



COVID-19 Planning and Process Changes

Institutional Response

Institution: Xavier University City, State: Cincinnati, OH

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Date Submitted: 3/15/21

Please complete the following questions based on the institution's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The prompts below are intended to help institutions articulate to peer review teams adaptations made in response to COVID-19. Understandably, some prompts may not be relevant to all institutions; in such cases, simply indicate so. By focusing institutional adaptations in this form, institutions can provide information to peer teams about how they are handling the pandemic, while retaining the Assurance Argument's traditional focus on long-term, non-pandemic operations. The COVID-19 Institutional Response should not exceed 10 pages. Upload the form in the Forms tab of the Assurance System prior to the institution's lock date.

Questions

Criterion 1. Mission. Please answer the following questions describing any changes the institution implemented related to Criterion 1.

- What, if any, program changes has the institution implemented (e.g., program hiatus, closure, launch) this fall? How do these service changes align with the institution's mission?

Xavier University has plans to suspend or eliminate twenty-one programs and to repurpose resources related to two additional programs. While these changes are numerous they do not significantly affect or alter Xavier's mission. All students in programs to suspend or eliminate will be able to complete their program at Xavier.

College of Nursing

Advanced Education Nursing (AEN) - Clinical Nurse Leader includes:

MSN Clinical Nurse Leader – suspended

Clinical Nurse Leader Post-Master Certificate – suspended

MSN Nursing includes:

Mobility Option – suspended

MSN-Administration - suspended

MSN-General Studies – suspended

MSN-Healthcare Law – suspended

College of Arts & Sciences

Intensive English Program –suspended
MA Urban Sustainability – eliminate
Bachelor of Music Performance – eliminate
BA in Land Farming & Community – eliminate (and likely integrated into ECOS)
BS in Human Centered Making – eliminate
BS in Applied Biology – absorbed into Environmental Science Major
BA in Classical Humanities – absorbed into Classics Major
Curriculum change to Physics Department degree – align multiple degrees and some change in course requirements
School of Arts & Innovation resources reinvested into Data Science Honors

Williams College of Business

Strategic Human Resources major – suspended
Sustainability Economics & Management – suspended
Information Systems Major – suspended

College of Professional Sciences

MS Human Resource Development – eliminate
Dual Degree Early Childhood Special ED & Montessori – eliminate
EdD leadership Studies – eliminate
MS Industrial/Organizational Psychology – eliminate

- How has the institution's commitment to the public good been maintained during this period? What was the pandemic's impact on its civic engagement/community-based work?

To support community-engaged learning, Xavier developed [resources posted at the website for the Eigel Center for Community-Engaged Learning](#) and the [Faculty Community Engaged Learning Guide](#) for information on how to engage with community partners. Most community-engaged and immersive learning components were held in a virtual setting. Xavier has several ongoing curricular and co-curricular clubs that provide enrichment, mentoring, and tutoring each year in local schools and we were trying to maintain some of that programming. Therefore, the Director of the Eigel Center was in weekly meetings with our neighborhood principals and monthly with Cincinnati Public Schools' chief communications officer. The Center for Faith Justice Summer Service Internship continued some community placements in summer 2020. The Bruggemann Center for Dialogue, the Ethics/Religion and Society Program, among others, continued to engage with the public through virtual events. In Spring 2021, Xavier serves as a vaccination site serving the public.

- Has the institution adjusted its recruitment, enrollment, and support strategies to serve traditionally underserved students? If so, how?
- Xavier offered tutoring and supplemental instruction services primarily virtually, with the option for students to request in person tutoring (provided proper COVID safety protocols are followed). These efforts allow Xavier to reach the students in a way that supports them best.
- In March 2020 when Xavier decided to move to remote learning, IT communicated additional support for traditionally underserved students, <https://www.xavier.edu/it/studentstrategies>. Xavier provided and shipped technology to underserved students including hotspots, webcams, document cameras and laptops. Below is a table of loans provided to students.

IT loans provided to students

	Laptops	Document Cameras	Web Cams	Hotspots
Spring 2020	38	8	0	0
Fall 2020	40	5	1	1

- Xavier did not significantly adjust recruitment or enrollment to serve traditionally underserved students. Standard practice at Xavier already included waiving application fees and implementing test optional admission policies. Xavier extended the deposit deadline and made additional financial aid available for Fall 2020 admitted students, although those were not necessarily exclusive to traditionally underserved students.

Criterion 2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct. Please answer the following questions describing how the institution maintained integrity, as outlined in Criterion 2, as it implemented changes to regular campus practices during this period.

- Has the institution altered any existing policies or procedures (e.g., admissions, grading, registration, etc.) in response to the pandemic? If so, please describe them. Will these changes remain in effect, or will they revert to the original policy after the pandemic has subsided?

Xavier adjusted its Academic Calendars in Spring 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021 in response to the pandemic, including measures to remove long breaks and adjust the start and end dates to minimize student presence on campus during the winter. These calendar changes are intended to be temporary. The Fall 2021 calendar restores breaks but maintains remote finals.

Xavier implemented temporary, semester-by-semester Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) grading on a limited bases in Spring 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021. Students may request a limited number of courses to be taken on a S/U basis each semester; a number of courses are excluded from S/U grading due to specialized accreditation, course sequencing, or other academic restrictions. Each S/U policy expires at the end of the respective semester.

Some programs made adjustments to admissions in response to the pandemic:

- Traditional BS Nursing
 - Temporarily will not consider ACT or SAT test scores for the Fall 2021 freshman year only.
- Full-time Masters Health Services Administration
 - Eliminate GRE/MAT requirement
 - Eliminate accounting and statistics pre-requisites
 - Temporarily allowed Zoom interviews in lieu of in-person interviews
- Leadership Studies
 - Waive GRE/MAT requirement
- Occupational Therapy Doctorate
 - Minimum GPA and GRE Writing now “preferred” instead of required
 - Temporarily waived volunteer hours and consideration of pass/fail grades for pre-requisite courses
- Psychology Industrial-Organizational Masters and Clinical Doctor of Psychology programs
 - Waive GRE (possibly temporary)
- Athletic Training
 - Candidates now have a choice between completing forty hours of observation and/or interviewing an athletic trainer. This modification will be removed after COVID-19.

In March 2020, the following immediate changes were made:

- Freshman recruitment:
 - Spring 2020 on-campus events, regional events, campus tours, and admission counselor travel were cancelled.
 - To continue to engage admitted students and encourage them to make their commitment, Enrollment developed a new digital strategy that included:
 - The XU to You platform. This platform was an innovative way of sharing the key pieces of information that a student would have received if they visited campus or attended a spring event all online from their home.
 - A series of virtual sessions including panels with current students, sessions with academic departments, mock classes, panels with Admissions and Student Success staff, and information sessions about housing, registration, and student services.
- Transfer recruitment:
 - The University Registrar and Dean of Retention, in collaboration with an Associate Dean in the College of Arts & Sciences, took temporary oversight of transfer credit equivalency determinations for all Core Curriculum courses for incoming Fall 2020 students. All other transfer equivalency requests are completed by the Department Chairs within a 24-hour timeline.
- In May 2020, as part of the work of the Enrollment & Pricing subcommittee of Xavier's COVID-19 Task Force, offices serving traditional undergraduate students formalized a three-month work plan that outlined the preparations to be done over the summer to continue effective recruitment practices in a virtual format throughout the coming year and to support students as they return to campus. This work plan, which was individualized by functional area, was updated weekly both to keep the university COVID-19 Task Force aware of Enrollment's activities and provide structure for internal goal tracking.

The following strategies have been used for the 2020-2021 academic year:

- First-year recruitment:
 - Implementation of digital platforms to allow prospective students to virtually engage with Xavier both before and after they apply.
 - Assessment of current investment in alternative prospect sources such as Naviance to supplement potential lack of available prospects from traditional sources such as ACT and SAT.
 - Redesign of X-Day events to comply with Ohio COVID-19 guidelines while giving students and families the opportunity to experience Xavier's campus.
 - Updates to the application review process in response to changes in students' transcripts and test scores (e.g. pass/fail grades from spring 2020, inability to retake college entrance exams).
 - Implementation of Regional Expansion Strategy, in part to locate recruiters close to students to alleviate potential inter-state travel restrictions that may come up due to COVID-19.
 - Continuous evaluation of the best method for hosting students on campus, the format of daily tours, and ways to incentivize students to visit campus.
 - Participation in virtual college fairs and high school visits to replace lack of opportunities to meet students in person.
- Transfer recruitment:
 - Extend temporary oversight of transfer evaluation to best support students who change their college plans throughout the 2020-2021 academic year due to COVID-19.
- Has the institution made changes to any contractual agreements during this period that have a bearing on educational activities? If so, please describe them.

Xavier updated its waiver form for student participations in practicums, placements, internships, etc. to include COVID-specific language.

The School of Education is entering into a contract with Sims School for virtual placements to support clinical field components of the required field hours as mandated by the Ohio Department of Higher Education.

In addition, while contractual agreements with the College of Nursing and the Occupational Therapy program did not change, the programs experienced numerous cancellations with clinical and placement sites.

- How did the institution communicate with students, staff and other stakeholders about any relevant operational changes during the pandemic?

Whenever possible, Xavier used existing, successful communications channels with our various constituencies to communicate important information about COVID-19 and the University's response.

Current students:

- A coronavirus website was created at the beginning of the pandemic to share operational information and to answer common student questions. The website is updated regularly with new health and safety information and changes to campus operations. Students are able to submit individual questions or feedback directly to the COVID-19 Task Force.
- Xavier students already receive a weekly email coordinated by the Student Government Association. Regular announcements, including messages about changes during the pandemic, were included in this email.
- Special editions of a Xavier Student Newsletter email were sent as needed as timely communication around high-level operational changes. For example, the move to remote learning, changes to grading policy, and health and safety plans for the return to campus.
- Social media channels, especially Instagram, were used to share high-level operational changes.
- Videos from key campus leaders, most notably the University president on a number of occasions, have been shared throughout the pandemic. The videos were shared via email, social media channels, and the coronavirus website.
- When students returned to campus for the fall semester, environmental signage both inside and outside buildings communicated key operational changes around mask wearing, distancing, and cleaning procedures.

Employees (faculty and staff):

- A coronavirus website was created at the beginning of the pandemic to share operational information and to answer common employee questions. The website is updated regularly with new health and safety information and changes to campus operations. Employees are able to submit individual questions or feedback directly to the COVID-19 Task Force.
- Xavier employees already receive a twice-weekly email. This email was increased to three times per week. Regular announcements, including messages about changes during the pandemic, were included in this email.
- Faculty received frequent, regular newsletters from the Center for Teaching Excellence with resources and workshop information to support pedagogy.
- Social media channels were used to share high-level operational changes.
- Videos from key campus leaders, most notably the University president on a number of occasions, have been shared throughout the pandemic. The videos were shared via email, social media channels, and the coronavirus website.
- When employees returned to campus in the summer, environmental signage both inside and outside buildings communicated key operational changes around mask wearing, distancing, and cleaning procedures.

Parents:

- A coronavirus website was created at the beginning of the pandemic to share operational information and to answer common student questions. The website is updated regularly with new health and safety information and changes to campus operations. Parents are able to submit individual questions or feedback directly to the COVID-19 Task Force.
- Parents were included in all of the Xavier Student Newsletter emails that communicated high-level operational changes.

- Social media channels, especially Facebook, were used to share high-level operational changes.
- Videos from key campus leaders, most notably the University president on a number of occasions, have been shared throughout the pandemic. The videos were shared via email, social media channels, and the coronavirus website.
- How has the institution's board been involved in monitoring potential disruptions to the institution's enrollment or financial stability?

The Finance Committee and Audit & Risk Management Committee of the Board are assigned oversight responsibility for the University's financial planning and risks. These committees meet quarterly and review both strategic and operational issues and then report back to the Executive Committee and to the full Board.

The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees and the full Board both meet quarterly to discuss strategic matters including enrollment and financial stability.

In addition to the normal quarterly oversight processes, during the pandemic the Executive Committee has been receiving the internal COVID-19 dashboard semiweekly along with key points of interest. Information has also been shared with the Full Board on a more frequent basis as needed. An example is when the University made the decision to go remote in Spring 2020. The University president's memos to the campus community regarding the shutdown, pay cuts, retirements benefit cuts and enrollment numbers were shared with the Full Board. There is also the option to call special meetings of the Executive Committee and/or Full Board when necessary.

Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support. Please answer the following questions and describe the institution's ability to provide quality education, teaching and academic support services during this period.

- Which delivery modalities will the institution employ during the 2020-21 academic year? Check all that apply.
 - On-site classroom teaching, with social-distancing measures within the classroom

☒ Fall
 ☒ Spring
 ☒ Summer
 - On-site classroom teaching, with fewer students in larger classrooms

☒ Fall
 ☒ Spring
 ☒ Summer
 - Hybrid models, with some learning in a classroom and some learning online

☒ Fall
 ☒ Spring
 ☒ Summer
 - 50% models, with one-half of students in the classroom and one-half present by video conference for each session

☒ Fall
 ☒ Spring
 ☒ Summer
 - Synchronous classes, offered online for all students during the regularly scheduled class time

☒ Fall
 ☒ Spring
 ☒ Summer

- Fully online classes, offered using an LMS integrated with regular student/teacher contact

☒ Fall

☒ Spring

☒ Summer

- Other—Please describe:

- What type of training did the institution provide for its faculty members on distance learning/hybrid formats to prepare them for this work? Check all that apply.

☒ Training for all faculty, delivered virtually

☒ Individual training with IT professional on the campus

☒ Access to online training on distance delivery offered by an outside provider to all faculty

☒ Individual training/coaching offered by experienced online faculty members on campus

☒ Department-level, department-specific training by subject area

☒ Recorded or live webinars/resources offered by outside providers

☐ Recorded or live webinars/resources offered by the LMS provider

☒ Other—please describe:

- Communities of practice – small groups of 3-5 faculty member who met remotely throughout the semester to share tips and ideas, and to support each other.
- Self-paced Canvas courses – Preparation for Remote Teaching (Summer), Fall 2020, and Spring 2021.
- Canvas course templates, which were imported into all summer and fall courses
- Instructional Continuity website with detailed and extensive support for faculty

Criterion 4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement. Please describe how the institution maintained the evaluation and improvement, as outlined in Criterion 4, as it implemented changes to regular campus practices during this period.

- How has the institution's ongoing student assessment changed since the COVID-19 disruption? If the institution altered the regular assessment program or processes, what has the institution implemented instead to assess student outcomes during this period?

Despite some disruptions, the assessment process continued as usual at Xavier. On the whole, COVID-19 did not alter the assessment process for the curricular and co-curricular areas. All units continued to assess student learning, to collect and review evidence of student learning, and to make programmatic and process changes to enhance student learning. However, some changes were necessary because of remote learning and some areas were not able to complete their standard data collection processes due to the upheaval of COVID-19 or due to lower response rates. A few specific examples are below:

- COVID-19 impacted International Education assessment. They had an effective plan for their assessment, but when students were not able to complete their study abroad, they were not able to complete assessment either.

- In the College of Arts and Sciences, some assessment instruments planned for Spring 2020 were too difficult to administer. One program showed flexibility by considering data from a course instead of a planned final project.
- In Student Affairs, several units changed from in-person data collection to online data collection. Other units measured student learning experiences that were traditionally in-person, but now delivered in a remote format. For example, Counseling Services was not able to gather their planned assessment data due to remote learning.
- How has the current disruption affected the institution's or individual departments' ability to integrate assessment data into ongoing program improvement? Note successes, as well as gaps.

The assessment of programs and plans for improvement continued during COVID-19. Many of the curricular and co-curricular areas indicated that program improvements were about the same or more difficult due to remote learning and the inability to administer assessment instruments. The participation rate for submitting the annual report was high, with almost 100% participation, and indicates that areas collected, reviewed, and reflected on their assessment data and have plans for implementing changes where appropriate.

- How have the institution's retention, persistence and completion initiatives been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Spring 2020: Transitioned student success/registration/retention efforts to entirely remote environment, including virtual success coach appointments, creation of Canvas page with resources for remote learning, additional progress report to faculty to identify students struggling with remote learning, virtual Success Series workshops, creation of FAQs and GPA calculator for pass/fail grading policy, collaboration with Bursar and Financial Aid to raise threshold for bursar holds, and virtual tutoring/Supplemental Instruction sessions.
- Fall 2020 and Spring 2021: Continued offering of success coaching, career coaching, academic advising, Success Series sessions, and Career Fairs in a virtual format. Continued work on Student Success Integration Task Force initiatives.
- We are continuing our completion initiatives in TRiO and Athletics

Criterion 5. Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning. Please describe how the institution maintained effectiveness, resources and planning, as outlined in Criterion 5, as it implemented changes to regular campus practices during this period.

- How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected enrollments? For each term in the upcoming academic year, please indicate an approximate percent increase or decrease.

○ Fall 2020

☒ Increase ☐ Decrease ☐ No change

Percent change:

☒ Less than 5% ☐ 5% to 10% ☐ More than 10%

○ Spring 2021

☐ Increase ☐ Decrease ☒ No change

Percent change:

☐ Less than 5%

☐ 5% to 10%

☐ More than 10%

o Summer 2021

☐ Increase

☐ Decrease

☐ No change

Percent change:

☐ Less than 5%

☐ 5% to 10%

☐ More than 10%

o Other: Please describe any other COVID-19 enrollment impacts:

Summer 2021 registration will not begin until March 29, 2021.

- What is the likelihood that funding sources other than tuition will be unable to provide the funds budgeted? If likely, how much of a budget cut does the institution expect?
- Xavier made a number of budgetary and spending changes in order to mitigate the financial challenges posed by the pandemic. While we were fortunate to receive federal and state grants in both Fiscal 2020 and Fiscal 2021 to mitigate lost revenue and additional cost, actions were taken to reduce expenses in order to mitigate the impact of lost revenue.
- While the University has unrestricted short-term and long-term investments and reserves, the University does not anticipate needing to make extraordinary draws on those funds as a result of the pandemic. In addition, the University does not expect to make extraordinary appropriations from its endowment.
- For Fiscal 2020, the largest impact on the University was the credit and refunding of room and board and loss of certain auxiliary revenues primarily related to its athletics program; the University also incurred some incremental costs related to cleaning, technology investments, and some early preparations for the Fall 2020 semester. The University took the following actions to mitigate the impact of the pandemic in Fiscal 2020:
 - o Curtailed capital spending to conserve cash;
 - o Suspended 403(b) contributions beginning in April;
 - o Limited spending that was not naturally limited due to the nature of the pandemic; and
 - o Limited hiring only to key positions and open faculty lines.
- As a result of the above actions, for Fiscal 2020 the University realized unrestricted revenue of \$202.4 million; this amount was down \$18.3 million (8.3%) from the budgeted amount of \$220.7 million. The University incurred unrestricted operating expenses of \$199.2 million; this amount was below its budgeted level by \$15.3 million (7.1%). This resulted in an increase in unrestricted net assets from operations of \$3.2 million, versus a budgeted increase of \$6.2 million.
- Information regarding financial impacts and budget cuts for Fiscal 2021 are outlined in responses to the questions below.
- What measures is the institution taking to address any budgetary issues for the current fiscal year?
- The University has budgeted a revenue increase of \$809,000 for Fiscal 2021. This included a loss of Auxiliary Revenue of approximately \$9.3 million, but primarily offset by revenue increases in our Accelerated BSN and gifts.
- For Fiscal 2021, the following actions were taken to mitigate the impact of this expected revenue decline:

- The University offered a voluntary separation plan that resulted in 6 faculty and 30 staff members leaving the university. Of these positions, 5 faculty and 24 staff positions were refilled, resulting in a net reduction of 1 faculty and 6 staff positions.
- The University also eliminated 12 staff positions through involuntary separations.
- The University suspended all 403(b) contributions in April 2020, and restarted contributions at lower levels beginning in January 2021.
- The University implemented a salary cut for all persons making more than \$40,000 per year. The cuts ranged from 0.1% to 7.5% depending on a person's base salary.
- All operating expense budgets were reduced in order to meet a total spending cut of \$3.2 million or 2.0% of the total operating budget.
- Capital spending has been curtailed, and the remaining spending is focused on completing major construction projects that had already been started and funded and on critical deferred maintenance projects.

- What interim steps has the institution taken to deal with temporary financial shortfalls?

With the exception of the staff reductions noted above, the remaining actions taken are intended to be temporary.

- What emergency policies or procedures, if any, has the institution invoked because of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Other than the budget and spending cuts noted above, no other actions have been taken. The University is monitoring its cash position and operating cash flow very closely and does not have any plans to make extraordinary appropriations from its endowment or its reserves.

- How have these changes affected institutional budgets for educational programs, support services and cocurricular activities?

Xavier experienced an overall average of a 6% reduction in institutional budgets for educational programs, support services, and co-curricular activities. The effects of the pandemic on program offerings is discussed under Criterion 1.

- What type of pandemic-related planning is the institution doing for Academic Year 2021–22?

Xavier's planning for Academic Year 2021-22 includes the following:

- Ongoing work of Xavier's COVID-19 Task Force
- COVID-related budgeting, including an assessment of additional costs and funding
- Continued close relationship with our TriHealth partner
- Continued COVID Support Services work to support students in quarantine or isolation, including testing of symptomatic students, contact tracing, monitoring symptoms, and surveillance testing
- Continued communication, signage, social distancing, masking, and cleaning protocols
- Planning for vaccination roll-out and institutional policies
- Monitoring of any changes from CDC and State of Ohio regarding room capacity, social distancing, testing, quarantine, vaccines, etc., and adapting accordingly
- Continued support and engagement of staff and faculty, with mindfulness to our community
- Review and adjustment of the Academic Calendar for Fall 2021
- Procurement of PPE for certain programs
- Management of reverse culture shock as restrictions ease