Adams State University - CO

HLC ID 1036

PROBATION   Visit Date: 11/13/2017

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Context and Nature of Review

Visit Date

11/13/2017
Mid-Cycle Reviews include:

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

Reaffirmation Reviews include:

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

Scope of Review

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

There are no forms assigned.

Institutional Context

Adams State University (ASU) was founded in 1921 and is the oldest Hispanic Serving Institution in the state of Colorado. ASU has been regionally accredited since 1950 by the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities, now the Higher Learning Commission. ASU offers 4 credit-bearing certificates, an Associate in Arts and an Associate in Science Degree, 24 undergraduate degrees, and 11 graduate degrees including a doctoral degree in Counselor Education recently accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) 7/19/17 (HLC Evaluation Summary Sheet). ASU serves a diverse student body (49% minority) and has a high percentage (91%) of students receiving financial aid. Overall, ASU enrolls 2110 undergraduate students and 1293 graduate students (HLC Evaluation Summary Sheet-Head Count)

At the time of this comprehensive visit to consider reaffirmation of accreditation (11/13-15/17), ASU was on probation by HLC Board action February 25, 2016. ASU is approved for distance education courses and programs, as well as correspondence education courses and programs. Due to concerns about ASU's distance education and correspondence courses raised in 2014 an advisory visit was conducted September 14 – 15, 2015 to examine ASU's compliance with HLC Criteria for Accreditation, the Core Components, Federal Compliance Requirements, and the Assumed Practices. Of particular concern was ASU's compliance with the U.S. Department of Education's Electronic Code of Federal Regulations (600.2). USDOE 600.2 specifically addresses the distinction between "correspondence courses" and courses classified as "distance education".

In placing ASU on probation, the HLC Board found that ASU was out of compliance with Criterion Two, Core Component 2.A, "the institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff," and that Criterion Two, Core Component 2.E, "the institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff, and students," was met with concerns. These findings were related to the continuing concerns about ASU distance education and correspondence courses specifically articulated in HLC correspondence dated 3/3/16.

At the time of sanction, ASU was required to submit an Assurance Filing in May, 2017 providing evidence that the University had ameliorated the findings of non-compliance identified and providing evidence that the University meets the Criteria for Accreditation, the Core Components, Federal Compliance Requirements, and the Assumed Practices. The University was also required to host a comprehensive evaluation no later than August 2017.

On October 17, 2016, ASU requested a change in the comprehensive visit dates from its previously requested and approved dates of April 10-12, 2017 to a later time. This correspondence also identified numerous steps that ASU was pursuing to resolve compliance concerns. On November 30, 2016 HLC rescheduled comprehensive visit dates for this visit to November 13-15, 2017.

On May 15, 2017, ASU submitted the required Assurance Filing. The May 15, 2017 Assurance Filing was partially included in the Assurance Argument for this comprehensive visit and was also submitted in its entirety to the Team in the Addendum Tab.

The Team reviewed the May 15, 2017 Assurance Filing, ASU's Assurance Argument and Sources, requested additional materials in the Addendum Tab submitted prior to the visit and items submitted to the Addendum Tab during the visit, as well as the additional documents shown below. The May 15, 2017 Assurance Filing documented that an extensive review of ASU online and correspondence courses was conducted and corrective actions taken:
• inappropriate correspondence courses were phased out;
• distance education courses that did not meet standards for student-faculty interaction or appropriate examination protocols were closed; and,
• both distance education and correspondence courses became semester based.

The May 15, 2017 Assurance Filing also documented that the Online Course Quality Assurance Forms and Course Semester Reviews conducted by department chairs and reviewed by Academic Information Technology Center (AITC) and other academic leaders was thoughtfully conducted. This was demonstrated by direct and supportive comments by chairs to department faculty for course improvements where needed and compliments when appropriate. ASU's membership in Quality Matters™ that serves as a foundation for the rubrics ASU are using was confirmed at: https://www.qmprogram.org/qmresources/subscriptions/subscribers.cfm?program=0#

Results of the Quality Assurance Review and the Course Semester Reviews presented in the May 15, 2017 report were examined by the Team for specific items related to inclusion of student learning outcomes, appropriate assessment of student learning outcomes for the course and appropriate levels of student-faculty interaction. The Team found that these issues were being appropriately addressed in the review processes.

Additional documents reviewed included 28 hard copy syllabi for courses with different delivery modes and formats at both the undergraduate and graduate level. The Team also reviewed 20 courses in the ASU Blackboard Learning Management System and had staff members of the AITC conduct a course review session. These staff are also active participants in the on-going course review process that has been implemented to assure that course offerings include the appropriate level of student interaction for distance education courses. Conversations with academic leaders, administrators and faculty confirmed that the course review processes are in place to assure compliance with federal definitions for distance education and correspondence courses. While the preliminary analysis of federal compliance Appendices indicated some specific courses of concern, the Team reviewed each item with ASU staff members

during the on-site visit. This interaction identified that some noncredit-bearing continuing education courses had inadvertently and incorrectly been included in Appendix A and that there were a few clerical errors. Corrections resolved concerns for federal compliance related to distance education and correspondence courses.

Specific discussion of Team findings related to issues of concern about distance education and correspondence education previously identified are included in the following Criteria sections of this Team report and the Team recommendation regarding ASU's sanction is presented in the Conclusion section.

Interactions with Constituencies

President
Assistant Vice President Academic Affairs (Steering Committee chair & co-chair Criterion 3)
Assistant Vice President- Extended Studies Operations
Assistant Vice President - Graduate Studies
Academic Advisors (3)
Academic Department Chairs (11)
Assistant Director Communications
Associate Director Campus Recreation and Wellness
Assistant Director Civic Engagement & Career Services
Assurance System Administrator
Board of Trustees (11)
President Professional Administrative Staff Council
Chair Student Learning Assessment Committee
Chief Information Officer, co-chair Criterion 5
Chief Financial Officer, co-chair Criterion 5
Coordinator for Fitness and Wellness
Coordinator of Adventure Leadership and Programs
Director Academic Information Technology Center
Director Assessment
Director Athletics
Director Human Resources
Director Nielsen Library
Director MBA program
Director SEEDS Grant
Director Special Projects (Dual Enrollment)
Director Student Life and Recreation
Director Student Success Center
Director Student Support Services
Executive Director for Enrollment Management, chair Criterion 2 and Federal Compliance
Faculty Senate President
Facilities Director
Grant Specialist
Grizzly Testing and Learning Center Manager
Library Circulation Supervisor
Interim Vice President Academic Affairs, co-chair Criterion 1
President Associated Student & Faculty Senate
President Classified Employees Council
President Contingent Faculty and Instructor Council
Prof. of Psychology, CTIR Director & co-chair Criterion 3

Prof. of Mathematics, Student Learning Assessment Committee chair, co-chair Criterion 4
Program Coordinator of Civic Engagement
Senior Analyst Institutional Effectiveness
Staff Academic Information Technology Center (4)
Transition Committee (5)
Vice President for Administration, Chief Operating Officer
Vice President for Student Services & co-chair Criterion 1

Drop In Sessions
Faculty (25)
Staff (58)
Students (9)

Additional Documents

Online, Face-to-Face and Print-Based Correspondence Syllabi (28)
AR101 – Art & Creativity (F2F)
AR103 – Art Appreciation (Online, Print-Based)
BIOL209 – General Biology (F2F)
BUS207 – Principles of Accounting 1 (F2F, Online, Print-Based)
BUS505 – Creating Consumer Value (Online)
CHEM401 – Biochemistry 1 (F2F)
COUN542 – Diagnosis and Psychopathology (Online)
ED590 – Professional Learning Communities: Collaboration and Collective Responsibility (Online)
ENG101 – Communication Arts 1 (F2F, Online, Print-Based)
ENG102 – Communication Arts II (F2F, Online, Print-Based,)
M104 – Finite Mathematics (F2F, Online, Print-Based)
M106 – College Algebra (Online, Print-Based)
Music100 – Introduction to Music Literature (F2F, Online)
NURS309 – Nursing Fundamentals (F2F)
Psy 245 – Brain and Behavior (F2F, Online)
SOC 365 – Race, Culture, and Ethnicity (F2F)

Email related to Addendum Requests while on site:
Criteria for Evaluating Academic Programs (11/8/17)
HLC Financial Calculations Email (11/15/17)
Department Chair Faculty Checklist for Online Courses Email (11/14/17)
HLC Federal Compliance Credit Hour Discrepancies Email (11/14/17)
Template for Graduate Online courses Email (11/14/17)

Blackboard Learning Management System Course Review (22)

Websites Visited:
https://www.adams.edu/administration/ir/
https://www.adams.edu/about/consumer-information/
https://www.adams.edu/about/fast_facts.php
https://www.adams.edu/students/sub/bookstore/about.php
https://www.adams.edu/hlc/index.php
https://www.adams.edu/alumni/index.php
https://www.adams.edu/finaid/

https://www.adams.edu/finaid/costs-to-attend.php
https://www.adams.edu/ps/http://www.cacrep.org/
https://www.adams.edu/about/asc_history.pdf
http://www.aacnnursing.org/CCNE
http://www.cacrep.org/
https://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/TeacherEd/EdPrepProjectdocuments/Approved-Educator-Preparation-Programs-in-Colorado.pdf
https://nasm.arts-accredit.org/
https://www.qmprogram.org/qmresources/subscriptions/subscribers.cfm?program=0#

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The institutional mission is defined by state statute, which describes primary areas and levels of offerings. The institution has defined a Vision, a Core Purpose, and Values based on the mission in order to make it more meaningful and actionable for faculty, staff, and students. The development of the Vision, Core Purpose, and Values was done through a process that involved constituents across the campus over a two-year time period. Based on interviews with stakeholders, it appears that the institutional mission of educating diverse students is broadly understood across the campus.

The statutorily-approved mission is for primarily undergraduate offerings in the liberal arts and sciences, community college programs for transfer, with additional focus on business, teacher education, and a limited range of graduate programs. In addition, the Vision, Core Purpose, and Values focus on access and supporting a diverse student body, while maintaining a quality education. Currently the institution offers four credit-bearing certificates, an Associate in Arts and an Associate in Science Degree, 24 undergraduate degrees, and 11 graduate degrees including a doctoral degree in Counselor Education recently accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) 7/19/17 (HLC Evaluation Summary Sheet). The institution focuses on supporting access through scholarship programs and through degree offerings in areas relevant to its diverse population   In terms of support services, the University offers a number of student support services including freshman orientation, learning communities, a TRIO program, and peer tutoring.

With enrollment of 35% Hispanic students and 49% underrepresented minorities, the University is following its Vision, Core Purpose, and Values.

The University aligns its resources with its mission through a budget request process that requires each unit to describe how any initiative requiring funding meets the ASU 2020 Strategic plan goals

derived from the ASU statutory mission and vision. In addition, through the ASU 2020 Budget Impact Study (Assurance Argument) the university has identified the resources needed for implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Interviews with the President, academic leaders, faculty, staff and students all confirmed that the ASU mission and its Strategic Plan represent guiding forces at ASU.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The University articulates its mission, vision, and values in the Faculty Handbook and a link to the Mission, Vision, and Values in the "About" tab on the University website.   In addition, the University has posters on campus, in classrooms and conference rooms, listing the institution's mission, vision, and values, along with Adams Outcomes.

The statutory mission, the institutional Mission, Vision, Values, and Core Purpose are current, and explain the institutional focus in terms of curriculum, scholarship, and intended constituents.

The mission, vision, and values identify the scope of its programs along with clarifying that the institution has a focus on its diverse, regional stakeholders. This mission includes rural teacher education, and serving as a provider of higher education in the San Luis valley.

According to third-party comments and campus interviews, ASU community partnerships, mentioned in the Assurance Argument, has lost grant funding and is no longer active. The University is developing new grant-funded partnerships including "Center for Economic Opportunity" that are intended to support community service and economic development in the region. Conversations with faculty, staff and students confirmed their familiarity with the change in direction regarding how community service and economic development coalesce.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The institution has real strength in meeting the expectations of Core Component 1.C, clearly addressing its role in a multicultural society. The institution has been designated a Hispanic-serving institution, and nearly half of its students are underrepresented minorities. The President indicated, in an on-campus interview, plans to replace a Cabinet-Level Liaison for Inclusive Excellence in January, 2018.

Members of the Board of Trustees, administrative and academic leaders, faculty, staff and students all spoke with commitment about what an important role ASU plays in supporting diversity and multiculturalism in the university community and the broader San Luis Valley. ASU values its identification as the first Hispanic Serving Institution in Colorado, a status achieved in 2000.

Title V funding has provided equity and inclusive excellence training for faculty and staff for the past 15 years. A newly updated performance evaluation template includes a requirement for evidence of support for inclusive excellence.   Based on an interview with the HR director, this template has been used for evaluation of all exempt employees this past year. In addition, the University is working to increase the diversity of its faculty and staff, in line with its current Strategic Plan.

ASU student organizations also represent attention to diversity. There is a Spanish Language Club, a Model United Nations organization and the Society for Advancement of Hispanics/Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS).

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

As a public institution with a statutory mission for regional service, Adams State University clearly demonstrates its service role to the community. This is manifested through its programming, including distance education offerings, as well as non-credit enrichment activities for the community, such as planetarium sessions and lectures.

As a public institution, the educational mission of Adams State University takes precedence over other considerations. The institution has put resources into supporting local students through scholarships, as a measure of its desire to meet its educational responsibilities. The Board of Trustees Policy Manual and Bylaws both include conflict of interest policies and the Board has recently developed a subcommittee on finance to enhance the regular review of resource allocations to mission-related purposes.

Goal 5 of the Strategic Plan specifically focuses on community relations. It includes plans for enrichment events, economic development, internships with for-profit and non-profit, and government organizations and programming and service-learning opportunities. Good progress has been made in addressing many of the strategic plan goals, related to community relations, as addressed in the ASU 2020 BOT Update (2017_0622-23). The President and Board of Trustee members confirmed that the alignment of economic development and community service initiatives will support the San Luis Valley.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Evidence

The institution's Mission, Vision, and Values are clearly articulated on its website, other public documents, and in posters placed across campus. These statements form the foundation for ASU 2020 Strategic Plan that guides university action and commitments. The mission is understood by the campus community, and guides the institution's operations in terms of programming, budgeting, and outreach.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The Team reviewed the materials in the Assurance Argument, including the ASU Faculty Handbook, Professional Personnel Handbook, University Manual and General Regulations, and reviewed numerous websites, including the bookstore site, and minutes from Cabinet, Executive Committee and BOT meetings that show the university has numerous policies in place. These materials clearly address all aspects of the university--financial, academic, personnel and auxiliary--and all personnel--board, administration, faculty and staff and demonstrate that it has in place numerous policies and procedures designed to insure fair and ethical behavior.

The concerns that led to probation focused on concerns about academic integrity. The University has subsequently adopted several new policies designed to address those concerns. This includes a policy on overload, limiting the number of credit hours and the number of students one faculty member can teach. The university has also reorganized so that the appropriate academic departments and the Vice President of Academic Affairs Office provide oversight for their extended study courses. Both the responsible academic department chair and AITC staff review all extended studies courses as they are developed and mid-semester when they are taught, to ensure they are meeting expectations regarding instructor interaction with students, and addressing other elements of best practices in pedagogy.

In on-campus interviews with faculty, Trustees and administrators, the Team verified that the policies and procedures were being followed, with one exception. A small number of faculty continue to teach credits on overload, beyond the maximum in policy. Even though this is a small number of faculty and in most cases there are few students (1-3) in the classes, the institution should bring practice in line with their policies. The issue of faculty overload and its relationship to ASU's financial position is discussed further in Criterion Five, Core Component A.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The Team reviewed the university's website and found that it was easy to navigate, clear and complete. It accurately presented information to students and the public, including information about programs and graduation requirements, admissions criteria, student retention information, gainful employment and tuition costs. Print materials provided to the Team clearly presented information about support services available to students, along with a general overview of the University.

The website was particularly transparent about the institution's current probationary status, why it was imposed and what the possible consequences are. The explanation ASU has shared with its community and constituents balances transparency and a sense of urgency to address important issues leading to the sanction without creating undue alarm.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The Team reviewed governing board policies and procedures in the Assurance Argument. These included the General Regulations, Bylaws, the Trustee Policy Manual, and minutes from BOT Meetings. These materials clearly reflect the role of the Board to be one of oversight, ensuring that the governance of the institution is consistent with institutional values.

Discussions with the Board and the President reflect the Trustees' commitment to the institutional values and a clear understanding of their role as one of oversight. As described in an on-campus meeting with Board members, in response to institutional challenges, the Board has recently made changes to improve oversight. These changes included the formation of an Audit and Finance Committee to more closely monitor the financial status of the University.

The Bylaws, Trustee Policy Manual and ASU General Regulations are very detailed and set direction for the governing board. That direction is consistent with the mission and values of the university.

The university is governed by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and related Colorado Statutes. The BOT is appointed by the governor. BOT policies and the Colorado Higher Education Commission policies are designed to ensure the independence of the BOT.

The Assurance Argument included the Trustee Policy Manual, Shared Governance Organizational Chart, and General Regulations. They all clearly state a commitment to delegation of the day to day governance of the university to the president and officers of the institution and to a process of shared governance. The institution offers examples (e.g. the presidential search process) in which the BOT worked closely with faculty and staff to make shared decisions.

Faculty, staff and students verified, when interviewed on campus, that they are very much involved in shared decision making at the institution.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The Faculty Handbook, considered a supplement to the Trustee Policy Manual, includes a section on Academic Freedom. In discussions, the Trustees specifically endorse the principles of academic freedom in a manner that provides assurances for the faculty and the institution.

Similar statements are provided in multiple sections of the Student Handbook, including Student Conduct, Academic Policies and Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy.

University policies, Information Technology Acceptable Use and Violence in the Workplace also provide parameters and statements regarding freedom of expression.

During the campus visit, faculty indicated that they felt supported by the administration in their work and had no concerns about their academic freedom.

The institution uses a series of committees to help insure freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. Committees are comprised of faculty and staff, with some reporting to the Associated Student and Faculty Senate or Faculty Senate. Examples include Associated Student & Faculty Senate, Curriculum Review Committee, Faculty Technology Advisory Committee, General Education Curriculum Committee and employee councils. ASU faculty reported that ASU is the only institution in Colorado that has a distinct Contingent Faculty Council with representation on the President's Cabinet to provide opportunities for this important constituency to have voice in university matters. This is a source of pride for ASU and was mentioned by faculty, staff and students more than once during the Team's varied conversations.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The university addresses responsible knowledge acquisition using an Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB's policies and related materials are well documented on the web site.

Consistent with the Institutional Syllabi Policy, the online and face-to-face syllabi reviewed by the Team included a statement on academic honesty and integrity.

The Academic Honesty and Integrity policy (ASU 100-03-01) states the university's position as well as providing examples to help students understand appropriate behaviors, be informed about actions that constitute academic dishonesty, and identify likely sanctions. The Student Handbook includes an Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy section with explicit examples and sanctions imposed.

The library provides guidance for "writing and citing" to enable students to practice ethical use of information resources.

The Temporary Faculty Hiring Policy (ASU 100-10-09) includes a component of peer review and classroom observations to help ensure quality knowledge acquisition and application.

Interviews with administrative and academic leaders confirmed that the policies referenced are known and implemented in an equitable manner.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Evidence

In the past, Adams State was placed on probation in 2016, mostly due to a lack of oversight for the online learning and written correspondence courses in its Extended Studies program as described in Institutional Context section of this Team Report. These concerns have been addressed. Print-Based correspondence courses have been dramatically reduced; they are now all offered on a semester basis only to prison inmates and degree seeking students who need them to meet specific degree requirements to graduate on a timely basis. Faculty overload is limited to *6 credits a semester (18 total credits),* and oversight for online and correspondence courses and programs is being transferred to academic departments with oversight provided by the Academic Affairs division to retain focus on federal compliance and course quality. Interviews with academic leaders and faculty indicated strong commitment to the online and correspondence course review processes as a means to maintain close connections with faculty course providers as they meet compliance requirements and work within Quality Matters™ principles and best practice.

The university's website and the public documents of the institution demonstrate that the Trustees, faculty and staff act with integrity. On-campus interviews showed a clear commitment on the part of all to transparency, integrity and shared governance.

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

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The Team reviewed online and on-campus course syllabi, and the course syllabi review processes as well as the program approval and review process, and discussed those materials and processes in interviews with faculty and academic administrators. Each program is reviewed every year, using a template common across all teaching/learning modalities. The learning outcomes are clearly articulated and appropriate to the degrees awarded.

The Team reviewed the materials related to the program approval processes (templates, policies and procedures) and verified, through on-campus interviews, that they were being used. The institution has clearly stated differentiated outcomes for undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as for the courses included in those programs. All programs, including their stated learning outcomes, are reviewed annually and online courses are reviewed mid-semester as well.

The institution offers online and face to face classes, as well as some print-based correspondence courses. Except for a few print-based correspondence courses, which will not be offered after this semester, all courses are taught on a semester basis. The print-based correspondence courses are available only to students who are incarcerated, or who are degree seeking students needing to a specific course, which is not available otherwise, to complete a program.

The Team reviewed the standard syllabi format used for all Adams University courses, across all modes of delivery and at all locations. This format requires clearly articulated learning outcomes and assessment processes. Syllabi are reviewed every three to five years to ensure that they reflect outcomes appropriate to the program level. The Team reviewed a sample of syllabi, representing all teaching/learning modalities. Although all of them included clearly articulated learning outcomes, an

initial federal compliance review identified syllabi that did not contain student learning outcomes. Continued institutional attention will be required to ensure that all syllabi are consistent with the university's template and include learning outcomes.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The Team reviewed the university's website, which lists the learning outcomes for the General Education program:

- understanding of and facility in the basic modes of communication and an ability to initiate inquiry, question conventional wisdom, and analyze problems;
- a critical understanding of the current state of knowledge, of the methods by which that knowledge has been produced, and of the interrelationships among the major academic divisions of knowledge: Communications, Arts and Humanities, Mathematics, Social & Behavioral Sciences/History, and Physical and Natural Sciences;
- the development of a global perspective (culture, historical, societal, scientific) from which a strong set of ethical and moral values can evolve; and
- an awareness of the importance and desirability of continuing to pursue intellectual growth.

These goals are appropriate to the mission and offerings of the university.

Although the goals do not specifically address the issue of diversity, discussions with faculty and review of a sample of general education syllabi, and program goals, suggest that this is integrated throughout the curriculum.

The university website, the content criteria that *have b*een developed for each general education area, as well as the common course syllabi, demonstrate that the outcomes are clearly articulated and based

on an established framework.

The institution is currently revising the general education curriculum to make it consistent with the state's guaranteed transfer program, which includes 31 credits of general education coursework in Communications, Arts & Humanities, Social & Behavioral Sciences, History, Science and Mathematics. ASU faculty plan to do this through the "Pathways" program, a thematic (e.g. social justice) general education curricula, using the Adams Outcomes as a basis for the learning outcomes. Although the Team discussed the plan for Pathways with department chairs, the plan has not yet been approved by the Academic Council. It is critical that the institution complete development of the plan for a revised general education curriculum and for assessing general education outcomes.

A summary of the projects and research included in specific courses, "Collecting, Analyzing, and Communicating Information; Mastering Modes of Inquiry or Creative work; Developing Skills Adaptable to Changing Environments by Department," show that there is a concerted effort to incorporate scholarship into advanced level classes. Discussions with faculty and academic administrators, and a review of random online and on-campus syllabi verify that this is indeed the case.

A review of the courses offered suggests that there is ample opportunity for study related to diversity. Some syllabi reviewed by the Team that recognize human and cultural diversity include: AR 103: Art Appreciation, BUS 397: Women & Power: Gender, Leadership & Business; COUN 515: Multi-Cultural Issues; COMM 430: Diversity in Media; MUS 100: Introduction to Music Literature; PSYC 315: Multicultural Issues; PSYC 360: Psychology of Gender; SOC 318: Race, Class & Gender; SOC 365: Race, Culture & Ethnicity; TED 549: Educating Diverse Learners; and CLD 516 Multicultural Narratives & Educational Reform.

In addition, the Team discussed how diversity and multicultural understandings contribute to the curriculum with faculty on campus. They expressed a strong commitment to integrating diversity across the curriculum.

The Faculty Handbook states that scholarship or creative activity is an important part of faculty workload. Faculty are eligible for sabbaticals every seven years, and a review of the sabbatical requests given to the Team, demonstrate a commitment to scholarship. A list of Mathematics and Science lunchtime talks and faculty lecture series suggests that faculty are engaged in scholarly activity.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The institution provided a summary of faculty from 2007-08 to 2016-17. The number of faculty has remained relatively stable, despite the fact that student enrollment has decreased. The current faculty ratio is 17:1. In spite of this ratio, the institution has a high proportion of faculty who are teaching an overload (more than 12 credits) in a semester; this is based on load reports provided by the institution and an interview with the VPAA. Continued institutional attention will be needed to ensure that teaching overloads do not lead to less effective teaching, and limited ability to carry out service and research.

According to reports provided to the Team, faculty turnover has been higher than average. This is understandable given the fact that the institution is on probation and facing budget shortfalls. However, continued institutional attention will also be required to ensure future faculty retention. In campus interviews, students, specifically business students, expressed their concerns about faculty turnover and demands on faculty to teach outside their specialties.

The Assurance Argument outlined the university's process for reviewing the credentials for all faculty, including those teaching in dual credit, contractual and consortial programs. As a result, the university dropped a number of faculty from their roster, or reassigned faculty so that they were teaching only in their clear areas of expertise. In interviews, department chairs verified that they had carried out the process. The university provided the Team with a list of all faculty qualifications and rationale for any faculty who did not meet the HLC degree requirements.

The Faculty Handbook clearly outlines the university's evaluation practices and the standards used in annual evaluations of non-tenured faculty. Post tenure review continues for any faculty who are rated as needing improvement.

Department chairs were asked to explain how they address Criterion 3. In all cases the departments included descriptions of their faculty review processes.

According to faculty, all online courses, taught by fulltime or adjunct faculty are regularly reviewed mid-semester by the department chairs. The Team reviewed the template used for the reviews. Following each review, chairs discuss their reviews with faculty. If issues found in those reviews are not adequately addressed by faculty, they are removed from online teaching.

There is a formal review process for adjunct faculty who are not teaching online, but according to the Interim Academic Affairs Vice President this may not always be followed. Although there are very few of them and many are reviewed, the institution should work to ensure the process is followed uniformly.

The university has allocated funds for professional development. The Faculty Handbook, outlines the process for requesting funds for sabbaticals. On campus discussion with faculty verified that they do take advantage of professional development opportunities. In addition, the institution has a Center for Teaching Innovation and Research, which supports faculty work. The Academic Instructional Technology Center supports faculty in their online teaching, and offers a course all faculty must complete before teaching online.

The Team reviewed the university's office hours policy. All full-time faculty are required to hold 10 weekly office hours and part-time faculty are required to hold one per class.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The university's website provides information about 73 student organizations. These include programs related to specific disciplines (e.g. accounting club, Spanish Club, athletics (e.g. lacrosse, baseball, soccer), spiritual life (e.g. Newman Club, Fellowship of Christian Students), diversity (e.g. Veterans, Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science, Black Student Union), and leadership and governance (e.g. Residence Hall Association, National Society of Leadership and Success). Based on information provided in the website and print materials provided to the Team, the University has many support services for students. These include an Academic Advising Office, tutoring labs for math, science, and other subjects, a writing studio, counseling services, accessibility services, and career services. In on-campus interviews, students expressed their satisfaction with the available student activities.

The admissions process, as outlined on the website, requires diagnostic testing on admission and students are directed to appropriate courses, developmental or otherwise, based on the test results. Admission Counselors advise entering students on their registrations. In on-campus interviews, professional advisors questioned whether the admissions staff were the best suited to provide registration advice. If the administration has not already addressed the issue of advising for initial registration one way or the other in keeping with their promise of transparency, they should do so.

According to print material provided to the Team, students who have declared a major have a faculty advisor in that academic department. Undeclared students, or students who are conditionally admitted, have an advisor from the Academic Advising Office. Students must obtain a PIN for registration from their advisor as a mechanism to help ensure that they check in with their advisors at least once per semester.

The university has a well-maintained infrastructure. During the campus visit, faculty expressed satisfaction with the infrastructure and noted that they had the resources needed to support their teaching. This included faculty in specialized areas such as computer science, theater and the arts, and the sciences.

The university's website links on-campus and online students to information resources—both those available in the Nielsen Library, as well as those that can be accessed online. The library staff also provides 24-hour chat and email services. In addition the website has links for answers to common related questions such as, finding articles and books, using the library, writing and citing.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.E - Core Component 3.E

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The university goals include Community Relations--collaborating "with the community to provide culturally responsive and sustainable development opportunities that mutually benefit the campus and the San Luis Valley community." (ASU 2020 Strategic Plan) The university has an Economic and Community Development Committee and recently received a grant from USDA, matched by a local bank, to foster community development. Trustee minutes, show that this committee is active and involved in community initiatives such as a Value Added Agriculture Sector Partnership, hosting an Economic Summit, and working with external partners to promote the development of an Industrial Hemp industry in the region.

During the on-campus visit, faculty were eager to share numerous examples of relationships between students and the community. These included theater performances, Halloween activities, and a youth science fair. It was evident as the Team walked the campus that students are engaged in community charitable activities; e.g. participating in local food banks, tutoring children and so on.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Evidence

Based on the materials provided and interviews during the on-campus visit, it is clear to the Team members that Adams State University has made tremendous efforts to ensure that it is providing high quality education in all its offerings.

The institution has a rigorous course review process and reviews all online courses mid-semester and departments report on program outcomes annually.

Departments have reviewed all faculty credentials and as a result have released or reassigned faculty to ensure that faculty credentials match the courses they are teaching. This was done for all courses, including those with dual enrollment.

The institution articulated Adams Learning Outcomes--Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World; Intellectual and Practical Skills; Personal and Social Responsibility; and Integrative and Applied Learning. The faculty is considering adopting these same outcomes for a re-imagined general education curriculum.

While these efforts are impressive, and the institution has made great strides, there are a number of efforts, e.g. revision of general education, that are not complete. The Team commends the institution on the great strides it has made and encourages all to see them through to the end.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

According to Adams State University policy, all academic programs engage in yearly and 5-year academic program reviews. It was confirmed in interviews with academic leaders that the five-year program review process is currently suspended for one year while being revised and will be re-implemented in the fall of 2018. The ASU Assessment Plan (4/17/17) presented to Academic Council and Graduate Council mandates that 5-year program reviews for all undergraduate and graduate programs will include an external reviewer with expertise in the discipline or field appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. This mandate in the program review processed proposed attests

to the ongoing commitment to the assessment of student learning. This commitment was demonstrated by academic and administrative leaders and faculty during conversations about Criterion 4. As the University is still developing its 5-year review process, institutional attention will be required to make sure that this planning process is completed and implemented. The relationship of a robust program review process to the ASU financial position is discussed further in Criterion 5, Core Component A.

The review process follows the ASU's assessment plan, Assessing Student Learning, which was established in 2009 and most recently revised in 2017. At the direction of the Student Learning Assessment Committee (SLAC), programs complete a Yearly Program Report, upload the report to Blackboard and the SLAC evaluates each report using a standardized scoring rubric. The results are then shared with the programs, the Director of Assessment, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. A review of several yearly program review documents, as well as discussions with several SLAC faculty representatives and the Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs corroborate that the policy is being appropriately implemented. In sessions during the visit focusing on Programs and Program Review, academic leaders, administrators and faculty confirmed that ASU maintains the quality of its education programs through a system of yearly program reviews. Evidence shows that yearly program reviews are conducted for undergraduate, graduate and General Education programs in accordance with the spring 2017 Assessing Student Learning assessment plan guidelines.

Transfer credit policies are aligned with ASU Institutional policies which are clearly outlined in the Academic 2016-2017 catalog on the ASU website. Although there is no limit to the number of undergraduate credits that can be transferred, 30 institutional semester hours are required to obtain a Bachelors of Arts or Science degree from ASU. A total of 6 semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred into ASU. ASU also participates in 17 Colorado state-wide transfer articulation agreements as evidenced in the Assurance Argument. The quality of transfer credits is evaluated by third-party review, for international credit and through articulation agreements and department chair approval. Prior learning assessment credit is available for undergraduate students through ACT/SAT credit in Advance English, Advanced Placement, credit by Examination, credit for Military experience, and credit by Portfolio in accordance with the guidelines provided by the American Council on Education (ACE) and Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) (Assurance Argument, ASU Catalog*)*.

Dual credit courses are known as concurrent enrollment courses at ASU. There are four ways high school students can take ASU college courses including video courses at high schools, Online Dual-Enrollment Semester-Based Courses, Concurrent Enrollment on the ASU Campus and "other" Distance Learning Options. Students are required to complete an ASU Concurrent/Dual Enrollment Agreement for verification of eligibility and must meet both high school and college requirements. Approval is required by the high school and parent and students must meet all prerequisites, including minimum placement testing requirements. The agreement clearly outlines the criteria that must be met for consideration upon entering the program. This process was verified in conversations with the Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs.

ASU maintains specialized accreditation where appropriate. The ASU website identifies the following specialized accreditations; National Association of Schools of Music, Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and related Educational Programs (CACREP). All specialized accreditations were verified on each accrediting association's website. Additionally, ASU received Department of Higher Education, State of Colorado reauthorization of the Educator Preparation Unit and Programs in 2013 through 2017. This authorization was confirmed in the Colorado Department of Higher Education website at: https://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/TeacherEd/EdPrepProjectdocuments/Approved-Educator-

Preparation-Programs-in-Colorado.pdf and verified with the Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs)

ASU evaluates the success of its graduates through alumni surveys. The university recognizes the need to improve the process to systematically collect, analyze and more broadly publicize information about graduate success. In a meeting with the President and Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs it was affirmed that more attention will be placed on gathering graduate data through the Alumni Foundation, initiatives through the Colorado Department of Education, and the Alumni Relations Office working in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Rating

Met With Concerns

Evidence

The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning, based on the four student outcomes (Adams Outcomes) provided in the Assurance Argument. The Adams Outcomes define the skills and knowledge expected of ASU graduates. These are Outcomes based on guidelines from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (Assurance Argument). The process for the assessment of student learning at Adams State is detailed in "Assessing Student Learning at ASU" (Assurance Argument, verified during the onsite visit). This plan was developed in 2009, and updated in 2012, 2015, and 2017. Review of this plan confirmed that a strategy is in place to align university student learning outcomes to program learning outcomes and ultimately to course learning outcomes through the Pathways Project. This work is intended to be completed by fall of 2018.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes at ASU is intended to occur for both General Education and Departmental programs. There is an active assessment plan and process in place for Departmental Assessment. This includes both undergraduate and graduate programs, as verified in an interview with the Interim VPAA. One example was provided by a chemistry faculty member during an onsite meeting. Based on the yearly program review and feedback from the SLAC, the Chemistry faculty member worked with the assessment coordinator to revamp student learning outcomes and mapped out an assessment tool for "graphing" in chemistry. According to the faculty member, this change clarified areas of confusion for students identified in the yearly program review. Other examples of departmental assessment were provided in the Assurance Argument. While department-level assessment is ongoing, the General Education assessment plan is currently being revised, and assessment is currently not taking place in those areas. Although it appears that the institution is making progress in completing the General Education assessment plan, the Team feels it is important to verify that the plan is developed on the intended timeframe, and that it is being implemented.

The institution demonstrates that assessment data generated through the departmental assessment

process has been used to improve student learning ("5 year assessment summaries" document in the Assurance Argument). Numerous examples were provided of how assessment has led to changes in curriculum, pedagogy, and other areas. As noted above, however, assessment is currently not being conducted to evaluate student learning in relation to the general education outcomes, and the present lack of assessment work in this area requires continuing institutional attention to ensure that a process is implemented in a timely manner that can be used to improve student learning.

The institution's assessment processes reflect good practice in several ways. The pathways project is based on using the AACU Value Rubrics, which has become an increasingly common method for assessing general education outcomes. The new General Education curriculum will also incorporate more High Impact Practices, another common mechanism for enhancing liberal education outcomes. The institution is using what it has learned to further enhance its assessment processes, as demonstrated by its ongoing revisions to its assessment plans. In addition, the institution has had substantial faculty and instructional staff member involvement in developing and evaluating its assessment work. For example, General Education curriculum and assessment is reviewed by a General Education Coordinating Committee composed of faculty appointed by the faculty senate. Revisions to the General Education program and assessment are being further evaluated by another faculty committee, the "Essential Learning Task Force". In addition, each department develops learning goals for its programs, and the faculty in that department play a key role in developing and implementing their assessment plans. Further, the Student Learning Assessment Committee is charged with overall evaluation and enhancement of assessment at Adams State University. This seven-member committee includes three faculty, and reports to the faculty senate.

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs and evaluates its effectiveness of student learning. ASU maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate for its students and mission. Evidence includes yearly program reviews, clear transfer credit policies, dual credit policies and prior learning credit policies.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

Monitoring Report completed by June of 2020

The monitoring report should include evidence that general education student learning outcomes developed by the General Education Task Force, Pathway Project, and aligned with the Adams Outcomes have been approved by the Faculty Senate and implemented. The finalized Pathways Project (general education) assessment plan and finalized rubrics for the assessment of the Pathways Project (general education) student learning outcomes should also be included in the monitoring report.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

ASU has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are attainable and appropriate to its mission, student population and educational offerings (Assurance Argument; Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, 2016**).**

There was a commitment to formulate and implement some of the 2013 retention goals into the Quality Initiative Proposal (QIP) (Assurance Argument) submitted to HLC in 2014. However, given ASUs probationary status and likely transition to the Standard Pathway the QIP requirement was eliminated. Nevertheless, ASU implemented some of the outcomes of the QIP and provided the data in the Assurance Argument (4c-Results); this showed a decrease in completion times for both associate and bachelor's degrees.

ASU collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion rates. During the on-site visit, the Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs affirmed that they followed the process for collecting and analyzing student retention, persistence and completion date as outlined in the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.

Retention data is collected by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) and, after analysis, reports are sent to the Executive team, Academic Council and Board of Trustees on a regular basis. OIE identifies barriers and issues facing students within the reports. ASU recently hired a Director of Assessment to help assist the OIE in refining the institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs.

Nationally, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) have slightly higher retention rates for Latino

students than retention rates for all higher education institutions (HEIs) (New America Foundation, January, 2015). The average graduation rate for HSIs (29%), remains well below the national average for all HEIs (57%). ASU's graduation rate reported in the Assurance Argument is 23%, below the national average for HSIs. In establishing goals, ASU may want to consider including an explicit graduation rate target in its strategic planning processes. This may help the community focus its efforts in a common direction.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Evidence

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs and evaluates the effectiveness of student learning. ASU maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate for its students and mission. Evidence includes yearly program reviews, clear transfer credit policies, dual credit policies and prior learning credit policies. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes at ASU is intended to occur for both General Education and Departmental programs. While department-level assessment is ongoing, the General Education assessment plan is currently being revised, and assessment is currently not taking place in those areas. Although it appears that the institution is making progress in completing the General Education assessment plan, the Team feels it is important to verify that the plan is developed on the intended timeframe, and that it is being implemented.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Rating

Met With Concerns

Evidence

Both the overall Composite Financial Index (CFI) as well as ratios which comprise the Index raise concerns about the financial operations of, and fiscal resources available to, the institution. The peer review team was unable to verify the FY 2013 CFI and while on site, requested that the institution recalculate this index. The recalculated CFI worksheet is in the addendum area of the assurance system. Upon institutional recalculation, the CFI dropped from the previously reported 1.40 to (0.06). Had this been calculated correctly upon submission in November 2014, it would have triggered a Financial Panel Review because it was below zone and was a second consecutive year with the CFI in or below zone. The past five fiscal years have shown a CFI range of 1.90 five years ago to 0.48 for the most recently submitted CFI for FY 2016. All those years would have indicated the institution should "assess debt and Department of Education compliance and remediation Issues" and "consider substantive programmatic adjustments" (Strategic Financial Analysis for Higher Education: Identifying, Measuring & Reporting Financial Risks, Seventh Edition, by KPMG LLP; Prager, Sealy & Co. LLC, p. 87). Three of the past five years have shown the CFI in the zone (FY 2016 and FY 2012) or below zone (FY 2013). The referenced CFI were excluding GASB 68 impact.

With respect to the net operating revenue ratio within the CFI, all five most recent years have shown the ratio curbed at the lower threshold of (0.40). The FY 2017 ratio, using draft financial statements,

shows the pattern continuing at the lower curb. Operating results indicate ASU has not been living within available resources (Ibid, p. 107). "A continuing decline or pattern of deficits is a warning signal that management and the governing board should focus on restricting the institution's income and expense streams to return to an acceptable net operating revenues ratios" (Ibid, p. 128).

While there is no absolute parameter for a viability ratio, a 1:1 relationship demonstrates sufficient expendable net assets for an institution to satisfy debt. ASU's viability ratio has averaged 0.19 the past five years indicating a potential concern in the ability of expendable net assets to cover debt (Ibid, p. 115). This concern has been manifested through ASU refinancing debt to reduce debt payments for a three-year window and an expressed desire by ASU to refinance bonds which are callable in 2019. The past few years, prior to including the viability ratio, the institution has provided additional calculations to the long-term debt expressed on the financial statements. While both current and non-current bonds payable and capital leases payable have been taken from the financial statements, ASU was "backing out" the unamortized refunding loss rather than use the numbers on the financial statements. *Strategic Financial Analysis for Higher Education* states that institutions should utilize the numbers from the financial statements and does not provide for further calculations or modifications. As a result, new modified CFI calculations were provided by the institution and are in the addendum to the Assurance Argument.

Finally, with respect to CFI, the return on net assets ratio has been below the goal of three to four percent plus inflation index for three of the past five years. Accordingly, asset performance and management generally may not be sufficient to support the University's strategic direction (Ibid, p.107).

The board of trustees and institution recognize the ongoing financial challenges. At the August 2017 board of trustees meeting (8/25/17 campus email), the board authorized "the administration of Adams State University to prepare a contingency plan to right-size the campus, in a manner which supports the board's long-term priorities as embodied in the ASU 2020 Plan, and which is complementary with other parallel strategies to ensure ASU's financial stability. This contingency plan may include a reduction in workforce, and the Board of Trustees has directed the administration to "communicate openly and deliberately with ASU faculty, administration and students to minimize concerns to this end." The president sent an email to faculty and staff the same day the motion was passed by the board, articulating the motion as well as a commitment to utilize data and involve constituent groups across the campus. Discussion in open forums during the site visit indicated a general understanding from faculty, staff and students about the financial challenges, including the possibility of workforce reductions. The faculty and staff indicate they have been involved in the discussions through constituent groups the past few months consistent with the commitment made by the president and the board. In multiple venues during the site visit, there was a persistent theme of appreciation from faculty and staff for the transparency with which such conversations are being conducted across the campus.

The budget process was articulated well during the site visit by both finance/budget staff as well as faculty and staff not directly involved in the finance and budget areas. This demonstrated a consistent understanding across the campus. The budget process is aligned with the strategic planning process directly on the budget request form as new funding requests must articulate how the new funding supports the strategic plan. However, the current program review process as discussed in Criterion Four, Core Component B focuses on student learning outcomes and does not address a variety of productivity issues, such as the cost/benefit of programs, and the ability of the institution to support those programs. The institution plans to address this in the five-year planning process, but that has not yet been implemented. The Criteria for Evaluating Academic Programs is a good start in defining a robust and fair program review process. While the proposal (November8, 2017) enjoys general

approval from the faculty via a survey, it remains in draft form pending formal review and several items such as cost and benefit of the program have not been evaluated by the criteria working group.

Staffing patterns, with the exception of extended studies workloads, have not changed as a result of enrollment declines, a fact noted by the institution, which may be contributing to financial pressures. In response to concerns about faculty salaries in the 2007 accreditation affirmation visit, ASU conducted a peer review of faculty salaries and reallocated $200,000 in FY 2016 funds to invest in faculty, staff and administrative salary enhancements. The economic downturn in 2008 presented challenges for ASU to respond sooner.

As a result of the university's probationary status, the university implemented a policy limiting faculty overload. This policy has been implemented, with some exceptions. The university needs to ensure that it is fully implemented.

As indicated in the Assurance Argument, exempt staff qualifications are determined by the institution and reflected in the job descriptions. Non-exempt positions are classified under the State of Colorado system.

Comments during the site visit indicate a challenge in recruiting qualified faculty and administrative staff due to the probation status, rural location, and comparatively low salaries. Change in senior leadership over the past few years has also presented some planning challenges.

A May 4, 2017 Moody's Investor's Service credit opinion indicate investments over the past ten years provide ASU with an average plant age of 11.3 years which is well positioned compared to an average age of plant of 15.2 years for A3 rated institutions. During the site visit, nine of the major buildings were visited, which confirmed a relatively young infrastructure with low deferred maintenance backlog. While this large investment in the infrastructure has provided benefits to campus, it too has provided additional financial pressures. Huron Consulting Group, retained by the Colorado Office of the State Auditor, stated this "capital-intensive strategy resulted in a significant increase in the University's debt service obligations" and as a result the operating cash flow in FY 2014 "exceeded the median for its selected peer group, but remained below the ideal threshold" (p. 17). The institution has taken steps to reduce the student fee commitment used to fund some of the capital improvements.

Over the past ten years, ASU has been responsive to changing technology requirements. This is evidenced by increased bandwidth being provided to the campus as well as comments during open forums acknowledging quality information technology support staff. A sampling of 18-20 classrooms and labs during the site visit indicated current technology with respect to computers, monitors and projectors. Computing Services is one of only a few departments on campus that appeared to be using multiple year budget modeling and planning.

The university budgeting and planning processes are inclusive and have a mission focus. While the mission statement expressions are realistic with respect to the organization and opportunities, there is a tension with respect to existing resources. The university may need to evaluate bold steps to ensure mission and resources align.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

Monitoring report by June of 2020

The monitoring report should include:

A five-year history of enrollment trends and plans, including retention rates.

To address concerns related to ASU's financial status the monitoring report should explain the history of CFIs and the component ratios that have contributed to being "In The Zone" or "Below The Zone", specifically the Net Operating Ratio, and identify specific steps the institution has taken to move the ratios toward a positive margin.

The monitoring report should examine the revenue and expense components that have had the greatest impact on the institution's financial health (e.g., enrollments, salaries and benefits, annual fund capital, cash flow, margins, reserves, and debt requirements) and identify specific strategies implemented to re-establish financial health (i.e., planning, enrollment). For each strategy implemented, the monitoring report should indicate when and how the strategy was implemented, results achieved, gaps in the results, and new or revised strategies planned for further continued improvement.

The report should document a finalized process for academic program reviews. One example of a completed program review should be included in the monitoring report to demonstrate that these reviews are being conducted to support ASU's Financial Plan of Action (Assurance Argument 5.A.1 approved by the ASU Board of Trustees 8/17). The monitoring report should also include evidence of compliance with ASU's overload policy (Adams State University Academic Policy 100-10-08, 5-19-16).

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

The Board of Trustees posts agenda and minutes on ASU web pages. As shown in those minutes, as well as discussions with the trustees and administrators during the site visit, the board has become more actively involved in the governance of the institution. A reformation of trustee committees within the past few years now includes an audit and finance committee. One trustee articulated experience in right sizing organizations and service on other boards which will prove helpful in the difficult decisions likely coming for ASU. Trustees articulated long term vision for ASU and the fortitude to make decisions necessary for the Financial Plan of Action currently under development. Trustees clearly demonstrated a sense of urgency with respect to current financial challenges and program review. The board reviews financial data and progress on the ASU 2020 Strategic Plan on a routine basis. Reports from the President, Faculty trustee and student trustee are routine agenda items. The board appropriately reviews and approves institutional policies. Trustees demonstrated understanding of their roles and responsibilities in conversations with the Team.

Three surveys (2009, 2013 and 2015) indicated concerns from faculty regarding shared governance. As a result, ASU engaged a consultant to solicit specific feedback and provide recommendations. ASU has implemented a shared governance policy approval flow chart that clearly demonstrates the process, including revisions. The President's cabinet was also reorganized to provide representation from all employee constituent groups, including faculty senate. Stakeholder comments during the site visit repeatedly commented on the cabinet reorganization as a positive change. In addition, the Executive Council posts meeting summaries on the web site so faculty, staff and students can access thereby providing a level of transparency.

Policies and academic requirements are developed and created through the Faculty Senate and a series of institutional councils and committees including: Academic Council, Graduate Council, Curriculum Review Committee, General Education Coordinating Committee, Student Learning Assessment Committee and the Faculty Technology Advisory Committee have been created.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

ASU allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities given overall constraints as discussed in Criterion 5, Core Component A above and the Board of Trustees, University President and other university leaders demonstrated in discussions with the Team and by their actions that they are prepared to address ASU's financial constraints.

Based on interviews during the campus visit, General Education assessment and other student learning outcomes assessment results are not well linked with program review or budgeting strategies for resource allocation. After a two-year pause, ASU has a plan to re-implement a revised five-year program review. This program review process can be supportive in examining how to respond to financial constraints and should include appropriate assessment reports. As mentioned in Criterion Four, Core Component B, the ASU document, *Criteria for Evaluating Academic Programs*, includes the appropriate direction, it just remains a "work in process."

ASU engaged the various campus constituents when developing the ASU 2020 strategic plan. The plan was structured to include metrics identifying which groups or individuals are responsible for fulfillment of each facet. Quarterly updates are provided to the President's Cabinet and semi-annual updates are shared with the Board of Trustees. The President participates in a state collaboration that examines agricultural needs in the state and that also identifies emerging factors influencing the strategic plan.

Enrollment fluctuations are addressed in student fee based budgeting through a practice of holding five percent reserve pending enrollment targets materializing. In addition, to ensure responsible spending fund balances are monitored closely. Any expenditures beyond $50,000 require approval of the Board of Trustees.

Limited resources are allocated consistent with the strategic plan by requiring new funding requests to

articulate how the funds will support the strategic plan.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

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

Rating

Met

Evidence

Operational assessment and consequent adjustments are an area where the institution could benefit from some additional focus. For example, NSSE is conducted but results are not systemically evaluated or utilized. Other examples of current practices articulated during the site visit include a housing quality of life survey, a survey involving student life and a facility audit. Residents expressed significant concerns regarding length of time for repairs in the living spaces, but the institution does not have an efficient process and potentially does not have sufficient staff to respond. The Vice President for Student Services indicates software to improve response times has been approved for purchase which will help with this.

ASU recognizes the past shortfall of not utilizing assessment data more broadly to improve operations in a more consistent and holistic manner. As part of the Financial Plan of Action, during fall 2017, the university began actively engaging most areas of campus in a review of operations using planning conversations and meetings with faculty and staff. This deliberate campus wide effort is intended to improve efficiency and effectiveness with the benefit of rightsizing the university.

According to numerous staff interviewed during the site visit, a senior research analyst hired in the office of Institutional Effectiveness a little over a year ago has brought a collaborative work style and a renewed vigor to data utilization which is being well received by offices across campus.

ASU is undergoing operational contingency planning to help "right size" the institution. Each division is reviewing operations to assess impact and effectiveness. It will be important to have the fortitude to implement the changes identified in the planning process.

Both the executive team and the board of trustees regularly review the progress on the ASU 2020 strategic plan. Tactics within the plan are assigned to a specific individual or department, with metrics and timelines for goal attainment or review. Conversations during the site visit indicated active engagement on the strategic plan elements and an ongoing assessment of the merits of the various elements. For example, ASU 2020 calls for implementation of an honors program. As the institution has focused on that piece of the plan, a more rigorous discussion on the merits of an honors program and appropriate use of resources are being determined if appropriate to move forward or not.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Evidence

ASU submitted an incorrectly calculated CFI for FY 2013, which had it been submitted correctly would have triggered a financial panel review. The CFI has been in zone or below zone three of the past five fiscal years. The institution and board of trustees are in the planning stage of change to address the financial challenges of ASU.

The institution assertively addressed and has been monitoring faculty overloads as a result of the probationary status. A new policy provides clear parameters to help prevent the overload issues from developing again.

Revised planning processes throughout the institution are under development or in early implementation, as demonstrated by the ASU 2020 strategic plan. The five-year program review process is suspended and a new plan being developed. This plan has not yet been implemented.

The ASU board of trustees is becoming increasingly active and supportive of the work from the president in helping to increase assessment and planning throughout the institution.

With newer infrastructure, responsive technology and an engaged faculty and staff, ASU is poised to address their financial challenges. There is a recognition on campus that such action may include changes in staffing and programs in order to return to financial health and remain a viable economic and education driver for Colorado.

While the institution appears to be taking appropriate steps to assess programs and improve financial health, the Team recommended "met with concerns' for Criterion Five, Core Component A because plans not yet implemented. As such, monitoring is recommended to ascertain if plans materialize into action and effective outcomes.

Review Dashboard

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

Review Summary

Interim Report(s) Required

Due Date
6/18/2020

Report Focus
Criterion 4 – Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

Core Component 4.B – Met with concerns

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

The monitoring report should include evidence that general education student learning outcomes developed by the General Education Task Force, Pathway Project, and aligned with the Adams Outcomes have been approved by the Faculty Senate and implemented. The finalized Pathways Project (general education) assessment plan and finalized rubrics for the assessment of the Pathways Project (general education) student learning outcomes should also be included in the monitoring report.

Criterion 5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

Core Component 5.A – Met with Concerns

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

The monitoring report should include:

A five year history of enrollment trends and plans, including retention rates.

To address concerns related to ASU's financial status the monitoring report should explain the history of CFIs and the component ratios that have contributed to being "In The Zone" or "Below The Zone", specifically the Net Operating Ratio, and identify specific steps the institution has taken to move the ratios toward a positive margin.

The monitoring report should examine the revenue and expense components that have had the greatest impact on the institution's financial health (e.g., enrollments, salaries and benefits, annual fund capital, cash flow, margins, reserves, and debt requirements) and identify specific strategies implemented to re-establish financial health (i.e., planning, enrollment, etc.). For each strategy implemented, the monitoring report should indicate when and how the strategy was implemented, results achieved, gaps in the results, and new or revised strategies planned for further continued improvement.

The report should document a finalized process for academic program reviews. One example of a completed program review should be included in the monitoring report to demonstrate that these reviews are being conducted to support ASU's Financial Plan of Action (Assurance Argument 5.A.1 approved by the ASU Board of Trustees 8/17). The monitoring report should also include evidence of compliance with ASU's overload policy (Adams State University Academic Policy 100-10-08, 5-19-16).

Conclusion

Adams State University addressed concerns identified in the 9/15 HLC visiting team report that led to its being placed on Probation by the HLC Board (2/25/16). The Team recommends that the sanction of Probation be removed for Adams State University. ASU is commended for the progress made in addressing prior HLC concerns and resolving federal compliance concerns. The HLC Probation Policy, INST.E.20.010, states: "An institution removed from Probation will be placed on the Standard Pathway for its next reaffirmation cycle."

While Criterion 1 (Mission), Criterion 2 (Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct) and Criterion 3 (Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support) were found by the Team to be "Met", Criterion 4 (Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement) and Criterion 5 (Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness) were found to be "Met with Concerns." The Team recommends a monitoring report due June 18, 2020 to allow ASU an opportunity to provide evidence of continued progress in meeting Criterion 4, Core Component 4.B and Criterion 5, Core Component 5.A.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation
Met With Concerns

Sanctions Recommendation
No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation
Limited to Standard

Federal Compliance Worksheet for Evaluation Teams

Evaluation of Federal Compliance Components

The team reviews each item identified in the *Federal Compliance Filing by Institutions* (FCFI) and documents its findings in the appropriate spaces below. Teams should expect institutions to address these requirements with brief narrative responses and provide supporting documentation where necessary. Generally, if the team finds in the course of this review that there are substantive issues related to the institution's ability to fulfill the Criteria for Accreditation, such issues should be raised in the appropriate parts of the Assurance Review or Comprehensive Quality Review.

This worksheet is to be completed by the peer review team or a Federal Compliance reviewer in relation to the federal requirements. The team should refer to the *Federal Compliance Overview* for information about applicable HLC policies and explanations of each requirement.

Peer reviewers are expected to supply a rationale for each section of the Federal Compliance Evaluation.

The worksheet becomes an appendix in the team report. If the team recommends monitoring on a Federal Compliance Requirement in the form of a report or focused visit, the recommendation should be included in the Federal Compliance monitoring sections below and added to the appropriate section of the Assurance Review or Comprehensive Quality Review.

Institution under review: Adams State University

Please indicate who completed this worksheet:

☒ Evaluation team

☐ Federal Compliance reviewer

To be completed by the Evaluation Team Chair if a Federal Compliance reviewer conducted this part of the evaluation:

Name:

☐ I confirm that the Evaluation Team reviewed the findings provided in this worksheet.

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Assignment of Credits, Program Length and Tuition
(See FCFI Questions 1–3 and Appendix A)

1. Complete the *Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours*. Submit the completed worksheet with this form.

   - Identify the institution's principal degree levels and the number of credit hours for degrees at each level (see the institution's Appendix A if necessary). The following minimum number of credit hours should apply at a semester institution:

     o Associate's degrees = 60 hours

     o Bachelor's degrees = 120 hours

     o Master's or other degrees beyond the bachelor's = At least 30 hours beyond the bachelor's degree

   - Note that 1 quarter hour = 0.67 semester hour.

   - Any exceptions to this requirement must be explained and justified.

   - Review any differences in tuition reported for different programs and the rationale provided for such differences.

2. Check the response that reflects the evaluation team or Federal Compliance reviewer's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

   ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

   ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The ASU undergraduate catalog (https://adams.edu/records/graduation/babs.php) specifies that a minimum of 60 credit hours are required to graduate with an associate's degree and a minimum of 120 credits are required for a bachelor degree. The Graduate School website (https://www.adams.edu/gradschool/faqs.php) specifies that graduate programs require between 30 and 66 graduate credits for a master's degree.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Institutional Records of Student Complaints
(See FCFI Questions 4–7 and Appendixes B and C)

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1. Verify that the institution has documented a process for addressing student complaints and appears to by systematically processing such complaints, as evidenced by the data on student complaints since the last comprehensive evaluation.

   - Review the process that the institution uses to manage complaints, its complaints policy and procedure, and the history of complaints received and resolved since the last comprehensive evaluation by HLC.

   - Determine whether the institution has a process to review and resolve complaints in a timely manner.

   - Verify that the evidence shows that the institution can, and does, follow this process and that it is able to integrate any relevant findings from this process into improvements in services or in teaching and learning.

   - Advise the institution of any improvements that might be appropriate.

   - Consider whether the record of student complaints indicates any pattern of complaints or otherwise raises concerns about the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation or Assumed Practices.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

   ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

   ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The Student Handbook (pages 74-75) presents a systematic process to receive, review, and resolve student complaints. A majority (69%) of the student complaints derived from Academic Affairs issues and 20% were based on either Athletics or Student Services related concerns. The institution adjusted its complaint review process by involving Department Chairs and enhanced awareness of the complaint review procedure by making an annual presentation during New Faculty Orientation. Expanding this formal annual presentation for all new campus staff members and ensuring the due process of all parties concerned will further strengthen the process.

In an interview with the Vice President for Student Services, he indicated that his office tracks complaints and the resolution of the complaints. The one area of concern with this system is with academic complaints, which are deferred to a department chair, where the information on resolution is not always shared with the Vice President of Student Services.

Additional monitoring, if any:

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Publication of Transfer Policies
(See FCFI Questions 8–10 and Appendixes D–F)

1. Verify that the institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public. Policies should contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions.

   - Review the institution's transfer policies.

   - Review any articulation agreements the institution has in place, including articulation agreements at the institution level and for specific programs and how the institution publicly discloses information about those articulation agreements.

   - Consider where the institution discloses these policies (e.g., in its catalog, on its website) and how easily current and prospective students can access that information.

   - Determine whether the disclosed information clearly explains any articulation arrangements the institution has with other institutions. The information the institution provides to students should explain any program-specific articulation agreements in place and should clearly identify program-specific articulation agreements as such. Also, the information the institution provides should include whether the articulation agreement anticipates that the institution (1) accepts credits from the other institution(s) in the articulation agreement; (2) sends credits to the other institution(s) in the articulation agreements; (3) both offers and accepts credits with the institution(s) in the articulation agreement; and (4) what specific credits articulate through the agreement (e.g., general education only; pre-professional nursing courses only; etc.). Note that the institution need not make public the entire articulation agreement, but it needs to make public to students relevant information about these agreements so that they can better plan their education.

   - Verify that the institution has an appropriate process to align the disclosed transfer policies with the criteria and procedures used by the institution in making transfer decisions.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

   ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

   ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The established transfer policies for Undergraduate Students are publicized through the transfer website, online university catalog, and transfer specific policy guidelines and publications.

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The institution participates in Colorado Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements (STAA) following clear guidelines of the Colorado Department of Education. Articulation agreements with Trinidad State Junior College and University of New Mexico – Taos are explicitly publicized in the Transfer Guide.

In conversation, the Director of Enrollment Services and the Registrar indicated that for courses that do not already have a defined equivalent, the department and department chair determine the equivalencies. This is broadly documented on page three of the Adams State University policy "Coursework Transfers".

Additional monitoring, if any:

Practices for Verification of Student Identity
(See FCFI Questions 11–16 and Appendix G)

1. Confirm that the institution verifies the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided through distance or correspondence education. Confirm that it appropriately discloses additional fees related to verification to students, and that the method of verification makes reasonable efforts to protect students' privacy.

   - Determine how the institution verifies that the student who enrolls in a course is the same student who submits assignments, takes exams and earns a final grade. The team should ensure that the institution's approach respects student privacy.

   - Check that any costs related to verification (e.g., fees associated with test proctoring) and charged directly to students are explained to the students prior to enrollment in distance or correspondence courses.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

   ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

   ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

Adams State University uses secure logins and pass codes, proctored exams, security questions, and other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identity in distance learning. The institution discloses any extra cost to students associated with these authentication methods of student identity through course syllabi, other University

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documents, and on the University website. The university also reserves the right to request additional government-issued documentation of identity from students for ensuring that the person enrolled in the course is the person completing assignments, exams, and all other course requirements.

The university uses designated Data Stewards and Data Custodians to enforce privacy of student information.

Based on interviews with the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, correspondence courses may no longer be taken by non-degree seeking students. Consequently, correspondence courses are now only available for prisoners, and degree-seeking students. The controls used to ensure student identity in distance education courses are also being used for correspondence courses.

Policies are documented in the ASU Policy Manual #100-05-14 Student Identity Verification For Distance Education

Additional monitoring, if any:

Title IV Program Responsibilities
(See FCFI Questions 17–24 and Appendixes H–Q)

1. This requirement has several components the institution must address.

   - The team should verify that the following requirements are met:

     o **General Program Requirements.** The institution has provided HLC with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department has raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities.

     o **Financial Responsibility Requirements.** The institution has provided HLC with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department has raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion 5 if an institution has significant issues with financial responsibility as demonstrated through ratios that are below acceptable levels or other financial responsibility findings by its auditor.)

     o **Default Rates.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its three-year default rate. It has a responsible program to work with students to minimize default rates. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department has raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. Note that for 2012 and thereafter, institutions and teams should be using the three-year default rate based on revised default rate data published by the Department in September 2012; if the institution does not provide the default rate for three years leading up to the comprehensive evaluation visit, the team should contact the HLC staff.

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- o **Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, and Related Disclosures.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.

- o **Student Right to Know/Equity in Athletics.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The disclosures are accurate and provide appropriate information to students. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion 2, Core Component 2.A if the team determines that the disclosures are not accurate or appropriate.)

- o **Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The institution has demonstrated that the policies and practices meet state or federal requirements and that the institution is appropriately applying these policies and practices to students. In most cases, teams should verify that these policies exist and are available to students, typically in the course catalog or student handbook and online. Note that HLC does not necessarily require that the institution take attendance unless required to do so by state or federal regulations but does anticipate that institutional attendance policies will provide information to students about attendance at the institution.

- o **Contractual Relationships.** The institution has presented a list of its contractual relationships related to its academic programs and evidence of its compliance with HLC policies requiring notification or approval for contractual relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a contractual relationship that may require HLC approval and has not received HLC approval, the team must require that the institution complete and file the change request form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Substantive Change Application for Programs Offered Through Contractual Arrangements on HLC's website for more information.)

- o **Consortial Relationships.** The institution has presented a list of its consortial relationships related to its academic programs and evidence of its compliance with HLC policies requiring notification or approval for consortial relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a consortial relationship that may require HLC approval and has not received HLC approval, the team must require that the institution complete and file the form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Substantive Change Application for Programs Offered Through Consortial Arrangements on HLC's website for more information.)

- Review all of the information that the institution discloses having to do with its Title IV program responsibilities.

- Determine whether the Department has raised any issues related to the institution's compliance or whether the institution's auditor has raised any issues in the A-133 about the institution's compliance, and also look to see how carefully and effectively the institution handles its Title IV responsibilities.

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- If the institution has been cited or is not handling these responsibilities effectively, indicate that finding within the Federal Compliance portion of the team report and whether the institution appears to be moving forward with the corrective action that the Department has determined to be appropriate.

- If issues have been raised concerning the institution's compliance, decide whether these issues relate to the institution's ability to satisfy the Criteria for Accreditation, particularly with regard to whether its disclosures to students are candid and complete and demonstrate appropriate integrity *(Core Components 2.A and 2.B).*

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

Adams State University has provided information on its responsibilities for Title IV funding, annual audited financial statements and composite financial ratios, three-year default rates data, campus crime statistics, athletic participation, contractual relationships, and satisfactory academic progress and attendance policies.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Required Information for Students and the Public
(See FCFI Questions 25–27 and Appendixes R and S)

1. Verify that the institution publishes accurate, timely and appropriate information on institutional programs, fees, policies and related required information. Verify that the institution provides this required information in the course catalog and student handbook and on its website.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

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☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

Adams State University publishes annual academic catalogs and semester course schedules. This information is also included in student handbooks. These documents provide accurate, timely, and appropriate information on institutional programs, tuition and fees, and policies and procedures. The information is also provided through its website, publications, and orientation programs.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Advertising and Recruitment Materials and Other Public Information
(See FCFI Questions 28–31 and Appendixes T and U)

1. Verify that the institution has documented that it provides accurate, timely and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its accreditation status with HLC and other agencies as well as about its programs, locations and policies.

   - Review the institution's disclosure about its accreditation status with HLC to determine whether the information it provides is accurate, complete and appropriately formatted and contains HLC's web address.

   - Review the institution's disclosures about its relationship with other accrediting agencies for accuracy and for appropriate consumer information, particularly regarding the link between specialized/professional accreditation and the licensure necessary for employment in many professional or specialized areas.

   - Review the institution's catalog, brochures, recruiting materials, website and information provided by the institution's advisors or counselors to determine whether the institution provides accurate, timely and appropriate information to current and prospective students about its programs, locations and policies.

   - Verify that the institution correctly displays the Mark of Affiliation on its website.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

   ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

   ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate

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reference).

Rationale:

Adams State University's Department of Public Relations and Marketing in conjunction with Enrollment Management & Admissions and Registrar's Offices provides accurate, timely, complete, and appropriate information to its current and prospective students and public.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Review of Student Outcome Data
(See FCFI Questions 32–35 and Appendix V)

1. Review the student outcome data the institution collects to determine whether they are appropriate and sufficient based on the kinds of academic programs the institution offers and the students it serves.

   - Determine whether the institution uses this information effectively to make decisions about planning, academic program review, assessment of student learning, consideration of institutional effectiveness and other topics.

   - Review the institution's explanation of its use of information from the College Scorecard, including student retention and completion and the loan repayment rate.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

   ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

   ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (4B).

Rationale:

The University is currently redeveloping its assessment methods for general education and overall institutional outcomes. In addition, the five-year program review process is being revised and is not currently active. Consequently, a monitoring report, as described in the Team response to the Criteria for Accreditation (specifically Criterion 4, Core Component B and Criterion 5, Core Component A) is recommended.

Additional monitoring, if any:

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Publication of Student Outcome Data
(See FCFI Questions 36–38)

1. Verify that the institution makes student outcome data available and easily accessible to the public. Data may be provided at the institutional or departmental level or both, but the institution must disclose student outcome data that address the broad variety of its programs.

   • Verify that student outcome data are made available to the public on the institution's website—for instance, linked to from the institution's home page, included within the top three levels of the website or easily found through a search of related terms on the website—and are clearly labeled as such.

   • Determine whether the publication of these data accurately reflects the range of programs at the institution.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

   ☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

   ☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

   ☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

   Rationale:

   ASU has a consumer information website (https://www.adams.edu/about/consumer-information/index.php) that includes or links to information related to student outcomes such as graduation and retention rates, persistence rates, postgraduate outcomes and also includes ASU student learning rates.

   Additional monitoring, if any:

Standing With State and Other Accrediting Agencies
(See FCFI Questions 39–40 and Appendixes W and X)

1. Verify that the institution discloses accurately to the public and HLC its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditors and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence.

   The team should consider any potential implications for accreditation by HLC of a sanction or loss of status by the institution with any other accrediting agency or of loss of authorization in any state.

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Note: If the team is recommending initial or continued status, and the institution is now or has been in the past five years under sanction or show-cause with, or has received an adverse action (i.e., withdrawal, suspension, denial or termination) from, any other federally recognized specialized or institutional accreditor or a state entity, then the team must explain the sanction or adverse action of the other agency in the body of the assurance section of the team report and provide its rationale for recommending HLC status in light of this action.

- Review the list of relationships the institution has with all other accreditors and state governing or coordinating bodies, along with the evaluation reports, action letters and interim monitoring plans issued by each accrediting agency.

- Verify that the institution's standing with state agencies and accrediting bodies is appropriately disclosed to students.

- Determine whether this information provides any indication about the institution's capacity to meet HLC's Criteria for Accreditation. Should the team learn that the institution is at risk of losing, or has lost, its degree or program authorization in any state in which it meets state presence requirements, it should contact the HLC staff liaison immediately.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The team confirmed by verification in accreditor and agency websites that the respective academic professional programs at Adams State University are in good standing with Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), and Colorado Department of Education.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Public Notification of Opportunity to Comment
(FCFI Questions 41–43 and Appendix Y)

1. Verify that the institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third-party comments. The team should evaluate any comments received and complete any necessary follow-up on issues raised in these comments.

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Note: If the team has determined that any issues raised by third-party comments relate to the team's review of the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, it must discuss this information and its analysis in the body of the assurance section of the team report.

- Review information about the public disclosure of the upcoming visit, including copies of the institution's notices, to determine whether the institution made an appropriate and timely effort to notify the public and seek comments.

- Evaluate the comments to determine whether the team needs to follow up on any issues through its interviews and review of documentation during the visit process.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

☒ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

Adams State University solicited third party comments from students, alumni, community, employers, and Facebook followers through local newspaper (The Valley Courier), alumni magazine, ASU website, the institution's Facebook page, Email, and campus announcements. Numerous comments were received, mostly positive. Some third party comments regarding changes to a community engagement program raised concerns regarding changes to a community engagement program. These were discussed with the President and other academic leaders, as well as faculty. The team did not find any continuing concern related to the comments received.

Additional monitoring, if any:

Competency-Based Programs Including Direct Assessment Programs/Faculty-Student Engagement
(See FCFI Questions 44–47)

1. Verify that students and faculty in any direct assessment or competency-based programs offered by the institution have regular and substantive interactions: the faculty and students communicate on some regular basis that is at least equivalent to contact in a traditional classroom, and that in the tasks mastered to assure competency, faculty and students interact about critical thinking, analytical skills, and written and oral communication abilities, as well as about core ideas, important theories, current knowledge, etc. (Also, confirm that the institution has explained the

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credit hour equivalencies for these programs in the credit hour sections of the Federal Compliance Filing.)

- Review the list of direct assessment or competency-based programs offered by the institution.

- Determine whether the institution has effective methods for ensuring that faculty in these programs regularly communicate and interact with students about the subject matter of the course.

- Determine whether the institution has effective methods for ensuring that faculty and students in these programs interact about key skills and ideas in the students' mastery of tasks to assure competency.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements.

☐ The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.

☐ The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

Additional monitoring, if any:

Institutional Materials Related to Federal Compliance Reviewed by the Team

Provide a list of materials reviewed here:

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Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours

Institution Under Review: Adams State University

Review the *Worksheet for Institutions on the Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours*, including all supplemental materials. Applicable sections and supplements are referenced in the corresponding sections and questions below.

Part 1. Institutional Calendar, Term Length and Type of Credit

Instructions

Review Section 1 of Appendix A. Verify that the institution has calendar and term lengths within the range of good practice in higher education.

Responses

A.   Answer the Following Question

1. Are the institution's calendar and term lengths, including non-standard terms, within the range of good practice in higher education? Do they contribute to an academic environment in which students receive a rigorous and thorough education?

    ☒ Yes   ☐ No

    Comments:

    The initial documentation received from the institution included learning experiences that were noncredit-bearing CEUs. Once that information was corrected, and other clerical errors were addressed, the institution's course offerings fall within the range of good practice in higher education.

B.   Recommend HLC Follow-Up, If Appropriate

Is any HLC follow-up required related to the institution's calendar and term length practices?

☐ Yes   ☒ No

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Rationale:

Identify the type of HLC monitoring required and the due date:

Part 2. Policy and Practices on Assignment of Credit Hours

Instructions

Review Sections 2–4 of the *Worksheet for Institutions on the Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours*, including supplemental materials as noted below. In assessing the appropriateness of the credit allocations provided by the institution the team should complete the following steps. The outcomes of the team's review should be reflected in its responses below.

1. **Format of Courses and Number of Credits Awarded.** Review the *Form for Reporting an Overview of Credit Hour Allocations and Instructional Time for Courses* (Supplement A1 to the *Worksheet for Institutions*) completed by the institution, which provides an overview of credit hour assignments across institutional offerings and delivery formats.

2. Scan the course descriptions in the catalog and the number of credit hours assigned for courses in different departments at the institution (see Supplements B1 and B2 to *Worksheet for Institutions*, as applicable).

   - At semester-based institutions courses will be typically be from two to four credit hours (or approximately five quarter hours) and extend approximately 14–16 weeks (or approximately 10 weeks for a quarter). The descriptions in the catalog should reflect courses that are appropriately rigorous and have collegiate expectations for objectives and workload. Identify courses/disciplines that seem to depart markedly from these expectations.

   - Institutions may have courses that are in compressed format, self-paced, or otherwise alternatively structured. Credit assignments should be reasonable. (For example, as a full-time load for a traditional semester is typically 15 credits, it might be expected that the norm for a full-time load in a five-week term is 5 credits; therefore, a single five-week course awarding 10 credits would be subject to inquiry and justification.)

   - Teams should be sure to scan across disciplines, delivery mode and types of academic activities.

   - Federal regulations allow for an institution to have two credit-hour awards: one award for Title IV purposes and following the federal definition and one for the purpose of defining progression in and completion of an academic program at that institution. HLC procedure also permits this approach.

3. Scan course schedules to determine how frequently courses meet each week and what other scheduled activities are required for each course (see Supplement B3 to *Worksheet for Institutions*). Pay particular attention to alternatively structured or other courses completed in a short period of time or with less frequently scheduled interaction between student and instructor that have particularly high credit hour assignments.

4. Sampling. Teams will need to sample some number of degree programs based on the headcount at the institution and the range of programs it offers.

    •   For the programs sampled, the team should review syllabi and intended learning outcomes for several courses, identify the contact hours for each course, and review expectations for homework or work outside of instructional time.

    •   At a minimum, teams should anticipate sampling at least a few programs at each degree level.

    •   For institutions with several different academic calendars or terms or with a wide range of academic programs, the team should expand the sample size appropriately to ensure that it is paying careful attention to alternative format and compressed and accelerated courses.

    •   Where the institution offers the same course in more than one format, the team is advised to sample across the various formats to test for consistency.

5. **Direct Assessment or Competency-Based Programs.** Review the information provided by the institution regarding any direct assessment or competency-based programs that it offers, with regard to the learning objectives, policies and procedures for credit allocation, and processes for review and improvement in these programs.

6. **Policy on Credit Hours and Total Credit Hour Generation.** With reference to the institutional policies on the assignment of credit provided in Supplement A2 to *Worksheet for Institutions*, consider the following questions:

    •   Does the institution's policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution?

    •   Does that policy address the amount of instructional or contact time assigned and homework typically expected of a student with regard to credit hours earned?

    •   For institutions with courses in alternative formats or with less instructional and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy also equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably achieved by a student in the time frame allotted for the course?

    •   Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that HLC will expect that credit hour policies at public

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institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

- If so, is the institution's assignment of credit to courses reflective of its policy on the award of credit?

- Do the number of credits taken by typical undergraduate and graduate students, as well as the number of students earning more than the typical number of credits, fall within the range of good practice in higher education?

7. If the answers to the above questions lead the team to conclude that there may be a problem with the credit hours awarded the team should recommend the following:

- If the problem involves a poor or insufficiently detailed institutional policy, the team should call for a revised policy as soon as possible by requiring a monitoring report within no more than one year that demonstrates the institution has a revised policy and provides evidence of implementation.

- If the team identifies an application problem and that problem is isolated to a few courses or a single department, division or learning format, the team should call for follow-up activities (a monitoring report or focused evaluation) to ensure that the problems are corrected within no more than one year.

- If the team identifies systematic noncompliance across the institution with regard to the award of credit, the team should notify the HLC staff immediately and work with staff members to design appropriate follow-up activities. HLC shall understand systematic noncompliance to mean that the institution lacks any policies to determine the award of academic credit or that there is an inappropriate award of institutional credit not in conformity with the policies established by the institution or with commonly accepted practices in higher education across multiple programs or divisions or affecting significant numbers of students.

Worksheet on Assignment of Credit Hours

A. Identify the Sample Courses and Programs Reviewed by the Team

BUS 381/481; HCA 381/481; NURS 415C; ID 179; BUS 363; BUS 355; CSCI 472; BUS 480; BUS 454; BUS 430; NURS 407C; MATH 340; MATH 120; CSCI 379; NURS 407C; PHYS 233; PHYS 232; PHYS 225; ED 589.

B. Answer the Following Questions

1. Institutional Policies on Credit Hours

   a. Does the institution's policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution? (Note that for this question and the questions that follow an institution may have a single comprehensive policy or multiple policies.)

   ☒ Yes   ☐ No

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Comments:

As per ASU Policy # 100-05-12 Hybrid and Online Course Credit Hour Assignment -
Undergraduate Students

b. Does that policy relate the amount of instructional or contact time provided and homework
typically expected of a student to the credit hours awarded for the classes offered in the
delivery formats offered by the institution? (Note that an institution's policy must go
beyond simply stating that it awards credit solely based on assessment of student learning
and should also reference instructional time.)

☒ Yes   ☐ No

Comments:

ASU Policy # 100-05-12, Hybrid and Online Course Credit Hour Assignment -
Undergraduate Students, identifies how instructional and contact hours influences credit
assignment.

c. For institutions with non-traditional courses in alternative formats or with less instructional
and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy equate credit hours
with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably
achieved by a student in the time frame and utilizing the activities allotted for the course?

☒ Yes   ☐ No

Comments:

d. Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good
practice in higher education? (Note that HLC will expect that credit hour policies at public
institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely
meet federal definitions as well.)

☒ Yes   ☐ No

Comments:

2. Application of Policies

a. Are the course descriptions and syllabi in the sample academic programs reviewed by the
team appropriate and reflective of the institution's policy on the award of credit? (Note that
HLC will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory
requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

☒ Yes   ☐ No

Comments:

b. Are the learning outcomes in the sample reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution's policy on the award of credit?

☒ Yes   ☐ No

Comments:

The initial federal compliance review noted missing course student learning outcomes in some syllabi. Upon further review onsite, the following course syllabi included student learning outcomes regardless of delivery method: MUS100, PSY245 (face-to-face and online); CHEM401, AR101, BIO209, SOC365, NUR309 (face-to-face only); AR103 (print and online); BUS505, COUN542, ED590 (online); ENG101, ENG102, M104, M106, BUS207 (face-to-face, print, online).

c. If the institution offers any alternative-delivery or compressed-format courses or programs, are the course descriptions and syllabi for those courses appropriate and reflective of the institution's policy on the award of academic credit?

☒ Yes   ☐ No

Comments:

d. If the institution offers alternative-delivery or compressed-format courses or programs, are the learning outcomes reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution's policy on the award of credit? Are the learning outcomes reasonable for students to fulfill in the time allocated, such that the allocation of credit is justified?

☒ Yes   ☐ No

Comments:

e. Is the institution's actual assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution reflective of its policy on the award of credit and reasonable and appropriate within commonly accepted practice in higher education?

☒ Yes   ☐ No

Comments:

C.   Recommend HLC Follow-up, If Appropriate

Review the responses provided in this worksheet. If the team has responded "no" to any of the questions above, the team will need to assign HLC follow-up to assure that the institution comes into compliance with expectations regarding the assignment of credit hours.

Is any HLC follow-up required related to the institution's credit hour policies and practices?

☐ Yes   ☒ No

Rationale:

Identify the type of HLC monitoring required and the due date:

D.   Systematic Noncompliance in One or More Educational Programs With HLC Policies Regarding the Credit Hour

Did the team find systematic noncompliance in one or more education programs with HLC policies regarding the credit hour?

☐ Yes   ☒ No

Identify the findings:

Rationale:

Part 3. Clock Hours

Instructions
Review Section 5 of *Worksheet for Institutions*, including Supplements A3–A6. Before completing the worksheet below, answer the following question:

Does the institution offer any degree or certificate programs in clock hours or programs that must be reported to the Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes even though students may earn credit hours for graduation from these programs?

☐ Yes   ☒ No

If the answer is "Yes," complete the "Worksheet on Clock Hours."

Note: This worksheet is not intended for teams to evaluate whether an institution has assigned credit hours relative to contact hours in accordance with the Carnegie definition of the credit hour. This

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worksheet solely addresses those programs reported to the Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes.

Non-degree programs subject to clock hour requirements (for which an institution is required to measure student progress in clock hours for federal or state purposes or for graduates to apply for licensure) are not subject to the credit hour definitions per se but will need to provide conversions to semester or quarter hours for Title IV purposes. Clock hour programs might include teacher education, nursing or other programs in licensed fields.

Federal regulations require that these programs follow the federal formula listed below. If there are no deficiencies identified by the accrediting agency in the institution's overall policy for awarding semester or quarter credit, the accrediting agency may provide permission for the institution to provide less instruction so long as the student's work outside class in addition to direct instruction meets the applicable quantitative clock hour requirements noted below.

> Federal Formula for Minimum Number of Clock Hours of Instruction (34 CFR §668.8):
>
> 1 semester or trimester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction
> 1 quarter hour must include at least 25 clock hours of instruction
>
> Note that the institution may have a lower rate if the institution's requirement for student work outside of class combined with the actual clock hours of instruction equals the above formula provided that a semester/trimester hour includes at least 30 clock hours of actual instruction and a quarter hour includes at least 20 semester hours.

Worksheet on Clock Hours
A.   Answer the Following Questions

1. Does the institution's credit-to-clock-hour formula match the federal formula?

   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

   Comments:

2. If the credit-to-clock-hour conversion numbers are less than the federal formula, indicate what specific requirements there are, if any, for student work outside of class.

3. Did the team determine that the institution's credit hour policies are reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that if the team answers "No" to this question, it should recommend follow-up monitoring in section C below.)

   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

   Comments:

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4. Did the team determine in reviewing the assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution that it was reflective of the institution's policy on the award of credit and reasonable and appropriate within commonly accepted practice in higher education?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

B. Does the team approve variations, if any, from the federal formula in the institution's credit-to-clock-hour conversion?

☐ Yes ☐ No

C. Recommend HLC Follow-up, If Appropriate

Is any HLC follow-up required related to the institution's clock hour policies and practices?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Rationale:

Identify the type of HLC monitoring required and the due date:

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HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

INSTITUTION and STATE:	Adams State University, CO
TYPE OF REVIEW*:*	Sanctions Probation
DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:	The University is also required to file an Assurance Filing by May 2017 providing evidence that the University has resolved the concerns of the Board identified in the Probation action and evidence that the University meets the Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components.Comprehensive Evaluation includes a Federal Compliance Reviewer.
	Adams State University has been granted an extension to Nov 2017 for the comprehensive evaluation visit to determine whether the concerns of the Board identified in its action have been resolved and the Criteria for Accreditation have been met. At its meeting in June 2018, the Board will review materials related to this evaluation and determine whether the University can be removed from Probation. If the University has not resolved the Board's concerns that led to the imposition of Probation and has not demonstrated that it is in compliance with all Criteria for Accreditation, other action may be appropriate.Comprehensive evaluation includes a federal compliance reviewer.
DATES OF REVIEW:	11/13/2017 - 11/15/2017

☐   No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements

Accreditation Status

Nature of Institution

Control: Public

Recommended Change: No change

Degrees Awarded: Associates, Bachelors, Masters, Doctors

Recommended Change: No change

Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2006 - 2007

Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2017 - 2018

Recommended Change: Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2021-2022

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Accreditation Stipulations

General:

Accreditation at the Doctoral level is limited to the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision. Out of state offerings are limited to courses in Northern New Mexico.

Recommended Change: No change.

Additional Location:

Prior HLC approval required.

Recommended Change: No change.

Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:

Approved for distance education courses and programs. Approved for correspondence education courses and programs.

Recommended Change: No change.

Accreditation Events

Accreditation Pathway   Under Review

Recommended Change: Limited to Standard Pathway

Upcoming Events

Monitoring

Upcoming Events

None

Recommended Change: Interim Report due June 18, 2020 demonstrating continued progress on Core Components 4.B (assessment) and 5.A (resources).

Reaffirmation visit in 2021-2022.

Institutional Data

Educational Programs		**Recommended Change: No change.**
Undergraduate		
Certificate	4	
Associate Degrees	2	
Baccalaureate Degrees	24	
Graduate		

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Master's Degrees	11	_____
Specialist Degrees	0	_____
Doctoral Degrees	1	_____

Extended Operations

Branch Campuses

None

Recommended Change: No change.

Additional Locations

East Campus, 108 La Veta Avenue, Alamosa, CO, 81101 - Active

East Campus, 108 La Veta Avenue, Alamosa, CO, 81101 - Active

Pueblo Community College, 900 W. Orman Ave., Pueblo, CO, 81004 - Active

Recommended Change: No change.

Correspondence Education

23.0101 - English Language and Literature, General, Bachelor, Bachelor of Arts in English/Liberal Arts

24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, Associate of Arts

24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Bachelor, Interdisciplinary Studies

24.0199 - Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities, Other, Associate, Associate of Science

45.1002 - American Government and Politics (United States), Bachelor, History and Government

45.1101 - Sociology, Bachelor, Sociology

52.0101 - Business/Commerce, General, Bachelor, Business Administration

52.0101 - Business/Commerce, General, Bachelor, Business Administration

52.0201 - Business Administration and Management, General, Master, MBA

Recommended Change: No change.

Distance Delivery

13.0406 - Higher Education/Higher Education Administration, Master, Higher Education Administration and Leadership

13.1001 - Special Education and Teaching, General, Master, Special Education - Generalist

13.1206 - Teacher Education, Multiple Levels, Master, Education

13.1312 - Music Teacher Education, Master, Music Education

13.1314 - Physical Education Teaching and Coaching, Master, Human Performance & Physical Education

22.0302 - Legal Assistant/Paralegal, Certificate, Paralegal

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Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Associate, Associate of Arts

24.0101 - Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Bachelor, Interdisciplinary Studies

24.0103 - Humanities/Humanistic Studies, Master, Humanities with an emphasis in History

24.0199 - Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities, Other, Associate, Associate of Science

42.2803 - Counseling Psychology, Master, Counseling

45.0301 - Archeology, Master, Humanities: Cultural Resource Management

45.0301 - Archeology, Master, Humanities: Cultural Resource Management

45.1002 - American Government and Politics (United States), Bachelor, History & Government

52.0101 - Business/Commerce, General, Bachelor, Business Administration

52.0101 - Business/Commerce, General, Bachelor, Business Administration - BA

52.0201 - Business Administration and Management, General, Master, MBA

No change.

Contractual Arrangements

13.1206 Teacher Education, Multiple Levels - Master - The Master of Education: Curriculum & Instruction Emphasis - US Satellite Laboratory, Inc.

None

Recommended Change: No change.

Consortial Arrangements

None

Recommended Change: No change.