relative financial health along a scale from negative 1.0 to positive 3.0. A score greater than or equal to 1.5 indicates the institution is considered financially responsible. Wilmington University composite scores have consistently demonstrated that the institution is maintaining the standards of fiscal responsibility (***Composite Financial Index***).

Since our last Self-Study visit, the management letters issued by the auditors identified no findings or material weaknesses. The three audit reports that are published annually include the financial statements, federal compliance report (***A133 Audit***), and the 403(b) Pension Plan audit (***FY23/22, FY 22/21, and FY21/20 Reports and Management Letters***). In addition, an NCAA agreed-upon procedures audit is conducted every three years.

CRITERION 8: *Strategies to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals.*

The Wilmington University resource allocation model ensures that our budget planning process allows for aligning resources with annual institutional priorities and continual assessment of resource utilization. The fundamental budget priorities approved by the Board of Trustees in the Budget Plan are:

1. Prioritize investments in the core mission: instruction, scholarships, and student support services.
2. Prioritize the well-being of our community members.
3. Enhance long-term financial health by building institutional reserves.
4. Invest strategically to achieve these priorities.

(***FY23-24 Budget Plan***)

The University has developed key performance metrics to assess the effectiveness of resource alignment with our mission and strategic plan. The budget allocation to the core mission should be no less than 75% of the educational and general (E&G) expenditures, a minimum threshold of 3% of the E&G budget for strategic allocation, including one-time investments and a target of 2 - 4.5% budget surplus to build strategic reserves for long-term financial sustainability.

We funnel assessment findings from units for resource allocation through the Pass I Budget Funding Request Process yearly. All requests must be linked to one or more of the annual institutional strategic priorities. For example, cybersecurity has been a focal point in our resource allocation decisions based on the results of a comprehensive risk assessment conducted by an external firm in fiscal year 2020. Since then, we have invested significantly by spending

$800,000 a year including $500,000 on Professional Services and $300,000 in software/hardware to improve our information technology infrastructure and security stature. The results of this assessment address potential vulnerabilities and system improvements.

CRITERION 9: *Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources.*

Wilmington University assesses its planning, allocation of resources, and improvement processes at the institutional and unit levels. The University's robust framework of assessment, PP3, ensures review, continuous improvement, and assessment is ongoing. Additionally, departments also report other accomplishments, including those provided for the Year in Review, a document published annually by the Office of Institutional Research. As previously mentioned in this Self-Study, outcomes are gathered for Annual Institutional Priorities, Task Force Action Items, and unit and multi-unit plans, such as the Retention Committee Plan.

The Finance Investment and Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees reviews all financial matters of the University. They are responsible for the periodic review of the Financial Status Updates and the investment portfolio performance and compliance with the investment policy (***Finance & Audit Committee Charter; Financial Status Updates***).

Pandemic Financial Impact

While the University was well-positioned to sustain operations during the COVID-19 crisis, pandemic-related factors still affected enrollment for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years. Some students took a gap year to manage personal and employment issues. Since many colleges and universities pivoted to remote learning, there was increased competition from schools that adapted quickly to the online environment. Large universities with robust marketing budgets also created more competition. University vice presidents identified approximately $3.5M in expense management in the FY 2020/2021 operating and capital budgets to accomplish no tuition increases (reflecting our commitment to affordability). Despite a slight enrollment dip of 1.1% in FY2020/2021, the University performed well financially (***Enrollment Factors Presentation - Jan 2021; FY 2020/2021 Audit***).

During FY 2021/2022, the national enrollment decline caused in part due to COVID-19 impacted the University. Enrollment seats declined by 10.5 percent from the previous fiscal year. To develop a balanced budget, the University preserved the $3.5M in expense management from fiscal year 2021 coupled with an additional $2.0M in operating budget reduction for fiscal year 2022. With a significant underperformance in the US stock market, the University investment portfolio also experienced a decline in market value (***FY 2020/2021 Audit***).

Conservatively and prudently developing its fiscal year 2023 revenue budget based on the actual enrollment from the prior fiscal year, preserving expense reductions, some of which through the strategic realignment of personnel to create efficiencies and earmarking strategic reserves to cover any shortfall, the University was confident that fiscal year 2023 would produce positive results. Wilmington University had an outstanding financial performance for fiscal year 2023, enhancing the University's Strategic Goal of Financial Sustainability. Below are some key highlights:

- The total net operating revenue of *$112.2 million* was *$10.98 million or 10.8%* above the prior fiscal year results due to increased enrollment (especially in international students) coupled with strong performance of the working capital (cash portfolio) and plus increase bookstore revenue.
- Prudent strategies to contain costs were successful, with a decrease *of approximately 3.8%* in operating expenses compared to the prior fiscal year.
- The solid performance resulted in an increase in net assets of **$17.5 million.** This will provide for continued strategic investment in capital needs and increasing the level of reserves for future financial flexibility.
- The board-designated endowment portfolio improved significantly *due to* the higher interest rate environment and strong equity market performance. On June 30, 2023, unrestricted cash and investments totaled approximately **$212.8 million** ($18.5 million or 9.5% above the previous fiscal year total) (***Financial Outcomes Board presentation***).

Conclusion

Systematic planning and resource allocation have played a pivotal role in the success Wilmington University has achieved in fulfilling its mission. The comprehensive and integrated strategic planning and assessment processes clearly drive the allocation of resources for the continuous improvement of our academic programs and administrative services.

Wilmington University is financially healthy, evidenced by its strong liquidity (unrestricted cash and investments), growing enrollment, and stable operating performance. The result of prudent financial management has allowed the University to weather past financial challenges, invest in academic and student support services, and expand major strategic capital to achieve our mission.

Areas of Innovation and Strength

- Continue implementing the sustainable financial framework initiative that balances the fiscal needs of academic programs, capital facilities, technology infrastructure, student support services, and administrative operations while maintaining affordable tuition and fees.

Opportunities to Shape the Future

- As the University nears the end of its five-year strategic plan, we will examine the opportunities and challenges that can impact the future direction of the University and adopt a new strategic plan.
- Accomplishments are collected in several ways (board reports, Year-in-Review reports, Compass, Annual Institutional Priorities, etc.) We can store accomplishments in one central location and summarize those accomplishments for the strategic plan with corresponding investments allocations.

Standard VII. Governance, Leadership, and Administration

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

Requirements of Affiliation: 12, 13, 15

Introduction

Wilmington University effectively collaborates within its collegial governance and administration systems to achieve its strategic objectives in alignment with the University's mission. University governance is multi-layered, consisting of the Board of Trustees, the President, senior administration and institutional constituencies of faculty, staff, and students.

CRITERION 1: A clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision making by each constituency, including governing body, administration, faculty, staff and students.

  Governing Body

Wilmington University is committed to shared governance. University-wide policies, procedures, and standards for individual conduct, institutional expectations, compliance with local, state and federal laws, mitigation of risk, and support toward the University's mission are published in Employee and Student Handbooks (***Employee Handbook, pg. 8; Student Handbook, pg. 2; Faculty Handbook, pg. 5; Adjunct Faculty Handbook, pg. 7***). Our organizational chart displays University governance that emanates from the Board of Trustees, which delegates critical authority to the President (***Board of Trustees Bylaws and Charter; Organizational Chart***). Leadership is transparent and collegial, and leaders work collaboratively to enact policies. The Board of Trustees is an autonomous body that takes an active role in the development of the University through shared governance, which requires synergistic communication among faculty, staff, administration, and the Board of Trustees.

The Wilmington University charter, bylaws, and committee charters outline the structure and responsibilities of the 18-member Board of Trustees. The chairman, vice chairman, chair of the Finance, Investment & Audit Committee, and three trustees appointed by the chairman comprise its Executive Committee. The Board of Trustees is composed of members who guide the decisions that affect the institution's overall functioning. Current Board members hold backgrounds in education, law, real estate, investment banking, medicine, and human resources (***Board of Trustees Biographies***). The Board is the legal governing body of and the legal entity for Wilmington University. As such, it is the final institutional authority and grants all degrees awarded by the institution upon the recommendation of the faculty. Board responsibilities are outlined in the Charter and Bylaws (***Board of Trustees Bylaws and Charter; Board Orientation***).

<u>Administration</u>
The University's administration is led by President Dr. LaVerne Harmon, who is supported by the Executive Team of seven vice presidents and a cabinet of 30 members (assistant vice presidents and college deans). The University Charter and bylaws clearly define the role of the President and note that she is appointed by the Board of Trustees. The President, as the Chief Executive Officer, leads the University by identifying its strategic direction, overseeing all financial, academic, and operational functions and supports the University's commitment to extending educational access to students of varying ages, interests, and aspirations. The President does not hold a seat on the Board of Trustees and all of her duties are clearly defined University bylaws (***Organizational Chart***).

<u>Faculty</u>
The Vice President for Academic Affairs is the Chief Academic Officer (VPAA) of the University, appointed by the President. The VPAA is responsible for the management of all academic programs, including the colleges, library, and the Center for Teaching Excellence. Responsibilities also encompass planning academic program budgets, implementing instructional programs, and coordinating faculty development. The Vice President serves on standing committees as described within the Faculty Handbook (***Faculty Handbook, pg. 8***).

Academic deans are appointed by the President in consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Deans are charged with providing visionary leadership of the colleges and overseeing all academic, and administrative operations, including academic, personnel, financial, and managerial. Academic Directors who assist the deans with the leadership of the colleges, are approved by the President based on recommendation from the Dean, VP or AVP. Duties may include fulfilling program chair roles, supervising of program chairs, and other duties as assigned.

Faculty have primary responsibility for the formulation, implementation, and quality of the curriculum, as well as academic policies of the University. In addition, faculty make recommendations to the President for presentation to the Board on any matters deemed of vital importance. Faculty formally participate in academic governance through membership in the Faculty Senate (***Faculty Handbook***). Various Faculty Senate Committees for faculty input into policies, etc. (***Faculty Senate Committee Functions; Faculty Handbook, pg. 44***).

<u>Staff</u>
Administrative staff contribute to shared governance through their departments, service to task forces, and committee participation. These groups provide employees with a forum to discuss important issues with leadership.

<u>Students</u>
The Student Government Association (SGA) is the primary governing body of all students enrolled at the University. Through the SGA, students have a voice in collegiate activities. The SGA is responsible for forming all student clubs and representing students on the University's standing committees (***SGA webpage***). The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) comprises student-athletes who provide insight into the student-athlete experience and welfare at

the University. The SAAC also offers input on the Athletic Department and NCAA rules, regulations, and policies that impact student-athletes (***SAAC Constitution***).

Board of Trustees Meeting *(4-5 Times a Year)*		
Leader: **Board Chair Judge Farnan**	*Attendees:* **Board of Trustees, Executive Team, as needed.**	*Sample Topics:* **Financials, Programs, Personnel, Strategic Direction**

Excutive Team Meeting *(Weekly)*		
Leader: **President Harmon**	*Attendees:* **VPs**	*Sample Topics:* **Enrollement, Board Updates, Personnel, IPs, Budget**

Administrative Cabinet Meeting *(Monthly)*		
Leader: **President Harmon**	*Attendees:* **VPs, AVPs, Deans**	*Sample Topics:* **IPs, PP3 Reports, Department or Unit Changes**

Academic Council *(Weekly)*		
Leader: **VP of Academic Affairs**	*Attendees:* **Academic AVPs, Deans, Administrative Deans**	*Sample Topics:* **Programs, Policies**

Faculty Senate *(Monthly During Academic Year)*		
Leader: **Faculty Senate Chair and Vice Chair**	*Attendees:* **All FT Faculty, Adjunct Faculty Reps, Selected Staff, SGA and SAAC Presidents**	*Sample Topics:* **New Programs and Policies**

University Coordinating Council *(7 Times per Year)*		
Leader: **President Harmon**	*Attendees:* **VPs, AVPs, Deans, Directors**	*Sample Topics:* **PP3 Reports, Enrollment Reports**

University Wide Meeting (2 *Times Per Year)*		
Leader: **President Harmon**	*Attendees:* **ALL FT Faculty & Staff**	*Sample Topics:* **State of the University, Enrollment Trends, Employee Recoginition**

Figure: Meetings with Opportunities for Input

CRITERION 2: *A legally constituted governing body that:*

Criterion 2a: Serves the public interest, ensures that the institution clearly states and fulfills its mission and goals, has fiduciary responsibility for the institution, and is ultimately accountable for the academic quality, planning, and fiscal well-being of the institution;

Criterion 2b: Has sufficient independence and expertise to ensure the integrity of the institution. Members must have primary responsibility to the accredited institution and not allow political, financial, or other influences to interfere with their governing responsibilities;

Criterion 2c: Ensures that neither the governing body nor its individual members interferes in the day-to-day operations of the institution;

Criterion 2d: Oversees at the policy level the quality of teaching and learning, the approval of degree programs and the awarding of degrees, the establishment of

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personnel policies and procedures, the approval of policies and by-laws, and the assurance of strong fiscal management;

Criterion 2e: Plays a basic policy-making role in financial affairs to ensure integrity and strong financial management. This may include a timely review of audited financial statements and/or other documents related to the fiscal viability of the institution;

Criterion 2f: Appoints and regularly evaluates the performance of the Chief Executive Officer;

Criterion 2g: Is informed in all its operations by principles of good practice in board governance;

Criterion 2h: Establishes and complies with a written conflict of interest policy designed to ensure the impartiality of the governing body by addressing matters such as payment for services, contractual relationships, employment, and family, financial or other interests that could pose or be perceived as conflicts of interest;

Criterion 2i: Supports the Chief Executive Officer in maintaining the autonomy of the institution.

Board of Trustees

University governance emanates from the Board of Trustees and is collegially shared among institutional constituencies. Appropriate authority is assigned for policy development and decision-making. The Board of Trustees is an autonomous body that takes an active role in the development of the University through shared governance which requires synergistic communications between and among the faculty, staff, administration, and the Board of Trustees.

The Board meets at least four times throughout the year. The Board holds committee meetings and occasional strategic planning retreats. The Board of Trustees also approved Vision 2025, the University's strategic initiatives. The purpose of each meeting is clearly defined (***Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule and Purpose***).

Board Committees

Trustees have clearly defined roles as individual members and contributors to the Board's working committees. Each member serves a three-year term, with officers elected annually (***Board Committee Assignments***). Board members may chair one of the seven board committees. Those committees include Executive, Program, Student Life & Alumni, Finance, Investment & Audit, Nominating & Corporate Governance, Personnel, and Compensation. Members are assigned to at least one of the seven committees that align with their professional expertise. Minutes are recorded for all committee meetings and distributed appropriately (***Board of Trustees Committee Minutes***).

Each committee has a charter that outlines its purpose and direction. A table summarizing the relationship between the Board of Trustees committees and their administrative leadership

counterparts can be found in the Board of Trustees Committee document (***Board Committee Assignments***). Specific committee responsibilities and roles of the chair, officers, and committee chairs are delineated in the Committee Charters (***Board of Trustees Bylaws and Charter***).

The Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee identifies and recruits potential board candidates. Members recognize the importance of adding new participants, keeping in mind that any new board member must clearly understand the University's mission and commitment of board service (***Board Orientation***).

The Board of Trustees comprises members who can effectively guide the decisions that affect the overall functioning of the institution. Members' names and titles are found on the University website (***Board of Trustees webpage***).

Board Conflict of Interest

The Board of Trustees has adopted a Conflict-of-Interest Policy requiring the prompt disclosure of any potential trustee-related relationship or transactional conflicts, at minimum, on an annual basis. Still, such disclosure may be requested more frequently (***Board of Trustees Conflict of Interest Policy***).

CRITERION 3: A Chief Executive Officer who:

> *Criterion 3a: Is appointed by, evaluated by, and reports to the governing body and shall not chair the governing body;*
>
> *Criterion 3b: Has appropriate credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization;*
>
> *Criterion 3c: Has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including developing and implementing institutional plans, staffing the organization, identifying and allocating resources, and directing the institution toward attaining the goals and objectives set forth in its mission;*
>
> *Criterion 3d: Has the assistance of qualified administrators, sufficient in number, to enable the Chief Executive Officer to discharge his/her duties effectively; and is responsible for establishing procedures for assessing the organization's efficiency and effectiveness.*

Dr. LaVerne Harmon became President of Wilmington University in July 2017 after being unanimously approved by its Board of Trustees (***Board President Appointment Minutes***). She is the first African American woman to be named the president of a college or university in Delaware. Dr. Harmon holds a Doctorate in Higher Education Administration from the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Harmon's biography contains a detailed list of her University tenure, board memberships, awards, and related professional information. (***Dr. Harmon Bio***).

At the start of her presidency in July 2017, Dr. Harmon immediately assumed responsibility for the final construction of the University's Brandywine campus, then led its ribbon-cutting

ceremony in January 2018. The full-service, contemporary campus was built to serve thousands of Wilmington University students who lived or worked in the popular Brandywine Hundred area and was illustrative of a forward-thinking University that experienced significant growth. Also, in 2018, the President signed two additional academic agreements in New Jersey to offer select programs at Camden County College and Mercer County Community College, building on the University's stellar relationship with and partnerships in New Jersey. That same year, Dr. Harmon signed an Online Programs Pathway Agreement, offered to Rowan College at Burlington County (RCBC) online students, establishing Wilmington University as RCBC's preferred partner for online degree completion programs.

President Harmon led the University through the pandemic, overseeing an immediate and seamless transition from in-person to remote instruction that safeguarded academic integrity and ensured uninterrupted learning for more than 20,000 students. She convened a Response Planning Committee to develop a preparation strategy to maintain smooth operations throughout the unparalleled crisis for a fully remote workforce.

Dr. Harmon oversaw two major reorganizations in Academic Affairs in 2022 and Student Services in 2023. A new Academic Affairs structure was developed to advance the University's core values while maintaining exceptional student service and academic excellence. Implementing the Academic Affairs structural reorganization was integral in the realignment of Student Services, which embraced the future with a strategy that served employees' talents and strengths.

Under her leadership, the University's Criminal Justice Institute and School of Law and the Wilmington University School of Law were founded, and the University's most ambitious capital expansion to date: construction of a state-of-the-art Convocation Center, an expansive law building, and an athletics training facility.

In her quest for excellence in academics and transparent communication, Dr. Harmon invited University deans to be a part of the President's Cabinet. She conducted listening tours and met with every department, in person, to celebrate successes and discern areas for improvement. Dr. Harmon also established the Office of Executive Communications to process and disseminate information and support internal and external communications. She hosts University-wide meetings twice a year. A collaborative leader who thrives on building partnerships, Dr. Harmon has nurtured numerous academic and corporate partnerships and is deeply committed to students, faculty, and the community. She has the capacity and compassion to understand Wilmington University students like no other President, having earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the University while working full-time, like many of our students. With a profound understanding of those she serves and leads, Dr. Harmon makes every operational decision with students in mind and always considers the well-being of the employees who assist them.

Dr. Harmon authored and published "The Heart of Leadership: A Personal Reflection," a book that enlightens professionals about the importance of compassion, a trait that informs many successful and respected leaders' actions and behaviors. Proceeds from book sales are donated to the Wilmington University Linda Thomas Scholarship, which Dr. Harmon founded in 1999 in memory of her sister.

The University Charter and bylaws clearly define the position of the University President, specifying that the Board of Trustees appoints that post. The University's Chief Executive and Administrative Officer, the President collaborates closely with the Board of Trustees and internal and external constituencies to provide overall leadership and direction. The President does not hold a seat on the Board of Trustees, and all her duties are clearly defined in the University's bylaws (***Board of Trustees Bylaws and Charter, pg. 9; Job Description of the President***).

The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees assesses the President yearly, and those results are shared with the Compensation Committee. Dr. Harmon's performance objectives are tied to the University's strategic initiatives (***Executive Committee Charter, pg. 1; Compensation Committee Charter; President's Performance Review Process***).

CRITERION 4. An administration possessing or demonstrating:

> *Criterion 4a. An organizational structure that is clearly documented and that clearly defines reporting relationships;*
>
> *Criterion 4b. An appropriate size and with relevant experience to assist the Chief Executive Officer in fulfilling his/her roles and responsibilities;*
>
> *Criterion 4c. Members with credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization and their functional roles;*
>
> *Criterion 4d. Skills, time, assistance, technology, and information systems expertise required to perform their duties;*
>
> *Criterion 4e. Regular engagement with faculty and students in advancing the institution's goals and objectives;*
>
> *Criterion 4f. Systematic procedures for evaluating administrative units and for using assessment data to enhance operations.*

President Harmon has formed a strong, highly collaborative senior leadership team that is well-connected across campus. Organizational charts for the University are published internally (***Organizational Chart***). The organizational structure is effective because various bodies exist to share information and work collaboratively. The four key bodies are the Executive Team, the Administrative Cabinet, Academic Council, and the University Coordinating Council. A visual depiction of their memberships, functions, and meeting cycles is provided in Criterion 1 of this standard.

> Executive Team

The Executive Team comprises three senior vice presidents and four vice presidents (***VP Job Descriptions***). Each vice president possesses the education and background necessary to perform their responsibilities and has adequate staff to support the daily University operations

(***Organizational Chart***). Their direct reports provide them with updates. That information is added to reports that are also shared with the board (***Dec 2023 Departmental Highlights***).

Faculty and Student Engagement

Collaboration and collegial governance are essential to Wilmington University. Open communication between the Faculty Senate, Cabinet, University Coordinating Council, University-wide meetings, and the Student Government Association are critical. University-wide committees regularly include both faculty and staff.

We offer students the opportunity to provide feedback in various ways. Representatives from SGA and SAAC regularly present at Faculty Senate (***Faculty Senate Sample Agenda***). Students are also included on selected program advisory boards and in selected curriculum meetings (***Nursing Meeting Minutes; Advisory Boards***). We also seek to solicit their input on various topics, such as the Graduating Student Satisfaction Survey administered to degree-seeking students when they submit their applications for graduation. We try to capture their overall impressions of programs, instruction quality, and current employment information (***Graduating Student Satisfaction Survey***). The 2022 Survey administered to 3,668 students had a response rate of 87%. Also, the Title IX and Clery Climate Survey is administered to current students and employees every two years to evaluate their awareness of policies and services regarding campus safety. The 2022 administration received 743 responses, with 39% identifying as students (***2022 Title IX Climate Survey Results***).

Students, faculty, and staff may serve on several committees. This allows for diverse viewpoints and input from constituents at every level. Several examples include the Retention Committee, discussed in Standard IV, on which faculty and staff collaborate to report on and collect retention data and efforts throughout the Institution.

CRITERION 5: *Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration.*

As stated in Standards I and IV, and demonstrated throughout this Self-Study, Wilmington University has a culture of assessment and continuous improvement. The Employee Handbook is updated regularly to stay attuned to best practices. The Faculty Handbook is also reviewed as needed by a Faculty Senate ad-hoc committee.

Annual performance reviews are conducted for the President and all members of the Executive Team. Vice Presidents are evaluated by the President and scored via a rubric on 16 competencies related to their areas of oversight (***VP Evaluation Form; SVP/CFO and Treasurer Evaluation Forms***). All deans are evaluated based on their performance. Full-time faculty are yearly assessed as outlined in the Faculty Handbook (***Faculty Handbook, pg. 33***). A standardized performance management program was rolled out in 2023. This program aims to facilitate interactive discussions between employees and managers, inspire professional development, encourage continuous improvement, and enhance employee engagement (***Standardized Performance Management Program***). Before 2023, evaluations were conducted by department heads. This new process generates consistency.

We discussed the PP3 process at length throughout this Self-Study. Administrative areas undergo regular assessments on a three-year schedule, rendering results readily available for all faculty and staff. These reports provide rich data on which to make decisions for the future (***PP3 Guidelines***). For example, survey response rates for Conference on Teaching Excellence attendees were declining because of how the survey was deployed within the Zoom meetings they attended from 2020-2022, when all conferences were online. The survey is now emailed to all attendees to receive valuable feedback and response rates have increased (***PP3 - CTE Report for Cabinet 2020-2022, pg. 4***).

Conclusion

Wilmington University benefits from solid and compassionate leadership and a Board of Trustees invested in organizational and student success. The board has appropriate levels of influence, but leaves daily supervision to the President. At times, we realign departments to find synergies that best serve our students.

Areas of Innovation and Strength

- Appropriate and engaged Board of Trustees.
- Executive leadership with substantial experience.

Conclusion

As a result of this Self-Study process, we are confident that we comply fully with the seven standards and requirements of affiliation with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The findings and evidence demonstrate that our mission, vision, and values provide affordable, career-oriented education, and our efforts to remove barriers and provide personalized service to diverse students are evident in planning and decision-making and are understood by all members of our community. The reflective process of this Self-Study is consistent with the Proof Positive 3 (PP3) Report, our robust approach to organizational effectiveness.

This Self-Study document confirms our holistic, student-focused approach that promotes retention and graduation, values diverse experiences and viewpoints, and develops relevant, quality academic programs that prepare students for new professional careers or advancement in their current positions. This report also corroborates our robust financial health and fiscal planning strategies and innovative partnerships that expand opportunities for students locally, nationally, and internationally.

While these standards-based chapters confirm our effectiveness, we recognize and embrace opportunities for improvement. For example, we should approach Vision 2030 with new ideas to remain competitive and explore more technological resources that enhance differentiated instruction of asynchronous learning. We will revise graduation competencies and General Education courses and develop a new strategic plan. We look forward to addressing these and other opportunities as we progress, with the complete understanding that excellence requires steadfast commitment.

We are privileged to share the Wilmington University story. We proudly list our strengths, accomplishments, and long history as a student-centered institution. We aspire to shape a promising future for our students, faculty, staff, institution, and community.

Appendices

Appendix A – Self-Study Workgroups

Self-Study Co-Chairs	
Dr. Liz Jordan	Senior Director, Information Technology
Dr. Mary Ann Westerfield	Assistant Professor, Assistant Vice President, Student Access and Success Services
Work Group 1 - Standard 1, Mission and Goals	
Dr. Angela Herman, co-chair	Assistant Professor and Chair, College of Health Professions and Natural Sciences
Dr. Doug Scappa, co-chair	Director, New Jersey Sites and Brandywine
Brian Beard	Senior Director, Information Technology
Dr. Maria Hess	Assistant Vice President, Executive Communications, Office of the President
Dr. Nicole McDaniel	Director, Financial Aid
Wendy Kennedy	Systems Analyst, Financial Affairs Budget and Systems, Information Technology
Alexis Murphy	Educational Effectiveness Coordinator
Melissa Palese	Director, Student Recruitment
Courtney Rossi	Employee Relations and Training Specialist, Human Resources
Dr. Regina Allen-Sharpe	Assistant Professor, Assistant Vice President & Dean of Students, Student Affairs
Adam Voyton	Assistant Director, Online Learning and Educational Technology
Dana White	Development Associate, Alumni Relations
Dr. Jim Wilson	Professor and Vice President, Academic Affairs
Thomas Leipold	Board Representative
Work Group 2 - Standard II, Ethics and Integrity	
Nicole Ballenger, co-chair	Assistant Professor and Chair, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Dr. Nicole Romano, co-chair	Assistant Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer, Human Resources
Maria Bannon	Assistant to the Dean, College of Technology
Dr. Johanna Bishop	Associate Professor and Director, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Dan Burke	Coordinator of Student Issues and Concerns, Student Affairs
Julie Gladden	Assistant Director, Transfer Credit Services
Lauren Godwin	Director, Enrollment Services
Dr. Aaron Sebach	Associate Professor and Dean, College of Health Professions and Natural Sciences
Dr. Danny Walker	Assistant Professor and Chair, College of Education and Liberal Arts
Misty Williams	Director and Registrar
Vaishnav Hari	Student
Work Group 3 - Standard III, Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience	
Dr. Kate Cottle, co-chair	Associate Professor and Chair, College of Education and Liberal Arts
Dr. Sallie Reissman, co-chair	Assistant Professor, Assistant Vice President and Dean, College of Online and Experiential Learning
Dr. Deb Berke	Professor and Director, College of Social & Behavioral Sciences
Dr. Adrienne Bey	Professor, Director, Center for Teaching Excellence
Dr. Matt Davis	Assistant Professor, Assistant Vice President, Academic Affairs
Megan Durstein	Lead Registrar Associate, Office of the Registrar
Dana Hanf	Director, Transfer Credit Services
Pam Huxtable	Educational Systems Technologist, Online Learning & Educational Technology
Dedra Poe	Manager, Student Success Center
Lindsay Rice	Assistant Professor, Senior Director, External Affairs
Christyn Rudolf	Manager of Student Accessibility Services, Student Life
Michelle Reyes	Manager, Library
Work Group 4 - Standard IV, Support of the Student Experience	
Dr. Lucia Nemeth, co-chair	Associate Professor, Senior Director of Educational Effectiveness, Academic Support Services
Dr. Bonnie Kirkpatrick, co-chair	Assistant Professor, Assistant Vice President, Student Services
Dr. Diane Bansbach	Associate Professor, Chair, Mathematics, College of Education and Liberal Arts
Dr. Lauren Havens	Lead Engagement Counselor, Student Engagement Center
Christina Darrah	Manager, Student Financial Services
Jeff Martino	Senior Director, University Partnership Center

Alice Miller	Director, Student Life
Kim Plusch	Assistant Director, Career Services
Sherri Strobel	Senior Director, Academic Advising
Dr. Robin Weinstein	Professor and Director, College of Business
Elizabeth Barben	Student
Work Group 5 - Standard V, Educational Effectiveness Assessment	
Dr. John Sparco, co-chair	Associate Professor and Director, College of Business
Dr. Denise Wells, co-chair	Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs
Dr. Michelle Brewer	Assistant Professor and Director, College of Education and Liberal Arts
Dr. Stephen Buchanan	Senior Director, Online Learning & Educational Technology
Dr. Kelly Cheeseman	Associate Professor and Chair, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Dr. Michael Curry	Associate Professor and Chair, College of Education
Dr. Katie Leach	Associate Professor and Chair, College of Health Professions
Gary Seydell	Assistant Director, Academic Advising
Dr. Matt Wilson	Assistant Professor and Director of Liberal Arts, College of Education and Liberal Arts
Work Group 6 - Standard VI, Planning, Resources, and Institutional Assessment	
Jean Davis, co-chair	Assistant Professor and Regional Chair, College of Business
Heather O'Connell, co-chair	Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer
Robin Angelucci	Controller, Financial Affairs
Brian Beard	Senior Director, Information Technology
Jaimee Campbell	Human Resources Classification & Compensation Specialist Human Resources
Dennis Craighton	Safety Supervisor, University Safety
Dr. Tim Day	Assistant Professor and Director, Digital Media, College of Technology
Adrienne Johnson	Associate Professor, Assistant Director and University Archivist, Library
Dr. Kathy Kennedy-Ratajack	Associate Professor and Dean, College of Business
Don Kukawski	Director, Buildings and Maintenance
Lloyd Ricketts	Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer
Rebecca Ritchie	Director, Student Financial Services
The Honorable Sue L. Robinson	Board of Trustees Representative
Work Group 7 - Standard VII, Governance, Leadership, and Administration	
Dr. Karen Sheats, co-chair	Senior Director, Human Resources
Pete Lutus, co-chair	Assistant Vice President & Chief Information Officer, Information Technology
Tom Hurd	Director, Student Engagement Center
Dr. Frank Ingraham	President, Alumni Association Executive Board
Dr. Stefanie Whitby	Assistant Vice President, Alumni & Athletic Director, Athletics
Ashley Mundy	University Secretary, Office of the President
Paula Potochney	Assistant to the Vice President, Academic Affairs
Dr. Rob Rescigno	Associate Professor and Assistant Vice President, Partnerships and Community Affairs
Sherry Stephens	Site Manager, Dover Site
Dr. Don Stuhlman	Assistant Professor and Director, College of Business
Larry Miller	Board of Trustees Representative
Data and Evidence	
Dr. Dana Chapman	Assistant Vice President of Institutional Research, Strategic Planning, and Assessment
Federal Compliance Report	
Dr. Linda Andrzjewski	Executive Director, Administrative and Legal Affairs

Appendix B - Requirements of Affiliation

Number	Requirement of Affiliation	Where Compliance is Demonstrated
ROA #1	The institution is authorized or licensed to operate as a postsecondary educational institution and to award postsecondary degrees; it provides written documentation demonstrating both. Authorization or licensure is from an appropriate governmental organization or agency within the Middle States region (Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), as well as by other agencies as required by each of the jurisdictions, regions, or countries in which the institution operates. Institutions that offer only postsecondary certificates, diplomas, or licenses are not eligible for accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.	Standard II
ROA #2	The institution is operational, with students actively enrolled in its degree programs.	Introduction Standard III Standard V
ROA #3	For institutions pursuing Candidacy or Initial Accreditation, the institution will graduate at least one class before the evaluation team visit for initial accreditation takes place, unless the institution can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Commission that the lack of graduates does not compromise its ability to demonstrate that students have achieved appropriate learning outcomes.	Not applicable
ROA #4	The institution's representatives communicate with the Commission in English, both orally and in writing.	Not applicable
ROA #5	The institution complies with all applicable government (usually Federal and state) laws and regulations.	Standard II
ROA #6	The institution complies with applicable Commission, interregional, and inter-institutional policies. These policies can be viewed on the Commission website: www.msche.org.	Standard II
ROA #7	The institution has a mission statement and related goals, approved by its governing board, that defines its purposes within the context of higher education.	Standard I
ROA #8	The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.	Standard III Standard IV Standard V
ROA #9	The institution's student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.	Standard III Standard V
ROA #10	Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.	Standard III Standard IV Standard V Standard VI
ROA #11	The institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development, including those from any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious	Standard VI

	sponsorship, and corporate ownership) adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to ensure financial stability. The institution demonstrates a record of responsible fiscal management, has a prepared budget for the current year, and undergoes an external financial audit on an annual basis.	
ROA #12	The institution fully discloses its legally constituted governance structure(s) including any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership). The institution's governing body is responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution and for ensuring that the institution's mission is being accomplished.	Standard VII
ROA #13	Most of the institution's governing body's members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. The governing body adheres to a conflict-of-interest policy that assures that those interests are disclosed and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution. The institution's district/system or other chief executive officer shall not serve as the chair of the governing body.	Standard II Standard VII
ROA #14	The institution and its governing body/bodies make freely available to the Commission accurate, fair, and complete information on all aspects of the institution and its operations. The governing body/bodies ensure that the institution describes itself in comparable and consistent terms to all of its accrediting and regulatory agencies, communicates any changes in accredited status, and agrees to disclose information (including levels of governing body compensation, if any) required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.	Standard II
ROA #15	The institution has a core of faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals with sufficient responsibility to the institution to assure the continuity and coherence of the institution's educational programs.	Standard III Standard VII

Appendix C - Scholarship Awards

Scholarship Type	2018-2019		2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023	
	Amount	#	Amount	#	Amount	#	Amount	#	Amount	#
Wilmington University Scholarships (Donor Funded)	$403,485	179	$388,002	161	$386,814	173	$390,184	126	$237,199	103
Micro Grant Program	$67,836	58	$61,702	58	$67,432	66	$68,761	62	$61,828	57
Institutional Assistance	$2,657,845	522	$2,819,884	537	$2,577,034	529	$2,541,265	516	$2,231,378	469
COVID Assistance	$1,746	4	$463,238	1,428	$64,304	102	-	-	-	-
Athletics	$1,252,315	262	$1.302,037	271	$1,304,081	246	$1,344,445	240	$1,516,121	274
Total	**$4,383,227**	**1,025**	**$5,034,863**	**2,455**	**$4,399,664**	**1,116**	**$4,344,655**	**944**	**$4,046,526**	**903**

Appendix D - Program Approval Process

Step	Process
Research	• Made aware of need • Program needs assessment/labor market trends/skills/ Advisory Board • Competitiveness/comparisons
Development	• Use Curriculum Committee Templates • Educational plan templates for Guided Pathways developed • Curricular mapping of student learning outcomes (SLOs) completed • Online course developers • Budgetary needs/Enrollment Predictions
College Approval **(Monthly mtgs)**	• Follow college review/approval process • Present to your college for approval
Academic Council **(Tues 10-12)**	• Consult with your dean about Academic Council review • Present proposal to Academic Council
Executive Team **(Weds)**	• Consult with your dean about presenting to Executive Team – usually only new degree programs • Present to Executive Team – fit with mission and fiscal review
Curriculum Committee **(Monthly – 2nd Thurs)**	• Submit proposals in your college folder in Curriculum Committee SharePoint Site • Present to Curriculum Committee for approval • Curriculum Committee Matrix for levels of approval
Faculty Senate **(Monthly – 2nd Thurs)**	• Submit new program and presentation to Faculty Senate Chairs • Present to Faculty Senate for approval
DE Dept of Ed	• Faculty Senate approved programs submitted to VPAA • VPAA coordinates with President's Office to submit proposal to the DE Department of Education for approval
Approved!	• Faculty member responsible for new program coordinates submission to subsequent year's academic catalog immediately after DE DOE approval • Coordinate with Advising/Marketing to distribute program information
Assess Grad Competencies **(Every block)**	• General Education Student Learning Outcomes Assessments • Program Competencies Assessed
Program Review **(Yearly and every 3 yrs)**	• One-year snap-shot • Three-year review • Audit of program reviews

Review of Outcomes	• Student Learning Outcomes assessed and analyzed • Review within college/advisory boards/instructors • Improvement changes proposed
Outcomes Summit **(Yearly)**	• Academic Affairs Outcomes Summit • Dean's summary reports and general education formative and summative and program competencies • CATS review
PP3 Review **(Yearly)**	• PP3 Review of closing the loop activities (Assessment, analysis, change made, re-assessment of outcome to determine improvement/or not) • Budgetary impact based on closing the loop activities, linked to IPs/SIs

Appendix E - Academic Affairs Assessment Plan

WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS ASSESSMENT PLAN

March 2023 rev.