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Introduction

The University of Oklahoma is a state flagship public research university with a strong sense of purpose and responsibility, a highly positive trajectory, and a clear roadmap to achieve its goal of meeting AAU public level benchmarks in the next five years.

During the last five plus years since the submission of our Assurance Argument document in August 2017, the University has charted a bold new course that emphasizes student access and affordability and the research/creative activity mission. The last several years have seen the recruitment of increasingly large first-year classes marked by growing academic excellence and greater representation of (and financial support for) first-generation college students and students from a diverse array of backgrounds that more fully represents the growing diversity of the state. Fully 25.4% of OU's current first-year class are first-generation students, and 39% are from minority backgrounds. Applications to OU passed the 22,000 mark this spring for the August 2023 first-year class, the highest total in the institution's history.

The last several years have also been marked by impressive advances for the research mission of the University. Grants, awards, and contracts across OU's three campuses in fiscal year 2022 totaled \$339M and research expenditures totaled \$417M, a 69% increase over the Fiscal Year 2015 figure of approximately \$280M in research expenditures (for the three campuses) provided in the 2017 Assurance Argument.

Carefully coordinated emphasis on expanding and improving the landscape of graduate education has resulted in notable declines in graduate fees and increases in graduate stipend levels, which in turn has improved the quality of graduate students entering our programs as well as the support structures that help ensure their success. This enhanced graduate program emphasis, as well as a growing emphasis on undergraduate research as a defining feature of our institutional identity, have further augmented OU's research mission, as has the strong support of the University and State Regents and the Oklahoma State Legislature for core research infrastructural needs.

That research mission is further facilitated by OU's dedication to training globally informed citizens. OU ranked 28th in the nation for student participation in study abroad programs in 2022 and 10th in the nation for student participation in short-term study abroad programs. Nearly 1,700 international students from 135 countries are currently matriculating at OU, and in January 2023, for the 9th time in the past decade, OU was awarded the Davis Cup for enrolling the most United World College Scholars in the nation.

The residential experience at OU has been enhanced with the opening of the Cross Center housing units, which accommodate 1,200 students. The University will be demolishing its three 1960s-built residential "tower" complexes on the Norman campus beginning in summer 2023, replacing them in phases with new, best-in-class housing facilities. The Norman campus is regularly featured as one of the most beautiful campuses in America—Norman's Bizzell Library has been highlighted as one of the most aesthetically beautiful libraries in the world—and renewed attention to and expanded funding for deferred maintenance are ensuring the long-term health and functionality of the campus physical infrastructure. Similarly, the Health Sciences Center features impressive physical facilities that enhance its work in improving health outcomes across the State. The Schusterman Center campus very effectively serves OU-Tulsa's distinctive set of community engaged student programs and research initiatives.

OU's bold goals and aspirations to become a leading public research university are further facilitated by an outstanding and recently completed pair of parallel *Lead On, University* Strategic Plans for the Norman and Health Sciences Center campuses, supported by a new Strategic Framework on the Tulsa campus and the founding of a new Polytechnic Institute there. The Strategic Plans align closely with OU's long-established mission to transform lives in the service of the state and society. That mission is increasingly supported by a growing integration across the three campuses and dedication to the principal of One University, as well as by



the careful development of a pro forma budget built around the *Lead On* goals.

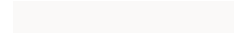
These ambitious efforts to ensure the accessibility and affordability of an OU education, to enhance the research mission, improve OU's already impressive physical infrastructure, and build a landscape of faculty and staff excellence committed to the democratic power of higher education to "Change Lives," are supported by a top-class advancement operation. The last several years have featured numerous transformational gifts, including to Arts and Sciences, Nursing, and ROTC, and OU announced the *Lead On* Capital Campaign in 2022. After record fundraising years in 2021 and 2022, the University has already raised \$760 million of its bold \$2 billion target and expects to complete the campaign on June 30, 2027. OU's alumni base has responded enthusiastically to the Capital Campaign and its commitment to building a nationally renowned public-serving university dedicated to the kinds of transformative research and creative activity that changes lives and communities at the local, state, national, and global levels.

The University of Oklahoma is a leader among public universities in the nation and is on a strong pathway to achieving its AAU goals and providing an ever-improving set of educational programs and support services for students and improving the physical world and the human condition through the impressive research and creative activity of our faculty and students.

We invite you to learn more about our University in the enclosed documents that comprise OU's 2023 Assurance Argument for the Higher Learning Commission.

Sincerely,

The OU HLC Executive Committee



Assurance Argument

University of Oklahoma - OK

Review date: 5/1/2023

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 articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference 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 and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

As the state's higher education flagship, the University of Oklahoma is a research-intensive, student-centered, public-facing, state-serving residential institution. The University's mission statement must, therefore, be commensurate in scope: *"to provide the best possible educational experience for our students through excellence in teaching, research and creative activity, and service to the state and society."* This mission statement reflects certain key aspects of the original mission components for the University, articulated in 1893, including its emphasis on citizenship. The statement was developed in 1995 by then-President David Boren, who sought input from a variety of University leaders and stakeholders including the OU Board of Regents. It is broad enough to encompass the breadth of OU's operations while providing a useful framework for more specialized activities at each of OU's three campuses distributed across key population centers in the state: Norman, Oklahoma City (Health Sciences Center, or HSC), and Tulsa. Each campus embodies the OU mission in its own way, as appropriate to its areas of focus. Moreover, OU's core mission is clearly reflected and operationalized in the *Lead On, University* strategic plan for the Norman Campus (2020), the parallel *Lead On, University* strategic plan for the HSC Campus (2022), and the accompanying "Strategic Framework" document for OU-Tulsa.

The University must balance its commitment to providing high-quality programs with a concerted focus on ensuring those programs meet the needs of and are widely available to Oklahomans. The State of Oklahoma expects OU to provide qualified state residents with access to its programs, and the University's commitment to that is demonstrated in enrollment patterns: 79% of students in health sciences programs are state residents, as are 57% of students in all other programs. OU is one of just two public research institutions in the State of Oklahoma, and the University's investment in graduate education is evident in its student population: 70% of students are in undergraduate

programs and 30% are in graduate/professional programs.

OU has the physical infrastructure necessary to support its ambitious instructional and research missions. Norman Campus contains the traditional elements of a residential university, including classroom and academic buildings, research facilities, libraries, residence halls and dining facilities, fine arts performance halls, and athletics facilities. This campus offers approximately 170 distinct degree programs across 12 degree-granting colleges spanning the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, health sciences, architecture, business, engineering, education, fine arts, international studies, journalism and mass communication, and aviation and meteorology. OU has three additional colleges that provide academic and administrative support to students. The OU Graduate College (23-0032, 23-0118) coordinates admission, manages course and program approvals, oversees degree progression and milestones, and monitors program metrics (e.g., diversity, graduation rates, time-to-degree, application and admission rates, etc.) and climate (student satisfaction) across all graduate programs. University College supports new and transfer undergraduate students as they transition into college life and as they enter a degree-granting college after their first year. The Honors College provides rigorous interdisciplinary programs for undergraduate students seeking additional intellectual challenges.

The University of Oklahoma's Health Sciences Center (HSC) is one of the most comprehensive academic health centers in the nation, with programs in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Lawton as well as research centers of excellence such as the Stephenson Cancer Center, Harold Hamm Diabetes Center, and Dean McGee Eye Institute. HSC comprises clinical and professional practice-based offerings across a wide range of health fields and specialties, as well as robust instructional, research, and biomedical sciences graduate programs. HSC has seven health professional colleges offering 67 distinct degree programs spanning the fields of allied health, biomedical sciences, dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and public health professions. OU Health, the state's largest clinical group practice, is HSC's clinical partner, providing health-related training and direct patient care to Oklahoma residents. Students and residents receive clinical training at on-site institutions, including the OU Medical Center, The OU Children's Hospital and Veterans Affairs Medical Center, as well as through affiliate training programs maintained at hospitals and clinics throughout the state. HSC has, therefore, a campus-specific mission statement crafted to reflect the campus's health focus: "The Mission of the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, as a comprehensive academic health center, is to educate students, residents, and other trainees in professional and graduate programs to become Oklahoma's future team of healthcare leaders, clinicians, researchers, and educators; to advance distinctive basic, translational, clinical, and population research; to innovate and commercialize discoveries; and to deliver exceptional patient care across the full breadth of adult, women's, and children's specialties."

The Tulsa Campus is comprised of the Schusterman Center, which includes academic buildings, research laboratories, a library, and new clinical facilities. The campus started as a public clinic, supported by the OU College of Medicine, designed to address problems created by failing healthcare services in the Tulsa area, and community engagement continues to be a core focus of Tulsa operations. The OU campus in Tulsa's vision is to build a nationally recognized center of higher education excellence in select areas that emphasize strong campus-community partnerships and leverage the unique opportunities and needs in the Tulsa region. It has a distinctively community-driven approach to higher education, with many of its campus programs and community-engaged research initiatives designed in partnership with community stakeholders. Tulsa's programs are offered in partnership with academic departments based at the other two campuses and include Allied Health, Community Medicine, Dentistry, Early Childhood Education, Educational Administration,

Curriculum, and Supervision, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Human Relations, Library and Information Studies, Nursing, Organizational Dynamics, Public Administration, Public Health and Health Administration, and Social Work. The Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma (Board) and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) recently approved the establishment of a new OU Polytechnic Institute on the Tulsa campus with six areas of concentration: cybersecurity, data science, software engineering, advanced mobility, embedded systems, and medical informatics and announced the hire of the Inaugural Director.

Appropriate to its status as a research-intensive institution, OU has significant resources dedicated to supporting the research mission. Norman's Office of the Vice President for Research and Partnerships (OVPRP) develops and disseminates official policies related to research and creative activities, incentive seed grant programs, support for external proposal development and submission, and support of interdisciplinary research centers and institutes, in alignment with Pillar 1 (Become a Top-Tier Public Research University) and Pillar 5 (Enrich and Positively Impact Oklahoma, the Nation, and the World through Research and Creative Activity) of the Norman Campus strategic plan. HSC's Vice President for Research (VPR) office promotes state-of-the-art biomedical science and health-specific research and is responsible for leading the implementation of their campus's strategic research plan, as articulated in Pillar 1 (Become a Top-Tier Research-Driven Academic Health Center) and Pillar 5 (Drive Economic Growth through Translation of Research into Commercial Enterprises) of the HSC *Lead On* plan. Tulsa's Assistant Vice President for Research provides on-site assistance with communication, implementation of policy, compliance, and access to resources at the Tulsa Campus, integrating their research operations with those at the other two campuses.

The University supports the "service to the state and society" part of its mission by incorporating community engagement and service learning into many of its program offerings. The Norman Campus houses five state-funded agencies charged with protecting Oklahoma's natural resources: the Oklahoma Archeological, Biological, Climatological, Geological, and Water Surveys. Embedding such agencies within our state's flagship university provides important opportunities to directly support the needs of the state and engage undergraduate and graduate students, as well as academic departments, with state policy concerning cultural and environmental resources. Many University centers and research programs connect student education to community service by partnering in service-learning courses (23-0115). OU also has a strong commitment to study abroad as a vital part of the undergraduate learning experience and believes that international experiences foster community engagement on a global scale (23-0001 Pillar 2, Strategy 5, Tactic 1; 23-0551). Further discussion of these programs is provided in Section 3-B.

In addition to academic programs, students are presented with many services designed to meet the portion of OU's mission that emphasizes providing "the best possible educational experience." Most student services are housed under Student Affairs (23-0117, 23-0475, 23-0476), which advances support to students on all three campuses. Key student services include academic advising, career services, fitness and recreation, health services and counseling, housing and food, and leadership development. Graduate Student Life (23-0118, 23-0482, 23-0483) also offers a variety of programs specifically tailored to the needs of graduate students and postdocs, including new student orientation materials and welcome events on all three campuses, professional development workshops, instructional certifications, and social and community programming.

OU's mission statement is prominently displayed on University websites and in major public documents (23-0005, 23-0119). It has been further distilled to the anchoring phrase "We Change

Lives” around which the *Lead On* strategic plans are built (23-0001, 23-0002). The core elements of OU's mission are clearly visible – and reinforced – throughout each of the plan's five pillars.

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1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
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 external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

The University of Oklahoma fully embraces its responsibilities as a public university. Educational service to students is central to OU's mission statement, followed closely by a commitment to service to state and society. Additional mission statements and goal clarifications within university (23-0001, 23-0002) and college (23-0120, 23-0528) strategic plans (discussed in more detail in Sections 1-A and 1-C) further demonstrate OU's engagement with a wide array of communities both internal and external. OU's stated goals align with HLC's expectation that concern for the public good is a core institutional value.

As a state university, OU does not have any investors, parent organizations, or external interest groups other than the State of Oklahoma. The University publicizes budget allocations, as described in Section 5-C, and its largest expenditures directly fund or support mission-related activities (23-0014, 23-0017). University athletics are not subsidized by the institutional budget, and their supporting funds are kept separate from those dedicated to supporting the University mission. The University of Oklahoma receives funds from the OU Foundation, an independent charitable organization that facilitates and manages philanthropic gifts supporting the University.

The University increasingly designs and executes its academic programs in an effort to meet as directly as possible the public's need for affordable, accessible, and varied educational opportunities, as discussed in detail in Section 1-A. In 2020, the University established OU Online to serve as a central hub for developing and supporting online degree programs. These programs are specifically designed to be flexible and accessible to adult learners needing to work full-time while pursuing their degrees. OU Online performs market analysis prior to starting any new program paperwork and curriculum planning (23-0125, 23-0536, 23-0537). Programs not managed by OU Online are encouraged to complete a Provost's office pre-proposal form designed to prompt departments to complete a needs assessment, market analysis, and an alignment of the the program with public need before they start development in earnest (23-0557, 23-0126, 23-0127). This helps ensure that all academic programs are strategically vetted and aligned with public need.

In addition to adjusting degree offerings, OU departments work to identify gaps in state higher educational offerings and provide programmatic solutions when appropriate. Most OU colleges have a Board of Visitors, Advocates, or Advisors to provide, in part, community input and support. For example, the College of Atmospheric and Geographic Sciences Board of Advisors makes specific recommendations regarding the college's academic offerings, including needed courses and degree

programs at the undergraduate and master's level. The Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education conducts market analysis for its graduate programs through EAB (formerly the Education Advisory Board). The College of Education also has an Education Professions Advisory Board comprised of teachers, principals, and superintendents of its partner school districts, who provide substantive feedback on programs and help facilitate community engagement with their schools, host teaching interns, and hire graduates of the college. The Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication conducted research among recent graduates of its BA programs, in advance of launching its online master's program in strategic communication and digital strategy in 2021, to ensure that proposed coursework met their expectations. The Gallogly College of Engineering recently launched a partnership office to understand the needs of the state and industry and is developing online programs to address state needs. This new office has mapped in detail and quantified the need for engineers in Oklahoma based on industry demand and is using the data to inform online programs, faculty hiring, and student networking. The College of Engineering's Office of Partnerships, Office of Research, and instructional programs are all connected with the industry leaders and state agencies. These data are used to guide educational program offerings and leverage regional and state collaborations as well as grant funding opportunities. The Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences Board of Advocates reviews core college documents (such as the 2022 *Pathways to Excellence* strategic plan), new academic programs, and infrastructural plans to ensure strong alignment with the needs of the region, state, and private employers.

OU's Libraries are committed to the greater global exchange of knowledge, making resources created by university research and scholarship freely available to the global community wherever possible. Scholars can deposit their work into SHAREOK, an institutional repository allowing free access to a variety of community stakeholders. The OU Libraries also support the Open OU initiative, which provides access to Open Educational Resources and offers guidance on making academic work freely available via Open Access publication. The University Libraries participate in a broad range of outreach activities with numerous local and regional communities. The Western History Collections (WHC) and History of Science Collections provide significant instructional and curriculum development support to area K-12 teachers. The WHC also partners with Native Communities such as the Cherokee Nation to make its archival resources accessible and is planning future joint programming and digitization projects. The Libraries also contribute expertise and project demonstrations as part of the OneOklahoma Cyberinfrastructure Initiative, and participate, with more than 50 other state institutions, in weekly program planning to share emerging computing infrastructure developments and influence state higher education curricula related to computing. The Donald E. Pray Law Library is an independently managed entity under the College of Law. Its holdings include almost 340,000 volumes of books and journals, including 25 specialized legal research databases such as Westlaw and LexisNexis. The Law Library also develops and maintains collections of special research materials focusing on Native Peoples and the law, including a project to digitize American Indian constitutions. The Law Library supports student collaborative learning with the Inasmuch Foundation Collaborative Learning Center, specialized study aids, and access to test files.

OU Health was established in 2021 as the state's only comprehensive and integrated academic health system of hospitals, clinics, and comprehensive care centers, including the OU Health Stephenson Cancer and Harold Hamm Diabetes Centers. Devoted to improving health outcomes and servicing the healthcare needs of Oklahomans, OU Health serves around one million patients per year and has clinic locations throughout the state with the majority of services provided by clinicians who are dually employed at HSC. All health professions academic program curricula are provided by HSC faculty members. Student learning experiences at OU Health facilities across the state in urban,

suburban, and rural settings include patient care and treatment provided under the direct supervision of faculty members and preceptors. The Stephenson Cancer Center and the Harold Hamm Diabetes Center offer free community health screenings through various year-round programs, such as in partnership with underserved and Tribal communities across the state.

The University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry plays an integral role in expanding access to dental care across the State by providing more than \$100,000-worth of free dental care to over 150 patients through community initiatives such as its Kids' Day, Veterans' Day, and Oklahoma Mission of Mercy. Additionally, the college provides high-quality dental care at a cost that is approximately one-third the cost of care in a private dental practice and makes available more than \$150,000 annually in patient care assistance funding for patients unable to afford the cost of their treatment. More than 70 percent of Oklahoma's dentists are graduates of the College.

The Early Childhood Education academic and research programs at Tulsa Campus actively participate in workforce preparation and program evaluation/improvement to meet the needs of young children and their families in the Tulsa area and across the state. The Early Childhood Education Institute (ECEI) conducts long-term applied research in partnership with two Tulsa-based early childhood programs – Tulsa Educare and Community Action Project of Tulsa County – serving young children, birth to age 5, growing up in poverty and thus considered at-risk for later educational and life success. ECEI works with program leaders on data collection and analyses designed to inform program improvements, regularly shares its findings with community partners, and supplies information to agency regulators or funders. In addition to this applied research relationship, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program at Tulsa Campus, in partnership with Tulsa Community College (TCC), provides teaching staff for these same two agencies and other ECE programs including Tulsa Public Schools. OU places students at these community partners to complete field studies and practica, thus providing first-hand knowledge of the skills and dispositions our graduates need to meet the demands of contemporary ECE classrooms and programs.

OU's Community Engagement program provides a coordinated university-wide infrastructure for community-based research, service-learning, public outreach, and community-campus partnerships via offices at all three campuses. OU's Graduate Certificate in Community Engagement teaches students how to positively impact their own communities, augmenting academic content from graduate and professional education degree programs. OU also hosts the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, which meets the educational needs of older adults by offering a variety of noncredit courses. Some University divisions offer summer programs serving the educational needs of the K-12 and Adult Education community, including the Sooner Flight Academy, museum programs, research laboratory experiences, and a wide range of summer sports camps and programs sponsored by the Division of Athletics.

The College of Law Legal Clinic further exemplifies the institutional commitment to engaging and responding to the needs of external communities by providing law students and faculty with opportunities to serve the community, including specialized Advocacy Clinics in the areas of Child Abuse and International Human Rights. The rigorous nature of these experiences helps students develop advocacy skills and offers hands-on practice in factual investigation, research, writing, problem-solving, client relations, and professional responsibility.

In addition, the Student Government Association and Registered Student Organizations organize a range of activities that connect the University to the larger community, including Higher Education Day at the state capitol, the Big Event (a community service day), and Green Week (devoted to campus and community sustainability) (23-0153, 23-0532). The Campus Activities Council

organizes various fund-raising events, such as the Dance Marathon, which helps support the Oklahoma Children's Hospital Foundation and Children's Miracle Network Hospitals.

OU positively impacts our state's communities through a wide variety of programs and services. Collectively, these initiatives testify to the breadth and depth of OU's commitment to providing service for the public good and investing in community health and social progress.

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1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Argument

The University of Oklahoma's mission statement and *Lead On* strategic plans emphasize the importance of service to the State and society (23-0001, 23-0002) and the institution consistently communicates this service ethic to all members of our diverse community. Every first-year student on the Norman Campus is required to complete a First-Year Experience general education course designed around five core learning objectives: cultural fluency, critical thinking, civil discourse, citizenship, and community engagement. Every OU undergraduate must also complete introductory survey courses in US history and American government. These requirements prepare students to be informed and active citizens engaged with their community. In addition, many degree programs require courses at the introductory and advanced levels that emphasize informed citizenship and workplace success.

The Norman Campus Career Center partners with colleges to create programming supporting students' future workplace success. Initiatives include the use of the Handshake career management platform, hosting and facilitating multiple career fairs each fall and spring, offering workshops and presentations on topics such as resumé writing and interviewing tips, and holding employer networking events. The Career Center recently implemented Career Communities, which provide students with industry-tailored approaches to job searches, including community-focused advising, networking events, and job boards. Tulsa Student Affairs hosts career services-focused Lunch and Learn sessions each semester and partners with the Oklahoma City National Memorial Museum to offer the Sooner Standard Award, created to promote acts of service, honor, and kindness. Graduate Student Life hosts a series of workshops on academic and non-academic job searches, as well as a new Instructional Competencies Certificate Program that can lead to earning up to four micro-credentials. OU Online recently launched a one-stop shop for career services tailored to the unique needs of online students, including the creation of affinity groups to help students connect with peers and mentors with similar interests and experiences.

To help ensure students graduate with the lowest possible debt load, OU partnered with MidFirst Bank to create the MoneyCoach Program, which provides students with personalized financial education, coaching, and planning strategies to promote healthy financial behaviors. Financial knowledge leads to financial health, resulting in success for students both during school and after graduation. The MoneyCoach team teaches students about important financial topics such as building credit, savings strategies, and protection from fraud.

Leadership and Volunteerism (L&V) empowers students to become effective leaders and active community members. L&V activities help students develop leadership skills, assist with personal growth through learning, and connect them to volunteer opportunities in the local community and beyond. Prominent among these activities are student leadership programs at the university and college level, including the President's Community Scholars. L&V programming is developed with long-term impact in mind, considering how best to prepare students for life after college.

OU's ROTC programs – Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps – prepare qualified students for national service as commissioned officers. Currently housed in University College, ROTC combines a regular academic program of study with a tailored curriculum of required ROTC offerings that place additional emphasis on both leadership and service. ROTC provides full coverage for tuition, room, and board, along with all regular university and college-specific fees, a monthly living allowance, and funding for textbooks. The ROTC programs at OU have been in operation for more than a century.

OU's commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive environment is clearly communicated in Pillar 4 of both the Norman and HSC *Lead On* strategic plans (Become a Place of Belonging and Emotional Growth for all Students, Faculty, Staff, [Patients], and Alumni). This commitment informs OU's policies, procedures, organizations, and core activities ranging from recruitment and retention to research priorities and support, communications, community partnerships, and physical infrastructure.

Since OU's last decennial review, the University has steadily increased its commitment to making diversity, equity, and inclusion the institutional standard. The University's Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) also serves as Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). The CDO reports directly to the President and sits on the University's Executive Committee. The DEI Division includes the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; the Accessibility and Disability Resource Center; and the TRIO programs: McNair Scholars, Project Threshold, and Upward Bound. The mission of the DEI Division is *“To enhance OU's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, to recognize and respect the essential worth of each individual, and to value differences amongst groups. We commit to building a welcoming and supportive campus environment where each individual feels welcomed, valued, and supported for success.”* This mission is further expressed in the Division's core values of Empathy, Accountability, Civil Dialogue, Collaboration, Equity, Integrity, and Mutual Respect. The DEI Division is the central hub for OU's many offices, centers, and programs supporting the University's commitment to inclusion, creating connections among departments working to encourage inclusion in all aspects of university life.

Norman Campus's New Student Programs is one of the first points of contact for students as they begin their education at OU, and a central goal of that programming is fostering a sense of belonging in every new student. OU's orientation events, New Sooner Orientation (NSO) and Camp Crimson, inform students about the University's range of cocurricular activities, introduce them to campus culture, and provide intentional opportunities to connect with affinity groups. NSO and Camp Crimson activities focus on creating a climate of respect. Students serving as Small Group Leaders are trained in conflict resolution, community care, and creating a welcoming environment. NSO also provides incoming students with training about academic expectations and integrity. Once on campus, Housing and Residence Life (HRL) provides an environment designed to educate students about academic and social responsibility. Housing and Food Services (HFS), Student Life, and the DEI Division all devote significant attention to ensuring that the needs of our diverse student community are met.

OU's Gender and Equality Center cultivates an affirming and diverse educational community by focusing on LGBTQ+ inclusion, interpersonal violence prevention, and advocacy for victims of gender-based violence. The Center offers educational workshops designed to both prepare students for an inclusive future and create a climate of respect. All first year and undergraduate transfer students are required to complete The Consent Conversation, a gender-based violence prevention curriculum. LGBTQ+ Programs focus on raising visibility and awareness for the LGBTQ+ community through Visibility Days while also creating affirming social spaces. Begun 12 years ago, LGBTQ+ Ally Training has to date educated over 9,000 people about LGBTQ+ identities, experiences, and ways to show support.

HSC's colleges and its Office of Community Partnerships and Health Policy provide programs for students interested in serving historically underrepresented and underserved populations. This goal is clearly articulated in Pillar 3 of the HSC Lead On plan: "Improve Health Outcomes and Reduce Health Disparities in Oklahoma." Additionally, there are robust DEI initiatives in the College of Medicine as well as direct applications to students' education and to service through the HSC Office of Interdisciplinary Programs which includes community outreach and service to underrepresented and minority populations.

The Office of Student Conduct is responsible for administering the University's disciplinary system, as expressed in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Code. It educates students about responsibility using a process rooted in Inclusive Conflict Excellence (ICE). Using the ICE model, Student Conduct has been able to resolve conflict at all levels of the university community while also taking into consideration the various lenses through which students see accountability. The goal is to ensure the process is equitable for all students through a holistic approach that includes Social, Procedural, Restorative, and Transformative Justice lenses. This holistic model is critical to meeting the University's goal of becoming a place of belonging and emotional growth for all students.

OU further demonstrates its commitment to DEI with the *President's Statement of Commitment to Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity*, which defines and affirms OU's values and commitment to diversity of backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives. These values are addressed by institutional structures like the Institutional Equity Office (IEO). The IEO is located on the Norman Campus, with representation at HSC and Tulsa, and reports directly to the President and the OU Board of Regents. Housed within this office are the Title IX and the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action offices. Additional guidance is provided in the *Staff Handbook's* "Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Assault Policy."

The University has made significant progress toward increased diversity of leadership since the last assurance review. On the Norman Campus, the Provost's Advisory Committee on Women's Issues fosters community connections and awareness of critical issues among women in academia, and the Women in Science, Dentistry, Medicine and Health (WISDMH) group supports the professional development of women on the HSC campus. An interdisciplinary faculty team has just received a major NSF ADVANCE grant (\$3M) in support of analyzing faculty evaluation structures to facilitate gender equity. Many key leadership positions in Academic Affairs across all three campuses are held by women.

The Norman Campus Veteran Support Alliance supports both prospective and current military-connected students in three key areas: promoting the rich network of veterans-focused contacts, services, and events via one university webpage; supporting a Green Zone Faculty/Staff network; and connecting both donors and recipients to the Veteran Support Alliance Foundation Fund. The HSC Veterans and Military Alliance provides similar support in HSC programs.

OU's Sooner Works program is a comprehensive, integrated program for students with an intellectual or developmental disability who desire a postsecondary experience on a college campus. The four-year certificate program prepares participants for competitive employment and independent living through a combination of coursework and career exploration. Sooner Works students live on campus and take traditional university courses in conjunction with courses specific to Sooner Works. In addition, students participate in internships and social organizations on the Norman Campus.

OU's College of International Studies – one of only a few such colleges in the country – provides many programs supporting international students' integration into the OU community. These programs benefit all OU students via increased cultural knowledge and diversity of perspectives. OU is proud of its incoming international students and wants them to feel welcome and fully engaged in the OU living/learning community. The OU Cousins program matches international and exchange students to American students according to hobbies, majors, and countries of special interest. There are monthly programmed events, and students are also encouraged to meet at any time to support each other and share their respective cultures through normal daily life. Many students choose to include their partners and children in activities, expanding this supportive environment to their whole family. The University's International Advisory Committee (IAC) organizes the fall International Bazaar and the spring Eve of Nations Banquet, and each year reserves a five-week period for international associations to invite all of OU to learn more about the countries and regions of the world represented through the lenses of our international student communities.

OU's strong emphasis on the contributions of study abroad to liberal arts education nurtures awareness of and respect for other cultures. OU's commitment to global engagement, and specifically to studying abroad, has long been a highlight of the student experience here. OU's campuses in Arezzo, Italy, and Puebla, Mexico, are integrated into the programmatic structures of the Norman Campus to maximize student participation, and various funding programs help ensure the accessibility and affordability of these programs for all OU students (23-0176, 23-0550).

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1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

The University's mission stands at the center of its operations. OU designs its academic programs to expressly meet the public's need for affordable, accessible, and varied educational opportunities, and it provides many co-curricular opportunities to prepare students for workplace success and informed citizenship. The University realizes that student development and learning are positively impacted through equity and inclusion, which requires more than curricular content. Most importantly, concern for the public good is a core institutional value and is upheld through a variety of community engagement activities, including community-based research, service learning, public outreach, and community-campus partnerships. As we will further demonstrate in subsequent sections of the document, the *Lead On* strategic plan exemplifies the core elements of the OU mission. Moreover, the plan operationalizes that institutional mission through a carefully designed pro forma budget that directs resources to clearly articulated needs and goals.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

The Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma (Board) operates with integrity, prioritizing fair and ethical conduct as it endeavors to fulfill its mission as embodied in the Norman and Health Sciences Center (HSC) campuses' *Lead On, University* strategic plans. Collectively covering all programs and campuses, these strategic plans specifically address how the University can advance the broad goals contained in its mission statement. These plans are based on a succinct statement of the University's purpose – "We Change Lives" – and each contains five pillars defining how the University will fulfill its purpose. More information about how these plans were developed and approved can be found in Section 5-B.

As a constitutional entity, the Board is governed by state statutes and rules requiring the University to act in the public interest and serve as an ethical steward of state resources. University employees are responsible for complying with all applicable state laws regarding finances and appropriations. The Oklahoma Ethics Commission also establishes and enforces rules expressly prohibiting state employees from misusing their position and requires all state employees to recuse themselves from participating in matters in which their impartiality could be called into question. The Board has incorporated the state ethics rules into its bylaws, policies, and handbooks. These materials highlight the ethical obligations of OU employees and educate employees and the University community about OU's commitment to ethical behavior and its compliance infrastructure.

Specific policies regarding obligations under federal and state law are created and maintained by the relevant University office, such as the Office of Compliance, the Office of Export Controls, and the Office of Institutional Equity. The University recently revised and expanded its individual conflict of interest policy to comply with federal and state disclosure requirements. Pursuant to the Board's policy, the President established a Conflicts of Interest Office on each campus, responsible for educating employees about conflicts of interest and facilitating employee disclosures and management plans. The Associate Provost for Policy and Administration (Norman) and the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs & Faculty Development (HSC) oversee policies and procedures related to academic issues.

To ensure the University operates in a fair and ethical manner with respect to financial matters, the

Board reviews University financial statements on a quarterly basis. Audited financial statements are made available to the public. As outlined in its audited financial statements (23-0012, 23-0015, 23-0013, 23-0016, 23-0014, 23-0017), the University adheres to standard disclosure requirements for public universities that require a comprehensive, entity-wide perspective of the University's assets, liabilities, revenues, expenses, and cash flow. The Board has also established policies describing its authority to govern and manage University financial matters, its short-term investment policy, and its debt policy. This financial accountability applies to every entity under the jurisdiction of the Board. The Board prohibits any deficits in University accounts and requires all accounts be reviewed monthly to ensure compliance.

The financial details of auxiliary enterprises are also included in the audited financial statements. Many auxiliary enterprises have additional means of ensuring not just financial integrity, but also operational integrity. For example, one of the most prominent auxiliary enterprises is the Athletics Department, which has an internal Athletics Council that advises the President and Athletics Director on all Athletics policy matters and is encouraged to report directly to the President when deemed appropriate by the Council. The Athletics Department is required to follow all internal University policies, NCAA bylaws and rules, and rules from the relevant athletics conference and has established a subcommittee to assist in this effort. The Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance Subcommittee must annually review all the University's activities and procedures regarding compliance with NCAA and Conference rules and report any concerns to the President and the Director of Athletics. There is also an Academic Integrity and Student Welfare Subcommittee that annually reviews the admission and academic performance of student-athletes and compiles information on admissions, retention, graduation, academic performance, and academic services for student-athletes including counseling, tutoring, and the monitoring of classroom attendance and grades.

Academic integrity is a university-wide priority. The University's efforts to educate students and faculty about academic integrity in teaching and learning as well as in research are further described in Section 2-E.

OU's Human Resources department carefully screens new employees, with more oversight in high-risk areas. The Norman *Lead On* strategic plan emphasizes not only hiring leading faculty to enhance the University's reputation but also recognize staffing levels must be sufficient to support any increases in faculty and student numbers to ensure the support infrastructure is maintained. The Board's policy on Administrative Search Committees recommends faculty, staff, and student representation on search committees selecting the President and other University administrators. The University has guidelines for faculty searches (23-0184, 23-0026). On the staffing side, Human Resources helps departments build appropriate screening criteria to ensure hiring of qualified staff. The University requires background checks of all final candidates and has recently expanded the scope of its background checks to require a state and national criminal search.

The University is taking necessary measures to ensure that all physical resources and institutional data are appropriately safeguarded. Once hired, employees are subject to the standards of conduct outlined in the respective faculty and staff handbooks including the Alcohol Abuse and Drug Use Policy (23-0007, 23-0008, 23-0009), the Computer Use Policy (23-0007, 23-0008, 23-0009), the Loyalty Oath (23-0007, 23-0008, 23-0009), the Workplace Threats and Violence Policy (23-0007, 23-0008, 23-0009), and the Standards of Conduct for all programs overseen by the Office of Compliance. Aside from Board policies and applicable laws, employees must also adhere to the relevant professional standards governing their area. For example, Financial Services follows the

Governmental Accounting Standards Board guidelines. Meanwhile, staff members who work for the Registrar or in Admissions adhere to the standards of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers as well as the local branch of the Oklahoma Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. The Financial Aid Office is a member of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators and frequently utilizes their tools and guidelines to remain compliant with Department of Education rules and regulations.

In 2021, the University established the Enterprise Risk and Compliance Oversight Steering Committee (ERCO) to identify, manage, report, and mitigate risks for all University campuses. ERCO advises both the Board and President and acts as the supervising body on legal, regulatory, and policy matters that fall within its purview, including the Office of Compliance, the Office of University Enterprise Risk Management, the Institutional Equity Office, the Office of Export Controls, and Athletics Compliance. The ERCO Steering Committee has six subcommittees that serve to identify, prioritize, and remediate regulatory, financial, and reputational risks: Campus Safety, Health Regulatory, Conflicts of Interest, Research, Foreign Influence, and Tax/Finance. ERCO is comprised of executive officers and adds another layer of oversight to ensure University resources are appropriately allocated and to prevent any lapses in ethical operations.

OU takes seriously its responsibility to educate and train its employees about their ethical obligations under federal and state law as well as University policy. The University uses the OnPoint learning system (23-0191, 23-0432) as its primary method of required training. Depending on an employee's job location and functions, the University offers or requires more than twenty different types of training courses, on topics including Standards of Conduct, Sooner Fire Safety, Conflicts of Interest, Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Awareness, Diversity: Inclusion in the Modern Workplace, Bloodborne Pathogens, Employee Hazard Communication/General Safety Training, HIPAA Privacy and Security Training, IT Cybersecurity Training, and Required FERPA Training for Employees.

Members of the University community and the larger public are encouraged to report any perceived ethical violations. They can access reporting mechanisms twenty-four hours a day. These mechanisms are secure, anonymous, and prominently displayed on the University's websites. OU is committed to addressing concerns promptly and consistently, thereby reducing risk and reinforcing a culture of trust and respect (23-0503).

The University's commitment to integrity is apparent on every level as the University conforms to applicable laws and establishes policies designed to facilitate an atmosphere of compliance and ethical behavior. OU works to educate all employees about pertinent policies and laws and encourages all community members to report any perceived ethical violations, allowing everyone to hold one another and the University accountable.

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Argument

The University is transparent as a matter of law and of policy, ensuring that faculty, staff, students, and other members of the University community have access to the information and evidence needed to understand the institution's goals and progress toward those goals. As a state entity, the University is subject to the Open Meetings Act, which requires all meetings of the Board be open to the public. Meeting agendas are posted in advance (23-0193, 23-0194, 23-0195), and all public meeting minutes (23-0048, 23-0049, 23-0050) are archived and published online in a searchable format. Each vote cast by a Board member is recorded and available to the public. The University is also subject to the Open Records Act, which allows members of the public to request copies of University records including financial records, memoranda, and even employee emails. These materials must be made available upon request, subject to certain statutory exceptions such as confidential research, student education records, personnel records, etc. The University's Director of Records Management oversees the Open Records Office and ensures records requests are filled in a timely fashion.

In 2019, the Board adopted a Policy Management Policy establishing a transparent process for the creation, review, and revision of all University policies, thereby ensuring all University policies would receive input from appropriate institutional stakeholders and be accessible to all members of the University community. The Policy Management Policy created the Office of Policy Management and the position of Director of Policy. The Director of Policy tracks all policies to see not only that they are regularly reviewed but that the policies are appropriately influenced by those most affected. To manage this task, the University implemented PolicyTech, software designed to route policies for review and establish a uniform policy template and workflow. PolicyTech will create improved policy processes and tools to help the University more effectively communicate policies and procedures and ensure adequate training about and adherence to those policies. All University policies will be held in a central location, easily accessible and searchable by any member of the community. OU is still in the early stages of implementing the Policy Management Policy, currently focusing on integrating the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma's Policies and Procedures Manual, as well as the Faculty and Staff Handbooks for each campus, into PolicyTech. New policies will be routed through the system from their start, and existing internal policies will be incorporated as scheduled by the Director of Policy.

The Office of Institutional Research and Reporting (IRR) also helps present evidence to prospective students, the public, and the University community about the governance structure of the University, including organizational charts for each campus; demographic data about the student population; and

other relevant data such as enrollment statistics, retention rates, and the number of full-time faculty. That office annually compiles data from Norman, Health Sciences Center, and Tulsa, ensuring accuracy and preparing reports in an accessible, readable format. IRR helps ensure the University's accreditation information is posted, up-to-date, and accessible to all visitors to the University's website so that anyone can view University assurance arguments and site visit documents as well as access a list of resources including relevant handbooks, class schedules, faculty rosters, and the academic and course catalogs. Visitors to the site can also find information about how to file a complaint with the Higher Learning Commission and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Prospective students can find links to information about the University's accreditation in the "About OU" section of the Norman Campus General Catalog, on the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education website, and in the website footer for most of the ou.edu websites.

The University believes both prospective and current students should understand the academic and financial requirements of achieving their desired educational objectives at the institution. Admissions requirements are easily accessible online. Prospective students can meet one-on-one with admissions and recruitment staff or attend webinars on undergraduate admissions, international student admissions, transfer admissions, and the different academic colleges. OU's General Catalog explicitly outlines the requirements for each Norman Campus degree and is available online. The Student Financial Center and its website provide information about the cost of attendance, including detailed information about tuition rates as well as the amount and purpose of required fees. This site also contains the University's Net Price Calculator and other materials to help students and their families estimate potential costs. For OUHSC, degree requirements are maintained by each college on the respective college website with a central jump point in Student Affairs. The OUHSC Financial Aid Office is transparent with both prospective and current students about the costs associated with each academic year by college with tuition and fees posted online and itemized for each degree. Additionally, the Financial Aid Office posts estimated costs associated with each degree and specialty offered broken down by year.

The University manages faculty and staff expectations through its policies. For example, each campus's *Faculty Handbook* contains policies outlining eligibility and criteria for promotion in rank and tenure (23-0007, 23-0008), with Norman Campus also covering the post-tenure review process. Faculty have information about the basis for their evaluations (23-0007, 23-0008), eligibility for sabbatical leave (23-0007, 23-0008), and their intellectual property rights (23-0007, 23-0008) regarding their work at the University. Faculty members who feel the University has deviated from its policies or not accurately represented its expectations have a mechanism to hold the University accountable. A faculty member may file a grievance with the Faculty Appeals Board, which hears eligible cases via a panel of the faculty member's peers (23-0007, 23-0008).

Faculty and staff are also kept apprised of campus news and events through internal newsletters. University-wide issues are often addressed by official email communication from the President. Employees and students receive the *Inside OU* newsletter (23-0204, 23-0205, 23-0206) approximately twice a month to help everyone stay connected to what is happening across all three campuses. The newsletter includes student awards, program rankings, and information on upcoming speakers and other events. HSC and Tulsa employees receive *The Pulse at OU Health* newsletter (23-0207, 23-0208, 23-0209) once a week with information about upcoming events or clinics on campus ranging from OU sports events to annual mammogram screenings and COVID-19 resources. The Provost's Office on the Norman Campus distributes official memos about academic policies and procedures via official email on a predetermined schedule based on the subject of the communication. It also sends out a weekly academic bulletin informing recipients about upcoming events, trainings,

and performances (23-0211, 23-0212, 23-0213). The Office of the Vice President for Research and Partnerships on the Norman Campus also sends out a weekly update on faculty achievements, appointments, grant awards, opportunities, and upcoming events (23-0214, 23-0215, 23-0216). These campus-wide communications are further supplemented by internal newsletters for relevant groups such as specific colleges, researchers, and faculty and academic affairs staff (23-0220). The Division of Marketing and Communications ensures the accuracy and consistency of these campus communications through the Publications Review process, which reviews and approves internal newsletters and communications. Finally, both internal and external audiences can view the agenda for any Board meeting to stay abreast of issues, events, and changes affecting campus. Agendas are posted 24 hours in advance of each Board meeting, and minutes of the meetings are posted online after the meeting has occurred.

All OU student-facing programs and departments are expected to track, document, and share evidence of student usage of and satisfaction with their programs and services. Student Affairs strives to enhance students' academic success by helping them develop critical learning and life skills and facilitating the cultivation of diverse campus life experiences. On the Norman Campus, Student Affairs tracks student involvement through annual reports. Data collected include Career Center usage rates, Fitness and Recreation traffic, use of the OU Food Pantry, and satisfaction with Health Services. Student Affairs also conducts annual assessments (23-0092, 23-0224) reviewing the types of activities and services offered by the University, how those activities and services relate to the mission of the University, whether those programs are successful, and where future efforts should be focused. The resulting reports are publicly available on OU's website. Student Affairs teams on the HSC and Tulsa campuses also conduct annual student satisfaction surveys by college. If results in a particular area are not satisfactory, Student Affairs works with the colleges and with OU's central services on any necessary changes. Seeking more information about student opinions about services and climate, in Spring 2021 graduate students on the Norman Campus were asked to participate in the Graduate Student Experience in the Research University Survey. Similarly, undergraduate students were asked to participate in the Student Experience in the Research University Survey in Spring 2022 (23-0228). Also in Spring 2022, Academic Affairs launched a redesigned Student Experience Survey to replace the previous end-of-course survey. This new survey, designed by a subcommittee of the Faculty Senate, was designed to minimize bias and provide more actionable feedback for faculty.

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

Like all state employees, each OU Regent is required to follow state ethics laws prohibiting misuse of office, as well as University policies governing individual and institutional conflicts of interest. As required by the Board bylaws, upon nomination and annually thereafter, all Board members must disclose, for themselves and their families, any known individual or institutional conflicts of interest, any material financial interest, or any relationships that give rise to legal or ethical obligations to act in the best interest of a separate entity. If appropriate, management plans are drafted to address disclosed conflicts and could result in the recusal of Board members from deliberations on relevant matters. Furthermore, no Board member, family member of a Board member, or business entity for which a Board member or family member is responsible for business or policy decisions may enter business transactions or have a business relationship with OU under the governance of the Board without a rigorous examination of the costs/benefits, carefully defined conditions in place, and a vote by non-conflicted Board members.

The Board is not subject to the influence of external parties such as elected officials or donors. Each Board member is appointed to a seven-year term and may be removed only "for cause," insulating the Board members from political influence. Donors, members of the legislature, and even the Governor who appointed the Regent cannot remove a Regent for political reasons or based on a Regent's lawful actions taken in accordance with their duties. Furthermore, upon request, members of the public have the right to view all emails, text messages, and other records of communications between Board members and external parties when University business is conducted. Therefore, an interested party could review Board communications to determine whether an external party influenced the Board or was involved in the decision-making process (23-0192, 23-0197).

The OU Board of Regents' deliberations and decisions directly reflect the pillars, strategies, and tactics outlined in its strategic planning. Board agenda items (23-0193, 23-0194, 23-0195) and meeting minutes (23-0048, 23-0049, 23-0050) document alignment with strategic goals. The Board also receives regular input from internal and external stakeholders about institutional priorities to help it make informed decisions on behalf of the University, as outlined in more detail below.

The Board regularly consults with internal stakeholders to ensure both that the Board is aware of the needs and priorities of its constituents and that it incorporates any feedback it receives into its deliberations and final decisions. The Board values input from OU's community partners and has an organizational infrastructure designed to ensure its members are well-informed about the substance and significance of issues raised by its internal and external constituencies. The Board bylaws establish five main standing committees: Academic Affairs and Research; Finance, Audit and Risk; Facilities and Properties; Health and Clinical Enterprises; and Administration and Operations. The Board also has two special standing committees: Equity Management and OU Retirement Plans Management (23-0229, 23-0563). These committees do not have the authority to act or make decisions. Instead, their members are charged with gaining a deep understanding of critical topics, receiving input from relevant OU personnel and constituent communities, and developing long-term strategies and recommendations. Standing committees share what they have learned about their assigned topic area with the rest of the Board, to assist in its deliberations and decision-making process. All committees have Board-approved charters that require at least four meetings per year and regular activity reports back to the Board. Each committee can invite any director, officer, employee, outside advisor, or other individual to attend meetings and present or assist in the presentation of matters to the committee. Each committee regularly consults with internal and external constituencies to receive their input and recommendations before it makes a full report to the Board for further action.

Each OU Regent receives training at the time of appointment and on a regular basis throughout their term. Training topics include various areas of University operations as well as broader briefings about national and regional trends in higher education. This training is required by both state law and University policy, to ensure each Regent can meet the legal and fiduciary responsibilities that accompany their role. Each new OU Regent receives a multi-day orientation conducted by University administrators that includes one-on-one meetings with key campus personnel. Each Regent must also complete a minimum of fifteen hours of continuing education during the first two years of their service, mandated by the state legislature and managed by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The OU Board of Regents occasionally receives additional training from relevant University offices to ensure familiarity with the University's policies and procedures.

Pursuant to its statutory authority, the OU Board of Regents regularly delegates decision-making to the President, the Faculty Senate, and other University officials as appropriate. In its bylaws, the Board delegates general authority and responsibility to carry out the policies and directions of the Board to the President, and through the President, to the appropriate administrative officers and offices, such as the appropriate campus Senior Vice President and Provost, Conflict of Interest Office, and Faculty Appeals Board. For example, the Board grants the President the power to delegate signatory authority to appropriate University executives, officers, and directors.

The faculty also regularly provide input on academic decision-making through their representatives in the Faculty Senate and their service on various University committees. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee meets frequently with both the President and the Provost to provide input on academic issues and meets with candidates for senior-level positions such as college deanships. The Faculty Senate regularly receives updates and provides input on policy matters in its meetings. At a regular meeting, the Faculty Senate might review updates to the Intellectual Property Policy, the Minors on Campus Policy, the Accessible Course Materials Policy, and the Data Governance and Privacy Policies (23-0232, 23-0233, 23-0234). Additionally, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee ensures faculty representation on University-wide governing and consultative committees, both standing and ad hoc. For example, the President's Academic Program Budget Advisory Committee

(PAPBAC) was an ad hoc committee formed in 2018 (23-0428, 23-0235). The Committee was comprised entirely of faculty, half appointed by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and half appointed by the Provost's Office. The PAPBAC Committee reviewed all budget cuts related to academic programs and issued reports to the university President for review prior to final budget decisions. In its second year, the PAPBAC Committee was asked to draft a strategic plan for the University. In October 2022, a new committee, the President's Advisory Committee for Post-Tenure Review, Endowed Chairs and Professorships, and Merit Increases (PACPEM) was formed (23-0236, 23-0555). The committee's structure and composition parallels that of PAPBAC and is addressing the core issues encapsulated in the committee's title: a) developing a rigorous and consistent 5-year post-tenure review policy for all tenure-stream faculty to ensure continued excellence in research/scholarship, teaching/mentoring, and service; b) developing a policy for periodic (e.g., every 4th or 5th year) evaluation of all endowed chairs and professors to ensure continued performance at the high levels requisite for occupying these positions; and c) developing and implementing a program of performance-based salary increases.

Other relevant groups with faculty input include the Academic Programs Council, the Academic Regulations Committee, the Budget Council, the Conflict of Interest Advisory Committee, the Committee on Faculty Compensation and Benefits, the Committee on Faculty Welfare, and the Committee on Faculty Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Through these and other committees, faculty members directly contribute to the academic decision-making process and help establish the academic priorities of the University. The counterpart HSC Committees include faculty and students or staff from HSC OKC and Tulsa (23-0412). The Faculty Senate has a process for establishing committee representation from the HSC Colleges. College bylaws specify how representatives are appointed to various committees – some HSC wide, others college specific. OU-Tulsa does not have a separate governance process, as the programs and faculty are integrated in either Norman or HSC processes.

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

The University fully supports academic freedom for faculty and students. The right to academic freedom is protected by policies in the OU Board of Regents' Policies and Procedures Manual, as well as in the Faculty (23-0007, 23-0008) Handbooks and Presidential statement on students' academic freedom. The OU Board of Regents' Manual contains policies on both academic freedom and academic responsibility. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in research and publication and are entitled to freedom in the classroom when discussing course content. As citizens, faculty members have the same rights to free expression as other community members, assuming they are speaking in their personal capacity and not on behalf of the University. Faculty members are also expected to show academic responsibility, genuinely seek to be effective teachers, scholars, and community members, and treat their colleagues and students with respect.

The OU Board of Regents allows duly constituted organizations at the University to invite speakers without fear of sanction. The Student Rights and Responsibilities Code (I-6) affirms this principle and grants students the right: "To establish or disseminate publications free from any censorship or other official action controlling editorial policy or content, in accordance with applicable regulations and University policy;" "To invite and hear any speaker of choice on any subject, in accordance with applicable regulations and University policy;" and "To peaceably assemble to demonstrate, inform, or protest, in accordance with applicable regulations and University policy."

The University's commitment to freedom of expression is also subject to oversight by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE). OSRHE recently established the Oklahoma Free Speech Committee which will review the University's and other state system institutions' free speech policies and the free speech training used at each institution. It will also review any complaints of free speech violations. The University will work with OSRHE to follow any applicable guidelines and ensure its policies, practices, and training materials reaffirm the importance of academic freedom and freedom of expression to the campus community.

OU reaffirmed its commitment to these rights in Pillar 4 of the *Lead On* strategic plan, in which the University aims to become a place of belonging and emotional growth for all students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Many tactics in the Pillar's Strategy 1 dovetail with the values of academic freedom and freedom of expression, including Tactic 2, which says OU will "Promote a culture of civil discourse, on campus and in our online educational spaces, by fostering a respectful exchange of different viewpoints, perspectives, and life experiences." If a faculty member or student feels their academic freedom has been violated in their pursuit of learning, both have access to procedures allowing an individual the opportunity to have the matter considered by panels that include their peers. Faculty members may file grievances with the Faculty Appeals Board and students with the Academic Appeals Board of their college.

The University is deeply committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive environment, reflected in OU's official non-discrimination statement: "The University in compliance with all applicable federal and

state laws and regulations does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 or older), religion, disability, political beliefs, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices, or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, housing, financial aid, and educational services.” If any member of the community feels discriminated against, they can file a complaint with OU’s Institutional Equity Office and/or through the OU Report It! system.

In 2022, OU’s President established the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Freedom of Speech and Inquiry Committee. As part of its scope, the Committee compiles, reviews, and offers feedback on all University processes, procedures, training, and orientations regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion and considers their effect on expressive activity and freedom of inquiry. In November 2022, the Board of Regents adopted the Chicago Statement of Principles on Freedom of Speech for all OU campuses.

As part of its commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression, the University has a responsibility to educate students about the history and principles that underlie those rights. With the support and involvement of its President, OU celebrates an annual Free Speech week. In 2021 Free Speech Week events included external speakers, a Free Speech Essay contest, and free screen-printing on t-shirts and tote bags with free-speech-themed designs created by OU faculty and students. In 2022, the OU Honors College sponsored a teach-in during Free Speech Week that focused on free speech in relation to critical race theory, sexual identity, and the impact of recent state legislation on public education. External speakers gave talks and hosted discussions on what free speech looks like on a college campus, and free speech concerns in the age of social media. A key partner for first amendment education on campus is OU’s Institute for American Constitutional Heritage (IACH). An interdisciplinary center within the Department of Classics and Letters, IACH promotes the study of American constitutionalism. Its annual activities include the Constitutional Studies Symposium, along with lectures and discussions during the academic year. IACH provides online access to its lecture library, which includes quick courses and lectures on first amendment issues such as free speech and freedom of the press.

Students regularly exercise their first amendment rights on campus. The University recognizes the historic significance of speech and assembly, in society generally and on college campuses. Consistent with the US Constitution, the Oklahoma Constitution, and OU policy, the University recognizes students’ rights to engage in all forms of protected activity. The student-run newspaper, the *OU Daily*, has been in continuous operation since 1916. The *OU Daily* reports on campus news and events without censorship or interference from the University. Recently, the Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center, a nonpartisan entity embedded within the Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences, partnered with the Oklahoma Historical Society to analyze and digitize the student newspaper’s archive. They also created an *OU Daily* Protest Archive to highlight student reporting about campus protests.

To ensure students can freely exercise their right to freedom of expression, Student Affairs created the Campus Event Response Team (CERT). This team supports student well-being and safety during campus protests, demonstrations, and other events where possible counter-demonstrations or emotional triggers and responses may occur. CERT also advises students on organizing and running events in accordance with University guidelines. Each year, CERT compiles an Expressive Speech Annual Report (23-0576, 23-0249, 23-0250, 23-0251). An examination of these reports from 2019-2021 indicates no events partnered with CERT experienced instances of barriers or disruptions to their right to free speech.

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2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

OU's compliance with regulatory and ethical obligations is critically important to fulfilling the *Lead On* strategic plans' first pillars of becoming a "top-tier research university" (Norman) and a "top-tier research-driven academic health center" (HSC). The University is committed to cultivating and strengthening a culture of integrity via an institutional commitment to policy, education, and oversight at each stage of the research process, from guidance on the proposal and award process to effectively and ethically conducting and reporting research and expenditures. The Office of Compliance has developed a Program of Compliance satisfying federal regulatory guidance that applies to all employees submitting claims for reimbursement of medical services; performing human and/or animal research; and/or handling or working with or around hazardous, controlled substances, and/or radioactive materials. The Office has five divisions – Environmental Health and Safety, Radiation Safety, Healthcare Billing Compliance, HIPAA Privacy and Security, and Human Research Participant Protection (Full "gold standard" accreditation from AAHRPP). It also has a role on each campus's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, Institutional Biosafety Committee, and Institutional Review Board. Division and committee policies and procedures are accessible to employees and students online. The Office of Compliance provides committee oversight as well as conducts periodic compliance/quality improvement reviews and investigations of compliance when appropriate to ensure compliance with University, state, and federal requirements.

University personnel also ensure fiscal accountability in all research activities as appropriate to their areas of purview. The Healthcare Billing Compliance office conducts necessary audits and investigations related to medical billing on the HSC and Tulsa campuses; and the Office of Research Financial Services on the Norman Campus and the Grants & Contracts Accounting Office at HSC support sponsored research post-award administration and conduct investigations and audits to ensure that awards are administered in compliance with the regulations, rules, and guidelines of the sponsoring agency and in accordance with the terms of the relevant agreement. Indeed, all of the compliance related functions at HSC are connected, either directly through the Office of Legal Counsel, or through reporting to the Senior Vice President and Provost.

As noted in Section 2-A, OU has robust conflict of interest policies including the Individual Conflict of Interest Policy and the Institutional Conflict of Interest Policy. Both policies overlap with disclosures required by federal and state regulations. The University also has an Ethics in Research

policy (23-0007, 23-0008) addressing scholarly misconduct that prohibits fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism; as well as improper use of information; serious deviations from accepted research methods; and failure to comply with federal, state, or University rules concerning research. Student academic misconduct is addressed through the Academic Integrity Code for Norman academic programs, the Academic Misconduct Code (23-0008, 23-0010) for HSC academic programs, and the Code of Academic Responsibility at the College of Law. These policies define academic misconduct and associated penalties, outline processes for reporting, and provide the opportunity for hearings for students accused of academic misconduct.

These offices, policies, and codes support the *Lead On* strategic plans, which aim to strengthen the infrastructure on each campus to facilitate OU faculty, staff, and student efforts to produce high-quality, ethical research. Furthermore, as part of OU's efforts to prioritize and support education, oversight, and enforcement of ethical behavior in research and academia, the University has increased staff in relevant areas. Both the Norman and Health Sciences Center campuses now have Conflict of Interest Officers (CIOs) that work with Conflict of Interest Committees on each campus. These CIOs are non-voting members of the relevant Conflict of Interest Committee and work with the Committees to develop training, collect disclosures, and draft and oversee management plans. The Conflict of Interest policies and committees help ensure compliance not only with University policy and state law but also with federal regulations including the disclosure requirements of agencies relevant to sponsored research.

The University has a full-time Research Integrity Officer (RIO) for the Health Sciences Center, as well as a staffed Research Integrity Office. The RIO is responsible for addressing alleged violations of the Ethics in Research policy, facilitating the investigation of any allegations, sequestering relevant materials, and communicating with state and federal agencies when appropriate. Allegations of research misconduct on the Norman Campus were previously handled by the Office of Legal Counsel; however, the Norman Campus hired a Research Integrity Officer in January 2023. As detailed below, the University has also invested in training on research and academic integrity for appropriate faculty, staff, and students.

Through its Offices of Research Administration/Services, Research Integrity Office, Offices of the Vice President for Research (23-0109, 23-0408), Office of Academic Integrity Programs, and Financial Services in Research, OU supports faculty, staff, and students at all stages of research - from the grant application to post-award administration. OU provides regular training and education on every aspect of the process from grant submission and writing assistance to accurately and ethically reporting personnel and resources in compliance with federal and state guidelines. OU places great emphasis on the importance of ethical behavior in academic and research contexts and offers resources, such as COI in Research training, for faculty, staff, and students to assist in compliance with University policy and federal and state regulations. All individuals who conduct or oversee research (including administrative or financial management of research accounts) through the HSC must complete Research Integrity training and through OU-Norman must complete Sponsored Research and Compliance training. The requirements for the above trainings are in addition to any other similar training that individuals may have completed and are separate from any academic program requirements for students or post-doctoral fellows, including credit-bearing courses that meet federal requirements for Responsible Conduct of Research training. OU also provides Responsible Conduct in Research training through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative, which includes core topics to consider in efforts to conduct research in a responsible manner. Faculty, staff, and student researchers on all campuses have access to additional resources on federal, state, and University compliance, including numerous optional training courses and

compliance workshops throughout the year and updates to federal, state, or internal requirements. Researchers also have access to research integrity online guidance on the pre- and post-award process, including written materials and archived training videos.

Students and faculty receive guides to understanding academic integrity from the Office of Academic Integrity Programs. The Office provides training to Norman Campus faculty and students and frequently visits class meetings to speak to students directly. Throughout 2022, the Office of Academic Integrity gave over 60 presentations to approximately 2,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Students have access to an assignment calculator to help them learn to organize their time, online citation tools to assist them with correctly assigning credit in their work, and free access to tutoring through University College Action Tutoring. Students can get assistance from the Writing Centers on the Norman or HSC campus, which provide both synchronous and asynchronous options, or in free drop-in tutoring sessions at the Norman Campus Math Center. The Office of Academic Integrity also provides documentation explaining the steps related to allegations, reporting, investigation, and hearing procedures.

Students receive training on the use of information resources from their respective libraries. The Bizzell Memorial Library on the Norman Campus frequently hosts library instruction sessions as part of OU courses for both undergraduate and graduate students (23-0575). The library also offers consultations where students can meet with librarians individually or in small groups, and it conducts drop-in outreach programming sessions that are regularly attended by a mix of faculty, staff, and undergraduate and graduate students.

Enforcement is a critical component of ensuring community members remain ethical in their pursuit of academic success. OU has policies and procedures in place to monitor compliance, as well as reporting tools that individuals may use when they have concerns about compliance issues. The University maintains OU Report It!, a 24-hour phone and online reporting system for all campuses. It has also implemented software to collect and manage conflict of interest disclosures, and has instituted more robust reporting processes, as described in more detail above. Research misconduct inquiries and investigations are conducted pursuant to the Ethics in Research policies by the Research Integrity Office or Office of Legal Counsel, and violations are determined by an Investigations Committee whose final report includes recommended sanctions and follow-up actions sent to the appropriate campus Senior Vice President and Provost for action. All sanction letters contain details regarding specified sanctions or follow-up actions and the University staff member responsible for ensuring they are enforced. Sanctions can range from additional training to termination. When appropriate and required by federal regulations and/or the terms of a sponsored research agreement, violations are also reported to the relevant federal agency or sponsoring entity.

Violations of academic integrity by students can be reported in several ways, most frequently by faculty members who are also trained to identify and report instances of academic misconduct. The outcomes of alleged violations are determined by the Academic Misconduct Board on the HSC Campus, the Integrity Council on the Norman Campus, and the Council of Academic Responsibility at the College of Law. Each panel recommends appropriate sanctions to the relevant administrative officer, who ultimately imposes the sanctions. Depending on the type of sanction, students may have the right to appeal.

All faculty, staff, and students who participate in scholarly activity are subject to the relevant policies and enforcement mechanisms.

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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

The University prioritizes and expects fair and ethical conduct across all aspects of its operations including academic, research, financial, auxiliary, and human resources contexts. This commitment begins with the OU Board of Regents, an impartial body knowledgeable and transparent in compliance with state law and University policy. In recent years, the Board and the University have renewed their commitment to integrity in its strategic plan and taken steps to strengthen the infrastructure that provides support and training on matters of integrity to faculty, staff, and students. The Board and University administration work diligently to establish rigorous policies, hire additional qualified personnel, and invest in new offices and reporting systems to educate, require, and enforce ethical conduct on all campuses and in the University community.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

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

Argument

The University of Oklahoma has robust institutional mechanisms and processes designed to assure the quality, relevance, and currency of its courses and degree programs. Applications for all new courses must pass multiple levels of approval, beginning with discussions among faculty at the departmental level prior to review at the college level. Undergraduate and pre-professional level courses and programs are approved by the Academic Programs Council (APC), while graduate level courses and programs are approved by the Graduate Council. After Council approval, proposals go to the appropriate campus Senior Vice President and Provost. Health professions and public health education at HSC includes an additional layer of review by a designated national accrediting body (23-0274) that establishes required standards for each discipline. With Provost approval, new curricula and substantive modifications move to the OU Board of Regents (Board) (23-0048, 23-0049, 23-0050) before advancing to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE), who grant final approval (23-0276).

APC's initial review process requires course proposals that clearly articulate learning objectives. Graduate-level courses taken by undergraduate students may be approved as graduate credit under provisions of the Graduate Bulletin (23-0260, 23-0277). The Graduate Council's Course and Curriculum subcommittee on the Norman Campus or the Course Director at HSC must approve courses applied for credit toward graduate programs. Once approved, course assessment is conducted by individual faculty to ensure ongoing enhancement of student learning. This is measured, in part, by student performance relative to the expected course learning outcomes articulated for each course. New degree programs and/or fields of study follow the same general approval process as individual courses, but also undergo formal post-approval reviews, including Academic Program Review (APR) and the OSRHE's post-approval (post-audit) and productivity assessment processes.

Academic Program Review is conducted for every program on a seven-year cycle, as mandated by OSRHE policy. The APR process includes assessment of learning objectives and outcomes achievement. The primary purpose of APR is to ensure degree programs function at the highest

possible levels of academic quality, are appropriately resourced, and are consistent with the mission of the University. This process is described in more detail in Section 4-A.

The Office of Academic Assessment conducts annual comprehensive reviews of program assessment reports from all colleges on the Norman Campus. Degree programs at all levels must establish well-articulated and measurable student learning outcomes as part of the program assessment process. Many OU degree programs, especially in the health fields offered by the Health Sciences Center, are subjected to additional quality assurance processes required by their specialty accrediting body, intended to demonstrate alignment with industry standards and ensure graduates can achieve credentials for professional practice. Assessment of student learning and general program quality in those programs is assured by remaining in good standing with specialized accreditors. This process is described in more detail in Section 4-B.

OU requires its educational programs have the same high level of quality, learning goals, and student learning outcomes irrespective of delivery method, instructional location, or consortial relationship. The University provides support for online programs and teaching technology through a range of support units, such as the Office of Digital Learning and college-level structures (23-278). All fully online and blended courses are designed, approved, and delivered in accordance with standards for quality assurance set forth by the Academic Programs Council. OU has contractual agreements specifically targeted to address Oklahoma's inadequate rural healthcare infrastructure. OU colleges maintain full control over curriculum and faculty qualifications in these arrangements, and none of the agreements result in more than 20% of program content being delivered by non-OU instructors. OU's international programs adhere to the same course development standards, systems, and procedures as those offered on campus. Faculty hiring standards and evaluation processes are consistent with the *Faculty Handbook*.

The University of Oklahoma offers a dual credit program (Concurrent Enrollment) to high school students. OSRHE sets statewide admission standards for this program, as well as faculty qualification requirements. The program is open to high school juniors and seniors, and participants are classified as non-degree-seeking visitors. Concurrent Enrollment students enroll in regular University courses taught by University faculty. Owing to this equivalence of program quality, the learning outcomes and level of achievement should be the same as for students enrolled in the University full-time. Dual credit is currently available only through the Norman Campus.

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. 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. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Argument

The University conforms to General Education requirements delineated in the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) Policy Manual and, moreover, is committed to the principle that a high-quality General Education (Gen Ed) curriculum is critically important for all undergraduate students. OU's Gen Ed curriculum is designed to ensure each student receives a broad, liberal arts education, regardless of their area of specialization, for the purpose of acquiring the "fundamental knowledge and skills they need to flourish as individuals and as citizens." Pillar 2 of the Norman campus *Lead On* plan (Prepare Students for a Life of Success, Meaning, Service, and Positive Impact) places particular emphasis on the centrality of Gen Ed, especially in Strategy 6: "Ensure that every academic program has a curriculum combining liberal arts, innovation, and engagement, while providing all students with essential skills to succeed."

General Education is under the purview of the Senior Vice Provost for Instruction & Student Success on the Norman Campus, who serves as Chair of the Provost's Advisory Committee for General Education Oversight (PACGEO). PACGEO is the group charged with assessing the Gen Ed program's adherence to state policy and determining if it is serving its intended function. Committee members are appointed by the Provost from faculty and staff involved in teaching general education courses and/or advising students about general education requirements. The Committee is responsible for evaluating new and existing courses to make sure they meet general education requirements and for improving awareness of Gen Ed standards among faculty and students.

PACGEO uses established requirements and guidelines to evaluate whether a course meets Gen Ed curriculum standards. These guidelines are used to ensure that all courses approved for the Gen Ed curriculum not only support the University's mission but also provide a solid foundation for all of OU's degree programs. OU's Gen Ed approval guidelines also require proposed courses meet a consistent overall quality of structure, including requirements related to writing assignments, course

content, class size, faculty qualifications, multi-section courses, grading policy, and active learning. For example, every Gen Ed course must include a writing component appropriate to expectations within its disciplinary area, to enhance written communication skills among all OU graduates (see section 4-B for more information on Gen Ed assessment).

OU's Gen Ed curriculum requires 40 credit hours of approved courses distributed among the following Core Areas: Symbolic and Oral Communication, Natural Science, Social Science, Humanities, and the First Year Experience. At least one course used to satisfy the Gen Ed requirements must be at the upper division level and outside of the student's major. PACGEO is currently reviewing its guidelines and expect a revised version will go into effect by the end of the Spring 2023 semester. The revised guidelines are expected to include a 5-7-year review cycle for all Gen Ed approved courses.

OU is committed to developing a campus climate that fully welcomes and engages all community members and believes that building a more diverse faculty and curriculum are essential to that goal. To that end, Gen Ed requirements include two semesters of a language and a world culture course. Further strengthening Gen Ed and our range of major and minor program options, and the diversity of our learning community, OU has strong departments of African & African American Studies, Native American Studies (with strong emphasis on Native sovereignty, tribal governance, indigenous arts, and languages), and Women's and Gender Studies; a Latinx Studies major; and a range of international and global studies faculty, courses, and programs in the College of International Studies, the Honors College, and in various other humanities and social science departments, including English, History, Modern Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics (MLLL), and Political Science. Moreover, the colleges of Arts and Sciences and International Studies require intermediate-level language acquisition (23-0288, 23-0581). In addition to Indigenous languages - Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, and Kiowa (offered in Native American Studies) - MLLL offers programs in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish, and five semesters of Persian language. MLLL was recently commended by the Modern Language Association for managing to "beat the odds at a time of general decline in [language] enrollments" nationwide.

The University also has a comprehensive study abroad program, coordinated by the College of International Studies (CIS), with a wide range of programmatic options ranging from several weeks to a full year. The programs are intended to broaden students' understanding of the world around them. OU's Puebla, Mexico, campus (23-0175, 23-0554, 23-290) is growing in significance within the larger institutional landscape of study abroad, which currently includes programs in 79 countries and over 223 cities on six continents. Prior to the Covid pandemic, fully one-third of OU students studied abroad during their undergraduate career, and 20% of those students participated in our signature international program in Arezzo, Italy (23-0580). OU was ranked 23rd of all U.S. universities for the number of students studying abroad in 2020-2021, and 10th in the nation for the number studying abroad in short-term programs. OU's cultural climate is deeply enriched by the presence of international students; nearly 1,700 students (Norman, HSC) from 135 countries (Norman, HSC) are enrolled across the University's three campuses. More information on diversity initiatives at OU is provided in Section 1-C.

In line with the Norman Campus's Carnegie Classification of "Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity," the Office of the Vice President for Research and Partnerships supports OU's role as a "flagship public institution...focused on societal impact through research and creative activity," with a special emphasis on bringing varied disciplines "from the core STEM fields to the humanities and fine arts, together to foster creative, comprehensive solutions to global challenges."

This strong emphasis on the applied social benefits of research and creative activity drives the University's support of faculty and student contributions to the discovery of new knowledge and understanding of the natural world and the human condition. Research, creative endeavors, and teaching at all levels coalesce into the kind of purposeful and dynamic knowledge creation and application that exemplifies and amplifies the University's mission.

OU's increased investment in research is visible through significant metric changes. The University is committed to achieving AAU-level metrics for its Norman Campus in research, faculty honorifics, postdoctoral trainees, and graduate and undergraduate student retention and graduation rates. Because of this concerted focus and support for our faculty, externally sponsored research expenditures, awards, and proposal submissions have not only recovered from pandemic-related loss of momentum but are now at record heights.

Tenured and tenure-track OU faculty members are expected to be actively involved in producing scholarly and creative work in their respective disciplines. Research leadership at all campuses provides faculty with support at both campus and college levels for their research and creative activities via supplemental resources and services such as internal funding programs, support of interdisciplinary research centers and institutes, shared core facilities, and a faculty research award program (23-0109). Likewise, OU is equally committed to student engagement in original research and views this as essential to its efforts to improve retention and graduation rates. The Norman Campus Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost recently established an Undergraduate Research Director position and has directed significant funding to undergraduate summer fellowships and Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (URCA) grants, which focus on the integration of sophomore students into externally funded faculty research. Moreover, the First-Year Research Experience (FYRE) program has been in place since 2012 and includes several core STEM departments. The Chemistry & Biochemistry department has a FYRE2 seminar course on STEM engagement for sophomores, and FYRE3 and FYRE4 courses help scale up meaningful engagement in funded research for juniors and seniors. Undergraduates from across the University present their research at national and regional conferences. For example, Mathematics majors present at the OK-AR section of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) or at the Texas-Oklahoma Regional Undergraduate Symposium (TORUS), and at various other regional and national conferences, and a number of them have published their work in scholarly journals and proceedings. FYRE students in the Mathematics department have also been involved in analyzing departmental data from the Math Tutoring Center that is used to inform decisions about tutoring resource allocations to maximize efficiencies and better serve student needs.

OU emphasizes to prospective students the importance of participating in the creation and social application of new knowledge and understanding throughout their degree program. Undergraduate student participation in research is encouraged through a variety of programs offered across the Norman Campus providing faculty mentorship, degree credit, practical laboratory experience, funding, and or publishing opportunities. Among these are the College of Arts and Sciences, the Honors College, and the College of Engineering (23-0298). Students in the Honors College complete and defend a thesis as part of its program. Many students also present their research via oral presentations or posters at the annual Undergraduate Research Day.

Original research and creative activity are foundational to graduate education at OU, evidenced by centralized support programs through the Graduate College, such as funding for graduate student conference travel and research activities, supporting students' attendance at prestigious trainings/courses at other institutions, and dissertation finishing fellowships that relieve doctoral

students of graduate assistant responsibilities as they complete their dissertations. The Graduate Student Senate also provides support for research-related travel through a competitive process. At the Health Sciences Center, the Graduate College provides competitive travel awards to graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to present their research at national and international scientific meetings. There are over 800 graduate research assistants contributing to the production of original research and creative activity on the Norman and Tulsa campuses. Graduate student scholarship and creative products are made available through publication and through the release of master's theses and doctoral dissertations on the open-access SHAREOK platform. Graduate students are eligible to apply for funding administered by OU Libraries for open-access publication of scholarly articles and books.

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. 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, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. 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.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Argument

The size of OU's faculty is appropriate for the size of its student body and the academic programs that serve them. OU's student-faculty ratio is 8:1 for health sciences programs and 17:1 for all other programs. The University of Oklahoma has a total of 3,646 faculty. Of these, 71% are full-time and 29% are part-time. Of the full-time faculty, 46% are either tenured or tenure-track. Total staff across all campuses is 6,354; 96% are permanent full-time employees. Faculty are expected to teach, conduct research, and contribute service to the University (23-0007, 23-0008). Staff support faculty, administrators, students, and other staff engaged in teaching, learning, research, service, and administration in a wide variety of ways.

The University is committed to creating a campus culture and climate that is fully committed to the championing of diversity, equity, and inclusion as foundational for institutional excellence and continued progress. At OU, diversity means all individuals and viewpoints are represented and included; equity means all have access and opportunity to succeed; and inclusion means all have a sense of belonging in an environment of respect and care (23-0035).

While OU's faculty and staff demographics do not currently align with those of our students or with those of the State of Oklahoma in general, University leadership recognizes this and has made improvement in this area a top priority, as indicated by Pillar 4 of the *Lead On* strategic plan for HSC and Norman: "Become a Place of Belonging and Emotional Growth for All..." The Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) has highlighted the need for better information about current employee diversity and is working to develop an accurate, accessible baseline. Information will be more readily and consistently provided via Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the *Lead*

On strategic plans and for the college- and department-level plans, as well as through enhanced reporting by the Office of Institutional Research & Reporting.

The University is working to improve hiring and retention processes to minimize bias and prioritize employee potential, knowing this will help OU attract excellent faculty and staff who reflect the diversity we see in our student body. Academic leadership, in conjunction with the Office of Institutional Equity, has improved training and processes related to forming representative and effective faculty search committees, developing diverse candidate pools, and conducting interviews (23-0184, 23-0026). All faculty job offers are ultimately approved by the appropriate Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost. Staff hires are managed by units in collaboration with Human Resources, which provides guidance on best practices related to screening applications and interviewing candidates (23-0027). The University recognizes good recruitment and hiring practices are a strategic long-term investment in institutional quality.

Every hire at OU is approved after careful consideration of overall institutional initiatives. Colleges and departments review vacant faculty and staff positions, assessing program demand, changes in disciplinary focus, and long-term strategic plans. Reviewing faculty lines in the context of current needs and emerging scholarly interests allows academic units more flexibility to foster innovative field-centered and interdisciplinary work and more closely integrate cutting-edge research and creative activity into the teaching enterprise.

To meet the projected growth in both undergraduate and graduate student enrollment, the University's strategic plan calls for 150 new faculty hires on the Norman Campus over a six-year period and 150 over a ten-year period at HSC. Of note is a commitment to hiring 40 faculty for the Gallogly College of Engineering over the next three years. This commitment is strongly supported by the Oklahoma state government and is a direct response to an identified state-wide need. OU also practices strategic cluster hiring and launched a major strategic hiring initiative in 2021 that led to 20 additional centrally-funded faculty hires (beyond the standard college-funded hires) across all departments, colleges, and campuses to boost multi-disciplinary convergence research. For example, one of the cluster hires, involving OU Health Sciences Center and the College of Arts and Sciences, is directed towards cancer research and patient care.

The University recognizes its responsibility to recruit and retain sufficient faculty to support classroom and non-classroom roles and other programmatic needs. On the Norman Campus, for example, efforts are made at the unit level to ensure a balance in faculty teaching and mentoring loads that recognizes a range of factors including credit hours generated, number of graduate advisees, and engagement with undergraduate research mentorship.

Each fall academic administrators on the Norman campus are reminded via a memo from the Provost's Office of faculty qualification requirements, which align with HLC guidelines. Regular faculty are hired after a comprehensive search process, during which their educational qualifications and disciplinary interests are evaluated in relation to department and college needs and long-term strategy. Part-time instructional faculty are hired in accordance with *Faculty Handbook* policies and procedures (23-0007, 23-0008). Instructional faculty without standard academic qualifications must possess significant industry or clinical expertise or equivalent certification. These requirements apply equally to those teaching dual credit courses and providing instruction in contractual arrangements. Departments are responsible for maintaining documentation of academic credentials and/or tested experience and must be ready to produce such documentation upon request (23-0316, 23-0577). Faculty wishing to teach or advise graduate students must obtain Graduate Faculty status, a process that requires review of appropriate disciplinary criteria, including terminal degrees, tested

experience, graduate mentorship, and evidence of scholarship. The membership of each master's and doctoral committee must be approved by the OU Graduate College.

Mid-tenure review, tenure, and promotion (to associate or full professor level) processes include input from external reviewers and review at the departmental, college, and university levels (23-0007, 23-0008). In addition, performance evaluations of all salaried faculty – whether temporary or permanent, tenured/tenure-track or renewable term – are conducted annually at the departmental level (23-0007, 23-0008, 23-0009, 23-0533, 23-0534). Evaluation procedures are subject to approval by the college dean and Senior Vice President and Provost. Thus, each academic unit determines the nature and level of acceptable scholarly work, evidence of teaching effectiveness, and types of service appropriate and accepted for their discipline. The Norman Campus begins this annual process with Committee A – a standing committee in each unit generally comprising the Chair/Director and two of its tenured faculty members – evaluating each faculty member in their academic unit according to the criteria and procedures approved by that unit. Evaluation results are put into a Summary Report of Annual Faculty Evaluation and submitted first to the faculty member for a response (if any), then to the appropriate dean, and, finally, to the provost (23-0320). The Norman Campus *Faculty Handbook* specifies renewable term faculty and ranked renewable faculty are required, in addition to an annual evaluation, to receive a comprehensive and thorough evaluation of their performance prior to the final year of their multi-year term (23-0007).

The University has various processes and programs intended to foster periodic self-assessment at the departmental level. In 2022, OU submitted an Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report focused on faculty evaluation processes and procedures to facilitate outcomes and goals related to student, faculty, University, and community success. Benchmarking across eleven comparative institutions found that most institutions have a highly decentralized faculty annual evaluation process and that evaluation scales, use, and sharing of results differ substantially among institutions. The University is currently developing a comprehensive toolkit of equitable and transparent faculty evaluation tools for teaching, research, and service, as well as training modules for faculty and unit leadership, funded by a 5-year NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation award. These tools will be piloted with volunteer academic units and revised based on feedback and research outcomes. This effort will continue through 2027, at which time the final toolkit guiding departments through the customization process will be available for all OU departments, as well as shared broadly via website and webinar for use by other institutions.

All Norman Campus course instructors receive detailed student experience feedback through the Student Experience Survey (SES), developed in 2019-2021 and fully implemented as of Spring 2022. Support to faculty and graduate teaching assistants on how to interpret and use the results is being provided by the Center for Faculty Excellence. Multiple workshops were provided for administrators to give guidance for how to use the SES in annual evaluations; recordings of these workshops are available. Training modules are being created to guide graduate students in how to use the results in applications for employment. The SES feedback is designed so that instructors can understand and adjust based on the student voice to improve the course design, course materials/content, or use of evidence-based practices. The SES results are combined with other information, including instructor narrative, during the annual teaching evaluation process to encourage instructor reflection on pedagogy and course materials/content, as well as the use of evidence-based effective teaching practices. As explained in the *Faculty Handbook*, the course and instructor evaluation processes are intended both to provide feedback to the instructor and information to chairs, directors, and Committee A about the quality of instruction within the academic unit. When applicable, the results may also facilitate appropriate recognition of excellent instruction. HSC also conducts student

instructional evaluations on a regular basis, coordinated by the colleges. This allows for specialized survey instruments that capture information required by respective professional and programmatic accrediting bodies.

OU provides resources supporting faculty success at all career stages. The Norman Campus Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE) offers resources in several areas. For teaching, CFE provides syllabus, teaching, and writing support; resources for inclusive pedagogy and community-engaged teaching; sources for evaluating teaching; and instruction in strategies for providing high-quality online and blended instruction. For research and creative activity, CFE provides workshops on topics including budget basics, community-engaged research, and navigating specific federal agency proposal processes. It also offers writing support on an individual or group basis to assist faculty as they develop research, fellowship, and book proposals, as well as journal articles and other writing products. Peer mentoring is available to foster faculty growth and leadership, and a series of curriculum plans offer a progression of workshops and consultations tailored to a faculty member's career stage. CFE also oversees an annual two-day New Faculty Orientation, providing critical information, resources, and support for research and creative activities, teaching, and service. More extensive support for new faculty includes the New Faculty Orientation In-Depth, which provides a series of opportunities to interact with others in their cohort, as well as the units and personnel responsible for supporting their careers as academic professionals. CFE also offers workshops to help faculty prepare for the tenure and promotion to Associate Professor process, as well as workshops and resources to support faculty as they prepare their dossiers for promotion to Full Professor rank. In addition to providing these targeted services to OU faculty at all career points, the CFE also meets with prospective faculty when they visit campus to interview, offering a confidential space to ask questions about campus and community resources.

HSC's Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Faculty Development provides resources and information for faculty career development as well as tools for teaching and learning, such as the Scholarship & Teaching Excellence Program. Every year, HSC holds a New Faculty Onboarding workshop series on topics including academic career pathways; promotion and tenure expectations; foundations for success in teaching, research, and scholarship; mentoring; service leadership; and an introduction to OU and the OUHSC Strategic Plan. College deans may also nominate early career faculty to participate as fellows in the highly interactive, 11-month Faculty Leadership Program. Other valuable faculty resources at HSC include HSC Education Grand Rounds, designed to offer faculty information about tools, innovations, and strategies for teaching and learner assessment; the Scholarship and Teaching Excellence Program; Mentor and Mentee training; community-engaged research programs; and Resources for Faculty, featuring valuable information on academic career planning, Award Dossier Tips, and Teaching Resources.

As part of promoting retention of tenured faculty, the University has policies intended to encourage continuing high professional competence and accomplishment among all faculty in their respective disciplines. The Norman Campus Post Tenure Review process is designed to provide faculty and their post-tenure review committee with an opportunity to assess each faculty member's overall performance every five years after their award of tenure, and to present plans for the next five-year period in relation to the goals and mission of the unit and University. Each Norman and HSC college and department establishes standards for the promotion of faculty within that unit. OU also has many faculty awards recognizing outstanding teaching and mentorship; research and creative/scholarly activity; professional and University service; and public outreach. The *Faculty Handbook* provides criteria for selection as well as nomination and selection procedures (23-0007, 23-0008).

Evaluation and professional development are also provided for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA). On the Norman campus, GTAs are evaluated at the academic unit level by the chair/director or their designate (e.g., Director of Graduate Studies). This process may include periodic classroom observation followed by a discussion of findings. OU also offers professional development to graduate students as they first begin their role as teaching assistants in Norman Campus programs. These include a New Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation to guide new GTAs through their first assignment; workshops, classroom observation, and coaching for international GTAs; pedagogy training by the Center for Faculty Excellence for graduate students interested in pursuing careers in higher education; and four OU Graduate College micro-credentials offered through a new Instructional Competencies Certificate Program starting in Spring 2023.

At HSC, graduate students and post-doctoral fellows who are interested in a career in academia are offered a two-semester course called Preparing Future Faculty (PFF). They learn about academic responsibilities and advancement, the tripartite mission, designing courses and lectures, using active learning, assessing student learning, managing students, and evaluating teaching effectiveness. PFF students develop and deliver two lectures and one laboratory or small group teaching to undergraduate or graduate classes at universities in the state. The experience is highly mentored. The PFF students also complete a class observation, formal lecture rehearsal, lecture delivery observation, and a lecture debrief. Students submit a teaching philosophy and portfolio that can be used for academic job searches. Professional development and training for Tulsa graduate assistants are supported through the services offered by the OU Graduate College and HSC.

Pursuant to the *Faculty Handbook*, instructional faculty on the Norman Campus are required to provide office hours, listed on their course syllabi, to ensure they are available to students for individual academic support (23-0007). Faculty are encouraged to provide virtual office hours in addition to or in lieu of traditional in-person office hours. Virtual office hours have shown higher attendance by students due to their inherent flexibility, allowing more students the opportunity to engage with their faculty members. The policy articulates the value of faculty being available to students. Compliance with, and effectiveness of, this policy is evaluated as part of regularly administered Student Satisfaction Surveys (23-0066, 23-0226).

OU also has several student/faculty mentoring programs at the department, college, and University levels intended to provide students at all levels with personalized nurturing and professional development as they pursue their education. For example, undergraduate capstone research experiences involve faculty mentoring as a key course element (23-0330).. Faculty teaching in graduate programs provide student mentoring in research, conference presentations, and publications. On the Norman Campus, the First-Year Student Mentoring Program provides students with opportunities to build relationships with faculty, increase their personal network, and gain valuable life experience.

These instructional activities are supported by well-trained staff at all organizational levels. The academic colleges regularly review staffing levels to ensure they are sufficiently prepared to meet student and faculty needs at the department level. All staff members providing student support services at OU, such as financial aid counseling, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are required to possess relevant degrees, certifications, and/or experience appropriate to their positions. Minimum qualifications are determined by the employing departments in consultation with the Office of Human Resources (HR) and are presented in job descriptions for each position. The HR website outlines recruitment and hiring processes, which have been designed to ensure a well-qualified and diverse applicant pool for each position. HR works closely with departmental search

committees to complete the selection and hiring process in compliance with applicable law and University policy.

All employees must complete several training modules, assigned based on their job duties. Human Resources offers a wide array of professional development workshops year-round to regular employees (further discussed in 2-C). The Staff Senate also advocates for staff professional development. More specialized training opportunities are offered at division and department levels. In addition to resources provided by OU, professional staff are encouraged to participate in state, regional, and national conferences of their respective organizations.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for 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 offerings 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 and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Argument

The University of Oklahoma recognizes the importance of providing students with key support services during their time at OU, whether for social, academic, or life skills development. From the moment a student arrives on campus to the day they cross the stage at graduation, the University works to provide timely assistance informed by national best practices in the field of student affairs. OU's Student Affairs offices support student success through a range of services distributed across all three campuses (23-0117, 23-0475, 23-0476).

New student support services are available on all three campuses. All incoming first-year undergraduate students complete the University College's New Sooner Enrollment Program, a comprehensive enrollment and orientation process. Prior to enrollment, new students must complete entry-level assessments of their academic preparation in Reading, English, and Math, at which point they are placed in appropriate levels of coursework. New undergraduate transfer students also go through an entry-level assessment process. These assessments were developed to ensure all incoming students are placed into appropriate courses. During this campus visit, incoming students meet with academic advisors to discuss potential majors, select their fall schedule, and learn about campus services. Learning support and preparatory processes for students in health programs are provided by individual colleges, including some program-specific orientations where both academic and central support services information is shared (23-0338).

University College also provides academic assistance programs designed to help students successfully transition to college, including Advising and Enrollment, the Student Learning Center, the Assessment Center, and the Center for Student Advancement. They are concentrated in a centrally-located building on the Norman Campus, ensuring easy access by students new to campus. OU is one of a small number of institutions offering a special set of support services to students facing potential barriers to academic success. Despite federal funding decreases, the University has continued its commitment to these prestigious programs: Upward Bound, Project Threshold, and McNair Scholars (23-0339). Additionally, the University's Accessibility & Disability Resource Center provides support for students with disabilities, with services including tutoring, mentoring, transportation/parking services, and scholarships.

On the Norman Campus, the Office of Graduation & Persistence Support manages several initiatives

aimed at increasing student retention, persistence, and graduation. It offers students one-on-one consultations with staff to create an action plan to address success barriers ranging from major exploration, financial barriers, social support, and academic life coaching.

The OU Graduate College hosts a Graduate Student Welcome Week as part of orientation for all incoming graduate students. Events include a Tour and Orientation Day during which students familiarize themselves with important study resources such as the Bizzell Library and attend sessions designed to orient them to systems like Canvas, OU's learning management system. Graduate students also participate in Professional Ethics Training and Graduate Student Research and Creativity Day. These Graduate College events are supplemented by Center for Faculty Excellence events mentioned in more detail in Section 3-C.

Norman Campus coordinates undergraduate advising under the Associate Provost for Academic Advising. Academic Advising's mission is to "educate and empower students as they design, develop and implement individual academic plans leading to intellectual and personal growth for success as citizens of the global community." At HSC, once students are admitted to a degree program, their academic advising is handled by the program college.

Norman Campus has an inclusive academic advising community, the Provost's Advisory Committee on Academic Advising. This committee reviews existing policies, evaluates proposed new policies and procedures, communicates important campus updates and deadlines to members of the advising community, and is briefed by campus representatives about programs that impact student success. OU's Academic Advising Resource Center provides on-campus professional development workshops exploring the unique needs of potentially vulnerable student populations. The University provides support for professional advisors to participate in the National Academic Advising Association and the Oklahoma Academic Advising Association, and OU's advising services have recently expanded to include Academic Life Coaching.

General academic advising for first-year students on the Norman campus is provided by the University College Advising Office. Students wishing to transition to a degree-granting college must meet that college's GPA and other entry requirements. Once students are admitted to a degree program, they work with the advising staff for their college or department. Academic Advising policies, procedures, and resources are shared on their website, including links to the general catalog for degree requirements.

During their first year, students having trouble choosing a major can meet with Major Exploration Coaches who help them find one to match their interests, strengths, and career goals. OU also organizes a Majors/Minors Fair, providing students with an opportunity to meet representatives from every academic program at the University. In addition, University College offers seminars and courses designed to help new students successfully transition to higher education, including Foundation to College Learning and First-Year Faculty Mentoring (23-0353).

An expansive and well-maintained physical infrastructure is required to facilitate first-class teaching, learning, research, and creativity. OU's facilities footprint includes laboratories and field stations, computer labs, high-end data analytics centers, and an airport, as well as classrooms, performance facilities, clinical skills training centers, clinics, libraries, and museums. Though departments and colleges configure and maintain most laboratory facilities, there are also Core Facilities at Norman and HSC partially supported by central resources administered by the appropriate campus research office.

The University Research Campus, on the south end of the Norman Campus, provides an excellent environment for synergy, bringing together state and federal government organizations, University academic and research programs, and private companies. With more than one million square feet, the Research Campus includes the National Weather Center as well as the Innovation Hub, a maker space open to students, faculty, staff, and the public. The University Research Park (URP), located in Oklahoma City on the HSC campus, has more than 700,000 square feet of space supporting biomedical research. URP is located at the core of the emerging Oklahoma City Innovation District.

OU has a research library on each of the three campuses plus several smaller affiliate libraries. In total, the University Libraries, including the main Bizzell Memorial Library, comprise the largest research library in Oklahoma. Resources include more than 8 million physical volumes, 1.9 million digital books and serials, and 320 research databases supporting all disciplines and research programs (23-0355). Library staff prepare research guides and tutorials, with a professional librarian assigned to each discipline/subject to provide instruction on finding, evaluating, and using information sources. These professional staff also teach course-specific research strategy curriculum in the classroom, through workshops, and through the Banner integrated learning system platform as requested by and coordinated with instructional faculty. While some library instruction is provided upon request, librarians also offer drop-in workshops on research tools, methods, and strategies and are available for one-on-one consultations.

The University Libraries is a member of the distinguished Association for Research Libraries and the Center for Research Libraries Global Resource Network. In addition, the Libraries participate in several national organizations focused on increasing access to scholarly information through shared storage, purchasing, and inter-institutional borrowing. These include the Greater Western Library Alliance and the Western Regional Storage Trust. Distinctive special collections include some of the most important early manuscripts in the history of science currently held in U.S. libraries, such as Galileo's personal copy of his work supporting the Copernican theory, with corrections in his own handwriting. In addition, the Special Research Collections program includes a world-renowned History of Science collection, the vast holdings of the Western History Collections on the American West and the region's Tribal Nations, the Bass Business History Collection, Chinese Literature Translation Archive, American School of Architecture, Papers of the Romanoff Family, and European and American Literature collections. Materials not owned by OU Libraries can be requested through interlibrary loans from other institutions around the world. The library also offers a service called Sooner Xpress that delivers requested research materials (including interlibrary loans) to Norman Campus users at a branch library, home, or office. Supporting the Sooner Express program, and the breadth of technical services activities is the Library Service Center, located off-campus, which houses over 500,000 volumes of materials and microform (23-0355, 23-0356, 23-0545, 23-0546).

After conducting a thorough review of student and faculty needs, the Dean of University Libraries used the results to guide significant changes to the physical environment of the Bizzell Library (23-0357, 23-0578). Combining OU student feedback and national best practices, the building's basic layout has been transformed. The fifth floor of the library was changed from an underutilized space to a state-of-the-art gallery area to highlight OU's special collections. Lower Level 1 of the library now houses the Collaborative Learning Center, including a collaborative classroom as well as individual and group study areas, a seminar space, a Community Room, a Digital Scholarship Lab, and group meeting and research areas. Lower Level 2 houses the Graduate Student and Faculty Center, which features reading rooms, reservable private and small group rooms, and a collaborative space – the Living Room – for graduate students and faculty to meet and share ideas (23-0356). The

University Libraries seeks new opportunities to maximize the use of library services, resources, and facilities by gathering feedback from students and faculty about evolving needs and information behaviors through systematic engagement via the Student Advisory Council and the Faculty Senate's University Library Committee (23-0358, 23-0579).

The Donald E. Pray Law Library at the OU Law Center supports instructional and legal activities of the Law Center's faculty and students, as well as the public. This research library contains print volumes as well as meeting and study spaces, and it provides access to more than 25 legal research databases such as Westlaw and LexisNexis (23-0359).

HSC houses the Robert M. Bird Health Sciences Library, which contains the largest collection of print and electronic health resources in the state of Oklahoma. Bird Library faculty and staff provide a variety of user assistance, including classroom instruction, consulting, searching, collaboration on systematic reviews, Interlibrary Loan, proctoring, and 3D printing. In addition to open study areas on two floors, group and individual study rooms are available and there is a computer lab for testing or instruction. The library's holdings include a special History of Medicine collection. The relationship between medicine and the arts is reinforced through rotating exhibits displayed in the third-floor art gallery, and library staff sponsor a twice-yearly book club for students, faculty, and staff.

Tulsa's Schusterman Library includes a digital exhibit space; an information commons containing computer workstations and student group study rooms; and reference and information services including mediated searching, interlibrary loan, and document delivery services. The library coordinates with the other campus's libraries to provide access to all current electronic subscriptions and databases and is developing a historical collection. Schusterman Library provides health literacy support and training, as well as treadmill desks, bicycle desks, under-desk ellipticals, and other active movement equipment. Tulsa also houses the Morningcrest Health Library, which serves medical students, faculty, patients, families, and members of the public visiting the Schusterman Center Clinic.

OU's fine arts programs are located on the Norman Campus, where there are excellent performance facilities for drama, music, theatre, and art. For example, the Donald W. Reynolds Performing Arts Center utilizes the latest technical equipment with the ambiance of a turn-of-the-century European concert hall, while the A. Max Weitzenhoffer Theatre offers an intimate, state-of-the-art flexible theatre-in-the-round setting for drama, opera, and musical main-stage productions. Drama Studio venues include the E. Frank Gilson Lab Theatre and the Studio Theatre, used for student-directed and Lab productions. The Catlett Music Center contains studios, rehearsal suites, classrooms, MIDI labs, the Grant Fine Arts Library, a recording studio, and three performance halls – the Paul F. Sharp Concert Hall, the Morris R. Pitman Recital Hall, and the Grayce B. Kerr Gothic Hall.

HSC's location in Oklahoma City, as well as the community-focused health programs at Tulsa, provides students and faculty with clinical practice as well as field opportunities in government, business, and non-profit organizations. HSC is a member of OU Health, the state's only comprehensive and integrated academic health system of hospitals, clinics, and research centers devoted to improving health outcomes and servicing the healthcare needs of Oklahoma citizens (see section 1-B). The College of Dentistry has one of the top clinical training programs in the country, with an expanding faculty practice, newly integrated comprehensive dental clinics for students (including on the Tulsa Campus), and a full range of specialties. In addition, arrangements with the Schusterman Center Clinic and the Wayman Tisdale Health Center provide Tulsa students with clinical experience.

The Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, established by the Territorial Legislature as the state's natural history museum, is a research division of OU housing more than ten million objects/specimens in twelve collections ranging from archeology, ethnography, and Native American languages to paleontology and mammalogy. Each curator has a professorial position in a corresponding academic department and teaches classes in addition to their research and curatorial duties. Students participate in laboratory research and field studies associated with museum collections and research programs.

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is one of the finest university art museums in the country with nearly 17,000 objects in its permanent collection, and particularly rich collections in the American Southwest and Native American art, as well as French Impressionism. Temporary exhibitions are mounted throughout the year, exploring the art of various periods and cultures, and admission is free. As an academic museum, faculty and students have access to valuable resources as part of instructional initiatives. Currently enrolled OU students can participate and earn credit in the Museum Internship or become Art Museum Ambassadors, two excellent opportunities for students interested in exploring museum careers.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

The University provides a high-quality education to all students, regardless of location, delivery method, or level. It provides a comprehensive set of support services to facilitate student learning. OU regularly examines the rigor and relevance of its programs against disciplinary and national norms. It promotes student scholarship, scholarly collaboration, and engagement through a variety of programs designed to introduce students to advanced intellectual work in a diverse and inclusive educational environment. The University monitors the size, qualifications, and professional advancement of faculty and staff to ensure the best possible educational experience for students, and it provides access to comprehensive learning resources, facilities, and expert services supporting research, scholarship, creative activity, and intellectual inquiry across disciplines, academic levels, and institutional locations.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

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

Argument

The University of Oklahoma is committed to the rigorous assessment of student learning. Its size and complexity call for a combination of approaches rather than a one-size-fits-all model. Many of OU's programs have specialty accreditors, especially the health-professions degrees. For each of these, OU evaluates the schedule and requirements of the specialty accreditation process. If considered to be sufficiently rigorous and of appropriate frequency, OU may decide not to have a separate assessment process for that program. For that reason, many of the assessment processes described below apply mainly to the non-health professions programs offered at the Norman and Tulsa Campuses.

OU evaluates degree programs according to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's (OSRHE) Academic Program Review (APR) Policy. This policy requires every degree program to be formally reviewed on a rotating basis. While APR is a state requirement, OU views it as an opportunity for academic units to assess and improve their teaching, research, and creative activities. Programs are evaluated on a seven-year cycle, with similar departments (e.g., social sciences, natural sciences) scheduled together whenever possible. APR is a year-long process overseen by the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost and is structured according to a timetable and guidelines provided at the start of each review process.

Departments being reviewed must prepare a self-study report (23-0372, 23-0565, 23-0566) addressing their mission, goals, educational objectives, and curriculum using the APR Self-Study Report Template (23-0058, 23-0059). The report must also include an assessment of learning outcomes; reflect on the quality and diversity of faculty, staff, and students; analyze current resources and facilities; and enumerate strategic initiatives and goals. To help prepare the report, departments receive supporting information, including results from a satisfaction survey of departmental faculty and students and a departmental profile document containing historical trend information about their majors, graduates, courses, and faculty. Departments use these materials to evaluate progress toward past goals and inform the setting of new ones.

The self-study report and support materials are reviewed by an Academic Program Review Committee (APRC). Each academic year, the Provost appoints an APRC comprising regular faculty members from departments not being reviewed that cycle, with the Director of Academic Assessment serving as an *ex officio* member. The review materials are also evaluated by two external reviewers chosen by the Senior Vice President and Provost from departmental recommendations. The external reviewers are invited to campus for a two-day site visit, after which they provide a written report (23-0371, 23-0564) of their findings based on the APR External Reviewer Template.

After considering input from departmental faculty, external reviewers, and the dean, APRC submits a summary of its findings and recommendations to the Senior Vice President and Provost, who prepares a final summary of the review findings, addressing strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities in a set of recommendations. These recommendations are presented in a meeting with departmental representatives, the college dean, and APRC. The department must then develop a plan to address the recommendations before their next review (23-0373). Reports summarizing these APR reviews are forwarded to the OSRHE in accordance with state policy (23-0374).

Health professions programs with specialty accreditation meet their requirement for regular program review by completing their accreditor's self-assessment and review processes (23-0377), which typically include a self-study report addressing minimum accreditation standards set by the agency. These standards can include mission, goals, educational objectives, curriculum, resources, assessment of learning outcomes and overall program outcomes, graduation, licensure/certification pass rates, and employment rates. Depending on the field, external peers and/or accrediting staff review the program's self-study (23-0375, 23-0376) and conduct an on-site visit. A report of findings is sent to the program, dean and/or Senior Vice President and Provost for review, and an action plan is created to address any findings. Health programs without specialty accreditation are reviewed every five to seven years in accordance with HSC or college policies, as appropriate.

OU's prior learning assessment regulations apply to all campuses and programs and comply with OSRHE's policy regarding Credit for Prior Learning. OU students may take prior learning assessment examinations for undergraduate credit, provided they have not received a grade other than W in an equivalent course at the college level; OU accepts prior learning assessment credits from an approved list of sources. Prior learning credit is awarded as neutral credit with no limit to how many credit hours may be transcribed. The amount of prior learning assessment credit that may be applied toward a degree is determined by the degree-granting college and undergraduate program. All eligible prior learning credit is evaluated and posted to the student's permanent record. The degree audit system applies the credit and each individual college determines whether all prior learning credit is utilized. State residency regulations impact the maximum amount that may be applicable toward undergraduate degrees and is carried out by degree-recommending colleges. There are three separate parts to the baccalaureate degree: general education, specialized education, and

elective hours. Prior learning credit is applied based on how all credit earned is considered and whether the degree program has limitations on the number of hours earned as neutral credit.

Prior learning assessment credit posted on transcripts from other institutions in the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education will transfer to OU, subject to the same conditions as resident credit from these campuses. The neutral grade of satisfactory (S) is assigned to all types of prior learning assessment credit authorized by OSRHE. Should a student fail a prior learning assessment examination, no grade will be recorded. A student also may not receive credit for a repeat of an exam previously failed. Prior learning assessment credit posted on transcripts from all other appropriately accredited institutions is accepted by the University provided the credit was earned through one of the prior learning assessment mechanisms mentioned above.

OU may award credit for educational experiences provided by select business, industrial, and governmental agencies in accordance with the policy on Prior Learning Assessment Credit. Credit is awarded based on recommendations made by the American Council on Education (ACE). Students may present a transcript from the ACE Registry of Credit Recommendations to the Office of Admissions or OU Graduate College Admissions for evaluation. All OU-accepted experiential learning opportunities are recorded under existing University-approved course numbers. The grade of S is assigned to all credit awarded in this manner and each college determines how this credit may apply toward a specific degree program.

OU's transfer credit regulations govern the acceptance of credits earned at other universities and colleges. Transfer credit earned by students at institutions accredited by the HLC or by OSRHE is accepted for transfer at face value. Credits earned at institutions accredited by organizations other than the HLC and recognized by the U.S. Department of Education will be reviewed on a course-by-course basis and may be accepted for transfer if the course is determined to be substantially equivalent to a University of Oklahoma course or courses. In addition, OU utilizes the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers' Transfer Credit Practices (TCP) of Selected Educational Institutions. At the graduate level on the Norman campus, if an institution is not listed in the TCP, accreditation is checked with the Council for Higher Education Accreditation to verify that the school where the credit and/or degree was granted is accredited by an approved accrediting agency. Health professions programs are governed by the transfer credit policy outlined in the *HSC Student Handbook*. Individual colleges may have additional requirements imposed by a specialty accreditor. OU's dual credit policies are discussed in more detail in Section 3-A.

Departmental faculty are responsible for planning prerequisites and course sequences; determining breadth, depth, and rigor of course content; articulating course learning outcomes; clarifying expectations for and assessing student learning; providing access to resources; and verifying faculty qualifications. When a specialty accreditor is involved, faculty ensure OU programs comply with accreditor requirements. Course content is reviewed and approved through a rigorous process governed by faculty members, including reviews by the Academic Programs Council (APC) or the Graduate Council. All course prerequisites are listed in course descriptions published in the University course catalog and class schedules. Course prerequisites are enforced during the registration process based on how courses are built in the student information system. Prerequisites are programmed to read previously earned courses with requisite grades to determine when prerequisites have been fulfilled. Prerequisite courses in-progress for subsequent terms are verified prior to semesters starting. Students are dropped from enrollment when failing to meet course prerequisites for an upcoming semester. Any changes in course prerequisites must be reviewed in advance by APC or Graduate Council, which in turn provide recommendations to the provost. This

process is explained in more detail in Section 3-A. Over one hundred of OU's majors have specialized accreditation. The University recognizes maintaining positive accreditation status helps us best serve our students. Site visit reports are shared with the Senior Vice President and Provost and the appropriate dean for any necessary follow-up.

The success of OU's graduates is evaluated by several offices and external resources at the college, department, and program level. The University Career Center is responsible for gathering first destination data from undergraduates. The primary method used is a survey through the Handshake platform. Other methods include National Student Clearinghouse analyses, class visits, and tracking graduates' activity on LinkedIn and other social media platforms. Data are gathered for up to six months post-graduation and are compiled and presented in the Career Center's annual Executive Summary (23-0386, 23-0571).

OU's Career Center is currently implementing a new system for gathering first destination data, to be rolled out in 2023 (23-0387). Every graduating undergraduate will complete a Canvas course with several modules. The final module will be the First Destination Survey, scheduled to open two to three weeks before the end of each semester. Implementation of the centralized graduation process with the Canvas course should increase the First Destination Survey response rate. The Career Center will also have a Data and Assessment Coordinator overseeing information compilation and presentation.

The OU Graduate College on the Norman Campus uses multiple methods to evaluate the success of graduate students after graduation. OU administers the National Science Foundation Survey of Earned Doctorates, required of all non-health, research doctoral students at the time of dissertation submission. This national survey provides data back to participating institutions about expected postgraduation employment of OU doctoral students as compared to peer institutions. OU also subscribes to Academic Analytics, which provides a detailed report of terminal degree graduates with faculty positions across the United States. The report includes a map of graduate placement by institutional characteristics and filters that show graduate placement by AAU membership and sector, institutional Carnegie classification, and other variables. The OU Graduate College has further contracted with Academic Analytics to use its Alumni Insight service to obtain data on current employment of the past ten years of doctoral graduates.

The Career Center gathers information about graduates' employment up to six months after degree completion. The Career Center conducts exit surveys at the time of graduation; contacts recruiting employers, and monitors social media sites like LinkedIn. Some colleges conduct exit surveys at the time of graduation; many later contact employers, monitor social media sites like LinkedIn, and gather self-reported information via alumni networks. Informal, individualized outreach by program leadership and faculty often supplement classroom surveys and other instrument-based data collection. Programs with specialized accreditation typically are required to do post-graduation analysis as part of their accreditation process, providing an additional source of information for the college. For those degrees preparing for licensure such as those in the College of Education and the College of Law, exam passage rates are also evaluated and reported.

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Argument

OU assesses student learning via a systematic, structured, continuous process designed to measure whether graduating students leave the University with the knowledge and skills expected of those completing the University's general education and major curricula. The assessment process helps faculty and staff identify whether changes to existing instructional strategies, content, and learning experiences would improve student achievement of desired curricular and co-curricular learning outcomes.

The Norman Campus Office of Academic Assessment (OAA) recognizes the critical importance of faculty ownership of the student learning assessment process. OAA's Director chairs the Provost's Advisory Committee for Learning Outcomes Assessment (PACLOA), a group providing institutional oversight of Norman Campus's program and institutional assessment activities. PACLOA is divided into two entities: (i) College Assessment Representatives comprising one faculty member from each college, and (ii) an Institutional Effectiveness subcommittee whose members include faculty and staff from a cross-section of student support offices.

Assessment at the course level is a core practice for OU faculty and uses planning, data collection, and analysis to inform curricular decision-making. Faculty evaluate individual courses by using a variety of direct and, where applicable, indirect assessment measures, using the results to determine whether students attained the desired level of achievement for course-level student learning outcomes. These measures include quizzes, tests, case studies, lab assignments, performances and practical demonstrations, projects, presentations, and the institutional Student Experience Survey. Actual assessment strategies vary by the type of course, the instructor teaching the course, and the discipline. In addition, many assessment types are used, including direct or indirect, formative or summative, and qualitative or quantitative. Looking at the First-Year Composition program as an example, faculty collectively examine aggregate assessment data across sections of the same course, as well as performance in program-level course sequences, to gauge the effectiveness of both the courses and sequences in institutional-level general education student learning outcomes.

OU recognizes that high-quality degree programs require a strong general education (Gen Ed) foundation. While the University is subject to state requirements for content areas and the number of credit hours, it is OU's responsibility to ensure Gen Ed courses effectively meet this challenge (23-0094, 23-0095, 23-0096). Because Gen Ed curriculum is designed to meet broader learning outcomes, it must be planned and managed by a cross-disciplinary group of faculty. To that end, the

General Education Assessment Subcommittee (GEAS) was established to oversee the implementation of OU's General Education Assessment plan while working closely with the Provost's Advisory Committee on General Education Oversight (PACGEO). GEAS is chaired by a faculty member and is comprised of the OAA Director and six faculty members drawn from various disciplines across the Norman Campus, as HSC and Tulsa campuses do not offer Gen Ed curriculum.

The General Education Assessment Plan articulates six overarching Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), with specific Performance Indicators (PIs) for each. The Plan includes a comprehensive Gen Ed curriculum map reflecting the alignment of existing courses with the PIs in each SLO. It also contains a schedule for assessing each PI in each SLO. PACGEO requires requests for new Gen Ed courses (23-0073, 23-0074) to explicitly address expected learning outcomes. Each course proposal must explicitly state at least one Gen Ed SLO and two PIs that will be evaluated when the course is up for assessment. Each semester, a General Education Report Template is provided for faculty to report data on student performance in courses scheduled for Gen Ed assessment. The Plan also includes a General Education Student Survey that is deployed to students enrolled in each participating course.

OU faculty assess student learning outcomes for degree and certificate academic programs using a clear and robust assessment process consisting of four steps: (1) articulating measurable student learning outcomes; (2) identifying appropriate direct measures for each SLO and, if possible, indirect measures to augment outcome of the direct measures; (3) describing student achievement of the SLOs; and, most importantly, (4) using these assessment results to develop concrete recommendations and action plans for continuous improvement. Recommendations could include refining curricula, modifying instructional practices, or adding student support services.

Faculty use a variety of direct and indirect measurement tools and processes to assess student learning. Direct measures employed include course-embedded assessments, embedded exam items, evaluations by internship/practicum supervisors, labs and case studies, papers or projects, portfolios, practical demonstrations, presentations, and rubric-driven reviews of performances. Indirect measures used include focus groups and student surveys about experiences, pursuit of further education and degree completion, and surveys about job placement. Data from indirect measures are used to augment results of direct assessment, providing a more complete evaluation of student success. For each measure, faculty in each program determine a performance target or criteria for success to use when evaluating whether program graduates possess the knowledge and/or skills articulated in the SLOs.

OU's assessment activities for graduate programs are as robust as those for undergraduate programs. Departments are encouraged to utilize existing processes such as graduate students' annual advisement reports, feedback on qualifying and comprehensive examinations, defense of the prospectus (when applicable), and evaluation of research projects in required graduate courses. Experience has shown these assessments provide effective and valuable feedback about student progress through various stages of their degree programs, capturing rich documentation about graduate student learning prior to culminating experiences like the defense of the dissertation or thesis.

Norman Campus programs must submit annual assessment reports (23-0077, 23-0078, 23-0079, 23-0080, 23-0081, 23-0082, 23-0083, 23-0084, 23-0085, 23-0097, 23-0098, 23-0099, 23-0100, 23-0101) each September, covering the preceding academic year, via *Nuventive Improve* - an online Program Assessment Management System. Each report must include information about each of the four assessment process steps described above. Results from previous assessment cycles provide

evidence about the program's degree of success in making changes identified in prior reviews. OAA staff review all reports and provide detailed feedback using a color-coded Program Assessment Review Rubric, designed by OAA with input from faculty. OAA consults with faculty and staff in support of assessment work and provides a variety of assessment resources, tools, and mechanisms. A summarized department-level feedback report is sent to the head of each academic unit while a consolidated college-level feedback report is sent to the college dean.

OU's health professions programs have clearly delineated goals and outcomes for student learning defined for them by discipline-specific accrediting bodies. In addition, outcome-based educational program objectives (EPOs) have been developed by the College of Medicine and linked to the competencies expected of a physician and a physician's associate. Student learning goals for these programs often evolve rapidly to meet contemporary practice expectations, so each accrediting agency specifies standards for effective assessment of student learning in their field. In addition, recent graduates of most health professions programs must undergo a licensure examination process as a final objective marker of student preparation for entry into practice. Health professions programs also assess student achievement of curricular and co-curricular outcomes using multiple mechanisms embedded throughout their professional degree. HSC has established a comprehensive interdisciplinary education program in which each college collaborates on instructional delivery and learner assessment based on nationally established shared competencies that complement discipline specific competencies and shared assessment tools. Co-curricular outcomes may be assessed using quizzes or reflection papers for such events as the campus flu immunization clinics, the City Rescue Mission, and the Big Event, a campus-wide volunteer effort supporting local institutions with health screenings and patient education.

OU strategically deploys surveys to measure the effectiveness of co-curricular activities and institutional support services. In recent years, OAA conducted a student satisfaction survey each spring for all enrolled students on the Norman Campus, designed to measure five key areas of student experience: Academics, Campus Life, Advising, Services, and General/Other. In Spring 2022, OU elected to employ the undergraduate Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) survey instead. SERU surveys are comprehensive, peer-benchmarked surveys intended to measure aspects of student engagement and satisfaction at research universities. The graduate SERU survey was administered to all Norman Campus graduate students in Spring 2021. OAA also deploys the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to first-year and senior students triennially. Institutional findings and reports from these surveys are disseminated via detailed Power BI and Tableau dashboards to all colleges as well as to student support offices including Student Affairs; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Academic Advising; and Admissions and Recruitment. Each April, HSC administers a Student Satisfaction Survey to students in health professions programs, designed to measure students' perceptions of departments, initiatives, facilities, and programs. The HSC Student Government Association uses the survey results to prepare for the next academic year's initiatives.

OU's Division of Student Affairs has a robust co-curricular assessment program designed to ensure continuous improvement of its services and programs that relate to student learning. An assessment process is built into its programming, to ensure administrators regularly check the efficacy of programs and identify potential improvements. The division's assessment reports reflect details of various assessment activities. Student Affairs also regularly employs the Project Co-Curricular Experiences Outcomes Survey (Project CEO Survey) to supplement internal assessment processes. The results are used to communicate how co-curricular experiences have impacted students' skills such as communication and leadership. Analysis of the results can be used, to enhance student

employee training and improve Student Affairs' staff understanding of the skills employers seek beyond graduation, how OU students acquire those skills, and how Student Affairs can create intentional learning opportunities.

The OAA staff provide support in every phase of the assessment cycle. Reflecting OU's growing assessment culture, the University community seeks out best practices identified by research and national discussions to put into practice on all campuses. These efforts begin at the assessment leadership level with the director and staff of OAA, who frequently attend and present findings at national and international higher education assessment conferences. OAA staff pass these insights along to OU communities via workshops and fora. Assessment data are used by faculty at the course and program levels in academic departments and by staff in administrative and educational support units to inform decisions on curriculum, instruction, and academic support services.

OAA offers workshops, small group or one-on-one consultations, personalized review and feedback of draft assessment plans and reports, and a variety of other resources. Each academic unit has an Assessment Liaison, a faculty member charged with coordinating documentation of assessment activities and creating the annual report submitted to OAA. Assessment Liaisons work closely with OAA to ensure the quality of assessment reporting, as well as serve as an assessment practices resource within their home units. Although OAA supervises and supports the assessment process, faculty and staff are the experts in their respective disciplines. Therefore, each program is responsible for its own assessment planning, design, and implementation.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Argument

The University of Oklahoma prioritizes the success of its students, as captured in the key theme of the *Lead On* strategic plan – “We Change Lives,” and further exemplified in Pillar 2 "Prepare Students for a Life of Success, Meaning, Service, and Positive Impact" and Pillar 3 "Make OU's excellence affordable and attainable". A critical measure of student success is retention, persistence, and completion. Pillar 2 of the Norman Campus *Lead On* plan includes clearly defined goals for graduation rates and degree completion at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. For instance, Pillar 2, Strategy 2, Tactic 1 is to "enhance and prioritize fundraising for need-based aid to increase retention and raise the six-year graduation rate from 67% to 75%." Targets were set based on past performance, future enrollment management plans, and comparison with national and peer standards (23-0394). Graduate programs define their own goals for student retention, set either by a specialty accreditor (23-0573) or the local program (23-0572).

OU recognizes we cannot evaluate our progress toward student success goals without access to accurate and up-to-date information. The Office of Institutional Research & Reporting (IRR) is responsible for maintaining and analyzing official information about undergraduate retention and graduation rates. The OU Graduate College, in consultation with IRR, provides data on graduate persistence and completion rates. Health programs and the College of Law (23-0569, 23-0573) maintain their own student success rates in accordance with any applicable specialty accreditor definitions and requirements. Basic information about student enrollment and graduation status is supplemented wherever possible with qualitative data about student experiences. The recently administered Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) survey, for both graduate and undergraduate students, provides results that may help identify barriers to student success that the University can address. Findings from the SERU surveys are currently being disseminated to various stakeholders to enable them to interpret the data and develop recommendations and action plans for enhancement of student experiences.

OU expects every member of its community to participate in helping our students be successful. One challenging side effect of this is the often-decentralized nature of data collection and dissemination. To ensure information can be integrated and analyzed to best effect, the Norman and HSC campuses have key administrators charged with monitoring and acting on data collected from a wide range of sources. The Senior Vice Provost for Instruction and Student Success in Norman leads student retention and graduation initiatives; manages enrollment planning and instruction; oversees classrooms, schedules, and space management for Academic Affairs; and serves as the OU liaison to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE). This person coordinates the efforts of several different support offices and research groups to support undergraduate retention and graduation. The Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Affairs serves in a similar role for HSC.

IRR, headed by an Associate Provost reporting directly to the Norman Campus Senior Vice President and Provost, provides data collection, analysis, and benchmarking support as needed to inform critical conversations about student success. On the Norman Campus, a Retention Working Group, comprised of student success leaders from multiple support offices, meets weekly to discuss students at risk of leaving the University. Once identified, students are contacted individually to identify and address obstacles to their continued enrollment and are provided with information intended to ease the re-enrollment process if they are not able to continue at that time (23-0403). The Retention Research Team brings together researchers and administrators to conduct high-level data analyses identifying factors affecting retention. Results are used to inform admissions decisions, course placement, retention programming, enrollment management, and program evaluation, and are regularly presented at the annual National Symposium for Student Retention (23-0404, 23-0405). The Graduation and Persistence Support (GPS) team coordinates with support resources across campus to remove potential roadblocks to enrollment and degree completion. They review University-wide policies and procedures to identify unintended impacts on degree completion and implement identified programmatic improvements. GPS also runs a Graduation Hotline designed to aid upper-class students, with an advanced number of hours, in successful and timely completion of their OU degree. The work of these teams has facilitated the identification and remediation of many barriers to undergraduate retention and graduation. New interventions based on these analyses include outreach to students with low mid-term grades, a continuous enrollment call campaign identifying barriers to re-enrollment, a streamlined math placement process, co-requisite remediation offerings, and an updated graduation process (23-0403).

The OU Graduate College in Norman also has a data-driven approach to its graduate retention efforts. It collects and analyzes data about graduate student retention, persistence, and completion in a Power BI dashboard. This interactive report includes time to degree and degree completion rates by college, department, and major. These data help the OU Graduate College identify factors affecting retention, time to degree, and degree completion that are shared with academic units and are used to develop measurable strategies for improvement. The College of Law's Academic Assessment Process examines curriculum delivery, student performance, and progression data via competency assessments and makes program changes if benchmarks are not achieved (23-0398, 23-0584). HSC programs work with their campus's Office of Institutional Research to collect and analyze information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

OU understands the need to ensure data used for decision-making is as accurate and timely as possible. IRR is responsible for all official reporting about the University, either by producing reports themselves or validating methodology used by partner offices, when appropriate. It follows the AIR Statement of Ethical Principles, always striving to be transparent in its practices, be in alignment with all applicable regulations about data definitions and appropriate use, and following best

practices in the field. IRR also provides official OU data to qualified internal research groups to use in conducting relevant analyses, as approved by the appropriate Senior Vice President and Provost's Office.

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

The University's academic structure is built on a foundation of continuous quality improvement at all levels. These initiatives are well-developed, comprehensive, and implemented throughout the University. They reflect the extent to which OU uses appropriate measures of the performance of its academic and co-curricular programs to proactively enhance its offerings through a systematic cycle of assessment, analysis, and continuous improvement. OU has articulated student learning outcomes at the institutional (general education), academic degree and certificate program, course, and co-curricular levels. Detailed assessments at each of these levels have provided evidence leading to insights into how well these programs meet their stated learning outcomes and where improvements are needed. Faculty and staff recognize the advantages of using assessment of the progression of learning to inform decision-making and improve student learning outcomes and overall student success.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Argument

All OU campuses are governed by the OU Board of Regents (Board). The Board comprises seven individuals, each appointed for a seven-year term by the Governor with the advice and consent of the State Senate. The Board typically meets several times per year at different campus locations, with an annual board retreat usually held each summer. The Board is also the governing body for two separate public higher education institutions, Cameron University and Rogers State University, but each institution's business is handled in its own section of meeting agendas. (For more on the Board's structure and governance see Sections 1-B and 2-C.)

The Board and its standing committees provide effective oversight over OU's financial and academic policies and practices by reviewing and approving, among other items, annual budget plans for each campus; tuition and fee rates; the annual audit plan; appointment of the independent auditor; plans for the issuance of debt; the All-Campus Master Plan; property acquisitions; the creation of any new auxiliary units; and all substantive program changes, including the addition and deletion of programs.

As discussed in more detail in Section 5-B, the Norman Campus and the Health Sciences Center provide quarterly financial analyses and reports of purchase to the Board for review, and the Board must approve all faculty and staff personnel actions at the full-time equivalent annual salary of \$150,000 or more. All faculty tenure and promotion cases are presented to the Board for review and approval each spring (23-0449). Minutes from Board meetings are posted publicly on the Board's website. Meeting agendas, including a detailed schedule, are also posted on the website at least 48 hours before each meeting as a courtesy to the university community, public, and press.

OU's top-level administrative structure is designed to ensure efficient and effective decision-making

across all service areas. The President has direct reports on each campus as well as 13 Executive Officer direct reports across all three campuses. The President has biweekly meetings with his direct reports, allowing for collaboration across departments and campuses. OU's academic organization is designed to provide strategic and operational leadership of its academic programs. The goal is to create an atmosphere of shared governance, integrated planning and implementation of decisions, and recognition and encouragement of contributions by members of the University community. The Faculty (23-0007, 23-0008) and Staff (23-0009) Handbooks document relevant operational and academic policies along with information about the University's general organization.

Norman Campus and HSC each maintain their own Faculty (23-0411, 23-0412) and Staff (23-0414, 23-0415) Senates, which regularly liaise with the President and other relevant Executive Officers. Each Faculty Senate's Executive Committee holds regular meetings with the President. Tulsa has an Academic Council and a Staff Senate (23-0413) that report to the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs on the Tulsa campus. These senates appoint committees charged with engaging faculty and staff on a variety of issues and providing actionable recommendations to senior administration. Some senate committees are specific to faculty and their campus (e.g., Academic Programs Council, Campus Tenure Committee, Budget Council, and Committee on Committees), and some are specific to staff and their campus (e.g., Staff Initiatives, Staff Week, Shared Leave). Committees with a University-wide focus have faculty and staff representatives from all campuses (e.g., Athletics Council, Employee Benefits Committee, Retirement Plans Management Committee). Senate committee meeting minutes are posted online, along with their annual reports to the President.

Norman Campus and HSC each maintain an Academic Programs Council (APC), reporting to the Senior Vice President and Provost of each campus, that advises the President and Faculty Senate on matters concerning instructional programs and curricula. APC's main responsibility is to evaluate the educational quality of existing and proposed programs. OU's Graduate Councils are responsible for setting and enforcing all graduate education policies.

To ensure students have effective representation in university governance, every enrolled student is automatically a member of their campus's Student Government Association (SGA). The SGA works closely with OU's administration to ensure students' concerns are heard. SGA's legislative powers are expressed on the Norman Campus via the Undergraduate Student Congress and Graduate Student Senate. At HSC, these powers are provided to the Student Government Association. The Tulsa Campus also has a Student Government Association with provisions for representation and participation between students from both Norman Campus programs and HSC programs (23-0583).

Key committees and councils across OU have student representation built into their structure, including Academic Programs Council, Athletics Council, Budget Council, Campus-Specific Fee Working Groups, Graduate Council, and Information Technology Council (23-0519, note committee membership lists). Frequently, students are invited to participate in faculty and administrative searches as well. The Norman Campus Senior Vice President and Provost's Office requires all academic chair and director search committees have one or two student members, reflecting both undergraduate majors and graduate students (23-0420). At HSC, search committees for all administrative positions must include a student representative. Searches for academic chairs and directors may include a student representative but are not required to (23-0008).

OU strategically invests in people and systems that can deliver timely, accurate, and accessible data in support of thoughtful and opportune decision-making by administration, faculty, and staff. The University has recently launched several new systems designed to better capture institutional data to

improve reporting, compliance, and decision-making functions. All three campuses implemented a new general ledger accounting system in July 2020 that established standardized internal accounting structures. This project has enabled more efficient staffing, as the University now supports one system instead of two, while also improving data quality and consistency. In Spring 2021, all campuses implemented a new budgeting tool that provides better planning functionality.

After approving the *Lead On* strategic plans, OU engaged a consulting firm to help develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) the University can use to monitor progress toward plan goals reliably and efficiently. The colleges' strategic plan KPIs are being aligned with these institutional KPIs. OU is implementing a scorecard tool, Cascade, to document the status of each KPI linked to strategies and tactics within the *Lead On* and college strategic plans and recently hired a Chief Strategy Officer to oversee this process.

The Office of Institutional Research and Reporting (IRR) on each campus provides data to academic and administrative units for use in monitoring and improving programs. IRR on the Norman Campus supports the Academic Program Review process, provides regular enrollment and first-year class updates, tracks student retention and graduation rates, and provides specialized analyses for urgent topics that may arise. IRR produces the *Annual Profile of the University of Oklahoma*. This document, more commonly known as the Fact Book, is a comprehensive source of data about students, faculty, staff, finances/budget, and research activity for all campuses. IRR's website includes a Data Center that is a repository for enrollment statistics, credit hour reports, admissions reports, and various other annual reports and accountability measures. IRR also provides interactive Power BI reports to internal users, making key organizational data available in a real-time, more user-friendly format.

The Office of Academic Assessment (OAA) on the Norman Campus plans, assesses, analyzes, and seeks to improve academic performance through a robust assessment process, described in more detail in Section 4-B. The resulting information is used in broader University analyses created for planning and continuous improvement initiatives. In addition, OAA conducts student satisfaction surveys to gather feedback on students' educational experiences at OU. Survey results are provided to several areas of campus operations so any issues identified can be addressed. OU participates in the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) faculty survey every three years. This survey provides important data about faculty satisfaction and experience that are shared with the Senior Vice President and Provost and the deans to inform future planning. OU administered the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) surveys to undergraduate and graduate students during Spring 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters. OU's results are benchmarked against both comparator and aspirational peers and inform strategic plan implementation. (For more on the SERU surveys see sections 2-B and 4-B.)

Collaborative engagement between administration and faculty has resulted in many successful projects and initiatives. For example, a major analysis of OU faculty compensation as compared to peer institutions was completed by the Committee on Faculty Compensation of the Faculty Senate in 2015 and 2020. In 2015, that committee's chair met with the Senior Vice President and Provost and the President to discuss their findings. The resulting discussion led to revision of the faculty promotion policy that increased the raise amounts for faculty upon promotion. In 2019, a similar project was conducted in partnership with the Committee on Faculty Compensation and Human Resources that resulted in a raise program that helped address instances where faculty were underpaid compared to peers. Also notable was the creation in Fall 2018 of the President's Academic Program Budget Advisory Committee (PAPBAC), comprised of 11 tenured faculty members and co-

chaired by the Senior Vice President and Provost and a tenured faculty member selected by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (23-0428). PAPBAC completed that budget related work in 2019. In Fall 2019, PAPBAC turned to strategic initiatives and completed its work as a committee in Spring 2020. A joint project including the Faculty Senate Faculty Welfare Committee, the Provost's Advisory Committee on Women's Issues, and the Office of Legal Counsel created new guidelines for the application of leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), resulting in a guaranteed extension of the tenure clock for full-time regular faculty and one semester of modified teaching load and relief from very demanding service duties. Additionally, in academic year 2020-21, two Faculty Senate Committees (Faculty Welfare and Budget Council) discussed options about how to better educate faculty on how the University's finances worked, how funding is sourced and utilized, and how the University compared financially to peers. Based on those discussions, the Office of Budget & Financial Planning working with the Office of Digital Learning created four short videos that provide helpful background information on the University's budget and finances. Additionally, the Office of Budget & Financial Planning launched a training in Spring 2022 to provide a more in-depth look into the University's finances. These trainings were offered through the Center for Faculty Excellence and Human Resources and were attended by over 150 staff and faculty over three sessions. Due to their popularity, this training is now being offered once each semester.

In July 2020, the Norman Campus announced its *Lead On, University* Strategic Plan, developed with thoughtful input from stakeholders drawn from all areas of the university. PAPBAC was asked to lead the planning process (23-0235) and collectively spent more than 900 hours developing the plan, meeting with campus stakeholders including representative leadership of faculty, students, and staff as well as the Norman Deans' Council. The Advisory Committee solicited feedback from OU community members through an online survey, to which they received over 5,000 responses, and University leadership conducted six town hall meetings across all three campuses. Final input was obtained from the executive leadership team, the Norman Deans' Council, student leadership, and Faculty and Staff Senate executive committees before the plan was formally approved by the OU Regents. The recently formed PACPEM committee (see Section 2-C) is a further example of the productive collaboration between faculty and administration (23-0236, 23-0555).

In July 2022, HSC released its *Lead On, University* Strategic Plan. The HSC plan was developed through methods similar to Norman Campus, engaging stakeholders from all three campuses. The HSC Leadership Committee created task forces to identify appropriate strategies, tactics, and key performance indicators. Co-chairs of each task force met regularly over three months in preparation for communication with the broader University community. Draft plans were reviewed by HSC college leadership, Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate Executive Committee, and Staff Senate, among others. An open comment period was also provided through the Faculty Senate portal. HSC leadership met with community groups, including the Oklahoma City-County Health Department and the Oklahoma State Department of Health, to gather their input. Throughout the development process, HSC leadership engaged with the Board to solicit input, and presented the HSC *Lead On* plan to the Board at the September 2022 meeting. The OU-Tulsa Strategic Vision aligns with the *Lead On, University* plans of both Norman Campus and HSC.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Argument

OU's organizational structure was created to handle diverse programs and services across the three campuses. Supporting three physical campuses is challenging, requiring effective allocation of resources to support strategic planning in ways that can be adjusted to respond to opportunities and challenges in a timely manner.

The Human Resources department is charged with helping departments ensure only appropriately qualified candidates are hired. Their Recruitment and Hiring website provides step-by-step guidance on topics such as creating a job description, how to effectively screen job candidates, and how to conduct a successful interview. The University's Talent Acquisition website provides automated screening criteria to help departments identify qualified applicants.

In accordance with OU's staff learning and development policy, HR's Learning & Organizational Development (LOD) office provides programs designed to help employees improve their individual and organizational performance. LOD's training schedule includes courses about university systems (e.g., travel, hiring, purchasing, grants), professional skills (e.g., conflict management, personnel management, writing), and personal development (e.g., managing change, overcoming stress). LOD also provides support and development resource materials for supervisors. LOD offers an annual Leadership Council, an eight-month program of workshops and events designed to improve leadership skills, foster cross-campus connections, and increase understanding of the University's breadth of operations.

Every staff member must receive an annual performance evaluation from their supervisor. These evaluations are used to address any performance problems, but they are also an opportunity to coach employees wanting to develop knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for job advancement. Human Resources provides supervisors with information on best practices in performance evaluations via regular training sessions and resources on their website.

While OU's campuses share resources where possible, to operate efficiently their financial positions are reported individually due to being classified as separate agencies under the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) (23-0014, 23-0017). The University establishes financial goals and metrics for each campus to evaluate its financial health, based primarily on recommended ratios from *Strategic Financial Analysis for Higher Education*. They include a Composite Financial

Index, Days' Cash On-Hand, and Bond Ratings. University administrators update the Board's Finance, Audit, and Risk Committee about these on a regular basis, as well as in regular budget training offered to faculty and staff.

OU is a beneficiary of The University of Oklahoma Foundation, Inc. (the Foundation), but it is important to note the Foundation is independent of the University in all respects. Foundation resources have grown over the last five years as market performance has remained strong. The University contracted with the Foundation to provide advancement services, under which over 80 advancement professionals were transferred from OU to the Foundation in 2022. This realignment created a stronger and more cohesive fundraising structure that better supports both the strategic priorities of the University and individual colleges and departments by maximizing philanthropic support of their respective initiatives. The largest single benefit to each college is an investment of additional capital into the fundraising enterprise. Through the realignment of priorities and drawing from Foundation funding sources, there was an immediate 30% increase in funding that was invested primarily in increasing the number of frontline fundraisers and scaling the organizational infrastructure commensurately. In 2022, the Foundation officially launched the \$2B *Lead On* capital campaign. In addition to the Foundation, endowment resources include endowed funds managed by the OSRHE and the State of Oklahoma Land Commission for the benefit of the University (23-0014, 23-0017).

Full-time faculty on the Norman Campus have increased 10% over the past five years, while full-time staff decreased by 10% (23-0005). As noted in the following paragraphs, the Norman Campus has prioritized strategic faculty hiring and efficient deployment of staff. During the same period at HSC, full-time faculty decreased by 31% and full-time staff decreased by 36%, but it's important to note the faculty and staff decreases at HSC are almost entirely due to the creation of the independent OU Health organization. Many full-time faculty and staff previously employed by the clinical practices within the College of Medicine transitioned out of OU to become OU Health employees. Prior to the merger, full-time faculty and staff counts at HSC had been slowly increasing.

Like most universities, the majority of OU's budget is allocated to personnel compensation. Accordingly, OU strategically deploys personnel funding to maximize student and faculty support and achieve strategic priorities. In response to resource constraints at points over the past five years, the University offered two voluntary retirement incentive programs and, separately, a targeted staff reduction in force (23-0443). To ensure service levels to students and faculty remained high, the University conducted comprehensive reviews of support needs and costs. As a result, it created the Shared Business Service Center (SBSC) on the Norman Campus, with core values focused on excellence in customer service, effective communication, efficient operations, flexibility and innovation, and integrity and transparency. The SBSC now supports over 65 departments. The staff-to-department support metrics (2.23 departments per SBSC staff member) are consistent with OU's goal of 2-3 supported departments per SBSC staff. Survey data from supported departments, while indicating some areas for improvement, shows that over 88% of respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the levels of support and service provided by SBSC.

The success of the SBSC inspired Administration & Finance to work with research-active colleges to develop a more tailored support network for Principal Investigators (PIs). Liaisons connect PIs with Research Financial Services and other central departments (e.g., Purchasing, Information Technology, Payroll) to provide support to PIs and their research teams. This new model allows the University to manage growth more effectively in research activity planned as part of the *Lead On* strategic plan (23-0001, 23-0002).

These strategic restructures allowed OU to alter its historic staffing levels by creating a model that more flexibly supports fluctuating faculty and student headcounts. OU can now more efficiently allocate limited resources and provide more robust and consistent – as well as better-quality – support. Moving away from a staff generalist model provides more pathways for staff career development; larger and more functional teams can more easily develop paths for promotion and increased responsibility that were difficult to achieve in a decentralized model.

OU continues to prioritize investment in its physical infrastructure, both in terms of new buildings and maintenance of existing structures. The University developed a multi-year strategy to address deferred maintenance issues on campus. The University also maintains a Campus Master Plan of Capital Improvement Projects. This plan is developed in consultation with stakeholders from each campus and prioritizes projects into three groups. The plan is reviewed and approved by the Board each May.

The Norman Campus recently received capital project support from the State Legislature for the creation of a research and technology facility associated with the University's new Oklahoma Aerospace & Defense Innovation Institute and to address capital needs in the biosciences. HSC received funding to modernize research facilities and equipment in biomedical sciences. Historically, the University funds new construction through a combination of state support (when possible), donations, and internal resources. OU received significant private gifts to support the construction of its two most recently completed infrastructure projects: Lin Hall (2018), part of the Dodge Physics Complex, and Gallogly Hall (2019) for the Gallogly College of Engineering.

As part of the University's Housing Master Plan OU acquired a 1,200-bed housing facility (Cross Village), built in 2018. Located adjacent to existing dormitories, Cross Village allowed the University to accelerate replacement of one of three residence towers built in the 1960s. The acquisition of Cross Village included a 1,000-space parking garage that, along with the recent construction of two new surface lots, significantly eased parking issues on Norman Campus. As detailed in the Housing Master Plan, OU plans to replace the two remaining dormitory towers by fiscal year 2030. This move, when paired with the construction of two new residential colleges that opened in Fall 2017, will significantly modernize the University's first-year housing infrastructure and accommodate current growth projections in the strategic plan.

Beyond brick-and-mortar infrastructure, OU's Information Technology (OU IT) department, led by the Chief Information Officer, reports directly to the Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer and coordinates with all campuses in a common strategic planning process for information technology across the University. OU IT works with the Information Technology Council, a board consisting of faculty, staff, and students, that advises on the policy and planning aspects of information technology. OU also has a three-tier IT governance structure comprised of an IT Executive Steering Committee, five Domain IT Advisory Committees, and ad-hoc User Working Groups. OU IT supports classrooms and computer labs and provides digital resources to students, faculty, and staff that directly support the academic mission of the University. For example, OU IT maintains a catalog of software free to OU students, faculty, and staff; provides IT support by phone, email, and in-person consultations; and offers private cloud solutions via IT Shared Services.

As described in more detail in Section 5-A, OU campuses recently established strategic plans that collectively cover all programs at Norman, HSC, and Tulsa and specifically address how the University can advance the broad goals contained in its mission statement. These plans are based on a succinct statement of the University's purpose – "We Change Lives" – and each contains five pillars defining how the University will fulfill its purpose. In turn, each pillar has strategies that

break it down into manageable parts, further divided into actionable and achievable tactics. They are fluid enough to be adaptable to current conditions while remaining consistent with the original strategy.

Developed in parallel with the Norman strategic plan was a restructured multi-year budget that includes both the allocation of resources needed to implement the strategic plan over a seven-year period and mechanisms to fund strategic investments. The budget was developed in collaboration with the Norman Campus Offices of the Senior Vice President and Provost, Vice President for Research and Partnerships, OU Graduate College, and Administration and Finance. This seven-year budget prioritizes investment in strategic initiatives while simultaneously improving the University's financial health. As a follow up to the presentation of the HSC strategic plan in September 2022, the HSC strategic plan budget, which links funding to tactics, was presented to the Board of Regents at their November 2022 Executive Session meeting.

OU uses a hybrid budget model that ensures funds are allocated in ways that support the University's educational mission by using a balance of incremental and production-driven funding methods. As part of the incremental budget process, colleges receive a portion of their budget as an annual allocation of Education and General (E&G) funding. E&G funds derive from state appropriations and tuition revenue and are adjusted accordingly to match available funds. As part of the production-driven budget process, colleges receive a portion of their budget through college-level fees and a shared tuition arrangement based on credit hour production. Balanced use of these two funding sources allows colleges more flexibility to adjust to fluctuations in external funding and student enrollment. For example, increases in enrollment will result in increased revenue under the production-driven budget component, and reductions in state appropriations will be reflected by decreased revenue under the incremental budget component. This hybrid approach provides a more stable budgeting process as compared to a traditional, fully incremental model. Regarding the HSC's production-driven budget process (23-0462), colleges receive a portion of their budget through college-level fees based on credit hour production. Use of this funding source allows colleges more flexibility to adjust to fluctuating student enrollment. Administrative support units on all campuses are primarily supported via an incremental model. Position changes (e.g., refills, raise requests, reclassifications) in these areas are reviewed by an HR-led committee to help ensure staffing support is sufficient to meet the department's objectives and avoid department-to-department staffing pay equity issues.

The Senior Vice President and Provosts, along with the Vice Presidents and Deans, follow an established set of principles for budgeting: consideration of a unit's entire budget and revenue sources when addressing E&G funding changes as well as mission-based prioritization of E&G funds for education, performance measures, sustained quality, and selective growth. These principles are applied via a budgeting process that is comprehensive, structured, transparent, participatory, and strategic. On the Norman Campus, for example, budget issues are discussed with a variety of constituencies, including the Faculty Senate, the faculty-led Budget Council, and the Deans' Council. When making cuts as necessary, OU uses administrative and operational efficiencies, coordinated decision-making, and new sources of revenue to protect academic programs as much as possible (23-0465).

The Budget Office maintains an operating timetable of the University's budget process. The President works closely with each campus's financial and administrative team and the Board in all aspects of financial administration. This includes an annual review and approval of the budget, which includes funding for the All-Campus Master Plan and Deferred Maintenance. At the direction

of the Vice President of Operations, Architectural and Engineering Services is responsible for organizing, periodically evaluating, and updating the All-Campus Master Plan, which prioritizes capital improvement projects across OU.

Potential changes to tuition and mandatory fee rates are discussed annually by the President, the CFO, and the Senior Vice President and Provost of each campus, taking into consideration expected state appropriations, enrollment and retention trends, and changes to fixed and variable costs. Once proposed rates are determined, administrative leadership meets with student leadership to explain the reasoning behind any changes and address any concerns raised by attendees (23-0509, 23-0510). Any change to tuition and/or mandatory fees must be approved by the Board at their June meeting. If approved, new tuition and mandatory fees are presented in June for final approval by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE).

Each academic year, up until 2020, each Senior Vice President and Provost's Office called for proposals of new or revised academic service fees, providing a timeline for proposals, a description of the approval process, and guidelines for submitting budget-to-actual and pro forma fee expense reports. Proposed fee changes were first submitted to Campus-Specific Working Groups (which include student representation), in accordance with the Executive Committee for Student Fee Governance and Oversight Charter. Once approval was obtained in accordance with the Charter, fee requests were submitted for approval to the Board each spring. If approved, changes to non-mandatory fees were then presented to the OSRHE for final approval in June of each year. Since 2020, there have not been open calls for fee increases since the emphasis has been placed on securing small annual tuition increases from the Board to fund the strategic plan.

Auxiliary units, such as Athletics, Housing and Food Services, Health Services, and Fitness and Recreation, are defined in the OU Board of Regents' Policy Manual as business-type activities that may charge fees to recover the cost of the goods or services provided. As such, they are expected to be self-sufficient (i.e., no E&G funding is provided) and are monitored via quarterly financial reviews. OU is proud to be one of a small number of universities that does not subsidize its Athletics Department. In fact, OU's Athletics Department, along with all auxiliary units on the Norman campus, returns funding to the University to support the strategic plan.

To ensure independent audits of management, OU's Internal Audit Department reports directly to the Board and submits an annual Audit Plan. It provides regular updates to the Board's Finance, Audit, and Risk Committee, consisting of completed audit reports that include management's response and a remediation plan if needed. Compliance with remediation plans is monitored by Internal Audit to verify identified deficiencies have been adequately addressed.

The University has implemented a new budget system, Workday Adaptive Planning, that provides greatly improved planning functionality and dashboard reporting. This new system integrates with the University's financial system and provides budget-to-actual reports to leadership (e.g., Dean, Chair, Manager). Each month, in accordance with Financial Services' policy, all departments must certify their financial balances to ensure spending is within budget and expenses are consistent with University policy. Departments can also access monthly revenue and expense reports via the PeopleSoft Financials system, allowing them to monitor and reconcile transactions and provide department directors with a timely and accurate picture of their finances. Financial Services provides additional monthly departmental reports, providing a high-level snapshot of activity and performance relative to budget. Monthly certification reports, signed and dated by the preparer and approver, must be retained for examination by Internal Audit.

As also discussed in Section 5-A, the Board receives quarterly financial updates for their review. The Quarterly Financial Analysis highlights key financial metrics and trends designed to identify unusual or unexpected variances relative to the prior year for the same period and budget item. The Quarterly Report of Purchases lists all purchase obligations between \$50,000 and \$1,000,000, and all purchases greater than \$1,000,000 require Board approval. OU has a purchasing policy outlining required approval chains. The University's purchasing system contains electronic approval controls designed to ensure compliance with the policy. Additionally, to help highlight unusual or unexpected trends, financial officers present budget-to-actual reports each quarter to the Board's Finance, Audit, and Risk Committee.

Annual financial statements are audited every year by an independent auditor and presented to the Board for approval. The most recent annual financial statements audit available was unmodified in opinion, meaning there were no reportable deficiencies in internal control or other matters that may require modification of the auditor's opinion. The Board's Finance, Audit, and Risk Committee, in accordance with its charter, appoints the external, independent accounting firm used for these audits through a request for proposal process conducted at least every five years.

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
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, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

Evidence of OU's alignment of resources to its mission and priorities can be seen clearly in actual annual expenditures by function. Excluding self-supporting auxiliary units (e.g., Athletics and clinical operations) spending in FY22 demonstrates this alignment: 37% on instruction, 18% on research, 7% on public service, 8% on academic support, 10% on student services and student aid, 5% on University support, 12% on operations and plant, and 3% on other (23-0014, 23-0017).

OU's annual budget process engages various internal constituencies to ensure funding is allocated in a manner that supports the teaching, research and creative activity, and service missions of the University. In late fall and early spring, as next year's operating budget is crafted for each campus, college and unit-level spending requests are evaluated by the President and his executive team. As described in Section 5-B, new investments supporting the strategic plan and included in the multi-year budget are prioritized for funding, including, for example, the Strategic Research Verticals developed by the Office of the Vice President for Research and Partnerships (OVPRP), which help drive and direct the Norman Campus research priorities. Other new funding requests are evaluated for their fit with OU's mission and the University's strategic goals, given the expected available budget. OU's capital budget, including long-range physical planning, is also reflected in the All-Campus Master Plan.

A recent example of the collaborative nature of OU's budget process is the investment in the Career Center. Discussions with students, the Board, and employers led OU to reimagine its Career Center offerings, designed with the goal of creating a best-in-class experience. A multi-year commitment of more than \$1M will add 12 staff positions in career coaching, employer outreach, and data assessment.

OU's strategic plans facilitate coordinated planning on each campus by articulating funding priorities through their pillars, strategies, and tactics. The Norman Campus strategic plan budget provides evidence of the University's awareness of the interconnectedness of educational quality, student learning, and the diverse, complex, global, and technological world by linking strategic plan tactics

to discrete, annual investments. As discussed in Sections 5-A and 5-B, OU's planning processes involve internal constituents and, where appropriate, external constituents.

The Office of Academic Assessment reports directly to the Norman Campus Senior Vice President and Provost, a linkage facilitating input about assessment resources into institutional planning and budgeting decisions. OU's state-mandated Academic Program Review (APR) (discussed in depth in Sections 3-A and 4-A) guides departments through a structured self-evaluation. This process encourages academic units to think strategically about teaching/learning and research/creative activity goals. APR helps both the department and central administration identify current and upcoming departmental resource needs related to faculty, students, staff, and facilities, and academic units leave the review process with a plan for implementing identified action items. These regular reviews also provide a way for constituent groups such as students, taxpayers, donors, funding agencies, accreditation organizations, and state government to hold the University accountable.

OU's processes for linking assessment, planning, and budgeting are also demonstrated through the Norman Campus's hiring process for regular faculty. Colleges complete a Regular Faculty Hiring Request for each regular faculty search they request, which is submitted to the Senior Vice President and Provost for approval. The Hiring Request process allows deans to allocate vacated faculty positions within their college to the highest and best need, while also providing clarity to the Senior Vice President and Provost on how the position will meet teaching needs with the college and leverage opportunities to build on research/scholarship/creative activity strengths within the college. Hiring of the additional 150 net new faculty recommended in the Norman strategic plan will follow a similar, but competitive process that asks the department to describe how potential faculty position(s) would contribute to strategic cross-unit/college/campus collaborations and/or address one of the four strategic research priorities of the University, as outlined in the OVPRP's Strategic Research Verticals.

Norman Campus planning at the college level starts with a strategic plan developed in consultation with faculty, staff, students, and any college-level external board of visitors or advisors (23-0120, 23-0528). This plan must, of course, be in alignment with the overall mission and goals of the University and will inform planning discussions with the Senior Vice President and Provost. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) identified for tracking the success of these plans are expected to align with those established for the University-wide plan. HSC administrators regularly review strategic and operational planning with deans at monthly Leadership Committee meetings. Tulsa developed its strategic vision in coordination with the Senior Vice President and Provosts from Norman and HSC. That process included consulting with internal and external stakeholders to identify ways the campus can leverage the existing strengths of the Tulsa campus to better serve the needs of the Tulsa community. Tulsa's vision focuses on three areas of excellence: health and medicine, social and behavioral community programs, and technology and innovation. (For more on OU's planning process see Section 5-B.)

Each fall, the President and executive leadership meet to discuss new first-year class targets, factoring in institutional capacity and tuition revenue implications, as well as tuition discounting strategies. Institutional Research and Reporting (IRR) distributes a weekly First-Time in College Applications Tracking Report providing counts of applicants, admits, and enrollments, and including information about demographic, quality, and degree program interest trends. Data from IRR reports, along with analyses from Admissions and Recruitment and University College, help the University plan enough course offerings and class sections to accommodate students in the upcoming academic year.

OU continues to see increases in first-year applications and enrollment. To counterbalance the recent decline in state appropriations, OU analyzes demographic trends in enrollment to inform its expanding recruitment reach. The first-year class grew from 3,724 in Fall 2010 to 4,683 in Fall 2022 while simultaneously increasing in academic quality and diversity. The average ACT composite score for new first-year students has risen from 25.9 to 26.0 during those years, and their average unweighted high school GPA has increased from 3.60 to 3.67 (23-0502, 23-0491). In the Fall 2022 first-year class, 25.4% of students identified themselves as first-generation college students, an institutional record.

Norman Campus's strategic plan calls for the first-year class to grow by 2% each year for the next seven years. This target resulted from capacity analyses designed to inform the University's goal to grow first-year enrollment slowly and strategically. This planned growth aligns well with OU's recent addition of two residential colleges and the Cross Housing Complex, replacing a 50-year-old dormitory and adding 300 net new beds (23-0452). (See Section 5-B.)

OU remains a cost-effective option for students in its target group, having held undergraduate resident tuition flat in four of the last five years and undergraduate nonresident tuition flat in three of the last five years (23-0005). Over the 10-year period ending June 30, 2022, OU has kept rate increases of resident tuition below the Higher Education Price Index (23-0492). Using OSRHE data, OU's Fall 2022 undergraduate tuition and mandatory fee rates are 73% of peer average for residents and 75% for nonresidents, as well as 78% for resident graduate students and 93% for nonresident graduate students. With increases in discounting, from AY2018 to AY2023, the annual net tuition and fee costs for residents has declined 6% and only increased 1% for nonresidents (23-0494).

OU enjoys an excellent reputation in the state and has a strong presence in nearly every Oklahoma high school (23-0496). Most of the Oklahoma recruitment team members are based in Norman and include individuals focusing on Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest regions of Oklahoma. Several recruiters also focus on Central Oklahoma high schools. OU's Diversity Enrichment Programs (DEP) team connects with diverse applicant populations, and their territories include the most diverse high schools in the state. DEP logged 179 high school visits and college fairs during fall 2022. Increased student body diversity remains a top University priority, and the DEP team's success deserves credit for OU's increasingly diverse student population (23-0497, 23-0582). OU also has four recruiting team members located on the Tulsa campus who focus on the Northeast quadrant of the state. They work in collaboration with the DEP team on highly diverse high schools in the Tulsa area.

OU realizes that recruiting students from all parts of the country helps meet goals focused on increasing student quality, expanding student body diversity, and generating sufficient tuition revenue to support University programs. Accordingly, OU has expanded its national recruitment strategies and hired regional representatives across the country, especially in Texas, California, Florida, and Georgia (23-0495). Additionally, OU has carefully focused on international student recruitment through global partnerships, experiencing a 5.7% (or 156 student) increase in international enrollment for Fall 2022 compared to Fall 2021. In January 2023, for the ninth time in the last ten years, OU was awarded the Davis Cup in recognition of enrolling the most Davis United World College international first-year students.

While OU's primary recruitment region is expected to experience a reduction in high school graduates from 2025-26 to 2036-37, the decline is not expected to be as steep as in other areas of the country. As other regions experience greater declines in high school graduates, however, the University expects that recruitment of high school graduates will become more competitive, and attendant costs may start eroding OU's net tuition revenue. In response to anticipated demographic

challenges, and in recognition of the increased popularity of online graduate programs, the University knew it needed a more coordinated, strategic approach to online education. It already had several high-quality, high-demand online master's programs, but they were distributed among individual colleges and campuses and lacked needed support. To better serve existing programs, as well as expand online program offerings, the University launched OU Online in June 2020.

Led by an experienced educator, OU Online is both a strategy and tactic within the *Lead On, University* plans (23-0001, 23-0002), providing a centralized division supporting the University's online program offerings. It partners with colleges to analyze potential new programs, develop multi-year program budgets, craft marketing strategies, help recruit new students, and manage new program launches. OU Online programs generated \$29 million in tuition revenue in FY2022, up from \$19 million in FY2021. OU Online performs post-start reviews on programs that have been accepting students for at least one year, meeting in person with department leadership and key central administrators (23-0500, 23-0538, 23-0539, 23-0540). While OU Online continues to focus on growing online graduate programs, it plans to leverage expertise in the College of Professional and Continuing Studies to expand online undergraduate degree completion programs.

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

The University's administrative structures and collaborative processes are robust, and through them the leadership is successfully advancing the OU mission. OU has multiple systems and reporting structures in place to provide regular constituent feedback and allow for comprehensive internal reviews. Examination of recent history shows many instances in which staff, faculty, administrators, students, and executive leaders identified a problem area, gathered necessary input, then implemented changes designed to provide a long-term solution. The University's resource base provides strong and stable support for our educational offerings and research/creative activity, and careful, systematic, and integrated long-term planning ensures that OU's ambitious future goals are realizable. Indeed, OU's leadership is constantly looking forward, assessing local, state, national, and global trends in higher education and in demography that may impact its long-term operations. The current economic and political environment in the state is certainly challenging, but OU's staff, faculty, administrators, and executive leaders are strongly committed to our mission *"to provide the best possible educational experience for our students through excellence in teaching, research and creative activity, and service to the state and society."* Moreover, the *Lead On, University* strategic plans underscore OU's dedication to positively changing the lives of our students, strengthening communities, and driving economic development across the state and beyond, and to doing so in smart, carefully coordinated, collaborative, and inclusive ways.

Sources

There are no sources.