

Standard ROA 7 The institution has a mission statement and related goals, approved by its governing board, that defines its purpose within the context of higher education.

Potential evidence:

2019-2020 Student Handbook

Board of Trustees Minutes Winter 2018 Winter 2020

## Mercyhurst University's Core Values

We are:

- Socially merciful, Mercy restores human dignity, expands our social relations, and empowers us to reach out in compassion to others.
- Globally responsible, Globalization challenges us to learn how to steward the resources of the Earth wisely and to act in solidarity with its diverse peoples.
- Compassionately hospitable, Mercy hospitality begins with self-acceptance, welcomes peoples of different faith, ethnic, and cultural traditions, and thus builds communities that transcend mere tolerance.
- Intellectually creative, Generous, inquiring, and critical habits of mind, which support the aspirations for excellence manifested within the academic community, encourage us in our lifelong search for what is true, good, and beautiful.
- Reflectively aware, Our Christian environment encourages reflection and contemplation of human behavior, promotes balance of mind, body, and spirit, and ultimately offers the opportunity to develop a moral compass for a life of integrity. Ambassadors of service.

In Addition, the university uses the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy Adopted by the

mission, vision and core values as it addressed practical actions related to four broad goals: Renew Our Commitment to a Mercyhurst Education, Renew Our Commitment to Campus Life, Renew the University's Resources, Processes and Infrastructure, and Renew the Mercyhurst North East Vision. This strategic plan, which involved broad collaborative input, was approved at the October 2017 Board of Trustees Meeting.

#### Summary of compliance:

The university's mission, vision, core values and critical concerns, along with the critical concerns of the Sisters of Mercy, offer clear grounding for the university in its identity and priorities. The foundational documents strongly influence the university's strategic planning, as evidenced by the ways in which mission explicitly framed the 2020 strategic plan. The university's newest strategic plan, which is still under revision, similarly frames its major priorities under thematic areas of the core values. The foundational documents are properly approved by the governing board.

We have found that the mission, vision, core values and critical concerns situate Mercyhurst University in its uniqueness as a Catholic university in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy. This will be addressed elsewhere in this report, while the Board of Trustees Subcommittee on Mission has the charge of reviewing the mission, vision and core values every three years, we do not have evidence that this is taking place with the expected regularity. The last review, which produced no substantive changes, was in 2012. As has surfaced in the recommendations within the university's Conference for Mercy Higher Education study report, the mission and core values remain particularly salient for the university's current planning and practices; however, the vision statement reflects priorities from 15 years ago and remains a quite general statement. It might be helpful to revisit this vision statement soon in order to ensure that it reflects the university's most significant current strategic goals and actions.

Standard ROA 12: The institution fully discloses its legally constituted governance structure(s) including any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership). The Institution's governing body is responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution and for ensuring that the institution's mission is being accomplished.

#### EvidenceName

Potential evidence:

BOT Bylaws DRAFT Amendments June 2017

Board of Trustees Mission Committee

Board of Trustees Mission Committee Executive Summary 10.6.20 (unapproved)

Board of Trustees Minutes Winter 2018 Winter 2020

Bylaws and CMHE Affiliation Agreement Updates 4-7-2020

Organizational Chart for the University

Organizational Chart for Academics

President's Cabinet Agenda 11.18.20

All-University Mission Committee (reports through University Council)

University Council Bylaws

Faculty Handbook

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes, Representative Examples of ~~Mission~~ matters brought before the Senate, 2012-2020

Staff Senate 2020-1-14\_Minutesn [(F)-4.7 (ac)2.3 (u(f)4.7xB-0.002 Tc 0.009 T 0 Td ( )Tj d [ 0 Td (.6 (he

## The Bylaws for the Board of Trusthe

for Mission, along with all the Presidents offers a weekly report at cabinet meetings (see sample from 11/18-20 Cabinet Meeting). The model ensures that a mission-sensitive perspective is brought into major decisions for issues such as operations and budgeting.

The University Council Bylaws include a shared governance model that demonstrates how this council offers recommendations to the President and to the Board of Trustees. It gathers recommendations from three distinct bodies: Faculty Senate and its various Standing Committees, Staff Senate and its various Standing Committees, and Student Government and its various Standing Committees.



- \$1,267.33 to BLOOM Collaborative and spring and fall 2020 \$700 collected to date for MU Food Pantry (as of Oct. 14, 2020) is notable that the Fall 2016 collection was for a Mercyhurst North East campus employee, whose son suffered a broken neck during a sports event. A one day Jeans for a Cause was immediately announced to help with family expenses. The mission and goals exemplified by this weekly event are publicized and widely known by Staff Senate members, through announcements in the daily Morning Buzz.

The meeting minutes from Staff Senate meeting November 17, 2020 show a presentation by Colin Hurley from Community Engagement about the Mercy Market new initiative to bring support to students in need (food insecurity, meal swipe sharing, clothing assistance and assistance with books) into one virtual space for communication. Meeting minutes from January 14, 2020 demonstrate a presentation from Karen Donnelly, Community School Director for Diehl Elementary about ways in which the university is and can be involved in supporting this underserved local school. Staff Senate also initiates ongoing well-being and mission-centered opportunities for employees. Staff Senate sponsors, in partnership with the Office of Mission, an annual Employee Professional Development (EPD Day). The January 8, 2019 Development Day workshops typify annual efforts to improve individual outcomes: Employee Step Up! Violence Prevention efforts on campus a program to better educate staff and administration about the Beyond the Gates component of the REACH curriculum. The January 7, 2020 Professional Development Day presentations





The ongoing practices of connecting all university efforts (i.e. budgeting, academics, athletics, student life) to mission draws Trustees to recognize mission as central to the overall operations of the university. As is noted in the Mission Self





budgeting and adds a number of unpredictable variables such as a sudden need for new materials and products, unpredictable retention for students (most notably student athletes) and employees, and unpredictable realities in federal government support and policies. Second, when the university learned that it would be in the process of searching for a new president in 2021, it became clear that it would be best to wait in order to give the new chief executive the opportunity to revisit the themes and objectives before finalizing this plan.

There is evidence that most employees perceive that at the level of planning and at the level of

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Standard 11b: clearly defined mission and goals that address external as well as internal contexts and constituencies

Potential evidence:

Mission, Vision and Core Values

July 2020 Action Plan for Equity, Inclusion and Justice

Campus Ministry and Community Engagement Fall 2019 Update for BOT

Spring 2020 Student Connection

I Stand with Immigrants Campaign 2019

Updated Pronoun Usage Policy 2020

FSAT courses

Beyond the Gates Initiative

Make Mercy Real Program 2019

iMU curriculum

Coaches and international travel

Career Path program: pre and post surveys for AIM students

BOOST study hall for AIM students

Vocational Exposure Experience for AIM students (2019)

Weekly Checks with AIM advisors

Campus Ministry Carpe Diem Retreat

Campus Ministry Vow Retreat

Residence Life and Student Conduct

Residence Assistant Training Surveys

Student Conduct Survey

A.N.C.H.O.R.S. model (included with report self-evaluation)

Campus Involvement Center

MSG Meeting minutes

MSG semester survey based upon student concerns.

Leadership Development Program

Exit surveys from participants in the Emerging Leaders program (Step3 (n t)4.gkp-0.6 (g)17 (r)-4 E i-2

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Summary of evidence:



The mission statement with its emphasis on service alongside the university's core values and the critical concerns of the Sisters of Mercy guide the strategic planning and curricular and co

the basics of how best to understand and support students who identify within these sexual diversities. The program has matured, with over 120 employees having completed it, to the point where these allies are now engaging in deepening conversations and continued learning, especially regarding the complexities of gender identity. Similar trainings have been offered to student leaders as well, including residence assistants. Mercyhurst is proud to be a campus that is known to be proactively supportive of and welcoming towards students and employees of sexual and gender diversities, and the Allies emblems that are posted outside of so many offices on campus speaks to this commitment.

The university has a Multicultural Activities Council and a Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator position (a position held by Michelle Spiron) within the Campus Involvement center to ensure that students from diverse cultures, races, ethnicities, genders and sexualities have their needs and preferences represented amidst student programming and events. Additionally, in 2020 the university added the position of the officer (Sr. Natalie Rossi) who regularly attends diversity-centered recognized student club and organization meetings, such as LGBTQIA Allies and the Black Students for Unity groups. These positions focused on both programming and pastoral presence are important supports for students who might otherwise feel marginalized on campus.

One of Mercyhurst's cherished and most successful programs is the AIM program (the Autism Initiative at Mercyhurst), which offers support and special career readiness opportunities for academically successful students on the autism spectrum. The mission of the Autism Initiative at Mercyhurst (AIM) is to facilitate and support the successful adjustment and progression of college students on the autism spectrum in all domains of college life, thereby broadening their vocational opportunities, and enhancing social and community engagement. The AIM program strives to accentuate each student's abilities within the academic, social, emotional, and independent living domains, while building new skills within the domains where the student may be deficient. Students in this program have a weekly appointment with an AIM advisor who offers them guidance from personal life skills to achieving success in the classroom. These weekly meetings allow the AIM department to support their students in an intentional manner.

The Office of Residence Life and Student Conduct provides a living environment that enables each student to develop holistically through educational opportunities. The Residence Life program recognizes that learning extends well beyond the classroom and continues into the area in which students live and fosters that development through provided campus housing. Students will be encouraged to participate as active members of their communities, while maintaining acceptable standards of behavior while respecting the rights, privileges and properties of all members of the community. Students should leave the Residence Life program with the skills necessary to be productive, contributing members of society. Annually, Residence Assistants participate in training that pertains to the position as a leader, role model, mediator and conduit for discipline on our campus. They spend a couple of weeks preparing for their position. Evaluations are conducted for trainings each year.

The current Residence Life development model was designed in 2018 and implemented in 2019. It is a pillar model based on the acronym of A.N.C.H.O.R. based in the Core Values of Mercyhurst University. There are 7 program pillars, with the expectation that RAAs will have two programs under the Socialization and Community Building pillar (1 each semester): Academic and Professional Development

students. The retreat has helped to identify many students who required more regular support, such as through the Counseling Center. Students have reported the profound impacts of the retreat, e.g. "I didn't know my Mom/Dad loved me. It was the first time I heard them say it my letter from them", "I learned it was okay to be vulnerable and let people get to know me", and "It was the retreat I didn't know I needed." Evaluations over the years have demonstrated similar and

spoken word or music. Students with varying levels of artistic skills are welcomed, including novice artists. The art ~~ay~~ represent ethnicity, religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, ableism, inclusion, acceptance, etc. The program started in ~~2018~~ was unable to take place in spring 2020 due to Covit~~o~~.

Yearly survey~~s~~ are completed~~at~~ the end of each academic year~~by~~ students who receive counseling services~~s~~. Students also fill~~in~~ an intake survey before they meet ~~with~~ a counselor in person in the waiting room. There are a couple of reasons the Counseling Center was unable to offer a survey in A~~Y~~2019-2020. The first is that the semester went from in~~person~~ to virtual due to the COVID shut down in March. And the second ~~is~~ that it was unlawful for our counselors to provide their services to students who lived outside of Pennsylvania. The coun~~selors~~ professional licensing does not allow them to counsel people across state lines.

The Campus Involvement Center advances student success by providing opportunities to engage in social, leadership, and experiential activities. We strive to connect students to

evaluative system. For Emerging Leaders the Leadership and Outreach Coordinator evaluates the effectiveness of this program based on how many students will continue with the educational training by participating in the Level 1 program and through monitoring if the students has become involved as a leader in one or more of the following areas on campus: Registered Clubs and Student Organizations, Campus Ministry, Residence Life, Ambassador, etc. For Level 1 at the closing workshop, a vision paper or visual diagram demonstrating their map of progress as a leader is created and documents their intrapersonal growth. For level 2 at the end of the semester, a brief survey is distributed and collected with one question asking about the personal growth of the student. For Level 3 a major integrated factor of students' level of growth can be evaluated by the time and effort placed into creating, facilitating and mentoring students in the Emerging Leaders program. The Emerging Leaders program is adapted annually based upon the mentors in the Level 3 program. Additionally, an exit interview is held with the students and notes are taken about the growth of their involvement in the leadership and development program.

Leanne Baker from ~~6~~ball provides educational sessions on a yearly basis with her teams.  
Topics

sixth grade and under volleyball plays BINGO with veterans at the VA hospital, football players and other teams read to elementary school children on Dr. Seuss day. The Red Carpet program at Pfeiffer Burleigh school has attracted men's lacrosse, women's lacrosse and other teams. Many teams have participated in the Produce Express program through our local food bank. The baseball team works three St. Luke's school events annually to assist with fundraising for their school athletics. Community service and engagement is an important tool for coaches to assist their players in not only developing teamwork, but also learn to interact with people and causes outside of themselves. Student athletes not only serve off campus, but on campus through various student clubs and organizations.

Another example of how the university offers special support to students is through the Student Outreach Committee (SOC), which is a referral system used to provide extra wrap around support for students who are in various ways struggling socially, emotionally and academically. This committee is crucial for ensuring that all students receive the extra attention they deserve. In recent years the university has documented a clear rise in rates of anxiety and depression among students, including suicidal ideation and attempts. This committee, and its careful attention to and support for an increasingly depressed and anxious student body's overall success and emotional and spiritual health remains crucial for the university. It is noteworthy that the university's dedicated Counseling Center, which offers free support to all students, continually runs at maximum capacity a trend which shows no signs of diminishing. Since implementing a shared report on Microsoft Forms in August 2019 this committee has received reviewed and followed up on 100 separate referrals (as of 2020).

A variety of supports are offered for students who have been victims of sexual assault, unwanted sexual contact or stalking. The university's Title IX coordinator oversees this comprehensive, fair, and sensitive process. The University of North Carolina at Charlotte. This document is the property of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. It is to be used only for the purposes for which it was prepared. It is not to be distributed, copied, or otherwise used for any other purpose without the prior written consent of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. This document is the property of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. It is to be used only for the purposes for which it was prepared. It is not to be distributed, copied, or otherwise used for any other purpose without the prior written consent of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.



the MU Pantry and Swipe Out Hunger (dining hall swipe sharing) initiatives for students facing food insecurity; a book swap program for students to share and reuse textbooks; and the Professional Clothing Closet initiative that offers free clothing for students as they prepare for job interviews and professional work settings. This Mercy Market is a rich example of the ways in which student financial services, Community Engagement, Parkhurst Dining Services, and faculty collaborate with



personal and programmatic supports. This program is officially on pause amidst the consolidation of the North East campus to Erie; however, the department of Community Engagement continues to individually support single parents through regular-break and logistical support. The university also engaged in Women's Suffrage Centennial/Voting Rights Events during AY 2019-2020. In collaboration with a coalition of regional organizations led by the Erie County League of Women Voters, the Departments of History, Political Science, and Anthropology conducted a series of campus events in Academic Year 2009 to mark the centennial of women's suffrage and also to raise the overlapping contemporary, urgent concerns over voting rights in America. The series led off with a disciplin

overall footprint by 50% by the year 2030. The university is still gathering initial energy consumption data for this initiative.

The university green team, which is also a reporting committee within the university, also engages in regular discussion and planning around issues ranging from recycling efforts to programs and events. One of the most dramatic recent indicators of the institution's unwavering, multidisciplinary commitment to the Core Value Global Responsibility and the "external contexts" of the climate crisis and indigenous rights struggles was the 2017 Sister Maura Smith Earth Day Lecture. In the fall 2016 History of the American West class, Brett Swan, a history and political science major, delivered a class presentation on the ongoing events on the Great Plains pertaining to the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). The presentation inspired a conversation between Swan and the instructor, who also served as chair of the university Green Team, about their mutual desire to focus the attention of the university community on the struggle to stop DAPL, a critically important environmental justice/indigenous human rights/climate change-related story. With financial support from the Office for Academic Affairs and the Student Sustainability Fund, the Green Team brought Tara Houck, a Chippewa First Nation tribal rights attorney who had been deeply involved in the DAPL struggle, to Mercyhurst to serve as the Sister Maura Smith Earth Day keynote lecturer for our 2017 Earth Day celebration. The event brought an overflow crowd to the Taylor Little Theatre, estimated 260 persons, with many attendees coming from nearby Seneca Nation.

Reflective of the Critical Concern for Racism, the university community also takes seriously its commitment to diversity and inclusion. In 2016 President Victor created a task force which listened to community members to learn perceptions about and experiences of racially diverse students and employees. Several positive things emerged from that task force, including #YouAreWelcomeHere campaign that featured a widely circulated video. The second iteration of that video was released in the summer of 2020. The university engaged in an impactful "expect respect" poster campaign. The university has also introduced a variety of trainings, including a New Employee Orientation. Establishment of Mercyhurst Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (2020) In response to the national racial reckoning that followed the murder of George Floyd, Mercyhurst University established an Office for Equity, Inclusion and Justice to elevate our commitment to confronting racism and advancing racial justice. An impressive September 2020 "Mercy March for Black Lives" event sponsored by student leaders, gathered hundreds of students for education and advocacy. Following the hiring of a part-time (for now) officer to coordinate our work (Sister Natalie Rossi, RSM), a range of initiatives followed, including a concerted effort to have faculty (through the Center for Teaching Excellence) and all employees adopt a common discourse of antiracism and white privilege; a continuing series of brief reflections on racism in the Morning Buzz; and planning of more intensive trainings and discussions for AY 2020-21. The July 2020 Action Plan for Equity, Inclusion and Justice also



initiative, this office works with individual faculty and departments support community engaged learning. It also offers service fair and programming to support year of service programs like the Mercy Volunteer Corps. CE helps to coordinate alternative breaks trips, such as annual Habitat for Humanity (housed under Campus Ministry), spring break urban

component in the innercity of Detroit. There are other students who have chosen careers and found ways to continue embracing what it means to be a global citizen.

Further evidence of students grasping the mission of our institution can be noted through their commitment to a year or more of service upon graduating. From 2017-2019, the First Destination Survey offered through Handshake from Career Services revealed that 3% of 18.5% who responded out of the senior class chose a career path in the form of service. Additionally, the Guyana FSAT courses demonstrate a high integration of learning and action with their commitments to service. The 2015 course had 30% of the participants chose to serve afterwards with AmeriCorps\*VISTA and Mercy Volunteer Corps. The 2016 course had 50% students serve through the aforementioned organizations, Peace Corps and two service master's programs at the University of Michigan and Notre Dame.

#### Summary of compliance:

We find extensive evidence that the mission, core values and critical concerns address both internal contexts and constituencies at the university, most notably in academics and within key departments such as Community Engagement. For example, the extensive information collected from the Hafenmaier College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences for 13 departments during the calendar year 2019 demonstrates that each core value and critical concern was addressed at least several times (for some well into the dozens) that year. The experiences students gain through service, beginning with the freshman year service experience and into the critical reflection on experience that takes place in the OutREACH and Senior Ethics Capstone experiences, ensure that students indeed experience deepening immersion in the university's core value as an ambassador of service.

Some areas are in need of continual improvement and refinement, such as the university's ongoing work in the areas of equity, inclusion and justice. There was once a fulltime sustainability coordinator, which then moved to parttime. This parttime position is vacant now. While many students and employees of good will work together on sustainability efforts, the sustainability area, which moved under mission last year, would benefit from more strategic planning in the area of environmental sustainability, particularly regarding the hopes and ideas of current students and regarding the future leadership structure for this area.

Most student life areas and campus ministry offer evidence of regular evaluations to continually revise and update programming. Athletics has some teams with strong evaluative processes in place, such as volleyball and field hockey. Forms of evaluation vary from team to team, ranging from weekly verbal feedback to regular periodic written evaluations. Overall, it appears

talking with athletics administration that the department lacks a formal process for evaluation of how the mission is evaluated within individual teams.

The university wishes it could offer more extensive service and immersion experiences especially international experiences but limits in staffing and scholarship support for students make this difficult. As the Community Engagement program matures, the university is beginning explorations of the benefits or drawbacks of seeking the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement. The process of conducting a study of this sort could be helpful, especially for bringing together the many people who are doing daily work on behalf of the mission and CST, and who often are unaware of the scope of what others are doing.

It is noteworthy that while we find extensive evidence of programs and events for supporting students on campus and connecting students and employees to concerns external to campus, we find that many of these programs take place without gathering evaluative feedback to know to what extent they were impactful or successful. In other words, we can say without question that the mission and core values significantly shape the ways in which the campus envisions its programming.



Standard: 1c: clearly defined mission and goals that are approved and supported by the governing body

Potential evidence:

Mission, Vision and Core Values

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes Winter 2018

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes Winter 2020

Board of Trustees Mission Subcommittee Minutes October 2020 (Unapproved)

Mercyhurst Team

these foundational documents throughout the discussion and planning. Secondly, the discussion at the meeting led to the new practice of generating discussion at the end of each full board meetings about how the meeting's deliberations reflect the mission and core values. The Fall 2020 Board of Trustees Mission Committee minutes reflect a discussion of a new series of board educational/reflective materials provided through the Conference for Higher Education. This discussion led to commitments to incorporate mission reflective components at the beginning of each full board meeting, using a combination of resources from the Conference for Mercy Higher Education and the university's own Mercy Emissary training resources.

The Board of Trustees also supports the university's mission and goals through its ongoing efforts to know the needs and concerns of students. The bylaws for the Board of Trustees state that the president of Mercyhurst student government serves as a Trustee and a full member of the board. This student representative also served on the Subcommittee for Mission each year. Additionally, the board has a current practice of facilitating direct dialogue between trustees and students, as evidenced by the February 2020 board meeting, which concluding with a Trustee student lunch mixer that placed approximately 25 student leaders from various positions on campus around lunch tables with a mixture of trustees and cabinet members.

#### Summary of compliance:

The Mission and Vision Statements were appropriately reviewed and approved when the new versions were drafted in 2006, and when they were revised to reflect the change to university status in 2012. During the October 2020 Board of Trustees Mission Subcommittee Meeting, the board discussed the fact that we do not have in place a clear schedule for reviewing the University's Mission and Vision statements.

There is a deficit in terms of evidence that the Board has adequately assessed the effectiveness of its support of the mission. Some information about the effects of the mission can be found in the 2020 Employee Mission Survey, which was initiated by the VP for mission. Student experiences and understanding of mission can be partially analyzed through initial analysis of the REACH curriculum through its Chalk & Wire system for longitudinal assessment. Beyond these, there is insufficient evidence that the governing body itself initiates efforts to assess and analyze either quantitative or qualitative information about its own mission. More information

Standard: #1d: clearly defined mission and goals that guide faculty, administration, staff, and governing structures in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curricular development, and the definition of institutional and educational outcomes

Potential evidence:

Planning:

Campus Ministry Department Assessment 2018

5 Year Self-Study Report: History

Interior Design & Architecture Department Assessment 2018

5Year Self-Study Reports: Public Health, Interior Design.

Resource Allocation:

Annual Budget Request for Additional Funding-Capital

Annual Budget Request for Additional Funding-Form Usage Instructions

Request for Additional Funding-Campus Ministry (2014)

Faculty Handbook

Program and Curricular Development:

Mercyhurst University Strategic Plan “Renewal Through the Mercy Mission, Fiscal Years 2018-2020”

“Renewal Through the Mercy Mission Fiscal Years-2020”, Mercyhurst University Strategic Plan Update” February 1, 2020.

William C. Sennett Institute for Mercy and Catholic Studies

MIAC October 2020 Event

Evelyn Lincoln Institute for Ethics and Society (ELIES)

2020-08-24 - Division of Enrollment DivisionWide Meeting

2018-06-06 - PRESENTATION Erie Recruitment Retreat for Fall 2019 Outcomes

Definition of Institutional Outcomes:

Strategic Plan Update

Employee Mission Survey 2020

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSEE)

Definition of Educational Outcomes:

Assessment Handbook

FYE Purpose Statement and Goals (iMU)

### Summary of evidence:

Mercyhurst University has an established mission, vision, core values and critical concerns (from the Sisters of Mercy) reflective of the Catholic and Mercy heritage inherent in the mission, to guide the Mercyhurst community in all decisions in four areas: planning; allocation of fiscal, personnel and physical resources; curricular development; and program development for student-related learning and for administrative supports. The mission guides how the institution defines its outcomes, both for students and financial assets.

The University conducts periodic strategic plans to advance its goals. The most recent plan, 2018-2020 provided the blueprint for widespread improvements in four overarching goals. This blueprint of overarching goals and strategic goals was the guiding impetus for faculty, administration and staff, and the governing Board of Trustees in their decision-making as they advanced their respective goals. The Strategic Plan Update in February 2020 indicated the outcomes with a high degree of progress.

### Planning, Resource Allocation, Curriculum Development, and Defining Outcomes

Faculty, led by chairs of all academic departments within four Colleges, closely follow the mission as they conduct their planning. Every five years, faculty and chairs of academic departments (as stipulated in the 2019 Assessment Handbook, page 14) are asked to self assess, and as part of this process to identify how departments align and contribute to the university's mission. Through Self-Study Assessment Reports, each academic department at Mercyhurst engages in a rigorous course of assessment of its M1.4 (n7g)-3.7 (o)412.3 (g616.3 (r)9 ( a)



## Mission that Guides that guides Administration Decisionmaking

### In Planning

The mission certainly has guided the President, the cabinet of Vice Presidents, and academic Deans in their decisionmaking in creating the current Strategic Plan. This is supported by an established cabinet-level Vice President for mission positioned to integrate the mission at all levels within the university and to the entire Mercyhurst community of students, faculty and administration. The Vice President for Academic Affairs is charged with upholding the Mission within Program and Curricular Development, and the Vice President for Strategic Initiatives does the same, as evidenced in the current strategic plan.

### In curricular and program development

Significant evidence for using the mission in decisionmaking can be found in the newly established REACH curriculum. In 2016, Mercyhurst University adopted a new general education curriculum: REACH. The REACH curriculum is designed to expose students to a variety of courses and experiences central to the liberal arts. The REACH courses also provide students with opportunities to meet university-wide learning outcomes, including: challenging mindsets and assumptions; developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills; encouraging curiosity and creative inquiry; cultivating an appreciation of art and culture; and igniting community awareness and engagement.

### In creation of the iMU course

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In terms of resource allocation, we acknowledge a lack of helpful supportive evidence. While final major decisions about resource allocation are made primarily at the cabinet level and these members will be acknowledged how the mission and strategic goals factor into decision making, it is difficult to substantiate how major decisions connect to mission. This includes decisions related to building and grounds, major projects and the overall university budgetary decisions.

In governance structures

The President's Cabinet meets weekly and manages the ongoing operations of the university. Each VP oversees various departments and individuals with varied processes for planning

It is significant in terms of the university's commitment to mission that the VP for Mission serves on this cabinet and meets biweekly with the President. The Vice President for Mission, along with all Vice Presidents, offers a weekly report at cabinet meetings (see sample from 11-18-20 Cabinet Meeting). The model ensures that a mission-sensitive perspective is brought into major decisions for issues such as personnel and budgeting. The VP for Mission supports two departments in advancing the mission through five-year assessment processes: Campus Ministry and Community Engagement. The Vice President also supports two broad mission-centered strategic initiatives: Sustainability and the Equity, Inclusion and Justice Initiative. Each of these areas utilize lead officers supported by committees that conduct ongoing planning and goal setting.

As another example, The Vice President for Academic Affairs is guided by the mission for curricular outcomes and makes those decisions for 14 offices. At least six of them submit five-year Self-Study reports that review their department mission in alignment with university mission, and guides their programmatic goals. Library, Registrar, Academic Support and Writing Center, Distance Learning, Career Services, and Learning Differences. The Vice President for Student Life also uses the mission in decision-making for 11 offices, and five submit five-year self-study reports: Residence Life, Police and Safety, Athletic Administration, AIM office and the Multi-cultural Center (with -0.005Tj 0.00:

The University Council Bylaws include a shared governance model that demonstrates how the council offers recommendations to the President and to the Board of Trustees and gathers recommendations from three distinct bodies: Faculty Senate and its various Standing Committees, Staff Senate and its various Standing Committees, and Student Government and its various Standing Committees. This university council, which meets at least twice each semester according to its bylaws, offers an important conduit of information, sharing concerns from various university constituents with the President and the Board of Trustees. The bulk of the work takes place in the faculty senate subcommittees, many which have a very explicit connection to the university's mission and core values: Administrative Policies, Campus Life, Diversity, Inclusion and Gender (being renamed Equity, Inclusion and Justice), Green Team, Intercollegiate Athletics, Library & Distance Learning and Mission.

### In programming beyond the curriculum

The mission statement for the Mercyhurst Institute for Arts & Culture (MIAC) states that it strengthens the vibrancy of the Erie region by presenting world-class performing arts experiences that lift the spirit, galvanize the intellect, stimulate the imagination and encourage the free exchange of ideas. By making these programs available and accessible to the broadest possible audience, the Institute strives to create an environment (e)-4 ( hm)-3 (77(m (e)-4 ( h/v6270.003



the critical concern of immigration: "Wounded Grace and the Vulnerable Among Us" by Dr Cecelia Gonzalez on September 26, 2019. A look back at fall lectures since 2010 shows that each critical concern has been creatively engaged through these public lectures that draw a combination of students, employees and members of the local and regional community.

The Evelyn Lincoln Institute for Ethics and Society (ELIES) provides information about current challenges facing our local and global communities, opportunities for development of ethical sensitivity and innovative strategies for dealing with ethical problems and conflicts. These issues are addressed through lectures, symposia, and round tables. A quick perusal of the website shows an impressive array of ongoing events. These programs not only align with the core values but also the critical concerns of the Sisters of Mercy. This includes programs dealing with earth, nonviolence and racism within the past two years. ELIES provides formal and informal programs throughout the academic year as well as spontaneous programs in response to current events. The fall 2020 feature was chosen to align with the current goals of the university regarding Equity, Inclusion and Justice. *Visible Indians in the Age of Diversity* On December 1, 2020 Edward A. Jolie, Ph.D., RPA, of the Mercyhurst University Department of Anthropology/Archaeology gave a presentation regarding the status of Native Americans in the landscape of today's America.

In Administrative Resource Decisions

We can offer a couple examples of

Many student support services on campus participate in thorough ~~year~~ self-studies. As its mission statement claims, "Mercyhurst University campus ministry creates a hospitable environment and a locus for spiritual development of the entire university community. Grounded in our Catholic identity and Mercy tradition, we support all faith traditions, foster holistic, communal development, and nurture transformative discipleship ~~for~~ service and justice." Campus Ministry's 2018 Student Services Assessment shows extensive analysis: (1) to look at the current ministry staffing levels at a dozen similar Catholic colleges and universities, and (2) to gather and analyze data about ~~programming~~ and priorities from 8 key comparable Catholic institutions. The ~~study~~ also notes the steady increase in students struggling with anxiety and depression as an urgent reason for maintaining current staffing levels. This process assisted in establishing a plan for continued staffing as the director was named VP for mission. The university named its chaplain as interim director, allowing us to hire a young, energetic Catholic lay minister for programming to support ongoing goals for the department while offering continued pastoral presence to students. As the self-study notes, "Through our assessment over the past several years, we have monitored how programs move from welcoming students to deeper reflection and integration of faith into daily life." This reaffirmed the need to continue to support key programs, such as Carpe Diem retreats and Wednesday night fellowship while identifying a need to revisit programs involving bible study and service/immersion opportunities.

Mission that Guides Board of Trustees in.

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Among the Board of Trustees' subcommittees is the Subcommittee for Mission. Not only do all incoming Trustees serve on this committee during their first year at the university, but this body also serves in the important role of ensuring that the mission is accomplished, as an institutional outcome. The minutes for the subcommittee on mission reflect that for each fall meeting (typically in early October) the mission subcommittee reviews and approves its

Most significantly, Board decisions led to planning resulting in the closing of the North East campus re-affirmed the Mission and Vision Statement commitment to the liberal arts and professional and career path programs like the new cybersecurity programs and building of its lab; initiated a capital campaign for athletic facilities and spurred the building of a new residence hall and significant renovations of the library and main dining hall.

In addition to guiding planning, the mission and goals were at the forefront of decision making by the Board of Trustees for resource allocation, primarily through their Finance Committee. The decision to close the North East campus was made during deliberations during the implementation of the overall Strategic Plan

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How the mission and goals guide decisionmaking to define its academic and administrative goals are unknown to this author. Beyond Trustees Cabinet level development of the strategic plan, this author is not aware of the how the administration uses mission and goals define overall institutional goals or outcomes from all strategic objectives, and then plans for growth and innovation.

It is noteworthy that members of this work group aside from the cabinet level position express very little awareness of how resource and budgetary decisions are made at upper levels of the university. While there are clear processes for submitting annual budgets or requesting new funds, after these forms are submitted there is not enough communication down the chain of command to help employees to understand what decisions have been made regarding budgeting and resources and, more importantly, why these decisions were made. A mechanism for transparency and communication are warranted.

As we survey the various administrative support offices in the university, it becomes clear that there is not a uniform method for planning and assessment across all areas. In comparison to clear self-study processes in academic areas that are readily available, it takes considerably more work to identify the planning processes in many administrative and support areas. While a deeper investigation shows that most areas do have processes in place for annual and long range planning, the university would benefit from more uniform practices and standards.

As noted elsewhere in this report, it has been more than five years (2012) since the Board of Trustees last formally evaluated the mission, vision and core values, even though the Mission Subcommittee's bylaws state that it will review these every three to five years. New structures will need to be put in place at the Board and cabinet levels to ensure that these are reviewed with the appropriate frequency. As the executive summary of the October 6, 2020 Board of Trustees Mission Subcommittee meeting reflects, this committee discussed that it is aware of



for Teaching Excellence office, and professional development days, and funded through Faculty Development Funds for all four colleges. These study reports of all departments provide evidence of how the scholarly and creative activities are integrated not only in classroom teaching, but also with students and other campus offices in community engagement, and with community partners in community outreach, and leadership.

### Faculty Scholarship

Faculty vigorously embrace the alignment of Mercy values in their scholarship. F Tc 0.0005 -1.Td [(Td





offices and organizations in the community, and the department's mission alignment, and integration of the university Mission, into classroom learning, and activities outside the classroom.

Hafenmaier College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Thomas B. Hagen  
Mercyhurst University History Department

The mission of the History Department engages students in the rich and rewarding study of past human societies and cultures. Our program's mission is inextricably bound to the University Mission, to foster a learning environment where, "faith and reason flourish together, [and] where the beauty and power of the liberal arts" are fully realized. Indeed, the History Department holds sacred the core values of the university's mission. The department, in doing so, has compiled an exemplary record of civic engagement on contemporary issues of vital importance to our students and the future they will help shape. History faculty and students have played a critical role in university initiatives as the university environmental sustainability program, and multidisciplinary academic program initiatives on issues of race, the welfare of children, genocide, and the health of our democracy.

The Public History program advances the Mercyhurst Mission's "commitment to serving others" and the nearly century

Consistent with the mission of Mercyhurst University, the Public Health Department seeks to educate students to be globally and socially responsible citizens who take intelligent actions to improve the lives and conditions of people around the world.

The Mercyhurst mission is infused in public health curriculum, with experiential learning infused into community engagement. Examples include a Social Determinants of Health course, partnering with the Office of Community Engagement to conduct surveys in homeless shelters, and experience the challenges of refugee resettlement. Other examples are: student needs assessments in one of Erie's low-income neighborhoods, training adolescent teen parents in the parenting program at an Erie high school; partnerships with Women, Infant and Children Program that provides services for low-income pregnant women and children until the age of 5; Erie County Health Department division of Sexually Transmitted Infections and Blue Zone project, for improved health outcomes in a rural town. Other recent projects were a food security program addressing food deserts in Erie, the annual international public health service trip and Public Health Club activities to improve campus life.

Many departments repeat these two examples of scholarly and creative endeavors to manifest the

Our faculty are leaders in service, at local, state and national levels. Faculty serve on boards of directors of nonprofit organizations like Harborcreek Youth Services (Criminal Justice faculty); Preservation Erie (which History faculty also founded); Lake Erie Region Conservancy (Biology); anti-graffiti efforts of the city of Erie (Intelligence Studies). Their expertise contributes greatly to Erie's community improvement, e.g., United Way of Erie County action plan for grade level reading (Education).

Faculty also serve at the state level as officers for the Pennsylvania Historical Association and Western Pennsylvania Undergraduate Psychological Consortium. At the national level, they serve as editors of journals, as a subject matter expert for juvenile justice system, and committee co-chair for the national Academy of Religion. Many other examples abound, of faculty expertise given on regional television news, or city initiatives to train police, ~~ed in~~ the newspapers.

Mission-Centered Learning Goals integrate Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy

The Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy: Immigration, the Earth, Racism, Nonviolence, and Women have taken on increasingly urgent relevance as our community has worked to respond to a range of issues of heightened concern to our students. Our faculty scholarship resonates in teaching students: from poverty in Erie to immigration and human rights to ~~the~~ ~~crisis~~ to

privilege; a continuing series of brief reflections on racism in the Morning Buzz; and the planning of more intensive trainings and discussions for AY-2020

Nonviolence: Faculty and students participated in an Erie “On the Move” initiative to mainstream Nonviolence (September 2017); and The Clothesline Project campus display focused on domestic violence (October 2020). The Mercyhurst Bystander Intervention Committee, collaborated with the Mercyhurst Empowerment and Prevention Project and the Pennsylvania “It’s On Us” Grant to support many more programs like this.

Women: Women’s Suffrage Centennial/Voting Rights Events (AY-2019). Mercyhurst. Faculty collaborated with a variety of regional organizations led by the Erie County League of Women Voters, the Departments of History, Political Science, and Anthropology and hosted a series of campus events to raise contemporary, and urgent concerns over voting rights in America.

All Critical Concerns: “Hurstories”—video short documentaries produced in association with the “Make Mercy Real” initiative of the Sisters of Mercy (April 2019), Students in Dr. Averill Earls’s Digital History: Documentaries class produce short video documentary histories that illustrated both Mercyhurst history and how people in the Erie community “make mercy real” by living out the Sisters of Mercy’s Critical Concerns: Immigration, the Earth, Racism, Nonviolence, and Women. They were compelling testimonials of how the Mercyhurst Mission is alive, both in the Erie community and across our curriculum. See: <https://hurststories.wordpress.com/2019/04/01/make-mercy-real/>

off-campus conference attendees, even when a presenter. Students often contribute their own funds for their conference travel, for example.

As financial constraints affect the level of scholarship on campus, or time for speaking by faculty, it is also reflected in the levels of financial support for faculty development through faculty development funds for travel to conferences. Even on-campus faculty training and support are modest. The Center for Teaching Excellence is staffed by one full-time teaching faculty member, and the two Faculty Development Days are faculty-led. Neither training nor professional development efforts bring outside, paid experts to lead in expertise.

Standard: 11f: clearly defined mission and goals that are publicized and widely known by the institution's internal stakeholders

Potential Evidence:

Student Handbook p. 6 (located on Student Hub portal)  
 Employee Handbook p. 2 (located on Employee Hub portal)  
 Faculty Handbook 20120 p. 2 (located on Employee Hub portal)  
 Undergraduate Admission Requirements (university web pages)  
 Student Conduct (web pages for Office of Residence Life and Student Conduct)  
 University webpages (document to be inserted into the repository)  
 iMU course (prior to COVID) the Mercyhurst mission and core values  
 New Employee Booklet for Staff and Administration  
 social media usages of mission and word mercy (Leena Clint in PR has a record 2009–  
 Mercy Emissary Program  
 Student Ambassador Program  
 Interpretive Plan for Mercyhurst's interpretive historical wayside map program  
 Evidence Name: Mercyhurst University Archives, Website, and Committee

Summary of Evidence:

The university's mission is publicized in a number of ways, including internal documents and handbooks; orientation and onboarding activities; programs and activities for ongoing education; websites, email and social media; printed communications; and archives/markers on campus.

Within important university documents, the mission and core values of the institution are prominently displayed. The faculty and employee handbooks list the mission and vision statements and core values on page 2 and the student handbook lists these on page 6 (after a longer table of contents). The fact that the mission statement and core values are at the beginning of these important university documents substantiates the relevance of them. Additionally, the Faculty Handbook demonstrates the ways in which the history, mission, vision, and core values of the university are central in the policies and practices of academic affairs at the university.

As employees and students are onboarded to the university, there are clear mechanisms in place to orient them to the mission and core values. A New Faculty Orientation is offered each August, and this day-long event includes a 45-minute mission presentation. As the Power Point presentation demonstrates, this session covers the history of the Sisters of Mercy and of

faculty) is offered periodically as needed when at least a dozen new employees have arrived at the university. This program was initiated in 2018 and expanded to a full program in 2019. It is typically offered twice each year. Staff Senate has also created a New Employee Booklet for Staff and Administration entitled "Welcome to the Mercyhurst Family". The nine-page document is given to each new staff and administration member electronically by Staff Senate President after the New Employee Orientation or when they are announced to the Mercyhurst community in the Morning Buzz daily newsletter. The introductory welcome letter on page 1 demonstrates.







for all campus stakeholders: students, employees and alumni. This magazine features regular updates connected to mission. In fall 2020 a special edition was created amidst the COVID pandemic: an issue entitled “Resilience and Resolve” highlighting historic moments when the Sisters and other leaders faced adversity with courage and compassion throughout the university’s history.

Additionally, the university has instituted mechanisms for better preserving and communicating its rich history. In August 2015, Mercyhurst hired its first professionally trained archivist. Since that time, the Mercyhurst Archivist has established a pronounced, greatly elevated visibility for our institutional history and Mission. Beyond the immense task of organizing, cataloging, processing and creating a preservation plan for the nearly 100-year voluminous collection of archival materials dating to the founding of the college, our archivist has established a vibrant, engaging University Archives Web site, a broadly inclusive Archives Committee, a daily presence in the Morning Buzz with a “Today in Mercyhurst History” feature, and working relationships with our Marketing/Public Relations office, the Student Ambassadors and their Historian, as well as a variety of academic departments including History/Public History, Hospitality Management, and Intelligence Studies. The public reach and impact of our archives has been extended across and beyond our community. Two examples: in 2018, a document unearthed by our Archivist—a stirring prayerful public address by Sister Carolyn Herrmann delivered just days after “Bloody Sunday” in Selma, Alabama in the struggle for voting rights (just prior to leading several hundred Mercyhurst students and faculty in a sympathy march through our gates)—was integrated by one faculty member into classroom lectures, a Mercyhurst Magazine article, and community lectures on local African American history. Second, a tour of the Erie Cemetery in October 2020

The 2020 Employee Mission Survey offers evidence that these collective efforts for onboarding, and ongoing training and for communication and preserving the university's mission and history are helping most employees to have a clear knowledge of the tradition; however, there remains some room for growth. It is noteworthy that employee respondents represent employees who have worked at the university from 0 to 40 years, and their responses to some questions represent different historical times in the university's development. 74% of employees say they

Although difficult to quantify, the response from the Mercyhurst community to the enlivened presence of our archives has been exceedingly positive. The evidence can be seen in the growing number of students, faculty, and staff who have worked with our archivist, who have had the doors of the archives opened to them in their searches for a particular piece of Mercyhurst history, and in the number of visits to the Archives web site: well over 1,000, from

Standard: 1g: clearly defined mission and goals that are periodically evaluated

Potential evidence:

Employee Mission Survey 2020

BOT Mission Subcommittee Charter on Mission

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes Winter 2018/Winter 2020

Revised University Bylaws September 2020

Renewal through the Merit Review Meeting C8/P-c -0.002 w 8.016 04.18[(c)-1.7 D 2eeott usedmrg M6





During the 2019-2020 academic year, the first group of students to have started the REACH curriculum as freshman will be seniors and enrolled in the Capstone Ethics course. This data will be processed during the subsequent summer, and the full longitudinal data set will be available in late fall of 2021.

The Learning Outcomes for outREACH are:

- Apply academic knowledge and critical thinking skills in an unfamiliar context.
- Demonstrate increased confidence in their ability to contribute to the common good.
- Develop an empathetic understanding for people and other life situations.
- Practice listening and dialog as essential to meaningful human interaction.
- Reflect critically on their outREACH experiences and the interconnections between learning in and outside of the classroom.

Preliminary data from the first two cohorts of iMU and BTG participants show clear increases in student understanding and application of Mission. The charts below show the rubric score results for the aggregated iMU data (Figure 1) and the aggregated BTG data (Figure 2)



Figure 1 iMU Aggregate Rubric Data on all outREACH Learning Outcomes



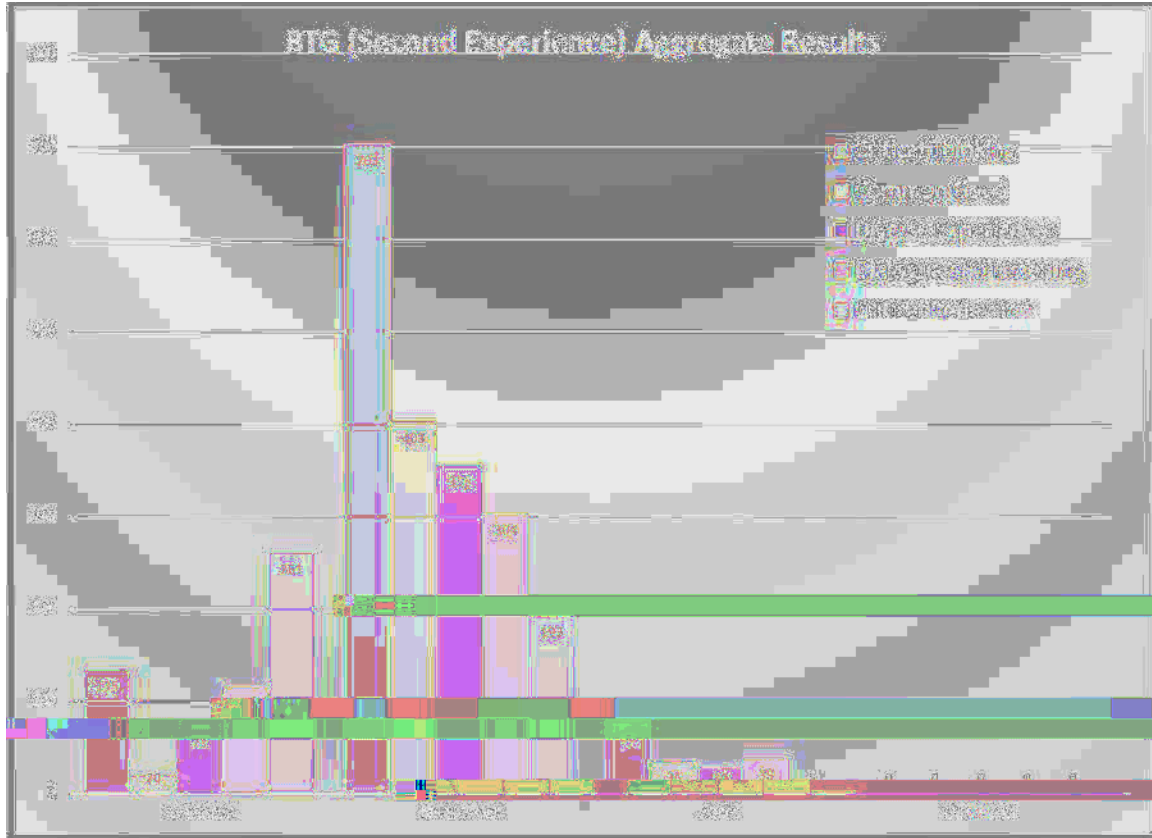


Figure2

this deficit and is suggesting mechanisms for predictably reviewing these foundational documents. A more rigorous system of accountability should be put into place to ensure that the mission is reviewed every 5 years and stated.







providing students with supports to work through challenges of anxiety, depression, isolation; provide continuing supports, adequate space, and transitional resources to single parents with children; explore possibilities for expanding service and immersion trips; and conduct a strategic self-study of its sustainability initiatives in order to ensure that this area of the university receives due attention and resources and has an effective leadership structure.

The team report (issued in November 2020) offered eleven commendations for areas of noteworthy achievement in mission: The Mercy Emissary Program, the Student Ambassador Program, attention to the liberal arts within the curriculum, the development of the whole person, the trustees of the university as advocates for mission, the creation of a cabinet position for mission, a commitment to service, a robust campus ministry, a commitment to the arts, the campus environs, and President Michael Victor as a beloved leader. The team also offered the following eight recommendations: pay attention to the needs of the adult student population; examine alternative modes for community-based learning with the aim of creating closer ties to the academic area and the faculty; clarify for students what service in the Mercy tradition actually means; exploring communal living opportunities as students offer service; frontload ethical theory earlier in service-oriented courses and programs; consider wider, ongoing methods of campus communication; emphasizing diversity to relate to the Mercy value of inclusion; adopting Mercy-full teaching schedules among scholars; and reinvigorate the sustainability program.

Finally, the visiting team offered three areas that the team identified as needing further conversation among the members of the Mercyhurst community. These are not recommendations, but rather broader questions that relate to the ways that the University manifests its commitment to the Mercy Catholic mission now and into the future. The first is a dichotomy of understanding with respect to "Mercy and Catholic." When the campus community stresses that they "embrace Mercy," but would rather not identify (or perhaps name) Catholic, it speaks to a poverty of understanding with respect to the rootedness of Mercy in Catholic faith and values. The second is a call for contemporary engagement with both the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and Catholic Social Teaching, which is not as explicitly present

### Summary of compliance:

The response of the CMHE Peer Review Visiting Team offers the university clear and objective evidence that the university's planning and processes are overwhelmingly in line with the goals for a Mercy and Catholic higher education. The team's report offered commendations, recommendations, along with a few items for ongoing conversation. The recommendations align almost completely with the recommendation from the university's own self-study report offering clear evidence that the university has been honest and accurate in its self-assessment. On November 24, 2020, the university was notified that its self-study report was unanimously accepted and approved by the CMHE's board of directors. As the Team said in the closing section of the report, 'In closing, the Visiting Team found Mercyhurst University to be a warm and welcoming community passionate for its Mercy mission. The commendations, recommendations and observations in this report reflect an institution that draws vigor and joy from its history and traditions and is well-served for the continued growth and deepening of that mission. The Mercyhurst community recognizes the charism of Mercy as its "superpower" and for this, the Conference for Mercy Higher Education celebrates Mercyhurst and looks forward to many more years of an excellent Mercy higher education presence in Erie and beyond.' The university considers this feedback a helpful affirmation that our goals and priorities are appropriate and well-founded in the Mercy and Catholic tradition.

We have also found that ongoing strategic planning has been concrete and focused on realizable goals and actions. Many of the university's strategic goals grow out of mission while remaining appropriate and attainable.

Standard: 13: goals that focus on student learning and related outcomes and on institutional improvement; are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs and services; and are consistent with institutional mission

Potential evidence: Academic Related Goals

Board Committee Charters FY2020

Board of Trustees Meeting minutes Winter 2018 Winter 2020

Universitywide Learning Outcomes

Assessment Handbook Fall 2019

Assessment Plans and Curriculum Maps

Annual Assessment Reports, Action Plans, Year Self Studies

Assessment Institute Schedules (8/2019 training)





Goals that focus on student learning and related outcomes

Goals for student learning and related outcomes are evident as the first two goals of the Strategic Plan:

Goal 1: Renew our Commitment to a Mercyhurst education, and deliver a Mercyhurst education that provides students with a distinct and transformative academic experience in preparation for personal and career success while empowering them with the knowledge and attitudes to lead fulfilling, civically engaged lives.

Goal 2: Renew our Commitment to Campus Life: Consistent with the Mercy tradition of whole-person development, provide students with an environment that supports intellectual growth as well as spiritual, professional, and personal wellbeing.

The Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Subcommittee is entrusted with providing oversight to ensure that academic programming and initiatives align with institutional mission and the achievement of institutional strategic objectives. They are responsible to “review and audit budget to assess for its alignment with stated institutional academic priorities; review faculty handbook for alignment with mission and achievement of strategic goals; and review and oversee institutional academic assessment efforts.”

These goals were broadly met by an overhaul of academic services and programs in three major areas: Office of Academic Services and Support, REACH Curriculum, and Beyond the Gates experiential service learning.

Two new Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs in AY-2016 and AY 2017-2018 vigorously pursued innovative changes and restructured the Office of Academic Services and Support. Curriculum changes were designed to meet the overarching goal to create a “distinct and transformative academic experience....” The student learning outcomes process at the university was significantly strengthened by appointing an Associate Provost to oversee the

## Assessment of Educational Goals

The goals for student learning are set out in the assessment process, based on the Assessment Handbook (Fall 2019). Departments develop Assessment Plans and Curriculum Maps, using assessment data. Annual Assessment Reports, Action Plans, and Self Studies are reported. Recent additions include the implementation of a new "Chalk and Wire" assessment platform to monitor and verify student learning outcomes.

## Meeting Academic Goals through Innovative new programs

veterans a veteran's center on campus, and active ROTC. The designation gives more outreach to veterans who were wounded in combat while serving their country and are now pursuing their higher education careers.

The second strategic goal collaboration with community partners-spurred further program development and funding. Major academic program development resulted from multiple collaborations. These partnerships are infusing the Erie community with a needed workforce and resources, while providing training opportunities to students. Partnering with

Erie State University (ESU) and the Erie County Office of Management and Enterprise Services (EMES) to create a new program resulting in a new program that will provide training opportunities to students. The program will be a new program that will provide training opportunities to students. The program will be a new program that will provide training opportunities to students.

discussions with diverse others? What is the quality of your interactions with staff? Do you find Mercyhurst to be a supportive environment?

The NSSE survey results in 2015 demonstrated several poor ratings concerning campus being a supportive environment among several administrative offices. The USE survey also validated this gap in how we are supporting our students. As a result of these NSSE and USE survey results, the university developed the “Students First” Campaign to offer reminders and resources for offices providing student services to be more customer friendly.

Widespread changes to administrative and educational support programs and services occurred in a three-year span to support student learning, as seen in the Strategic Plan update. Seven new and restructured administrative programs and services demonstrate this support:

The new Online Distance Learning office and an academic support counselor for online and graduate students now aid nontraditional students. The restructured four Colleges and Deans work extensively with their chairs for curriculum development, advising, to ensure the efficiency of course offerings, and support the educational goals.

The university has made major technology upgrades to improve teaching in every department across campus, including Elucian Self-Service software. The Registrar’s office reorganized with a new course coding standard for increased efficiency, new reports for course enrollment and REACH curriculum, and adjustments to the waitlist process. The new

restrictions were imposed, these services were fully used for dozens of students who were accommodated in dorms and apartments on campus.

Two examples of academic goals with decreased administrative support

Two examples stand out where educational goals are not supported as robustly as in the past. The first is faculty professional development and scholarship. This necessary support for effective teaching is currently modest and declined significantly after 2015. The development of programming to promote faculty development does not have robust funding, as in the past. Beginning with AY 2015, as a new administration confronted severe fiscal challenges, that generous support of annual research contracts, giving faculty a reduced load, and research fellowships were suspended. Since then, some support has returned in the form of selective sabbaticals. More limited faculty development funding was initiated for AY2016 by two of the four colleges to attend conferences and contribute to their teaching and research, Hafenmaier College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, and Walker College of Business. The Center for Teaching Excellence, led by a faculty member, offers programs and resources each semester. Faculty Development Days are held annually at the start of the academic year to provide opportunities for









Goals for renovations to campus physical infrastructure were met when the Aramark contract for maintenance department was restructured to create a deferred and preventative maintenance plan. This resulted in much needed renovations and fixes to campus physical plant (windows, HVAC, roof, as noted earlier).

Aggressive goals for new processes since 2017 resulted in major technology updates across administration offices, with at least 8 new software and technology systems for Division of Enrollment, Student Financial Services, Residence Life, Police and Safety, and Athletics; Blackboard LMS software was adopted for academics. Electronic document management was begun, impacting Financial Aid, Registrar, Health Center, Academic Support Services, HR and legal offices. Widespread campus-wide technology changes to streamline communications ranged from a new phone system and printers to SharePoint for a new employee and student website (HUB) to Microsoft One Drive for documents, Teams and shared calendars. Microsoft Azure was deployed for account management. New reporting systems improved data access and analytics, such as automated budget reports for Vice Presidents, Deans and budget directors. Finance, HR, and Enrollment at Td [(e)-10 (sa3 (e(l)3.7 (3 (d)-4.ae)-36.267T( a)203 (d E)1(

Presumably line with the



the welfare of children, genocide, and the health of our democracy. “Further, our students, particularly those enrolled in the Public History program, frequently engage in experiential

in the critical concerns of the Sisters of Mercy, and Mercy mission of service. The curriculum efforts to specifically incorporate it throughout the five-year span is most notable.

Both the chair and a vice chair of the Board of Trustees have been involved with the current strategic plan as part of the steering committee, offering substantial interfacing and input with the governing body amidst planning.

The NSEE survey was initially offered in 2005 and again in 2007. Afterwards, it was determined to offer the survey every three years. We have data from 2010, 2013, 2016 and 2019. The survey is offered to only freshmen and senior students. While we do miss cohort classes in between the surveyed years, deemed sufficient data for us to evaluate our effectiveness. It should be noted that due to COVID, we have not been able to analyze the 2019 survey results.

Evaluation of student learning outcomes are robust via the comprehensive assessment model and an extensive process found in the Assessment Handbook (Fall 2019). The Assessment Philosophy (pg. 3) describes the four principles for the annual reports, action plans, and five year selfstudy reports. The academic assessment process (Assessment Handbook) followed. This author does not find evidence of a common College Assessment Framework among the four colleges, for consistency.

An assessment model for institutional administrative goals and campus life is not clearly specified as of Fall 2020, but revisions to the Fall 2019 Assessment Handbook are pending (C. Allen, email 12/1-2020). The same process for student life and administration offices as for Academic Affairs began in 2019, using the Five Year Self Study Reports (Assessment Handbook,

morale, and clarify roles as it relates to budget development, management and related responsibilities, the following recommendations are made. This team will lead the annual budget planning process to include, but not limited to, revenue projections, resource allocation and long range planning while ensuring its successful implementation.

Financial impacts due to academic and non-academic strategic plan goal achievements, for program development, marketing, building, remodeling and operational efficiencies

It is unknown to this writer if there is a process to evaluate the financial impact of the Strategic Plan for the 3 year period at the University of the Pacific (UOP) from 2014 to 2017. © 2014 UOP

Standard I-4 ...*periodic assessment of mission and goals to ensure they are relevant and achievable*

Potential evidence:

Academic Departmental Studies  
 Board of Trustees Minutes Winter 2018  
 Board of Trustees Minutes Winter 2019  
 Board of Trustees Minutes Winter 2020  
 Strategic Plan Update 2.14.20  
 Strategic Plan HUB Site  
 2023 SP Timeline  
 AGENDA Cabinet Strategic Retreat July 2019  
 BOT Mission Subcommittee Charter on Mission  
 BOT Mission Summary 6.16.17  
 BOT Mission January 2019 Summary  
 BOTMISSION 10.6.2020 Executive Summary  
 Action plan equity, inclusion and justice  
 Revised University Bylaws September 2020  
 Renewal through the Mercy Mission Update 2.1.2020



mission, vision and core values is at each trustee's place setting for the full board meeting as a visible reminder of these foundational documents throughout the discussion and planning. Secondly, the discussion at that meeting led to the new practice of generating discussion at the end of each full board meetings about how the meeting's deliberations reflect the mission and core values. This reflective exercise has facilitated many important group discussions about

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This led, for example, to strategic assessment of niche majors and programs, including the decision to strategically expand the university's Autism Initiative at Mercyhurst (AIM) program and to explore new local initiatives for high school students to enroll for advance credit.

After this initial cabinet-level planning, a steering committee was then formed, which met frequently in fall 2019 to put together a skeleton of potential strategic areas to bring to the broader community for discussion and feedback. Various listening sessions were offered on both campuses in order to gather community feedback and concerns. A transparent strategic planning process including the timeline and key documents is available to be viewed by all employees on the university's HUB site.

Strategic goals are also regularly reviewed for relevance within academic departments. Each academic department at Mercyhurst engages in a rigorous course of assessment of its program, evaluating the efficacy of its curriculum and faculty in fulfilling Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and graduating students prepared for their respective professional fields. The ongoing assessment moves through a five

very regular process for updating and revisiting strategic goals. As the Renewal Through Mercy strategic plan update for the Board of Trustees in February 2020 demonstrates, the administration periodically reviews the strategic plan to see if it is being accomplished and remains relevant. While there is a clear current practice