4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

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

Argument

Item 4.A.1

In addition to program reviews via specialized accreditation, Xavier collects, reviews, and provides feedback concerning program assessment information (e.g., data from student learning objectives) using a university-wide system on Nexus/Sharepoint. Program review also takes place for major program changes via college and university-wide curriculum committees – College Curriculum Committees, Board of Undergraduate Studies (BUGS) and Board of Graduate Studies (BOGS). Xavier has implemented an academic program health initiative, where academic programs are being reviewed using an APH dashboard, which comprises five dimensions: academic quality, finances, contribution (e.g., mission and diversity), trends (e.g., employment), and personnel (e.g., faculty productivity). Metrics used in the program health assessment include: student enrollment and diversity (e.g. CAS and particularly Biology), persistence by major, graduation rates by major, time to degree by major, post graduate outcomes, student major mobility, degrees awarded, contribution to the core, students per faculty ratio, undergraduate faculty rank distribution, student
credit hour production by faculty, seats per course section, and course capacity utilization, among
others.

With regard to regularity of program reviews, new programs and program changes are reviewed by
college academic deans and curriculum committees and then BUGS or BOGS prior to submission to
the Provost for approval. Academic programs in the Williams College of Business, the College of
Nursing, and the College of Professional Sciences typically have regular and periodic review via
specialized accreditation groups. The CAS has established an 8 year cycle for program
review. Program changes typically include program policies, curriculum development, and course
modifications. Programs across the University are reviewed annually by area assessment committees,
who provide feedback concerning student learning objectives and outcomes in relationship to use of
findings for continuous improvement, assessment strategies, assessment measures, results of current
year assessment activity, and needed resources. Feedback from program reviews has resulted in
programs being able to secure faculty lines (e.g., Sport Studies) and administrative assistants (e.g.,
Radiology Technology).

Concerning acting upon findings from program review, with each review mechanism, programs are
provided feedback from the reviewing source. For example, area assessment groups provide program
feedback via a program student learning assessment rubric. Program feedback concerning student
learning objectives is reviewed by program leaders and faculty members as well as many program-
based advisory boards for input to act upon findings. Assessment is treated in detail in Criterion 4B.

Item 4.A.2

All transcripted courses are evaluated by BUGS and BOGS, after being reviewed by the respective
college’s curriculum committee. BUGS and BOGS reviews all program/course content, contact
hours, overlap and learning objectives.

Xavier awards academic credit for directed, experiential learning experiences (e.g., internships,
practicums, field experiences, study abroad, etc.). Co-ops or internships for credit provide students
with a hands-on, professional experience in a relevant organization. These experiences are planned,
supervised and evaluated collaboratively between the (work) supervisor and faculty members.
Learning goals and objectives align with academic theory and professional standards in each
student’s field of study. Grades are based on workplace feedback and completion of learning
assignments.

Xavier offers students immersive, community-engaged learning opportunities for academic credit.
Semester-long service learning programs consist of interdisciplinary course work and service
opportunities. Learning objectives and goals are overseen by faculty guides and service providers.
Courses for academic credit in international programs led by Xavier faculty follow the same process
of BOGS/BUGS. Both domestic and international programs are available. Xavier has developed a
tool for the assessment of immersive learning courses through its participation in the Higher
Learning Commission Assessment Academy.

All experiential, for-credit programs and courses are evaluated by college curriculum committees and
then BUGS and BOGS. These entities review program/course content, contact hours, overlap and
learning objectives.
Xavier also awards academic credit for courses not available at Xavier taken through the Greater Cincinnati Consortium of Colleges and Universities. Courses are vetted through the appropriate Department Chair and Dean. Under the Consortium agreement, Xavier students pay Xavier tuition and course grades and credit transfer.

**Item 4.A.3**

The Office of the Registrar reviews and processes all transfer credit for admitted transfer and deposited first-year students. Xavier awards undergraduate transfer credit for: academic courses from regionally-accredited institutions; AP, IB and CLEP exams; some military experience; Ohio Police Officer’s Training Academic; and other training recommended by the American Council on Education. Non-traditional students follow similar transfer guidelines. A grade of C or better is required for undergraduate transfer work. The Office of the Registrar maintains a Transfer Evaluation System and database of approved transfer work. At the graduate level, students are permitted to transfer in up to 6 course credit hours with a grade of B or better from another institution. Additional graduate credits may transfer at the discretion of the program director/chair and dean. Transfer credit is evaluated and approved by the appropriate program director/chair and dean.

Once matriculated at Xavier, approvals for off-campus/transfer work are evaluated by the appropriate department chair and approved by the appropriate dean. Certain core courses (i.e. writing flag, quantitative flag, etc.) are evaluated by the core curriculum subcommittee that awards the specific flag/designation. Students who plan to study abroad must also have courses pre-approved to ensure they meet academic standards. Co-op and life experience credit are not accepted. At the undergraduate level only transfer work with a grade of C or better will be accepted. Other restrictions include: 10-year, 4-year institution only (for upper-division classes) and/or residency rules.

**Item 4.A.4**

Prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, and expectations for student learning are overseen by each college’s respective curriculum committee before final approval by either the Board of Undergraduate Studies or Board of Graduate Studies, as appropriate.

Each college’s assessment committee assesses student learning.

Faculty qualifications are established by each academic unit, following HLC guidelines. Faculty qualifications are then review by the appropriate academic dean for approval.

Xavier does not currently offer dual credit programs. Xavier will accept dual credit that is earned via other regionally accredited colleges and universities, sent via official transcript. Those credits are not defined differently than other transfer credits and are subject to transfer credit policies as outlined in the catalog.

**Item 4.A.5**

Xavier University holds specialized accreditation as appropriate to its educational purposes. Both the
College of Nursing and the Williams College of Business have programs accredited from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), respectively. Nearly all programs in the College of Professional Studies are accredited through the appropriate specialized accrediting body, including the School of Counseling, Health Services Administration, Occupational Therapy, Psychology, Radiologic Technology, Teacher Education Programs, Montessori, Educational Leadership, Social Work, and Athletic Training. Select programs within the College of Arts and Sciences, such as music, chemistry, and the Intensive English Program are accredited through the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the American Chemical Society, respectively.

Item 4. A.6

The Career Development Office and Office of Institutional Research track employment and graduate school outcomes of undergraduate students within 180 days of graduation. Results are available to the public from an interactive Fact Book on Xavier’s website. Outcome data include employment, graduate school, median salary, job location, relevancy to major, knowledge rate and top employers. Employment outcome data for graduate students is typically collected at the program level. Reporting of outcome information varies by college and program. Student employment and graduate school outcomes provide one indicator of job preparedness. In addition, departments work directly with the employers, businesses, and educators to ensure that curriculum and experiential learning adequately prepare students for employment and/or advanced study. Examples include: independent, professional accreditation (such as AACSB); scheduled program reviews; engagement with student and community-based advisory boards; feedback from alums and employers; coops/internships/practicums; outside speakers and panelists; and experiential learning.

Beginning in academic year 2019-20, all undergraduate programs in the College of Arts and Sciences will undergo a program review on an 8-year cycle. A part of this review includes post-graduate outcomes provided by the Academic Program Health dashboard and supplemented by program-gathered data on alumni.

Many of the academic programs in the CPS are accredited by professional accreditation organizations and supported by community-based advisory boards. Additionally, one of the purposes of the CPS Dean’s Undergraduate Student Advisory Board involves examination and discussion of the efficacy of programs. In 2018, this CPS student advisory board sponsored a forum involving recent CPS to examine and discuss how Xavier programming has been helpful regarding employment, continuing education (e.g., graduate school) and participation in post-graduate service organizations (e.g., the Jesuit Volunteer Corps).

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

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

Argument

Xavier University’s Assessment protocol has focused on building institutional capacity to create, support, assess, and improve learning experiences, both curricular and co-curricular, as an integral aspect of our student experience, rooted in our Jesuit Catholic mission. Specifically, the institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

Area Assessment Committees (AAC) with membership consisting of associate deans and faculty members experienced in assessment, are housed in each college/division, chaired by senior faculty members or associate deans in the colleges, and by senior administrators in the co-curricular divisions. The AAC are charged with overseeing, reviewing, and enforcing assessment processes, and ensuring continuous programmatic review. Chairs or associate deans of AAC form an Administrative Assessment Group (AAG) that meets regularly throughout the semester to oversee, plan, revise, and coordinate assessment from a university perspective. This group, which reports to the Provost, monitors challenges experienced by the AACs, and responds with process and/or policy changes as necessary. Thus, Xavier has a clearly delineated organizational structure of assessment.

Xavier University operates under a faculty-driven Assurance of Learning model to ensure that we meet our student learning objectives. The Institutional Assessment Plan details the guiding philosophy of assessment at Xavier while the established programmatic cycle and process followed can be summarized by ten recurring, cyclical steps.

Assessment is a regular, recurring activity across Xavier University’s core curriculum and within each college/division. We have operated under a decentralized system, with assessment established as a programmatic process and with oversight and enforcement responsibility given to colleges and divisions where the programs are offered. Xavier defines a program as any definite and established curriculum, academic or nonacademic, in which student learning takes place. All programs are expected to be assessed for student learning.

Xavier uses an Assessment Hub for the yearly assessment process, and this dashboard is routinely shared with the Provost and President, as well as with the Board of Trustees at their annual meeting. It is used as a high-level overview of program progress and serves as an aid to the Provost and deans to indicate where attention may be required.
Since the last HLC visit of 2015, and the ensuing request for action summarized in the Staff Analysis of Institutional Report 2019, the University has continued to focus on its academic evaluation, by identifying core SLO’s and the assessment of these in order to improve student learning. Below, we first discuss the assessment process for the Core Curriculum, and then detail those of each college/division.

Core Curriculum Assessment

A new vision for the Core Curriculum and an accompanying set of Goals and Student Learning Outcomes that are deeply connected to Xavier’s Jesuit Catholic mission were approved by Xavier faculty in 2013 and implemented in fall 2015. As part of the Core Curriculum reform, Xavier faculty instituted a Core governance schema and established two permanent committees charged with overseeing the Core:

- The Core Curriculum Committee (CCC) is charged by the Faculty Assembly to manage the Core Curriculum – to serve, in effect, as the dean for the Core.
- The Core Curriculum Assessment Committee (CCAC) is charged with managing all assessment processes for the Core and to report its assessment findings to the CCC and, through it, to engage the Faculty Assembly to action as warranted.

Assessment of our core reaffirms our commitment to quality: clear goals for student achievement are set, performance against the goals is regularly measured, evidence of success is reported, and improving student learning is continuously addressed. We assess the entire Core Curriculum (all 12 SLOs) over a four-year cycle (typically three SLOs each year). Certain SLOs are broken down in order to focus on specific aspects of the broad outcomes. For example, one of our SLOs for Magis, a Jesuit term that is related to ad majorem Dei gloriam, a Latin phrase meaning "for the greater glory of God", which is the motto of the Society of Jesus, states that our students will be empowered to “recognize and cogently discuss significant questions in the (1) humanities, (2) arts, and the (3) natural and (4) social sciences.” We use different tasks to separately measure and assess each of the four component outcomes.

Assessment tasks consist of two components: a base experience (readings, images, thought-experiments, scenarios, or other activities) followed by one or more questions directed at one of the 12 Core SLOs. Different questions are designed to align with the different SLOs, but tasks are designed such that the same base experience may serve multiple SLOs. The CCAC reviews and updates the tasks, as necessary, to correct challenges that they identify; these challenges are noted in annual reports, e.g. the 2018-19 Core Curriculum Assessment Report.

For each academic year, tasks are chosen based on the SLOs identified for assessment according to a pre-defined assessment schedule. We collect pre- and post-Core assessment data from all undergraduate students via required, zero-credit courses:

- All first-year students take CORE 101: GOA (Goa is a city in India that is significant in the life of St. Francis Xavier, our namesake saint), which fulfills several developmental and enculturation goals as part of our first year experience. Tasks for assessment are assigned as part of this course.
- All adult and transfer students take CORE 103: GOA for Adult/Transfers.
- All seniors take CORE 499 - Core Capstone. This course is required for graduation and serves only our assessment needs. It requires only one hour (approximately) of a student’s time. Tasks are delivered via our Learning Management System Canvas.
We randomly assign assessment tasks to each section of CORE 101 and 499 based on the SLOs scheduled for assessment that year. From the students’ responses collected (typically 100-200 responses per task) we:

- Assess all responses if the tasks can be auto-graded (e.g., multiple choice questions for quantitative reasoning).

- Randomly select 50 responses for each SLO if the task must be assessed manually. This sample size ensures statistically reliable results. The selected student essay responses are scored by at least three members of the CCAC. Rubrics are used to measure the student responses. Following accepted practices for inter-related reliability, the three scorers individually score several tasks and discuss their scoring to agree on a common approach. Scores are aggregated and compared to the given metric. Core assessment reports are generated based on these metrics, and overall observations from the scorers are rolled into the final report for each SLO.

In the fall semester of 2015, the incoming class of first-year students enrolled under our current Core Curriculum. In the spring semester of 2019 we collected post-Core assessment data on this same cohort, the first to have gone through the entire new Core. Previously, our assessment necessarily involved two separate cohorts and evaluated the old Core curriculum using the new Core SLOs (note that there is a high degree of applicability of the new SLOs to the old Core). The 2014-15 academic year assessment report was the first of our core assessment reports that addresses the HLC’s charge to effectively assess our Core Curriculum.

Core Assessment Results and Insights

The CCAC reports its insights from assessing our Core to the CCC. A Core Curriculum Assessment Report is submitted to the CCC annually, typically in late fall, and posted on Xavier’s central assessment site, accessible to the entire University. In each report, the CCAC evaluates the data collected for each SLO against the appropriate metrics, determines whether the metrics are met or not, comments on their understanding of why this may be, addresses gaps that it may see, and recommends improvements to the tasks, SLOs, curriculum, and/or the assessment process. For example, in response to the 2018-19 Core Curriculum Assessment Report, the CCAC made the following changes:

- Designed a new task for SLO 4b, “discuss and evaluate what constitutes human wellness”.
- Determined that SLO 3b, “examine the nature of beauty, truth, and virtue as means of gaining a sense of the divine”, was not assessible as written and requested a revision. Spearheaded by Theology, the various humanities departments replaced the wording to read

      Students will be able to describe how reflection upon a range of human experiences enables a sense of the divine and/or a sense of life’s meaning and right relationships with others and the world.

This change was then approved by the Faculty Assembly.

We note that there is a question of how to determine if any curricular changes are made (or planned) in response to the CCAC reports. The Area Assessment Group (AAG) is considering adding a relevant prompt to the colleges' annual reflection and action form to collect this data.
Developed new instructions for two SLO tasks to make expectations of responses more explicit.

In general, our Core assessment work over the past years shows the following assessment achievements and gaps:

- The data generated indicate that student learning takes place across all assessed SLOs. For example, for SLO 6b Vocation, in the 2018-19 Core Curriculum Assessment Report, we note that senior performance improved over freshman performance (65% of senior placed in the top 2 categories and 96% placed in the top 3 categories; 54% of first years placed in the top 2 categories and 74% placed in the top 3 categories).
- In all assessment tasks, students commonly do not support their arguments using data or facts.
- There is too often a gap between what faculty hope that the core is accomplishing and what faculty are actually teaching in the core courses.
- While a reporting process to close the feedback loop is being used in the Core assessment process (e.g. 2018-19 Core Curriculum Assessment Report includes the CCC feedback), we are working to strengthen the communication and response with the faculty, since their teaching of the Core has the most impact on assessment results.

Academic Program and Co-Curricular Program Assessment

In addition to the Core Curriculum, all degree programs are assessed for student learning. Following is a discussion of each.

The College of Arts & Sciences

The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) evaluates the assessment of programs through the governing body of the CAS Area Assessment Committee (CASAC), which is made up of 8 faculty members, including an associate dean. The CASAC evaluates programs’ assessment strategies and results annually when it receives materials from, and then offers feedback to, all fifty-two programs in the College. Members of the committee, as a whole or individually, also provide ideas and feedback as programs develop their assessment plans. At CASAC's inception in 2012-2013, only 56% of the programs participated in assessment. By the academic year 2018-19, all of CAS' programs were doing some form of assessment.

Each department has clearly stated goals for each program (major and/or minor) within the department, as well as outlined SLOs and developed measures for assessment, e.g. Mathematics, B.S. and Actuarial Science, B.S. in the Department of Mathematics.

Each program assesses one or more of its Xavier SLOs, via direct and indirect measures, by addressing whether changes were made to the assessment plan, the effectiveness of measures used, the methodology of the assessment process - when, where and how the assessment was done, the performance outcome for the assessment, data supporting the assessment, and plans for the following academic year’s changes or improvements to the SLOs, and also, reports on the actions taken as a result of its assessment. Every program assesses each SLO at least once every three years.

Each assessment program submission is reviewed by at least two CASAC members, and then gets discussed further at a meeting of the committee. Each program’s submission is examined by evaluating the following aspects of its assessment: a description of the program and its student learning objectives, the assessment strategies and measures used, the assessment results obtained, the
use of results for continuous improvement, including an emphasis on direct and indirect measures, and the resources requested. At the end of the CASAC review, the committee fills out an evaluation rubric and comments on the various categories. The remarks made by the CASAC are intended to be formative, encouraging best practices of program assessment. Also, CASAC notes resource needs as a result of assessment, and reports these to the Dean in a summary document and a follow-up discussion with the serving associate dean.

The evaluation rubric is then shared with the program's chair, who then discusses it with the department. As the result of this discussion(s), plans for continuous improvement are made to the program as well as any necessary changes to the assessment strategies.

We provide here as examples the 2017-18 assessment report of Chemistry and English and note some of their characteristics.

- **Chemistry**: The B.S. in Chemistry is accredited by the American Chemical Society, which provides convenient tools for assessment. Such tools include national standardized tests for General Chemistry and Organic Chemistry, plus a requirement for a senior capstone project. The department collects data every year and uses these results to inform continuous improvement. The department has not needed to make any major changes over the past five years.
- **English**: The B.A. in English is assessed primarily at the senior level, using written papers from the senior seminar and a senior exit survey. In 2017-18 the department noted that writing outcomes were achieved at the desired level, but not oral communication. There is now a major course that carries the Oral Communication Flag, plus the department encouraged more faculty to incorporate oral assignments within their courses.

### The College of Professional Sciences

The majority of the programs in the College of Professional Sciences (CPS) are professionally accredited and are required to submit assessment reports to their accrediting bodies.

Each CPS program has clearly defined Xavier goals for student learning. In CPS, the core assessment process consists of an annual review overseen by the CPS Area Assessment Committee (CPSAC) that has an associate dean as its chair. Each program within CPS provides an annual assessment report which addresses the progress made on the past year’s SLO(s) commitments. The CPSAC then reviews the annual submissions. There are currently forty-one programs in CPS as Nursing has recently become a separate college. Within each program, SLOs tie to accreditation requirements for field licensure as well as to specific Xavier program requirements. By way of an example, the Human Development and Learning Syllabi from the Educational Foundation program shows how each activity is aligned with several accreditation requirements.

The annual program assessment template provides a model for academic units to follow as they reflect on their program’s assessment plans and processes. Each program’s assessment plan states its specific student learning outcomes derived from its program mission, as well as specific knowledge and skill indicators. Here are some examples of CPS’ program descriptions and SLOs and also, some examples of the CPS’ committee evaluation reports.

Most CPS programs are accountable to the various accreditation bodies. An analysis of the Ohio Assessments for Educators (OAE) results in areas of program remediation. These areas then form the specific SLO(s) goals for the upcoming year.
The importance of assessment to improve student learning is recognized by CPS. Assessment occurs at the course, activity, and program level, and involves the participation of faculty, administrators, and staff throughout the college. Summary reports, together with normative comparisons, provide faculty with specific recommendations for addressing areas for improvement. The suggestions made for revisions are addressed in the next year’s annual reflection. Annual reports are posted on the Assessment Hub that is publicly displayed on the CPS home site and reported to the Board of Trustees.

Examples of how the 2018-19 assessment reports informed program changes in the CPS include:

- The development of a Dissertation Advisement Clinic in Spring 2019 for the doctoral program in Leadership Studies.
- Addition of a new faculty line in Exercise Science.
- Change of a competency rubric and rating scale for Social Work majors in field placement.

The College of Nursing

As a newly established college, the College of Nursing (CN) is in the process of defining its program assessment structure and leadership. Up to and including the AY 2019-20, its program assessment has continued to be reviewed by CPS. Beginning July 1, 2020, the CN will form an Area Assessment Committee (AAC), similar to the other colleges.

Examples where CN programs learned from assessment efforts is illustrated in the 2018-19 assessment reports where nursing programs (e.g., Family Nurse Practitioner) used program feedback to refine nursing assessment tests for curriculum areas.

The Williams College of Business

The Williams College of Business (WCB) is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). AACSB accreditation requires among other things that the WCB implement and sustain effective assurance of learning “assessment” practices. Compliance is ensured through the AACSB’s periodic Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Reviews (CCIR). The WCB was subject to such review during the 2018-19 academic year. The CCIR is a thorough examination of a college’s strategic processes – including all assurance of learning activities. In spring 2019, the AACSB formally approved the WCB’s ongoing assessment practices and other strategic processes, and voted to extend the college’s AACSB accreditation.

WCB faculty, staff, and administrators regularly re-examine the college’s Goals and Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in light of priorities that emerge from University- and College-level strategic planning including input from all appropriate constituencies (students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and professionals from across the business community). Revised and reaffirmed BSBA and MBA goals/SLOs were approved via faculty vote on May 2019. Similarly, faculty in each department developed major(s) specific and specialized graduate program(s) SLOs.

Each department and graduate program has designed curriculum maps that link WCB courses to SLOs and planned schedules of assessment to identify the timing of assessment for each SLO. The curriculum maps serve to confirm that SLOs are adequately addressed by the college’s course offerings and identify the optimal course(s) for collecting assessment data. The WCB assesses student learning using both direct (e.g., course projects and embedded exam questions) and indirect measures, e.g., MBA program survey. However, the College relies primarily on direct methods of
assessment because they measure learning at the source and accommodate revisions to course content and teaching methods, based upon student progress toward specific learning objectives at the end of specific teaching segments. For example, grading rubrics, ets_results, and aol_results.

The WCB assesses each SLO at least twice within a five-year period. WCB departments and graduate programs complete assessment reports annually. The assessment reports describe the SLOs assessed, the assessment methods/tools that were utilized, the data collected, and the results obtained.

The WCB Curriculum Innovations Committee provides recommendations for curriculum changes to the relevant department(s) and to the WCB Curriculum Committee. In many instances, assessment results indicate that student learning objectives are being achieved and maintaining status quo is the desired action. In other instances, action is taken to improve undergraduate student learning. Over the last few years, as a result of its assessment, the WCB has introduced and revised curriculums for two specialized graduate degree programs MACC and MSCA, as well as undertaken a variety of changes within the undergraduate courses that are taught across all majors. Following are a few examples:

- **Accounting:** Adopted new textbook that places a greater emphasis documenting and interpreting business processes in the primary business transaction cycles, and increased class discussion and activities related thereto. Increased class time dedicated to students’ hands-on problem solving to understand the role of tax research in tax planning and to integrate income tax considerations into economic decision-making.
- **Economics:** Identified need to offer an applied research methods course and began offering such course in spring 2018.
- **Finance:** Removed material related to derivatives to allow time to better support student learning of financial modeling topics.
- **Information Systems:** Modified database project to increase complexity and better simulate a real-world business environment. Increased focus on hands-on projects with more physically tangible deliverables to further engage the students and require employing multiple technology platforms through the project lifecycle.
- **Management:** Provided additional resources outside of class (e.g., pre-recorded PowerPoint-based lectures) in order to increase the number of case studies covered in class.
- **Strategic Human Resource Management:** Increased emphasis on metacognitive learning using case-studies of real-life human resource problems.

In pursuit of continuous improvement, the WCB has also implemented changes in processes over the years to make its Assurance of Learning (AoL) model more systematic, with better documentation and oversight. Two of the more recent changes include creating a new administrative position, titled WCB Director of Assessment, and providing financial support for faculty to attend AoL development programs. The WCB Director of Assessment reports directly to the Associate Dean and shoulders responsibility for ensuring that all faculty are engaged in a continuous-improvement model of AoL. Increasing the number of faculty who attend AoL development programs should help maintain and improve the WCB’s culture of data-driven program review and curricular development.

**Student Affairs**

The Division of Student Affairs (SA) is committed to the assessment of student learning and development. The SA operates with clear and consistent expectations related to student learning assessment, and each of its departments, specifically, Center for Faith and Justice, Counseling Services, Dean of Students, Disability Services, Gallagher Student Center, Psychological...
Services, Recreational Sports, Residence Life, Student Involvement, Title IX, follows annual assessment practices. The Division’s assessment strategies align with those described above for each college: annual assessment plans at the beginning of an academic year, data collection and analysis throughout the year, annual reports at the end of each year, and modifications to programs and/or assessment plans as deemed necessary and based upon findings. While assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement, have been a norm of its professional practice since its inception in Academic Year 2011-12, e.g. Student Involvement Assessment Report 2011-12, the Division has strived to coordinate and elevate this work through improved training and documentation as evinced in the 2018 Student Affairs' Assessment Narrative. In particular, SA's current practices have been in place since Academic Year 2014-15 with the following cycle:

- **August** – before the start of each academic year, each department in SA, submits their Annual Assessment Plan. The template provides detailed information about each SLO (i.e. where it exists in the curriculum, how it is measured, etc.) and how it aligns with the divisional learning competences. These plans also include documentation of other major data sources and surveys that the department facilitates or supports. The Senior Director for SA reviews the departmental plans and meets with the departmental assessment coordinator(s) as needed to provide coaching and guidance.

- **Academic Year** – throughout the academic year, each department engages in their work and integrates their learning and assessment practices as outlined in their Annual Assessment Plan.

- **July** – at the end of each academic year, each department completes their SLOs Report. These reports invite each department to provide detailed analysis of each student learning outcome, a summary of major changes and key insights, and an analysis of proposed next steps. The Senior Director of Student Affairs reviews the departmental reports and meets with the departmental assessment coordinator(s) as needed. As part of the evaluation process, the Senior Director compares the Annual Assessment Plan with the SLOs Report to determine if the unit measured and assessed what it stated it would at the beginning of the year. The Senior Director evaluates if/how the unit plans to use its assessment evidence to implement changes and improvement. During this phase, the departments are expected to upload documentation of their assessment efforts to the Nexus site.

- **August** – after the department makes any necessary revisions to their SLOs Report, they then submit a revised Annual Assessment Plan for the upcoming academic year. The plan should reflect changes proposed as a result of the prior year’s assessment process, thus closing the loop on our assessment cycle. The Senior Director reviews the plans annually.

These practices have helped each unit to better execute assessment and learn how assessing student learning can serve as a tool to support the Division’s work. The SA has an Assessment Committee that consists of representatives from each reporting unit. The committee meets to share best practices, to identify training and resource needs, and to implement training opportunities. For several years, members of the Assessment Committee have attended the annual Student Affairs Assessment and Research Conference at Ohio State University (OSU). The Assessment Committee has also hosted trainings on writing learning outcomes, assessing learning outcomes, tools/technology to support assessment efforts, and more.

The Office of Student Involvement is one unit that has engaged in the assessment cycle consistently over this time period. Having engaged in the process over several years, the Office of Student Involvement recognized that it was spending time assessing elements of the student learning
experience that were measurable, but perhaps less meaningful. As result of their assessment practices, the Office of Student Involvement elected to implement a more global assessment of "involved student learning" across students’ experiences in roles such as club leaders, orientation leaders, Student Activities Council and SGA members, student employees, and more. The unit added an SLO focused on assessing "involved student learning and performance of transferable skills most desired by employers".

The metric used for this SLO was designed around results from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) survey. This work aligned with staff conversations about creating more high level departmental learning goals that better reflect the department’s overall purpose, such as leadership development and career preparation. The staff used findings from this assessment to refine some of its programs and services. In particular, the staff saw the deepest impact with students serving in on-going roles such as Manresa Core and Student Activities Council. The team elected to deepen their investment in these experiences (and other similar roles where they have an ongoing relationship with students) rather than focus on shorter-term programs. As a result, Student Involvement paused some of existing student leadership programs (specifically Emerging Leaders Initiative and Sophomore Leadership Challenge) in order to focus on integrating strengths-based education and leadership skill development into existing on-going experiences.

The Office of Residence Life engages in student learning assessment using both direct and indirect measures of student learning, e.g. 2017-18 ORL Annual SLOs Report. One of their most effective practices is the annual administration of the Skyfactor survey. Via this national benchmarking survey of residential student learning and satisfaction, the Office of Residence Life measures the impact of on-campus living on student academic performance, student knowledge of campus resources, and student preparedness to interact with people who are different from themselves. Based on feedback from the annual Skyfactor survey, the Office of Residence Life implemented a new roommate matching process for Summer 2019, support by new software (My College Roomie), to allow students to make better roommate matches to support their academic success and their preparedness to interact with other diverse students.

The Title IX Office also engages in annual assessment of student learning, e.g. 2017-18 TIX Annual SLOs Report, particularly related to student leaders’ ability to name types of sex discrimination as well as confidential resources for reporting sex discrimination. Based on their assessment of these learning outcomes, they continue to modify their trainings to ensure that students fully understand the difference between a confidential resource and a resource that is required to report. They have added spring refresher courses, modified training strategies (e.g. case scenarios, live quiz post-presentation, role plays) and partnered with other university staff (like the Advocacy & Prevention Office) to support these trainings. The Title IX Office also gathers data about the student experience from the annual climate survey. During Spring 2020, they are working with the Office of Institutional Research to revise/improve the data gleaned from the three question survey and are working to include student and employee resources within the tool itself. In addition, as always, their review revealed the continuing need to strengthen Xavier’s primary prevention education efforts on gender-based violence. As a result of their assessment efforts, the Title IX Office was able to add a second position to their team beginning in academic year 2019-2020. This role focuses on gender-based violence prevention education, including the roll-out of the just introduced Green Dot prevention education and bystander engagement program on campus.
The EMSS division follows a yearly cycle of assessment similar in strategies and procedures as those described above.

The EMSS Assessment Committee consists of at least one representative from each of the following offices: Center for International Education, Enrollment Intelligence, GOA, Office of Academic Support, Student-Athlete Academic Support Services, Student Success Center, and TRiO Student Support Services. The committee meets at least once each semester to share assessment updates, present assessment plans, and get advice and feedback from each other. The EMSS Assessment Committee 2018-19 Timeline and the EMSS Assessment Plan 2018-19 highlight how assessment for the EMSS division is performed. In particular, these documents show the evaluation process as well as the SLOs assessed by each department and how the data is collected.

Individual groups have experienced positive results from the recent years' assessment. To illustrate this, here are a few examples from GOA and the Office of Academic Support.

GOA's SLOs are assessed via reflections that students complete at the end of each class. The process to gather data for SLOs was improved in 2018-19, which resulted in an easier submission process for students and the data collection became more reliable. Not directly related to SLO assessment, but through the course evaluations, constructive feedback from the students on how to improve the course numerous changes were implemented. The most notable one was in fall 2016, when the course meeting schedule was changed from every other week (in 2015-16) to weekly meetings for the first 6 weeks of the semester. Additionally, based on student feedback, the content of lessons have changed with the most improved ones being the Diversity and Inclusion topics. Currently, stereotypes and micro-aggressions are covered in CORE 101 and identity, power, and privilege in CORE 102. Also, for the first time this year, in the reflection for the sixth, and last, GOA class, the students were asked whether they plan to return to Xavier the following semester (this is asked in CORE 101 and 102). This question evinces the great collaboration that exists between GOA and the Student Success Center to help identify students who are considering leaving the university.

The Office of Academic Support (OAS) has as one of its SLOs "Students who use tutoring or the SI program will be able to have a better understanding of the course material". Initially, we used only indirect measures with student feedback administrated via an evaluation. However, in the past couple of years, direct measures were developed, which improved the process. Currently, a tutor report is completed after each tutoring session on how well a student can apply the material from the course on a scale from 1 to 5 (with 1 indicating student cannot apply the material and 5 indicating the student has mastered applying the material); this allows the tutor to stop and think about how the student is processing the course material. To assess this SLO, we take the average rates of the first tutoring session and compare them to the average rates of the last session. Results indicate that the average at the last session is higher than the first, signifying that the students can better apply the course material after meeting with a tutor. For exact results see the OAS 2018-19 report.

Additionally, an analysis of retention data for students who used tutoring and supplemental instructors (SIs) has resulted in an expansion of the SI program to support additional courses over the past couple years (specifically MATH 120, 140, 225, CSCI 180).

The EMSS division staff are encouraged to attend conferences or other professional development opportunities that focus on assessment (some have attended the OSU Assessment conference in June, others have attended assessment related conferences/workshops/sessions through their national professional organizations) to help improve their assessment practices.
The assessment approach has not changed since originally instituted in 2012-13 and has served Xavier well. Until recently, assessment was being overseen by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs. However, since the summer of 2019, we have a dedicated Faculty Director of Assessment (FDA) in charge of overseeing student learning for all curricular and co-curricular programs.

With the appointment of an FDA, the Administrative Assessment Group (AAG) has sought to develop efficient assessment processes and policies across all areas to ensure consistent and effective assessment practices. During the fall semester 2019, the AAG met frequently to discuss current assessment procedures and documents, reflecting on areas of strength as well as growth opportunities. This restructuring has provided an avenue for recognizing a vision for assessment, with common learning outcomes and assessment processes, documentation, and expectations aligned throughout the University. Specifically, the following outlines changes to assessment practices at Xavier:

- Improved the external assessment website.
- Updated the 2012 University Assessment Protocol to the 2019 University Assessment Plan.
- Revised the University’s organizational assessment structure.
- Improved the Assessment Hub at the Nexus Sharepoint site to provide a consistent framework for the different organizational structures of the University in order to better articulate our assessment practices, training documents, and member participation.

Several documents were reviewed to “close the loop” and reflect best practices for assessment. Two specific areas of improvement were identified that will assist the University in completing the cycle of assessment. The annual assessment report template has been revised to eliminate redundancy, streamline the process, provide clear guidelines, and address program and budgetary decisions. Additionally, starting in the spring of 2020, the reflection and action form, which has been revised, will be submitted by programs in the spring rather than in the fall with the annual assessment report. This form allows programs/divisions to reflect and report on the assessment feedback provided by the Area Assessment Committee (AAC) and to address areas of needs in the improvement of student learning outcomes, direct and indirect measures, and reflection on data and artifacts. Faculty and staff will then meet to discuss this feedback on the assessment of their program/division, and to develop a plan that includes resource and budget requests. This update to the assessment cycle was necessary to have a formal process for programs/divisions to address gaps in their assessment practices as well as have the opportunity to address budgetary concerns.

The schedule and procedure for submitting and reviewing the reports will reflect changes beginning in the fall of 2020. The steps for completing the annual reports are outlined below:

- Program directors or assessment leads submit the annual report to the Nexus SharePoint site.
- AAC reviews the annual reports and gives feedback via the evaluation rubric.
- Completed rubric with feedback from the AAC is returned to the department/unit via email.
- Curricular and co-curricular areas review the feedback with their group members, and then complete the reflection and action form and return it to the AAC – this timeframe allows for the areas to make changes and request resources prior to the next annual report. The completed form is submitted to the school/department director/chair, who uses the summary narrative box to add comments/feedback. The school/department director/chair then posts the reflection and action form to the Nexus SharePoint site.
- AAC reviews all reflection and action forms and writes an overview of the college/division's
needs. This report then gets submitted to the Deans and the Direct Reports to the Provost.

- Deans and Direct Reports to the Provost/President submit assessment results and planning resources to the FDA who then communicates this information to the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, the Provost, and the Associate VP - Provost for budget and planning purposes, and these in turn report back to the FDA the decisions that were made.
- The FDA reports back to the Deans and Direct Reports to the Provost/President who will then share the necessary information with the AAC who are charged with overseeing, reviewing, and enforcing assessment processes and ensuring continuous programmatic review.
- Co-curricular programs will follow a similar plan but reports will be due during the summer.

Additionally, beginning in March 2020, the AAC membership selection process will be implemented. A new survey will be distributed to solicit interest and nominations for members to serve on the AAC. Associate deans and senior administrators in consultation with the Deans will select members to serve a three year term with an option to extend the term. This process will allow for continuity and insight for review of the annual assessment report.

We have a strong assessment team at the University and a clear plan of action that includes regular meetings, reflection on our practices, and methods for implementing changes. Moreover, professional development and training opportunities will become a regular part of assessment.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Argument

4.C.1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.

Xavier University engages in regular examination and reflection on its goals and mission, including a strategic plan that has set goals and strategies for the number and persistence of students. The 2019-21 Strategic Plan indicates the goal of "growing the undergraduate student population to 5,000 undergraduates with an emphasis on increasing our historically underrepresented students" and "decreasing the first year discount rate to no greater than 49%, and increasing first-year retention to at least 90%." The goal of 90% first-year retention for undergraduates is ambitious yet attainable; while rare for universities of our size, endowment and incoming student ACT scores, a few private universities of similar size, only moderately larger endowments, and moderately higher incoming student ACT scores have attained 90% first-year retention in recent years.

The Division of Enrollment Management and Student Success (EMSS) has set enrollment goals in its Five-year Enrollment Management Plan that spans the years 2016-21, and is currently working towards the next plan. Furthermore, the Student Success Coaching Plan 2019 details outreach activities that the Student Success Center (SSC) is doing in any given week of the semester to help students, whether at low or high risk, to persist at Xavier University.

4.C.2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.

The Office of Institutional Research (IR) collects student data on retention, persistence, and
completion of its programs from Xavier's colleges. For example, the College of Arts and Sciences sends suspension and probation letters, and students on suspension have a right to appeal the suspension. IR then analyzes this data and distributes it in the form of reports. Students are tracked by program major as they progress towards degree completion, on a term by term basis. In particular, IR gathers information on enrollment and persistence and creates reports on these. The students’ persistence rates are aggregated in several ways: in the major, by semester; persistence at Xavier over time to degree completion; and graduation rates by major. IR also collects data on students withdrawing as well as data on suspension and probation, both at the College and University level.

Beginning in 2017, this student data and other factors of academic program health have been available to programs and academic administrators for monitoring and analysis through the Academic Program Health dashboard.

Data related to retention, persistence, and completion rates is also collected by separate units of the university. The TRIO program tracks its students and provides reports on their activities and persistence. The GOA course, an introduction to Xavier program, which includes lessons on Academic Strategies, Wellness and Setup for Success, collects data on students’ course grades which it reports on, to help forecast persistence. Also, academic programs, for example, Mathematics, gathers exit surveys from graduating students, which it then analyzes as part of its annual assessment.

Student support services designed to aid and encourage persistence and completion, also keep data on their activities. For example, the Writing Center provides a yearly report on the activities and usage of the center. There are also yearly reports on the use of the Office of Academic Support and the Supplemental Instruction Program, as well as the Mathematics Tutoring Lab.

4.C.3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

Information from the data gathered is used to improve efforts at retention, persistence, and completion of degrees. The data, consistent with nationally published work, suggests the importance of early intervention and the university has acted on this in several ways.

In the summer of 2017, the University established a Student Success Center (SSC) to organize the work of several offices and thus, better coordinate efforts at retention, persistence, and degree completion. The main efforts of the SSC office are as follows.

- **Academic advising** - to provide expert advice on majors and minors, core curriculum requirements, and registration procedures, in order to keep students on track to graduate.

- **Career development** - to help students, independent of their major, convert their college success into career success by providing resources such as mentoring programs, interviewing and resume polishing, internship information, career coaching, job listings and more. These resources are tailored to reach all current and former Xavier students.

- **Success coaches** - to work with first and second year students. The success coaches meet with students early in the semester and throughout the academic year, encouraging them to "understand strengths and weaknesses, recognize patterns of behavior, reflect critically on decisions, and make deliberate choices that support their best interest.”
• **Student Progress Reports** - sent to faculty several times during a semester (weeks 2-3, weeks 6-8, and weeks 11-12) soliciting feedback on students enrolled in their classes, to have a mechanism for early detection of students' issues and guide them to support services or schedule alterations as needed. These reports are sent out for 1st and 2nd year students, athletes, students in TRIO, and Veterans. Faculty submit these progress reports in the Navigate - EAB Advising system. When students are flagged 'at risk' in one of these reports, they will get an automated email notification letting them know that faculty indicated that they did not have good attendance, are failing, or are in need of tutoring. Additionally, the students are provided with recommendations and links to resources for their specific issue(s). The success coaches (for 1st and 2nd year students) then track patterns and will follow up proactively with students with three or more alerts.

• **Financial Advising for students** - to counsel and give advice on everything from FAFSAs to payment plans and more.

In Fall 2019, a new cross-divisional task force, the Student Success Integration Task Force (SSITF) was introduced to help Xavier progress toward 90% first-year retention for undergraduates. SSITF was charged to identify strategies and recommend appropriate funding to strengthen first-year undergraduate student belonging and thriving. As of Spring 2020, SSITF has developed nine recommendations based on retention data, research into student success, and extensive engagement with campus constituents.

Also acting on data, showing early intervention is important, starting in 2014, the University initiated the Xavier Action and Care Team (X-ACT), to respond to alerts regarding student concerns that are raised by faculty or students through a simple button and form available on the University’s portal. X-ACT is a collaborative, interdisciplinary advisory group that meets regularly to provide support and assistance to students who may be experiencing emotional distress and exhibiting at-risk or threatening behaviors. X-ACT helps coordinate a University-wide response and resource alignment and serves as a resource for faculty and staff in addressing at-risk or disruptive student behavior. X-ACT functions as follows. The Student Concern reports are received by the Dean of Students office and the Student Success Center. Reports representing a concern for a student’s safety or wellbeing, or circumstances that are significantly impeding a student’s academic success, are brought to the X-ACT meeting for review. Cases are reviewed with the team and a collective determination is made regarding the most appropriate intervention(s) for the students involved. X-ACT interventions include, but are not limited to: monitor the situation; engage directly with the student to deescalate the situation; work with an ally, faculty, advisor or other staff person to monitor situation; work with other departments to coordinate a plan of action, e.g. assessment, counseling, care management, conduct; refer to mental health assessment or treatment (voluntary); voluntary hospitalization for evaluation and/or treatment; involuntary hospitalization for evaluation and/or treatment; student conduct review/action; contact with family member(s); separate from campus (voluntary leave/withdraw, interim suspension, involuntary leave); mandated psychological assessment; contact campus emergency response team (CERT/XUPD). Interventions are quite varied as they are developed to respond the specific and unique factors of the student’s circumstances. X-ACT meetings occur weekly for approximately 90 minutes per week, during the fall and spring semesters. Reports and interventions are documented and records are maintained by the Dean of Students office.

Moreover, the Office of Disability Services does tremendous work to support our students' success. Disability Services offers equal and integrated educational experiences, services, and
enrichment opportunities to students with disabilities to allow full access and participation in the Xavier community.

Retention data indicates student preparedness is a factor in retention, persistence, and degree completion. Using academic readiness (AR) ratings determined at the time of application, the University has become more selective in its acceptance of students at AR levels that require more resources for success, which in turn, allows us to provide the needed resources to all Xavier students.

Data also indicates that financial need is a factor in student retention. Initially, there was a small fund in Student Affairs that provided some support for student emergencies. Then, two sources of emergency funds in the Office of Financial Aid (FA) and the EMSS (through the SSC) were established to help Xavier students in need. FA applied for and received a Dash Grant through Great Lakes (now called Ascendium), and during the academic years 2017-18 and 2018-19 Xavier provided approximately $90,000 in emergency grants for a large number of Xavier students, the top uses of these being: housing/rent ($33,000), food ($18,000), car/vehicle repairs and expenses ($13,000), and medical/dental expenses ($11,000). Also, to support all students, but in particular to help students in financial distress, the SSC implemented a book rental and tuition insurance program. Furthermore, during the same period, Student Affairs was building their emergency fund through the March Gladness campaign that occurs each year, funding up to approximately $15,000 a year. As the last Dash Grant funds were being used, donors stepped in to provide additional funds to support the student emergency fund. Recently, in fall 2019, the SSC and Student Affairs both realized that it made little sense to have two emergency funds running in parallel, so they convened and developed a common application for emergency funding. They are also meeting as a group to develop a common procedure for distributing emergency funds and to make decisions regarding applications for funds.

Furthermore, in 2018, the university has begun providing assistance around food insecurity through The Store – a student government run free food pantry.

To aid the students' academic advising process, the University publishes both a Student Guide as well as a Faculty and Staff Guide. Furthermore, recognizing the need for coordinating information across university offices, success coaches, and faculty advisors, the University adopted the Navigate - EAB Advising system for tracking student progress. EAB Advising was launched in January 2017 to the full-time professional advisors, and the full rollout for professional staff finished at the end of spring 2018 with the launch of Tutoring and special advising centers. Faculty rollout began in fall 2018 with a pilot group and the full rollout finished for faculty in fall 2019. The Navigate system integrates metrics that allow detection of and intervention with students determined to be at higher risk for persistence.

The Academic Program Health dashboard is used by colleges and programs to monitor their success in retention, persistence, and degree completion. For example, in AY 2018-19, academic programs in the College of Arts and Sciences used this information to develop five year plans. Programs have also used this information to start initiatives, for example, Computer Science began using Supplemental Instruction in AY 2018-19 to address retention rates in the program. In 2019-20, all undergraduate degree programs responded to a metric established through the Provost’s office that included retention and degree completion in its measure.

Following IR data indicating that lacking a feeling of belonging (e.g. "Adjusting to Xavier","Homesick") is a common factor in withdrawal from the university, Student Affairs (SA) launched the Pathways program in fall 2018 to provide a variety of ways for students to find their fit
into the social community at Xavier. The Pathways program originated from the Division of Student Affairs’ interest in clearly articulating the learning and development opportunities available for students in the co-curriculum. The concept started in AY 2015-16 when SA began to define its student learning outcomes and opportunities across four primary areas – community, identity, wellness, and leadership. During AY 2016-17, Student Affairs established a cross-functional team to explore opportunities for the Division to better coordinate the educational opportunities for students across the four learning competencies. The team began the process of identifying a map of co-curricular learning opportunities and suggested “pathways” for students to experience learning across all four realms. After a strategic planning process in AY 2017-18, SA expanded and redefined the learning competencies to include the following: belonging, identity, wellbeing, spirituality, social concern, and leadership. The divisional Pathways team then mapped out a toolkit and website to guide first year students. All first year students received these materials during Manresa (new student orientation) and participated in a small group activity where they used the concept of these pathways to begin to chart their journey through the co-curriculum. In AY 2019-20, SA aimed to enhance the experience for students by adding a 6-week series of initiatives to introduce students to the learning competencies. SA tracked student engagement in the 6-weeks of program and is currently analyzing the available data. SA also partnered with the GOA program to conduct a survey of the students’ experiences with Pathways. The survey was administered in January 2020 and results are in the process of being analyzed. Also, SA is working with partners across the university with the goal of integrating our learning pathways into the Road thru Xavier online system and the larger Road through Xavier experience.

Further following through on the Strategic Plan’s stated goal of 90% retention, the SSITE, is convening December 2019-January 2020, to discuss student retention, and to identify strategies and recommend appropriate funding to strengthen first-year undergraduate student success. The strategies will integrate efforts across Enrollment Management, Academics, and Student Affairs.

4.C.3. 
*The institution’s processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)*

The Office of Institutional Research (IR) is Xavier University’s official source for academic and student affairs institutional reporting and research analysis, e.g. the Census Day Enrollment Statistics Report. It performs research and analysis to support decision-making, university planning, and assessment. IR supports the University and its mission by collecting data regarding student success in all academic programs and providing this information to academic and administrative units in support of strategic initiatives. In particular, it conducts surveys, outcome studies, and institutional-level assessment, e.g. the Career Outcomes Rate summary show rates by college and overall.

Xavier University utilizes IPEDS-defined cohorts (first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduates) to track retention and graduation rates. This traditional cohort represents over 90% of the total entering students in a given fall semester. The Office of Institutional Research tracks the official retention and graduation rates and monitors longitudinal trends both overall and by subpopulations, such as for ethnic groups or first generation students.
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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

Xavier’s Mission, the 2019-20 Strategic Plan, and the EMS and Institutional Assessment Plan, serve to guide and inform the nature of teaching, learning, recruitment, academic evaluation, retention, and improvement efforts of the University’s educational offerings. Institutional responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of learning and the quality of programs for educational improvement is an ongoing and continuous process involving program reviews, academic assessment, specialized accreditations, college and university curriculum committees, designated Xavier academic offices and resources, administrative leadership and oversight, the Academic Program Health initiative, and a Student Success Center established to coordinate efforts for student retention, persistence, and degree completion.

Under the guidance of the Provost, University and college leaders partner with Xavier’s Faculty Committee and with the faculty chairs of the various academic committees, to discuss ways to support the University’s academic endeavors, and implement a multifaceted approach for evaluating and improving teaching and learning. A concerted effort has been made to assure policies and processes embrace and include the broader university to utilize the perspectives and strengths of faculty and staff members, university leaders, students, and external stakeholders (e.g., academic advisory boards). The Provost’s office and the leaders of the various assessment committees provide support and counsel to ensure that faculty and staff receive education and training regarding assessment.

Notably, the evaluations of programs was strengthened in 2019 by the appointment of a Director of Assessment and the inception of an Administrative Assessment Group. This leadership group provides a central oversight of assessment, and a clearly identifiable level of structure and direction for the evaluations, and improvements, of curricular and co-curricular programs. Additional attention has been given to establishing formal means for “closing the loop” between assessment and the ability to acquire resources for documented instructional and learning needs. This constitutes a step forward in response to HLC’s previous feedback regarding the strengthening of a centralized approach for the evaluation and improvement of teaching and learning.

As structure and support for assessment and evaluation has developed at Xavier, faculty and staff have claimed ownership over the processes and benefits associated with a deep focus on assessment and its evident connections to the evolution of learning.

Sources

There are no sources.