



POINT PARK UNIVERSITY SELF-STUDY 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

Point Park University's Self-Study report summarizes the most important developments at the University since its last Self-Study in 2010 and its PRR in 2014-2015. This Self-Study affirms the University meets all articles of affiliation and criterion for the seven Middle States standards. As importantly, the University has used the Self-Study process to evaluate what it does well and what it can improve.

Some highlights, along with standards where these developments are more fully explored:

- The completion and opening of the Pittsburgh Playhouse, a 160,000 square foot performance and learning laboratory that includes three distinct theaters, multiple classrooms, and open social spaces. The Playhouse is an integral part of the University's Master Space plan, as well as Point Park's contribution to the continued revitalization of Pittsburgh's downtown, where the University's 15 buildings are spread out over five city blocks [Standards 1,3,4, and 6] (**S6_C3_Point Park Playhouse**).
- The 2020 revision of a new University mission [Standard 1] (**S1_C1_Mission Vision Values 2020**).
- The signing of Collective Bargaining Agreements for full-time and part-time faculty [Standards 2,3, and 6] (**S2_C1_FT CBA_2017-2021**) & (**S2_C1_PT CBA_2015-2019**).
- The addition of online academic programs [Standards 3 and 6] (**S3_C1_Online Programs and Start Dates**).
- The founding and growth of the University's cooperative education program [Standards 3,4, and 6] (**S4_C1_Career-Readiness_Fact Sheet**) & (**S4_C1_How to Graduate Career-Ready_Brochure**).
- A data-informed Center for Student Success that incorporates professional advising and academic services [Standard 4].
- The University's entrance into doctoral-level education with a Ph.D. in Community Engagement, an Ed.D. in Leadership and Administration, and a Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology [Standards 3,5, and 6].

What follows are the key findings, innovations, and needed improvement from each standard.

Standard I: Mission and Goals

A new University Mission statement is the centerpiece of Standard I. Developed through a campus-wide, comprehensive, and inclusive process beginning in 2018, this Mission continues to uphold Point Park's traditional emphasis on knowledge, skills, and experience that allow for engaged professionals. Its newest incarnation more clearly names the diversity and urban environment that shapes much of Point Park.

The Standard I committee identified progress and innovation in these areas:

- Point Park's strategic plan is linked to the mission through four strategic initiatives. The

unit goals stemming from each of the initiatives continue to be a unifying tool to ensure the mission is at the center of the University's work. Additionally, the University has nearly completed its articulation of a fifth strategic initiative around equity, diversity, and inclusion ([S1_C2_2016-2021 & Strategic Plan \(Mission Initiatives Goals\) amended 9.20.19](#)).

- The revised mission statement will serve as a foundation for the next iteration of the strategic plan.
- Established assessment and alignment of resources as a standard practice across the University ([S6_C1_PARA Mission & SOPs_June 2019](#)).

Standard I also observed these are areas of opportunity:

- Communication of new mission statement should be renewed through physical reminders such as posters in classrooms and conference rooms and a communication campaign using the University website and social media avenues.
- The University should continue to enhance its diversity and inclusion initiatives across all constituencies and in all University offices and functions, as well as engaging the University community in identifying needs and prioritizing action steps.
- The University should recalibrate its efforts related to the strategic plan and assess the impact on teaching and learning as well as financial health of the University given the challenges presented by COVID-19. In this regard, the pandemic provides Point Park an unexpected opportunity to conduct a stress tests of its systems and protocols to ensure that efforts in all areas identified in the University's mission and strategic plan are integral to its work even in a crisis of this magnitude.

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Point Park promotes ethical treatment of its students, staff, and faculty. It has clearly documented procedures and policies for grievances, academic freedom, and fair employment practices.

The Standard II committee identified the following as areas of innovation and development:

- The signing of the CBAs supports academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression and intellectual property. Having a shared understanding of these terms and a coherent procedure in case of grievances reinforces the importance of these ideas.
- The revision of grade appeals and dismissal appeals to reduce complexity and potential conflicts of interest.

It identified these areas as opportunities for the University:

- While the ethics policies are distributed to all employees on an annual basis, part-time faculty receive no training. Additionally, when changes are made to the policies, those changes are not called out in the annual distribution of policies so that employees are aware of specific changes.
- The University Code of Conduct is posted in multiple locations on the website, potentially

leading to multiple versions of the Code. Hosting this Code in one place will mitigate this confusion.

- Point Park should continue its efforts at promoting a broad-based diversity, equity, and inclusion coalition of faculty, staff, administrators, and students.
- The Staff Handbook needs to be updated.
- The University will be better served by turning many common forms, such as registration, leave of absence and change of major, into digital formats.

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student-Learning Experience

Point Park is proud that teaching and learning are at its core. While all full-time faculty are expected to remain current in their fields, the University does not judge the value of its faculty on how many articles they may produce for which journals. Instead, faculty are expected to be members of a learning community, providing mentoring opportunities, real-world perspectives, and innovative teaching. The combination of practicing artists, current business owners, former FBI agents, engaged community activists, and traditional scholars provides students with a rich tapestry of educational opportunities. With the recent addition of online learning, the University remains committed to offering its unique form of education to a wide variety of students.

Specifically, the Standard III team identified these as areas of innovation and development:

- Since 2015-2016, the University shifted the student-to-faculty ratio from 13:1 to 11:1 and stayed steady with its tenured to tenure-track numbers.
- Upgrades to its student portal have allowed ease of access to advising worksheets, course descriptions, book listings, mid-term grades for undergraduate students, and access to the student retention system, FinishLine, so that faculty may submit information easily on attendance and student performance in the classroom.
- There has been growth in the number of students not only participating in High-Impact Practices, but also the switch from pursuing just a single opportunity to two or more ([S3 C4 NSSE19 High-Impact Practices](#)).

Likewise, it identified these opportunities for further improvement:

- Develop a plan to increase participation by students with the online course evaluations
- Online student advising is handled by an outside partner who does not use Point Park's early alert system. This partnership with Wiley (formerly The Learning House) has ended and will be replaced with a new partner in the 2021-2022 Academic Year, allowing the University to overhaul the online advising process and bring it in-house.
- Instructors, especially part-time faculty, need to be better informed about CORE learning objectives attached to their courses.
- Faculty need to have access to assessment rubrics before the semester starts and a clear understanding that they will need to have students create artifacts that can be used for a CORE Outcome assessment.
- The University should continue to focus on post-assessment activities aimed at improving

faculty training

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Point Park's focus on student success is seen in traditional metrics like retention statistics, available tutors, and intercollegiate athletics. However, its student focus also is seen in its development of an emergency fund for students, its emphasis on financial literacy for all students, and its data-informed approach to mitigating problems. A dedicated group of professional coordinators and academic coaches provide classroom support, while a host of co-curricular departments give students opportunities to develop outside of the traditional classrooms.

Standard IV's team found these innovations and developments:

- The use of data to inform the Center for Student Success supports various learners. Using aggregator sources such as FinishLine, the CSS can provide a range of academic and academic-adjacent services (**S4_C1_Finishline Numbers**).
- The development of the Emergency Fund to support students with micro-grants and loans. In many cases, these funds can be dispersed to students in under 48 hours.
- The creation of academic coaches to help with executive and time management, in addition to content areas.
- The continued growth of the University's co-op program ([S1_C2 Annual Report 17-18-updated with grad outcomes stats](#)).

The team found these areas for opportunity and growth:

- Although the creation of the University Counseling Center provides much-needed mental health services, Point Park will need to develop an enhanced, sustainable model for student mental health in general.
- The University's study-abroad program and commuter resources remain under used.
- Week-long orientation for first-year students is only in its second year, and assessment data on its strengths and weaknesses will need to be longitudinally gathered over time.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Thanks to investment by the University and intense work by the faculty, assessment of educational programs at Point Park occurs at many levels and in many ways. Direct measures of student achievement such as rubric-based assessment and indirect measures like student and alumni surveys, or reflective essays help assess and improve classes, programs, and departments. Additionally, outside accreditation in several programs provides a secondary lens through which improvement can be seen.

Standard V's teams cited the following areas for innovation and development:

- Overall, courses of study are communicated clearly, and well-aligned for successful

completion of program objectives.

- A plan for assessment of all facets of curriculum was implemented on a reasonable timeline, and a culture of assessment is being created within departments (**S5_C1_Program Review Sequence**).
- Assessment from stakeholders is happening at a higher rate across the University. Faculty are engaged and working to make effective changes to curriculum to improve student learning and success.

The team found these areas for opportunity:

- Continued efforts towards the collection of post-assessment data, graduate information, and oversight of yearly compliance.
- The University will work on refining the curriculum process to make it more efficient and effective.
- The University needs to create structures to ensure inclusion of online course data in program and CORE assessment reviews.
- The University should continue to refine faculty training in formal and informal assessment practices.

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

Point Park has taken several steps to ensure that its strategic planning and resource allocation are intimately connected with the improvement of the University. The use of a strategic planning software platform has streamlined the process and reporting of strategic decision making. Its Planning, Assessment, and Resource Allocation (PARA) process promotes transparent resource allocation and Point Park's Strategic Enrollment and Revenue (SERP) group identifies programming and other revenue opportunities. As previously mentioned, the University Playhouse opened in 2018, completing the University's Academic Village.

Standard VI identified the following as innovations and developments:

- The University has an established process for planning, assessment and resource allocation together which is linked to the strategic plan (**S6_C1_PARA Mission & SOPs_June 2019**)..
- The SERP process provides a structure which solicits feedback from the entire University for ideas for new programs and revenue generation. Various initiatives have been implemented with new revenue generation created (**S1_C2_Standard 1_Memo RE SERP Process**).
- The Budget Efficiencies Committee (BEC) has implemented significant budget efficiencies.
- The successful opening of the Point Park Playhouse completes the final phase in the University's Academic Village.

- The University successfully transitioned the University to a fully remote learning environment at the onset of the pandemic in Spring 2020. In addition, the University created a very comprehensive set of campus safety opening guidelines for the entire campus community.
- An effective Hyflex learning model was created for FY 2021 which supported various necessary learning modalities during the pandemic.
- The University has a coherent, assessable strategic plan with yearly objectives and status completion updates for Board members (**S6_C1_All Dashboard Objectives 2021**).
- Despite the malicious destruction of all alumni records pre-1997, the University has raised more than 70 million dollars since 2006, mostly from the Pittsburgh community.

Areas for Improvement:

- The newly reorganized Development and Alumni Relations will need to gather longitudinal assessment.
- The University's classroom utilization ratio needs to be improved (**S6_C1_Classroom Utilization**).

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

Point Park demonstrates effective governance at several levels. Its Board of Trustees is engaged and works closely with the President to maintain the long-term health of the University. The President is supported by long-serving senior leadership with appropriate skills and experiences. Faculty Assembly and faculty committees work in collaboration with the administration, as does a newly redesigned Staff Assembly and Student Government Association.

Standard VII identified the following innovations and developments:

- The University's mix of long-serving senior administrators and relative newcomers has added a variety of leadership perspectives.
- The University has developed an onboarding process for new Board of Trustee members (**S7_C1_New Trustee Orientation**).
- Revisions in faculty committee structures and make-up indicate a willingness to change as the University changes (**S7_C1_Faculty Assembly 2018-19 Committees**).
- The formalization of shared governance processes among faculty, staff, and administration.

The standard team found these opportunities:

- Although the system of shared governance is built into the faculty's Collective Bargaining Agreement, and embraced by staff, the University will need to rely heavily on the principles of shared governance in its response to the pandemic.
- Recruitment and engagement of new Board members remains important.



INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Brief History

The history of the University mirrors the history of the city that it calls home. Building from opportunity, and a willingness to change, remains a constant for Point Park, and this theme of opportunistic improvement is seen throughout the Self-Study. The University began as a small business training college in 1933, offering programs such as medical secretarial, engineering secretarial, and accounting. With enrollment reaching more than 800 students in 1960, Point Park Junior College, named for the city's historic Point State Park, began offering associate degrees. The University's current mission statement echoes the original one: being a college "with the goal of helping young men and women become responsible adults, eager to achieve productive and rewarding lives and instilling academic achievement, intellectual curiosity, a philosophy that will sustain them through life and its corresponding crises." Programs in engineering technology, education, and journalism were added, with the College awarding bachelor's degrees in 1966. Capitalizing on a performing arts space—The Pittsburgh Playhouse—located in the Oakland neighborhood, Point Park introduced dance and theatre programs to its list of majors. These programs were the foundation for the University's current Conservatory of Performing Arts, which also includes Cinema Arts.

Since its Depression-era founding, Point Park has endured two crises for survival. The first occurred in 1973 when the College became over-extended and faced financial problems, bringing it close to bankruptcy. A focus on student success and development fueled enrollment growth and helped provide needed resources to return the College to financial solvency. The second crisis came in mid-1990 when members of the College's Board of Trustees briefly considered merging Point Park with another local school. Following a period of intense focus on growing enrollments, increasing financial assets, and improving its facilities, Point Park emerged from this crisis in a strong position to seek University status and in 2003, the College received authorization from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to become Point Park University.

As Point Park became a University, it began a long labor relations struggle between faculty and the former administration. The faculty filed a petition to unionize with the regional National Labor Relations Board. The University contested the petition. As will be discussed in several Standards, the signing of a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBAs) with Part-Time faculty in 2016 and Full-Time faculty in 2017 brought an end to this impasse. With the signing of CBAs, the University and the faculty renewed efforts to fulfill the University mission to serve Point Park students, providing an exceptional education based upon innovative, experiential learning. The success of this educational mission is central to Standards I, III, V, and VII.

In the decade since the last comprehensive Self-Study, the University maintained its enrollment and budget, while growing its endowment and completing its master space plan. In 2011, the operating budget was \$90.2 million; in 2019, the operating budget is \$86.1 million. Enrollment in

2011 was 4,077 students and in 2019 is 3,929 students. The endowment was \$21.9 million in 2011 and now rests at nearly 47 million (**S6_C1_Endowments**). During the last decade, Point Park invested \$81.2 million in capital projects to upgrade academic and residential buildings, build new facilities, and purchase new properties. The final component of the master-space effort is the opening of the Pittsburgh Playhouse in 2018, offering students from a variety of disciplines the opportunity to engage in experiential, professionally driven education. Resource allocation and its importance to Point Park's continued dynamism is addressed in more detail in Standard VI.

Two other important organizational developments have served Point Park well. The first is the Center for Student Success (CSS), which provides a holistic approach to student support domains. In 2014, student feedback on the quality of advising and mentoring led President Hennigan and other members of the senior administration to advocate for a revised advising structure. The CSS offers department-specific course advising, with an aim to keep students on an eight-semester graduation, academic coaching, disability services, and tutoring. The Center for Student Success is detailed in Standard IV.

The second development: in 2015, Point Park entered the online education arena. Recognizing that traditional undergraduate enrollment had leveled off, the University partnered with a third-party provider, The Learning House, to quickly institute the recruiting and instruction of online students. From that foundation, the University currently offers 22 programs in exclusively online formats, as well as several programs with hybrid programming. Standards III and V detail the academic components to online education, along with Standard VI.

As alluded to earlier, Point Park University remains committed to supporting student opportunity through innovative and experiential education. Piloted by the Rowland School of Business in 2015, the University's co-op program provides undergraduates, regardless of academic discipline, an opportunity to engage in a six-credit experiential education course while earning living wages. At the graduate level, the Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology emphasizes community-based research and practice, and its doctoral-level students are integrated into the counseling services at Point Park. The University's first-year experience course has students construct solutions to real challenges existing within Point Park's community, and the Honors Program routinely participates in service learning. Point Park students are justifiably proud of their reputation for being inclusive, diverse, and community-focused, and the University strives to promote these values in its educational offerings.

COVID-19 Related Changes and Activity

Since most of the Self-Study was written pre-pandemic, there is a need to briefly address many of the changes to Point Park since COVID-19 disrupted higher education.

- **March:** The University quickly shifts to remote learning once it learned of the extent of the crisis. Communication was consistent and transparent (archives of all communication can be found on the university website). In under a week, all students experienced diverse ways of teaching and learning. For students without easy access to technology, the University provides laptops and other resources. The first assessment of many regarding the transition occurred a few weeks later using a brief but actionable survey. It was not only designed to

determine how students adjusted to online instruction, but also to quickly connect them to service and support if needed, especially focused on technology and connectivity.

- April: The University mitigates another major student concern by extending the Pass/No Credit option to all students in all classes. In partnership with The Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS), an survey is administered to determine what worked well and what did not (**S4_C1_HEDS Student Survey Summary**). According to survey results, the University responded positively to the COVID-19 pandemic as evidenced in the percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:
 1. Nearly 83% of the respondents indicated that staff/admin have done a good job protecting students from the negative health consequences.
 2. Nearly two-thirds (63%) indicated that staff/admin have done a good job helping students to adapt to the changes at the institution brought on by the spread of COVID-19.
 3. 73% indicated that staff/admin have shown care and concern for the students.
 4. 70% of the students said that faculty have shown care and concern for them as they make changes in their courses.

In addition, nearly three-fourths (74%) of the students were generally satisfied or very satisfied with regards to the communication they were receiving about its ongoing response to COVID-19. The University's senior executive team begins a series of bi-weekly communications informing the Point Park community of larger, strategic decisions concerning how teaching and University operations will work in the Fall (**S4_C1_HEDS Student Survey Summary**).

- May-June: The Center for Inclusive Excellence and the Center for Student Success host a series of webinars focused on the upcoming semester. The University creates working groups based on the four strategic pillars— Academic Excellence, Quality Student Experience, Managed Resources, and Community Engagement—to generate solutions to the challenges of sustaining operations during a pandemic. Made up of faculty, Chairs, Deans, students, and staff, each of the working groups leveraged data collected from a community survey designed to solicit ideas from the University around fall course plans and ideas to address student engagement, morale, and safety. For example, the Academic Excellence working group suggested that the University have no on-ground classes after Thanksgiving break to minimize travel, and Managed Resources developed the social-distancing guidelines. Recommendations from these working groups are sent to a Steering Committee, who, in conjunction with other University leaders, make important re-opening decisions based on this input (**S1_C1_Final Report Covid Planning**). In addition, a special email address was created for all faculty, staff, students, and parents to gather COVID-19 related questions. These questions were used to create the framework for a series of Townhalls where the questions were answered publicly.
- July-August: Through its use of earlier collected survey data, Point Park knew more than 77% of its students expressed interest in face-to-face instruction; at the same time, the University was extremely aware of the health risks posed by a semester as usual (**S4_C1_HEDS Student Survey Summary**). Using a Point Park version of the HyFlex model, classes are designed to have an on-ground component, while also offering remote learning to students who could not attend class physically. Classes that Chairs and faculty

determined had to take place exclusively on-ground are passed forward to the Provost for approval.

- August: Once courses are designated as HyFlex, remote, or on-ground, students were given an opportunity to choose which of their courses they wanted to take in which modality. These student choices, along with other systemic changes such as returning Point Park to a standard credit hour and socially distanced classrooms, allowed Point Park to open as scheduled, with students taking courses in a variety of ways, while still retaining the University's emphasis on experiential learning and teaching.

Like other colleges and universities, Point Park is facing challenges because of COVID-19. Its first-time enrollment is down, and there has been an increase of 10% of students choosing to take a leave of absence or attend another institution (**S6_C3_Operating Budget Projections**). The shift to remote and HyFlex learning required the University to purchase new cameras and other in-class technology. Dr. Jonas Prida has been promoted to Associate Provost for Academic Excellence and Innovations to manage the pedagogical and institutional changes brought about by COVID. Because of social distancing, the Pittsburgh Playhouse ran an all-digital season with no audience. This confluence of challenges has forced the University to look even more closely at how it spends and invests resources. Changes will come out of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is up to Point Park to do what it has always done with change: use it as an opportunity to improve.



THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

Outcomes of the Self-Study

Point Park has identified the following outcomes of the Self-Study:

- Through its self-study process, Point Park University can support the criteria needed for a Reaffirmation of accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.
- The University has procedures, policies, and processes that are no longer useful or productive. The Self-Study allowed the University to identify these ossified policies or processes and either revise or excise them.
- Establish a foundation for the next iteration of the strategic plan
 - This Self-Study provided an opportunity to make data-informed revisions to the University's next strategic plan. As a tuition-dependent institution, Point Park is aware that it must continue to make wise investments in curricular programming and student experiences.
 - Within the narrative, there will be explicit ties to various standards and their connection to Point Park's strategic planning. This tying together highlights the potential opportunities that the Self-Study identified.
- Emphasize the post-assessment phase of curricular and co-curricular activities. Several of the Standards recognized that the final stage in institutional improvement remains less developed than the assessment activities proceeding it. The University is taking active steps to improve post-assessment activities.
- Communicate to all Point Park community members the ongoing improvement efforts
 - The innovation, academic success, student development and skillful decision making that drives Point Park are not communicated as successfully as many in the Point Park community would like. Each standard ends with a bulleted list of improvements and developments, as well as a list of areas for improvement.

Institutional Overview

Point Park University is a medium-sized liberal arts university, offering traditional liberal arts and professional degrees; additionally, the University is home to a highly ranked Conservatory of Performing Arts (COPA). Located in Pittsburgh's central business district, Point Park prides itself on being the city's only downtown University. Founded in 1933 as the Business Training College and becoming Point Park University in 2003, the University has long served the city of Pittsburgh and the surrounding region as a career-focused institute of higher education. The University's mission statement, revised in January 2020, makes explicit the connection between Point Park's location and educational focus: "Point Park University provides innovative undergraduate and graduate education in a dynamic urban setting. Dedicated to academic excellence and community engagement, we prepare students of diverse backgrounds with the knowledge, skill, and experience to lead meaningful lives as informed citizens and successful professionals."

The central campus consists of fifteen buildings spread out over five city blocks. The most recent addition to campus is the Pittsburgh Playhouse, a 160,000 square foot, state-of-the-art learning laboratory with three major theaters, prop/scene/costume design shops, a sound stage, and multiple

classrooms. Undergraduates may choose to live in one of five residence halls, with many students living off-campus in any of Pittsburgh's affordable neighborhoods.

The University currently offers 82 undergraduate programs, 17 masters-level programs, and three doctoral programs. Undergraduate programs with the largest enrollments are Sports, Arts, and Entertainment Management, Business Management, Cinema Production, Dance, and Criminal Justice (**S1_C1_Factbook Enrollment**). Master's-level programs with the largest enrollment are the master's in business administration, and the online Health Care Management and Educational Administration. The doctoral program with the largest enrollment is the Ed.D. in Leadership and Administration, and Point Park offers one of the only Ph.D.'s in Community Engagement in the nation. The new Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology has recently been accredited by the *Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association*.

Point Park is almost exclusively tuition-dependent, with roughly 80% of its 86-million-dollar operating budget generated by tuition. In FY 2020, full-time undergraduates are charged \$913 per credit hour, and students enrolled in its Conservatory of Performing Arts are charged \$1,177 per credit hour, reflecting the more intensive training, facility, and technological demands of these majors. 88% of Point Park students receive financial aid, with the average grant to an incoming student being approximately \$21,000 (**S2_C7_Factbook Financial Aid**).

Point Park serves approximately 3,000 undergraduate students in on-ground and online programming with roughly 800 students in the University's graduate programs (**S1_C1_Factbook Facts & Figures**). Approximately 85% of undergraduates are full-time, while roughly 30% of graduates are full-time. The University expects the percentage of full-time graduate students will grow with the expansion of the University's Psy.D. program. 61% of undergraduate students come from Southwestern PA, with Maryland, Ohio, and Florida having the largest representation of other states. The University also welcomes students from 33 different countries (**S1_C1_Factbook International**).

Point Park's demographics mirror the surrounding area. The city of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County are roughly 80% white, 13% African American, and 3% Asian American. The University is 72% white, 15% African American, and 2% Asian America. As befitting its mission, the University serves 20% first-generation students, and 45% are Pell eligible. Point Park's first-year to second-year retention rate is 78% and its six-year graduation rate is 60% (**S1_C1_Factbook Facts & Figures**).

Point Park's students take advantage of many co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, including student government, an award-winning student radio station, student newspaper [*The Globe*] and YouTube station, a Black Student Union, and more than 40 student clubs and organizations. The University offers 15 varsity intercollegiate sports, participating in the River States Conference as part of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA).

Point Park has 154 full-time faculty members with approximately 60% being tenured, with other faculty being professional appointments, visiting artists, and tenure-track faculty (**S1_C1_Faculty by Status**). Over the last three years, Point Park has hired new faculty to work in its doctoral

programs in Community Engagement and Psychology, the Conservatory, Humanities and Social Sciences, the Rowland School of Business, and Engineering. Additionally, Point Park has hired new Deans in the Conservatory and Communication. The University also employs many part-time faculty.

Paul Hennigan became President of Point Park University in 2006 and under his leadership, the University has been a transformative force in downtown Pittsburgh. In addition to the stability of a long-serving President, Point Park has continuity in other executive roles with a long-serving Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations (2006), Vice President for External Relations (2006), and Dean of Students/Vice President of Student Affairs (2003). Befitting the rapid changes in higher education and the University itself, there have been changes in other executive positions: an inaugural Assistant Vice President of Online Learning in 2015; a new Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs in 2016; a new Vice President of Enrollment in 2017; and a new Athletic Director in 2018.



STANDARD I: MISSION AND GOALS

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.

Criterion 1: *an accredited institution possesses and demonstrates a clearly defined mission and institutional goals.*

Point Park University's Board of Trustees approved and adopted a new University Mission statement January 28, 2020. This new mission frames and articulates Point Park's academic agenda and relation to the larger community: "Point Park University provides innovative undergraduate and graduate education in a dynamic urban setting. Dedicated to academic excellence and community engagement, we prepare students of diverse backgrounds with the knowledge, skill, and experience to lead meaningful lives as informed citizens and successful professionals." While the mission statement is new, it represents a thoughtful and logical progression from previous mission statements, reflecting the University's drive towards innovative, experiential education for all its students while declaring a commitment to foster engaged, informed members of society.

Point Park's recent mission revision was developed through a community-wide, comprehensive, and inclusive process that began in 2018 and culminated in Board approval in 2020 ([S1_C1_2020.01.28 PointParkBOTResolution23 2019 ApprovalModifyingUnviversityMission](#)). The process included participation through the University's shared governance system, with the faculty and staff each making recommendations through their Assemblies in 2019 (**S1_C1_SA September 2019**). Students and alumni were involved in the process as well, with each constituency contributing both content and language to the final statement. This process is described in detail later in this section.

Point Park's mission statement has been periodically reviewed, revised, and formally approved since 1966, when the institution became a college awarding bachelor's degrees ([S1_C4_SSI Mission related question](#)). The mission statement that was approved in 2008 and served Point Park from 2008-2013 was developed after Point Park became a University in 2003 and President Paul Hennigan was appointed the University's sixth President in 2006: "Point Park University educates students in a diverse urban environment and prepares graduates to apply knowledge to achieve their goals, advance their professions and serve their communities."

The previous statements of mission, vision, and values were developed through a similar process that began in 2005, supported by external management consultants (The Hill Group) and approved by the Board of Trustees in 2008. The mission statement had a minor revision to include the word "urban" approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2013 ([S1_C1_2013.01.24 Point Park BOT Resolution 2002-2013 Approval Modifying University Mission](#)).

At Point Park, the mission, vision, and values are vital to academic program development, curriculum, and the student experience. Its mission, vision, and values are fundamental the strategic planning, assessment, and resource allocation that come together in the University's formal Planning Assessment & Resources Allocation (PARA) initiative. As this section explains, these statements of belief and purpose are interwoven throughout campus operations and culture. In this

manner, the University meets the criteria for Standard I and Requirements of Affiliation #7 and #10 ([S1 C1 PointParkUniversity Mission Vision Values post January 2020 revision](#)).

Furthermore, because the institution's statements of mission, vision, and values define the University's purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what Point Park seeks to accomplish, these statements are widely disseminated, appearing in University publications, such as the *University Catalog* (p. 5) and the *Student Handbook* (p. iv), as well as on the Point Park website, social media, and on posters and signage throughout classrooms, offices, and conference rooms ([S1 C1 PPU Catalog 2019- 2020](#) & [S1 S1 Point-Park-Student-Handbook-2019-20-rev-2019-12-10](#)). The tenets of knowledge, professions, and community also are part of the University seal, displayed at all major University functions to serve as a reminder of mission's importance ([S1 C1 University Seal](#), [S1 C1 PPU Catalog 2019- 2020](#) & [S1 S1 Point-Park-Student-Handbook-2019-20-rev-2019-12-10](#)). .

The only change to this mission from 2008 to 2019 was the addition of "urban" before "diverse environment," a revision that was a recommendation identified by the campus team in its 2011 Middle States Accreditation Self-Study: "The University should consider adding a dimension of "downtown" or "urban" to the mission." (p. 14). This revision was approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2013 ([S1 C1 2013.01.24 Point Park BOT Resolution 2002-2013 Approval Modifying University Mission](#)).

Vision Statement

The University's engagement with its urban environment as well as its aspirations to engage on the national stage inspired the previous vision statement that was crafted during the same University-wide process that established the 2013 mission statement: "Point Park University will be one of the most dynamic private, urban universities in America."

The current vision statement was written in 2016, when President Hennigan initiated a process to revise the vision statement to better reflect the unique elements of the University, specifically the student experience both inside and outside the classroom. The result of that revision process is a vision that better captures the heart of Point Park University: "To be one of the most dynamic, private urban universities in America with an intense focus on student success through distinctive, innovative, and experiential learning."

This revised vision statement is consonant with Point Park's new mission.

Values

During the years 2005-2008, when Point Park underwent its community-wide, comprehensive, and inclusive process to revise the mission and vision, it also developed a set of core University values to guide its work:

- Promoting academic excellence
- Focusing on student needs
- Fostering a community of mutual respect and diversity
- Encouraging innovation

- Ensuring integrity and ethics in our actions
- Responding to our stakeholders
- Facilitating civic engagement

The University lives these values, as is evident in the development of the Ph.D. in Community Engagement [civic engagement] ([S1 C1 Community Engagement SEP Cost Sheet & S1 C1 Community Engagement SEP Action Plan](#)), the University's standing as a top-ten program in musical theater and dance [academic excellence] ([S1 C1 Top 10 BFA Dance Programs OnStage Blog 2018](#), [S1 C1 Top 10 BFA Dance Programs OnStage Blog 2019](#)) [S1 C1 Most Represented Colleges Playbill Article 2017](#), [S1 C1 Most Represented Colleges Playbill Article 2019](#)) the introduction of a food pantry and business attire closet [student needs] ([S1 C1 Trib Pioneer Pantry Article 2017](#) [S1 C1 Point Closet PPU Globe Article 2019](#)), and the development of our office of Alumni Engagement and Giving [responding to our stakeholders]

While Point Park is proud of its value-centered work, it acknowledges that there is more work to be done. One of the major challenges the University has faced the last 12 months is creating a shared understanding of diversity and inclusion, and, as importantly, how that shared understanding is promoted and grown. Point Park is currently engaged in a University-wide effort to make this value central to everything it does, and to ensure that University stakeholders understand and appreciate its importance.

Criterion 2: *institutional goals that are realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with mission*

Point Park's 2016-2021 Strategic Plan was developed following University-wide planning and discussion ([S1 C2 Leadership Group meeting notes April 20, 2015 05112015](#), [S1 C2 April 16 Faculty Forum](#) & [S1 C2 Executive Team meeting notes Jan 19 2016](#)). Planning efforts included a representative group of key stakeholders including members of the faculty, staff, students, administration, community advisors, and Board of Trustees ([S1 C2 2016-2021 Strategic Plan \(Mission Initiatives Goals\) amended 9.20.19](#)). Using SWOT analysis and an environmental scan, four strategic initiatives were identified, as well as 26 broad goal areas that are central to Point Park's future as a contemporary, urban University. The four initiatives – Academic Excellence, Quality Student Experiences, Managed Resources, and Community Engagement – and how they are woven throughout the work of the University are described in this section. Point Park's website includes a dedicated page for the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan where the strategic initiatives (colloquially known as pillars) and associated goals are shared. Through these goal areas, faculty and staff assess their work, develop priorities, and monitor resources needed ([S1 C2 Aligning initiatives with strategic planning](#)). Using a strategic planning software [SPOL], unit managers, department heads, and other members of the University's administration track and assess the planning areas under their supervision. In turn, these strategic assessments are presented to the various Board of Trustees subcommittees during quarterly meetings ([S1 C2 Dashboard Gaps](#)). Irrespective of which initiative these tasks and goals fall under, all of them serve the overall mission of the University.

Academic Excellence

Academic Excellence focuses on continuous improvement, with other goals supporting this focus. As seen in the 2016-2015 strategic plan, these goals include:

- “becoming a school of choice for students” by increasing the University profile as an academic community and through the regional and national profile of its faculty ([S1 C2 2016-2021 Strategic Plan \(Mission Initiatives Goals\) amended 9.20.19](#)).
- Promoting the academic delivery of instruction through innovative and integrated learning and through online, hybrid and on-campus modalities.
- Shared governance is a key goal supporting Academic Excellence by acknowledging the expertise of the University faculty as those most important in delivering its mission ([Assembly Shared Governance](#)).
- Inclusive excellence underscores the essential importance of diversity and inclusion in academic achievement and professional development of students. The University’s efforts to strengthen current academic programs and develop innovative programs that are consistent with the University’s mission and unique position in downtown Pittsburgh are framed by the strategic initiative of academic excellence and its attendant goals and objectives ([S1 C2 Staff Assembly Shared Governance](#)).

At Point Park, academic excellence also means experiential, innovative learning. As is evident in the University’s web advertising, television and radio ads, and campus brochures, the city is its campus ([S1 C2 Advertising Examples](#)). This statement promotes the value of Point Park’s urban setting, particularly in the University’s efforts to help students become career ready. Most noteworthy, the co-op program and student internships connect the academic world to hands-on experiences for students. These are documented on the University website under its “Career-ready” page, the Professional Career Readiness Center, and tracked through Handshake, a program utilized by hundreds of colleges and employers across the country ([S1 C2 UPDATED Career Services Brochure S4_C1_Handshake Portal & S1 C2 Annual Report 17-18-updated with grad outcomes stats.](#)) Each of the five schools at the University looks for opportunities to integrate the classroom learning with relevant real-world experiences. When appropriate, schools update their webpages and social media outlets to both inform students and community partners related to these experiences.

Quality Student Experience

This strategic initiative calls on the University to provide integrated, inclusive experiences that support student success and life-long learning. The University’s strategic plan for quality student experiences is divided into five sections:

- Connecting every student with at least one meaningful experiential learning opportunity each year.
- Developing a sense of University community and pride ([S1 C2 PPU Profiles April 2020](#)).

[S1_C2_PPU_Profiles_June_2020](#) & [S1_C1_Village_Park_Building_Wrap_Image](#).

- Promoting the connection between the liberal arts foundation and career readiness.
- Fostering a culture of respect, civility, and inclusivity.
- Assuring the highest quality of life on campus (**[S1_C2_2016-2021_Strategic_Plan](#)** (**[Mission_Initiatives_Goals](#)**) **[amended_9.20.19](#)**).

Given the prominence of experiential learning in the University's vision statement, this type of learning figures prominently in Point Park's academic and co-curriculum. From a student's first year on campus, Point Park works to engage them in experiential learning through University 101 where students identify a social issue, problem or opportunity — at Point Park or within the downtown Pittsburgh community — and build a concept poster around the solution. Through the Office of Student Activities, Involvement, and Leadership (SAIL), students are provided with the opportunity to connect to the campus community, develop their leadership abilities, and create meaningful college experiences through on-and off-campus programs, student organization involvement, and intentional leadership initiatives (**[S4_C4_CAB_Review_Documents_2017-2019](#)**).

Through the Professional Career-Readiness Center, students learn how their liberal arts foundation connects to workforce opportunities. The emphasis on distinctive, innovative, and experiential learning is evident throughout the curriculum and its emphasis on hands-on learning through internships, co-op experiences, and practicum placements working with community partners in Pittsburgh and beyond (**[S1_C2_Annual_Report_17-18-updated_with_grad_outcomes_stats](#)**, **[S1_C2_Experiential_Learning_Curriculum](#)** & **[S1_C2_Experiential_Learning_Examples](#)**). The PCRC provides access to programs and services that enhance student success by creating opportunities to achieve career readiness, increase knowledge of career pathways, and connect to experiential learning internships and co-ops. Additional experiential learning opportunities include studying abroad, experiential and service trips in the United States, honors programming, and service opportunities in Pittsburgh (**[S1_C2_SOB_International_Experiences](#)**).

Point Park works to foster a culture of respect, civility, and inclusivity through programming and policy. The Center for Inclusive Excellence, started in 2017, has provided staffing and funding of multiple inclusive projects ranging from All-Abilities Media to school supply giveaways (**[S1_C2_CIE_December_2019_Newsletter](#)**, **[S1_C2_CMI_All_Abilities_2017](#)** & **[S1_C2_CIE_School_Supplies_Giveaway](#)**). The Registrar's Office and student life have incorporated preferred name policies, the University offers gender-inclusive washrooms in prominent locations, to name a few (**[S1_C2_Incoming_LGBTQ_Students](#)** & **[S1_C2_PREFERRED_NAME_Info_Email](#)**). However, there are, and will continue to be, pockets of the University where civility and inclusion are less well adopted. The 2020 all-campus forums on diversity, equity, and inclusion led by students in the University's theater and dance departments indicates the work that still needs to be done. **[S1_C2_Diversity_Forum_President_Email_12052019](#)** & **[S1_C2_Diversity_Forum_President_Email_12182019](#)**), (**[S1_C2_Adding_Machine_Canceled_Broadway_World_Article](#)**, **[S1_C2_Diversity_Forum_President_Email_12052019](#)** & **[S1_C2_Diversity_Forum_President_Email_12182019](#)**).

Managed Resources

The strategic initiative Managed Resources has the highest number of strategic goal areas—nine in total—because its broad-based nature. Together, they are focused on the strategic enrollment, marketing strategies, space utilization, technological infrastructure, and long-term viability of the University. These goals align the resources needed to deliver the academic excellence, quality student experience, and community engagement that make up the other three strategic pillars. The heart of Point Park is its students; as such, the strategic enrollment process known as SERP provides the outline for the innovative programming central to Academic Excellence and Quality Student Experience ([S1_C2_Standard 1 Memo RE SERP Process](#)). The recent completion of the Pittsburgh Playhouse is another example of a resource that provides students with state-of-the-art educational experiences and the University with income through ticket sales and rentals.

Central to Managed Resources is the University's PARA process, mentioned earlier. Planning, Assessment and Resource Allocation provides a performance-based process for resource allocation linked to the planning and assessment efforts of the University ([S6_C1_PARA Mission & SOPs June 2019](#)). The planning effort is transparent—it includes faculty members, institutional research, and administration—and is aligned with the strategic plan. Using data from the annual assessment process or new priorities, departments consider their strategic priorities, intended outcomes, and metrics. Then, they specify resources that may be needed to accomplish their goals. A more detailed discussion of PARA is contained in Standard VI.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is the fourth strategic initiative in the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan. As an urban institution, the University strives to be an engaged member of the city community. The University solidified its long-standing commitment to community engagement in 2015 when it established the Department of Community Engagement, preparing scholars and practitioners to work in partnership with civic, business, and community organizations to become agents of change in diverse community settings ([S1_C2 Point Park Carnegie Application 2019](#), [S1_C2 PhD Proposal Draft](#) & [S1_C2 CommEng Review](#)). The Department of Community Engagement offers one of the nation's few doctoral programs in Community Engagement. It also oversees the University's first-year student introductory course, City-University Life 101, which emphasizes the Point Park commitment to this part of its mission ([S4_C1_Undecided_UNIV_101 Syll_FA-19](#)). Community engagement is communicated to stakeholders throughout the institution and beyond. Point Park's website consistently features highlights from Community Engagement efforts, including the Social Impact Grants & Scholars Program. Various departments communicate community engagement in their respective marketing materials to prospective students. The Department of Community Engagement's prospective student flyer reads "Be an agent of change. Inspire others. Advance diverse communities." The School of Communication has a "Make a difference/Get Involved in the Community" flyer, listing all the ways students can get involved with the community ([S1_C2 School of Comm Flyer](#)). The recent development of the Social Justice Studies major is another way that community engagement is woven into the fabric of the curricular offerings of Point Park ([S1_C2_Social Justice Degree Requirements](#).)

New Mission Development

Point Park's system of shared governance was integral in developing its new mission statement. University leadership sought input from a wide range of stakeholders during the mission revision process during the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 academic years. Faculty, administration, the Board of Trustees, staff, alumni, and students were all involved at various stages of the process ([S1_C2_PointParkMissionRevisionProcess2018-2020](#)).

Provost John Pearson initiated the mission review process in fall 2018 by distributing a copy of the existing University mission statement among faculty assembly, staff assembly, various standing committees, students, and alumni. Campus constituencies then engaged in a multi-stage review process from fall 2018 through Spring 2019.

- Faculty Assembly – President of the Faculty Assembly (M. Pascal) distributed materials to faculty committees, who reviewed the existing mission statement and drafted new versions. The faculty assembly reviewed newly proposed mission statements and voted on which to advance; the version that received the most votes was submitted for consideration to the Provost (**S1_C1_Survey Question**).
- Staff Assembly – President of Staff Assembly (M. Gieseke) formed a special task force of staff assembly members who reviewed the existing mission statement and drafted new versions. Staff assembly reviewed newly proposed mission statements and voted on which to advance; the version that received the most votes was submitted for consideration to the Provost (**S1_C1_SA September 2019**).
- Honors Students – Students enrolled in an Honors 299 (taught by H. Fallon) were given the mission statement to review and revise as part of a class assignment in Spring 2019. Results were shared with the Provost (**S1_C2_Honors Mission Review**).
- Alumni Board of Directors – Members of the Alumni Board of Directors reviewed the mission statement and provided feedback. Results were shared with the Provost (**S1_C2_Alumni Mission Review**).

The Provost reviewed and compared mission statement feedback from all the constituencies and drafted a mission statement incorporating elements of each version. The Provost then submitted a draft to President Paul Hennigan and his leadership team for review and feedback. In October 2019, The Board of Trustees Academic Excellence Committee voted to advance the mission statement draft to the Executive Committee of the Board for consideration. The Executive Committee reviewed and approved the draft and it advanced to a full vote of the Board of Trustees and was approved on January 28, 2020

([S1_C1_2020.01.28_PointParkBOTResolution23-2019_ApprovalModifyingUniversityMission](#), [S1_C1_PointParkUniversity MissionVisionValues_postJanuary2020revision](#) & [S1_C2_PresidentHenniganMessagetoUniversity_NewMissionStatement_Feb2020](#)).

New Mission Statement (as of January 28, 2020)

Point Park University provides innovative undergraduate and graduate education in a dynamic urban setting. Dedicated to academic excellence and community engagement, we prepare students of diverse backgrounds with the knowledge, skill, and experience to lead meaningful lives as informed citizens and successful professionals.

This mission reflects Point Park's evolution, as well as more clearly naming the diverse community and the urban environment that shape much of what the University does. The challenge for Point Park's future work is to communicate broadly the revised wording of the mission and continue to identify ways for it to influence faculty, staff, and students. One way this challenge can be met is identified in the University's Self-Study prospectus: its use of the new mission statement to help guide the development of its next strategic plan.

Criterion 3: *goals that focus on student learning, related outcomes, and on institutional improvement; are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs and services; and are consistent with institutional mission.*

The University's mission and goals are a catalyst for how it approaches assessment. During the last decade, the University has focused on helping internal stakeholders understand the importance of ongoing assessment. In addition to the use of SPOL software, in 2016, two guides were produced to aid faculty and staff with assessment work, the Point Park Guide to University Assessment and the Point Park Guide to Assessment of Student Learning ([S1 C3 Point Park Guide to University Assessment 2016](#) & [S1 C3 Point Park Guide to Assessment of Student Learning 2016](#)). The work of supporting faculty and staff in their efforts to use assessment as part of the toolkit for improving student outcomes is now overseen by the Center for Inclusive Excellence (CIE).

Internal & External Collaboration

Collaboration with external partners through University advisory boards, government partnerships, and community connections is critical to Point Park University's responsiveness to community and workforce needs that directly connect to its mission, vision, and values. Many areas of the University established temporary advisory boards when starting new programs and initiatives, including the School of Education when it started its doctoral program and in its shift from early childhood / elementary to PreK-4 and special education programs. Others have established advisory boards comprised of University representatives and external partners from the business, nonprofit, and government sectors that are ongoing, including the Office of Alumni Engagement and Giving, Rowland School of Business, Center for Media Innovation (merging with the School of Communication to create one joint advisory board), and the Department of Community Engagement ([S1 C3 Various Advisory Boards](#)). Through its Vice President of External Affairs, Point Park builds and maintains relationships with public officials, legislators, and community constituents to support the University's mission. These relationships have been critical to pursuing government support for large-scale capital projects including the Pittsburgh

Playhouse and the Academic Village Initiative. The University has also partnered with the Mayor's Office on Inclusive Innovation programming through its Center for Inclusive Excellence ([S1_C3 Mayoral Forum Article July 2019](#)). Community connections are also facilitated by faculty who bring local business, government, and nonprofit leaders to the University for workshops as well as experiential learning through University 101 projects, School of Business guest lecturers and Wood Street Communications (to name a few) ([S1_C3 School of Business Guest Lecturers List](#)).

Criterion 4: *periodic assessment*

A continuous cycle of assessment leading to improvement is seen in a variety of areas in Standard 1.

A few highlights:

- Assessment of student needs helped develop the professional readiness center ([S1_C3_Pricing Survey](#)).
- Recognition of the need for more emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion across all parts of campus.
- Implementation of the PARA system through which resource allocation is directly related to planning and assessment.
- Continued improvement of the University's shared governance system and the communication it requires.
- Using the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) as one method of indirect assessment, Point Park regularly gauges the extent to which students perceive the importance of the mission statement. Specifically, students gave a 5.35 average satisfaction rating (on a scale from 1 to 7), which was an increase over last year. In addition, this area was identified as a "strength" defined by being in the top quartile of satisfaction and top half of importance ([S1_C4_SSI Mission related question](#)).

In summation, Point Park University has clearly articulated mission, values, and goals that are periodically assessed and updated. It aligns resource allocation with its strategic priorities and provides members of the campus community with opportunities to shape these priorities. In its articulation of the mission and its assessment of learning, it satisfies Requirements of Affiliation 7 and 10.

Innovations and Developments:

- Point Park's strategic plan is linked to the mission through four strategic initiatives. The unit goals stemming from each of the initiatives continue to be a unifying tool to ensure the mission is at the center of the University's work.
- The revised mission statement will serve as a foundation for the next iteration of the strategic plan.

- Established assessment and alignment of resources as a standard practice across the University.

Areas for Improvement:

- Given the University's revision to the mission and vision statements, communication efforts need to be renewed through physical reminders such as posters in classrooms and conference rooms and a communication campaign using the University website and social media avenues. These communications will reinforce the collaborative nature of the new mission, both in its process and in its substance.
- The University should continue to enhance its diversity and inclusion initiatives in all University offices and functions. Point Park students, faculty, and staff want to be part of a University that highlights inclusion and equity across the campus and the curriculum. It has opportunities for improvements in how it engages in purposeful and meaningful diversity and inclusion efforts as a University from adopting gender neutral terminology campus-wide in publications, on websites, and via social media; to making print and electronic materials fully accessible to individuals with disabilities; to ensuring that academics and programming are representative of the diversity of the University.
- The University should continue to address priorities for diversity and inclusion by broadly engaging the University community to identify needs and prioritizing action steps.
- The University must continue to recalibrate its efforts related to the mission and strategic plan and assess the impact on teaching and learning as well as financial health of the University given the challenges presented by COVID-19. In this regard, the pandemic provides us an unexpected opportunity to conduct—to live—stress tests of our systems and protocols to ensure that our efforts in all areas identified in our mission and strategic plan are integral to our work even in a crisis of this magnitude.



STANDARD II: ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

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.

As articulated in the Values section of Standard I, ethics, integrity, and a respect for a diversity of opinions and life experiences are part of the University's ethos. Point Park University approaches ethics and integrity through a holistic framework of contractual arrangements, internal policy and procedures, federal and state regulations, and, most importantly, in student, staff, and administrative behavior. This holistic approach embeds Standard II through the University.

Criterion 1: *a commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights*

Point Park University respects the rights of academic freedom by its students and faculty inside and out of the classroom. It also promotes the ideas of intellectual freedom, freedom of expression and understanding of intellectual property rights for the University community. The faculty's right to academic freedom is outlined in both the full-time and part-time collective bargaining agreements for their respective unions and is in accordance with the Association of American Colleges & Universities' (AAC&U) definition of academic freedom. The collective bargaining agreement between the University and the full-time faculty union, Article 7, Section 1, states that: "Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties. A faculty member's freedom to engage in research and publication of the results, as reflected in this section, shall not be interpreted as automatic satisfaction of any conditions necessary for advancement in academic rank" ([S2 C1 FT CBA 2017-2021](#)).

Similar language is found in Article 9 of the part-time faculty collective bargaining agreement, stating: "Part-time faculty members shall enjoy academic freedom, namely, freedom of investigation, exposition and expression in the course of their classroom teaching, and scholarship or creative work if directly related to their responsibilities under the terms of their appointments..." ([S2 C1 PT CBA 2017-2021](#) & [S2 C1 CBA Academic Freedom](#)).

Since the signing of the collective bargaining agreements, there has been a total of five academic grievances concerning academic freedom filed against the University: four by part-time faculty and one full-time. In all cases, the University was found not to have breached the CBA definition of academic freedom. Many of Point Park's faculty and teaching artists are actively involved in research and community-based programming and these activities, even when potentially sensitive, are supported by the institution. The University also respects its faculty's right to their intellectual property.

The collective bargaining agreement between the University and the full-time faculty union articulates this right in Article 8, section 2: "The University will not claim copyright ownership of Traditional Works of Scholarship except as otherwise provided in this Article, and members of the bargaining unit may claim copyright to such works under their name. While the ownership of

syllabi, course material and tests rests in the faculty members creating them, the University retains the right and license to store and save such materials for determining the learning outcomes of past courses...” ([S2_C1_CBA Intellectual Property](#)).

The part-time faculty’s intellectual property rights are stated in the collective bargaining agreement between the part-time faculty union and the University in Article 16: “Part-time faculty members shall have the same rights and be subject to the same policies regarding all forms of intellectual property, including but not limited to scholarly works, artworks, and teaching materials, as all other faculty members” ([S2_C1_CBA Intellectual Property](#)).

As discussed, the University interactions with full- and part-time faculty are governed by collective bargaining agreements (CBA). These agreements are reviewed and renegotiated near the end of their terms by the unions and the University. The part-time faculty CBA expired in the summer of 2019. A new agreement was successfully reached in September 2019, and included changes to the intellectual property policy, giving greater clarification on which materials faculty maintain ownership of which materials the University maintains ownership of, and when the University can use materials created by a faculty member in their absence ([S2_C1_CBA Article 16 Revision](#)). Even though there has not been a formal grievance around intellectual property, this clarification should provide further guidance for faculty and administration.

Criterion 2: *a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives*

Point Park is committed to providing an environment that fosters respect for ethics and diversity. Fostering a community of mutual respect and diversity and ensuring integrity and ethics in our actions are two of the values the University adheres to as part of its Mission, Vision and Values, seen in Standard 1 ([S2_C2 Mission, Vision, Values](#)).

To create a welcoming environment for incoming students, Point Park implemented diversity training for orientation leaders that was used to highlight how diverse students’ experiences are and orientation leaders should be sensitive to others’ identities ([S2_C2 Be Kind to Your Neighbor poster](#), [S2_C2 Cross the Line Activity](#) & [S2_C2 Privilege for Sale Activity](#)). Each athletic event incorporates an announcement through the PA system derived from the NAIA reminding participants and attendees that, “The NAIA embraces the five core character values of the Champions of Character Initiative, which are respect, responsibility, integrity, servant leadership and sportsmanship.” ([S2_C2 NAIA PA Announcement](#), [S2_C2 It's On Us](#)).

Point Park’s student affairs division offers a myriad of activities that support and educate students learning about respect and diversity ([S2_C2_Student Events](#)). Within the residence halls, Point Park instituted a yearlong campaign centered on respect because student affairs found a rise in residential complaints regarding parties and noise. As a result of this campaign, there was a 36% drop in noise complaints after the introduction of this program ([S2_C2 Noise Complaints 2018 2019](#)).

Another area of growth is in the leadership education programming provided to students. From 2014 to 2016, the Student Activities, Involvement and Leadership Office provided students with an opportunity to develop their interpersonal skills by interacting with other students from diverse backgrounds. This eight-week course had students participate in various learning experiences that would be their competencies as a leader ([S2_C2_The First Year Resident Educators Ultimate Guide to Programming](#), [S2_C2_LEAP Programming Requirements](#)). Unfortunately, student interest waned, and the program was canceled. Relaunching this program, with student input, is an opportunity to convert this challenge into a strength for the University so that students' cultural competencies are increased through programmatic offerings of the Student Affairs division.

Not only do the students participate in initiatives building respect for diversity, but so do members of the staff, faculty, and administration. Each year the University sponsors a Safe Zone LGBTQ training where all employees can receive certification that their offices and work areas are safe spaces. This program has also had periodic assessments to better understand participants' satisfaction of the training. After the first survey was conducted in the 2015-2016 academic year, the training program was updated to provide a better experience to participants that included more activities for them to learn the content ([S2_C2_SafeZone_Training](#)), ([S2_C2_SafeZone_Activities](#)), & ([S2_C2_SafeZone UA Survey Results 2015-2016](#)).

In 2018, a collaborative effort, led by the Center for Inclusive Excellence and School of Education, engaged in a wide-ranging assessment of the University's engagement with, and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Out of its twelve recommendations, two were implemented: an updated diversity and inclusion statement and a series of improvements in hiring practices ([S2_C2_D & I Steering Committee Report](#)). In 2019-2020, the University's Musical Theater department was scheduled to perform an updated version of *The Adding Machine*, a 1923 play about race and class relations in America. Many students felt that the casting for the play was neither diverse nor inclusive; additionally, students who were cast did not perceive that they had been given adequate training to deal with the subject matter. These students, joined by other student groups and coalitions, worked with the Dean of the Conservatory and the executive team to cancel *The Adding Machine*, replace it with a less racially charged performance, and institute two campus-wide town hall meetings that focused on the question of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom. A working group, led by President Hennigan, began to work through the various issues that *The Adding Machine* brought to the surface. The COVID-19 pandemic prevented this taskforce from continuing its work in the spring of 2020, but specific recommendations of the taskforce have already been implemented, such as an increased emphasis on directors of color and the opportunity for students to vet potential scripts ([S2_C2_Season Planning Group](#)).

In conjunction with the Safe Zone initiatives, the University identified the need to expand its support for diversity and inclusion. Up until the fall of 2018, the University employed a full-time Title IX administrator who had additional responsibilities with the General Counsel's office. Upon the departure of this staff member, the University restructured this Title IX position to include

diversity as a part of its portfolio. Through this position, the University was able to address an area of weaknesses to provide staffing and resources to better assist the student body and the University community at large. This position, Director of Title IX and Diversity, is presently staffed by a lawyer with extensive experience in Title IX. However, the addition of “Diversity” to her duties increased her workload, especially considering Point Park’s recent conversations surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion. ([S2 C2 Assistant Director Title IX, S2 C2 Title IX Coordinator Position Description, S2 C2 Director of Title IX and Diversity Position Description, S2 C2 D&I-4 Subcommittees, S2 C2 D&I-Steering Committee, S2 C2 D&I-Steering Committee Report](#)).

Criterion 3: *a grievance policy that is documented and disseminated to address complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty, or staff. The institutions policies and procedures are fair, impartial, and assure that grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably*

Point Park documents and disseminates its grievance policies in publications aimed towards the specific audiences. Student grievance policies are found in the *Student Handbook* (p. 62) and the *University Catalog* (p. 50). As a result of the assessment, changes were made to the Grade Appeals policy to account for structural changes within the University. The Grade Appeals policy was revised to reflect the current structure of the academic schools and departments. At the time, two of the schools did not have Deans, so a committee system was implemented in the place of the Dean, with the associate provost having final say over grade appeals ([S2 C3 Student Appeal Policy, S2 C3 Grade Appeals Policy 2014, S2 C3 Grade Appeals 2019 & S2 C3 Transfer Student Appeal Process 2019](#)).

For non-grade academic grievances, the University has a well-documented procedure. Students are given step-by-step instructions on how to resolve the grievance, and, if still not satisfied, students then can use a web-based complaint form to alert the Associate Provost of their concerns ([S2 C3 Student Complaint information from webpage, S2 C3 Student Complaint Resolution Form, S2 C3 Policy Prohibiting Sexual Misconduct Reporting Policies & Protocols](#)).

Due to the signing of the collective bargaining agreement, the University's full- and part-time faculty follow clear policies concerning grievances as well. Full-time faculty are covered under Article 29 (Grievance and Arbitration Policy) and part-time instructors are covered under Article seven. After one cycle of the part-time CBA, changes were made in the policy. The original CBA required that a grievance be filed within 10 days, a meeting held within 14 days, and then a written response in another 10 days. The new CBA provides 30 days for a grievance, 14 days for a meeting, and 15 days for a response. This change came about because part-time faculty are not on campus daily and by the time a faculty member could file a grievance, it was past or nearly past the deadline to file a grievance. The University was also granted additional time on their end to investigate grievances, since it often must refer to other departments for information. ([S2 C3 CBA Grievance and Arbitration 2017-2021](#)).

University staff are covered under the grievance policy appearing in the *Staff Handbook*, pages 38-39 (**S2_C5_Administrative Staff Handbook_2011**). Additional information on staff grievance policies can be found on Point Park's webpage. However, the *Staff Handbook* was last updated in 2011 and does not consistently reflect Point Park's development as a complex institution. The revision of this handbook is overdue.

Criterion 4: *the avoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict in all activities and among all constituents*

Both the University's undergraduate and graduate catalogue outline numerous conflict of interest policies at the University. First, the Catalogs explain that the University follows a "Lender Code of Conduct" and provides a link to the code. The Lender Code of Conduct outlines several protections meant to prevent conflicts of interest between the University, as the facilitator of student loans, and its students.

The Catalog also addresses the University's grade appeal process. This process is designed to mitigate any actual conflict of interest between the professor issuing a grade and the student appealing the grade by allowing the student to bring a case before disinterested third parties through secondary and tertiary appeals. A student's standard of proof is the same at the first, second and third levels of appeal, all students may plead their full case in front of a disinterested party.

The appeal process for academic probation and dismissal is a likely area of improvement for both undergraduate and graduate policies. The conflict-of-interest protections contained in the grade appeal process offer a student some level of protection to prevent the student from being unjustly placed on probation or dismissed from the University (**S2 C4 Academic Probation and Dismissal Policy 2014** & **S2 C4 Academic Probation and Dismissal 2019**). However, these protections only apply if a student chooses to appeal their grades. The probation and dismissal appeal process does not have its own conflict of interest provisions. To make the policy stronger, the University should add conflict of interest provisions to its probation and dismissal appeals process.

The University also issues a *Student Handbook*, outlining a student's code of conduct. Violation of the student code of conduct results in a disciplinary procedure against the student. The student code of conduct promises that the disciplinary procedure will be governed by an "objective decision-maker." The policy allows a student to challenge a decision-maker for "personal bias"; however, it does not allow a student to challenge a decision-maker where they believe a conflict of interest exists (**S2 C4 Code of Conduct March 2015**). Although sometimes leading to similar results, conflicts of interest and bias are different. Therefore, the student code of conduct should be amended so that students may challenge decision-makers whom they believe hold a conflict of interest.

Further, unless a student successfully challenges a decision-maker for bias, the disciplinary procedure is administered by a single student conduct officer. To mitigate the danger of an undetected conflict of interest, the University should amend the student code of conduct so that three student conduct officers administer each hearing.

Another challenge exists in the University's grade appeals process. The process does not allow a student to bypass the first level of appeal, even if the student believes that the professor who issued their grade is subject to a conflicting interest. To make this policy stronger, the University should amend the student handbook so that a student may bypass the first level of review where the student believes a conflict of interest exists.

Both Catalogs explain that the University requires all research involving human participants be approved by the University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Institutional Review Board itself has policies in place to prevent conflicts of interest. Investigators on the IRB are asked to review human research proposals and assess whether a conflict of interest exists. Further, institutional review board members are prohibited from reviewing a proposal where the member has a conflicting interest ([S2 C4 Institutional Review Board Policies and Procedures Oct 2015](#) & [S2 C4 IRB Review Form Oct 2015](#)). The current institutional review board policy also has added the definition of conflict of interest. This change provides more specificity, making the institutional review board's policy easier to enforce ([S2 C4 Grad Catalog 2018- 2019](#) & [S2 C4 Undergrad Catalog 2018-2019](#)).

Faculty, administrators, and staff also have clearly stated conflict of interest boundaries. The opening statement of the policy delineates "each University employee must manage his or her personal and business affairs legally and ethically, and so as to avoid situations that might lead to a conflict or the suspicion of a conflict between his or her self-interest and his or her duty to the University, our students and the public in general" ([S2 C4 Code of Conduct March 2015](#)). Faculty have a similar clause in Article 9 of the CBA, stating "Faculty members' primary professional duties and responsibilities are to the University. A faculty member engaged in outside activities shall notify the University, in a manner determined by the University, if the faculty member reasonably anticipates that the outside activities may conflict with the faculty member's duties and responsibilities to the University" ([S2 C1 FT CBA 2017-2021](#)). Board of Trustees members are required to fill out forms to indicate any potential conflicts of interest, and each Board meeting begins with a verbal affirmation that no members have a conflict of interest. For more on Board of Trustee's conflict of interest policies, see Standard VII, criterion 2.

Criterion 5: *fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees*

The three major segments of Point Park's workforce—full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and staff—are covered by three different sets of codified policies. The hiring practices of full-time faculty are embedded in Article 26 of the CBA, where the process of departmental need and institution priority is outlined (p.54-55). In 2020, new faculty hires became part of the University's PARA process [see Standard VI]. Evaluation of full-time faculty is covered in the "Evaluation" section of the CBA (p 53-55) and designates what is and is not considered part of a faculty member's routine evaluation. Promotion/advancement is covered in Articles 17-19 (p. 35-45). Discipline of FT faculty, as well as the protection offered by due process, is stated in Article 24 (p. 52-53). In most cases, the disciplining of full-time faculty is progressive in nature, and only on rare occasions has the University moved towards separation with a full-time faculty member

(S2 C1 FT CBA 2017-2021).

Part-time faculty hiring and evaluation is like that offered to full-time faculty. A detailed description of the appointment criteria can be found on pages 19-25 in the CBA. In its most general strokes, the CBA delineates that the University determines the hiring and placement of PT faculty, the frequency of their courses, the dates and methods for informing PT faculty about course offerings. The PT CBA also provides the framework for the evaluating, disciplining and separation of PT faculty. Article 11, “Evaluation” (p.17-19), provides the framework for frequency of classroom evaluation, the use of student opinion surveys, and other necessary components to supporting fair evaluation for PT faculty. The opportunity for promotion in rank is covered in the section. Disciplinary actions and eventual separation are discussed in Article 6, “Discipline and Discharge,” (p. 8-9). In most cases, the University follows the stated, “While discipline will generally be progressive in nature” opening clause, it has, on specific occasions, moved quickly to separate PT faculty from the institution (**S2 C5 PT Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement**).

As a result of contract renegotiations with part-time faculty, there were changes made to the Appointments article (p. 21). The new CBA more clearly articulates which part-time faculty have preferential appointment status and how their appointment to courses should be handled.

Staff hiring practices and the process for promotion and transfer are outlined in the *Staff Handbook*, pages 8-9. Performance appraisals for staff follow a 90-day introductory period and then a yearly review that includes a self-appraisal, a written formal appraisal by a supervisor, and a discussion about the two appraisals (**S2_C5_Exempt Employee Self Review**).

Within the last two years, the University has developed a detailed hiring guide that provides a process for faculty and staff searches, especially around questions of implicit bias and fair hiring. Additionally, the provisional accreditation of the Psy.D. program states that the University must continue to provide diversity and equity training for all faculty searches in the program. The Human Resources department houses several documents that promote best practices in hiring, as well as evaluation documentation, and EEO and ADA guidelines (**S2 C5 Hiring Process Interview Guideline Packet 3.18.19** & **S2_C5_PT Promotion Process**).

While the University provides this detailed hiring guide, training should be provided for committee members to ensure compliance. Additionally, there is no central repository to track faculty or staff applicants for positions nor agreed-upon rubric to evaluate applicants. While the University understands that each department seeks specific skills, a lack of baseline data on which candidates are advanced to interviews is problematic. As of AY 2020, the University began to offer on-line training to all faculty and staff about implicit bias. While this training is an important first step, recent scholarship in the ineffectiveness of implicit bias training demonstrates the need for a variety of training opportunities.

Criterion 6: *honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions practices, as well as in internal communications*

For honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, Point Park's Consumer [Information page](#) complies with the Higher Education opportunity Act of 2008, requiring colleges and universities to publicly disclose various policies and procedures. The Director of Online Communications and Marketing reviews the page periodically to confirm the accuracy of the information: in 2020, the page has been updated twice.

For external and internal communications, the University's new website was created in February 2018, replacing the older system that suffered from a lack of coherency, buried content, and a content management system that was inflexible ([S2 C6 PointPark.edu Email](#)). The revised pointpark.edu is designed to be the outward facing portal for students, alumni, and the Point Park community, showcasing upcoming events, faculty achievements, and student success. This website is overseen by the Office of Enrollment Marketing, with final approval of all information resting in the hands of the University's web managers. Each week during the academic year, the Office shares links to relevant pointpark.edu features and profiles, social media highlights, and Web areas of interest. The Managing Director of Marketing and Public Relations emails the entire University community weekly Media Highlights of campus activities. Point Park also has two Campus Announcements that are largely student focused: *The Social Scoop* and *The Point Park Globe*, its Weekly Newspaper ([S2 C6 Social Scoop Procedure](#)) ([see PPU Globe webpage: http://ppuglobe.com/contribute/](http://ppuglobe.com/contribute/)).

Recognizing that communication to faculty, staff, and students was paramount during the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent move to remote education and operations, the University's President and Provost began a series of twice-weekly communications to inform the campus community on present and future plans. Later assessment of this communication to faculty and staff showed that most respondents were satisfied with the communication from the University, but asked for more clarity, frequency, and transparency ([S2 C6 Report on University Response](#)). As a result of this assessment, the Provost began a twice-weekly email directed specifically at faculty that included discussions on University finance, scheduling, and social distancing efforts, to name a few ([S2 C6 Example Communications](#)).

Point Park's admissions department did not have a written policy for honesty in recruiting until 2020, when the Director of Admissions led a group that developed a policy for all recruiters ([S2 C6 Honesty in Admissions](#)). Given the competitive nature of its Conservatory (roughly 70 new theater students out of a 1000 are accepted, with slightly higher numbers in dance), applicants for these majors undergo a two-step application process requiring either a portfolio review or an audition. These policies are designed to provide transparency in the selection process, as well as offer students additional opportunities to audition. The application process is described [here](#).

As will be described in Standards III and V, faculty assembly committees are working to streamline the curriculum process, so that new programs and other substantive changes are made with enough time to ensure accuracy in marketing and other materials. Another proposed solution to increase the accuracy of information: The University Registrar developed a budget proposal for software

that track curriculum changes throughout the whole process and creates a more user-friendly digital catalog. Unfortunately, budgetary restrictions will delay this purchase

Criterion 7: *as appropriate to its mission, services or programs in place: to promote affordability and accessibility & to enable students to understand funding sources*

The Office of Financial Aid publishes extensive website information regarding affordability, understanding funding sources and options. The Affordability page link states, “We are committed to making a Point Park education affordable, and we will work closely with you to make this unique real-world education a reality.” The 2019-2020 Factbook confirms that 94% of all undergraduates and 74% of graduate students received financial aid in Fall 2018. In Fall 2017, 96% of undergraduates and 80% of graduate students received aid; in Fall 2016, 93% of undergraduates and 80% of graduate students received financial aid ([S2_C7_Factbook Financial Aid](#)). Out of the \$103,159, 537 in financial aid granted in 2018-2019, roughly \$43 million came from institutional scholarships, tangible indication of Point Park’s belief in providing access to higher education.

Point Park’s Financial Aid page includes an accessibility page designed to simplify the process of applying for financial aid. In addition to providing students a four-step instruction in how to apply for financial aid, this page has an embedded video created by Federal Student Aid that provides an overview of the financial aid process. On the same page is the funding sources and options link that helps students understand what is available to them. Each of the categories—grants, loans, etc.—are then linked to more information on their availability and who qualifies. To correlate this information with eventual aid, in 2019, roughly 1,400 Point Park students took advantage of a Pell Grant, for example, and 282 were awarded Federal Work-Study.

The Understanding Financial Aid link helps students understand Satisfactory Academic Progress required by the federal government, the Total Withdraw explanation, and a discussion of Financial Literacy. The University’s goal is to provide students with information that will expand their financial literacy so each student can make informed decisions throughout life. Point Park’s financial aid office provides workshops and has numerous links to resources about finances and debt. During Admitted Students Day, students are presented a PowerPoint that succinctly describes their potential financial obligations, important due dates and various ways to pay for Point Park ([S2_C7 ASD PowerPoint 2020](#)). Before the Fall 19 semester, Financial Aid visited each University 101 class to discuss responsible money management and paying for University. Starting in Fall 2019, this discussion was moved to first-year orientation to maximize the time of the Financial Aid office ([S2_C7 Money Matters Presentation](#)). As a result of post-presentation surveys administered during the inception of the Money Matters Presentation, the Financial Aid office strengthened the focus on budgeting by explaining how to create a budget for college, how to create a personal budget, and how overspending can lead to debt ([S2_C7 Survey Stats](#)).

Criterion 8: *compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations and requirements*

The University is committed to complying with all Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and federal

laws, Middle States policies and requirements of affiliation. All materials related to this are included in the Verifications of Compliance reports.

The University discloses graduation and retention rates in its annual Factbook, along with enrollment reports, faculty profile, and other important information. Copies from the last several years are available to be viewed at any time on the University's website. Point Park also distributes Graduate and Undergraduate catalogs annually that detail policies on FERPA, student conduct, and record retention. Academic assessment is housed at the Center for Inclusive Excellence.

The University utilizes the external website and internal intranet site for the distribution of communication that may go beyond Factbook or catalog information. This information can also be found in the student handbook ([S2 C8 Student Handbook](#)).

Criterion 9: *periodic assessment of ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented.*

As mentioned in criterion 7, assessment of the financial aid and student accounts processes resulted in changes that better support students' ability to understand their financial obligations. The billing cycle was updated in 2017 to provide a specific, predictable cycle where bills are administered on the sixth day of each month. Previously, late fees were applied to any account with a balance regardless of when the balance occurred, whereas now students do not incur late fees unless they were billed on the sixth of the previous month, as a result, fewer late fee complaints are registered. Furthermore, the Office of Student Accounts has increased the frequency of communication to students and families. Deadline notifications are sent out for payment plans, employer reimbursement and other due dates, giving students the opportunity to financially clear accounts before tuition due date. Additionally, office staff are now responsible for signing off on all student complete withdrawal forms, allowing staff to explain to students the monetary impact of complete withdrawal, resulting in some students deciding to stay or keep one class to reduce the financial impact of a withdrawal ([S2 C9 FA20 Outreach Calendar](#) & [S2 C9 Survey Tables](#)).

In addition to internal assessment, the University has leveraged audit services from Schneider Downs since 2008. This firm regularly assess key functions and areas within the University, including its ethical practices. Judicial Affairs were audited in 2012, the compliance requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act were assessed in 2013 and the University's Code of Conduct was assessed for employee acknowledgement and adherence in 2018. As a result of the 2012 audit, the Office of Student Conduct was able to implement the following improvements: a link was created on the University website for maximum incident reporting potential, an improved tracking method of student behavioral incidents was developed using the student conduct database Maxient, and adjudication reports were updated to improve the method of justifying student sanctions ([S2 C9 Judicial Affairs Audit Issues Log](#), [S2 C9 MaxientServiceAgreement](#) & [S2 C9 FY2014 Judicial Affairs Followup](#)).

Additionally, through its periodic assessment, Point Park has implemented:

- A new honesty policy for admissions counselors
- A more coherent HR policy for training faculty search committees
- A more consistent policy for communication from the Provost's office
- A revised policy for student grade appeals
- A clarifying revision of intellectual property in the Part-Time Collective Bargaining Agreement

As seen throughout Standard II, Point Park University supports its emphasis on ethical decision-making and student support through a series of documents, policies and procedures. These policies, along with the articles of compliance, satisfy the requirements for Standard II.

Innovations and Developments:

- The signing of the Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) supports academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression and intellectual property. Having a shared understanding of these terms and a coherent procedure in case of grievances reinforces the importance of these ideas.
- The revision of grade appeals and dismissal appeals to reduce complexity and potential conflict of interest.

Areas for Improvement:

- While the ethics policies are distributed to all employees on an annual basis, part-time faculty receive little training the policies. Additionally, when changes are made to the policies, those changes are not called out in the annual distribution of policies so that employees are aware of specific changes ([S2 C9 New Hire Orientation Documents](#)).
- The staff handbook, although revised constantly, needs a communication strategy to alert staff of these changes.
- The University Code of Conduct is posted in multiple locations on the website, potentially leading to multiple versions of the Code. Hosting this Code in one place will mitigate this potential confusion.
- Point Park should continue its efforts at promoting a broad-based diversity, equity, and inclusion coalition of faculty, staff, administrators, and students.
- The University's conflict of interest grading policies can be clarified by clarifying the difference between conflict of interest and a previously existing bias.



STANDARD III: DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

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.

As a University that has innovative teaching and academic excellence at its mission's core, Point Park offers a total of 110 academic programs across its five schools: The Conservatory of Performing Arts, Arts and Sciences, Rowland School of Business, Communication, and Education.

Among the strengths of Point Park's academic programs are:

- Its focus on career-ready education with a strong liberal arts background. Point Park students are exposed to internship opportunities, co-ops, and other forms of experiential learning.
- A flexible general education Core that embeds another part of the mission statement—community engagement—into University 101, a course for all first-year students. Additionally, the Core is designed to meet the challenges of the 21st-century with students learning writing skills, communication, and other transferable skills.
- The University's setting in downtown Pittsburgh. Given the University's emphasis on career-ready education, the access to major business and industries provides both a robust pool of qualified faculty and opportunities for students to engage with faculty in experiential learning opportunities.
- State-of-the-art performance spaces that support the University's nationally ranked dance and musical theater departments.
- A faculty dedicated to student learning and, because of its collective bargaining relationship with the University, participates in curriculum and programming review.
- Requirements of Affiliation that are integral to Standard III—8, 9, 10, and 15—will be identified in their specific sections.

Criterion 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*

There are currently 88 undergraduate and post-baccalaureate programs offered, as well as 22 post-graduate level. Included in the post-graduate study program numbers are three doctoral programs: Philosophy in Community Engagement, Education in Leadership and Administration, and Psychology in Clinical-Community Psychology (**S3_C1_Program Table**).

Since 2016, the University has bolstered its online offerings to a total of thirty-seven programs. Most offerings are undergraduate and graduate degrees (89%), with certificates filling the remaining 11% of offerings ([**S3_C1_OnlineProgramsAndStartDates**](#)).

Credit counts for undergraduate degrees vary from a minimum of 120 to an upper limit of 134 for certain BFAs (**S5_C1_Undergraduate Catalog 2018-2019**). Master's degrees range from 30-39 credits, and doctoral programs range from 54 credits in the Ed.D. to the 90 credits needed for a Psy.D. Regardless of credit counts, the University and its faculty support learning and development, both in themselves and in their students (**S5_C1_Graduate catalog 2018- 2019**).

In all degree levels and courses of study, Point Park students are asked to display the synthesis of learning at some point in their academic careers. For many students, this will be in one of their capstone courses, which are taken during a student's senior year (**S3_C1_Capstone Examples**). For other students, this synthesis is demonstrated in a professional capacity with certification. For students at the graduate level, integration of learning is shown in specialized research or professional licensure. All programs are designed to promote rigorous, coherent learning opportunities with yearly assessment of the effectiveness of these programs, satisfying Requirement of Affiliation 9. The assessment of capstone courses is addressed in Standard V.

As another way to ensure students are well served, Point Park University has several additional specialized program accreditations listed in detail ([**S3_C1_Outside Accreditors**](#)). As required, all programs leading to certification in education are subject to approval by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Specific programs under the Conservatory of Performing Arts are an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Dance.

Programs leading to a Bachelor of Science degree with majors in civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering technology are accredited by the Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission.

Programs leading to a Master of Business Administration degree, a Master of Science in Healthcare Administration, to a Bachelor of Science Post-Baccalaureate degree in Accounting, Business Management, and Human Resource Management, to a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting, Business Management, Economics and Finance, and Human Resource Management, and Sports, Arts and Entertainment Management are accredited by the International Assembly of Collegiate Business Education (IACBE). In Fall of 2020, the University sought certification for its new Marketing and Sales program and Applied Computer Science program through IACBE, as well as reaffirmation of the previously accredited business programs. At the December meeting of IACBE, Point Park's accreditation for new and existing was re-affirmed.

With the fall 2018 opening of Point Park's new Playhouse, nearly all courses are hosted centrally on campus in Downtown Pittsburgh. However, the Rowland School of Business does actively utilize two off-site classrooms. For undergraduates enrolled in the Sports, Arts, and Entertainment Management, the commercial performance venue Stage AE has a private classroom utilized by the program (**S3_C1_SAEM Syllabi**). Stage AE is a multi-purpose entertainment venue located on the North Shore of Pittsburgh. It has an indoor seating area for concerts and an outdoor amphitheater that holds up to 5,550 people. The venue also had a 500-person capacity night club attached. The venue is located about two miles from main campus, and shuttle transportation is provided.

On the graduate level, the school has an agreement with one local business, GAI Consultants to offer one class per term to their employees on site. The M.B.A. program offered in an accelerated format and are staffed by experienced full-time and part-time faculty from the University ([S3 C1 Offsite Classrooms](#)).

These external accreditation bodies support Requirement 8 by ensuring quality curricular and, in some cases, co-curricular, evaluation, as well as displaying to the public the results of these assessment. Non-externally accredited programs make public their successes through the University's Fact Book, published yearly and accessible through the Point Park website.

Criterion 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*

Point Park's educational programs are the foundation of Academic Excellence, but its faculty are the steel beams that take it to new heights. It is their commitment to service that builds shared governance through faculty assembly, faculty committees, and smaller groups within academic departments. There are faculty who provide community service through internal Social Impact Grants & Scholars Program run by the Department of Community Engagement ([S3 C2 Social Impact grants](#)). Point Park's faculty publish in a range of scholarly and popular publications, and scholarly activity is encouraged, and is aided by Faculty development funds, as elaborated on in section 3.2D ([S3 C2 Published Faculty](#)).

Because of its urban location, Point Park has been able to recruit an exceptional group of full- and part-time faculty to enhance the educational experience of its students. Accomplished journalists, literary award winners, Broadway performers, practicing engineers, school superintendents, and other noted professionals from the area regularly teach Point Park students. Faculty profiles are provided in ([S3 C2 Faculty Profiles](#)) for review.

Point Park University uses a multitude of student surveys to gauge the rigor and effectiveness of instruction. NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) provides a tool kit linking Point Park's survey results to specific accreditation standards, and that data will be used throughout this standard. Survey data results from 2017 and 2019 have been compiled and are provided in the Evidence Inventory ([S3 C2 NSSE17 Middle States Data](#)) ([S3 C2 NSSE19 Sch and Dept reports](#) & [S3 C2 NSSE19 Engagement Indicators by Dept](#)). During the latest survey period, a total of 29% of the First-year students and 31% of the senior population participated in the survey.

When reviewing the 2019 multi-year report regarding the Engagement Indicators of Academic Challenges, our statistics for both first-year students and seniors have generally remained steady ([S3 C2 NSSE19 Multi-Year Report Point Park.xlsx](#)). However, in the category of 'Assigned Writing', for seniors, the rate grew significantly over the past two NSSE surveys. This change in statistics may be linked with the increase in students taking an online course in the 15-week DL

format, or 8- week fully online format. All of Point Park’s online classes are writing intensive, focusing heavily on discussions, journals, and papers/presentations (**S3_C2_Online Syllabi**).

In summary, the data provided show that the perceived level of rigor for students has remained steady, except in the category of ‘Assigned Writing’ where significant increases were noted for undergraduate seniors.

B: *qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do*

Full-time faculty hiring policies are outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, which also describes all full-time faculty ranks and some University-wide criteria for hiring, tenure, and promotion, such as the terminal degree or equivalent practice in field. According to the Point Park University factbook, 75.7% of the full-time faculty have terminal degrees [S3 C2 Factbook 201819](#). Standard II also contains discussion of the hiring process for faculty members.

Article 19 of the full-time faculty collective bargaining agreement outlines the process for promotion and tenure ([S3 C2 CBA Quotations](#)). Candidates for promotion and tenure must submit a dossier that includes: Background materials, a Self-Evaluation, Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness, Evidence of Service to the University, and Evidence of Scholarship.

Regarding online education, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has set specific standards for online instruction. To comply with those mandates, all instructors who are teaching online must complete a formal training of either 1) best practices for online course design or 2) instruction. Free training options are provided to the faculty through the Department of Online Learning, and the University accepts trainings from other higher education or partner institutions such as Quality Matters and the Online Learning Consortium. Licensures and certifications for online are stored within the University’s strategic planning software SPOL, as well as Academic Affairs and each respective department.

C: *sufficient in number*

As of the 2019-2020 academic year, Point Park employs 558 faculty, made up of 154 full-time and 404 part-time. During the Fall of 2019, 59.1% of the full-time faculty are tenured, and 24.7% are on tenure-track. The academic departments of Communication [now a School of Communication], Literary Arts and Social Justice Studies, Business, Community Engagement, and Criminal Justice and Intel Studies have the highest percentage of full-time faculty who are tenured (80%, 70%, 67%, 67% and 63%, respectively).

In accordance with Department of Education standards, it is suggested that the “majority of courses” be taught by full-time faculty. Every term, the office of Institutional Research generates a report containing the full-time to part-time faculty ratio of class distribution. Department Chairs are encouraged to monitor these reports as they create their departmental course schedule and determining instructor assignments. During fall of 2019 the ratio was 49%, while the fall term of 2020 was at 51%.

The current undergraduate student to faculty ratio (FTE) is calculated at 11:1, an improvement over the previous 13:1 ratio in the 2015. Historical data are provided in the Evidence Inventory

(S3_C2 Faculty Ratio Historic).

D: provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation

As a teaching institution, Point Park prides itself on offering opportunities for professional development to all faculty. The Center for Inclusive Excellence (CIE) offers new faculty an initial orientation program with workshops and seminars, as well as monthly programming (**S3_C2_Training Schedules**). The Natural Sciences and Engineering Technology department offers an informal mentoring program to their faculty members; additionally, Faculty Assembly is in the early stages of researching the idea of setting up a University -wide mentoring program.

The Department of Online Learning provides additional professional development opportunities, which are directed towards online learning, but open to all faculty. During the 2019-2020 AY, they provided on-ground workshops, access to free online webinars, and awarded 10 yearly scholarships to attend an online workshop provided by the University's partner, the Online Learning Coalition (OLC). Point Park University is also a member institution of Quality Matters, granting faculty access to a variety of other free webinars and discounted classes as well (**S3_C2_PD – Online – Schedule AY 2019-2020, S3_C2_PD – Online – Schedule AY 2018-2019, S3_C2_PD – Online – Schedule AY 2017-2018, S3_C2_PD – Online – OLC Training Scholarships**).

As stated in Article 13 of the full-time faculty CBA, Professional Development; Section 1, the University provides each full-time faculty member \$615 annually for faculty development purposes. When the budget allows, the University also provides the opportunity for faculty members to apply to the office of the Provost for additional professional development funding. For the 2018-2019 academic year, in addition to the \$615 individual allotment, the University has committed \$33,366 towards various scholarly pursuits including creative work projects, the acquisition of additional teaching certification, continuing education credits, and faculty led field trips. This information can be found in a chart located in (**S3_C2 Evidence – Faculty Development Fund Data**).

Point Park University offers full-time faculty opportunities for sabbatical leave. To be eligible for sabbatical leave, the tenured faculty member, or Senior Teaching Artist and Master Teaching Artist, must have completed at least six years of continuous service as a full-time faculty member at the University, or at least seven years of continuous service as a full-time faculty member at the University since their last sabbatical. The formalized process is outlined in detail of the Full-Time Faculty CBA, in Article 14 Section 2. All those who were recommended for sabbatical by the Academic Policy and Procedure Committee for the years of 2018-2020 were approved by the Provost and President. Specific information on sabbaticals approved between the academic years of 2018-2020 are in (**S3_C2 Sabbatical Information**).

Beginning in the 2017-18 academic year, the Campus and Academic Resources Committee of faculty assembly implemented the Distinguished Teaching Award. This award is intended to recognize a full-time faculty member for continued commitment to excellence and innovation in

teaching. Dr. Darlene Marnich of the School of Education won the initial award, the 2019 winner, Dr. Vincenne Revilla Beltran, also from the School of Education, and the 2020 award went to P.K. Weston, from the Department of Literary Arts and Social Justice Studies.

The Department of Community Engagement gives awards to a faculty member, student, and a community partner annually for excellence in community engagement. The Point Park Faculty member who received the award in 2018-2019 was Dr. Matthew Updike for his work with citizen scientists. A link to the website can be found here.

E: reviewed regularly and equitably based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures

The University adheres to the terms of the full-time faculty CBA in article 25 relating to Faculty evaluations. A full copy of this text is available in the Evidence Inventory ([S3_C2_CBA Quotations](#)). Evaluations are made up of three parts: a self-evaluation, peer and Department Chair evaluations, and student evaluations ([S3_C2_Faculty Evaluation Forms](#)). Each year the faculty member must complete a Faculty Activity and Self-Reflection Report that includes data and reflection on teaching (advising and curriculum development), scholarship/creative work, and service. The Department Chair evaluations take place yearly and the results are stored within both the school and Academic Affairs archives.

Student evaluations are generally used by individual faculty to better understand student perceptions of their course and pedagogy. Student evaluations are required as part of the information provided within the tenure & promotion portfolios, and therefore they become materials that the faculty on the T&P committee, the Chair, and the Provost look at when making recommendations regarding tenure and promotion. The CBA requires “Copies of all student evaluations for prior six (6) years of full-time service or for all years of full-time service since last promotion, whichever is greater” ([S3_C2_CBA Quotations](#)).

One concern identified by faculty and the Self-Study is the low level of participation by students using the course evaluation system. Starting in 2016, course evaluations were switched from an in-class paper format to a fully online one. Over the next four academic years, the University utilized its Learning Management Systems, first Blackboard and now Schoology, as the delivery mode in conjunction with the service ‘CourseEval’. As of the data collected in the Fall term of AY 2019-2020, the participation rate is 38.9% students. This participation rate may result in skewed data ([S3_C2_Export Survey Results](#)).

This issue was brought up by Academic Affairs and the Academic Personnel Policies Committee in 2018 and appears to be a problem for other universities that have moved to digital evaluations. Some technological changes were made so that the course evaluations could be accessed from mobile phones; however, the student participation numbers are still lower than the University would prefer. Academic Affairs is considering the return to paper evaluations if the University can develop a reasonable way to record and anonymize the results; however, that decision has not been made as of this time ([S3_C2_Provost Pearson Response](#)).

As seen in this section, Point Park University satisfies Requirement of Affiliation 15. It has a core

of full-time and part-time faculty, along with other committed personnel, which allow it to assure continuity in hiring, evaluation, and promotion. The combination of traditional scholarship and community engaged learning reflect the central mission of the University and provide coherency to professional development and program development.

Criterion 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*

All course books and degree requirements are available online through Point Park's website, pointpark.edu, and incorporated into its student portal, branded as 'Pointweb'. Degree sheets and course books that provide a semester-by-semester path towards graduation are another way that Point Park satisfies Requirement of Affiliation 9.

PointWeb, the University's "one-stop shop" for students, provides students with information necessary for them to complete their educational journey. PointWeb was launched during the 2012-2013 academic year and is routinely updated. Through PointWeb, students view the course catalog, course registrations, sign up for classes, and view their mid-term and final grades. Students also can print unofficial transcripts in PointWeb. Other information such as course objectives and outcomes, required textbooks, and prerequisites are listed within the course catalog. Screenshots are available in the Evidence Inventory ([S3 C3 PointWeb Screenshots](#)).

While the Student Information System allows students to access all the items needed to meet the criteria, it often lacks clarity and accuracy for the student around program requirements. The system currently in use requires course requirements to be entered by hand, per major/concentration/minor and per academic year including any changes to curriculum or course codes.

Moving forward, an upgrade to Jenzabar EXI will allow for more automated functions, allowing for better accuracy of information to the student. The University has added a new function to this system that creates an electronic course sequence plan, which guides students to register for courses that they need in their chosen academic program and the University core curriculum. While this function does restrict the student's options, it increases the student's ability to graduate on time, improving the overall advising process and laying the foundation for the University's goal to get students graduated within four years. By fall 2020, 43 programs are on EXI ([S3_C3 EXI Programs](#)).

Criterion 4: *sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution's programs of study and students' academic progress*

Center for Student Success:

As will be described in more detail in Standard IV, Point Park has a coordinated, campus-wide commitment to helping first-year students obtain their degree in four years. In place since 2014

this framework ensures each student is connected to the support services, campus resources and range of opportunities needed to complete their degree while encouraging students to explore academic and pre-professional opportunities that might enhance their professional career readiness.

Faculty mentors are a central part of this commitment. These mentors teach in the student's academic degree program and meet with students at least once per semester to discuss the student's program, degree requirements, and prerequisites. They also offer information about internship opportunities, career paths, and professional connections related to that major ([S3_C4_Full-TimeFacultyCBAReferences](#)).

Tutoring Services:

Point Park tutoring services provide professional and peer tutors for students; scheduling is available through WOnline, accessed through the tutoring link on PointWeb. Tutoring services are bifurcated between the writing center and STEM subjects. There are on average 24 tutors available during the academic year. As of the fall of 2019, 1,300+ requests were made for tutoring assistance ([S3_C4_Writing Center Sample](#)). Unfortunately, historical data is unavailable, as the old software service for tutoring requests, TutorTrac, provided an export of corrupt data files that Information Technology was unable to repair.

The Writing Center consults with students in courses across the curriculum at all stages of the writing process; in-person and online consultations are available through PointWeb. The Writing Center can assist students in a number of areas, including understanding the assignment handout, getting started, brainstorming and prewriting, writing a thesis statement, organization strategies, grammar, usage and style-skill development, proofreading strategies, correctly documenting sources, and understanding and responding to instructor feedback.

Specialized STEM tutoring services include the following classes: MATH (all levels), Accounting, Biology, Civil Engineering Technology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Economics, Electrical Engineering and Electrical Engineering Technology, Mechanical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering Technology, and the Natural Sciences. Math is one of the most highly requested tutoring services amongst the current student population.

In conjunction with the Center for Student Success, an initiative is underway to identify and support students who are at risk academically. Dedicated staff reach out to students who are struggling in their courses as suggested by their midterm progress grades. While the University will not have data for at least a year, it anticipates this initiative having a positive impact in communicating to students that services are available and aiding with student retention.

Disability Services:

Disability Services assists in ensuring that Point Park University adheres to The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

All students are responsible for reporting their own disabilities to request accommodations. To streamline the process of self-reporting, the department subscribes to a software called Accessible Information Management (AIM). This cloud-based software is used to track self-reported disabilities and accommodation requests and ensure that the students' instructors are notified of these requested accommodations.

The latest detailed report of self-reported disabilities from AIM is provided in the Evidence Inventory ([S3_C4_Disability_Services.docx](#)). In summary, a total of 188 students have reported some form of disability and asked for accommodations during the 2019- 2020 academic year. Mental Health is the highest disability type, making up 24% of requests, and learning disabilities are second highest at 11%. A full chart is in the document ([S3_C4_Disability_Services_Chart.xlsx](#)).

Honors Program:

Point Park University's Honors Program is currently led by faculty members Dr. Sera Mathew and Dr. Brendan Mullen; Professor Helen Fallon recently retired from her post after many years as the successful leader of the Honors Program. Any student awarded a Presidential Scholarship or enrolls to the University with a 3.5 GPA and a 1250 SAT/25 ACT score is automatically invited into the organization. In the year-end report of the 2018-2019 Academic year the Honors Program consisted of 230 students at the end of the Fall semester, 89 of which graduated. Qualifying students enrolled in a total of 77 honors classes (36 Fall, 41 Spring) (**S3_C4_Honors Program Report 18-19**), (**S3_C4_Honors Program Report 19-20**).

Students in the Honors Program take some courses that are designated as honors courses or honors sections; in addition, they may "honorize" a standard course for additional credit upon completion of additional, rigorous assignments. These honorized courses are overseen by the Honors administration to ensure quality ([S3_C4_Honorized_Courses_2019](#)).

Although the Honors Program challenges students academically, it also provides opportunities for students to have real-world experiences to develop leadership skills. Students are encouraged to explore opportunities in community service, mentoring, and membership in other academic organizations. Examples of the honors program classes, student works, and community service initiatives, and notable alumni are provided in the Evidence Inventory:

University Library Services:

The mission of Point Park University Library is to promote a culture of scholarship by serving as the principal source of information services, providing the resources necessary to facilitate the learning and research activities of the University. The Library empowers the community to engage critically with the world to discover, connect and innovate.

The University Library's holdings include over 65,000 print volumes, 500,000 eBooks and access to 120 electronic databases. A curated textbook and course reserve collection provides students

with copies of every textbook in the core curriculum and select course-specific volumes. Additional resources are provided by the Library via Interlibrary Loan and EZ-Borrow/PALCI consortia, which allows the Point Park community timely access to materials across the globe.

Library resources such as the print and audiovisual collection, printing, scanning, study areas, computer labs, group-capacity media rooms, and in-person reference assistance are available during operational hours. Students can also rent rooms for studying and presentations using an online reservation page. Students and faculty have access to the library and all print holdings during all hours of operation (seven days per week during the Fall and Fall terms and six days per week during the summer term). All e-materials (databases, e-journals, eBooks, streaming video, and other electronic resources) are accessible 24/7 through the Library's website. Librarians are available to assist students with reference and research consultations, technical assistance, readers' advisory, access to the University Archive, etc.

Students have access to the library and all print holdings during all hours of operation (seven days per week during the Fall and Fall terms and six days per week during the summer term). All electronic resources, databases, serials, and eBooks from on-campus and off-campus locations, are available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week through the Library website.

Community members may contact their librarians via e-mail, text message, phone, and instant message. Librarians are requested to be embedded in courses within Schoology to offer customized research guides and assistance.

Library Instruction is provided upon request (in classroom settings, scheduled individual consultations, or online environments) for all course offerings from the University's first-year core curriculum through graduate and doctoral programs. Library instruction is tailored to class needs, covering library orientation to assignment- and/or course-specific instruction. Additionally, librarians design and teach the introduction to Information Literacy component of "Foundations for Success.

Information Technology Services:

The University IT Help Desk provides technical support to all students, faculty, and staff on campus. Their onsite hours of operation match the operational times of the University and its on-ground courses. The Information Technology department provides access to a central computer lab on campus 24-hours a day to ensure that students can complete assigned work with access to much of the required software and technology for their courses. IT also implemented a self-password reset option so that students, faculty, and staff could change their password during non-support hours.

All students, faculty, and staff are provided with free access to Microsoft Office 365, Adobe Creative Cloud, and additional software while their University accounts are active. This software package allows University community members the opportunity to download this essential software on up to five personal devices and information about these discounts and software programs can be found on the University website.

Educational pricing for Apple and Lenovo computers as well as a select number of software

packages are also available to students. There also is an on-campus computer service center, providing free and discounted computer and warranty repair.

Learning Management System (Schoology):

Point Park University uses a learning management system (LMS) to host online and hybrid courses, groups, and online conferences. In AY 2018-2019, the University migrated all courses from Blackboard Learn to Schoology. In contrast to the previous LMS, Schoology is a cleaner, modern system with several new forms of automation to make its management simpler for the University. The system is set up to allow all faculty, staff, and students to have an account, authenticated through a single sign-on service through Microsoft Azure. A Schoology course shell is created for every course section, and course enrollments are updated automatically (**S3_C4_Schoology Screenshots**).

Faculty teaching on-ground courses are responsible for maintaining their own course materials from term to term. For the University's fully online programs, Instructional Designers in the Department of Online Learning assist faculty developers in building these courses and are also responsible for populating content in the new course shells each term. All the institution's online courses are designed from a template informed by the Quality Matters (QM) rubric to ensure consistency, rigor, and quality (**S3_C4_OM Standards Fifth Edition**).

There are third-party tools faculty can use to address academic integrity in Schoology. Previously the plagiarism detection service, Unicheck, was used; in AY 2019-2020, the University shifted to Turnitin. Additionally, the University uses, ProctorU to proctor exams. Another tool available to users both in and out of Schoology is Conferences, or Big Blue Button, a web conferencing tool for departments to use that involves the use of specific "rooms." This tool allows Point Park to have web conferences that do not require participants to be members of a course or that they even be associated with the University (guest speakers, for example). The University contracts with Blindside Networks to provide enhanced service for Big Blue Button and keeps records on its use to assess its usefulness to students and faculty (**S3_C4_LMS BigBlueButton Usage 2017-2020**). During the University's response to the pandemic, tools such as BigBlueButton, Teams, and Zoom became critical in allowing faculty to continue their primary function of teaching and to enable students to continue their main responsibility—learning. Using assessment data gathered during the summer, the University focused its faculty development on ensuring that all instructors have at least some knowledge and familiarity with Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Big Blue Button (**S3_C4_Covid Assessment Final Report**).

In addition to the above-referenced development opportunities, the Instructional Technologist provides support to end users directly and through the ITS Help Desk's Freshservice ticketing system. Point Park University has also contracted with Schoology to provide enhanced support offerings including 24/7 access to Schoology's own help system.

High-Impact Practice Participation:

The NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) High-Impact Practices (HIP) report tracks how many students perceive that they are taking part in events that fall under the HIP category. The results of the 2017 NSSE survey indicate that Point Park University was slightly behind its peers, with 48% of surveyed students taking part in 2 or more HIP, and 31% taking part in only one ([S3 C4 NSSE17 High-Impact Practices](#)). However, in comparison to the University's Carnegie peers, the University is roughly equivalent. There is more discussion on NSSE as a proxy for student learning in Standard V.

When the survey was administered again in 2019, there were significant statistical changes noted in appendix ([S3 C4 NSSE19 High-Impact Practices](#)). For first-year students, there is a 33% increase in self-identified service-learning activities, amounting to 86% of first-year students taking part in service learning. This significant change puts that group above the average for both Middle States and Carnegie Class peers. This change can be attributed to the implementation of a classroom service project for each section of University 101, a required course for all first-year students. 85% of first-year students Point Park participated in a high-impact practice, a 36-percentage point increase from the 2017 survey.

The 2019 report also shows that seniors have shifted from participating in one HIP to two or more high impact practices. The statistics show that 90% of the students surveyed had participated in at least one high impact practice, and 69% participated in two or more. This is an overall increase of 21%

The 2016 launching of the Co-Op program within the Rowland School of Business allows students to earn credit while working in their profession. All the data relating to student internships and the co-op program are provided in a chart and data table in the Evidence Inventory ([S3 C4 Experiential Learning Data](#)). With the University focusing on career readiness, the Co-Op program has moved beyond the Rowland School of Business and is available to students in all University programs. For more on the Co-Op program, see Standard IV, Criterion 4.

Criterion 5: *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;*

Point Park values the skills and dispositions that critical thinking fosters by a wide-ranging general education core curriculum. In 2012, the University faculty self-selected in 12 working groups to revise the general education core. Working through faculty assembly, five of the most supportable revisions continued to be examined. In fall 2014, the process resulted in the newest version of the

CORE, structured as a series of three Fundamentals courses, which all students take their first year, a menu of course options that fall under eight themes, and a senior Capstone course. During the 2016-2017 academic year, the CORE themes were expanded to include more courses, offering options to students coming in transfer credits. After implementing those changes for two years, the Faculty Assembly voted in September of 2019 to recommend that the University make permanent the expansion of core courses, and the Provost accepted and approved this recommendation.

All CORE courses were mapped to the five CORE learning outcomes listed below:

Communication	Employ written and oral communication skills in order to convey clear and organized information to target audiences for specific purposes
Information Literacy	Locate, evaluate, and use information effectively, ethically, and legally from a variety of formats both traditional and digital.
Problem Solving	Analyze problems and develop independent solutions.
Global/Cultural Literacy	Analyze issues within their political, economic, socio-cultural, historical, and environmental contexts.
Creativity/Aesthetics	Recognize, define, analyze, and interpret a variety of aesthetic expressions and/or demonstrate originality and inventiveness.

Specific CORE courses and their link to the themes are in the Evidence Inventory, identified as [\(S3 C5 Core Theme Courses 2018-19\)](#). The course descriptions and outcomes are provided in the document [\(S3 C5 Core Courses and objectives\)](#), and abbreviated version of this information is provided in [\(S3 C5 Core Course Descriptions 2018-19\)](#).

During the 2019-2020 Academic Year, the Core Outcomes Assessment Committee [COAC] shifted from assessing a learning outcome to focus on several areas of improvement surrounding the core curriculum. The first area evaluated is the tool used to assess the core curriculum's effectiveness, discussed in Standard V. As Point Park's CORE becomes increasingly and intentionally interdisciplinary and experiential, assessment tools reflecting this shift are needed. More detailed information on the history, as well as the evaluation process, can be found under Standard V.

The committee leaders for Standard V note that 90% of Point Park's CORE classes are taught by adjunct faculty. When reviewing the assessments, it discovered that information pertaining to the core classes was not being disseminated to the instructors from the individual departments, with some courses not meeting or conflicting with the institutional- level learning outcomes.

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;*

Required assessment of the CORE curriculum ensures that the CORE outcomes of Communication and Information Literacy are assessed annually in Fundamentals courses and that Problem Solving, Global/Cultural Literacy, and Creativity/Aesthetics are assessed on a rotating basis. The CORE Fundamentals courses have been assessed each semester since implementation.

- For Communication, 57% of all student artifacts assessed met the standard.
- For Information Literacy, 90% of all student artifacts assessed met the standard.
- For Problem Solving, 35% of all student artifacts assessed met the standard.
- Based on the assessment of Global/Cultural Literacy, it was determined that either the assessment rubric needs to be reevaluated, or that the assessed course objectives need to better align with CORE Outcomes. It was also determined that Global/Cultural Literacy is a broad category and difficult to effectively assess.
- Based on the assessment of Creativity/Aesthetics, it was determined that the assessment rubric matches the course material for “Introduction” everywhere except in the Math Sections. COAC and Point Park faculty determined that it is necessary to rethink the definitions of Creativity/Aesthetics for intro-level courses.

One continual improvement recommendation: Most of these classes are taught by part-time faculty, a deliberate outreach strategy on these course’s CORE outcomes is needed. There is more discussion of the general education CORE in Standard V.

As seen in Criterion 5, as well as Standard V, Point Park assesses student achievement in its general education core. This assessment and subsequent evaluation of the core support Reaffirmation of Affiliation 9.

Criterion 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.*

According to University data, 100% of faculty who teach doctoral levels of classes hold a Doctoral or terminal degree in their field (21 Full-time, 13 Part-time). All faculty teaching in masters-level programs hold a master’s degree or higher in their field (44 Full-time, 72 part-time) (**S3_C6_Graduate Faculty Qualifications**). When asked to search for and recommend a candidate to fill an open full-time faculty position, department faculty work within the guidelines of Article 17 of the CBA, which states that tenure- track faculty must have a terminal degree or be working towards one. Additionally, the Rowland School of Business utilizes a hiring decision tree developed by its accrediting agency IACBE, to aid in the decision-making process. Recommendations for hiring are made to the Provost, who in turn makes recommendations to the President of the University. (**S3_C6_IACBE Faculty Qual Decision Tree**).

The faculty Graduate Council Committee determines the need for, and feasibility of, graduate

degree programs recommended by the various academic departments, considering proposed programs' ability to fulfill the mission of Point Park University, as well as general criteria related to student admission. Membership of the council includes the directors of the graduate programs and the Department Chairpersons. As mentioned earlier in this Standard, the University also now incorporates a strategic enrollment process for new programs.

Point Park faculty provide a wide range of learning experiences to graduate students: student work samples demonstrate a variety of strategies utilized by students to meet the course objectives. Students in the Educational Leadership and Community Engagement doctoral programs are expected to produce a dissertation, while Psy.D. students have clinical opportunities across the nation. Students in the online M.B.A. program perform strategic planning and resource analysis for their own businesses, and a student in the Master of Fine Arts in Writing for the Screen & Stage works closely with faculty to produce professional-quality scripts.

Scholastic evidence provided in the Evidence Inventory of this report includes:

- Sample selections of course syllabi from each graduate program (**S3_C6_Syllabi**)
- Samples of student work from graduate programs including (**S3_C6_Student Work**)
 - Dissertations
 - Portfolios
 - Student Writing

Criterion 7: *adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval on any student learning opportunities designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers*

The University uses two third-party providers for student recruitment and advising, Wiley (formerly The Learning House) and K-12 Teachers Alliance (KTA). Both partners are paid by a revenue-sharing agreement upon student enrollment, but neither entity offers course instruction nor issues any grades. For more on the enrollment and advisement structure, see Standard IV.

Criterion 8: *periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs providing student learning opportunities*

In addition to its assessment of student learning within programs and courses, Point Park assesses programmatic effectiveness. During the Fall of 2016, the Program Review Committee (PRC) conducted a survey of Department Chairs and faculty to solicit input on how the review process could be refined. The results of the findings, as well as discussion pertaining to the faculty CBA led to the disbandment of the PRC. It was determined that five-year Program Review is an administrative duty that faculty should not dedicate their service time to, but rather this process should be administered by Academic Affairs but involve faculty throughout the process.

During the 2018-2019 Academic year, the five-year review process was paused so that the institution could not only refine the process but reassess its measures as well. As a result, significant changes were made. After consultation with Deans and with the new eight-year cycle

for Middle States' self-studies, program review will occur in six-year cycles, starting in 2020. With the new guidelines put forth by Academic Affairs, reviews will follow the PARA process, which links strategic planning, academic programming and assessment directly to resource allocation. The PARA process will be explained in further in Standard VI.

To offset this gap in 18-19, the standard committee reached out to all Department Chairs about the status of program review regarding each of their areas. Twelve Department Chairs responded, and the survey results can be found in ([**S3 C8 Program Review Survey Responses 3-12-19**](#)).

All program review schedules, templates, forms, and reports are published on the Center for Inclusive Excellence's (CIE) Schoology site. Completed program reviews are also housed within the same Schoology course for archival purposes.

Several Point Park departments are aided in their programmatic assessment by external accreditation. Engineering, the Rowland School of Business, the School of Education, the Psy.D. program, and the Dance program are required by their independent accreditation organizations to assess and improve policies, procedures, and activities that support learning and faculty.

Some examples of the use of assessment results that led to change:

- The acquisition of technology upgrades for the Cinema Arts Department and the hiring of a Safety Coordinator/Production Manager.
- The creation of a Communications proposal for Tricaster live multicamera streaming as part of the Point Park News Service, UView, and Broadcast facilities.
- The creation of a five-year Engineering Technology capital equipment plan for Mixed Signal Oscilloscopes, a Heat Conduction Unit, and power electronics laboratory equipment.
- Focused faculty training on Zoom, Big Blue Button, and Microsoft Teams
- ([**S3_C4_Covid Assessment Final Report**](#)).
- Reconsideration of student course evaluation processes to improve response rates
- Creation of a new computer lab dedicated to the animation program

As seen throughout Standard III, Point Park is committed to providing its students with high-quality education taught by a dedicated group of full-time and part-time faculty. It has established processes for supporting faculty development and scholarly activity and makes use of the strategic plan to allocate fiscal and human resources. In doing so, it satisfies Requirements of Affiliation 8, 9, 10, and 15.

Innovations and Developments:

- Since 2015-2016, the University shifted the student- to- faculty ratio from 13:1 to 11:1 and stayed steady with its tenured to tenure-track numbers.

- Upgrades to its student portal allowing ease of access to advising worksheets, Course descriptions and book listings on-demand, mid-term grades for undergraduate students, and access to the student retention system, FinishLine, so that faculty may submit information easily on attendance and student performance in the classroom.
- An improvement in the number of students not only participating in high-impact practices, but also the switch from perusing just a single opportunity to two or more.

Areas for Improvement:

- Develop a plan to increase participation by students with the online course evaluations.
- Online student advising is handled by an outside partner who does not use the University's early alert system. This partnership with Wiley (formerly The Learning House) will end and be replaced with a new partner in the 2021-2022 Academic Year, allowing Point Park to overhaul the online advising process and bring it in-house.
- Instructors, especially part-time faculty, need to be better informed about CORE learning objectives attached to their courses.
- Faculty need to have access to assessment rubrics before the semester starts and a clear understanding that they will need to have students create artifacts that can be used for a CORE Outcome assessment.
- The University needs to continue its focus on post-assessment improvement.



STANDARD IV: SUPPORT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

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.

Point Park University remains committed to its mission of supporting the experience of all admitted students, regardless of modality or level. The University's focus on student success, engagement, retention, degree completion, and professional development is pervasive across campus departments. The University's emphasis on continuous assessment and improvement is apparent in all student services and programs from pre-admission, through graduation, and beyond. In its commitment to students, the University fulfills the criteria for Standard IV and Requirements of Affiliation 8, 9, and 10.

Criterion 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*

Admitting, Supporting, and Retaining Point Park Students

Point Park's combination of nationally ranked theater and dance programs with more professionally focused majors in criminal justice and business management allows it to have a holistic model of admitting students (**S4_C1_Undergrad Requirements**). Point Park has historically played a vital role in access to higher education and continues this role by offering rolling admission and low-cost admission fees. Another way that Point Park supports a range of students is through its flexible admissions policy for Point Park Online. Understanding that many of its students are working students with previous credits, the minimum GPA for online students is 2.0. This commitment includes the implementation of test-optional admission starting in Fall 2017. In Fall 2018, the number of students increased from application through matriculation. In Fall 2019, the students remained fairly level, with a slight increase in test-optional admitted students. In Fall 2020, the University saw its largest increase in test-optional applicants, admitted and matriculated students, some of which was the result of the pandemic (**S4_C1_Test Optional Admissions Trends**).

Graduate admissions reflect diverse student interests as well (**S4_C1_Graduate Requirements**). Students applying for the Psy.D. program are expected to have at least a 3.25 to be competitive, while students applying for the various Master's programs must have a minimum 2.75 cumulative and 3.0 in the major. This range in admissions requirements supports the University's mission of students achieving their specific professional goals, often while supporting their communities. The Point Park website and Catalog contain admissions requirements for all graduate programs.

Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions

Prior to Fall 2020, Point Park consistently enrolled between 800 and 900 new undergraduate students in fall semesters. In that same time frame, while inquiries decreased, applications and admits increased. This is due to several factors including strategically leveraging financial aid, using a third party for search and applications generation, using a pre-populated application, providing professional development to maintain a well-trained Admissions team and an Enrollment Marketing team that has leveraged opportunities to increase audience and engagement across all social media channels.

Unfortunately, due to decreasing numbers of high school students, the national debate on student debt, the cost of higher education and the questioning of the value of a college degree, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of students who enrolled have decreased over four years (from 897 to 669). Moving forward, Point Park will expand search purchases and leverage the benefits of increased inquiries from this expansion, join the Common App, provide a new web app on its website to better capture stealth applicants, institutionalize changes to submission and completion of applications, and continue to refine financial aid strategy. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected fall 2020 enrollment during the spring and summer of 2020 as prospective students have become uncertain of their plans. Moving forward, the University will create both virtual and in-person opportunities for students to visit campus, expand Saturday hours to allow for more opportunities for families to see campus in person while following the CDC guidelines for the maximum number of people at an indoor gathering. Point Park will attend college fairs in a virtual manner and provide high school visits and group tour experiences virtually. Virtual Open House and Admitted Students days will continue to be used throughout the year. Virtual academic Q&A sessions will be scheduled throughout the recruiting cycle so that students have the opportunity to meet with faculty. For the Conservatory of Performing Arts, all 20/21 auditions will be virtual.

Full-time Undergraduate				
	<i>Inquiries</i>	<i>Applications</i>	<i>Admits</i>	<i>Matrics</i>
Fall 2017	20,560	5,561	3,687	897
Fall 2018	28,481	6,513	4,243	816
Fall 2019	16,897	5,916	4,283	820
Fall 2020*	19,556	5,906	4,134	669

The University implemented an enrollment management model and organizational structure to ensure that the recruitment, admission, and retention of academically prepared, diverse applicants is a strategic and collaborative effort across campus divisions. As stated above, third party partners are used to help recruit and leverage financial aid. In addition, Point Park uses the College Skills Inventory (CSI) to identify at risk first-year students and early alert software across campus to identify issues across a student's time on campus. To ensure the recruitment of the appropriate student population, the University carefully reviews the undergraduate recruitment plan each summer. Undergraduate admission counselors participate in an annual debriefing and planning

session to examine areas of success and challenges during the prior admission year. This includes a full review of campus events, recruitment activities, the application review process, and interactions with other service departments to mitigate melt. Then, a list of action items is compiled and worked on in priority order. In addition, undergraduate admissions counselors are giving a variety of weekly goals and meet with the Director of Admissions bi-weekly to identify issues and trends.

Finally, several surveys have been administered to students and parents to measure satisfaction. Results show much success with Admissions events and family visits over the past few years. Open House event results of surveys taken between 2018-2019 showed an average of 82% would be likely to enroll at Point Park after attending the event. Admitted Students Day event surveys between 2017-2020 showed on average that 92% would be likely to attend based on their experience with that event. Campus visit surveys from 2017-2020 resulted in a score of 4.64 out of 5 overall satisfaction with the visit. Some comments from students: “My tour was fantastic, and I am very excited to apply to PPU” (7/15/2020); “Will definitely be applying... Thank you for making this such a great experience, surrounded by a great area and excellent people!” (2/10/2020). Most recent surveys of campus visits showed 93% of responses for overall satisfaction within the 4-5 out of 5 range (**S4_C1_HEDS Student Survey Summary**).

Graduate Recruitment and Admissions

Overview

Over the past four years, on-campus graduate enrollment has steadily decreased from a high of 219 in Fall 2017 to its current level of 110 in Fall 2020. Point Park’s graduate programs have historically attracted adult learners who tend to work full-time and attend school part-time. The recent decline in enrollment is primarily attributable to: (1) the preference of these non-traditional graduate students for a more convenient modality (online); (2) the significant price differential between our online and on-campus graduate programs, and (3) the impact of employer tuition reimbursement, a benefit many students utilize which has been reduced or de-emphasized by employers in recent years. However, the University’s Psy.D. program only accepts full-time, on-ground students, and now that the program has provisional accreditation, the number of full-time graduate students is expected to increase.

Graduate (Master's & Doctorate) Funnel Ratios							
	<i>Inquiries</i>	<i>Inq to App</i>	<i>Applications</i>	<i>App to Admits</i>	<i>Admits</i>	<i>Admit to Matric</i>	<i>Matric</i>
Fall 2017	1,219	72%	875	52%	452	48%	219
Fall 2018	1,532	71%	1,085	41%	441	43%	191
Fall 2019	1,340	51%	689	47%	322	41%	133
Fall 2020*	1,005	44%	441	51%	227	48%	110

* at 9/8/2020

Graduate (Master's & Doctorate) Enrollment				
	<i>Inquiries</i>	<i>Applications</i>	<i>Admits</i>	<i>Matrics</i>
Fall 2017	1,219	875	452	219
Fall 2018	1,532	1,085	441	191
Fall 2019	1,340	689	322	133
Fall 2020*	1,005	441	227	110

* at 9/8/2020

Recruiting Events and Contacts

The staff of the Graduate Admission Office continue to hold on-campus recruiting events in a variety of formats, including in-person visits, Open Houses (when permitted by health officials) and virtual Open Houses/Information sessions. Staff also participate in a number of on-campus events focused on promoting graduate programs, such as panel discussions, the university's annual graduation fair, senior week events, and the alumni tuition discount to current Point Park students, and personal visits to all senior capstone classes. External events are also a key component of outreach efforts, including graduate fairs at local colleges and universities (both in-person and virtual), and employee benefit fairs, particularly those held by the university's tuition discount partners.

Tuition Discounts

The university has been aggressive in seeking out local companies and government agencies interested in establishing tuition discount partnerships with Point Park (**S4_C1_Tuition Discount List**). It should be noted that use of tuition discounts has declined significantly in recent years. This seems to correlate with the decreasing incidence of employers providing tuition reimbursement.

Use of Tuition Discounts	
Year	Number of Students
2015	375
2016	324
2017	210
2018	196
2019	132
2020	77
Grand Total	1314

Recruitment Processes

Utilizing the CRM, the staff has implemented a robust communication flow to graduate students at every stage of the funnel. The inquiry process has been simplified, and staff now respond to potential students within 24 hours of the initial inquiry. Counselors employ various methods of personalized outreach to prospects throughout the recruitment/admission process, including phone calls, emails, and text messages. In addition, many standard communications are sent out automatically to the prospect pool via the CRM that share information on the application process, financial aid, program of interest, alumni success stories, faculty, and recruiting events. At every stage, the Graduate Admissions Office coordinates closely with graduate program directors to make sure that prospective students understand the benefits of a Point Park degree and have all the information they need to make an informed decision.

Online Program Admission

In addition to the recruiting and admission of on-ground Master's and Doctoral students, the staff of the Graduate Admissions Office is also responsible for the admission decisions for all online students – whether they are graduate or undergraduate. Graduate Admission staff work closely with two third-party OPM vendors, overseeing their efforts to maintain a seamless admissions process and serving as gatekeepers to ensure qualified students are admitted into all the university's fully online programs. The goal is to make sure that online students are effectively integrated into the Point Park community. A complete listing of the University's policy for admission at the graduate level can be found (**S4_C1_Graduate Admissions Requirements**).

Conditional Admittance

First-year students falling below the general admission standards outlined on Point Park's website automatically are considered for the Foundations for Success program (**S4_C1B Foundations for Success Brochure**). This program involves a closer look at a student's performance in the core academic areas of History, Math, Science, English, and Foreign Language. Students must achieve a cumulative targeted GPA in those core areas, while also managing to not fall below a baseline ACT or SAT composite score. Transfer students may be directed to repeat courses at their previous schools or attend community college in preparation for Point Park's rigor (**S4_C1B Transfer Deny Letter**).

In July 2015, programming for students conditionally admitted transitioned to the Center for Student Success—a centralized, comprehensive hub for student support, created in 2014. Students are admitted into the Center's Foundations for Success program on the condition that they fully attend and successfully complete preparatory assignments and a two-week, two-credit course prior to the start of Fall classes (**S4_C1B Foundations Admit Letter**). Foundations explores key knowledge, skills and attitudes that increase preparedness for the first-year academic experience. The program includes instruction and assessment in the domains of information literacy, quantitative reasoning, and college survival skills. Feedback from students related to the quality and value of the Foundations shapes curricular and instructional changes from year to year. The 2020 Foundations program emphasizes training for proficiency in a HyFlex environment. A survey is planned at the end of the Fall 2020 term to assess the effectiveness of this new emphasis.

Support is continuous throughout the first year. Students completing the course must also regularly meet with their Student Success Coordinators and continue their development as students in cohort-specific UNIV 101-University -City Life sections. Foundations sections are taught by CSS Staff to provide targeted retention support for a group historically at-risk for leaving the University ([S4_C1_UNIV 101 Syllabus Comparison](#)). The current pandemic only exacerbates that risk ([S4_C1_Foundations Retention](#)).

Graduate applicants falling short of the entrance requirements are tagged as a conditionally admitted student and further reviewed by program directors ([S4_C1B_Grad Conditional Letter](#)). It is the purview of program director to admit or deny a student and to outline the conditions for admission. All program directors receive a list of the conditionally admitted students who started their program each semester and track their academic progress throughout the first term. Once the term concludes, the program director suggests to the student that they should not continue, suggest strategies for improvement, or clear the student to continue without provisions.

Financing a Point Park Education: Financial Aid and Student Accounts

As mentioned in Standard II, The Offices of Financial Aid and Student Accounts coordinate efforts providing information to students regarding eligibility for federal, state, institutional, and private sources of aid as applied to the tuition, fee, room, and board charges at the University ([S4_C1A_Welcome Packet Financial Services Insert](#) & [S4_C1A_Financial Aid Brochure](#)). Both offices send material before matriculation, orienting students to the University's website. The website contains general and student-specific information related to available aid. Prospective students to the University can utilize a financial aid calculator to estimate their financial aid ([S4_C1_Net Price Calculator](#)). Continuing students can access their individual account information via PointWeb, the University's student information and registration portal. Both offices have the same access to review student authorization to third parties and adhere to the University's record retention policy in compliance with federal and state regulations ([S4_C1_FERPA Policy Student Accounts and Financial Aid](#)).

Supporting Financial Literacy

As discussed in detail in Standard II, the Director of Student Accounts provides a financial literacy presentation to students during first-year orientation, reviewing budgeting tools, loan application and repayment, as well as credit management ([S2_C7_Money Matters Presentation](#)). In addition, Rowland School of Business faculty identified a need to provide second to fourth-year students an optional course that addresses specific lifestyle skills required to make good financial choices during and after college. BMGT 271 "The Money Thing: Life and Finances During and After College" was approved by Faculty Assembly in spring 2016 as a new core course within the Succeed in Business category ([S4_C1_BMGT271 Syllabus 2020](#)). One of the course's key outcomes is the completion of the Personal Life Map Portfolio Workbook and Report, where students investigate their earnings potential, identify living expenses, and plan through their first-year budget post-graduation ([S4_C1_The Money Thing Sample 1](#)), ([S4_C1_The Money Thing Sample 2](#)). The faculty member in charge of this course had plans to expand its scope

during her sabbatical, but due to COVID-related budget austerity, her plans are on hold.

Orientation and Student Transition

Recognizing the long-term gains of on-boarding of students, Point Park University has historically devoted significant resources into orientation programs for first-year and transfer students in both on-ground and on-line modalities ([S4_C1A Admit Packet Your Checklist](#), [S4_C1A Welcome Packet & S4_C1 Orientation Budget 2020](#)). As such, orientation programs have been evaluated and restructured over the years by senior members of the University's executive team, including the University President. On-ground orientation programs, known as Pioneer Experience, provide two different programs for new students—one for first-time, full-time students and another for transfer students ([S4_C1_Pioneer Experience-Meeting Analysis](#)), ([S4_C1_Pioneer Experience Spring 2021 PE Schedule](#)), ([S4_C1_Pioneer Experience 1-1 Questions](#)), ([S4_C1_Pioneer Experience Tea Tuesday's](#)), ([S4_C1_Pioneer Experience Virtual Transfer Day](#)), ([S4_C1_Pioneer Experience Cinema Arts](#)). Dividing these two student pools allows the University to tailor orientation programs to the expectations of these distinct groups. Until the summer of 2019, Point Park hosted between four and six, two-day programs for first-year students, providing guidance on their academic paths, as well as resources to assist students' transition into the University. Four, one-day programs supported transfers students. In response to transfer student feedback, orientation provided an opportunity to meet with academic departments, provided time for the creation and adjustment of schedules, ensured the accurate evaluation of transfer credits, and allowed for the review of financial aid packaging and payment obligations.

In the summer of 2019, an orientation task force determined that a one-week program prior to the start of the fall semester would allow for more comprehensive programming ([S4_C1 Taskforce Agenda](#)). Transfer students continued to be served by one-day programs throughout the summer. The program goals of this extended program: help students develop meaningful relationships with other students and with faculty, as well as establish foundational knowledge of University resources and the Point Park community. Students and families were given an opportunity to provide feedback through post-orientation surveys ([S4_C1 PE 2019 Survey Results](#)). The pandemic prevented a replication of this new week-long orientation, making longitudinal assessment of the new orientation strategy unlikely; however initial results from 2019 have shown a positive reaction to the program and its goals.

Support and Retention of At-Risk Students

As a tuition-driven University, retention efforts are vital to sustainability and success. While retention rates for incoming first-time first-year students has declined slightly over the last three years (from 78% to 75%), transfer student retention (from 74% to 81%) and graduate student retention (from 83% to 88%) have increased during that same timeframe ([S4_C1_First to Second Year Retention](#)). Interestingly, although first to second year retention rates declined for first-year students, it appears that persistence after their second year increased substantially as reflected in four-year and six-year graduation rates. four-year graduation rates have increased from 49% to 53% and six-year graduation rates increased from 55% to 60% over the past three years ([S4_C1_Graduation Rate Trends Report](#).)

Central to Point Park's support, retention, and advisement of its students is the previously mentioned Center for Student Success. The CSS offers students and faculty needed resources for the retention, advisement, and eventual graduation of all students ([S4_C1C_CSS Coordinator Handbook](#) & [S4_C1C_CSS Administrative Handbook](#)). However, the CSS plays a crucial role in the support and retention of at-risk learners through the provision of its core functions: undergraduate advising, tutoring, disability services, and Foundations for Success. The University uses several identifiers to classify that a student is at-risk for leaving college and/or as academically underprepared. At the undergraduate level, pre-college measures for incoming first-year students include: the assignment of a risk value associated with FinishLine Retention's predictive model; the completion of Ruffalo Noel-Levitz's College Student Inventory (CSI), and the conditional admittance of students who have not met the minimum academic standards (Admissions criteria) ([S4_C1_Sample CSI Student Report](#)).

The FinishLine predictive model utilizes eight factors to calculate a risk score and category (high-risk, at-risk, safe) for all first-time, full-time students at matriculation ([S4_C1B_Predictive Model Results Report](#) & [S4_C1B_Predictive Model Rebuild Data Analysis](#)). Lists of students considered at-risk or high-risk for leaving the University are distributed to several student service areas. This distribution to student success areas has resulted in more intentional messaging and outreach strategies to address their unique retention challenges. This includes outreach from: The Center for Student Success, the Office of Undergraduate Admission, and Student Life ([S4_C1_Model Outreach Samples](#)). Starting in 2019, retention meetings were held with all Department Chairs ([S4_C1_Sample Agenda_Use of Predictive Modeling](#)) who oversaw undergraduate majors to review related attrition information and share student risk scores. From there, departments began more intentional ways of engaging at-risk and high-risk students ([S4_C1_Faculty Advisor Protocol](#)) For instance, some departments began sending pre-semester introductions to at-risk and high-risk students while others considered risk categories when assigning academic advisors. Strategies around risk categories continue evolving as evidenced by one academic advisor's fall 2020 plan to engage her at-risk and high-risk students at several high need points (midterm/finals weeks) through the term, to recommend 12 credits (the lowest full-time credit load) for the first semester, and to encourage scheduled tutoring appointments from week one ([S4_C1_Messaging Samples re Use of Model](#)).

The College Student Inventory (CSI) provides the Center for Student Success with valuable data related to students' self-reported characteristics encompassing domains such as academic motivation, general coping, and receptivity to support services ([S4_C1_CSI Student X](#)). (This survey gives student success coordinators an informed point of departure for advising appointments and the provision of support resources and referrals ([S4_C1_CSI Integration and Action Plan](#))). First-semester first-year students review their CSI Life.

The CSI is also a focal point of the previously discussed Foundations for Success program for conditionally admitted students ([S4_C1B_Foundations Admit Letter](#)). Students use the results to identify areas of strength and weakness, as well as learning the campus resources available to address challenge areas. The results are also used in the development of a semester plan--a goal setting and planning exercise reviewed at the students' pre-semester appointment with their student success coordinator ([S4_C1_CSI Integration and Action Plan](#)).

Other freshmen surveys are used to identify students who are career uncertain. Beginning in fall 2018, career-uncertain students are placed in UNIV 101 sections with other undecided students (**S4_C1_Career Uncertain Survey Data**). This cohort model allows for more targeted interventions specific to major and career exploration. This initiative has been and will continue to be assessed as part of the CSS's assessment and strategic planning objectives, as retention of undecided students is a notable challenge (**S4_C1_Planning Objective and Tasks for Undecided**). Early assessment of this initiative shows that Point Park experienced a significant increase in 1st to 2nd year retention of undecided students (**S4_C1_Undecided Retention Trends**).

Since fall 2014, the University has utilized ACT/SAT scores to identify students who demonstrate below standard writing proficiency (i.e., another at-risk population). Students are subsequently registered for composition courses (ENGL 101) and appropriate supplemental writing labs (**S4_C1_ENGL101 Placement Rubric**). They may also be referred by composition instructors based upon an initial writing sample. Direct and indirect assessment data generally has shown significant gains for students enrolled in supplemental writing instruction. Specifically, students who pass their supplemental instruction courses have higher proficiency rates (defined as C or above in ENGL 101) and better overall retention than those who do not take the course with supplemental instruction. (**S4_C1B Supplemental Writing**). As such, the University is in the initial stages of exploration regarding the implementation of supplemental labs for historically challenging math courses.

As mentioned in Standard III, criterion 4, Point Park's tutoring services are fundamental to the academic support of its students. In the 2019- 2020 academic year, Tutoring Services supported 2,021 students through 2,058 appointments. Comprised of both a Writing Center and a comprehensive center focusing on math, science, business, and other content areas, Tutoring Services provides both acute and reoccurring support for students. To better meet the demands of students, tutoring has expanded its services to include virtual options for remote and online students, as well as students with scheduling challenges. The quality of the student's experience with tutoring and writing support is evaluated through a post-session survey (**S4_C1_Post Session Student Survey**) while the tutor's is documented through post-session notes

Supporting college students holistically requires the University to respond to the students' emerging needs. The Center for Student Success and Student Intervention have used student data to inform how it collectively supports students. In addition to Tutoring Services, students are also supported in their academic and personal development by registering with Disability Services. 214 Point Park students representing a range of physical, mental, and cognitive differences registered for academic accommodations during the 2019-2020 academic year (**S4_C1_DS Breakout by Diagnosis**). To improve retention outcomes for students receiving accommodations, a Disability Resource Team was formed. This working group includes the disability services coordinator, tutoring services coordinator, the director of student intervention, the director of the Center for Student Success, and student success coordinators as needed. An outcome of this collaborative effort was the creation and expansion of academic coaching, a service that scaffolds the development of organizational, time management, and study skills. Tutoring Services provided 649 hours of academic coaching to students in the 2019-2020 academic year. The effectiveness of services provided by Disability Services and the Disability Resource Team is demonstrated by

higher first to second year retention rates for those receiving accommodations versus the general student population (**S4_C1_Retention by DS Status**).

In March 2019, a presentation for the American Association of Colleges and Universities outlined how Point Park is leveraging collaborative, data-driven interventions to improve retention outcomes for all learners ([S4_C1 AACU 2019 Presentation](#)). Data collected through FinishLine data demonstrated a need for support in non-content areas, particularly for students receiving academic accommodations. This analysis led to the creation of academic coaching as a service provided through Tutoring Services. The CSS, Student Intervention, and tutoring services are exploring partnerships with faculty in the School of Education to expand academic coaching given the impacts of COVID-19. This intervention will support diverse learners in the transition to HyFlex/hybrid modalities (**S4_C1_Academic Coaching Meeting Notes**).

Additionally, although not inherently an at-risk group, the University provides international students with specific resources to support their learning, success, and graduation from Point Park. The International Student Services and Enrollment (ISSE) is a one point of contact office for international students ([S4_C1C International Students Brochure updated for Fall 2019](#)). Brochures for students and parents/guardians are available in the four most common non-English languages spoken at Point Park, and international students also participate in a common orientation to campus and Pittsburgh ([S4_C1C International Orientation Schedule Fall 2019 & S4_C1 Foreign Language Brochures](#)). Feedback from faculty submitted through FinishLine has brought attention to the unmet needs of English Language Learners (ELL). A working group representing faculty, Athletics, Tutoring Services, the CSS, Alumni Engagement, and ISSE is developing interventions to support the academic and social needs of ELL students. A pilot program was launched in November 2020, pairing education students currently enrolling in EDUC 250 English Language Learners with 13 student-athletes who are non-native speakers (**S4_C1_English Language Learners Pilot**).

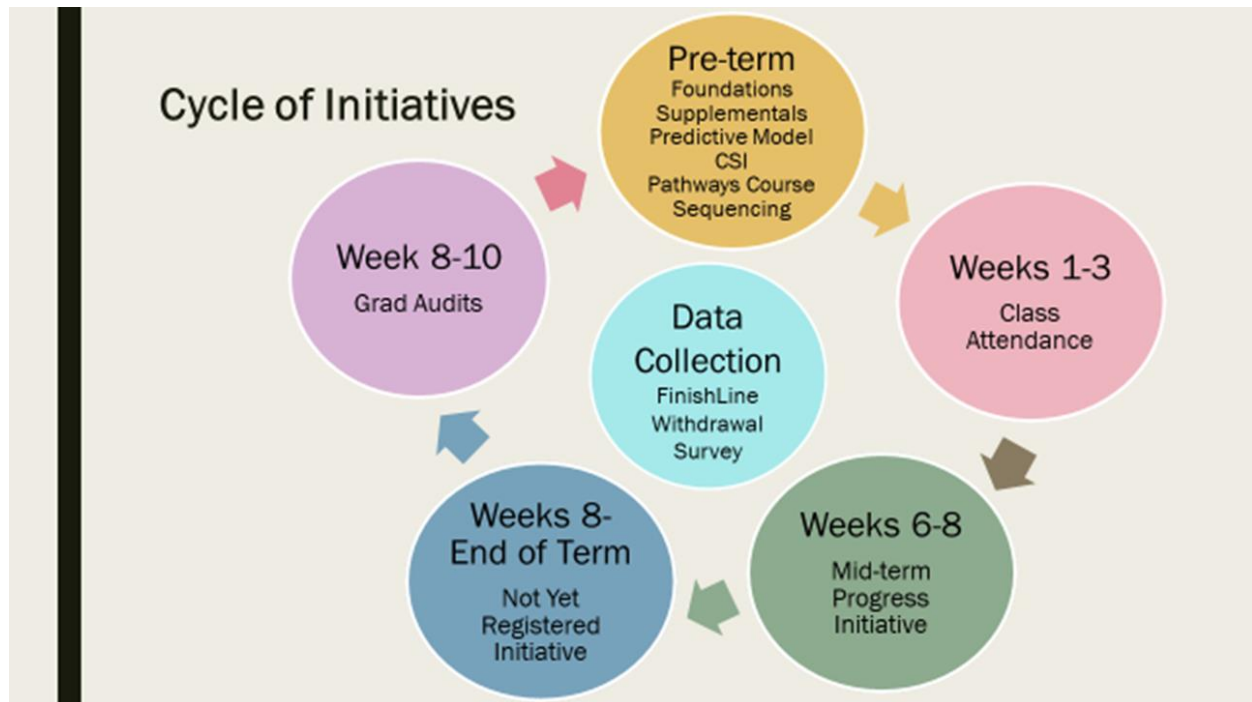
Advising:

In accordance with the Pathways to Success, a guided pathways protocol, undergraduate advising at Point Park is the shared responsibility between the student success coordinator and the faculty advisor (**S4_C1_Pathways to Success Protocol**). Pathways ensures that students are meeting both the curricular and co-curricular milestones associated with student success. Coordinators are responsible for the technical aspects of student registration, course approval, and degree progress (**S4_C1_Sample Course Sequences**) and completion. FinishLine provides coordinators and faculty a shared notes space to document interactions with students. In addition, CSS coordinators utilize the notes function for the documentation of the students' degrees audit, occurring prior to registration for their senior year ([S4_C1C Grad Audit Notes Summary Report](#)). The Office of the Registrar uses this documentation to identify discrepancies in their formal degree audit and subsequent degree conferral ([S4_C1D Registrar Degree Audit notification](#)). Discrepancies are communicated from the Office of the Registrar to the student. Students can track their own degree progress via the course needs function in PointWeb ([S4_C1D PointWeb-Advising](#)).

Retention and Student Intervention

Numerous student success and retention initiatives are overseen by the CSS (Center for Student

Success) and the Office of Student Intervention through the academic year, including FinishLine Predictive Modeling (**S4_C1_Predictive Model Detail**), Foundations of Success, Attendance Tracking (**S4_C1_Class Attendance Summary and Sample Outreach**), Mid-Term Grade Initiative (**S4_C1_Mid-Term Outreach Summary and Sample Alert**), Not-Yet-Registered outreach (**S4_C1_NYR Summary Table Outreach**), Student Success Grant (**S4_C1_Success Grant Rubric and Summary**) and Emergency fund (**S4_C1_Emergency Grant Rubric and Summary**), and the complete withdrawal survey process (**S4_C1_Complete Withdrawal Survey Instrument**).



FinishLine Retention serves as the central repository for documentation related to student advising, outreach initiatives, and interventions. Efforts begin with attendance tracking in the first three weeks of the semester. Recognizing that attendance is a critical determinant of student success, students receive attendance alerts generated through FinishLine ([S4_C1_Attendance Alert](#)). CSS (Center for Student Success) coordinators reach out to students not attending classes, documenting all contacts made with students in the system.

Faculty and staff continue submitting concerns related to student success, both inside and outside of the classroom, through the submission of early alerts. Once submitted, an alert is triaged to the most appropriate person or resource for follow-up. Timely intervention is detailed in FinishLine, providing an arsenal of documentation, patterns of student behavior, and evidence of student support. On average, 1,500 early alerts and more than 2,200 interventions are submitted each fall and spring semester. The fall 2020 semester saw the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in greater activity in FinishLine as demonstrated by the submission of nearly 3,000 early alerts and more than 3,700 interventions.

Faculty are strongly encouraged to submit mid-term grades or progress reports as a critical piece of student retention. All students who receive unsatisfactory mid-term grades receive an automated alert to inform them of their standing. The CSS reaches out to students to ensure sound decisions related to degree progress and are connected to faculty and additional support resources. All outreach attempts and interventions are documented in FinishLine. Through the implementation of new tutoring software, students referred to tutoring services through the mid-term progress initiative can be tracked to assess their use of tutoring services. The initiative's effectiveness also is measured by academic improvement and successful course.

The Center for Student Success concludes the semester with a concerted outreach effort to register students not enrolled for the subsequent term. Data are collected in FinishLine for students indicating they are not intending to return to the institution and their reasons for leaving. This data, in addition to the centralization of the complete withdrawal process and survey in the Center for Student Success helped the University to better understand the reasons students leave Point Park University and make improvements to student supports and programs wherever possible. For instance, complete withdraw (WD) surveys gathered in the fall of 2018 demonstrated a dissatisfaction trend in a specific set of majors (**S4_C1_CW notes and Early Alerts**). After reviewing the data points between FinishLine documentation and complete WD surveys, meetings with the Department Chair and program directors adjusted and improved the student experience.

Two additional examples of institutional change implemented as a result of assessment data collected in FinishLine and complete WD surveys are the creation of the "success grant" (**S4_C1_Success Grant Rubric and Summary**) and the "emergency fund." As students point to financial challenges as barriers to retention, the success grant was developed to support those who were struggling to pay past-due balances. Since 2017, 23 students have been awarded the success grant, and it has significantly contributed to students' ability to remain enrolled. Specifically, 19 of the 23 students (83%) have either graduated or are currently registered. The emergency fund supports students experiencing acute financial need through the release of relatively small dollar amounts (ranging from \$50-\$500) to help cover daily needs— transportation, parking, or utilities.

One notable challenge in student support and retention is the increase of students in need of mental health support services. Point Park University has put significant resources in counseling services, moving from providing counseling services to creating a counseling center (**[S4_C1_UCC Brochure](#)**). Over the past two years, the University has hired a Director and an Assistant Director (both with Ph.D.) to create and run a counseling center (**[S4_C1_UCC Position Descriptions](#)**). Each semester has seen an increase in students participating in these services. Specifically, for the 2019-20 academic year, the University Counseling Center (UCC) provided counseling to 414 students as compared to 302 students for the 2018-19 academic year. Due to COVID 19, the UCC has introduced the addition of tele-therapy. This new service has only been introduced the fall of 2020, and more time will be needed to assess the effectiveness of this tool. Due to COVID 19, the UCC has introduced the addition of tele-therapy. This new service has only been introduced the fall of 2020, and more time is needed to assess tele-therapy's effectiveness.

The UCC provides counseling programs and clinical services to enhance retention and guide students throughout their educational experience. The UCC offers mental health services at no cost

to all enrolled students, providing a confidential environment for students to talk about personal or academic concerns ([S4 C1 PPUCC Policies and Procedures Records Policies & S4 C1 PPUCC records policies](#)). Clinical services for students include consultation, individual psychotherapy, treatment groups, psychological assessment, crisis support, and community referrals. Additionally, the Center offers local and national support resource information via its website.

The UCC conducts periodic assessment of programs supporting the student experience. Clinical services are assessed via reports within its electronic medical records system (Titanium), allowing the Center to monitor demand and utilization statistics for regular review. As a combined training clinic and counseling center, doctoral-level therapists-in-training deliver most clinical services ([S4_C1_ PPUCC Demand for Services Report](#)). Given this structure, the University employs a highly consultative culture of clinical practice and invests significant resources in clinical oversight and supervision. Video-assisted supervision is used for all clinical services provided by doctoral trainees at the UCC and regular assessment of the effectiveness of treatment is employed. Point Park University is currently participating in the JED Campus Program ([S4 C1 JED Campus Description](#)). In its inaugural year, this program entails a visit from the JED Foundation and University -wide strategic planning and ongoing assessment of support services and the well-being of the community at large ([S4 C1 JEDCampusAssessmentBlank](#)). The UCC also conducts assessment for the student wellness training program, surveying instructors and students for feedback ([S4 C1 UCC Survey](#)).

As part of its recognition that cross-departmental input and outreach are necessary to address the web of factors affecting persistence, the University was exploring a “task-force” model of collaborative teams comprised of faculty and staff. These groups will engage populations that have historically proven challenging to retain. The CSS, Student Intervention, and Institutional Research will coordinate initiatives, providing units with data specific to their students. Each task force will be responsible for establishing objectives, designing interventions, and assessing the impact of their efforts on retention ([S4 C1D Retention Committee-Task Force Graphic](#)). Unfortunately, the pandemic and resulting budget pressures have delayed the further development of this idea.

Professional Career Readiness Center

To support Point Park’s mission of professionally focused liberal-arts education, the University provides students and alumni with career guidance through the Professional Career Readiness Center. Ongoing service, through one-on-one appointments, workshops, and in-class presentations help students to build effective resumes, conduct successful interviews, strategically research job markets, and effectively network and market themselves. Assistance with graduate school research and application also is available to students ([S4_C1_How to Graduate Career-Ready_Brochure](#)), ([S4_C1_Career-Readiness_Fact Sheet](#)).

The University also offers and participates in career and internship job fairs on and off campus for both undergraduate and graduate students. Students and alumni have access to Handshake, a job and internship search website that allows users to find and apply for full-time, part-time, and internship postings submitted to the University by a variety of employers ([S4 C1 Handshake](#)).

[Portal & S4 C1 How to find a job on Handshake Info](#).

Starting in 2016, based on market research from the strategic plan, Point Park started the Cooperative Education program within the previously existing Office of Career Development (**[S4 C1 Employer Flyer Cooperative Education Program](#)**). The University's co-op program emphasizes innovative and experiential learning that enables students to gain real- world, full-time, paid work experience while earning up to 12 college credits. The co-op program was piloted in the University's Rowland School of Business (**[S4 C1 Student Information Guide Cooperative Education Program](#)**). After three successful years growing the opportunities for business majors, Point Park now provides co-op opportunities for students in a variety of majors. These co-op opportunities have continued despite the pandemic with students working virtually during the summer of 2020 (**[S4 C1 Spring 2020 Internship- Job Fair, S4 C1 Spring Internship and Job Fair Postcard, S4 C1 Spring Internship Job Fair 2018 Banner.](#)**)

In addition to expanding co-op program opportunities, Point Park redesigned the Office of Career Development to the Office of Career Readiness. In the fall 2019 semester, the University hired its first Director of Career Readiness (**[S4 C1 Director of Career Readiness](#)**). It is the Director's responsibility to overhaul the office to focus on the overall readiness of students to help prepare them for entering the workforce immediately upon graduating from the University (**[S4 C1 Career-Readiness Center About 2019](#)**).

Criterion 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*

Transfer Credits, Credit by Examination, Experiential Credit, and Other Credit-Bearing Experiences

To ensure the integrity of the transfer credit evaluation (TCE) process, the responsibilities shifted from the Office of Admission to the Office of the Registrar since the University's last accreditation. The Director of Articulation and Certification works closely with academic departments on the evaluation of major-specific courses to ensure that students are given credit for all prior courses (**[S4 C2 UG Transfer Policy, S4 C2 UG Transfer Students, S4 C2 Transfer Credits Graduate Level Policy, & S4 C2 Transfer Credits UG AP CLEP IB](#)**). Only those courses applying to the student's degree requirements are credited. Final TCE evaluations then are sent to the student to assist in their admissions decision. Because the Center for Student Success assists transfer students through their registration process, they also serve as a second set of eyes ensuring that all credits are evaluated and are applied appropriately towards the students' degree requirements. The Registrar's office instituted a formal appeal process to allow students to request a re-evaluation of their credits (**[S4 C2 Transfer Appeal Process & S4 C1 Transfer Requirements](#)**).

In the fall of 2020, the Provost convened a working group to assess and ultimately improve the

transfer evaluation process. This group was represented by several offices typically involved in the TCE process: the Registrar's Office, Center for Student Success, Admissions, and Academic Affairs ([S4_C2_TCE_1.29.20_Meeting Notes](#)). The working group examined critical areas around transfer credit evaluations, including relevant policies, length of time to evaluation, faculty input, and communication flow to students. As a result, several improvements were made, such as developing of electronic TCE's, increasing the accuracy of evaluations, decreasing turnaround time when students are informed of the evaluation (from one week to three days), and the developing more student-focused communications regarding their transfer credit evaluation ([S4_C2_Transfer Credit New Student Letter](#)) ([S4_C2_Transfer Mapping Information](#)).

The University has a well-articulated policy concerning its credit by examination policy ([S4_C2_Credit by Examination Website](#)). In cases where a CLEP or AP (Advanced Placement) exam is not available, students can request an examination that grants them the credits for a course ([S4_C2_Experiential Learning Credit](#)). The University *Catalog* explains that experiential credit also is available to students, if they have six Point Park credits (p.59).

Criterion 3: *policies and procedures for the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records*

Safety and Security of Student Records:

Point Park follows FERPA regulations concerning student records and access to them ([S4_C3_ferpfaq & S4_C1 FERPA Policy Student Accounts and Financial Aid](#)). All official University communication is sent to a student's Point Park email, with some exceptions, such as the recent survey to assess the University's response to the pandemic. The University also employs a text messaging service to inform students of important dates, but no student records or information are conveyed. Pages 22-24 in the *Student Handbook* gives more detail on FERPA and other records

The University's policy on the safekeeping and eventual discarding of records can be found at on the University's intranet ([S4_C3 Record Retention and Destruction Policy](#)). In most cases, records are kept for seven years, except for student transcripts, which are kept in perpetuity.

Criterion 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*

Athletics

The University's Athletic Department, under the leadership of the Director of Athletics, regularly reviews rules and regulations related to compliance issues associated with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and the River States Conference. The NAIA publishes an official handbook and policy manual along with ongoing updates. In addition, the Director attends

the annual meetings of the River States Conference and shares rule changes and new bylaw information with the Athletic Department staff.

The Athletic Department monitors the academic progress of each student athlete with the assistance of the Registrar's Office and the Director of Student Intervention ([S4_C4 Athletic Eligibility](#)). In addition, the Faculty Athletic Representative signs off on all eligibility requirements for student athletes. Academic progress of student athletes, including grades and credits earned, is reviewed twice per term to ensure compliance with the mandates of both the NAIA and the River States Conference ([S4_C4_NAIA Policy Handbook](#)).

Since 2010, its last self-study, Point Park has added several varsity sports to the Athletic Department. Currently, there are seven women's sports teams, six men's sports teams, and two coed sports team at the University. In 2020, it added a co-ed varsity e-sports team, one of the first in the region. In addition to varsity programs, the Athletic Department offers junior varsity opportunities in men's and women's basketball, women's soccer, women's volleyball, and men's baseball. The University and the Athletic Department have annually strategic objectives included in the budget, as well as on-going plans to improve the athletic programs at the University. The Athletic Department has an Assistant Director, a Sports Information Director, and athletic trainers on contract from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center ([S4_C4 About Us- Point Park University Athletics](#)).

Office of Student Life:

Created in 2014, the Office of Student Life includes the following areas: Residence Life, Housing and Occupancy Management, Commuter Resources, Student Activities, Involvement, and Leadership (SAIL), Study Abroad, Student Health Services, and the University Counseling Center (UCC) ([S4_C4_Student Life Organization Chart](#)). The Office of Student Life is dedicated to the development and empowerment of the whole student by supporting self-exploration and growth with an emphasis on inclusive communities, accountability, and collaboration.

Student Health Services provides high-quality medical services to students that facilitates personal wellness and encourages self-advocacy. It provides first aid intervention, illness and injury assessment, starter doses of over-the-counter medication, various health screenings, community health referrals, physician, alcohol, and drug education. To ensure students' health needs are met, the University has contracted with a hospital affiliated medical facility to provide comprehensive medical services to Point Park University students. Through the Student Health Center, students are eligible for physician office visits at no charge. Because of COVID 19, the University enlisted the support of UPMC to provide student health services ([S4_C4_UPMC Flow Chart](#)). Point Park has suspended all traditional services within its Health Center and has contracted with UPMC to provide the University with two outside nurses during this pandemic.

Study Abroad is committed to offering students academically sound, credit-bearing international education programs that help develop intercultural competence. The University provides affiliated

programs at the following institutions: Regent's University London, American University of Rome, University of Salford, CSDMA Madrid, and the University of West London (**S4_C4_Regent's College Affiliation Agreement**), (**S4_C4_American University of Rome Contract**), (**S4_C4_University of Salford Articulation Agreement**), (**S4_C4_Communidad de Madrid Affiliation Agreement English Copy**), (**S4_C4_University of West London Study Abroad Agreement**). The Director of Student Life is tasked with helping any student interested in a study abroad opportunity. Knowing that studying abroad takes extensive planning, the Director of Student Life works with students on their application process, meeting with their academic advisor, applying for/renewing their passport, and making travel arrangements. Additionally, the Director of Student Life uses videoconferencing programs to communicate with students while they are abroad and provides opportunities to meet upon their return from their semester abroad to help with re-acclimation. Even with increased attention for students both while abroad and upon returning to the University, the University has not seen an increase in the total number of students requesting to participate in Study Abroad. The underlying causes for this lack of participation will be assessed when the program returns from its COVID-19 suspension.

Student Activities Involvement and Leadership (SAIL) provides opportunity for students to connect to the campus community, develop leadership abilities, and create meaningful college experiences through on-and off-campus programs. Through the Coordinator of Student Involvement, the SAIL office supports more than 40 student organizations affiliated with the University (**S4_C4_Student Organization List**). The office utilizes the software system PointSync to promote the student organizations, provide training materials to the organizations, and publish the Student Org Handbook ([S4_C4_Student Organization Handbook 19-20](#)). The Coordinator also works with each organization and its leaders on yearly transition plans ([S4_C4_Officer Transition Checklist 2019-20](#) & [S4_C4_Leaving a Legacy](#)). In addition to the self-created student organizations, the SAIL office also advises the Campus Activities Board (CAB). CAB is made up completely of students, tasked with providing programs, activities and events to the entire student body. At the direction of the Dean of Student Life, the Director of SAIL's duty is to provide extensive and comprehensive training for CAB. CAB has increased the number of programs each year, providing students with both traditional activities, but also new, diverse programs that fit with the year and needs of our current population ([S4_C4_CAB Review Documents 2017-2019](#)).

Residence Life strives to build inclusive communities, engage students in co-curricular programming, and provide intentional developmental opportunities that foster safe, respectful, accountable, and collaborative environments within the University's five residence halls. Through the support of two Hall Directors and two Assistant Hall Directors, residence life oversees 25 Resident Educators (REs). Residence Life provides one RE per first-year floors and two REs per building for its upper-class buildings (**S4_C4_RE Census Fall 2017-Spring 2020**). The office looks to provide different levels of support depending on one's class year, believing that first-year students need more support as they transition into college.

Commuter Resources serves as a bridge between commuter students and the University community by providing relevant resources. Through the support of the Director of Student Life, the University promotes on-campus resources to encourage the active participation while on

campus. It provides oversight of a designated commuter lounge and serves as a central hub of information and resources for the commuter population. While the Student Life Office made many efforts to serve as the hub for commuter students, the most recent assessment has shown that commuter students are still not familiar with the office and its services ([S4 C4 Commuter Survey Results](#)). As part of its post-pandemic improvement, commuter services will focus its efforts on promoting its services to the commuter population.

Criterion 5: *if applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of student support services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers*

Third party student support services:

The University uses two third-party providers in student enrollment and advising. The K-12 Teachers Alliance (KTA) recruits qualified teachers and administrators for the University's graduate education programs. Its recruiting is supervised by the School of Education to confirm that the quality of applicants is acceptable. Procurement and the Business Office supervise KTA's contract with the University. KTA's contract does not specify a number of applicants nor does KTA receive a fee for each student that applies to the program ([S4_C5_KTA Agreement](#)).

The second third party service is Wiley Learning, formerly The Learning House. Contracted with the University in 2015 to provide enrollment and online advising as the University entered online learning, the University will end its contract with Wiley in 2021. Now that Point Park has a developed online presence, there is no longer a need to have a third party involved with advising or recruiting.

Criterion 6: *periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience*

As demonstrated throughout this Standard, Point Park uses assessment to support students, their learning, and the University mission. All offices in Student Life, Student Affairs, and the Center for Student Success engage in yearly assessment, and these results have led to improvements both large and small. Some examples:

- More robust student mental health services. Students indicated in 2018 and 2019 that the University needed to increase access to counseling and other health services.
- The revision of the first-year orientation to a weeklong experience.
- The expansion of the University's co-op experience.
- The use of early alert systems to provide interventions for students facing classroom or out-of-classroom challenges.

In addition, the internal auditors for Point Park (Schneider Downs) formally reviews admissions, enrollment, and retention as part of its scheduled audit plan. The most recent assessment of these areas was conducted in 2018 and included a thorough analysis of the effectiveness of these functions, as well as a set of recommendations for improvement ([S4 C6 Admissions, Enrollment and Retention Final Report](#)). For example, the audit firm recommended that the University complete an assessment of the Office of Student Intervention in order to assist with the workload and the monitoring and closing of early alerts in the FinishLine system. The action plan

created by the Director of Student Intervention addressed this in the short term by collaborating with a local institution to utilize graduate student interns in Higher Education Management Programs to specifically work with early alerts (**S4_C6 Intervention Action Plan**). This initiative will be assessed to determine its effectiveness moving forward.

As demonstrated throughout Standard IV, Point Park is intensely committed to serving its students. From its weeklong orientation process to its tutoring to its co-op opportunities, the University strives to provide all students with opportunities to grow as students and people. Point Park's emphasis on assessment and data-informed decision-making has led to several improvements in processes and policies. Through its holistic approach to student success, the University satisfies the criteria for Standard IV, as well as Requirements for Affiliation 8, 9, and 10.

Innovations and Developments:

- The use of data to inform the Center for Student Success supports various learners. Using aggregator sources such as FinishLine, the CSS can provide a range of academic and academic-adjacent services.
- The development of the Emergency Fund to support students with micro-grants and loans. In many cases, these funds can be dispersed to students in under 48 hours.
- The creation of academic coaches to help with executive and time management, in addition to content areas.
- The continued growth of the University's co-op program.

Areas for Improvement:

- Although the creation of the UCC provides much-needed mental health services, Point Park will need to develop sustainable models for student mental health in general.
- The University's study-abroad program and commuter resources remain under used.
- Weeklong orientation for first-year students is only in its second year, and assessment data on its strengths and weaknesses have not been longitudinally gathered.



STANDARD V: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT

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.

At the core of its mission, Point Park University prepares graduates to apply their knowledge to achieve their personal goals, advance their professions, and serve their communities. The University strives to provide coherent structures for the application of knowledge through distinctive, innovative, and experiential learning. It works towards continuous improvement through a series of formal and informal assessments that are appropriate for its size, its faculty, and its students. In its assessment strategy that stems from its strategic plan and culture of improvement based on assessment, Point Park satisfies Requirements of Affiliation 8, 9, and 10.

As a result of the University's last 2010-2011 Self-Study, and other internal assessment activities, administration and faculty found that course-level assessment was not ensuring that students had accomplished educational goals. In 2016, the University re-designed its assessment office; in 2017, it hired a new Assistant Provost for Curriculum, Assessment, and Accreditation and a new Assessment Coordinator, later forming the Center for Inclusive Excellence (CIE), to more effectively measure and meet its educational goals (**S5_C1_ HR1 Tracker**). As this standard indicates, substantial progress has been made in developing a coherent assessment culture across academic departments, Schools, and degree levels.

Criterion 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 institutions mission.*

One of Point Park's strategic initiatives is Academic Excellence; within this initiative of Academic Excellence are measurable goals for student learning and a consistent effort to assess and improve this learning (**S5_C1_Strategic Planning Academic Goals**). As mentioned above, with few exceptions, the University's program objectives are clear, assessable, and support its mission. Program objectives are in the University Catalog, usually immediately after the introduction of major or program, and on Degree Requirement sheets that are available to students in PointWeb ([S5_C1 Graduate catalog 2018- 2019](#), [S5_C1 Undergraduate Catalog 2018-2019](#)). One of the findings of the Self-Study is program chairs and heads of departments were not always cognizant of the importance in having assessable objectives. The Center for Inclusive Excellence and the Faculty Assembly continue to work together, and with both the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and Graduate Curriculum Committee to ensure that new program proposals and curriculum alignment maps meet Middle States standards. In the Rowland School of Business, IACBE (International Accreditation Council for Business Education) requires that all accredited program outcomes must map to all five of the School's broad-based learning goals, and six of the eight IACBE Key Learning Objectives (**S5_C1_RSBUS Assessment Plan 2019-2022**).

Criterion 2: *organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty and/or appropriate professionals, evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/program goals*

As described previously, Point Park University has a comprehensive assessment plan designed to evaluate student achievement of institutional and program goals. The most recent assessment plan has been deployed over the past five years and is proving to be an organized and sustainable process to meet assessment and educational goals for the University CORE curriculum (general education), and individual programs (majors). Online offerings are housed in on-campus departments, and are, therefore, assessed within the broader, University -wide structure. These robust assessment structures are reflective of the University satisfying Requirements of Affiliation 8 and 9. Currently, we have found that artifacts from online offerings are not always being used in assessment structures, and we are taking steps to fix these issues ([S5 C2 University Assessment Tracking 6.30.30](#)).

Point Park's assessment plan tasks three University stakeholders with assessing curriculum:

1. The CORE curriculum is assessed by the Faculty Assembly's Core Outcomes Assessment Committee (COAC). This Committee is made up of tenured and tenure-track faculty members teaching in a variety of disciplines and familiar with the general education core. COAC's mission also is discussed in Standard III ([S5 C2 University Assessment Tracking 6.30.30](#)).
2. Each program's faculty undertakes the assessment of at least one program objective each year. Faculty are empowered to "close the (assessment) loop" by analyzing assessment data and using it to make changes to increase educational effectiveness. For example, Point Park's BA (Bachelor of Arts) in History has five program objectives, encapsulating a variety of higher order thinking skills. In 2018, embedded test questions and a rubric were used to score how well students could explain causes/correlations of an historical event [direct measure]. Additionally, a student focus group answered questions about history and their participation in it [indirect measure]. After the assessments are gathered, specific recommendations are made to the faculty about including more low-stakes analysis into pedagogy and other faculty development opportunities. The documentation then is passed along to the Assistant Provost.
3. Department Chairs & Program Heads were tasked with completing a five-year program review using curricular, student/alumni data, and external reviewers intended to tie assessment to the allocation of resources. However, because of the full-time faculty 2017 Collective Bargaining Agreement, the faculty committee overseeing five-year program review was disbanded, as oversight in program review was deemed to be a management responsibility, and several members of the committee were not Chairs. As such, the program review process was put on hiatus for a year until a more equitable arrangement could be made. In 2019, after consulting with Deans, the Center for Inclusive Excellence drafted a six-year program review model, designed to reduce the work expected to be done by the program director or Chair. This new program review has been piloted in the School

of Communication ([S5 C2 Program Review Data Packet Journalism](#)).

The six-year program review begins with providing a data packet to programs containing prepared data from multiple University departments, including: faculty counts and credentials, program curriculum, student learning assessment from past six years, program budget (if available), student headcount, FTE, graduations rates, retention rates, and demographics. Once provided to the program director or Chair, this information can be used to extrapolate resource needs, innovation plans and curriculum modifications ([S5 C5 Standard 5 Memo RE Program Review](#)). A new standard operating procedure was developed to introduce a streamlined program review process with the goal of making the process simple for faculty ([S5 C2 Program Review Mission & SOPs](#)).

The development and successful implementation of the Planning, Assessment & Resource Allocation (PARA) process contributed to refocusing the purpose of Program Review for the benefit of needed resource investment and revenue potential. A pilot for a four-year program review was initiated in the 2019/2020 Academic Year for the undergraduate Journalism Bachelor of Arts (see the Program Review Mission & SOPs). The review is an exemplary example of the potential for an administration- managed, faculty-prepared program review process, complete with an external review of the program faculty, curriculum, outcomes, assessment practices, available facilities, student body demographics and work. After consulting with Deans and chairs, Point Park decided to move to a six-year program review cycle, allowing programs to see students from enrollment to graduation.

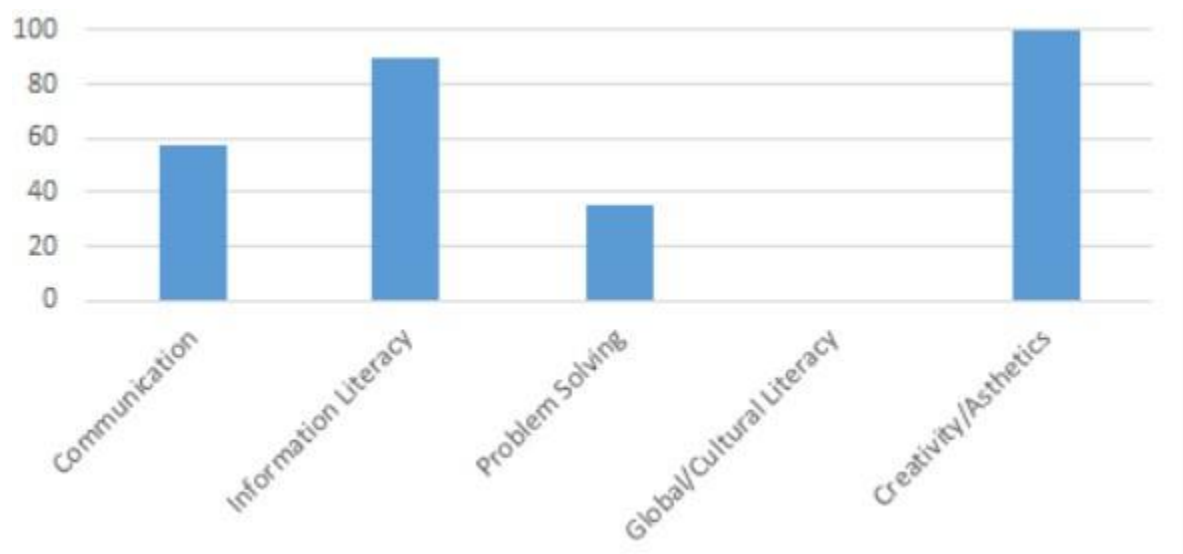
One recommendation from external review is that more complete program budget information be made available. Currently, department budgets are not stratified by program- expense. As resource allocation is an integral part of University management and of high interest to the University faculty, this oversight of specific program budget data provides room for improvement to the new four-year Program Review process. The CIE presented this six-year model to University deans in the fall of 2020/2021 Academic Year and initiated a new cycle of programs for review, while continuing to accept external accreditation as a means of satisfying internal Program Review requirements.

Several University programs are accredited by professional accreditors. These programs are asked to submit their yearly assessment data to the University for collection and tracking purposes but are not required to complete additional portions of the University assessment plan. As of the Fall 2020 semester, the Bachelor of Sciences degrees in Electrical and Mechanical Engineering were granted accreditation by ABET. The Psy.D. program was accredited on contingency by the A.P.A (American Psychological Association). The Rowland School of Business also underwent a successful IACBE re-accreditation visit in the Fall of 2020.

1. CORE curriculum COAC (Core Outcomes Assessment Committee)

The CORE assessment plan requires the assessment of one CORE objective each year from a variety of artifacts collected from courses in the following “themes”: Explore the World, Investigate Mathematics, Investigate Science, Apply and Appreciate the Arts, Interpret Creative Works, Understand People, Succeed in Business, and Discover Technology. CORE courses are taught by numerous departments in the University; therefore, artifacts are requested from departments at some point in the assessment cycle.

As of the 2018-19 school year, COAC completed its first round of assessment of each CORE theme and is currently assessing its assessment measures (see Criteria 5). Additionally, starting in 2018, all program capstone courses are submitted for Capstone assessment to COAC to ensure CORE outcomes are being taught throughout the curriculum. As described in Standard III and in the chart below, assessment of these CORE courses showed that a range of student achievement.



100% of students achieved at least “introductory” competency in creative and aesthetics, leading the COAC committee to question the rubric and scoring of these artifacts. Additionally, Global/Cultural literacy was too broad a topic to accurately score. After their year-long assessment of the CORE assessment plan, COAC recommended the following:

- That oversight be implemented/Director of the CORE be re-instated.
- **Rationale:** Currently, COAC is doing assessment for assessment sake. Assessment data and recommendations are being communicated to Department Chairs, but it would be helpful to have an administrator responsible for following up with departments and 'closing the loop.'"
- That the CIE provide a procedure for informing all instructors teaching in the CORE each semester, and that CORE courses list the CORE objectives of their theme in addition to the course objectives on syllabi.

- **Rationale:** By sending a semester email, and asking instructors to include CORE theme objectives, Point Park increases knowledge of its CORE theme outcomes and its responsibility to CORE classes.
- That a full-time faculty member “oversees” CORE courses for alignment purposes to ensure continuity between adjunct instructors and to collect artifacts over time as part of their University service.
- **Rationale:** For the CORE courses that are taught exclusively or mostly by adjuncts, it would be helpful to establish a point person to provide consistency for assessment purposes.
- Instead of asking for artifacts from all courses in a theme, a sample course will be surveyed from all representative departments. Each course instructor will be asked to submit syllabi and artifacts showing alignment with course and CORE objectives for review (similar to capstone assessment). Capstone assessment will be ongoing.
- **Rationale:** Currently, assessment practice provides no way to close the loop on assessment recommendations, nor does it provide recommendations in a timely enough fashion to measure “closing the loop” effectively (recommendations are currently given every eight or nine years).

2. Annual Program Assessment

The University’s Annual Program Assessment process seeks to ensure program objectives are met consistently in every student. In the majority of programs, the University has increased its annual assessment over the last nine years. For example, the Criminal Justice program increased its annual assessment from 50% in 2011 to 100% in 2018. Literary Arts moved from 60% to 100% starting four years ago. The increase can be attributed to several changes made by the CIE over the past three years. The CIE created an online submission form and allows departments under Professional Accreditation to submit assessment results in whatever way their Accreditor requires to prevent a duplication of work (**S5_C1_RSBUS Assessment Plan 2019-2022**). There also are programs with low response rates: interdisciplinary studies has been zero over the last four years, as has Master’s programs in intelligence studies. Certain programs, such as social justice studies, are new and have had little chance to gather meaningful assessment data. Other programs with low response rates, such as psychology, were focused on achieving contingent APA (American Psychological Association) accreditation for the Psy.D. program. Programs with limited historical response rates have been identified and remediation and training opportunities are available. The chairs and Deans of these programs also are working with the Coordinator of Assessment to target courses and faculty likely to be leaders in assessment and improvement.

As part of the Self-Study process, Standard 5 committee members identified three challenges. First, it found that course alignment to program objectives in programs with an outside accreditor are strong. In the remaining departments, course alignment was often done in an indirect way and alignments had drifted due to little changes made over the years. Therefore, the committee asked programs to show direct evidence of course alignment to ensure program proficiency as part of the Middle States Self-Study process

Second, the committee found further checks and balances must be added to the curriculum process. The University believes faculty should drive the curriculum, and faculty are encouraged to develop dynamic curriculum for today's professional landscape. With this encouragement, the curriculum process began fielding more and more curriculum change requests. The changes being made to program curriculum makes it difficult to get a clear picture from assessment data and is not a sustainable process.

Third, additional support must be given to the HSS department. HSS has been restructured twice in the last eight years. In both restructurings, the primary faculty fluent in assessment have left the department. As such, HSS has no faculty fluent and willing to spearhead its assessment protocols and is falling behind in this area. This is affecting both the department's programs and the University CORE. However, with the chair's backing, two new faculty members have been identified to lead assessment and improvement activities in the fall 2021 semester.

3. Other Forms of Assessment

The University also utilizes student course evaluations, alumni surveys, and student surveys as assessment instruments. As mentioned in Standard III, Point Park uses NSSE data to track students' perceived sense of engagement with Point Park, how much writing they do, and their interactions with diverse peers, to name a few. Given Point Park's mission to serve a diverse population, NSSE data from 2015 and 2017 show a slight overall increase (.7%) in classroom discussions that included diverse viewpoints for first- year students, along with .2% increase for seniors. Looking at these figures in comparison to Point Park's Middle States and Carnegie peers, a fuller picture develops. For first-year students, the 56% of students is 4% higher than Point Park's MS peer group. Another survey question connected to diversity ["Tried to better understand someone's views by imagining a how an issue looks from their perspective"] showed 78% of first- year students had experienced this in a classroom, 12% above MS peers.

At the same time, the NSSE data show the University scoring less than its MS peers on collaborative learning. In 2015, roughly 28% of seniors indicated they took a course that emphasized collaboration; this number rose slightly in 2017 to 30.1%. First-year students saw a small decline (30.3 in 2015 to 29.9 in 2017). Given the collaborative nature of many Point Park majors, this deficiency needs to be addressed in curricular and pedagogical ways. The SAEM program has already increased its emphasis on team learning in its capstone course, and University 101, which all first-year students take, mandates a collaborative poster presentation.

Additionally, each department either uses or is beginning to implement student and alumni surveys to both collect additional indirect assessment data and share the results with the learning and alumni community.

Criterion 3: *consideration and use of assessment results for the improvement of educational effectiveness*

As evidenced in the University's 2001 Self-Study, assessment activities now have a 20-year history at Point Park. The following examples, from a variety of schools, show how the University

has worked to create a consistent culture of assessment practice, and, in doing so, satisfies Requirement of Affiliation 9. In addition, many of these programs have integrated goals from school or departmental strategic planning to coordinate assessment activities with curricular improvement, satisfying Requirement of Affiliation 10.

Use of recent assessment has resulted in improving educational effectiveness. A year-end assessment report summarizes all assessment results, which include the achievements in the following Standard 5 sub criterion **S5_C3_Assessment of Student Learning_2019-2020**.

a. Assisting Students in Improving Their Learning;

Previous years' assessment found the College Composition faculty were more likely to comment on sentence-level mechanics and less on topic selection, thesis development, and other higher-order concerns; additionally, faculty comments were more often negative than positive and that few instructors provided end note commentary for improvement. To use portfolios as a critical opportunity to learn, program leadership revisited the importance of establishing a hierarchy of concerns in commentary and offering substantive feedback. This re-adjustment immediately improved student learning. In the 2019 assessment of College Composition, evaluators found students more engaged with topic selections, understanding audience, and a more nuanced understanding of research.

The 2019-2020 assessment of the BFA in Animation found that students in DIGI 220 were less interested in stop-motion animation than expected. Thanks to this assessment, more emphasis on intellectually challenging animation types has been recommended. Additionally, because this course is taken early in a student's career, animation forms that more deeply challenge the students promote interest in the major.

b. Improving Pedagogy and Curriculum;

Point Park's BFA in Acting rewrote the voice and speech curriculum and approved it as a five-semester sequence because of directly measuring learned skills and student survey results. Following best practices in assessment, Theater Production considered any rubric score on students' work or student self-reflection below an 80% a point for pedagogical change or reinforcement. After scoring Communications Ethics course rubrics and pre/posttests, two concerns were apparent: (1) due to a lack of assessable projects, individual major breakdowns were not possible and (2) there was a significant difference in grading between FT instructors and PT instructors, with the former grading much lower than the PT instructors' grades. As ways to mitigate these concerns, the data gathering process was refined, the grading disparity was addressed, effective portfolio scoring practices were revised and as part of curriculum review, the program may consider standardizing these courses with a primary syllabus.

After completing assessment of Intelligence Studies INTL 102, two curriculum revisions were suggested: (1) that ethical and legal issues concerning national security are covered in a later course and (2) their emphasis in this course can be reduced. In its place, more content in the areas of technology and intelligence collection was recommended. Similarly, both indirect and direct

assessment of the capstone course in Business Management demonstrated a lack of retention of accounting and finance content. In addition to curricular changes reinforce this content earlier in the semester, there also is an effort to develop a more holistic business lens for students.

In the 2019-20 assessment of Business Management 481, a capstone course, two important curricular changes are scheduled because of recent assessment. The first is students did not demonstrate a retention of accounting or finance principles. Second, students lacked a holistic lens through which to see the course. Faculty recommend that more intentional efforts to link the course with experiential learning and co-op opportunities.

c. Reviewing and Revising Academic Programs and Support Services;

The most robust use of assessment in NSET is the Engineering program's provisional accreditation through ABET. Faculty were asked to provide longitudinal assessment data to confirm that students take rigorous courses and perform well in these courses. Two components of structural engineering -transportation and construction— fell beneath Point Park's goal with no components falling beneath the ABET action line (**S5_C3_CET_2019_Structures Assessment Report**). Because of these relative weaknesses in transportation and construction, a construction management course is planned to be part of the curriculum for the Civil Engineering Technology in 2021.

d. Planning, Conducting, and Supporting a Range of Professional Development Activities;

Forensic Science students are required to judge their peers' presentations as indirect method of assessment, however, after review of the scores it was determined that a better method of scoring student projects may be to invite past students to complete the peer evaluations. This would provide a professional development opportunity for the past students and more critical review of projects for the current students.

The Psychology Department evaluated poster presentations as part of their undergraduate research symposium. Using the APA presentation rubric, faculty assessed 19 students: all 19 students scored satisfactory or higher on the rubric. Students are encouraged to continue to develop presentation skills as part of their professional development.

e. Planning and Budgeting for the Provision of Academic Programs and Services;

It was determined because of assessment that the Dance department required drums for the students in West African Dance courses to use. A purchase request through the Chair was made to invest in the program.

f. Informing appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs;

An indirect method of assessment in SAEM 480 was rubrics given to alumni that asked them to indicate level of preparation in five areas: diversity/social responsibility, communication, research, problem solving, and ethics. Of 43 alumni, 88% of alumni felt the program met standard on diversity and social responsibility, 95% on ethical decision making, 92% in communication, 88% in problem solving, and 95% in ethical decision making. A recommendation made based on these results is that SAEM should include more cases and other activities that develop student problem-

solving skills earlier in the program (**S5_C3_SAEM Alumni Survey 2017-18**). Improving key indicators of student success, such as retention, graduation, transfer, and placement rates; in 2017, after examining their first- to- second year retention rates, the Cinema department revised its curriculum and subdivided its majors into a BFA in Cinema Production and a BA in Cinema and Media Studies. Recognizing the time and talent demands of a traditional BFA, the Department introduced a 120-credit BA in Cinema and Media Studies in 2018 to engage students who had a passion for film but could not successfully complete a BFA.

g. Implementing other processes and procedures designed to improve educational programs and services;

To maintain consistency among the 30-40 sections of University 101 classes, the Department of Community Engagement introduced a module system of assignments into the LMS in 2019 with a common grading standard (**S5_C3_UNIV 101_Schoolology Modules**).

The committee found that while the University has begun to create a consistent culture where assessment of program objectives is a standard practice, the University must now focus its efforts on having departments “close the loop” and report their results to the appropriate stakeholders in a more consistent manner. Discussed in more detail in Criterion 5, a more intuitive online form for reporting assessment activities, results, and follow-up is one link in this communication chain, as is the creation of regular calendar for reporting dates.

Criterion 4: *if applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of assessment services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers.*

As mentioned in Standards III and IV, the University has third-party providers to recruit students and provide advising for externally designed online courses. Neither of these parties teaches classes or assesses students.

Criterion 5: *periodic assessment of the effectiveness of assessment processes utilized by the institution for the improvement of educational effectiveness*

As the University consistently builds on its a culture of assessment and works towards having every implement effective change, there remain programs that are not at the point where assessing their assessment practices is practical. In those programs with a cohesive assessment practice, changes have been made to make assessment a more useful practice. For example, in the Literary and Social Justice Studies department, their work in the first-year composition area is a separate assessment from that of their majors, and their creative writing major must use longitudinal assessment rather than the yearly assessment protocol used by the University.

Prior to the Fall of 2017, University Assessment & Student Learning Assessment has been managed through a paper format, tracking the outcomes or objectives measured, resources required for improvement and methods for communicating results. The paper forms were cumbersome to organize and made reporting University -wide results difficult. A renewed focus on assessment has resulted in changes to assessment process to assure that assessment is functional and effective

for academic and non- academic constituents, alike ([S5 C5 Standard 5 Memo RE \(Resident Educators\) Assessment of the Assessment Process](#)).

Beginning with the 2017/2018 Academic Year, Microsoft Forms was implemented as a method of collecting all Student Learning and University Assessment plans and results. While some programs opted to complete assessment within the perimeters of their external accreditation, most programs completed assessment using the Microsoft Forms process.

Microsoft Forms simplified the method of assessment, asking six questions in the plan and five questions in the results form. Faculty and staff participants' initial general response was positive. Questions were added to the Student Learning Assessment Plan form in the 2019/2020 Academic Year to allow for more than one faculty participant to be identified. The Student Learning Assessment Results form for the 2019/2020 Academic Year was updated to include the following questions:

- Did you have to change your planned methods of assessment because of the University move to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic? *The University is assessing its response to COVID-19. Please note, we may reach out to select faculty for additional detail regarding how the pandemic may have affected their Student Learning Assessment process.*
- What resources are needed? *Resources can include, but are not limited to additional personnel, increased financial resources, new or additional technology, and increased or upgraded facilities.*
- Have you (or your Chair) requested additional resources through the PARA process (Planning, Assessment & Resource Allocation) based on this assessment?
- The above questions were added due to the need to 1) identify if and how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected University assessment processes and 2) tie academic program assessment to the University resource allocation process (PARA). Faculty are encouraged to communicate resource needs with their Chair so that participation in the PARA process grows. It is one of the goals of PARA to identify areas where additional resources will have a positive impact on student learning outcomes.

In addition to general changes to the Microsoft Forms in 2019/2020, the Rowland School of Business designed a new template for Student Learning Assessment, which aligned with their specific IACBE requirements of accreditation.

Additional training was provided to University staff preceding the 2019/2020 Academic Year and all University assessment was officially entered into the Assessment module of SPOL. While staff response has been generally positive regarding the use of the SPOL Assessment Module for University Assessment, improvements need to be made to the methodology of implementing two direct or one direct and one indirect methods of measurement. Additional direction will be provided for the 2020/2021 Academic Year. Additionally, staff participants will be asked to “close the loop” concerning their 2019/2020 University Assessment results.

Another new resource the CIE has put together to assist in academic assessment across disciplines

is the Guide to the Assessment of Student Learning. This guide provides examples of direct and indirect assessment measurements, commonly used terms, discipline-specific assessment ideas, and examples from previous Point Park assessments. First used in the University's IACBE Self-Study, this document should be a reliable guide to future assessment activities ([S5 C5 Guide to Assessment](#)).

In assessing the CORE assessment practice, the committee realized that the submission of artifacts was voluntary and yielded small sample sizes of artifacts by which to assess the CORE. After completing one cycle of CORE objective assessment, COAC asked for, and received permission, to take a year to assess its assessment practices. The committee found the following:

1. Many CORE courses are taught by part-time instructors, and these instructors are occasionally unaware they are teaching CORE courses. While course objectives are aligned to CORE outcomes, instructors do not always know what thematic area the course is in, nor what the CORE outcomes for that area are.
2. The sample size currently not large enough.
3. Some courses are misaligned within the CORE.

As seen in Criterion 3, the University has made a range of curricular, pedagogical, and programmatic improvements based on consistent assessment. From adding content to a capstone business course to creating a new major to increasing the rigor of graduate dissertations, the ability to plan, assess, and revise remains a central part of Point Park's continuing improvement.

In terms of University assessment, assessment review has revealed that five-year program review should become six-year program review. Further, all departments with online course offerings must assess artifacts from online sections in the same percentage as occurs across semester offerings. By assessing its assessment practices, the University has been able to implement changes which will yield better results.

The last eight years have been profitable in creating a consistent culture of assessment throughout the University. Overall, faculty is engaged, and administration is working to provide structures to make the process effective. The University has been successful in creating a culture where assessment is being done by faculty on a consistent basis and these assessment activities have led to improvements in learning and student success. In this way, the University has satisfied the Requirements of Affiliation 8, 9, and 10.

The University is working to have higher rates of using the assessment information to make quality changes to curriculum, as well as closing the gaps in assessment information collection. Currently, some faculty are making changes to curriculum based on informal assessment rather than formal assessment. In the Rowland School of Business, curriculum changes are made based on assessment. Therefore, the administration will use the next cycle to work towards a culture of documented data-driven change.

Innovations and Developments:

- Overall, courses of study are communicated clearly, and well-aligned for successful completion of program objectives.
- A plan for assessment of all facets of curriculum was implemented on a reasonable timeline, and a culture of assessment is being created within departments.
- Assessment from stakeholders is happening at a higher rate across the University. Faculty are engaged and working to make effective changes to curriculum to improve student learning and success.

Areas for Improvement:

- Continued efforts towards the collection of continual improvement data, graduate information, and oversight of yearly compliance.
- The University needs a more formalized curriculum process, using assessment data to drive change.
- The University should create structures to ensure inclusion of online course data in program and CORE assessment reviews.
- The University should provide further training to faculty to formalize informal assessment practices.



STANDARD VI: PLANNING, RESOURCES AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The institution's planning process, 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.

As Point Park University navigates the challenging higher education market with declining student demographics and the effects of a global pandemic, the University works to ensure that Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Improvement support the mission and strategic plan of the University. In this identification, execution, and assessment of the institutional priorities, Point Park meets Requirements for Affiliation 10 and 11, as well as engaging with Standard VI's necessary criteria.

Criterion 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*

Point Park University strives to continually meet the University's Mission through its five-year strategic plan (2016 – 2021). The results of the most recent planning process included a reaffirmation of the Mission Statement at the time, an enhanced Vision Statement, and a reaffirmation of the four Strategic Initiatives. The University's mission is supported by the four strategic initiatives, which provide direction and guidance to the University. The four strategic initiatives are Academic Excellence, Quality Student Experience, Managed Resources, and Community Engagement (See Standard I for more). Another outcome of this Strategic Planning process was the Board of Trustees committee re-structuring. There are now four strategic initiative committees of the Board that meet semiannually to review annual progress toward overall completion of the Strategic Plan.

Supporting the four strategic initiatives are broad-based goals developed by the University prior to the approval of each five-year plan. Goal development is an inclusive process, occurring at the institutional, unit, and program level. Last undertaken as part of the development of the current strategic plan (2016-2021), the final goals were based on the results of a comprehensive SWOT analysis, environmental scan, and student focus groups from late 2014 to 2015. In addition, as part of this process, the President discussed with the University Community the market pressure bearing down on small and mid-size, private higher education with projections that some percent of these schools ceases to exist over the next decade (**S6_C1_Good Buy_Good Value Segmentation and Trends**). For the University's current Strategic Plan, goal development focused on positioning the University to thrive in a market with a shrinking high school demographic and a national discussion about the cost, value, and relevance of a college degree.

The final set of goals were based on the results of a comprehensive SWOT analysis and environmental scan from late 2014 through 2015 and approved by the Board of Trustees in April 2016 ([S6 C1 Strategic Plan Development Documentation](#)). One outcome of this process: market research conducted to inform the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan identified a niche opportunity with the creation of an undergraduate cooperative education (co-op) program. After benchmarking other co-op programs, the program was created as a three-year pilot in the Rowland School of

Business (**S1_C2_Updated Career Services Brochure**). Students successfully completed the co-op program during the three-year pilot with a post-graduate employment rate of nearly 100% (**S6_C1_Co-op Data**) (**S6_C1_Performance Evaluation_Student and Employer_Experiential Learning**). Based on this success, the University expanded the co-op program to all schools and all majors. Point Park is in the fifth year of offering the co-op program. The co-op program is described in more detail in Standard IV.

The planning process's next step requires each department and unit area to construct objectives corresponding closely to the goals. The objectives are integrated into the Annual Operating Plan (AOP), helping the University determine, which goals are accomplished at the end of the five-year cycle. The Annual Operating Plan spans each academic year (September 1 through August 31) and includes the objectives and tasks that departments undertake to help Point Park accomplish long-range goals and further the mission of the University (**S6_C1_All Dashboard Objectives 2021**).

Objectives are developed using the SMART methodology to ensure that they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound. Objectives contain key elements that allow for progress monitoring and accountability that include:

- Intended Results --- The outcomes that are expected as a result of accomplishing an objective
- Assessment Measures – The tools and methods used to measure the outcomes
- Actual Results --- The outcomes that actually occurred at the end of the planning year
- Use of Results --- The extent to which the results are used for continuous improvement
- Gap Analysis --- The difference between intended results and actual results

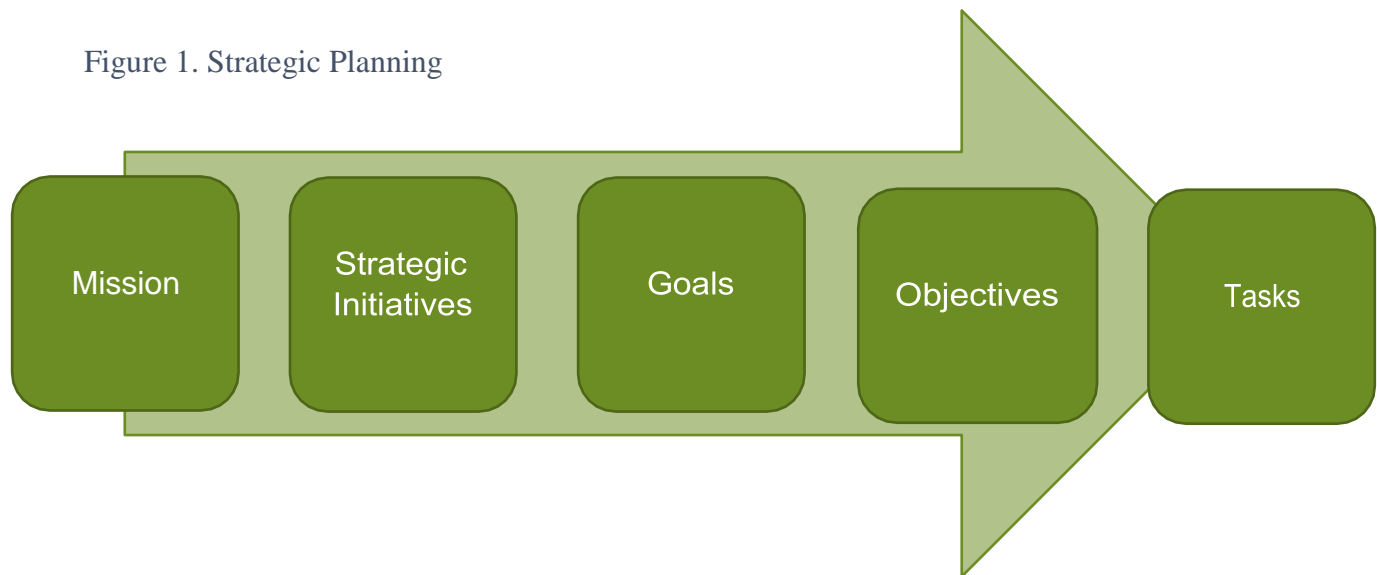
Finally, each objective has associated tasks that contain information about the specific actions needed to occur to accomplish the objective ([S6_C1_SPOL Examples](#)).

Specifically, tasks:

- have specific start, due and completion dates
- have costs associated with them and the funding of those tasks must be approved by planning unit/budget managers.
- can be assigned to any individuals or units within the University.
- and their progress are tracked through regular status updates (quarterly)

As shown in Figure 1, Point Park’s strategic planning process is designed to be straightforward, inclusive, and understandable to all members of the University community.

Figure 1. Strategic Planning



Tasks and objectives are updated regularly by the departments and tracked in a strategic planning software system -Strategic Planning Online (SPOL.) Dashboards generated from this system, which provide an update on the goals, objectives and tasks, are reviewed at the semi-annual strategic initiative Board subcommittee meetings. At the planning year’s end, a final dashboard gap analysis is presented, showing the difference between planned objectives and completed objectives. Most recently, the gap analysis for 2019-20 shows a 76% completion rate for objectives and a 67% completion rate for tasks (**S6_C1_Gap Analysis Draft**).

Each summer, planning units begin formulating objectives and tasks for the upcoming planning year, beginning on September 1st. New objectives are reviewed and approved by higher level planning unit managers. Point Park is currently in the last year of its 5-year strategic plan. Under normal circumstances, the University would be conducting assessment and planning activities to prepare for the 5-year strategic plan. However, in light of the current circumstances related to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Point Park's Board of Trustees extended the current strategic plan to 2022.

PARA - Linking three crucial elements

The incorporation of new objectives into the annual operating plan is most often an extension of the Planning, Assessment, and Resource Allocation (PARA) process. PARA promotes the University’s Strategic Plan by coordinating a transparent resource allocation process through an equitable prioritization of new objectives. It also ensures that University resources are committed to those activities that are tied to the University mission ([S6 C1 PARA Mission & SOPs June 2019](#)).

Instituted in 2017, the PARA committee originally was composed of key members of the University familiar with strategic planning, assessment, and finance. Due to responses collected as part of annual assessment, additional representatives from faculty and staff were added to the committee in 2019 to assure that the scoring of proposals demonstrates values important to all facets of the University ([S6 C1 PARA Evaluation June 2019 & S6 C1 PARA Survey Data 2019-2020](#)). In 2017, the PARA committee encouraged proposals for all intended objectives for the forthcoming academic year, regardless of resource need. Increased participation has resulted in limiting PARA submissions to only those proposals that require additional internal resources. While only 15 and 23 requests were submitted for funding in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, respectively, 51 requests were processed by the PARA committee for potential funding in the 2020-2021 academic year. Also new in the 2020 cycle, requests for replacing existing equipment or refurbishing a currently used space are diverted from PARA into a Capital and Asset Planning committee, comprised of University members responsible for updating campus space, technology, and academic resources.

A standard rubric is used for scoring proposals that best support the University's strategic institutional goals and rely on comprehensive assessment for continual institutional improvement ([S6 C1 PARA Rubric October 2019](#)). High-scoring proposals are recommended for funding in a final report submitted to the Provost and Senior Vice President of Finance and Operations. In addition to recommending internal funding, the PARA committee supports efforts by departments to secure external resources, if applicable, such as recommending grant-opportunities or partnerships to achieve objectives.

All funding decisions are reported out to the University community as a part of annual PARA information and training sessions. Surveys are administered to all participants in the process, as well as attendees of the information and training sessions. Survey feedback is especially important in improving process transparency, community understanding of institutional resource allocation and the general usefulness of the strategic planning process. While the general response of participants is positive, there remains frustration that past assessment practices (such as Program Review) did not consequently guarantee funding. This is especially evident in feedback from faculty during the proposal submission portion of the process.

In the Fall of 2020, the PARA committee began scoring proposals with the intention of an equal or greater award of 2019's funding, when 13 of 23 requests were funded for a total of \$1.28 million in new budget allocations ([S6 C1 The PARA Process Presentation](#)). Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic presented several financial challenges to Point Park University. While PARA remains an imperative method of allocating resources to fund objectives with the highest probability of success, only three proposals could be considered for funding; of those three, one proposal will likely be funded by a special request for alumni donation. To encourage further participation in the PARA process and discourage frustration due to the time and effort made in submitting proposals, the PARA committee has planned to extend 2021-2022 funding consideration to all current requests.

Criterion 2: *clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that provide for constituent participation, and incorporate the use of assessment results*

With SPOL implemented now for three years, Point Park has created a multiple-step process to continue to roll out long-term initiatives, help departments plan for new initiatives and request added resources, communicate strategic plans and goals, and make changes and implement new plans based on the assessment of external environmental factors. These steps include:

- **SPOL Process.** As discussed in criterion 1, Point Park has instituted the SPOL process for creating and aligning objectives with the University's mission and for tracking and assessing how those objectives are being met. Each unit manager receives training on SPOL, a SPOL user handbook is available, and the Board of Trustees is provided with a set of key performance indicators from the SPOL software.
- **PARA Process.** The coordinator for Planning and Assessment conducts a series of information sessions in the months leading up to formal PARA requests. After the PARA process is completed, all submissions are returned with feedback, and the University community is provided with a summary of how many projects were funded and for how much.
- **SERP Process.** The Strategic Enrollment & Review Planning (SERP) Committee was developed by the President to develop a three to five-year programming plan to maintain and increase enrollment and revenue. The SERP process entails community conversations, thorough programmatic and plan assess and a multi-phase, multiyear rollout process.
- The entire University is encouraged to present to the SERP Committee all revenue generating ideas, even those ideas and initiatives not directly increasing enrollment. The current SERP steering committee holds meetings on a weekly basis to review new ideas under consideration. The Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs acts as liaison to academic departments and the Senior Vice President of Finance and Operations provides input based on financial constraints and potential. The Provost retains initial decision-making capacity on all new academic programs, though new programs must be adopted by Faculty Assembly. The Associate Vice President of Institutional Research, and the President report out to the Board of Trustees, as well as the greater University community as needed.
- Initiatives are suggested individually or by response to University surveys regarding institutional improvement. Working groups evaluate the initiative, developing a prospectus that includes benchmarking similar programs or initiatives, enrollment expectation (if applicable), budget requirements, market viability, seven-year job growth, assessment of expected revenue and an action plan for the initiative's implementation. A goal of this detailed analysis is to assure that adopting the idea or program will provide students with a distinct experience and deliver a positive financial return to the University (**S6_C3_SERP Process, S6_C3_SEP Action Plan & S6_C3_SEP Imperative**).
- The reception of SERP has been widely positive by participants, though the process for the community at large to submit ideas may need to be improved. Additionally, an assessment process for SERP with the intention to improve the process is needed to determine if the initiative have had the effect expected, e.g., improved retention, increased

enrollment, brought in new revenue sources, etc.

- **BEC Process.** The Budget Efficiencies Committee (BEC) was established in FY 2018 to review the operating budget for efficiencies and expenditure reductions. The BEC continually assesses the organization for efficiencies primarily in the areas around workflow, processes, and staffing. The BEC includes the Provost, the Senior Vice President of Finance and Operations and the Vice President of Human Resources who all work closely with various members of the University Community for input, information, and feedback to help to inform decisions. Examples of budget efficiencies recommended by the BEC and implemented include outsourcing architectural, painting and transportation services, downsizing certain administrative positions by creating more efficient workflows, automated switchboard function, reduced various mid-level management positions plus reduced desk the outsourced desk attendant services with installing card access locking systems, cameras, turnstiles.
- **Communication** - Point Park University conducted a broad scan of staff and faculty during the 2016-17 academic year to gather data on University internal communications. A summary of this information and related recommendations presented to the President in October 2017 suggested that, at Point Park, there is a lack of communication, transparency, and trust, and an inadequate feed-forward/feedback loop (**S6_C2_Internal Communications Report Memo**). While there are several positive aspects of Point Park's communication efforts, the scan also identified gaps that needed improvement. The Executive Team took the findings of the ad hoc committee and created a small working group dedicated to developing and implementing predictable approaches to improve internal communications. Key communication tools within the plan include annual meetings with all University faculty and staff known as Point Park Perspectives along with faculty and staff town hall meetings. In all cases, mechanisms for one-way and two-way communication are included, and all staff and faculty can submit questions in advance. A summary of the tools considered and implemented were documented (**S6_C2_Communications Flow Chart**). These tools are scheduled for a re-assessment to determine effectiveness in the 2021-2022 academic year.

Criterion 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*

Operating Budget

The University's budget process starts in October with the Office of Enrollment Management (**S6_C2_Enrollment Org chart 5.10.19**) working with the Business Office and the academic departments to set new enrollment goals and institutional aid levels, some of which are obtained using predictive modeling provided by Ruffolo Noel Levitz, an outside specialist in higher education enrollment services. The Business Office sets targets for numbers of returning students based on retention and graduation rates. A budget is developed to include the approved new revenues, new expenses and expense efficiencies resulting from strategic planning initiatives

through the Strategic Enrollment, Revenue Planning (SERP) process, the Planning, Assessment and Resource Allocation (PARA), and the Budget Efficiencies Committee (BEC). Price increases are then recommended for approval while also taking into consideration benchmark pricing data from peer institutions.

Point Park has been able to grow enrollment to its peak in Fall 2017 by maintaining its full-time on-ground undergraduate numbers, while adding new online undergraduate and graduate programs as other areas have declined. See enrollment chart from fall 2012 – fall 2020 below:

Beginning in fall 2015, the on-ground part-time undergraduate as well as the on-ground ground graduate students, most of whom were working adults started to decline. At the same time, in 2014, the University entered a seven-year contract with The Learning House to initiate and expand

ENROLLMENT - headcount									
	Fall	Fall	Fall	Fall	Fall	Fall	Fall	Fall	Fall
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Full-time	2,359	2,385	2,490	2,532	2,573	2,612	2,595	2,513	2,301
Part-time	552	525	441	393	310	252	167	156	124
Accelerated	274	265	150	66	12	-	-	-	-
Graduate	574	613	531	506	420	356	311	234	177
Doctoral	-	-	38	75	113	156	163	170	139
Online Doct	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	86
Online Ungrad	-	-	35	130	223	269	291	249	327
Online Grad	-	-	3	106	333	457	491	462	348
Prof. Dev.	68	53	49	36	68	55	39	51	29
Total	3,827	3,841	3,737	3,844	4,052	4,157	4,057	3,875	3,531

its online programs. The University began offering fully on-line undergraduate and graduate programs, helping to stabilize and grow enrollment. See full listing of online programs at ([S6_C3_Fall I & II 2018_Bar Graph_Enrollment Data](#)). In addition, on-ground doctoral programs started in Fall 2015 with on-line doctoral programs beginning in Fall 2019, both of which have also helped to grow enrollment. The new doctoral programs include an Ed.D., a Ph.D. in Community Engagement and a Psy.D. program.

Per the enrollment chart, the University experienced a 4.5% enrollment decline in Fall 2019, primarily due to a decline in full time undergraduate students recruited as high school graduates in the University's primary recruiting area. In addition, the on-line student population declined which the University attributes to the declining performance of their on-line partner, The Learning House. The Learning House contract expires in April 2021, and a new partner has been identified to work with the University on strategic enrollment.

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the University's leadership team was optimistic about thriving in the challenging higher education market. The original vision for the Academic Village was finished with the opening of the new Pittsburgh Playhouse in Downtown Pittsburgh ([S6_C3_PPU Pittsburgh Playhouse](#)). A strong Strategic Enrollment Revenue Plan (SERP) was created and being implemented based on ideas generated throughout the University which projected \$16 million in net new revenue over six years through FY 2025 ([S6_C3_SERP Sept. 2020](#)). The

search for a new on-line partner was underway, with increased enrollment and higher margins anticipated with net new revenue of \$4-5 million in the third year of the contract. The University's strong commitment to distinctive, innovative, and experiential learning" had created an emerging Career Ready brand gaining in reputation. In addition, the Federal Workforce Development Agency in Pittsburgh (Partner4Work) and the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) partnered with the University and funded a three-year pilot to identify CCAC students most likely to succeed in the co-op program and get these students on the pathway to seamlessly matriculate to the University and into the co-op program (**S6_C3_PPU_CCAC_Announcement**).

Then, in March 2020, Point Park, along with schools throughout the country, transitioned to remote learning and operations in less than a week due to the developing pandemic. The shock of this event created enormous consequences for Point Park. Over 1,200 courses designed for on-campus learning were transitioned to a remote modality. Nearly all students in residence halls were required to leave. It was "all hands-on deck" to ensure that students would finish the spring semester with a quality education. A late spring student survey shows that Point Park rated better than average (**S4_C1_HEDS Student Survey Summary**). Finally, the spring term of COVID-19 ended and, unfortunately, students graduated without a commencement ceremony.

The University community spent the entire summer of 2020 working extensively to prepare for the uncertainty of a fall on-campus semester. The spring student survey results were shared widely throughout the University to learn as much as possible quickly. A steering committee was formed made up of the Provost, Senior VP for Finance and Operations, Vice President of Human Resources, President of the Faculty Assembly and President of the Staff Assembly. This Steering committee had oversight for five University-wide committees that aligned with the Strategic Plan: Academic Excellence, Quality Student Experience, Managed Resources, Community Engagement and a fifth, Diversity and Inclusion (**S6_C3_COVID Planning Teams**). Because of the uncertainty in the modality and structure of the Fall reopening plans, the Committees were given various reopening scenarios and the related estimated fiscal impact to consider in their planning (**S6_C3_COVID-Planning Scenarios**). These committees were charged with recommending plans based on the different reopening scenarios for each of their areas. The President of the Student Government was engaged in weekly meetings starting in early July. The entire Operations units of the University worked tirelessly to create an Operations Manual and prepare a campus that would be as safe as possible (**S6_C3_Operations Manual**). The University engaged the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) to be the medical manager for COVID-19. Faculty received extensive training to help them prepare for all learning modalities. All classrooms were equipped with technology that would allow for on-campus and remote learning. And in March 2020, the Board of Trustees Executive and Finance committees began to meet monthly rather than quarterly with the Executive Team to stay up to date with a quickly unfolding set of uncertainties surrounding the pandemic.

The University implemented a Hyflex learning model for the Fall 2020 semester and are using this again in the Spring 2021 (**S6_C3_HyFlex Learning Chart**). This model allows students the choice of attending classes remotely or on-campus. Approximately 25% of students chose fully remote, 25% fully on-campus, and 50% a mix of the two. This along with course re-scheduling de-densified the campus to safe levels.

The pandemic had a material financial impact on the University. Fall 2020, enrollment declined 9% (see enrollment chart above), with the largest decline in first-year students, which is down 18% from the previous year. In addition, students living on campus in University housing declined 24% from the previous year. See Housing Chart below:

HOUSING									
	Fall	Fall	Fall	Fall	Fall	Fall	Fall	Fall	Fall
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Available beds	1,020	1,020	1,074	1,070	1,070	1,070	1,070	1,070	1,070
Actual	998	978	1,046	1,040	1,047	1,055	1,041	1,048	796
% occupancy	97.8%	95.9%	97.4%	97.2%	97.9%	98.6%	97.3%	97.9%	74.4%

Over the past ten years, the University's operating budget has had positive accrual basis and cash basis operating results for most of these years. The University's operating budget is also heavily dependent on student tuition and room and board revenue, making up over 95% of revenues. Because of the decline in enrollment, room and board revenue from the pandemic, the FY 2021 Operating Budget for the University was approved by the Board with an accrual basis loss of \$13.8 million and a \$10.6 million cash loss (**S6_C3_Resolution FY 2021 Budget**). The Board approved a Resolution in August 2020, directing the Executive Team to reduce current year expenditures by at least \$3 million and to do everything possible to create a balanced Operating Budget for FY22(**S6_C3_Resolution FY 2022**).

In managing through this challenging period, the University is following its principles of crisis financial management: preserve cash, reduce expenditures, grow revenues, be transparent, communicate often, and act with compassion. As of 11/2020, approximately \$2.9 million of expenditure reductions have been identified and implemented for FY 2021 including various staff position eliminations and furloughs, course reductions through consolidations/low enrollments, staff wage freeze and reduction in the staff 403b plan match from 7.5% to 3% beginning 1/1/2021, a 10% wage reduction for senior officers and various other departmental budget reductions. As a result, the FY 2021 accrual basis and cash basis loss forecasts at 11/2020 have improved to losses of \$10.7 million and \$7.6 million respectively when also including an estimated one-time cost of a tenured faculty retirement incentive plan and the related future savings from reduced full time faculty positions (**S6_C3_Operating Budget Projections**).

Looking beyond the pandemic, the University projects enrollment to grow with a higher concentration of adult and part-time students taking on-line classes. With the new on-line service provider in place, and a reorganized internal structure supporting the on-line area, the University will ensure adequate marketing funds are invested and key performance indicators are contractually in place to generate and support enrollment growth as well to quickly identify and address any concerns. For the full-time undergraduate student population, enrollment at more normal levels is expected to occur beginning Fall 2022 (FY 2023). Total enrollment is projected to begin to increase beginning Fall 2023 (FY 2024) with projected Fall 2024 (FY 2025) enrollment at 3,974 (**S6_C3_Enrollment Projections**). Housing is projected be back to more normal levels

by Fall 2024 (FY 2025) with 1040 students living on campus (**S6_C3_Housing Projections**). Regarding operating expenses, many implemented budget efficiencies are expected to continue including, reduced departmental budgets, reduced staffing costs and continued course efficiencies. Based on these various assumptions, the University's operating performance begins and continues to improve beginning in FY 2022 through FY 2025 (**S6_C3_Operating Budget Projections through FY 2025**).

Additionally, Point Park understands the need for partnerships and working relationships with other small and mid-size private schools in the region. One example is the Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education (PCHE), an organized consortium of the eleven accredited colleges and universities in Allegheny County. In existence since the 1960s, PCHE provides undergraduate students at all eleven schools the opportunity to cross register for courses at any of the schools. Point Park has worked with at least ten other schools in recent years on joint purchasing of services and materials. Point Park is currently working with two liberal arts colleges on providing these schools with access to Point Park's co-op program and other 4+1 master's degree opportunities for their students. Point Park is also working with another small, private, local university on an aggressive approach to shared services to reduce costs. These relationships will be helpful if Point Park would find itself, sometime in the future, interested in exploring merger opportunities with other schools.

Criterion 4: *fiscal and human resources as well as the physical and technical infrastructure adequate to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered*

Essential resources needed to support University operations include fiscal resources, human resources, facilities, and technology.

Fiscal Resources

The University's operating budget is supported by unrestricted operating cash. At the beginning of fiscal year 2021, the University's unencumbered operating cash was at one of its highest historic levels, totaling \$14.4 million. The operating budget projections and cash position analysis show a depletion of operating cash through FY 2023 because of the pandemic, however then operating cash begins to grow. (**S6_C3_Operating Budget Projections through FY 2025**). There is sufficient operating cash in place to support the cash losses. In addition to unrestricted operating cash, the University's endowment totals \$48.9 million as of 9/30/2020 and is made up of the following three components:

\$ 14,220,000 - Permanent Endowment

\$ 28,003,000 - Board Designated Endowment

\$ 6,671,000 - Rowland School of Business Endowment

\$ 48,894,000 - Total Endowment

The Board Designated Endowment, which has grown to \$28 million, is an unrestricted endowment put in place in 2003 at the recommendation of Dr. Hennigan and supported by the Board of Trustees. The fund's purpose is maintaining liquidity necessary to support the long-term financial health of the University. In addition, the fund can be spent at the Board's discretion in the event of a serious cash need by the University. Currently, the Board Designated Endowment is treated, and invested as an endowment, with earnings used annually to support the operating budget. The Board approved earnings spending level over the past several years to support the operating budget has been 4%. In April 2020, the Board approved a resolution, 9-2020 (see link) authorizing the Finance Committee to modify the asset allocation for the Board Designated Reserve Fund as stated in the investment policy statement, in its discretion, to cover the ongoing needs of the University as a result of the pandemic. The Finance Committee has authorized that the Board Designated Endowment to maintain a higher liquidity position in order to support the operating budget if necessary (**S6_C4_Board Resolution Authorizing Flexibility**).

Human Resources

Point Park University maintains its human resource infrastructure to effectively deliver Point Park's educational mission, provide a satisfying and safe work environment, and maintain a flexible structure to accommodate needed changes. The University's education mission is delivered by 145 full-time faculty members and 360 active part-time faculty. The University further is supported with 260 full-time staff, 150 part-time staff, and 400 student employees. (**S6_C4_Organization Chart 2019**).

Faculty and certain staff are represented by unions. Full-time faculty are represented by the Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh / Communication Workers of America and the part-time faculty union is with the United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union (**S6_C4_FT CBA 2017_2021 & S6_C4_PT CBA_2015-2019**). The University has two additional staff unions with the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 95-95A, AFL CIO and United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union, AFL-CIO, CLC - Local 1088 Clerical Unit. For staff who do not fall under union membership, the University benchmarks College and University Professional Association (CUPA-HR) data to ensure fair compensation for matched positions.

Human Resources launched its OnPoint Wellness Program in 2017 (**S6_C4_OnPoint Award Nomination & S6_C4_OnPoint Award**). With the continued rise in healthcare expenses and the desire to improve employees baseline health, the University took steps to improve employee health in meaningful ways. The program for wellness and biometrics allows employees to earn points toward reduced rates on insurance. The University, in turn, provides step counters, lunch and learns, biometric screening, increased incentives for going to primary care physicians and eye doctors. The University was a finalist for an award for this program from a Pittsburgh human resources organization (**S6_C4_Engaging Pittsburgh Nomination & S6_C4_2018 Engaging Pittsburgh Email**).

Because the University is in the heart of downtown Pittsburgh, a police department, which gained accreditation in 2013, was put in place in 2011 to enhance safety for the University community. A “Point Alert” system was instituted and includes numerous messaging protocols to keep students and employees informed and safe regarding any incidences on or off campus.

Human Resources personnel ensure that faculty and staff have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities to advance the University’s mission. Key organizational development activities include restructuring the executive team to ensure that the University remains nimble and adaptable in the changing climate of higher education. Since 2016, the University’s executive leadership team restructured from twelve executive team leaders to nine. The executive team also was restructured to focus on key University priorities and shared governance through its alignment with Staff and Faculty Assembly sub-committees.

The University focuses on competency development and internal skill enhancement focused on building abilities and leadership aptitude for current employees. The University’s performance review and evaluation process is structured around leadership competencies, and managers meet with employees to review and suggest training needs. Performance reviews are formally completed after 90 days in a new position, and annually for all staff members. Faculty performance evaluations are discussed in Standard III. Changes in the higher education environment led Point Park University to evaluate many of the work processes performed by staff. These evaluations include detailed workflow analysis to ensure that efforts advance the University’s mission, and most importantly, that any discontinued work does not hinder its advancement. To that end, the Human Resources department worked on downsizing initiatives recommended by the Budget Efficiencies Committee (BEC) to create efficiencies each year since 2015. These initiatives are ongoing and include a thorough review of the reallocation of critical functions with a keen focus on student success. (Notes regarding specific steps taken by the BEC are kept confidential due to the nature of initiatives and, therefore, cannot be added to the Middle States Evidence Library. If needed, these notes can be viewed upon request by contacting Lisa Stefanko, Vice President, Human Resources, Equity, and Inclusion.)

To cultivate an environment of awareness, mutual respect, and understanding, the University is creating an Office of Equity and Inclusion that includes leadership in Diversity & Inclusion, Title IX oversight, and Disability Services. This Office will be announced formally in January and, once operational, office staff will regularly meet with students, staff, and faculty to discuss University culture, and leads the University-wide Equity committee.

Physical Infrastructure

Over the past decade, Point Park University has greatly expanded its downtown footprint to appropriately support its operations with the creation of the Academic Village, growing from 5 to 17 buildings, and bringing the total space to just over 1 million square feet (**S6_C6_Property Inventory**). With this growth phase completed and space needs completed, the University shifted its focus to ensuring the best and most efficient use of space. The campus includes 317 staff and faculty offices and administrative areas, 54 classrooms, 18 general use computer labs and 75

program- specific spaces such as labs, studios and rehearsal spaces supporting instruction in areas such as Photography, Theatre, Dance, Engineering and Cinema. The new Pittsburgh Playhouse serves as a cornerstone for Point Park’s Conservatory of Performing Arts and Entertainment Management programs, and its 90,000 square feet includes three performance stages, a sound stage, rehearsal spaces, a café, and public areas. Additionally, the University has 5 buildings that service on campus housing, having 1,070 beds that range from traditional style dormitory layouts to full apartment style living.

Technical Infrastructure

Within the Center for Information Technology, the leadership team includes the Director of Administrative Systems and Desktop Services, Senior Director of the Media Services, and the Director of Infrastructure (**S6_C6_Information Technology_Org Chart**). The responsibility for these areas include enterprise resource planning tools, internal/external network connectivity, hardware/software in all instructional labs on campus, all police department public safety systems (cameras/ 911/ panic buttons etc.), all media services within the classroom and all student production services (TV studio operations, cinema cameras, TV broadcast field kits etc.). The department is led by the Associate Vice President (AVP) of Information Technology who assumes the responsibility of cyber-security, budgeting, and strategic planning within the division. The AVP of Information Technology not only leads the University internally but participates in leadership roles within the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania (AICUP) by serving as an advisory board member and chairperson for the statewide information technology committee of AICUP. This leadership role has allowed the University to reach its strategic goals with fiscal efficiency. In addition to a group purchase of cyber-security assets and internet connectivity, Point Park University leverages collaboration to ensure continued improvement in cyber security through the AICUP (Association of Independent Colleges & University of Pennsylvania) NCFTA (National Cyber-Forensics & Training Alliance) initiative. The AICUP NCFTA program features and member information can be found on the AICUP website. Point Park University strives to deliver the technical infrastructure for students to explore and achieve their academic goals in a safe, robust digital environment. The university is in the final phases of a \$1.5 million network upgrade to put in place a fiber optic network on campus, upgrade hardware and invest in the human capital to allow all students, faculty and staff to achieve their academic and administrative goals in a mobile friendly environment (**S6_C4_Cyber Security Update**). This 21st century infrastructure uses best practices to protect data and intellectual property. In addition, this infrastructure was heavily leveraged during the COVID-19 pandemic when over 100 classrooms were converted in to “HyFlex” learning environment. It would not have been possible for students to continue their academic goals if the University would not have taken the initiative to invest in this important resource.

An internal audit function committee reporting to the Board of Trustees allows an independent study of the effectiveness of the department based on best practices. Many improvements have been initiated to include improvements within cyber-security, network design and fiscal efficiency. Audits are conducted, and the results shared with the Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees to

ensure transparency and document improvement plans. The AVP of Information Technology and Internal Audit representatives report out findings and improvement plans at audit subcommittee meetings held a minimum of two times a year.

Criterion 5: *well-defined decision-making processes and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability*

As will be discussed in more detail in Standard VII, ultimate financial and strategic planning and decision-making rests with the Board of Trustees and the President. Essential decision-making processes and structures are critical to support the implementation of the strategic plan and overall operations of the University. The decision-making structure is as follows:

Board of Trustees and Board Committees: The Point Park University Bylaws defines decision-making authority for the Full Board of Trustees, the Committees of the Board, and the University Officers (**S6_C5_Board Approved Bylaws**). In addition, the Corporate Governance Policy further defines additional detailed guidance on Management authority versus the authority levels of the Board of Trustees (**S6_C5_Corporate Governance Policy**).

University Officers:

- **President** – Chief Executive Officer of the University whose primary responsibilities are the overall supervision and management of the University. See Bylaws for description of responsibilities.
- **Provost** – Chief Academic Officer of the University whose primarily responsibilities are to oversee the composition and the quality of the Deans, Department Chairs and Faculty and the quality and scope of the academic programs. See Bylaws for description of responsibilities.
- **Senior Vice President of Finance and Operations** – Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer of the University whose primary responsibilities are preparation and oversight of the operating and capital budgets, accounting and auditing, insurance and risk management, and such other responsibilities as required by the Charter and Bylaws, as well as reporting the status of these issues to the board. See Bylaws for description of responsibilities.

As discussed in more detail in Standard VII, ultimate financial and strategic planning and decision-making rests with the Board of Trustees and the President. However, the Provost and the Senior Vice President of Finance and Operations are more directly involved in the day-to-day fiscal and strategic developments of the University. As seen in SPOL, each department's objectives are ultimately authorized by one of these two people, with each being granted the ability to revise or reject objectives.

Executive Team: Direct budget and management oversight of all areas of the University; Implementation and execution of strategic initiatives and advisory role to the President. The Executive Team meets at least once a week.

Deans: Responsible for budget and management of the various Academic Schools/Related Program Chairs of the University.

Academic Departmental Chairs: Responsible for budget and management of specific academic departments within a school.

Administrative Department Managers – Responsible for budget and management of an administrative area.

Faculty Assembly – The membership of the Faculty Assembly shall consist of all full-time faculty. The Faculty Assembly operates as an organized body in the educational and financial operations of the University and provides recommendations to the administration on behalf of the full-time faculty ([S7_C1_Faculty Assembly Bylaws](#), [S7_C1_FT_CBA_2017-2021](#)).

Staff Assembly – The membership of the Staff Assembly shall consist of all full-time staff. The Staff Assembly strives to play an active role in a shared governance approach. It also serves as a venue for staff to share information, ideas and concerns with one another. Appropriate ideas and concerns are presented to administration for consideration.

Criterion 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*

Facilities/Infrastructure

The Physical Plant Department is responsible for the management of capital projects, space planning, and space management for all 17 buildings. It is the mission of this office to support the University's strategic plan by improving and/or supporting the campus learning and living programs.

The University updated its master space plan in 2019 ([S6_C6_Master Space Plan](#)). This Master Space Plan identifies a strategy to allow for the phased implementation of facilities improvements that will address programmatic needs, relocate programs based on use and affinity, and allow for physical space improvements that are negatively impacting efficiency and functionality. This implementation strategy is broken into five phases with projects including consolidating academic departments and administrative offices, moving classrooms to lower floors to ease elevator congestion, creating street-level newsrooms for student media, and converting classrooms into cinema-editing suites.

Point Park has been working to ensure best use of its existing space. Examples of that are Point Park's Academic Village, which started in 2008 with the phase being the state-of-the-art Pittsburgh Playhouse which opened in 2018. The \$60 million entertainment center serves as a cornerstone for Point Park's Conservatory of Performing Arts, and its 90,000 square feet includes three performance stages, a sound stage, rehearsal spaces, a café, and public areas ([S6_C6_playhouse_spreadsheet](#) & [S6_C6_Playhouse floorplans](#)). The University has also made necessary building upgrades in recent years such as a HVAC upgrades to Academic and Thayer halls in 2016, renovation of the Point Park coffee shop in 2017, creation of office spaces

for the Center for Inclusive Innovation in 2018, and the addition of a Professional Career Readiness Center in the Student Center in 2019 (**S6_C6_Master Space Plan_Meeting Minutes**).

The University's current deferred maintenance of campus facilities totals \$20,964,000. These projects include various needs such as roofing replacement, correction of structural defects, repair or replacement of installed utility and distribution systems etc. These projects are tracked in the Life Cycle Analysis report (**S6_C6_Life Cycle Analysis**). The items are tracked from year to year until they are deemed necessary and funded, either as stand-alone projects or in combination with other construction work.

Building evaluation surveys are completed for each building on a five-year rotational basis to identify any additional building needs. To address daily facility maintenance needs or concerns from the campus community, a work order service portal, CORRIGO, is in place. Smaller dollar needs can be addressed through the physical plant operating budget. However larger requests may require capital approval from the Sr. VP of Finance or the Finance Committee, based on the amount of the project. New initiatives, which have a facility component are requested through the PARA process.

The Physical Plant Department assesses its services to the campus community on a regular basis by reviewing business practices and feedback from regular meetings with key campus customers, such as the Facilities Committee of the Faculty assembly and the United Student Government monthly meetings.

A University-wide sustainability initiative began in June 2005 and continues today with a variety of initiatives including recycling, energy conservation, green cleaning, and procurement policies. Park University also has a history of integrating sustainability into the campus and construction projects which included the George Roland White Dance Complex receiving LEED GOLD status in 2008 and LEED certification on the Playhouse is currently in-process and expected to be official in 2021. In addition, in 2012, the University entered a 2030 Pittsburgh District which is committed to reducing energy and water use, carbon footprint and improving air quality (**S6_C6_Pittsburgh 2030 District**), (**S6_C6_PPU Dance Complex_LEEDS**), (**S6_C6_Owner's Project Requirements_11.27.19**).

As a result of the March 2020 pandemic, the university created a COVID Task force, which was overseen by the Vice President of Operations and comprised all areas of the University including Executive Administration, Academic Administration, Human Resources, Operations, Safety, Procurement, etc. The group was responsible for the development of a set of guidelines and procedures following the CDC and State Health Departments recommendations to enhance and protect the health and safety of all the students, faculty and staff when on campus (**S6_C3_Operations Manual**). Changes made to campus included de-densifying all spaces while creating safe guidelines for successful on-campus learning; signage was placed throughout the University communicating the need for social distancing, mask wearing requirements, and the importance of washing hands etc.; and elevators were reprogrammed to improve efficiencies and buildings were reviewed to ensure appropriate air flow.

Technology/Infrastructure

Point Park University maintains strategic planning in Information Technology for replacing academic hardware and software on a regular basis, and the University conducts annual audits of its assets to ensure replacement is occurring (**S6_C6_Project Timeline**). University faculty and staff request technology on an “as needed basis”. Faculty needs are identified and organized/prioritized by the Associate Provost within the Provosts Office. A mix of operational and capital funding is used to purchase needed technology. An academic computer lab replacement schedule is maintained, however due to recent budget constraints, some lab replacements have been deferred unless necessary. However, starting in 2019, the Board of Trustees has approved a three-million-dollar infusion of new technology over the next three years to guard against cybersecurity attacks and ensure labs and instructional areas remain up to date (**S6_C6_Network Modernization Plan**). The University spends an average of \$1.5 million per year on IT hardware and software (not including salaries).

Based on the results of student satisfaction surveys, Point Park continues to add computer labs, working spaces, and more consistent Wi-Fi (**S6_C6_Faculty Facilities and Technology 2019 Survey**). In addition, the University replaces equipment in high-demand fields such as cinema and sciences. Faculty and staff receive new equipment on an as-needed basis, depending on usage needs. Replacement decisions are made through the IT department, by individual Department Chairs, and, if large enough, through capital decisions ultimately approved by the Finance Committee.

Because of the March 2020 pandemic, the University was faced with addressing instructional technology needs. Instructional delivery was moved online to complete the spring 2020 semester and the summer 2020 was used to begin the process of changing instructional spaces for the Fall of 2020. A multi-pronged approach was used to address the instructional need. The decision was made to give students the option to attend class in person or online. This was achieved by outfitting all classrooms with the technology needed to deliver synchronous and asynchronous instruction. In addition to this effort, an instructional transition team was assembled within information technology to meet with faculty who teach in instructional programs that depend heavily on technology to reach instructional/programmatic goals. During the summer of 2020 this team had multiple meetings with faculty and assembled a “technology needs” list of over \$400,000 to help these specific programs deliver instruction in this new “Hybrid” format. Purchases were made and implementation took place to prepare.

Criterion 7: *an annual independent audit confirming financial viability with evidence of follow up on any concerns cited in the audit’s accompanying management letter*

Point Park undergoes an annual independent financial audit, as well as more frequent internal audits of systems, operations and programs.

The University contracted with the audit firm of Baker Tilly in 2012 to audit the University's financial statements. The University has received unqualified opinions, indicating no irregularities or exceptions (**S6_C3_Point Park University 2019 Baker Tilly Audit Issued Financial Statement**), (**S6_C7_Independent Auditor Final Financial Statement for 2017 & 2018**).

The University recognized the need for an internal audit function to ensure appropriate internal controls were in place throughout the University. The University concluded that an accounting/auditing firm with more dedicated resources and ongoing training would be a more effective and lower cost internal audit solution. Schneider Dows was hired as an outsourced internal audit function in 2012. Multiple internal audits are conducted every year, covering areas such as privacy policies, registration, enrollment, cybersecurity maturity, use of campus facilities by minors and various others. These audits have resulted in various operational, policy, procedural and efficiency changes throughout the organization. Schneider Downs, presents their audit results a minimum of twice per year, to the Board of Trustees' Audit Committee.

Criterion 8: *strategies to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals*

Point Park has an already established plan to measure and assess institutional effectiveness and resources.

- The PARA process is directly tied to the University's strategic planning process and assessment activities. This process compels departments to optimize budgets through discussions of reallocation rather than of budgetary additions. See Criterion 1 for further detail.
- Risk Management – an Enterprise Risk Management Process was put in place in 2014 which identifies institutional risks and mitigation strategies. Various risks are identified by management and related mitigation strategies are put in place and documented. This risk assessment is shared with the internal auditors and is used to create the internal audit plan. The risk assessment is also reviewed and discussed with the Audit Committee of the Board. Many of the identified top risks link directly or indirectly to the University's institutional resources including Enrollment Declines, Liquidity/Endowment, On-Line Partner Transition, Fundraising, Academic Quality/Relevant Programs in Demand etc. (**S6_C8_Top Risks Schedule**).
- As part of the Internal Audit process, Schneider Downs, reviews internal controls as well as efficiencies within various departments. The internal audit schedule is developed to include the top risks as identified by management and to audit the risks to ensure management's controls are effective. All internal audit results are reported to departmental managers with a required plan from management to address any findings. The audit results and management's responses are reviewed with the Audit Committee of the Board.
- A ten-year dashboard report is shared with the Board of Trustees at their quarterly meetings. All dashboards have financial implications and provide new and historical information, performance information, and trends - both positive and negative for

enrollment, operating budget, endowment, debt, staffing, gifts, graduation rates etc.

- In order to regularly assess cash resources during the year, minimum quarterly projections of operating budget revenue, expenditures, cash flow and liquidity are prepared by the Business Office. The projections are presented to the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees as well as the Full Board of Trustees. In addition, the Sr. V.P of Finance and Operations provides updates to the Faculty and Staff assemblies at a minimum of once a semester on the operating budget and cash resources supporting the University. These updates have also occurred at Point Park Perspectives and all-University meetings each term.
- The endowment is managed by an external investment consultant, Private Wealth Advisors. Quarterly investment results, which are compared to benchmark performance indicators, are reviewed with management and the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees. Private Wealth Advisors (**S6_C8_Private Wealth Advisors Investment Report**).
- A Financial Ratio, Trend & Benchmark Analysis is prepared by Baker Tilly from the year end audited financial statements which is reviewed with Management as well as the Audit Committee of the Board (**S6_C8_Baker Tilly Annual Report**). The report, which is used to help to identify and assess the University's strengths and weaknesses, provides a wide variety of audited information including liquidity and performance ratios against industry wide medians. In addition, a financial benchmark report is prepared using the University's data compared to six local competitors.

Criterion 9: *periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources*

Effective assessment of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes and availability of resources are discussed throughout Standard VI including the following examples:

- In order to assess the effectiveness of the PARA process, Surveys are administered to all participants in the process, as well as attendees in the training sessions. Survey feedback is especially important in improving process transparency, community understanding of institutional resource allocation and the general usefulness of the strategic planning process. In the most recent surveys, while the general response of participants has been positive, there remains frustration that past assessment practices (such as Program Review) did not consequently guarantee funding. This is especially evident in feedback from faculty during the proposal submission portion of the process. As a result, faculty representation has been increased in the PARA process in order to improve the level of understanding of the approval process among more faculty.
- In the Spring and Summer of 2020, all academic deans and department chairs, were asked to add an additional level of review and assessment to their course offering processes to ensure all course offerings for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 were courses that were needed and were would run as efficiently as possible. The Deans, Chairs, Associate Vice Provost, Associate VP for Institutional Resources, SVP of Finance and the Internal Auditors created

and reviewed reports showing duplicate course offerings, low enrolled courses, multiple special topics courses etc. As part this process, many courses were combined, eliminated, changed to independent studies etc. while ensuring students had an appropriate alternative course options if one of their courses was eliminated or combined with another section. At this point in time, it is estimated that approximately \$500,000 of savings was generated from this review process which will support the University operating budget.

- In the Spring 2020, the top University risks and Enterprise Risk Management process were reviewed and discussed with the Audit committee. During the discussion, it became clear, that a more simplified risk assessment process and reporting structure was needed to have a more effective outcome for Management to identify and manage the risks and for the Audit Committee to understand the top risks facing the University in order to adequately support the University. As a result, Management created a new process for identifying, rating, communicating and documenting controls and strategies in place to mitigate the top Risks of the University (**S6_C8_Top Risks Schedule**).
- As discussed in Criterion 2, in 2017, a University wide communication plan was put in place based on a broad scan of feedback from staff and faculty which suggested a lack of communication, transparency, and trust, and an inadequate feedback loop. Various tools to improve communication were put in place. These tools are scheduled for a re-assessment to determine effectiveness in the 2021-2022 academic year.
- In 2019, because of departmental effectiveness concerns, the University made the decision to restructure the Development office, eliminating middle-management-level positions and temporarily eliminating the Vice President position (**S6_C3_DAR_History of Annual Fund or Unrestricted Individual Gifts_April 2019 & S6_C3_DAR_Org Chart_August 2018**). This restructure also came with the directive to focus on two main initiatives: alumni engagement and Annual Fund growth. The new department management, on-boarded in early 2019, created:
 - A department structure that increases meaningful alumni engagement through engagement with faculty and students.
 - A structure to analyze, and adjust as needed, the department work output benchmarked against the strategic goals of the University.
 - Successful annual fund programming to continue raising more dollars and increasing alumni participation.
 - A uniform process to execute and accurately capture and report all University department level and student organization fundraising and alumni interactions.

To ensure the success of these redevelopments, The Development and Alumni Relations Office shifted from a vertical model to a horizontal model with Alumni Engagement Officers (AEO's) at the core of the team (**S6_C3_DAR_Org Chart_March 2019**). Each AEO serves as a liaison for two departments or schools on campus. They get to know the faculty and staff; the department's operations and highlights; and engage with the department's students and alumni via events, in-person visits, engagement opportunities and fundraising, (**S6_C3_Media Days**). The development team engages in biweekly

strategic planning and metrics analysis sessions to address the objectives and tasks laid out in the University's Strategic Plan. (**S6_C3_DAR_Strategic Planning Dashboard**). The implementation of these two critical pieces refocused the department for consistent growth while allowing the Development office to be more integrated in the University. A key indicator of the Development offices' success is the participation rate of alumni making donations to the University (**S6_C3_DAR_Annual Fund or Unrestricted Individual Gifts_April 2019**).

As seen in Standard VI, the University's planning process, 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. In this alignment and with the assessment processes in place, Requirements for Affiliation 10 and 11 are satisfied. that are appropriate to its size and structure. Through its continued assessment of these projects, it satisfies Requirement for Affiliation 10.

Innovations and Developments:

- The University has an established process for planning, assessment and resource allocation together which is linked to the strategic plan.
- The SERP process provides a structure which solicits feedback from the entire University for ideas for new programs and revenue generation. Various initiatives have been implemented with new revenue generation created.
- The Budget Efficiencies Committee (BEC) has implemented significant budget efficiencies.
- The successful opening of the Point Park Playhouse completes the final phase in the University's Academic Village.
- The University successfully transitioned the University to a fully remote learning environment at the onset of the pandemic in Spring 2020. In addition, the University created a very comprehensive set of campus safety opening guidelines for the entire campus community.
- An effective Hyflex learning model was created for FY 2021 which supported various necessary learning modalities during the pandemic.

Areas for Improvement:

- The newly reorganized Development and Alumni Relations will need to gather longitudinal assessment.



STANDARD VII:
GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP
AND ADMINISTRATION

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.

Criterion 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*

Point Park University's governance and the administrative structures support the mission and goals of the University as set forth in the University's Strategic Plan. Thus, the University demonstrates its engagement and compliance with Standard VII, as well as Requirements for Affiliation 12 and 13.

The University Charter, the University Bylaws, updated in 2017, the Bylaws of the Faculty Assembly, the Staff Assembly Bylaws and the Full-Time Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement and Part-Time Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement define the governance of the University. United Student Government, formerly known as the Student Government Association, acts as the representative voice of Point Park students ([S7_C1_Shared_Governance, S7_C1_FT_CBA_2017-2021, S7_C1_PT_CBA_2015-2019, S7_C1_Staff_Assembly_Bylaws & S7_C1_Faculty_Assembly_Bylaws](#)).

The Officers of the University consist of the President, who acts as the Chief Executive Officer, the Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, Senior Vice President of Finance, who is the University's CFO and Treasurer, and the Secretary. The Secretary, who may also be a Vice President, shall be appointed by the President, subject to Board approval. Executive-level legal questions are handled by a retained lawyer on a per case basis. President Paul Hennigan currently acts as interim Secretary.

Point Park University is organized into two operational divisions: The Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Finance and Operations. Each division is led by a senior Vice President reporting to the President, Dr. Paul Hennigan. Other senior leadership positions include the Vice President of External Affairs, Vice President of Enrollment, Vice President of Student Affairs, Vice President of Human Resources, Assistant Vice President of Institutional Research and Strategic Planning, and Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs (S7_C1_2019_University Organizational Charts).

The Office of Academic and Student Affairs includes all academic programs, faculty and academic support staff, as well as the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Institutional Research and Strategic Planning, the Library, the Division of Online Learning, the Pittsburgh Playhouse, Student Affairs, and Alumni Engagement & Giving. This division is led by Dr. John Pearson, Senior Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs and Provost. (S7_C1_2019_University

Organizational Charts).

The Office of Finance and Operations includes the Office of Human Resources; the Office of Business Services; the Office of Finance; Information Technology Services; the Office of Enrollment, which includes Full-time Admissions, Graduate Admissions, International Student Services and Enrollment, Enrollment Marketing, and Financial Aid; Public Safety; and Operations, which includes facilities, environmental health and safety, transportation, and conference/events. This division is led by Bridget Mancosh, Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations. A complete organizational chart is found in the inventory locker ([S7_C1_Finance and Operations Org Chart 2019](#)).

Of specific importance to Standard VII are the summer 2021 retirements of the President and Provost. John Pearson has been Provost for what will be five years, and Paul Hennigan has been President for what will be 16 years. Pearson's announcement went to the University community in February 2020 ([S7_C1_Pearson Retirement Article](#)), and the President appointed a Search Committee in March 2020 ([S7_C1_Provost Search Committee List](#)). The University hired Association of Governing Boards (AGB) Search to be the search consultant, and the Provost Search process resulted in the hiring of a new Provost, who is scheduled to take office in May 2021 ([S7_C1_Provost Search Timeline](#)).

Hennigan's retirement was announced in early October to be effective in the summer of 2021 ([S7_C1_Hennigan Retirement Press-Release](#)). Joe Greco, Chair of the Board appointed Don Jenkins to chair an *ad hoc* committee on the Presidential transition and Diana Bucco to chair the Search Committee; both are members of the Board Executive committee. The Executive committee interviewed several search consultants and hired WittKieffer. Diana Bucco appointed a Search Committee with representatives from all major University constituencies. ([S7_C1_Provost Search Committee List](#)). Hennigan will remain in the President's position until a successor is named. Hennigan also will continue to consult with the University to assist with the Presidential transition and a few other highprofile community projects that are currently underway. This will provide an extra set of experienced hands and mind to assist the new President in establishing priorities.

The Faculty Assembly, comprised of full-time faculty members as well as other teaching professionals awarded faculty privileges in the Assembly, is a parallel system of governance whose function is advisory ([S7_C1_FT CBA Faculty Assembly Overview](#)). The Faculty Assembly is subject to the general policies of the University and is governed by By-Laws updated in February 2019 ([S7_C1_Faculty Assembly 2019 Bylaws](#)). Among its duties, the Faculty Assembly recommends policy regarding instruction and academic standards, makes curricular recommendations, recommends the granting of degrees, as well as changes to the academic calendar.

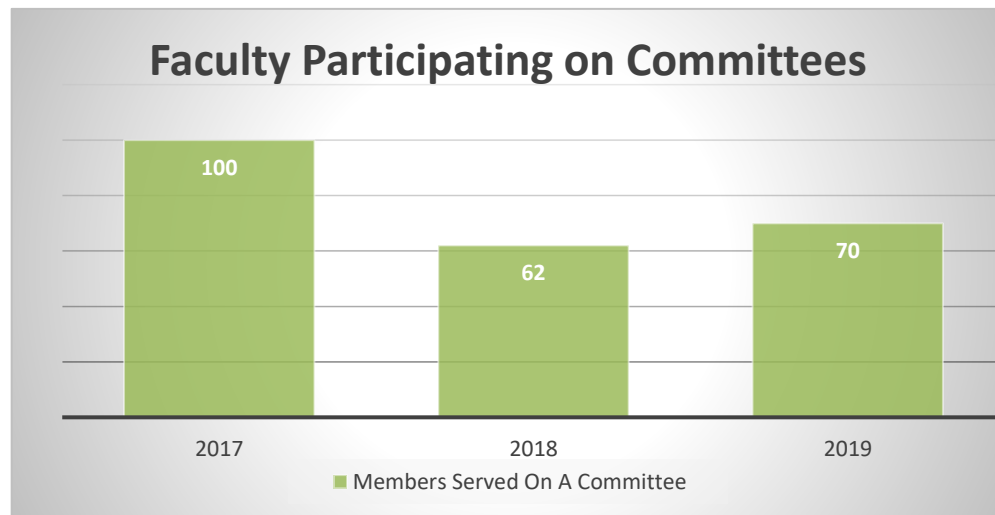
The Faculty Assembly approves recommendations and then forwards them to the Administration and the President for final approval and implementation ([S7_C1_Faculty Assembly 2016-'17 FA Committees](#)), ([Faculty Assembly Approved Committees '17-'18](#)), ([Faculty Assembly 2018-](#)

'19 Committees). Standing Committees are organized to facilitate the work of the Faculty and to originate formal communication from the Assembly to the University Administration to further shared governance. In 2019, standing committees include:

Undergraduate Curriculum	Graduate Program
CORE Outcomes Assessment	Instructional Technology & Facilities
Finance & Operations	Campus Academic Resources
Enrollment & Student Affairs	Academic Personnel Policies
Diversity and Inclusion	Organizational Review

These committees reflect the needs of the University and are modified or eliminated as necessary. As previously discussed in Standard V, the Program Review Committee was disbanded in 2017, while a revised version of the Diversity and Inclusion committee grew out of the University's 2018 diversity and inclusion task force.

Faculty members are encouraged, but not required to serve on, at most two standing committees. In 2019, 70 faculty members served on a committee, excluding the graduate program committee, which includes representatives of all graduate programs. In 2018, 62 members served, and in 2017, when Faculty Assembly had additional committees, more than 100 faculty members participated in a committee membership.



As described in several other standards, the University's full- and part-time faculty are covered by two different collective bargaining agreements. These agreements delineate the authority of the administration and that of faculty. For example, the University determines the academic calendar but within the agreed-upon timeline listed in the CBA. The part-time faculty CBA was re-negotiated in 2019, and the full-time CBA is up for re-negotiation in 2021.

The Staff Assembly, comprised of all regular full-time and part-time staff members employed by

Point Park University, through its mission, “strives to play an active role in the University decision making and adopts a shared governance approach ([S7_C1_Staff Assembly Bylaws 6.3.19](#)).” The Staff Assembly serves as a venue for staff to share information and concerns with one another ([S7_C1_Staff Assembly Meeting Minutes_2020_November](#)). The Staff Assembly ensures there is staff representation on various University committees that plan and implement policies that affect the staff at the University. In 2019, to better align Staff Assembly with the University’s four strategic initiatives, the Staff Assembly established five subcommittees: Academic Excellence, Quality University Experience, Managed Resources, Community Engagement and Ad Hoc STARS Recognition ([S7_C1 STARS Overview](#)). The Staff Assembly Bylaws were revised and approved on June 3, 2019.

Currently, approximately 35-40 eligible employees participate in each monthly Staff Assembly meeting, though recent virtual Staff Assemblies (hosted in this method due to the COVID-19 pandemic) have seen attendance of more than 125 staff members at a time (all attendance records are kept in meeting minutes, found on the Staff & Faculty Intranet).

Point Park’s third governing body is the Student Government Association. Its stated mission: “We, the Student Government Association of Point Park University, are created from the ranks of the Student Body of Point Park University to serve as a voice for the students and a communicator with the administration.” In addition to serving as the communication channel among students, faculty, and administration ([S7_C1_Student Government Association Mission Statement](#)), it advocates for student welfare and improvement on campus. SGA also is responsible for allocating funds for student organizations and clubs. Despite varying in number from a high of 22 in 2017 to a low of nine in 2019, these representatives remain integral voices of the students at Point Park. As appropriate, members of SGA are on standing and ad hoc University committees. During the University’s response to COVID-19, members of the Student Government Association were involved with advocating for the Pass/No Credit policy to be extended into the Fall semester, as well as being participants in COVID-19 taskforces.

Criterion 2: a legally constituted governing body

The Board of Trustees of Point Park University are provided the power and authority to govern effectively ([S7_C2 Legally Constituted Governing Body](#)). Among the many powers given to the Board in its Bylaws: it keeps current the University’s mission; selects and assesses the President; charges the President with leading the strategic planning process, as well as participating and approving the plan; oversees the setting of tuition and fees; preserves and protects academic freedom; and engage directly in fundraising projects. Its most important powers, however, are to ensure the academic quality and fiscal health of Point Park.

Since 2006, Point Park has been a member of the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) ([S7_C2_AGB-Current Members](#)). This relationship provides all Trustees with AGB bi-monthly publications about governance matters. Point Park also engaged AGB to facilitate two Board retreats over the past ten years, one in 2012 and another in 2014 ([S7_C2_AGB Agenda_2012](#)),

(**S7_C2_AGB Board Retreat PPT_2012**), (**S7_C2_AGB Board Retreat Agenda_2014**), (**S7_C2_AGB Board Retreat PPT_2014**). The 2012 retreat led to the decision to move forward with the University's largest Capital Campaign for the Pittsburgh Playhouse. A second AGB session in 2014 began the discussion of the University's next Strategic Plan, approved in 2016. Management and the Board also reach out to AGB periodically to check in on the best practices associated with a particular topic.

According to its by-laws, the Board of Trustees shall consist of no fewer than 10 and no more than 40 voting members. Currently the Board of Trustees consists of 29 voting members. These Board members are nominated by the Executive Committee who shall have at least eight voting members. The Executive Committee meets four times each year. The Executive Committee of the Board is responsible for:

- Establishing and maintain standards of Board conduct.
- Developing and Facilitating Board member recruitment.
- Except as set forth otherwise in the Bylaws with respect to choosing a Chair of the Board, recommending a slate of Board officers for Board approval.
- Ensuring that Board members have adequate orientation and ongoing education.
- Assessing the performance of the Board and Board members.
- Assesses the President's performance and compensation

During the 2016 strategic planning sessions, the Board restructured its committees to align with the forthcoming strategic plan. In addition to the Executive Committee, standing and ad hoc committees are established as deemed appropriate. Currently there are four strategic initiative committees and four operational oversight committees (**S7_C2_Bord Committee Structure**):

Academic Excellence	Maintaining academic excellence, as laid out in the strategic plan, as well as supporting current initiatives in academic excellence.
Quality Student Experience:	Supporting the various initiatives laid out in the strategic plan around student success. Brings forth new opportunities for students in experiential and cooperative education.
Managed Resources	Oversight of investment in areas of strategic growth and differentiation. Implement systems of increased productivity.
Community Engagement	Oversight of academic, cultural, and professional opportunities in community engagement.
Finance and Investment	Oversight of operating and capital budgets, debt management, endowment management, and Board-Designate Reserve Fund management

Auditing	Oversight of University and internal audits.
Ad Hoc Playhouse Committee	Oversight of the capital campaign.

Chairs of standing committees serve on the Executive Committee.

In 2016, after consulting with AGB and the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management, term limits were placed on members: three, three-year terms for members and three, two-year terms for the Board Chair and committee chairs. Board members then must be retired for at least one full year before reelection to the Board.

The President of the University, the President of Faculty Assembly, the President of Staff Assembly, the President of the Board of the Alumni Association, and the President of the United Student Government are all ex-officio, non-voting members of the Board of Trustees.

Conflict of Interest:

The Board of Trustees is required to act in accordance with the Bylaws of the University and the University's Conflict of Interest Policy ([S7_C2_Conflict of Interest Policy](#)). The policy complies with the requirements of organizations that are exempt under section 501c (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Annually, members of the Board of Trustees are required to complete and sign a disclosure form and update that form in the event that knowledge of conditions may create a possible conflict of interest. Additionally, Board Members verbally affirm they have no conflict of interest at the start of each subcommittee and full Board committee meeting ([S7_C2_Conflict of Interest Board Meeting](#)). Board members serve as volunteers and are not compensated for their service to Point Park University.

Criterion 3: Chief Executive Office

The President is the Chief Executive Officer of the University, appointed by the Board of Trustees, and serves at the pleasure of the Board. The President may be removed from office only by a two-thirds majority of voting members of the Board, then in office. The President is responsible for the supervision and management of the University, for the duties mandated by the Charter and the Bylaws of the University, and for interpreting and implementing the policies of the University and the Board.

Dr. Paul Hennigan was appointed by the Board of Trustees in September 2006, after a process of consultation with stakeholders of the University. Dr. Hennigan previously served as the Chief Financial Officer and Acting President of the University. Dr. Hennigan is the seventh President of the University and holds the longest tenure of any Point Park College/University President.

In August 2017, on the final day of negotiating the first collective bargaining contract with a newly recognized full-time faculty union, the Communication Workers of America (CWA), the Faculty Assembly convened a special meeting with barely a quorum and voted by slightly more than 50% of those present, No Confidence in Dr. Hennigan. The Board was prepared by way of consultation with the AGB to conduct an expert, independent review of the vote. The thorough review concluded that there was no evidence to support the claims made by the faculty against Dr. Hennigan. The Board Chair, Joe Greco, convened a Faculty Assembly meeting where he presented the findings and conclusion, and Greco encouraged the faculty to work more closely with the Administration on the development of an effective shared governance model with a new collective bargaining agreement in place. Provost John Pearson worked closely with the faculty since then on developing an understanding of shared governance and how it could work at Point Park.

Performance Evaluation of the President

The University Bylaws state that the Executive Committee will act as a compensation committee once a year to approve the University President's goals and objectives, to evaluate his/her previous year's performance and approve his/her forthcoming yearly compensation, in addition to awarding a financial incentive based on the previous year's performance. An independent compensation consultant is also engaged in this yearly process.

At the close of each fiscal year, the President drafts his/her goals and objectives to be achieved in the next fiscal year. The President also drafts a self-appraisal of performance for the current fiscal year. These drafts are shared with the Executive Committee prior to an annual meeting early in the Fall semester. During that meeting, the goals and objectives are discussed and approved. A retrospective financial incentive is determined based on review of the self-appraisal. The President's executive compensation is established based on recommendations provided by an independent compensation consultant. All decisions are documented in an official University memo.

In addition to the base salary compensation, the President may earn a financial incentive to be determined retrospectively based on the previous fiscal year achievement. The President's combined annual salary and incentive may not exceed the annual compensation of the 75th percentile of compensation for comparable institutions (as defined in the annual report from Sullivan, Cotter & Associates, Inc.) Sullivan, Cotter & Associates, Inc. provides the University with a comprehensive analysis of comparable executive compensation every three to four years in order to identify best practices ([S7 C3 Memo RE Exec Committee Process for President Review](#)).

Criterion 4: *an administration possessing or demonstrating appropriate size, structure, and skill*

As seen in the University's organization chart and Standard VI, each senior Vice President has clear direct reports who support and carry out the strategic plans of the department and University. Many executive team members have served at Point Park for a decade or more, while others are relatively new to their positions, providing a balance of perspectives and experiences. As positions at the University are vacated, the University's immediate needs are reviewed, as well as the strengths

and skills of employees currently holding leadership positions within the University. Positions are restructured accordingly, while taking into consideration cost effectiveness and efficiency ([S7_C4_2019_University_Organizational_Charts](#)).

Monthly, the academic leaders of the University meet. The meetings are held the fourth Monday of every month, from 11:30 am – 1:30 pm and are chaired by the Provost. This group consists of Deans, Department Chairs, and department leaders within academic and student affairs. At the meetings, the Provost provides academic leaders with relevant information and seeks input from the University's academic leaders on important decisions ([S7_C4_Academic_Leader_Agendas](#)). Additionally, Deans and Department Chairs can place items on the Agenda as well in the spirit of shared governance.

Deans and Chairs meet with their faculty the second Monday of each month. Information shared with Deans and Chairs at the Academic Leaders meeting is disseminated to faculty, and faculty report to peers and Chairs decisions and information gathered from various faculty committees. The department meetings also focus on questions of curriculum, student expectations, and budgeting ([S7_C4_School of Education Department Meeting- Oct. 12 2020](#)), ([S7_C4_School of Education Department Meeting- Oct. 12 2020 Notes](#)).

Point Park's administrative structure supports its commitment to shared responsibility in academic matters. Faculty maintain control over curriculum, with the administration providing guidance on programs or majors that offer increased enrollment or meet strategic goals. The administration controls how and when faculty teach courses, with the faculty, Chairs, and Deans working closely with the Registrar's Office and Point Park online to satisfy student course sequences and quality assurances, in the case of online teaching ([S4_C1_Sample Course Sequences](#)). Executive-level administration sets the strategic goals for the University, with input from Deans and Chairs on how these goals can be implemented. Staff assembly brings the experience and concerns of members of the campus community who, outside of faculty, are most likely to have day-to-day interactions with students to upper administration.

Assessment and Evaluation of Administration

As seen in Standards II and III, all Point Park staff and faculty are regularly evaluated, and administrators are no different. For new administrative employees, as outlined in the *Administrative and Staff Handbook and Policies Manual*, performance appraisals are conducted after the first 90-day introductory period and then annually. The annual review consists of a self-appraisal, a formal written appraisal, and a discussion of the evaluation with the supervisor. The evaluation's purpose is to assess performance, contribute to professional development, and to provide feedback in a consistent manner.

Deans and Chairs are not considered members of the collective bargaining agreement during the time they serve as in these roles. Because of this agreement, they are evaluated using a process more closely aligned to other administrators. During the second year of a three-year appointment, all full-time faculty in the respective department are provided a short assessment/survey form. These forms are returned to the Associate Provost, who tabulates the results and writes an executive summary of the results. These results then are sent to the Provost who meets with the

Chairs (**S7_C4_Evaluation of Chairs**), (**S7_C4_Chair Review Cycle**), (**S7_C4_Department Chairperson Assessment by Faculty/Staff**), & (**S7_C4_Department Chairperson Self-Assessment**). After these discussions and review of the evidence, the Provost decides on appointment or non-reappointment of the Chair.

Criterion 5: *periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration*

Point Park University performs yearly assessment of leadership, administration, and governance. These assessment tools range from campus surveys to assessment of operational units to metrics on the strategic plan. Examples of this assessment and improvement driven by this assessment:

- Surveys indicated that communication from administration needed to happen more frequently. The President and senior Vice Presidents instituted a Point Park Perspectives, a town-hall style meeting led by the President to answer questions and generate ideas.
- In 2017, dissatisfaction with the academic calendar led to a group of faculty and administrators who worked together and created a more sustainable and predictable academic calendar (**S7_C5_Academic Calendar Meeting Notes**).
- The use of a SPOL dashboard to coordinate Board of Trustee efforts in various subcommittees.
- The Board of Trustees was prepared to do its assessment in 2020, but due to the pandemic and retirements of the Provost and President, has paused to focusing on the University's response to COVID-19 and the hiring of a new President.
- As seen throughout Standard VII, Point Park University has a clearly defined administrative structure, and in doing so, satisfies Requirements of Affiliation 12 and 13. Its Board of Trustees works closely with the President in ensuring that the University's mission is consistently upheld. The President, in turn, is supported by a range of competent senior-level administrators. Point Park's faculty and staff also have well-organized and delineated administrative structures, with regular opportunities to deliberate and make recommendations to the administration. Point Park's efforts at appropriately shared decision-making and governance are developing, and more opportunities will be presented where shared governance is needed.

Innovations and Developments:

- The University's mix of long-serving senior administrators and relative newcomers has added a variety of leadership perspectives.
- The development of an onboarding process for new Board of Trustee members.
- Revisions in faculty committee structures and make-up indicate a willingness to change as the University changes.

Areas for Opportunity:

- With many new Board of Trustee members in the last two years, the University will again assess the effectiveness of the Board.
- Although the system of shared governance is built into the faculty's Collective Bargaining Agreement, and has been discussed with the staff, the University will need to rely heavily on the principles of shared governance in its response to the pandemic.
- Recruitment and engagement of new Board members remains important.



COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Committee Membership

Point Park University is profoundly grateful to the administrators, faculty, staff, and students who made lasting contributions to the Self-Study and to Point Park's future through their work on the Self-Study Committees and Working Groups.

Steering Committee

John Pearson—Provost

Teresa Gregory—Associate Professor, Sports, Arts, and Entertainment Management

Christopher Choncek—Assistant VP of Institutional Research and Planning

Jonas Prida—Assistant Provost

Standard I Working Group: Mission and Vision

Kristin Deluca—Director of Grants and Fellowships

Karen McIntyre—School of Education

Sydney Fulton—Institutional Research

Standard II Working Group: Ethics and Integrity

JW Tabacchi—Office of Student Conduct

George Santucci—Office of Financial Aid

Angela Goodwin—Registrar's Office

Jordan Nofziger—Human Resources

Justin Delecki—Procurement

Standard III Working Group: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

Annie Shean—Online Learning

Mark Marnich—Dept. of Natural Sciences, Engineering, and Technology

Deb Bateman—Registrar's Office

Ron Dufalla—School of Education

Tatyana Dumova—School of Communication

Sean Martin—Dept. of Criminal Justice & Intelligence Studies

Karen McIntyre—School of Education

Standard IV Working Group: Support of the Student Experience

Molly McClelland—Center for Student Success

Michael Gieseke—Office of Student Affairs

Sarah Guidi—Center for Student Success

Ashley Davis—Center for Student Success

Dayna Coleman—Office of Graduate Admission

Justin Wojtkowski—Admissions

Sean Martin— Dept. of Criminal Justice and Intelligence Studies

Kurt Kumler—Counseling Center

Jackie D’Amico—Enrollment Management Sandra Cronin—Financial Aid

Kevin Taylor—Athletics Chris Hill—Physical Plant

Standard V Working Group: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Tracey Brent-Chessum— Conservatory of Performing Arts

Archish Maharaja— Rowland School of Business

Mike Botta—Dept. of Criminal Justice

Darlene Marnich—School of Education

Karen McIntyre—School of Education

Brent Robbins—Dept. of Psychology

Channa Newman—Dept. of Humanities/ Social Science

Sarah Perrier—Dept. of Literary Arts

Gregg Johnson—Dept. of Natural Sciences, Engineering, and Technology

Steve Tanzilli—Rowland School of Business

Bob Derda—Rowland School of Business

Margie Gilfillan—Rowland School of Business

Patrick Mulvihill—Rowland School of Business

Thomas Baggerman—School of Communication

Cara Friez—Conservatory of Performing Arts

Garfield Lemonius— Conservatory of Performing Arts

Aaron Bollinger— Conservatory of Performing Arts

Heather Starr-Fiedler—Dept. of Community Engagement

Standard VI Working Group: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

Andy Conte— Center for Media Innovation

Nelson Chipman— Online Learning

Gregg Johnson— Dept. of Natural Sciences, Engineering, and Technology

Stephanie Adamczyk—Alumni Engagement and Giving

Heather Cook—Business Office

Kristin Deluca— Director of Grants and Fellowships

Jim Hardt—Business Office

Mariann Geyer—President's Office

Chris Hill—Physical Plant

Natalie Rice—Human Resources

Peggy Vandenbord—Human Resources

Tim Wilson—IT

Standard VII Working Group: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

Keith Paylo— Vice President of Student Affairs

Linda Hippert— School of Education

Misty Abraham— Student Accounts

Heather Starr-Fiedler— Dept. of Community Engagement

Gregg Johnson—Dept. of Natural Sciences, Engineering, and Technology

Lisa White— IT

Darlene Marnich— School of Education



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