

**Report to Faculty, Administrators, Trustees, Students
of**

**Hunter College of the City University of New York
New York, New York 10021**

**Prepared following analysis of the institution's
Periodic Review Report**

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Evaluation of the Periodic Review Report of Hunter College of the City University of New York

I. Introduction

Founded in 1870 as a normal school, Hunter is one of the oldest public colleges in the nation. Hunter College is the largest senior college in the City of New York (CUNY) system, located in the upper east side of Manhattan. Over 23,000 students currently attend Hunter, pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees in more than 170 areas of study. In 2008, Hunter began offering doctoral degrees. At the time of its decennial review in 2009, the college's undergraduate enrollment stood at 15,884 and graduate enrollment was 6,330. Five years later, the undergraduate enrollment rose over 5 percent to 16,689 students.

The Periodic Review Report was well-organized; information was easily accessible via the website and the document's appendices. The college provided an in-depth response to the recommendations from the previous decennial evaluation and update on the major challenges and opportunities faced. The process was inclusive; aligned with the renewal of the college's strategic plan. The readers commend the institution for the quality of the report. We also note that the college moved forward with its Periodic Review as quickly as it could after responding to the devastation from Storm Sandy in fall 2012.

II. Responses to Recommendations from the Previous Decennial Evaluation

This section summarizes Hunter College's response to all of the recommendations made in the decennial report prepared by the visiting team in 2009, and updated since its monitoring report in 2011. The institution responded to the two recommendations made the visiting team's report from the previous decennial evaluation. Hunter College did not provide specific recommendations in its 2009 self-study. The two recommendations made by the 2009 visiting team resulted in the Commission's request for a monitoring report that was submitted by the institution by October 2011:

Expedite the development of its new Strategic Plan, using a process that is transparent, participatory and inclusive. The Plan should articulate the mission vision, and focus of the College with the related goals to be achieved over its life. Equally important, the Plan should provide an institutional framework for a system of student and institutional assessment and accountability. (Standard 1)

The College should continue to develop and support its learning outcomes assessment activities through its organizational structures as well as through fiscal support. Of particular importance are faculty development and opportunities for information dissemination and sharing across institutions. (Standard 14)

The Commission accepted the 2011 Monitoring Report and requested that the institution "document the implementation and use of measures of institutional effectiveness that are clearly linked to the institutional mission and strategic goals (Standard 7)."

In the 2011 Monitoring Report, the institution provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that it implemented a strategic plan with a mission appropriate for an institution of higher education that described its purpose and who it served. Since the monitoring report, the institution provided evidence in its Periodic Review Report (PRR) that the plan is still being used by the institution to guide decisions, including resource allocations and enrollment targets. Additional evidence regarding the institution's compliance with this recommendation is addressed in Section V of this report.

III. Major Challenges and/or Opportunities

The readers evaluated the institution's analysis of its major challenges and opportunities and potential impact. The readers agree that the institution continues to be in compliance with the Commission's requirements of affiliation and accreditation standards. Hunter College identified four areas as major challenges and opportunities: (a) providing opportunities for interdisciplinarity, (b) expanding infrastructure through partnerships, (c) opportunities for student-faculty collaboration, and (d) managing a context of systemic transitions. In its Strategic Plan document, the institution outlined additional challenges and opportunities as themes, including the need to maintain currency with information technology and enhance resource development. These additional themes are addressed throughout the institution's strategic plan goals.

In each of the above areas, the PRR provided evidence that these issues were aligned with the Strategic Plan or through its Master Plan. Multiple resources such as federal grants or generous donations supported the institution's ability to address these challenges during difficult economic circumstances. For example, evidence was provided to document the procurement of Roosevelt House as a resource for the Public Policy Institute, an interdisciplinary program.

The institution is to be commended for its management of the transition to the CUNYfirst tool at the same time it transitioned to Pathways program. As an institution within a larger system, managing the priorities of the institution within the context of the larger system's priorities may result in competing with institutional priorities. Hunter College chose to integrate these external mandates to enhance its institutional effectiveness or promote student success, two goals within its strategic plan.

The reviewers suggest that the institution continue to monitor these challenges and seek opportunities through the strategic plan goals, especially in the area of graduate education. In addition, the institution should continue to seek enhancements to its library facilities. While the recent addition of doctoral programs enhances the identity and research goals of the institution, they are often more costly. Given recent trends in graduate enrollment, the institution should monitor its offering of doctoral programs and the impact on the university's resources. The differential tuition rates described in Section IV of the PRR indicate that the institution is prepared to address this concern.

IV. Enrollment and Finance Trends and Projections

An evaluation of the institution's enrollment and finance trends and projections finds that Hunter College continues to be in compliance with the Commission's requirements of affiliation and accreditation standards.

The PRR states that Hunter College undergraduate enrollment grew by 5 percent between 2009 and 2013, while enhancing the profile of its incoming students. The institution's applicant pool continues to increase in diversity, and its enrollments reflect its statement of diversity within its mission statement. CUNY Hunter plans to maintain stable enrollment patterns over the next five years due to steady or expected increases in high school graduation rates, a trend that defies declining rates in the rest of the region due to its location within the City of New York. The increase in high school graduation rates is based upon a study conducted or commissioned by the institution, not available to the readers. The source does indicate that this Hunter College report contradicts the October 2013 WICHE report predicting a decline in high school graduation rates in the metropolitan service area of New York City. The reviewers suggest that the institution continue to closely monitor the high school graduation rates in its service area. The institution is to be commended for its ability to manage program enrollments, attract a higher profile applicant pool during the past five years and for its conservative growth projections for the next five years.

One concern to share with the institution regards its growth in transfer student population. In a recent report shared at an ACERT Lunchtime Seminar in March 2014, a comparison of native students and transfer students reflected a gap in six year graduation gaps for transfer students arriving with more than 30 credits. As the institution continues to grow its transfer student population, consideration must be given to continue to strengthen advising and student success services for this growing population.

CUNY Hunter experienced only a slight decline (.3 percent in FTE) in graduate enrollment during the last five years, compared to significant declines observed by other institutions with graduate programs focused in Education. The institution reports that it was able to offset the decline in Education programs by diversifying its offerings and enhancing those in the other schools.

Hunter College's financial projections are supported by its conservative enrollment growth, the flexibility afforded by the CUTRA account, the CUNY Compact partnership that provides tax-levy funding to cover mandatory costs and a portion of programmatic investment plan, philanthropy and increased revenue from modest tuition increases supported by the rational tuition plan. The institution is to be commended on its ability to raise private funds to support institutional priorities. The PRR reported an increased annual giving from an average of \$16 million in 2009 to \$45 million by 2012.

V. Assessment Processes and Plans

The Periodic Review Report states, "Hunter has strengthened and expanded its assessment processes across the College, using data to inform decisions from the course level to the college level." Evidence exists that the institution has strengthened organizational structures and processes to support institutional assessment and learning outcomes assessment. The

Commission accepted the institution's 2011 Monitoring Report and asked that Hunter College "document the implementation and use of measures of institutional effectiveness that are clearly linked to the institution's mission and strategic goals (Standard 7)."

Institutional Assessment. (Standard 7)

Evidence provided in the Periodic Review Report indicates that Hunter College intentionally aligned its strategic plan with the CUNY Performance Management Process (PMP) and outlined an institutional effectiveness process to inform decisions and resource allocations. The Planning and Budgeting timeline documents a systematic process for the President, Provost, Deans and the President's Senior staff to regularly review and use annual reports, academic program reviews and the achievement of performance goals and targets reported annually in the PMP. This process encompasses multiple implications for resources including hiring priorities. The institution reviews past performance and consults with CUNY to set enrollment targets for the next academic year. In addition, the PRR states that, "PMP incentive funds have been invested to increase efforts toward student success and engagement." The institution's leadership regularly attends Senate meetings and Deans' Council meetings to communicate status and discuss priorities.

An Administrative Assessment Committee and administrative assessment process was developed for administrative offices. Annually, administrative offices submit reports on assessment initiatives and improvements made as a result of those assessment initiatives. Evidence exists that this process, including the "closing-the-loop" element, has been active since 2009-10.

The readers note that the academic department reporting process was updated in 2012 to integrate department level initiatives with the institution's strategic goals and CUNY's PMP. The new reporting template included measures such as faculty productivity, scholarly work and student learning outcomes assessment. The student learning outcomes assessment portion of the template was also intentionally updated and is made available separately for departments. The annual reports are reviewed by the deans and the Provost's office and used to "allocate new faculty lines, equipment and supplies."

The readers suggest that Hunter College continue on its present trajectory to demonstrate institutional effectiveness.

Assessment of Student Learning (Standard 14).

The assessment of student learning outcomes continues to improve at the institution, with more focus on the course level and increasing focus at the program level. The PRR indicates that the institution intentionally chose to focus its assessment at the course level and then build to the program level. Within the Hunter College School of Arts and Sciences departments (which enrolls over 96 percent of the institution's students), most departments have "emerging or developed" assessment plans, identify student learning outcomes and use curricular maps. About 30 percent of departments are reported to use assessment results in 2013 compared to under 20 percent in 2009; the institution still needs to improve in this area.

Some of the assessment initiatives appear to start and then stop, causing the readers to be concerned about the viability of some of these assessment practices and their contribution to a systematic approach to the learning outcomes assessment process. For example, as stated in the 2011 Monitoring Report and the PRR, the Senate established the new Standing Committee on Academic Assessment and Evaluation. Only one report was provided in the PRR or found on the institution's Senate website from this committee. The report was delivered in 2010. In 2011-12, the Provost's office provided support for program and course-level assessment projects from CUNY's "Coordinated Undergraduate Education (CUE) funds to support program and course-level assessment proposals for undergraduate education." These assessment projects are posted to the institution's website. These funded assessment initiatives provided support for faculty to use assessment to address questions regarding student learning and related experiences. Given that another document provided in the PRR described CUE funds invested to support student success opportunities, the readers wonder if this was a one-time resource for faculty use or if it is ongoing and occasionally also used to fund other institutional priorities? The same is true for the intended function of the Senate's new Standing Committee on Academic Assessment and Evaluation. As the college continues its work in reaching a sustainable level of program level assessment, publishing the assessment sections from the annual reports on the web site will demonstrate that the institution has established a culture of assessment.

The readers note that the Assessment Office provides resources for faculty to enhance student learning outcomes assessment, often in concert with the Academic Center for Excellence in Research and Teaching (ACERT). Reframed by the institution in 2011 to focus on pedagogy and its connection with assessment, ACERT "encourages use of learning outcomes as a necessary component of pedagogical practice and curricular review through individual consultations and group workshops." Faculty development opportunities exist, such as the "Easy Assessment Makeover" workshop in spring 2014, to help faculty improve their assessment of student learning and "shift the focus of assessment as one-time or project-based practice to one that is embedded, ongoing, and sustainable." The readers suggest that ACERT and the Assessment office continue to partner to help faculty integrate student learning assessment at the course-level and begin to enhance how those assessment findings may be used to demonstrate program-level achievement on learning outcomes.

In regards to the assessment of general education, the institution took advantage of the recent CUNY Pathways initiative to provide or update learning outcomes on general education course syllabi. As indicated in the PRR, "More than 200 existing general education courses were modified, virtually of which required the development and integration of new learning outcome tied to assignments and assessments." The institution relies upon CUNY mandated assessment instruments (e.g., former CPE and now the CLA) and assessments in select courses to understand student achievement of General Education Requirement (GER) learning outcomes. Based upon assessments in these courses, improvements to pedagogy or the curriculum were made. The learning outcomes are integrated within the mission statement of the Hunter College Strategic Plan:

Hunter undergraduate, graduate, and professional curricula challenge students to think critically – to approach problems from multiple perspectives, distinguish the questions each raises, and recognize the kinds of evidence each values. The College's academic programs stress the significance of human diversity,

emphasize research and artistic creation, and invite students to extend their education beyond campus.

There appears to be several resources through the Institutional Research office and Assessment office to support administrative and learning outcomes assessment. The readers offer a friendly suggestion that links be integrated to direct those in need to one site listing both resources, as valuable support may be missed if one only looks to one of the sites.

In the PRR, the institution shares its future plans for assessment, “As Hunter continues to implement its new Strategic Plan, it will pay particular attention to using findings from assessments to inform its understanding of current trends and plan for a successful future.” The PRR reported that the institution’s current assessment plan is being updated.

*The readers recommend that this assessment plan be designed with support from the Senate and seek extensive input from faculty to gain buy-in for its implementation. In addition, the readers recommend that the plan focus on demonstrating student achievement on programmatic learning outcomes.
(Standard 14)*

VI. Linked Institutional Planning and Budgeting Processes

The Periodic Review Report (PRR) provides evidence that resources are aligned with planning priorities, “substantial investments of these resources have been devoted to the plan and its central vision of fostering a research-oriented, student-focused institution.” Specifically, since the Strategic Plan was adopted in 2012, approximately \$26.7 million has been invested in Goal I, Enhance Hunter College’s Academic Identity as an Emerging University; nearly \$25 million in Goal II, Increase Student Success and Engagement; almost \$600,000 in Goal III, Foster a Commitment to Accountability, Openness, and Inclusion; and \$8.2 million in Goal IV, Address Hunter College’s Urgent Infrastructure Needs. These investments were used across the goals for academic program support, facilities improvements, faculty research, student support services, and scholarships and stipends. The sources for these investments included technology fees, CUE funds, Hunter College Foundation, Research Foundation and Tax-Levy.

Case studies provided in the PRR demonstrate that priorities that have been supported by strategic resource allocations (i.e., faculty hiring, facilities restoration, research funding for faculty to promote the college’s identity, student success initiatives, undergraduate research and a teaching and learning center for faculty) are monitored for improvement. For example, funds generated from philanthropic or entrepreneurial efforts were allocated to support faculty research. The institution reported increased number of research grants awarded and increases in scholarly productivity. As reported in the case study, “While it is not possible to make causal statements about the effects of Hunter’s many investments in the research enterprise, it is worth noting that the productivity of Hunter’s faculty is on the rise.”

The readers agree with the evidence provided in the PRR documents that, “Hunter’s aggressive and successful attempts to seek new resources—via philanthropy, state and city support, entrepreneurial efforts, differential tuition and academic excellence fees” allow the institution “to support its ambitious Strategic Plan.”

VII. Conclusion

The readers agree that the institution continues to be in compliance with the Commission's requirements of affiliation and accreditation standards. During a time of economic recession and dramatic shifts in their regional landscape, Hunter College has made progress since their 2009 decennial review and 2011 monitoring report:

- Addressed mandates to adopt new the business tool, CUNYfirst, that integrates records and business processes and updated general education courses to meet CUNY Pathways initiative
- Instituted organizational structures to systematize and promote the use of assessment
- Created and use a strategic plan to guide the institution forward and allocate resources
- Repositioned undergraduate or graduate programs to increase enrollments, sought additional philanthropic support, recognized benefits from differential tuition and CUE investments and tax levy to support strategic goal

As stated earlier in the document, the readers recommend that the institution:

Continue to update its assessment plan that is designed with support from the Senate and input from faculty, including adjuncts, to gain buy-in for its implementation. (Standard 14)

Focus on demonstrating student achievement of programmatic learning outcomes and the use of assessment information to improve teaching and learning. (Standard 14)

STANDARDS
for Accreditation
and
REQUIREMENTS
of Affiliation

THIRTEENTH EDITION

2014

Access full document:

<http://www.msche.org/documents/RevisedStandardsFINAL.pdf>



Middle States Commission on Higher Education

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Standard I

Mission and Goals

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

Criteria

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

1. clearly defined mission and goals that:
 - a. are developed through appropriate collaborative participation by all who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional development and improvement;
 - b. address external as well as internal contexts and constituencies;
 - c. are approved and supported by the governing body;
 - d. guide faculty, administration, staff, and governing structures in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curricular development, and the definition of institutional and educational outcomes;
 - e. include support of scholarly inquiry and creative activity, at levels and of the type appropriate to the institution;
 - f. are publicized and widely known by the institution's internal stakeholders;
 - g. are periodically evaluated;
2. institutional goals that are realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with mission;
3. goals that focus on student learning and related outcomes and on institutional improvement; are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs and services; and are consistent with institutional mission; and
4. periodic assessment of mission and goals to ensure they are relevant and achievable.

Standard II

Ethics and Integrity

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

Criteria

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

1. a commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights;
2. a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives;
3. a grievance policy that is documented and disseminated to address complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty, or staff. The institution's policies and procedures are fair and impartial, and assure that grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably;
4. the avoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict in all activities and among all constituents;
5. fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees;
6. honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, as well as in internal communications;
7. as appropriate to its mission, services or programs in place:
 - a. to promote affordability and accessibility;
 - b. to enable students to understand funding sources and options, value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt;
8. compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements to include reporting regarding:
 - a. the full disclosure of information on institution-wide assessments, graduation, retention, certification and licensure or licensing board pass rates;
 - b. the institution's compliance with the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation;

Standard II

- c. substantive changes affecting institutional mission, goals, programs, operations, sites, and other material issues which must be disclosed in a timely and accurate fashion;
 - d. the institution's compliance with the Commission's policies; and
- 9. periodic assessment of ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented.

Standard III

Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

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

Criteria

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

1. certificate, undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional programs leading to a degree or other recognized higher education credential, of a length appropriate to the objectives of the degree or other credential, designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning;
2. student learning experiences that are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are:
 - a. rigorous and effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service, as appropriate to the institution's mission, goals, and policies;
 - b. qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do;
 - c. sufficient in number;
 - d. provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation;
 - e. reviewed regularly and equitably based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures;
3. academic programs of study that are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution in a way that students are able to understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion;
4. sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution's programs of study and students' academic progress;
5. at institutions that offer undergraduate education, a general education program, free standing or integrated into academic disciplines, that:
 - a. offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field;

Standard III

- b. offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives; and
- c. in non-US institutions that do not include general education, provides evidence that students can demonstrate general education skills;
- 6. in institutions that offer graduate and professional education, opportunities for the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking, provided by faculty and/or other professionals with credentials appropriate to graduate-level curricula;
- 7. adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval on any student learning opportunities designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers; and
- 8. periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs providing student learning opportunities.

Standard IV

Support of the Student Experience

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

Criteria

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

1. clearly stated, ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success and are compatible with institutional mission, including:
 - a. accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds;
 - b. a process by which students who are not adequately prepared for study at the level for which they have been admitted are identified, placed, and supported in attaining appropriate educational goals;
 - c. orientation, advisement, and counseling programs to enhance retention and guide students throughout their educational experience;
 - d. processes designed to enhance the successful achievement of students' educational goals including certificate and degree completion, transfer to other institutions, and post-completion placement;
2. policies and procedures regarding evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits, and credits awarded through experiential learning, prior non-academic learning, competency-based assessment, and other alternative learning approaches;
3. policies and procedures for the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records;
4. if offered, athletic, student life, and other extracurricular activities that are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern all other programs;
5. if applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of student support services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers; and
6. periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience.

Standard V

Educational Effectiveness Assessment

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

Criteria

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

1. clearly stated educational goals at the institution and degree/program levels, which are interrelated with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the institution's mission;
2. organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty and/or appropriate professionals, evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/program goals. Institutions should:
 - a. define meaningful curricular goals with defensible standards for evaluating whether students are achieving those goals;
 - b. articulate how they prepare students in a manner consistent with their mission for successful careers, meaningful lives, and, where appropriate, further education. They should collect and provide data on the extent to which they are meeting these goals;
 - c. support and sustain assessment of student achievement and communicate the results of this assessment to stakeholders;
3. consideration and use of assessment results for the improvement of educational effectiveness. Consistent with the institution's mission, such uses include some combination of the following:
 - a. assisting students in improving their learning;
 - b. improving pedagogy and curriculum;
 - c. reviewing and revising academic programs and support services;
 - d. planning, conducting, and supporting a range of professional development activities;
 - e. planning and budgeting for the provision of academic programs and services;
 - f. informing appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs;
 - g. improving key indicators of student success, such as retention, graduation, transfer, and placement rates;
 - h. implementing other processes and procedures designed to improve educational programs and services;
4. if applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of assessment services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers; and

5. periodic assessment of the effectiveness of assessment processes utilized by the institution for the improvement of educational effectiveness.

Standard VI

Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

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

Criteria

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

1. institutional objectives, both institution-wide and for individual units, that are clearly stated, assessed appropriately, linked to mission and goal achievement, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, and are used for planning and resource allocation;
2. clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that provide for constituent participation, and incorporate the use of assessment results;
3. a financial planning and budgeting process that is aligned with the institution's mission and goals, evidence-based, and clearly linked to the institution's and units' strategic plans/objectives;
4. fiscal and human resources as well as the physical and technical infrastructure adequate to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered;
5. well-defined decision-making processes and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability;
6. comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that includes consideration of sustainability and deferred maintenance and is linked to the institution's strategic and financial planning processes;
7. an annual independent audit confirming financial viability with evidence of follow-up on any concerns cited in the audit's accompanying management letter;
8. strategies to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals; and
9. periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources.

Standard VII

Governance, Leadership, and Administration

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

Criteria

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

1. a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision making by each constituency, including governing body, administration, faculty, staff and students;
2. a legally constituted governing body that:
 - a. serves the public interest, ensures that the institution clearly states and fulfills its mission and goals, has fiduciary responsibility for the institution, and is ultimately accountable for the academic quality, planning, and fiscal well-being of the institution;
 - b. has sufficient independence and expertise to ensure the integrity of the institution. Members must have primary responsibility to the accredited institution and not allow political, financial, or other influences to interfere with their governing responsibilities;
 - c. ensures that neither the governing body nor its individual members interferes in the day-to-day operations of the institution;
 - d. oversees at the policy level the quality of teaching and learning, the approval of degree programs and the awarding of degrees, the establishment of personnel policies and procedures, the approval of policies and by-laws, and the assurance of strong fiscal management;
 - e. plays a basic policy-making role in financial affairs to ensure integrity and strong financial management. This may include a timely review of audited financial statements and/or other documents related to the fiscal viability of the institution;
 - f. appoints and regularly evaluates the performance of the Chief Executive Officer;
 - g. is informed in all its operations by principles of good practice in board governance;
 - h. establishes and complies with a written conflict of interest policy designed to ensure the impartiality of the governing body by addressing matters such as payment for services, contractual relationships, employment, and family, financial or other interests that could pose or be perceived as conflicts of interest;

Standard VII

- i. supports the Chief Executive Officer in maintaining the autonomy of the institution;
3. a Chief Executive Officer who:
 - a. is appointed by, evaluated by, and reports to the governing body and shall not chair the governing body;
 - b. has appropriate credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization;
 - c. has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including developing and implementing institutional plans, staffing the organization, identifying and allocating resources, and directing the institution toward attaining the goals and objectives set forth in its mission;
 - d. has the assistance of qualified administrators, sufficient in number, to enable the Chief Executive Officer to discharge his/her duties effectively; and is responsible for establishing procedures for assessing the organization's efficiency and effectiveness;
4. an administration possessing or demonstrating:
 - a. an organizational structure that is clearly documented and that clearly defines reporting relationships;
 - b. an appropriate size and with relevant experience to assist the Chief Executive Officer in fulfilling his/her roles and responsibilities;
 - c. members with credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization and their functional roles;
 - d. skills, time, assistance, technology, and information systems expertise required to perform their duties;
 - e. regular engagement with faculty and students in advancing the institution's goals and objectives;
 - f. systematic procedures for evaluating administrative units and for using assessment data to enhance operations; and
5. periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration.