

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point - WI

HLC ID 1716

OPEN PATHWAY: Reaffirmation Review

Visit Date: 3/4/2019

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Context and Nature of Review

Visit Date

3/4/2019

Mid-Cycle Reviews include:

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

Reaffirmation Reviews include:

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

Scope of Review

- Reaffirmation Review
- Federal Compliance
- On-site Visit
- Multi-Campus Visit (if applicable)

- Federal Compliance 2018

Institutional Context

The University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point (UWSP) was founded as a normal school in 1894. It has been continuously accredited since 1951 and became a part of the University of Wisconsin system (UWS) in a statewide restructuring of public higher education in 1971. Its most recent comprehensive visit took place in 2008-2009 followed by a mandated focused visit for assessment in April 2012. In a system restructuring that was approved by HLC in July of 2018 the two-year campuses, formally the "University of Wisconsin Colleges," were disbanded with each campus moved under the control of a four-year institution. In this restructuring UWSP received UW - Marathon County (now UWSP at Wausau) and UW - Marshfield/Wood County (UWSP at Marshfield).

UWSP is a predominantly baccalaureate institution with roughly 96 percent of its 8200 students enrolled in Bachelors degree programs. Since the 2015 - 2016 academic year the institution has seen a decline in enrollment of approximately 15 percent. Being heavily dependent on tuition this has led to budget shortfalls and these shortfalls have been exacerbated by actions by the state legislature. Tuition has been legislatively frozen for the past five years (with at least three more years for the freeze anticipated) while UWS state funding has seen two major reductions over roughly the same period. In addition, the two campuses, mentioned above, now under UWSP's control, also bring additional enrollment and budget issues to the table.

The team's visit took place shortly after UWSP garnered national attention for a proposed restructuring plan named

"Point Forward," under which several humanities majors/departments were to be restructured and/or eliminated. The institution has kept the team informed of ongoing discussions and progress on this plan with documents from the chancellor and the all-faculty council provided, up to the time of our arrival on campus, as important actions were taken.

The team found UWSP's assurance argument to be thorough and reflective with concerns candidly presented. The argument did, however, contain numerous links to web pages in PDF's attached to the argument - well beyond the six allowed by HLC guidelines for the assurance report. While we believe the institution was attempting to be very transparent in doing this, it did create a concern as to how the team could carry out the most effective review with so many trails to follow. In addition, the document trail was, at times, difficult to follow when links and source documents sometimes had differing doc titles.

Interactions with Constituencies

Academic Advisors (2)

Academic and Career Advising Center Director

Admissions Office Manager/Program Assistant

Assessment Coordinator

Assistant Dean of Students

Assistant Director of Residential Living

Assistant Director, Academic and Career Advising

Associate Dean, College of Natural Resources

Associate Dean, General Education and Honors

Associate Dean, School of Health Care Professions

Associate Director, Compliance and Training, Financial Aid

Associate Provost for Enrollment Management

Associate Registrar

Associate Vice Chancellor for Personnel, Budget, and Grants

Associate Vice Chancellor for Teaching, Learning, and Strategic Planning

Budget Director

Campus Executive, UWSP at Marshfield

Campus Executive, UWSP at Wausau

Catalog Editor

Chair, Academic Affairs Committee

Chair, Common Council

Chair, Faculty Council

Chair, General Education Committee

Chair, School of Education

Chancellor

Chief Enrollment Manager, Admissions

Chief of Staff

CNR Outreach Program Manager

Co-Chair, Marathon County Steering Committee

Co-Chairs, Assessment Subcommittee (2)

COLS Dean's Assistant

Compliance Officer

Controller

Dean, College of Fine Arts & Communication

Dean, College of Letters and Science

Dean, College of Natural Resources

Dean, University College

Department Review Subcommittee Chair

Director of Financial Aid & Scholarships

Director of Masters & Post Baccalaureate, School of Education

Director of MBA

Director of Recruitment

Director, Academic and Career Advising

Director, Center for Inclusive Teaching and Learning

Director, Continuing Education

Director, Counseling Center

Director, Disability and Assistive Technology Center

Director, Office of Economic and Community Development

Director, Office of International Education

Director, Residential Living

Director, Tutoring-Learning Center

Director, University Centers

Director, University Libraries

Enrollment & Outreach Coordinator

Enrollment Analyst

Enrollment Strategist

Faculty & Department Chairs (22)

Former Assessment Coordinator

Head, School of Business and Economics

Institutional Planners (2)

Interim Associate Director of Recruitment

Interim Executive Director, University Communications and Marketing

Marketing Specialist, University Communications

Member, General Education Committee

Mentoring and Internships Coordinator

National Student Exchange & Study Abroad Advisor

Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness Staff (2)

Online Program Manager

Professional Development Program Manager

Program Assistant Supervisor, Admissions & Recruitment Office

Program Assistant, Academic Affairs

Program Associate, Research and Sponsored Programs

Provost & Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Registrar

Residence Hall Directors (5)

Retention Coordinator, Diversity & College Access

Scholarship Coordinator

Senior Admissions Officer

Staff Member, Registrar's Office

Staff Members, Residential Living (2)

Strategic Enrollment Analyst

Student Government Budget Director

Student Services Coordinator, Athletics

Sustainability Coordinator

University Enrollment Outreach Coordinator

UWS Board of Regents: Chair and two Regents

VA Coordinator

Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs & Chief Financial Officer

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Vice Chancellor for University Advancement

Additional Documents

10th Day Enrollment Census (Fall 2018)

2014-2015 School of Education Assessment Report with the AS Feedback Rubric

2016-2017 Division of Communication Assessment Report with the AS Feedback Rubric

2018-2019 Fisheries and Water Resources with the AS Feedback Rubric

2018-2019 Forestry with the AS Feedback Rubric

2018-2019 Human Dimensions of Natural Resource Management with the AS Feedback Rubric

2018-2019 Wildlife Ecology (the report has not been reviewed yet by the AS)

2018-2019 Soil and Waste Resources (the report has not been reviewed yet by the AS)

Assessment Plan: Master of Science in Natural Resources

Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) Accreditation Letter (April 2017)

CEEC Data Collection Non-Credit Template

Chancellor's emails to Students and Faculty, re: Point Forward (March 5, 2018)

Common Council Resolution (February 6, 2019)

Computing and New Media Technologies Summary Report and Self Study

Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology Report Approval (August 2016)

Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology Accreditation Action Report (July 2017)

Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology Accreditation Letter for Speech-Language Pathology (August 2017)

Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology Report Approval (July 2018)

Department of Natural Resources Department Review Summary Report

Documents and links via the University Web Page at <https://www.uwsp.edu/Pages/default.aspx>

Faculty Senate Proposal for Streamlining Department Review Reports (1/21/2015)

Final Report: Joint Review of the Doctor of Audiology Degree (December 2011)

Graduate Assessment Report: Master of Science in Data Science (Fall 2018)

La Trobe Business School Marketing Syllabus

Masters of Education Portfolio Guidebook

Masters of Education Student Handbook

MBA Assurance of Learning Plan

National Association of Schools of Music Accreditation Letter

New Program Authorization, Master of Natural Resources (June 2016)

Physics and Astronomy Summary Report and Self Study

Point Forward Executive Summary (March 2018)

Point Forward Vision Statement

Program Learning Outcomes Updates (March 6, 2019)

RPD Consultative Committee - Final Report (March 1, 2019)

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point - WI - Final Report - 3/28/2019

School of Communication Sciences and Disorders Assessment Report (1/27/2017)

School of Communication Sciences and Disorders Department Review Summary Report

Sociology and Social Work Summary Report and Self-Study

Study Abroad Partner Institutions List (March 2019)

UWS Enrollment Changes in Percent, 2017 - '18 (preliminary)

UWSP Action of the Common Council Resolution (2/20/2019)

UWSP Foundation Gift Totals by Year (2007 – 2018)

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Accreditation Letter

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

As part of a large state system, the University of Wisconsin (UWS) institutional missions are required to be aligned with several levels of mission beginning with the "Wisconsin Idea" approved by the state legislature. This guides the development of the system (UWS) mission. UWSP is also included in a grouping of 11 comprehensive, non-doctoral UW campuses referred to as the "University Cluster," which also has a mission developed by the cluster of universities. Each of these 11 institutions also develops its own "select mission," which needs to be aligned with the higher level missions and the Wisconsin Idea and is approved by the UWS Board of Regents (BOR). The UWSP select mission was last revised in 2015 but another revision is currently being considered in response to the incorporation of two former UW Colleges (now named UWSP at Wausau and UWSP at Marshfield). Faculty and staff in the C1 open forum were aware of the mission and able to discuss the current process of merging the UWSP Select Mission with the UW College's Mission (formerly the mission of the acquired Wausau and Marshfield campuses). They talked about top-down and bottom-up efforts currently ongoing as well as an earlier review in preparation for the Change of Control visit. The team found that the UWSP select mission is developed with appropriate input from students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members and is in line with higher level system missions, and is current.

The mission broadly focuses on discovery and dissemination of knowledge, providing a broad-based education, and community engagement. While there has been controversy at UWSP around a plan, called *Point Forward*, to reorganize the university and eliminate programs in the liberal arts, the university does have a robust general education program that has been thoughtfully developed and reviewed and this plan retains required coursework in many of the fields currently proposed for restructuring. A letter from the mayor of the city of Stevens Point, as well as several other comments

from alumni, attest to the engagement and value of UWSP to its community and the region.

Fifty-one percent of UWSP's core expenditures are allocated to instruction and 13% to academic support services in 2018-19. While state budget cuts have necessitated staff reductions, the student to faculty/instructional staff ratio has been maintained at roughly 19 or 20 to one over the past six years. The university's strategic plan emphasizes advancing learning and enhancing student life and its contribution to overall learning. In an open forum participants noted that the select mission is usually referenced in planning meetings and, even when not explicitly noted, still guides actions. The wording of Wisconsin Legislative "Act 55," passed in 2015, modifies faculty involvement to "advising the chancellor" from "responsible for [certain programs]." Nevertheless, faculty, students, and staff are involved in an advisory way in planning processes through the Common Council, Staff and Faculty Councils, the Student Government Association, and various committees and task forces. Many constituents attested that shared governance was healthy at UWSP.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The system and university cluster mission statements are articulated in Wisconsin Statutes, Chapter 36 and on the UWS web pages. These, along with the UWSP Select Mission, vision and values are also included in the 2018-19 UWSP catalog and on the university web site under the link "About UWSP." The team also looked at the faculty handbook and found the system and cluster missions and a discussion of the select mission but the select mission itself does not appear to be stated there. The select mission is also printed on the backs of employee business cards.

The select mission of UWSP, taken together with its vision statement, clearly indicate that the primary emphasis for the university is educating and developing students for an engaged life in their communities and a successful career. The mission is current, having undergone revision in 2015, and is again under review in response to the UWS campus reorganization, which has placed two two-year campuses under UWSP's control.

The UWS mission statement, which guides the activities of all state institutions, appears to provide the best guidance as to UWS and UWSP constituents. Emphasis is placed on associate and baccalaureate degree levels (along with "select" graduate programs), promoting economic development in the state, serving the needs of the disadvantaged and minorities, and working with other system institutions to maximize educational opportunity.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

UWSP addresses its role in a multicultural society in its mission and values statements and in its strategic plan. The select mission of UWSP emphasizes developing abilities to "...engage in...global communities" while the UWS Growth Agenda emphasizes inclusion and integrating diversity into core efforts of the university. The UWSP values statements also speak to diversity and inclusivity and community engagement. The current Strategic Plan emphasizes diversity and defines populations to be served broadly (e.g., in addition to traditional minorities the plan calls for attracting and serving place-bound students, students with family responsibilities, and tribal communities). Several of the attendees to the C1 meeting pointed out the university's dedication to attracting and serving first generation students and students from rural backgrounds who are often disadvantaged.

The university does reflect attention to diversity in its processes and activities and has seen some success in recruiting and retaining students from different cultural backgrounds. Being located in a smaller community in a rural area of central Wisconsin, attracting minority students can be a challenge. Minority enrollments are currently small but have been growing from 6.3% (7.3% including international students) in 2009 to 9.2% (11.0%) in 2013. The total number of minority students has grown from about 770 to 1064 during this same period. Admissions efforts have included targeted visits to urban high schools in Wisconsin and Illinois and multicultural leadership camps to bring high school students to campus. Efforts to improve the climate for and attention to the needs of students from different backgrounds have also been implemented, notably through the Center for Inclusive Teaching and Learning (CITL) which was founded to help develop faculty who are sensitive to the learning needs of diverse students, and the Diversity and College Access office (DCA) that focuses on improving retention and graduation rates for underrepresented students. The university has also researched the success of its efforts to increase diversity and created an "Equity Scorecard" that is used to inform future efforts to bring in and retain a more diverse population. Information on the gaps in UWSP efforts, as well as where they saw success, were shared with the team.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

Wisconsin Statute 36 emphasizes the role of the UWS as stressing undergraduate teaching as its main activity and professional and graduate education with emphasis on state and national needs. Service to the public is also emphasized and several of the faculty and staff commented about the importance of community and regional service to UWSP. UWSP is a not-for-profit institution and does not generate revenues for shareholders. As already noted in the evidence statements for C1.A, education takes priority at UWSP with fifty-one percent of core expenditures allocated to instruction and 13% to academic support services in 2018-19.

The public service mission of the university is reflected in activities in each of the institution's colleges. Unique to UWSP, the College of Natural Resources is recognized as a destination program in the state and offers external outreach through units and services such as environmental laboratories and stations, the Treehaven Reserve, and the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education. Other examples of community engagements: The College of Professional Studies produces Economic Indicator Reports, offers education for 2 - 5 year old children through the Gesell Institute and provides school-based financial education through the Center for Economic Education. The College of Fine Arts and Communication offers exhibitions, workshops, and creates art (murals, etc.) for downtown businesses. Other colleges and departments offer incubators and events such as STEM Career Days for seventh and eighth graders, support a Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and a residential camp for high school students.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Evidence

As part of a large university system, mission statements are articulated at three levels: the System Mission, the University Cluster Mission, and the UWSP Select Mission. The Select Mission has been written to fit within these higher-level umbrellas, is published in several places in university documents and web sites, and is regularly referenced by university faculty and staff to guide their work. Emphasis in the mission is on educating students (primarily undergraduate) and on service to the community and state.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

Financial processes are predominantly controlled centrally by University of Wisconsin System offices and officials, creating central transparency for UWSP financial positions. Audits, too, are centrally operated and appear transparent and sound. There is candid discussion about the significant changes that System and State control and funding have wrought. Areas of concern include the Unrestricted Net Position for UWSP of \$4 million, down from \$23 million the previous year. At the same time, there was the completion of a \$75 million Chemistry/Biology building which suggests strong future support for these two majors and related sciences.

Academic functions and disclosures appear to have solid processes and we have noted the very recent response - March 1, 2019 - from the Common Council/Faculty Council on the Point Forward recommendations as evidence of this process in action. The team notes that, under "Agendas, Minutes, and Reports" the Faculty and Staff GenderSexuality Alliance Statement comments on the loss of Domestic Partner Benefits for state employees, that this loss of benefits, though mandated at the state level, can have deleterious impact on attracting a diverse faculty and staff. The team also noted that a new Master of Business Administration degree was authorized, presumably as part of the effort to increase enrollment.

Under Personnel, the team noted that robust resources were provided to the Office of the Dean of Students to accommodate significantly increased student caseload for students in crisis and distress, including mental health, academic, medical, family, and self-harm cases. Additionally, the team notes strong and varied engagement with students by the Center for Prevention, which saw a significant increase in reporting of sexual misconduct in 2017. Increased reporting is associated with strong programs that build trust among students. It is noted that the intent is to provide a similar level of robust support for students at the Marshfield and Wausau campuses.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

As is the case with financial reporting, accountability dashboards recording student data are centralized and captured on interactive Tableau format charts at the UW System level. On UWSP websites, processes for students are clearly provided, including admissions, financial aid, registrar, housing, etc. For example, student costs are clearly stated, including a detailed list of all segregated fees. Transparency of employee processes are also clearly delineated.

Institutional Research has significantly updated its data resources, looking back over 10 years and providing a quick glance at disaggregated enrollment, credit, and other trends campus-wide. The visiting team participated in a demonstration of its current displays which are clear and comprehensive. The data tables are available to any faculty member, student, or staff member with university identification.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The team again notes that oversight of UWSP is centralized across the UWS and that 16 of the 18 Board of Regents (BOR) members are appointed by the governor and do not participate in statewide elections for their seats. In any such structure, the sub components of 2.C.1 - 3 (which focus on preserving and enhancing the institution, considering the interests of internal and external constituents, and board independence) must be interpreted within the context of the politically determined board appointment process.

This consideration naturally arises as a significant change was recently made to the UWS shared governance policy, as stipulated in section 2.C.4, when Act 55, s. 36.09(4), which reduced the shared governance impact for faculty with this deletion: *deleted: , shall be vested with responsibility for the immediate governance of such institution and shall actively participate in policy development*]. Henceforth, the faculty have served only in an advisory capacity to the chancellor that was specifically described as "subordinate" within campus governance. This dramatic change to UWS campus governance represents a sharp departure from public university governance norms. In the wake of this change, and in response to it, the UWSP Common Council was created with robust representation of faculty, staff and students.

It is quite clear, both from policy documents and from interviews with BOR members, that the BOR delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the UWSP administration. As for review of academic matters, the urgent discussion regarding the *Point Forward* proposal has involved vigorous debate and process among appropriate internal constituents, including UWSP faculty.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

In addition to the UW System bylaws and polices that govern freedom of expression, UWSP has published protections for all campus employees and students codifying the ability to seek and express ideas without fear of retribution or silencing. UWSP abides by the principles of truth in teaching and learning, and states clearly that:

It is the collective responsibility of all members of our university community to create and maintain a safe and inclusive environment free of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

UWSP has adopted the American Association of University Professors *Statement of Principles and Interpretive Comments on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, considered the standard-bearer on definitions of academic freedom and tenure.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

UWSP has multiple and long-standing processes, policies, offices, administrators, and staff appointed to ensure compliance and integrity to the research and knowledge acquisition enterprise on campus. Examples of the thorough support structures embedded to ensure safety and compliance across campus include:

- The 0.125 FTE IRB chair and a .875 FTE ORSP program assistant who oversee IRB compliance;
- The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) policy, managed by a 0.875 FTE IACUC chair and animal care facility manager.
- Biohazardous materials managed by the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) and policies and procedures for research involving these materials and organisms are articulated in the *UWSP Biological Safety Manual*.
- Transparency in federally-sponsored scholarship, the AVC for Personnel, Budget, and Grants provides oversight of the financial conflict of interest (FCOI) policy and procedures.

The impressive volume of student research is also guided by a strong set of processes that ensure positive outcomes for students and researchers mentoring them. UWSP also operates under an umbrella of UWS policies that protect integrity of campus processes and activity.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Evidence

It is clearly evidenced via the thorough processes and policies at UWSP, executed by a committed and dedicated faculty, staff, and administration, that the institution is both highly regarded and acts with integrity and ethical conduct.

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

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

UWSP has established guidelines for curriculum course and program development that begins within the department with the appropriate faculty expertise. Faculty experts in the discipline initiate course and program changes, which are then reviewed by the Department Chair, the appropriate Dean and the Vice-Chancellor. All courses and programs must be approved by either the Curriculum Committee or the Graduate Council. For courses in the General Education program (GEP), a separate review process occurs within the General Education Committee to insure courses meet the GEP guidelines. Program Review occurs every 10 years with Assessment reports occurring every five years. At the Criterion 3 and 4 Open Forum, faculty commented that current research, student research and work with current industry professionals also supports curriculum currency. Over 20 advisory boards and 18 external accrediting agencies also provide input and oversight to the currency of programs. Letters from accrediting agencies, (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and National Association of Schools of Music), demonstrate currency of accreditation requirements.

The GEP Learning Outcomes are identified and made available on the UWSP website. The learning goals for the Masters in Education state that students will apply graduate level knowledge in core and research areas, integrate content knowledge in the professional area and formulate, implement and sustain evidence-based practices. The MBA program learning goals focus on developing and enhancing leadership skills and identifying regional business opportunities. These are in contrast to the CNMT 480 Project learning goal of the ability of students to write about and orally communicate technical computing information. The learning goal of Math 327 is to recognize and articulate how mathematical ideas interconnect.

While it appears that there is differentiation between undergraduate and graduate program learning goals based upon individual course review, evidence of graduate and undergraduate program goals were available only for the undergraduate programs upon request. Development and/or evident posting of differentiated learning goals for the undergraduate and graduate programs would be beneficial for students, both current and prospective. In addition, with the acquisition of the branch campuses, learning goals at the associate level will also need to be developed/posted for student use.

UWSP offers courses at three campuses and through face-to-face, hybrid and online instruction. In conversations with the Associate Vice Chancellor for Personnel, Budgets and Grants, it was stated that program quality across all modes of delivery was monitored at the departmental level. Full-time faculty work with adjunct lecturers to insure learning goals, course and program consistency. In addition, for courses with prerequisites, courses are monitored regularly to insure students are acquiring the needed skills and knowledge to allow success in courses that follow. In a spot check of syllabi on the UWSP intranet, while many courses having multiple sections did have the same program and course learning outcomes listed, some did not. The associate vice chancellor stated that UWSP had no dual credit, contractual or consortial arrangements on the main campus. UWSP provides online instructor training for all online instructors. According to the Assurance Argument, distance education courses are reviewed for compliance with Section 508 Federal Accessibility Guidelines and all online instructors are required to complete online instructor training provided by CITL.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The UWSP General Education Program (GEP) provides the foundational basis for all 4-year degrees. It “provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines and forms the basis for developing important intellectual, civic, and practical capacities,” directly supporting the UWSP Mission to “[foster] intellectual growth, [provide] a broad-based education, [model] community engagement and [prepare] students for success in a diverse and sustainable world.” The GEP was completely restructured and the revised program was implemented in 2013 and supports integration into all bachelor degrees. The five levels of general education (foundation, investigation, cultural and environmental awareness, integration and embedded in the major) provide a framework upon which to build and integrate the four-year degree.

The GEP is anchored in the AAC&U LEAP Framework, with a scaffolding structure of Foundation, Investigation, Cultural and Environmental Awareness, and Integration Levels according to the GEP Booklet. Students starting their studies at UWSP are required to complete 31-46 credits in the GEP. The GEP Booklet as well as the GEP Category Learning Outcomes articulate the purpose, content and intended learning outcomes of the general education requirements. GEP Outcomes were designed to provide a course by course scaffold that would allow a solid foundation upon which a student could build and integrate a chosen major and is now embedded within the major. Information on GEP, including the Learning Outcomes and GEP courses, are readily available on the UWSP website.

The GEP learning outcomes of the Capstone Experience in the Major and Communication in the Major align with the institutional emphasis on effective communication and research skills. Capstone projects included internships, practicums, design portfolios, case studies, research projects, and professional caliber papers. In addition, the 16 graduate programs also provide a culminating experience for their students. As General Education is embedded within the major, the capstone experience and communication component are required for all degrees.

As stated in the Assurance Argument, multiple campus wide discussions helped to revise the learning outcomes. The GEP learning outcomes support a commitment to and appreciation of cultural and environmental awareness. For instance, the original seven learning outcomes in the Cultural and Environmental Awareness Level were replaced by nine learning outcomes, refining the emphasis not only on knowledge and skills but also on empathetic insight as students learn about diverse cultural perspectives. Various conversations in Open Forum meetings while on campus indicated that diversity was a UWSP value, not just a stated goal. The Center for Inclusive Teaching and Learning, The Diversity Corridor, The Diversity and College Access program and the Diversity Council are all initiatives all designed to promote diversity across campus.

Within the role of a comprehensive teaching institution, UWSP "expects teaching excellence" and scholarly engagement as noted in both the University Handbook and the Teaching, Scholarship and Service document. As stated in the Teaching, Scholarship and Service Document, the definition of Scholarship as defined by Boyer is the model used at UWSP. Over \$6.9 million dollars for research and public service were awarded to UWSP during the 2016-2017 academic year. Numerous faculty research awards have been acquired and students have been recognized for undergraduate scholarship. Discussed in an Open Forum was the student research that occurs on campus in several differing disciplines including chemistry, biology, and natural resources.

Three field stations allow opportunities for student-faculty research. Treehaven not only provides student opportunities but also provides public and school programs. The Schmeckle Reserve also offers a variety of educational experiences for both students and the public. As stated in an Open Forum with subsequent documentation provided, programming for middle school students, high school students and the public, as well as UWSP students, occurs at the field stations. The CEEC Data Collection Non Credit Template documents over 17,000 participants served in 2017-2018 through the use of non-credit workshops, conferences and trips and events.

The College of Letters and Science hosts an annual undergraduate research symposium with over 200 students involved in 2018 and the College of Fine Arts and Communication presented over 125 awards to students in the 2016-2017 academic year. Faculty and students contribute to scholarship at UWSP.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

As stated in the Assurance Argument and listed in the Common Data Set 2017-2018, UWSP has 476 faculty and instructional academic staff, with 365 of those faculty full-time and 111 part-time. The faculty to student ratio is 17:1 and has fallen from the 2007-2008 ratio of 21:1. As noted in the Common Council/Standing Committee/Permanent Subcommittee Meeting Schedules, faculty and staff are actively involved in campus governance, assessment and curriculum, with over 325 faculty and staff committee seats reported. While academic positions have been reduced, UWSP has been able to reduce the student to faculty ratio and continues to provide a sufficient number of faculty to carry out both classroom and non-classroom activities. Affirmed in conversations with faculty during Open Forums, faculty are actively involved in curriculum, assessment and governance at UWSP. While faculty are engaged and involved at UWSP, due to the workload and the intensity of current challenges, it was noted and apparent that faculty and staff were fatigued.

As stated in the Common Data Set 2017-2018, of the 476 full and part-time faculty, 288 hold a doctorate or other terminal degree, with 133 holding a masters degree. As stated in the Assurance Argument, determining appropriate qualifications rests with the faculty and chancellor. In the document labeled, Faculty Qualification for Rank, it is stated that alternatives to a doctorate are to be determined by the department and faculty governance and should be based upon nationally recognized professional standards.

For faculty teaching general education courses, a master's degree or higher is required. If a faculty

member holds a degree outside of the area in which they are teaching, 18 hours or graduate credit in that field or subfield is required. Academic units have developed hiring qualifications that outline the minimum experience needed as well as the system for evaluation, if tested experience is used to determine faculty qualifications.

Policies are in place for faculty qualifications for dual credit and consortia programs. Dual credit instructors are required to have a master's degree and work under the supervision of a faculty member in that discipline. The consortia programs engaged in by UWSP involved other UW schools and as such the personnel guidelines used were determined by the UW system.

Faculty who teach graduate courses, chair a graduate committee, serve as a member of a graduate committee and/or supervise graduate work must meet departmental criteria as approved by the Graduate Committee. As stated in the Graduate Research and Teaching Faculty Policies, faculty designated as graduate faculty have specific criteria the faculty must meet in addition to receiving Graduate Council approval. Specific guidelines for tested experience for graduate faculty are also specified in the Graduate Research and Teaching Faculty Policies.

Annual merit reviews and five-year post-tenure reviews are required of faculty and Instructional academic staff. Student evaluations are required for each course at least once a year. Departmental evaluation specifications are listed in department personnel manuals. Faculty not tenured are reviewed using the published retention schedule. Guidelines for promotion are included in the Teaching, Scholarship and Service document provided by the Office of the Provost. During Open Forum conversations, it was affirmed by the team that yearly staff and faculty evaluation occur.

Faculty are expected to remain current in their discipline. Resources are provided by UWSP for faculty to do so. CITL, the University Personnel Development Committee, Faculty Development Grants and the Wisconsin Teaching Fellows and Scholars Program provide support through competitive processes. Sabbaticals are also available to faculty to support professional development. In the Criterion 3 and 4 Open Forum, faculty stated that both competitive and noncompetitive funding had been available for professional development. With the current budget challenges, this funding was now less available and faculty were exploring additional means by which to stay current in their discipline, which included discipline specific research, collaboration across campus, working with industry professionals and the utilization of technology.

USWP does not have a University policy on required faculty office hours. Instead faculty office hour requirements are established by individual departments. Faculty have email and can also utilize the learning management system to facilitate student contact. Course syllabi contain faculty office hours in order to notify students of individual faculty availability. Data from the NSSE survey demonstrate that students talked about career plans, worked with faculty on items beside coursework on areas like community and student groups, discussed course topics outside of class and discussed student academic performance significantly above other UW, Masters programs and significantly above and/or equal to other public institutions. On the Student Survey, faculty availability was rated at a 4.17 on a 5 point scale. Faculty are available for student inquiry.

Staff members are recruited based upon the University Personnel System policy and must meet all Board policies as well as state and federal laws to ensure nondiscriminatory practices are followed. The hiring unit supervisor develops the job description and qualifications with input from the Affirmative Action Officer and the Office of Human Resources. Employee reviews occur annually and include professional development plans for the upcoming year. Resources are available for travel/conferences from the University Staff Council. These funds have been maintained, despite

budget challenges. In addition, individual departments budget for professional development support of academic staff, which allows academic staff the opportunity to attend professional conferences, workshops, and specialized training. Professional development activities are also provided on campus by Human Resources and the Business Affairs Division.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

UWSP provides student support to both the overall student body and to specific student populations. Services include the Disability and Assistive Technology Center, the Tutor-Learning Center and the Office of Diversity and College Access. The Office of International Education provides support for both incoming international students and outgoing UWSP students. According to the Annual Report of the Disability Services and Assistive Technology Office, this office has seen an increase of 3% every year for the last six years in the number of students who register for their services and an increase of 17.5% in the usage of testing services with 6.2% of the student body utilizing this office. The Assurance Argument stated that one in three students utilizes the Tutoring-Learning Center. Observations of the team while on campus, verified that the Tutoring-Learning Center was well-used by students. The Leading Edge program provides specific student support with the transition to college for students with disabilities, while the LEAP mentoring program provides support for students from outside central Wisconsin and the FastTrack Math program provides support for students engaging in accelerated math activities. The 2017 LEAP Assessment Report shows a higher GPA and retention rate for students utilizing the LEAP Program than those students not involved with LEAP. The Diversity and College Access Office supports the retention and graduation rates for underrepresented students. From conversations with both faculty and staff in Open Forums, it was evident that faculty and staff were passionate about student success and interested in supporting students both in and outside the classroom.

The UWSP Testing Services offers placement tests for math and foreign languages. The UWSP Math Placement Test Code is used to place students in the appropriate first math course. Advisers to these students also discuss an appropriate academic plan with the student. The ACT score for incoming freshman is used to determine the appropriate first English course placement. Support for

math is offered through the Tutoring-Learning Center (TLC) and the Department of Mathematical Sciences. With the branch mergers, the addition of a developmental writing curriculum has potential to provide increased support in the area of writing, complementing writing support provided through the TLC and through writing courses within majors.

Following a survey by the National Academic Advising Association and with input from staff, faculty and students, a centralized model for advising is underway at UWSP. The university-wide Academic Advising Council has been formed to further develop revised advising policies and procedures. Prior to this reorganization, most students had been advised by faculty advisors, with the College of Professional Studies and the College of Natural Resources hosting professional advisors. Following the reorganization, first-year students and transfer students will meet with a professional advisor in University College for their first one to three semesters at UWSP. The students will then be transitioned to their faculty adviser. Approximately 50% of students at UWSP change majors, making a goal of the new model continuity of student advising. Noteworthy to this major change in advising was the role students played, both in providing input and also in supporting differential tuition, which paid for professional advisers to staff the Academic and Career Advising Center. The new model will also include ten professional program specialists and three career specialists who will work with professional and faculty advisors to facilitate student advising.

The 400-acre UWSP campus contains over 400,000 square feet of instructional space, more than 3,900 computer workstations, and a library that subscribes to over 100,00 print and online periodicals and 200 databases. Librarians provide over 350 classroom sessions and workshops annually and are available for students both on campus and online. Students are provided access to online cloud-based software and services, wireless coverage in all academic and administration buildings as well as in residence halls, and an online video library of software. The IT Department handles on average 4,000 requests each semester and is addressing how to best handle IT availability during nontraditional hours, in response to requests received. The Center for Inclusive Teaching and Learning provides inclusive, evidence-based student-centered pedagogy for both faculty and staff. The new 176,500 square foot Chemistry Biology Building, toured by the visiting team, hosts over 50 research and teaching laboratories, seven classrooms, lecture halls and a tropical conservatory.

UWSP has several performance spaces ranging from the main Jenkins Theatre to the smaller Studio Theatre. The Noel Fine Arts Center holds rehearsal spaces as well as design studios and costume, prop and scene shops. The Professional Education Program, The School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, the Clinical Laboratory Science and Athletic Training all participate in clinical settings ranging from on-campus settings to area preceptors in actual clinical settings. UWSP also operates three field stations and the Museum of Natural History, used by both the public and the university. In touring campus, the team was able to see firsthand the effective infrastructure and resources in use by both faculty and students.

The General Education Program Category Learning Outcomes address both research and information literacy. Faculty teaching in these general education foundation courses ensure students utilize both research and information resources in both written and oral communication. These outcomes are then emphasized in capstone and communication general education requirements. The Library provides numerous resources to support research and information literacy including online research guides, one-on-one student interactions, a one-credit course on information literacy and many classroom sessions.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.E - Core Component 3.E

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

Data from the 2017 NSSE report showed that students at UWSP planned to participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, clinical placement, hold a formal leadership role in a student organization, participate in a learning community or participate in a student abroad program at a rate equal to or significantly above both other UW schools and all public US Schools represented in the survey. This data supports that the co-curricular programs offered by UWSP contribute to an enriched educational experience for students. The NSSE data also showed that students at UWSP participate in co-curricular activities significantly above other UW schools and all public schools. The NSEE data also show that students attended campus events and events that address important social, economic and political issues significantly above other UW schools and all public US schools. Students residing in one of six Living Learning Communities (LLC) reported in a LLC survey that over 80% of students gained knowledge, resources or information from the Living Learning Communities that was received only from their LLC. Centertainment Productions alone provided 92 events within the 2017-2018 academic year with over 9,700 in total student attendance at these events. The Student Affairs Assessment Team established and evaluates Student Affairs Learning Outcomes indicating an intentionality in co-curricular programming to support the role and mission of the institution.

Students at UWSP are provided a variety of opportunities to enrich their educational experience. UWSP students engaged in over 5,013 hours of volunteer service in 2016-2017 ranging from service trips, student food drives, blood drives and 25 other campus events. The Office of International Education reported that in the 2017-2018 academic year, 1 in 6 graduating seniors studied abroad during their UWSP years and that over 175 international students from 35 different countries were taking classes at UWSP. In an Open Forum, faculty discussed the opportunities for students to participate in undergraduate research, to engage in faculty-student research and to present student research findings. The College of Letters and Science is hosting the 20th Annual Undergraduate Symposium in May showcasing student research. The UWSP Economic Impact Report, as stated by the Board of Regents, demonstrated over a \$420 million dollar impact on the local economy due to the presence of UWSP. With over 200 registered student organizations in addition to the above stated activities, UWSP provides a rich experience for its students that aligns with the UWSP

mission.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Evidence

UWSP provides a quality education as demonstrated by degrees appropriate to the institution and responsive to area needs, the exercise of intellectual inquiry by both students and faculty, faculty and staff that provide both quality programs and services, UWSP support for student learning and effective teaching and an enriched educational environment for students.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

Academic programs at UWSP are reviewed every 10 years. The University Handbook describes the purpose of the review and provides a general description of the process. Programs follow an extensive, two-pronged review process that includes a self-study and an external review. All of the materials included in the report (self-study, site team visit and comments from the dean) are submitted to the Department Review Committee which in turn creates a summary report. The summary reports submitted as evidence in the assurance argument indicate that the review process culminates in a Departmental Review Subcommittee Summary Report that describes department strengths and challenges, makes recommendations to the department and administration and includes the subcommittee's and dean's comments and observations. The on-site visit indicated that

some faculty and administrators question the usefulness of current program review (PR) expectations as mandated by the UW system. Those same faculty and administrators expressed greater satisfaction with UWSP assessment which they found to be more meaningful. Given the significant progress the institution is having with assessment, it may be time to see if better alignment of processes could make program review more meaningful. The ultimate goal would be for PR and assessment data to be reliable and meaningful enough to seamlessly inform decision-making related to general education, undergraduate and graduate programs. The newly formed Integrated Planning Advisory Committee may be able to assist with these planning efforts. (See further discussion in 5.C.)

UWSP has processes in place to evaluate the credit it transcripts. The catalog provides information pertaining to alternative credit opportunities and includes information on a variety of credit equivalency options within both the General Education Program (GEP) and majors, ranging from advanced placement and CLEP tests, through military service equivalencies.

Current and potential transfer students have access to a number of tools designed to facilitate the transfer experience. UWSP adheres to the UWS transfer policy, accessible via the university catalog. The transfer process begins with the Admissions office. The UWS Transfer Information System, program transfer guides and articulation agreements are used to assist transfer students in identifying course equivalencies. In cases determined as needing a specialized consultation, department heads and content specialists are consulted.

At UWSP the curriculum is developed and overseen by the faculty, which serves as the governing body that maintains and exercises authority over learning outcomes, prerequisites and rigor. UWSP is committed to student success and academic support and provides services ranging from one-on-one tutoring to course-embedded support linked to group study sessions.

The institution maintains specialized accreditation for a number of its graduate and undergraduate majors. Faculty lead these efforts as appropriate to the educational purposes of a given discipline.

The UWSP Academic and Career Advising Center uses a follow-up survey to track employment and further schooling rates. The availability of institutional data, combined with regular program review and student learning outcomes assessment, allows units to remain forward thinking in terms of program development and improvement. While UWSP included in the assurance argument an impressive list of programs that offer licensure and/or certification, the evidence doesn't provide a clear explanation as to how the pass rates are communicated and systematically included when evaluating the success of UWSP graduates.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

UWSP has made significant progress in the area of academic assessment since its 2008 HLC comprehensive visit and 2012 focused visit. UWSP has revised its General Education Program (GEP), created a five year assessment plan and completed one round of GEP assessment.

As documented in the GEP Brochure linked in the assurance argument and located on the GEP web site, UWSP's General Education Program includes four overarching learning outcomes that are subsequently articulated via four distinct levels (Foundation, Investigation, Cultural and Environmental Awareness, and Integration). Each level is then broken down into a list of measurable outcomes. Four additional outcomes are embedded in the major.

Systematic assessment of general education began in 2013 and since then some outcomes related to each of the four overarching outcomes have been assessed. GEP assessment asks instructors teaching GEP-designated courses to submit course portfolios in which they must: 1) explain the alignment of their courses to their General Education category learning outcomes, 2) provide assessment results related to at least one learning outcome, 3) reflect on the results and describe a plan for for addressing the results to impact and 4) improve student learning. Although UWSP's general education assessment is still in its infancy, the institution is now positioned to engage in continuous assessment.

Until recently academic program assessment required programs to submit a formal assessment report every five years. The year before the report was due, the Assessment Sub-committee (AS), of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Common Council communicated to the the program via an assessment "Welcome Packet" that includes the "Assessment Report Format", the "Assessment Report Presentation Guidelines", the "Assessment Section from the University Handbook", and the assessment report "Feedback Rubric". Since the last HLC visit, all undergraduate programs have engaged in the assessment process.

Co-curricular assessment is led by the Student Affairs Assessment Team (SAAT) and is charged with gathering and communicating empirically-based findings to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs in ways that empower decision-making and continuous improvement. Annual reports are the vehicle by which this information is collected and transmitted. Although co-curricular assessment is mostly being done using nationally recognized tools, the results are being shared and used to improve programs. As stated in the committee's charge, SAAT is cognizant of the fact that they need to walk the Student Affairs division "through the process of transitioning from a summative, evaluative understanding of assessment (student satisfaction surveys, service delivery surveys, attendance numbers, etc.) to one grounded in a richer understanding of student learning.

During the on-site visit, UWSP clearly acknowledged that they continue to work to improve their processes and are positioned to do so. For example, the General Education Committee (GEC), a sub-committee of the Common Council that oversees general education assessment, realized that in order to assess the entire GEP over a five year period, it would not suffice to assess only one outcome per year. Similarly, the five year program assessment timeline created the same challenge. As such, the assessment coordinator, on behalf of both GE and program assessment committees introduced a resolution asking the Common Council to approve a revised assessment policy that would mandate annual assessment reports for academic programs with the additional understanding that annual assessment would culminate in the assessment of all learning outcomes within the five-year assessment period. Similarly, the same resolution mandates that all outcomes related to each GEP level be assessed during the assigned assessment period for each category

A concern related to outcomes assessment is the fact that students do not appear to have easy access to program learning outcomes. While the HLC team was able to confirm learning outcomes exist for all undergraduate programs via a document sent via email to the team during the visit, such a list does not appear to be available to students. The recent transition to Campus Lab should help resolve this issue and provide a means to communicate program learning outcomes to all stakeholders.

One of the most positive aspects of UWSP assessment is its use of faculty learning communities. UWSP has successfully found a way for GEP faculty to engage with assessment in a meaningful way. During the criteria 3 & 4 forum, as well as during the assessment focus meeting, faculty were quick to point out this positive shift in culture that has already led to improved student learning via revisions to learning outcomes and curriculum changes. A spot check of GEP assessment reports also indicated that many instructors are using the assessment to inform course level improvement. In future planning UWSP should find a way to better capture and share the different ways in which GE assessment is leading to improved student learning within the program. A similar challenge faces program assessment in that a spot check of reports indicates that programs are using assessment data to make improvements to student learning, but this act of "closing the loop" is not yet captured in a systematic and comprehensive way at the program or institution level.

While UWSP has created and implemented processes for GEP, undergraduate program and co-curricular assessment that are overseen by designated faculty/staff committees, graduate program assessment is relegated to individual departments and programs. As such, the assessment of graduate programs is uneven at best and in some cases virtually non-existent. While some programs are engaging in regular meaningful assessment as part of their program accreditation (MBA-forthcoming, MM-Education, Clinical Doctorate in Audiology) other programs (Comm Studies MA, MS-Education) are in need of greater administrative support to develop and implement institutional processes for regular on-going assessment that reflects best practice.

Since 2012 a half-time assessment coordinator organizes assessment activities (professional

development, Campus Labs implementation, etc) and compiles reports and provides professional development opportunities and program consultations for faculty and staff in both general education and academic undergraduate programs. Although this position has enabled UWSP to establish assessment processes and provide some professional development opportunities to faculty, one half-time position will not provide the support necessary to sustain these existing assessment efforts. The decision to move to Campus Labs may help streamline some reporting, but will simultaneously create an opportunity to provide programs with even more feedback and professional development. Furthermore, it is essential that graduate program assessment be immediately improved. As was the case for undergraduate and GE assessment, this cannot happen without resources being directed at establishing and implementing comprehensive graduate program assessment policies and procedures.

UWSP has created and implemented a high quality assessment initiative and is positioned to have a mature culture of assessment within five years if current undergraduate and general education efforts are maintained while simultaneously expanding systematic assessment into graduate education.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

As evidenced in the memo from the Provost dated November 18th, 2018, UWSP has recently established a Degree Completion Steering Committee (DCSC) chaired by the chief enrollment officer and comprised of faculty, staff and administrators. The charge from the Provost to the committee is clear, *"Without making any significant changes to current admission standards, increase UW-Stevens Point's four-year graduation rates to 50% for the 2023 entering baccalaureate freshman cohorts on the main and branch campuses with zero equity gaps when those outcomes are disaggregated by income, race, and ethnicity."*

To begin this work the committee was asked to *"review data, policies, academic research, best practices, and national and state completion initiatives and make a recommendation about a conceptually coherent, systematic, scalable, and sustainable institutional program to improve our four-year graduation rates that will be fully implemented by Fall 2023 with baccalaureate students on the main and branch campuses."*

Data related to retention, persistence and completion is available at the UW system and local institutional level. For example, the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Chancellor Evaluation Metrics indicates that the most recent four year graduation rate for the 2013 cohort of all students is 34.4% whereas that of students of color (SOC) is 22.3%.

Included in the assurance argument is the committee's first draft of a partially completed report, titled Conceptual Framework for Retention and Degree Completion, December (2018) that speaks to the committee's purpose and responsibility with attention given to definitions. The committee has

also begun to establish an inventory of retention activities, including an *"in progress"* section that focuses specifically on creating an inventory of established retention efforts to support special populations. As the committee collects and analyzes the institutional data necessary to begin their work they are also considering joining a national degree completion project such as the "60Forward" initiative or the Complete College America's six-prong degree completion strategy.

The on-campus visit indicated that while some members of the campus community were aware of the retention goal, few could elaborate on the goal-setting process or what the plan was to attain the goal. A communication plan regarding this effort should be created and implemented, but prior to doing so, the Provost should ask the DCSC to weigh in on the feasibility of the 50% goal.

A meeting with the academic support staff revealed that they were keenly aware of the need to improve retention/persistence/graduation rates and are already positioned to support these efforts. The staff provided the team with examples of student support efforts from around campus, ranging from improved advising to tutoring and mentoring, all of which will positively impact institution-wide retention and completion efforts. Past (Title III grant) and current (EAB implementation) student success efforts indicate that the institution is committed to creating and implementing a data-informed retention and degree completion plan.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Evidence

UWSP demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs via its commitment to comprehensive on-going program review, maintaining nationally recognized specialized accreditation as appropriate and through its attention to improving retention and completion rates. Furthermore, processes exist and are used to thoroughly evaluate all credit that UWSP transcripts, via faculty governance and institutional policy.

Establishing a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning has clearly been a challenge for UWSP and remains an area of concern for the HLC review team. For UWSP to establish a mature and sustainable culture of assessment that is meaningful to all stakeholders the following must happen:

- 1) As noted by UWSP faculty, staff and administrators, some assessment processes must be tweaked so that all learning outcomes are assessed within a reasonable amount of time.
- 2) The current reporting structure needs to better capture the ways in which assessment results are leading to data-informed action plans to improve student learning (i.e. revising curriculum, changing pedagogy, revising learning outcomes, changing assessment processes, etc.)
- 3) UWSP must create and implement comprehensive assessment policies and procedures for graduate programs much like those already implemented at the undergraduate level.

The HLC review team is confident that UWSP faculty and administrators can identify the strengths and challenges of their current assessment processes and are currently focusing their efforts on making many of the necessary improvements. With that in mind, this HLC review team expects that significant progress can and will be made in the next 3-5 years.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Rating

Met With Concerns

Evidence

All at UWSP acknowledge that the campus "cannot fiscally support its current educational programs" and that its "plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future" is clouded in uncertainty (quoted text from HLC Core Component 5.A). There is tension and a lack of clarity about how the second (November 2018) *Point Forward* plan released by Chancellor Patterson will succeed in erasing the deficits in the next three years through, in part, the proposed elimination of six majors, while also absorbing operational responsibility for the two new branch campuses at Wausau and Marshfield. Put simply, UWSP is embedded within a profound, and unprecedented, fiscal crisis.

It is accurate to portray the responses to the fiscal crisis from the administration, the faculty, staff, and students, as committed, passionate, and serious. Truly impressive efforts have been planned, proposed, and some enacted to seek fiscal stability. On one hand, the workforce was reduced mainly via attrition. Non-academic administrative and plant efficiencies have also been enacted and \$10 million in spending down carefully saved reserves, as required by UWS direction, has occurred. On the other hand, alternative programmatic revenue opportunities were proposed and enacted such as service-based pricing, and an aggressive and successful historic capital campaign has raised \$39

million to date, surpassing the original \$30 million goal with about three months left in the campaign. Designated campaign funds will be used to create 81 new scholarships, 56 new program accounts, and five endowed faculty positions. The dedication to embrace this new operational reality by adopting an entrepreneurial approach to university fiscal management is, as we know, not within the training or expectations of most university administrators, or of faculty members, from whence most administrators arise.

Attempts to grasp the new operational reality and emerge from the complexities of the sudden addition of the two 2-year campuses – thrust upon them by the UW System after the decision to eliminate the University of Wisconsin Colleges, which UWS had managed centrally – are still visibly happening in real time. Point administrators scrambled to quickly engage leaders on those two campuses and leaders of the County Boards who had previously provided some oversight and building ownership for them, to establish functioning communication, to try to allay the branch campus and County Commissioner fears about losses of their community identity and opportunities for their residents. This two college merging process is ongoing and, as admitted in open session, evaluating its success and/or progress is challenging, a variable that "depends on the day".

Some key points of evidence require noting. From the minutes of the Common Council's (faculty and staff shared governance body with student representation) Executive Committee on November 14, 2018, assembled directly following the release of *Point Forward 2*, Regent Atwell made summarizing comments that captured the campus-wide zeitgeist including, (*verbatim*):

- *Tough conversations are occurring at UWSP*
- *UWSP morale is low*
- *Faculty salaries are low*
- *UWSP budget deficit/structural deficits of UWSP and branch campuses (remain)*
- *Communication strategies for successful dialog with the public (are still needed)*
- *Self-defeating negative cycle of budget cuts and enrollment declines*
- *Demographic issues*
- *UWS overbuilt as a system*
- *Enrollment management by UWS to address competition among UW campuses*
- *Conflicting views of UW-Madison access related to enrolling Wisconsin students*

Key comments here bear analysis, (in bold, below), based on other evidence in the assurance argument and comments and discussion the team heard on the site visit.

Tough Conversations, Faculty and Staff Morale and Salaries. Faculty, staff, and some students indicated a fatigue in the fiscal crisis and uncertainty accompanying it hanging over their heads. There is concern, among the visiting team, of evidence (see Chancellor Patterson's letter to the Common Council plus anecdotal comments in open fora) of recently hired assistant professors anxiety about their future and wondering why they didn't know about the instability when hired. Staff, too, in their open session, described an ongoing sense of low morale and foreboding due to staff job cuts that have happened and also threaten the future, in addition to extra responsibilities many have absorbed simultaneous to frozen wages or benefits cuts.

The argument states that 71 staff FTE positions that had been funded by General Purpose Revenues (GPR) and tuition funds were eliminated since 2014, but that "*in spite of these reductions, the student to faculty/instructional staff ratio has remained stable over the past five years demonstrating that UWSP is committed to maintaining a high-quality learning experience for our students.*" The disjointed nature of this argument underlines the points that staff made in open forum

and Regent Atwell acknowledged about low morale: staff cuts will, of course, not impact faculty-to-student ratios with simultaneous declining enrollments but falling staff morale due to staff layoffs does ripple out to the community has an impact.

It appears clear, in reference to staff qualifications, that there is a dedicated and well-qualified campus-wide staff who are fully capable of adding responsibilities as needed and rising to challenges as needed.

UWS Issues. With admirable candor, Regent Atwell stated that the *UWS overbuilt*, openly owning that the system of 2-and 4-year campuses within the system that he oversees, is unwieldy and, perhaps, fiscally unsound. This comment underscores the forum voices and evidence describing, for example, the shock of finding that the campus suddenly would manage two branch campuses; the surprise that legislatively-imposed budgets forced Point (and all system campuses) to spend down their reserves of close to \$11 million to fill their budget gaps; the discovery that other comprehensive campuses had fiscal advantages built into their enrollment management and differential tuition processes that revealed a deeply uneven playing field and concurrent treatment vis-à-vis the UWS system distributions. Thus, UWS created a system-wide landscape of competition in which, as some staff stated, there are bound to be losers. At issue, then, is the strong perception and belief among most at Point that UWS practices have contributed to the current crisis. It is the strong belief of Chancellor Patterson, in contrast, that the Board of Regents, representing UWS, will help them emerge from the crisis (see Core Criterion 5B response).

Communication. Regent Atwell asked hard questions at the November 14, 2018 meeting of the Executive Committee, including, why UWSP continued to hire faculty members when

1. there was dramatically reduced funding allocated by the legislature (26% in FY10 to 15% in FY12 then holding steady)
2. tuition continued to be frozen by UWS
3. enrollment continued to drop year after year

This point of continued business-as-usual faculty hiring behavior with little central caution about fiscal constraints was a complaint of some faculty and seems to be connected, according to the provost, to an inertia driving most university departments: to automatically fill a faculty position because of the perception of its indisputable role in the integrity of the entire departmental enterprise. As the same time, some of this hiring occurred before the enrollments downturn as well as before the length of the tuition freeze was known.

Despite the formation of multiple cross-campus task forces and committees charged with responding to the fiscal crisis and proposing recommendations and regular all-personnel communications by the executive team and the Common Council chairperson, communications strategies designed and executed by the Point administration either were adequate and fell on deaf ears or were inadequate and were not transparent or sufficient, depending on who was responding. However, during a meeting with the Board of Regents (BOR), Regent Peterson did acknowledge that the communication of the original draft plan might have been handled differently. Some evidence of this was also noted in the initial meeting with the team, when Chancellor Patterson expressed concern that faculty groups did not understand that *Point Forward* was meant to start a dialogue; it was not meant to insinuate a done deal. He spoke of his puzzlement of faculty criticism. The provost also said that no faculty groups chose to present their own ideas to address the deficit, so he and his team created *Point Forward*. Implicit within these comments is an apparent communications divide.

Finally, the unsatisfactory rating by the BOR Audit Committee is not a good look during this present moment. The argument suggests that this audit is *not* related to the structural deficit but, rather, addresses inadequate reconciliation of expenses and is being quickly cleaned up.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

May 1, 2021: An interim report to include (1) the strategic plan developed out of the *Point Forward* initiative (2) a progress report on plan implementation and (3) the most current financial results of university operations.

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

UWSP is governed by the Board of Regents (BOR) of the University of Wisconsin System (UWS) which includes 13 comprehensive universities and 13 two-year colleges. In 2015, *Wisconsin Act 55* removed faculty from direct responsibility for “immediate governance of and policy development for the university”, thus streamlining the BOR reporting lines to the chancellors as the single responsible executive head.

The relationship between the sole executive head of campus - Chancellor Patterson - and the Chair of the Board of Regents, seems to be one of mutual respect and trust. The visiting team met with three Regents, including the Chair, and engaged in a thorough and candid 1.5 hour discussion that touched on all areas of concern. The Regents expressed strong support and, overall, optimism in the leadership at UWSP and the ability of the entire campus to weather the fiscal challenges. Furthermore, the Regents indicated that they intended to lobby for an increased funding proposal from the Governor which would partially restore funds that had been cut beyond reasonable levels in previous years.

In response to the major governance changes mandated by *Act 55*, UWSP formed the Common Council, a body representing all constituencies across campus and with advisory roles to the chancellor and executive officers. Common Council was given substantial oversight over curriculum and academic policy and has been a consistent advisor to the *Point Forward* proposal and process since its release.

To ensure campus-wide participation in *Point Forward*, two ad hoc committees were formed to review the proposed program and department cuts and to review the proposed restructuring plan for reorganizing academic units.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

It is clear UWSP is working to ensure current resources are directed to its mission and priorities within its current change processes, planning, and initiative implementation.

- The UWSP's select mission centers on serving its Central Wisconsin region to "become more vibrant, healthy, prosperous, and sustainable." Its activities in carrying out this mission are articulated in numerous places and documents, inclusive, but not limited to, the catalog, handbook, website, the Point Forward Interactive (November 12, 2018) document, and Strategic Plan – A Partnership for Thriving Communities. The resources allocated to these activities come from the operating budget, which is based on GPR/tuition or program revenue. Given the current budget deficit of eight million dollars, the university states, in its argument, its "highest priority is to make adaptations to its programs, offerings, and services that will enhance its ability to recruit students, and improve its marketing, recruitment, and retention systems."
- Evidence of utilizing resources for UWSP's mission and stated priority is found in the newly approved allocation model, dictating that 60% of all new GPR funding will be used to reduce the structural deficit, and 40% for strategic investments mentioned above, seen in their Financial Sustainability Plan. \$400,000 of new GRP was available for strategic investment in this current academic year (2018-2019). Once proposed state system budgets are finalized and UWSP's specific budget is complete, funds available for the next academic year will be finalized. Units on the campus may apply for funding using the procedure developed by the Integrated Planning Advisory Council (IPAC Road Map, Strategic Fund Investment Procedure, Strategic Investment Request Form FY 19). An initial proposal to support enrollment planning, marketing, and recruitment was approved during the current academic year and is currently being implemented (IPAC Minutes 7-30-18, Fall 2020 Undergraduate Enrollment

Strategy).

- As part of the Strategic Plan, A Partnership for Thriving Communities, the university is also reviewing how best to utilize its limited resources in support of its academic programs. Multiple programs are being considered for teach-out, and new, service-based programs are in view that may be self-sufficient and provide additional revenue to the university (Academic Affairs Workshop January 2019, Academic Budget Allocation Model – Draft Utilizing FY19 Figures, Academic Portfolio Alignment – Huron Group).
- Retention is another arena the university understands has a significant impact on enrollment and revenue. Initiatives are now underway to highlight students at risk (Retention Steering Committee Early Alert Implementation).

Institutional entities demonstrate the use of assessment and evaluation in their planning and budgetary processes, but there is a need for clarity in the process and timetables, as well as more complete student learning data. A concern is found in the arenas of program review and assessment of student learning. Although regular program review and more recently program assessment are taking place, both processes could be better linked to institutional planning. The Integrated Planning Advisory Committee could overcome this challenge by developing processes to link program review and student learning outcomes assessment to the decision-making processes. These are the types of processes that would add credibility and transparency to the decision-making process, especially when difficult decisions regarding program eliminations must take place.

Planning at UWSP is inclusive of its varied constituencies and covers all aspects of the university's operations (IPAC Road Map, Academic Portfolio Alignment, Retreat Agenda – June 29-20 2018).

- The planning process at UWSP takes place at the unit, functional area, and divisional level (information from argument statement, Fork in the Road, IPAC Road Map, Strategic Plan – A Partnership for Thriving Communities). Data is available through multiple sources, but the Office of Institutional Effectiveness is reported to be the hub source from which to draw reports and data (5.C open forum, IPAC Road Map).
- The units, areas, divisions above use such data as lab usage reports, student satisfaction, and student learning assessment reports, as well as external sources, in assessment and evaluation of effectiveness (Academic Portfolio Alignment – Huron Group, College of Letter and Science Lab Usage Stats – Fall 2017, Common Council Council Constitution, IPAC Road Map, Online Student Survey Report Summer 2018, OPAR Student Headcount and FTE 08-18).
- The governance and administration structure and processes are an asset in incorporating all facets of the university community (IPAC Road Map, Common Council Constitution, Reorganizing Academic Units – University Handbook Chapter 7 Section 8, Retreat Agenda – June 19-20 2018, Strategic Plan – A Partnership for Thriving Communities). The IPAC committee is now linking and coordinating planning efforts at an enterprise level coming from the various units and organizations in the university (Chancellor's FY19 Charge to IPAC, IPAC Road Map). External constituent concerns are acquired via outreach from the internal units (e.g. Denny Peterson email 2018.05.22, a response to UWSP outreach regarding current challenges, representing 28 regional business organizations) and input from external sources (Academic Portfolio Alignment – Huron Group, School of Design Proposal).

UWSP shows a clear understanding of its current capacity and needed/desired capacity. It is attempting to build into its strategic plan the elements that will mitigate changing challenges and lead it to growth and sustainability. Via various forums conducted by the team, as well as the reports contained in the argument, administration, faculty and staff appear to be clear as to the driving factors of enrollment and revenue.

- Aspects of the institution's current state have included gaining more up-to-date awareness of how such drivers as the economy, demographic shifts in the region, fewer high school graduates in the region, etc. impact enrollments (Academic Portfolio Alignment – Huron Group, Retreat Agenda – June 19-20 2018, How did we get here 2017, Strategic Plan – A Partnership for Thriving Communities, Summary of Ruffalo Noel Levitz Engagement January 2019).
- It may be debatable whether the university dealt with its changing environment in a timely manner in the past, but it certainly is now acutely aware of the aforementioned drivers and enrollment factors. It is moving toward a carefully developed plan that incorporates these various factors, differentiation points, and potential initiatives. It would have been advisable to be further along at this date in producing a sound and complete operational plan to detail aspirations in its strategic plan (Strategic Plan – A Partnership for Thriving Communities), however, changes at the system (UWS) level and a serious attempt to enfranchise all campus constituencies have resulted in delays. UWSP demonstrates that it is currently engaged in systematic and integrated planning to meet its current and future challenges and opportunities.

The higher education environment in the state of Wisconsin has been challenging in recent years, made more so for UWSP by state-wide budget cuts and the recent inclusion of two former UW College campuses (Wausau and Marshfield). UWSP demonstrates an understanding of the various factors that have led to decreased enrollments and its current budget deficit (Chancellor's FY19 Charge to IPAC, How did we get here 2017, Point Forward Interactive November 12, 2018, Retreat Agenda – June 19-20 2018, State of the University Power Point 2017, Strategic Plan – A Partnership for Thriving Communities).

The institution evidences inclusion of the factors of changing revenue sources, macroeconomic issues, student profile and demographics, as seen in discussions and planning in multiple departments across the university (Academic Affairs Workshop January 2019, Academic Portfolio Alignment – Huron Group, Fall, 2020 Undergraduate Enrollment Strategy, Retreat Agenda – June 19-20 2018, State of the University Power Point 2017, Strategic Plan – A Partnership for Thriving Communities.)

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The challenges UWSP has faced in recent years have contributed to the desire to develop a more systematic approach to documentation of operational performance. The argument notes a “need to develop an integrated approach to our data systems.” In the open forum for criterion five several individuals commented on the difficulty of acquiring accurate, up-to-date data. A related issue was articulated that differing groups are using different data sets in discussion of a specific item (Criterion Five Open Forum, Final Committee Report And Recommendation, March 1, 2019). An individual in the forum from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness noted that data systems are in transition, contributing to a delay in getting data reported as well as the differing data sets. All agreed that there must be increased confidence in reported data.

Documentation of evidence of performance is seen in a variety of unit-related arenas. As examples, Academic Affairs utilizes graduation and retention rates, along with enrollment data; Student Affairs uses student exit surveys, and case load by category for services; Business Affairs uses enrollment data, room utilization; University Advancement documents impact of alumni, and reports foundation fundraising (Accountability Dashboard, Annual Financial Information Report Data Spring 2018, Campus Activities and Student Engagement Annual Report 2017, Check Out Data 2015-16, Dean of Students 2017-2018 Annual Report, Strategic Planning Committee Report).

UWSP understands the need for more robust documentation, and integration of such in its planning processes. The current levels of enrollment and the budget deficit have heightened awareness and driven strategic thinking in improving the overall health and sustainability of the institution (Fork in the Road, Retreat Agenda – June 19-20 2018, Strategic Plan). UWSP has worked to assess critical drivers and has articulated a proposed approach for the future (Strategic Plan). The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) and the IPAC council play key roles in the integration of the documentation.

Evidence of application of learning is seen in recent moves in enrollment management, inclusive of re-organization of student recruitment and admissions, new approaches to marketing, and the academic affairs division considering program changes and new programs that can be used for service-based approaches (Academic Affairs Workshop January 2019, Academic Portfolio Alignment – Huron Group, Enrollment Planning Unit Organizational Chart, Financial Sustainability Plan). Other examples of learning leading to improvement are the advent of a new General Education

Program (General Education Policy Review Committee 6 Steps, GEP Category Learning Outcomes), creation of the Academic and Career Advising Center (ACAC) in 2016 (Academic and Career Advising Center Report), development of a Diversity and Inclusion Website (Diversity and Inclusion, Diversity Inclusion Initiatives).

A key development in the institution's ability to translate institutional learning into effective planning for improvements and change at the enterprise level is the advent of the IPAC council and its direct input into the Common Council, the latter being a key advisory group for representing faculty, staff, and student voices to university decision-makers. The institution is clearly striving to respond to its challenges and move toward stability and sustainability. It now needs to finalize an operational plan, cascading from its strategic plan, to complete this phase of the planning process. At the time of the team's visit, the enterprise level operational plan had not been completed. Clearly system level aspects, including the lack of a final state budget, efforts on campus to collect input from internal constituents, and unresolved institutional issues (i.e. a final determination of programs to be taught-out), have delayed final issuance of a plan.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Evidence

The visiting team's assessment of both the argument and discussions at the site visit clearly demonstrate a university with pride of excellence in academic preparation, student experience, and commitment to the community. The team met with three top Board of Regent members who also expressed confidence in UWSP's leadership and future, and vowed to do whatever they could to support this institution.

The team witnessed a strong thread of vigorous thought, preparation, and debate about the fiscal and programmatic future of UWSP given the significant fiscal constraints and deficits facing it in the near future, and the uncertain futures of integrating two branch campuses, both in different counties.

There are steep challenges ahead for gaining support from the entire UWSP community for the directions outlined in the second *Point Forward* proposal, and there is a commitment, on the part of the administration, to proceed with humility, transparency, and inclusiveness, all values embedded into UWSP. That commitment needs to be walked out with a clear, enterprise-level operational plan that cascades from UWSP's strategic plan, and that specifically addresses the current financial deficit and possible further financial challenges if enrollment targets are not met in the future.

Given the deep fiscal uncertainties of the near future and the delays in development of a final plan for restructuring, the team has recommended interim monitoring, focused primarily around Core Criteria 5.A to this effect:

May 1, 2021: An interim report to include (1) the strategic plan developed out of the *Point Forward* initiative and concomitant enterprise-level operational plan (2) a progress report on plan implementation and (3) the most current financial results of university operations.

Review Dashboard

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

Review Summary

Interim Report(s) Required

Due Date

5/1/2021

Report Focus

An interim report to include (1) the strategic plan developed out of the *Point Forward* initiative (2) a progress report on plan implementation and (3) the most current enrollment and financial results of university operations.

Conclusion

The University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point (UWSP) allocates its resources to its educational and service missions and the team found that, in spite of recent enrollment and budget challenges, the institution has maintained a clear focus on providing high quality education programs for its primarily undergraduate and traditional students along with its missional focus on engagement with the community and region. Faculty and staff are proud of their institution and dedicated to offering the best educational experience possible to their students. Many are actively and heavily involved in service to UWSP.

Establishing a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning has been a challenge for UWSP. However, the review team has noted that the institution has made significant progress since the 2012 focused visit in identifying the strengths and challenges of their current assessment processes. Faculty and administrators are currently focusing efforts on making many of the necessary improvements in response to early assessment findings.

Faculty, administration and staff are also engaged in the institution, taking advantage of an effective and inclusive system of shared governance in planning to meet the challenges faced by UWSP. The university has suffered enrollment declines in the neighborhood of 15% over the past four years, a statewide tuition freeze that is in the fifth of a planned eight years, and two major statewide budget cuts. As a result of political pressure it, along with other University of Wisconsin System institutions, is being forced by the state to spend down its reserves of several million dollars and to acquire two former University of Wisconsin Colleges (two-year campuses). In response to these challenges, in early March 2018 the administration floated a proposal (*Point Forward*) to reorganize academic programs and cut 13 liberal arts majors. In response to reactions from faculty, staff and students, and after considerable dialogue between campus constituents at all levels, a modified proposal (being referred to on campus as *Point Forward 2*) was floated in November with six proposed program cuts. The plan had not, at the time of the visit, been finalized but, over the past year, while debate has been passionate, shared governance systems have been used and, on several occasions during the visit, faculty expressed the feeling that the whole experience has evidenced the effective system of shared governance at UWSP. Nevertheless, employees of the institution have suffered through years of uncertainty along with two imposed reorganizations of the University of Wisconsin Colleges. Several staff members expressed exhaustion at both the number of changes and the inability of UWSP to respond effectively to system and statewide mandates. Staff and faculty without tenure are especially concerned about how reductions will impact their futures with the university. Bottom line, UWSP is an institution that, in spite of the significant challenges it has faced in a volatile environment, has thus far been able to maintain quality

in pursuit of all aspects of its mission - but at a cost to morale. Ongoing uncertainty and system imposed restructuring has exacerbated this situation and delayed development of a new strategic plan. As a result, the team was not able to review a current, completed strategic plan or to review its impact on the university's enrollment and financial positions. We have, therefore, recommended that an interim report be submitted to the Commission by May 2021 when, it is hoped, a plan will be in place and the early impact of planned changes and the situation of the university will be more settled.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation

Met With Concerns

Sanctions Recommendation

No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation

Eligible to choose