Assurance Argument

Illinois Wesleyan University - IL

7/29/2016

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).

Argument

4.A.1. As mentioned briefly in Criterion 3.C.1., the University established an external review program in 2007, which provides the opportunity for academic units to reflect on their curriculum and explain how it relates to the University's mission. Each unit defines the specific objectives of the review before beginning a self-study process. Benefits of external reviews include enhanced communication between academic administrators and academic units, intra-departmental dialogue, and ultimately greater administrative support and understanding regarding the work within the unit. Each external review includes a comprehensive faculty-driven self-study, an external review by two to three colleagues from other institutions, and an academic unit's response to the external reviewers' report, including an action plan. More details concerning the self-studies, external reviews, and academic unit review schedule are available via the external review guidelines and objectives. Examples of completed reviews are also available.

The assessment of student learning goals within the academic units is detailed in Criterion 3.C.1, as is additional information concerning the Strategic Curricular Planning process. The General Education assessment process is described in Criterion 3.B.2.

Aside from the aforementioned student learning goal assessment processes that are addressed on an annual basis, the IWU faculty recently approved a new comprehensive review of the General Education program. Over the 2014-2015 academic year, the Curriculum Council appointed a General Education Review Task Force. The Task Force's charge includes the following elements in accordance with the University's mission and the ideals of a liberal arts education: ongoing General Education assessment, structure, scale/number of requirements, best practices, peer institutions, student engagement and intellectual independence, capacity for integrative learning, and the degree to which the program is easy to understand and navigate. The review shall consider the resource allocations for the General Education program on the overall campus community and the balance between the delivery of the General Education program and all majors and minors.

Program reviews are undertaken in non-academic affairs areas as well. For example, the University's student affairs division conducts an ongoing assessment of specific areas using criteria set forth by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). As noted at the CAS webpage, the Council "…creates and delivers dynamic, credible standards, guidelines, and Self-Assessment Guides that are designed to lead to a host of quality programs and services. CAS aims to foster and enhance student learning, development, and achievement." Areas that have undergone reviews recently include Arnold Health Services (2014-2015), student activities (Fall 2015), and security (Spring 2016). The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is scheduled for review over the 2016-2017 academic year.

4.A.2. and 4.A.3.

As described in the *IWU Catalog* (69-71), there are a number of conditions that must be satisfied in order to receive college credit earned prior to high school graduation, such as Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB). A maximum of eight course units of AP or IB credit will be recognized by the University, four of which may count towards General Education Requirements. For the AP exam, a score of 4 or 5 will receive one course unit of credit. Only Higher Level exams are accepted for the IB, with required scores of 4, 5, 6, or 7. Credit is not counted toward the fulfillment of major or minor requirements.

Course credit transfer for currently enrolled students is also available under certain conditions by request and approval from the Registrar. Considerations include the following:

- Courses must be offered by an accredited institution;
- Courses must be acceptable for credit towards a degree at that institution;
- Courses must be equivalent in rigor and in content (when appropriate); and
- The request for taking courses elsewhere must further a valid educational objective.

Matriculated students can earn no more than four units of General Education credit through a combination of AP, IB, and course transferred from other institutions (except for approved off-campus study programs). Transfer credit is not accepted for the Gateway Colloquium, and online courses may not be applied toward second language or science lab requirements. The department chair or program/school director must approve courses counting toward a major or minor.

Transfer of credits from foreign institutions not affiliated with IWU must be accompanied by an official English language translation of the official transcript and the official course descriptions from the institution's catalog. All requests are evaluated by a transcript evaluation service, which is paid by the student seeking transfer of credit. Credits from affiliated institutions will be accepted based on current institutional procedures without the evaluation service.

Common forms of experiential learning (*IWU Catalog* 54-55) at IWU include individual travel study, internships, and credits in independent study or special topics. The Associate Provost, the Curriculum Council, the student's academic advisor, and one or more faculty members who serve as directors and evaluators of the student's work approve these specialized programs for credit. Project proposals must be detailed and well organized to receive consideration. For example, internships for credit require students to follow the official internship guidelines adopted by the faculty, which includes a minimum of 160 on-site hours for one full-course unit of credit. Additional academic work is also required. Tracking is provided by using the Internship Learning Contract which is completed by the student, on-site supervisor and faculty supervisor before a student is registered for the course. Examples of experiential learning projects are available via the enclosed report.

4.A.4. Prerequisites: If a course requires prerequisites, they must be identified in the Request for Curriculum Council Action form, which is then considered through the CC's proposal review and approval process. Prerequisites are listed with the course descriptions in the *IWU Catalog* and are also enforced within the departments and online registration process. Curriculum Council must approve any changes in course prerequisites.

Rigor of Courses and Expectations for Student Learning: As indicated in the *IWU Catalog* and previously described in Criterion 3.A.1., the University's courses and their respective levels of performance are organized via a numbering system that delineates the expectations of students. The rigor of courses is assured through the faculty governance system and specifically by the Curriculum Council, which provides oversight on all matters concerning the curriculum.Course proposals must include a written rationale (CC HB) concerning the following:

- How does this course fit in with your overall program and faculty/student interest?
- Who will teach the course? How will this course affect departmental course offerings and staffing?
- Are you deleting a course to make space for this one? (If the course cannot be offered at least once every two years, please explain the circumstances under which it will be offered.)
- Why are you offering the course at this level?
- If the proposed course unit is more or less than 1, please explain. (Is this request in line with the University policy on course units?)
- Explain how the library, computer, media or other resources are or are not adequate? (If resources are not adequate, please indicate how they will be acquired.)
- For General Education courses, please read the category/flag description and goals carefully and explain in the proposal how the course meets the criteria for the appropriate category and/or flag. For 300- and 400-level courses, address how the course meets the additional requirements stated in the Criteria column for some categories.
- For May Term courses, explain how the course fulfills one or more purposes of May Term.

Finally, credit at IWU is awarded on the basis of criteria of subject mastery or competence. As noted in the *Catalog (65-67)*, the University has established detailed descriptions of the levels of student performance associated with each grade designation and their associated quality points, which determine a student's cumulative grade average.

Access to Learning Resources: IWU has an abundance of learning resources, examples of which were included in Criterion 3.D.4.However, there are a number of important learning resources that present themselves in different contexts previously described.For example, students, faculty, and staff have direct borrowing privileges at over 130 Illinois institutions of higher education through the University's membership in the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI).

The CARLI member libraries serve over 94% of Illinois higher education students, faculty and staff. Music students regularly give concerts at the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts, while Environmental Studies students are able to use Geographical Information Systems (GIS) equipment at Illinois State University. Students interested in pursuing a medical career are eligible to participate in a medical externship. In cooperation with local physicians of different specializations, students engage in a full-time observation of the physician's daily routines including office/clinic hours, hospital rounds, surgery, staff meetings, etc. Pre-professional programs leading to certification in Education and Nursing could not exist without the cooperation and collaboration with community schools and hospitals, respectively, and the nature of this collaboration is discussed in more detail in Criterion 1.D.3.

Faculty Qualifications: The required qualifications for IWU faculty are detailed in the *Faculty Handbook*.These qualifications are also summarized in Criterion 3.C.2., including a description of the evaluation process for prospective tenure-line faculty members. IWU does not have dual credit programs.

4.A.5. IWU programs accredited by specialized accreditation commissions:

School of Nursing: The University's School of Nursing program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. The School is also approved by the Department of Registration and Education of the State of Illinois.

Educational Studies: The University's elementary and secondary teacher education program is approved by the Illinois State Board of Education.

School of Music: IWU's School of Music is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music.

Department of Chemistry: The University's chemistry program is on the approved list of the American Chemical Society's committee on professional training.

4.A.6. Annually, IWU administers the Graduating Student Survey (GSS), a University-developed instrument that captures students' employment and educational plans for the year following their graduation. The survey is administered in April and continues for nine months, allowing for updates and submissions of missing information. Approximately 78% of students graduating over the 2014-2015 academic year responded to the GSS, indicating that 74% were employed full-time, while 22% reported that they were continuing their education on a full-time basis (e.g., graduate and professional school). The employment positions represent a very diverse mix of occupations, and the educational programs include degree pursuits in law, medicine, business, education, and science. Post-graduate service is also tracked including students participating in the Peace Corps, Americorps, and City Year. Additional employment and graduate-professional school offers are available as well. More detailed information concerning the above may be accessed in the GSS reports, while 10 years of employment and continuing education information is available via the IWU Fact Book. The GSS reports are widely disseminated across campus and many of the findings are posted in news releases, within the "Why Wesleyan?" and "After Wesleyan?" webpages, and the Major-to-Career webpage, which provides over 10,000 career biographies of alumni by major. This site highlights the diverse career fields embarked upon by IWU alumni, reflecting the fact that a college major doesn't always coincide with a specific career.

Additional evidence concerning the success of graduates may be examined through the results of an IWU alumni survey administered via the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium**.** Administered

over the fall of 2014, IWU alumni graduating one year, five, and 10 years ago were included in the assessment. When asked to what extent their undergraduate experience prepared them for the following activities, the alumni respondents reported the following:

Combined values of "Very much" and "Quite a bit."

	1-Year	5-Year	10-Year
Graduate or professional school	81%	79%	79%
Current career	69%	66%	75%

The University also monitors external sources for information concerning its graduates:

- More than 80% of our pre-medicine graduates are admitted to medical school on their first try, compared to the 50% national average for all pre-medicine majors at other institutions.
- According to the National Science Foundation Survey of Earned Doctorates (2002 to 2011), IWU ranks 74th overall among the nation's 224 baccalaureate colleges in the number of graduates who go on to earn doctoral degrees. Other rankings include the following: humanities (61st); religion and theology (124th); arts and music (24th); business and management (47th); physical sciences (73rd); life sciences (61st); mathematics and computer science (132nd); psychology (61st); social sciences (95th); and education (107th).
- In each of the past five years (2010-2014), IWU's School of Nursing graduates have matched or outperformed the state and national passing rates for the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses.
- IWU's teacher education graduates in the class of 2013 exceeded state pass rate averages with a cumulative 100% passing rate on two required state exams. They also exceeded first attempt state pass rate on all content knowledge exams areas (except Spanish) and in all programs (elementary, secondary, music) on the assessment of professional teaching exam (the final test required for licensure). In addition, 100% of the 2014 graduates (survey respondents) seeking employment in schools were hired in schools. Those students who did not opt for immediate employment went to graduate school or pursued other opportunities.

Sources

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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.

Argument

4.B.1, 4.B.2 ,4.B.3 and 4.B.4,

IWU has clearly stated student learning goals, effective processes and methodologies for assessment University-wide. As described in Criterion 1.A.2 and 3.B.2, General Education, the foundation of an IWU education, has eight student learning goals that are distributed across 14 categories. These goals are assessed on a routine basis with an emphasis on direct measures of student learning. Based on a five-year rotation, faculty members teaching within each General Education category/flag develop and implement direct assessment tools to measure the extent to which students are meeting category goals. Three to four categories/flags are assessed each year. Recent General Education assessment reports are available via the following reports, which outline the various uses of information to improve student achievement within the program.

The assessment of student learning goals within majors and minors is described in Criterion 3.C.1. All academic units are expected to have a Strategic Assessment Plan on file with the Assessment Committee, which may be updated as necessary when goals and priorities evolve. On an annual basis, units submit an Annual Assessment Report (AAR) in the fall, which contains the results and actions of the unit's assessment efforts from the past academic year to improve student learning. A summary of the AAR is provided in the reports for campus-wide dissemination. In the spring, the academic units submit a Yearly Action Plan, which outlines the intended assessment work to be accomplished over the next academic year. These processes allow the Assessment Committee to provide guidance to the academic units as needed and to evaluate the extent to which each department, school, and program has performed assessment consistent with effective policies and practices. Assessment resources, AAR summaries, and exemplary assessment-related materials are available via the Student Learning Assessment webpage.

In February of 2016, the Division of Academic Affairs invited consultants from the Center of Inquiry at Wabash College to visit and review IWU's assessment activities (i.e., General Education and student learning goals within academic units) and provide feedback on how the University could increase the effectiveness of this work. A report was provided in April concerning IWU's assessment efforts, which included the impact of the campus climate on collaboration and the use of assessment data elements to make positive changes across campus. This report was shared with the faculty in May and discussions concerning the campus climate and assessment will take place over the summer and into the fall.

Finally, there are a number of assessment resources provided by the Office of Institutional Research & Planning (OIRP) that supplement the University's assessment efforts. The analysis of student learning assessment data occurs at the institutional level through the collection of benchmark data from national survey instruments, organized according to a multi-year schedule. In year one, for example, first-year students complete the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE), developed by the Indiana University Center for Post-Secondary Research. The BCSSE asks questions about students' high school experiences and interactions, as well as their college engagement expectations. During the spring semester, first-year students and seniors complete the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), where they answer questions that explore the levels of student engagement with college resources and activities (e.g., classes, peers, faculty). The NSSE also features curriculum-based questions.

In year two during the fall semester, first-year students complete The Freshman Survey (TFS), which is a part of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), developed by the University of California, Los Angeles Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). The TFS survey covers a wide range of student characteristics: parental income and education, ethnicity, and other demographic items; financial aid; secondary school achievement and activities; educational and career plans; and values, attitudes, beliefs, and self-concept. During the spring semester, seniors complete the College Senior Survey (CSS). The CSS allows comparison between students' responses as entering first-year students via the TFS and their responses at the end of their senior year. Additionally, the HERI faculty survey is offered regularly to provide an assessment of faculty perceptions and expectations regarding institutional priorities and student development. For purposes of enhancing student learning, a comparative analysis of the degree to which student and faculty perceptions demonstrate congruence or significant difference regarding students' time on task, motivation, and achievement of specific learning goals has been particularly useful when shared by the provost in the chairs/directors meetings.

These instruments are disseminated in an ordered and systematic fashion allowing the University to guard against the negative effects of over-surveying and time to examine the results and respond as necessary. All of the reports related to the above mentioned surveys are publicly available via the University Assessment webpage. Campus-wide email notifications are sent out as new reports become available. In addition, presentations concerning selected aspects of the reports take place within trustee, Cabinet, Staff Council, and divisional meetings**.**

A number of co-curricular programs are also assessed concerning their learning outcomes. For example, students participating in the University's Summer Enrichment Program complete a survey concerning their leadership training and internship experiences. A report is generated from this exercise and shared throughout the student affairs division. Similar reports include the annual report for the Office of Student Activities and Leadership Programs. Among a number of items, this report provides an evaluation of the University's First-Year Leadership Institute and Titan Leadership Program. Another example of evidence is the report produced by the Office of Residential Life (ORL), which details the vast amount of programming that takes place on an annual basis. One example includes the assessment of the new Quality and Impact Programming Model (2014-2015), which is designed to help student residents grow and develop holistically. The model includes a Six Weeks Challenge, which is a weekly-guided checklist that focuses on strong community development as well as individual interactions. A number of student learning outcomes and staff-student engagements are expected from this Challenge.

Students participating in programming efforts will:

- Build relationships with students in their community
- Explore with peers individual perspectives on current, critical, or controversial events and topics
- Gain a new, or deeper, understanding of personal and society implications of resource usage (sustainability)
- Develop a greater understanding of self as it relates to personal wellness
- Enhance classroom learning through connecting life experiences with classroom topics.

Through implementing the model, paraprofessional staff will:

- Provide an opportunity for each resident/roommate pair to talk about interests/goals/
- Provide a targeted learning experience for each resident
- Establish and build community through shared experiences
- Utilize and discuss sustainable aspects of program offerings
- Explore and highlight the unique diversity within the floor/building community
- Plan and implement building-wide events with staff and interested residents

Detailed data elements concerning the above outcomes, as well as a number of other ORL-based activities are available within the annual report.

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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.)

Argument

4.C.1. As noted in Strategy C in the strategic plan, *IWU 2020,* the University's goal concerning first-year-to-sophomore retention is to maintain a rate of over 90%. As observed in the Fact Book, the University's retention rates have remained very strong over the past number of years with fluctuations between 88% and 93%. After two consecutive years of first-year to sophomore retention rates lower than 90% and recognizing the rapidly changing student demographics (as detailed in Criterion 5.C.5.), new initiatives and planning efforts took place over the 2012-2013 academic year. A number of these initiatives are listed throughout the strategic plan including the following:

- Develop a robust peer-tutoring program (Strategy I.B4).
- Create and implement a meaningful review of the advising system (Strategy I.B5).
- Develop, maintain and review a consistent study of campus retention for trends and actionable responses (Strategy II.C1).
- Review retention rates by race to determine areas for improvement (Strategy II.C1).
- Review first-generation student retention and explore supports as needed (Strategy II.C1).
- Review progress reports and campus research studies regarding climate, recruitment and retention (Strategy III.A4).

The University's success with first-year to sophomore retention is reflected in the strength of students persisting through their junior and senior years. Over the past three years, the sophomore-to-junior average retention rate was 84%, while the junior-to-senior average retention rate was also 84%.

The University's graduation rates are also very strong. The four-year graduation rate generally hovers between the low and mid seventies, with a recent three-year average of 75%. The commonly used six-year graduation rate generally hovers within the low eighties, with a recent three-year average of 80%.

However, recent examinations of retention and graduation rates when disaggregated by race/ethnicity were somewhat concerning. As noted in its spring 2015 report to the University Council for Diversity,

the Campus Climate Assessment Committee offered a number of observations and recommendations for the University to consider for enhancing the student experience.

4.C.2. and 4.C.4.

The majority of IWU students enter the institution as traditional first-time, first-year degree-seeking students, at an average age of 18. Each entering student cohort is examined through the methodologies defined by the Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data Sharing (IPEDS) system in examining retention and completion rates over the students' experience at the University. Retention and graduation rates are reported via IPEDS and in the Common Data Set (CDS). The IPEDS reports are publicly available via the National Center for Educational Statistics. The University also provides publicly available retention and graduation rates via the Fact Book, CDS, and IWU Facts webpages.

The University also reports retention and graduation rate information through the annual IWU Benchmark Report, which provides data elements on key performance indicators on IWU and its Peer/Aspirant Group for internal and external monitoring, management and planning. The Peer/Aspirant Group consists of 12 institutions that were selected using a number of characteristics (e.g., programming, environment, external resources). Over the past three years, the University has fluctuated slightly below or at the median of this group for first-year-to-sophomore retention and four- and six-year graduation rates. In general, the University seeks to be at or above the Peer/Aspirant Group median. Additional information is also obtained on an annual basis via the Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Consortium, which serves as data element depository for over 100 institutions similar to IWU.

The University admits approximately 25 to 30 transfer students each fall semester. The retention of transfer students is tracked through enrollment projection modeling procedures and has been very strong, generally in the mid to high 90s.

4.C.3. As mentioned in Criterion 4.C.1., the renewed concern over attrition translated into a number of retention-driven initiatives during the strategic planning process. However, a number of efforts concerning retention commenced well before the adoption of *IWU 2020* in the spring of 2014 including the following:

- Development of a new Retention Database to improve the quality and efficiency of tracking students who depart from IWU.
- Development of a "Students of Concern" online form to enhance communication among faculty and staff regarding at-risk students.
- More aggressive follow-up with students who were late in registering for classes.
- New Leave of Absence procedures were implemented in February 2015. The procedures clarify roles and the process for tracking students who request a leave of absence for medical or mental health reasons. Additionally, registration holds were added to better collect documentation related to the leave and any future accommodations required.
- Revised exit interview form to better document data concerning why students leave.
- Implementation of the Parent Portal, which provides access to news and events of interest to IWU parents. If authorized by the IWU student, parents can also view the student's secure information such as grades, financial aid, and class schedules.
- Implementation of the summer SPLICE program for biology and chemistry students
- Establishment of IWU's F1RST, a new student-led residential student organization whose main focus and goal is to seamlessly incorporate first generation college students into the community and University.
- Implementation of the Emerging Leaders Summer Institute. Targeting "at risk" students, this

weeklong summer enrichment program prepares students for a successful career at the University.

Special efforts were made concerning the University's Turning Titan new student orientation program. In order to enhance the arrival and settling-in experiences for students and their families a number of initiatives were implemented, which included the following:

- Students were provided with more time with their advisors to promote stronger connections. Meetings with advisors were better structured, with more clarity of learning outcomes.
- Stronger and clearer connections were developed among student peer groups, which enhanced long-term adjustment. The groups were structured by Gateway Colloquia groups, which provided longevity and consistency for the students throughout the orientation experience.
- Meetings were minimized on move-in day to streamline the process, making it less overwhelming so students could truly get settled.
- Same-day advising and registration were implemented, which allowed advisors to be present and helpful with troubleshooting problematic issues.
- "Service Day" was changed to "Mission Day," which provided better communication and connectivity with the University's mission and the mission-related activities engaged by students.
- Additional free time and better communication about expectations with student athletes and the athletic department were provided to reduce schedule overload.

In addition, the University developed and administered an in-house survey to assess the satisfaction levels of first-year students with over 30 aspects of University life (e.g., advising, campus safety, quality of teaching, student orientation). The First-Year Student Satisfaction Survey (FYSSS) was first administered in the spring of 2014. Some of the significant findings from the most recent administration were as follows:

- The majority of the responses for the 33 aspects of University life were positive. The Ames Library had the largest average score (3.56) based on a four-point scale, while SODEXO Dining Services had the lowest average score (2.57) (4 = Very Satisfied to 1 = Very Dissatisfied).
- Seven items (Class Registration Process, Financial Aid Package, First-Year Academic Advising, First-Year Residence Hall, Gateway Course, SODEXO Dining Services, and Social Experience) had a combined dissatisfaction rating of 20% or greater (i.e., Very Dissatisfied & Dissatisfied).
- Eighty-one percent of the student respondents indicated that they would still choose to enroll at IWU, if they could select their college again - up from 78% last year.
- Forty-seven percent of the student respondents indicated that they considered transferring - up from 40% last year. "Affordability" and "Value of education relative to price" were identified as the most frequent reasons.
- Similar to last year, students' satisfaction with their social experience at the University had the highest overall correlation with overall satisfaction (.506), reinforcing the need for high quality, inclusive community-building on-campus

The results of the FYSSS continue to confirm a number of beliefs and provide further credence to strategic planning initiatives related to improvements in advising, the class registration process, student employment, and the overall social experience on campus. As noted previously, a review of student health services was conducted in the 2014-2015 academic year based on the student feedback from that administration of the survey. Affordability continues to be a primary focus for the University. Although not directly tied to the FYSSS results, the University awarded 39 new Promise

Scholarships to students entering in the fall of 2014. These endowed scholarships are in addition to what a student was initially awarded in their financial aid package. The central purpose of the Promise Scholarships is to help bridge the gap between what the University can provide in aid and what families can contribute to the cost of an IWU education.

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

The continuing assessment and enhancement of Illinois Wesleyan's educational programs, learning environments, and support services provide clear evidence of the University's commitment to excellence. Programs, courses, and the quality of credit are routinely reviewed. The effectiveness of student learning is rigorously examined through the measurement of learning goals within the academic units and the General Education program. Goals concerning student persistence and completion are defined, and progress is closely monitored and enhanced through a number of initiatives employed by faculty and staff. Alumni success in educational and professional endeavors is observed through a number of internal and external collections of information, which is used to improve programming and promote the educational achievements of IWU students.

Despite the University's strong evidence concerning the core components of Criterion Four, challenges have been identified that require addressing in the near future. A number of these challenges have been documented in the University's strategic plan, *IWU 2020*. They include the following:

Challenges

- Evaluation and revisions to University-wide programs including General Education, Gateway Colloquia, the Writing Program, May Term, and First-Year Advising should continue to be pursued.

- The University should continue and expand its evaluation of its processes and methodologies concerning curricular and co-curricular assessment programs.

- The University should attain 100% participation in the assessment of student learning goals at the academic unit level.

Sources

There are no sources.