

Assurance Argument
Illinois Wesleyan University -
Bloomington, IL

Review date: 11-16-2026

3 - Teaching and Learning for Student Success

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The rigor and quality of each educational program is consistent regardless of modality, location or other differentiating factors.

3.A. Educational Programs

The institution maintains learning goals and outcomes that reflect a level of rigor commensurate with college-level work, including by program level and the content of each of its educational programs.

Argument

As noted in the IWU Catalog, (1) course numbers differentiate the University's courses and their required performance levels. One hundred-level courses are introductory studies in general areas of knowledge or work in basic skills. Two hundred-level courses include intensive studies in general areas of knowledge, basic studies in specialized fields of knowledge, or work in intermediate skills. Courses at the 300-level address advanced studies in general areas of knowledge, intensive studies in specialized fields of knowledge, or work in advanced skills. Finally, 400-level courses concern advanced studies principally for students who are majoring in the programs or departments. Levels 200 through 400 generally require previous studies in the areas or academic abilities normally acquired during several semesters of college work, respectively of the courses.

Developing and maintaining courses and programs that ensure high levels of student performance involves several elements. As noted in the By-Laws of the Board of Trustees, (2) members of the faculty are responsible for the review and maintenance of the curriculum. Much of this work is accomplished through the oversight of the Curriculum Council (CC), (3) a faculty-elected committee by academic division, which recommends the approval of new and revised courses and curricula to the general faculty. Other elements include third-party accreditation standards that enhance and ensure high levels of student performance in areas such as chemistry, educational studies, and nursing. Additional evidence that IWU students' performance is appropriate to their degrees includes pass rates on standardized tests (e.g., education, nursing, accounting), placements in graduate and professional schools (e.g., allied health, arts & sciences, law), and high levels of employment following graduation. (4)

Academic Rigor

Prerequisites: If a course requires prerequisites, they must be identified in the Request for Curriculum Council Action form, which is then considered through the Curriculum Council's proposal review and approval process. Prerequisites are listed in the course descriptions in

the IWU Catalog and are also enforced by departments and in online registration processes. The Curriculum Council must approve any changes in course prerequisites. Minutes of the Curriculum Council meetings are available on campus or via IWU login. (4a)

Rigor of Courses and Expectations for Student Learning: As indicated in the IWU Catalog, 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 ensured through the faculty governance system, specifically by the Curriculum Council, which provides oversight on all matters concerning the curriculum. New or significantly revised course proposals must include a written rationale concerning the following: (4b)

- How does this course fit in with your overall program? That is, what role does it play in your academic unit's curriculum? How does it align (if at all) with your academic unit's student learning goals? And how does it reflect 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 Shared Curriculum/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.

Finally, credit at IWU is awarded based on the criteria of subject mastery or competence. As noted in the 2024-2025 IWU Catalog (pp. 52-54), the University has established detailed descriptions of student performance levels associated with each grade designation and quality points, which determine a student's cumulative grade average. (4c)

Credit and Transfer Student Procedures

As described in the 2024-2025 IWU Catalog (pp. 57-63), several conditions must be satisfied to receive college credit earned before high school graduation, such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and the Cambridge International Examinations. A maximum of eight course units of AP or IB credit will be recognized by the University, four of which may count towards Shared Curriculum credit. 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 5, 6, or 7. Cambridge International Examinations at the A-Level with scores of A*, A, and B, will generally receive one course unit of elective or Shared Curriculum credit. All credit from AP, IB, and Cambridge or similar programs will be counted as lower-division credit. (4d)

To facilitate transfer, the University recently joined the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI; www.itransfer.org) as a receiving institution. As a result, students who have completed the

General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) at any IAI participating institution will have made significant progress towards the General Education requirements at Illinois Wesleyan. The formation of articulation agreements between IWU and several Illinois community colleges is an ongoing process.

All transfer students (including those transferring in with the IAI GECC package) must have a 2.00 cumulative grade average for all college work (exclusive of military science) and for all work completed at Illinois Wesleyan to qualify for an undergraduate degree. Courses with grades of less than a C will not be accepted for transfer. Transfer students who have completed the IAI will still be required to satisfy other graduation requirements (including the other aspects of the Shared Curriculum: Encountering Diversity and Physical Education). Transfer students who have completed a statewide articulated associate degree or those who have been granted 30 semester hours of transfer credit without having completed the GECC will have the option to complete the GECC curriculum while enrolled at IWU. The Registrar, in consultation with the faculty and the Dean of Curricular and Faculty Development, shall evaluate all requests for transfer and Advanced Placement credit for Shared Curriculum courses and flags.

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 for 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 (2024-2025 IWU Catalog pp. 37-43) (4e) at IWU include off-campus study, internships, and credits in independent study or special topics research projects. 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 include 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. (4f)

Another evaluative process for the academic units is external reviews. After a postponement during the COVID-19 pandemic, external reviews were reestablished over the 2023-2024 academic year. A revised external review schedule (5) was updated in the spring of 2024. The reviews center around several questions, including the following:

- How is the department's or program's mission related to IWU's mission and vision?
- Is the department following national trends and best practices for the content and rigor of the major(s), minor(s), or certificate(s)? Are curricular demands accessible to both majors and non-majors, as appropriate?
- Has the department/program identified student learning goals for the major and/or minor that are clear and measurable? How does the department/program assess progress on these goals?

- What are the short- and long-term priorities of the department or program? What are the needs and demands of the program in the context of existing resources?

IWU offers Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Bachelor of Science (B.S.), Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.), Bachelor of Music (B.M.), and the Bachelor of Music Education (B.M.E.) degrees. The requirements for each degree are described in the 2024-2025 IWU Catalog (pp. 31-34), (6) as well as the course unit system and equivalencies to other systems for awarding collegiate credit. Besides traditional major and minor programs, the University is working on awarding microcredentials in the form of academic certificate programs. These programs are three- to four-course clusters that students may take to enhance necessary skills and knowledge that will benefit them in post-graduation activities (e.g., graduate school and career). The University has established certificates in Data Science, Intercultural Competence, and Reading Intervention. A “bilingual teaching” certificate is currently under development by the School of Educational Studies. (7)

All IWU courses have their own student learning goals that are consistent with the Shared Curriculum and/or the respective academic units’ learning goals as articulated in their Strategic Assessment Plans (StrAP). The University’s Assessment Committee (AC) (8) continually reviews student-learning goals within the academic unit for accessibility, appropriateness, clarity, and usefulness. In addition, the AC is charged with assessing student-learning goals within the Shared Curriculum (general education). The process (9) is a faculty-driven model where volunteers are solicited to assess Shared Curriculum categories. Faculty-developed measures and/or rubrics are utilized to assess specific goals within the category, and a report is produced that includes data and key findings. These reports are sent to the AC to produce an aggregate report on each category, which is then shared with the Curriculum Council (CC). Evidence concerning assessment within the Shared Curriculum for both the CC and AC models includes these sample reports. (10) The University’s student learning goals are publicly available in the IWU Catalog and on the webpages of most academic units, the Shared Curriculum, and the Student Learning Assessment webpage. (11) More details concerning the assessment work of the AC and CC are available in Criterion 3.E.

In January of 2025, the Assessment Committee (AC) scheduled an Assessment Workshop for faculty members to reimagine the student learning outcomes within the Shared Curriculum. Significant issues from the AC’s perspective included the following:

- The eight student learning outcomes (SLOs) in the Shared Curriculum and the student learning outcomes in each of the Shared Curriculum categories/flags are difficult to assess, as they are written due to the lack of measurable student outcomes.
- The eight SLOs and the categories/flags in the Shared Curriculum are not aligned.
- The current assessment process has been disconnected from the regular curricular development process.
- The original 2013 assessment model has been disrupted by the General Education review (2017), Program Evaluation Task Force (PETF) process (a comprehensive academic program review) (2018-2019), COVID-19 (2020-2021), various institutional financial strains, the fact that half of the faculty is new, and others.
- The AC is disconnected from Academic Affairs.

Two additional faculty workshops were held in March and April of 2025 for assessment liaisons, deans, chairs, and directors for updated information concerning expectations for

assessment within the academic units. Further details concerning the AC's identified issues, short- and long-term suggested fixes, and the workshop outcomes are available in the AC's memo to the Council for University Programs and Policies (CUPP) and the Faculty Meeting of April 23, 2025. (11B) (11C)

The quality of the University's programs and learning goals is consistent across all academic units. All courses follow the same assessment processes noted above to ensure consistency with the Shared Curriculum and/or individual units' learning goals. IWU is a residential institution with one campus, where the vast majority of courses are taught. However, there are IWU-sponsored study abroad programs. For example, the IWU Barcelona Program (12) allows IWU students to study with an IWU faculty member and local faculty while living with host families in Barcelona. Students take one course with the IWU Barcelona Program Director, an IWU faculty member, and select their other three classes from those offered by Barcelona faculty at the Barcelona Study Abroad Experience, the University's program partner. Over the past few years, these courses utilized a Zoom Room to allow IWU nursing majors to take their required nursing courses in Barcelona. This technology allowed the Barcelona-based students abroad to be actively engaged in the classroom on IWU's campus, while allowing IWU students to live vicariously through their classmates' cultural immersion via synchronous learning.

The University also offers 3-2 cooperative programs (13) in forestry and environmental management, occupational therapy, and pre-engineering. In general, the programs require students to spend their first three years at IWU, completing each program's respective requirements and courses. After students are admitted to a cooperating institution and have completed one to two years of the program (depending on the program), students are awarded their IWU degree. There are a variety of degree programs and cooperating institutions in the forestry and environmental management and pre-engineering programs.

Courses offered through online modes of instruction have the same curriculum and learning goals as their in-person counterparts. Feedback from faculty members has indicated that planned assessment tools are comparable to those used in face-to-face instruction. As new courses or programs are developed in the future that are specifically designed for distance or correspondence education, the University's Thorpe Center will work with the faculty to develop meaningful tools to assess their students. (14)

Sources

There are no sources.

3.B. Exercise of Intellectual Inquiry

The institution's educational programs engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in practicing modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

Argument

The University's core requirements within the Shared Curriculum, (1) which include the General Education Program, Encountering Diversity, and Physical Education, are consistent with those in our mission documents and provide the foundation for the University's educational programs. The terms "intellectual independence, critical thinking, imagination, social awareness, active learning, problem-solving, collaborative inquiry, and community involvement" characterize the program's goals. Cumulatively, they represent a strong University commitment to ensure that all of its students acquire the skills and become conversant with the values that promote a life of learning and intellectual inquiry.

The Shared Curriculum goals, in their current form, are listed below:

- To develop students' capacities for critical thinking, intellectual independence, and imagination by creating opportunities for active learning
- To develop students' knowledge and understanding of the fundamental processes and relationships of nature and culture and their evolution over time
- To enable students to use formal methods of reasoning in problem-solving
- To heighten students' understanding of the diversity of cultures in our own society and the world
- To develop students' capacities for expressing and communicating ideas in writing and orally, in English and in another language, and for using writing as a means of discovery and understanding
- To foster in students the ability to make and assess judgments of value in such areas as ethics, aesthetics, and public policy by encouraging them to frame questions of value, to explore alternative value systems, and to become informed, active citizens in public life
- To develop in students kinesthetic awareness, personal fitness, and lifelong habits of healthy living
- To bring the world to campus and students to the world through varied combinations of co-curricular programming, travel, and service to the community

The ethos of the Shared Curriculum is based upon the affirmation that, as different areas of inquiry are both distinctive and related to one another, students should have the opportunity to learn how different perspectives provide unique opportunities for viewing the world around us while also appreciating how these perspectives can be mutually reinforcing and complementary. As a result, the framework of the program is based upon courses that fulfill the learning goals of knowledge categories, and courses that serve as flags, whereby they include content specific to a set of skills or values with which all students should become conversant. Typical students begin their Shared Curriculum program by completing a

Gateway Colloquium, a first-year seminar that allows students to develop their critical thinking skills through focused attention to the writing process.

In addition to Gateway Colloquium, the Shared Curriculum course categories include the following: Analysis of Values, the Arts, Contemporary Social Institutions, Cultural and Historical Change, Formal Reasoning, Intellectual Traditions, Literature, the Natural Sciences (most students must complete a physical science and a life science course, one must contain a laboratory experience, the other will be issues focused), Second Language, and Physical Education. Required flagged courses include those that have a focus on domestic or global diversity and those that are writing-intensive. Students must complete four flagged courses (two diversity courses corresponding to each area of focus, and two writing-intensive courses, at least one of which should be completed before the end of one's sophomore year). By the time they graduate, students will have completed at least three writing-intensive courses: the Gateway Colloquium and two writing courses, one of which must be in their major field of study. Evidence concerning the assessment of student learning in the Shared Curriculum was noted in Criterion 3.A.

IWU greatly values scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge and offers faculty and students numerous opportunities to engage in activities that further the constructive exchange of ideas. As mentioned briefly in Criterion 2.E., The Ames Library faculty has developed an information literacy program (2) focused on the appropriate use of scholarship, including the building of critical thinking skills and the analysis of content within the scholarly environment. To that end, the information-literate student can:

- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and access and use information ethically and legally

In addition, the library faculty has developed a set of learning outcomes for information literacy for first- and second-year students. A learning outcomes document was created in conjunction with the Writing Program and is engaged in collaboration with several teaching faculty across the disciplines to develop approaches and assignments for achieving the goals of information literacy across campus. All of the attributes associated with the information literacy program are consistent with those within the mission documents.

One of the showcases for formal student scholarly achievement under faculty advisement is the John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference, which began in 1990. In April of each year, students present papers, posters, compositions, and works of art at a gathering of faculty, students, parents, and alumni. Conference participation is open to students from all disciplines. As noted below, participation has been significant since the last self-study. Conference programs from every year are made available in the Digital Commons. (3)

John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference

	Students	Posters	Oral Presentations	Art/Music
2022	76	50	17	3

2023	99	25	51	4
2024	122	67	25	2
2025	127	72	33	0

A distinctive feature highlighting IWU's student-faculty collaboration involves a few on-campus student-published journals. Students manage, edit, and publish three professional journals sponsored by particular academic units, including the Undergraduate Economic Review (economics), Tributaries (English), and Res Publica (political science). Through directly participating in the peer review process, students obtain a direct understanding of how scholarship is produced, including the importance of writing for a professional audience, as well as the necessity of revising one's work to meet acceptable standards of discourse within one's discipline. This participation also provides the opportunity to discuss copyright and intellectual property issues with students. The student journals are submitted to the campus Digital Commons in electronic form, which has significantly enhanced their readership through increased access. (4)

The Eckley Summer Scholars and Artists Endowment (5) is another instance where students and faculty work closely together. This endowment supports summer research and creative activities for several students each year, enabling them to stay on campus over the summer to work under the direction of faculty mentors. The program is designed to support the development of a student's scholarly or artistic project in hopes of deepening research and creative competencies. Faculty members have the opportunity to work with talented students by providing professional mentorship on topics of mutual scholarly or artistic interest. Other student-based research funds include the following: The Criley Endowment Fund, established in 2008, which provides summer scholarships for student research in the field of biology, the Mark A. Israel '91 Endowed Summer Research Fund in Economics, established in 2013, and the Environmental Sustainability Summer Experience, which provides experiential learning projects in research, art, study abroad, or an internship. All of these endowed initiatives have a significant impact on the quality of student research opportunities and experiences. (6)

Faculty engagement in scholarship and/or artistic production and performance is a key expectation for achieving tenure and promotion. A compilation of the approved abstracts for sabbatical and pre-tenured faculty leave topics over the past several years demonstrates the fact that faculty engagement in scholarly activity is widespread and significant. (7)

One significant program over the past several years concerning intellectual inquiry has been the annual intellectual themes at IWU, a faculty-driven initiative with the goal of synthesizing learning around a central concept and creating a vibrant intellectual environment on campus for students, faculty, and staff. The theme guides the summer reading program for new students, as well as several theme-based courses and events (e.g., films, lectures, workshops) that are offered to students in support of mission- and vision-driven attributes. Examples of recent themes include the Power of Place, which provides an opportunity for students to think critically about various conceptualizations of place. (8) **(Leave this in the Argument, since it covers 2022-2024 (Power of Place))**

Established in 2013-2014, the University offers opportunities for learning, reflecting, and

advocating on behalf of human rights through its Center for Human Rights and Social Justice (CHRSJ). The CHRSJ supports campus initiatives related to human rights and social justice, which play a prominent role in the mission documents and curriculum of the University. These initiatives include the Peace Fellows Program, the Scholars at Risk Advocacy Seminar, and the Human Rights Undergraduate Research Workshop. In addition, the CHRSJ sponsors prominent guest speakers and summer internships, and provides information about the graduate programs and prospective Non-Governmental Organization opportunities in the human rights field. Other examples of students utilizing the CHRSJ may be found here. (9)

The Hart Career Center is especially effective in placing students in internships relevant to their interests and aspirations. As stated by the Center, “Internships offer opportunities to make your education “real” by providing practical work experience in your major field of study or career interest area.” More specifically, internships allow students to:

- Explore possibilities of future careers
- Gain valuable skills and career-related experience
- Apply classroom knowledge to real-world situations
- Establish professional contacts and begin networking
- Possibly earn money, academic credit, or a future job offer

Internships	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25
Total	402	419	443	454
Academic (for credit)	26%	25%	29%	26%

Detailed information concerning the class distribution, participation by semester, and internship compensation is available via the Internship Trend Data Report and the annual Internship Summary Reports. (10)

Sources

There are no sources.

3.C. Sufficiency of Faculty and Staff

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

Argument

Illinois Wesleyan has the faculty and staff required for its delivery of high-quality programs and services. As observed in the faculty section (1) of the Fact Book (e.g., demographics, rank, FTE), IWU balances its full-time instructional faculty with a sufficient number of teaching-track, visiting, and adjunct instructors to successfully deliver the University's curriculum and maintain a student-to-faculty ratio of 12 to 1 with an FTE of 137 (Fall 2025). Also noted in the Fact Book, the University's staff FTE was 296 (Fall 2025), which equated to a student-to-staff ratio of 5.7 to 1.

Regarding the responsibilities and expectations of IWU faculty, Article I in the Faculty Handbook states the following: (2)

The level of academic excellence, which characterizes an institution of higher education, is directly related to the quality of its faculty and the degree to which the faculty takes seriously its role in maintaining the high quality of education in the University.

IWU faculty participation is vitally important in a number of areas, including personnel matters, academic freedom, the curriculum, student recruitment, advising, academic achievement, and fiscal planning. These areas are listed in detail in Article 1.

The qualifications for full-time, tenure-track faculty at IWU are as follows (Faculty Handbook, Chapter IV – 13; January 2019):

*Candidates must furnish proof that all degree requirements have been completed before the deadline date for presenting files for tenure. To be eligible for tenure, faculty members in the College of Liberal Arts or School of Nursing must have the earned doctorate in the appropriate discipline except in rare circumstances where substantial evidence of equivalent professional ability and experience is clearly demonstrable. For the purpose of tenure and promotion, the master's degree can be considered the terminal degree in the Department of Accounting and Financial Services. Faculty members in the professional schools of Art, Theatre Arts, and Music and library faculty must have completed the appropriate terminal degree and/or whatever special preparation is normally specified as necessary by the profession. **Need updated FHB statement.***

The evaluation process for hiring prospective tenure-line faculty members includes input from the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, the members of the search committee, the chair of the department, faculty within the department, and a faculty member external to the department. Other members of the University community, including department chairs, school directors, students, and program officers, meet prospective candidates during campus interviews, and written evaluations are solicited from all of those on the candidate's itinerary. When the department has decided on its preferred candidate, a recommendation is

sent to the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, who has the final approval.

Although the hiring department, in consultation with the Provost's Office, determines a candidate's specific itinerary for the on-site interview, job candidates are generally expected to deliver a formal presentation, speaking about their scholarship and/or their teaching. Several departments require their candidates both to deliver a formal talk and to teach a regularly scheduled class. On-site interviews are thus rigorous and last for at least a full day to a day and a half. A significant component of one's job application is expected to include documentation of a candidate's teaching effectiveness, including course evaluations from a previous or current institution. However, this may not be the case for some assistant professors, depending on the amount of teaching experience.

Non-tenure-track appointments include coaching, visiting, extended temporary, courtesy, adjunct positions, and teaching track appointments. These positions may differ in duration and are described in detail in the faculty appointment (3) section of the Faculty Handbook. The expectations for faculty qualifications are similar to those for tenure-track appointments. In limited circumstances in professional and pre-professional programs, bachelor's-trained instructors are appointed based on their professional experience outside the classroom. In these instances, the Associate Provost and department chair/dean evaluate their professional experience in the context of their instructional role. A letter confirming credentials review is placed in their personnel file. Records concerning active IWU faculty (4) are updated annually and are kept in the Office of the President.

A new instructor is formally and repeatedly apprised of the University's expectations for developing the criteria for earning tenure. As noted in the Faculty Handbook language (Article I and Tenure and Promotion Guidelines), (5) faculty members are evaluated based on competence and experience in classroom teaching and responsibilities associated with classroom teaching, completion of professional training, scholarly/artistic ability and achievement, and constructive contribution to the University.

New faculty members (tenure-line, teaching-track, and visitors) also participate in two intensive orientation sessions in August and January to help them understand expectations for teaching, service, and research at IWU. During the August orientation session, scheduled during the week prior to classes starting, new faculty are introduced to campus leaders who welcome them to the campus community and offer an overview of the general profile of the University's student body. New faculty also learn what offices and processes IWU uses to support student success and health. Finally, experienced teachers and information technology (IT) staff offer advice about University expectations for student achievement as well as classroom and technology use, including FERPA regulations, syllabi, the Shared Curriculum, and LMS (Canvas). During the January orientation, new faculty learn techniques to balance their teaching, research, and service requirements. Other topics are covered as requested by new faculty, both during the January orientation and ad hoc orientation sessions offered throughout the year by campus committees. Past topics have included internal and external grant seeking, Title IX, promotion and tenure requirements, advising, and shared governance.

All new faculty, including adjunct faculty, are invited to a drop-in orientation session at the beginning of each semester, where they can ask questions and find help for LMS use or other IT issues. Orientation resources are disseminated on the Provost's webpage. (5A)

All probationary appointments are made for one year and are formulated in writing, setting forth the conditions of the appointment. New faculty members submit self-evaluations with appropriate files to the Promotion and Tenure Committee (PAT). The Provost's Office is responsible for notifying each faculty member of the terms and conditions of renewal.

There is also a Major Pre-Tenure Review process, which is designed to give probationary faculty direct written feedback from the PAT Committee about their progress toward tenure. This review is distinguished from other probationary evaluations in that the faculty member produces a full case file, which emphasizes accomplishments to date in the context of goals and strategies for continuing development toward tenure.

Another approach to increase teaching effectiveness is the policy requiring standard student evaluations (SmartEvals) (6) of each faculty member's courses. The completed evaluations are held in the Office of the Registrar until grades for the course have been finalized. This process provides students with assurance that their grades will not be affected by their responses. Annually, after reviewing the evaluations, each faculty member should prepare a summary and file the completed evaluations with his or her supervisor. The evaluations must be kept on file in the Department or School office for three years and must be made available upon request of the PAT Committee.

Evaluations for non-tenure track faculty take place on an annual basis via peer teaching observations and student course evaluations. Deans, School Directors, and Department Chairs are responsible for providing evaluations to the Provost concerning the teaching effectiveness of the faculty member, including a recommendation concerning the faculty member's continuation at the University.

Tenured faculty members are evaluated for advancement in rank. Concerning full-time tenure-line instructional faculty, continued progress commensurate with years of service at the University is expected in teaching, scholarly/artistic achievement, and service. In addition, strengths and contributions specific to a faculty member's disposition are also taken into account.

Faculty members who have earned the terminal degree are awarded the rank of Assistant Professor. To achieve the Associate Professor rank, a faculty member must meet the standards of effective teaching, scholarly/artistic achievement, and University service set out for tenure and promotion. Excellence in teaching and significant contributions to the institution and the profession are expected, as is self-directed development. It should be noted that faculty members might achieve tenure without being promoted to the Associate Professor rank. Finally, promotion to Professor requires a level of professional distinction as recognized by colleagues within the University and in the broader professional community. As teachers, they must demonstrate the ability to work with students at all levels, challenging individuals of different abilities and motivations to develop their intellectual and/or artistic strengths. Proven leadership within the institution and serving as a role model for other faculty and students are expected at this level.

Library faculty, athletic coaches, and teaching track faculty have somewhat similar criteria to those of instructional faculty, with attributes more properly aligned with their respective professions and statuses. Detailed descriptions of these criteria (7) are also available in the Faculty Handbook.

In 2008, The Ames Library and the Office of the Provost began to host the Faculty Scholarship Showcase, which has become an annual event. Its purpose is to publicly recognize faculty scholarship efforts, and it has enabled faculty to see what their colleagues are doing while providing an opportunity to keep a better track of the scholarly productivity of members of the IWU community. The figures enclosed below were taken from the records of those receptions, which provide numerical indicators of faculty activity. However, since it involves a considerable amount of self-reporting, the table gives a snapshot rather than a comprehensive view of the range of scholarly activity during the period surveyed.

Faculty Scholarly and Artistic Productivity

Fall	2022	2023	2024	2025
Journal Articles, Book Chapters, Reviews & Book	29	46	33	20
Books	4	4	5	5
Conference Presentations	2	9	3	7
Creative and Artistic Work	2	10	2	6

In recent years, several faculty and students have received local, national, and international recognition for their efforts. Evidence concerning excellence in teaching, scholarship, curricular innovation, composition, and national service has been in ample supply over the past number of years. (7A)

Evidence regarding processes and resources in support of faculty development is abundant. As noted in the Faculty Development Handbook, the University offers Standard Professional Travel and Expense Opportunities for full-time faculty. Specific allocations include \$850 for development activities requiring travel, \$1,000 for formal participation at a domestic conference, performance or exhibition, or attendance at a conference where she/he has a leadership role, and \$1,450 for above-stated participation at an international conference, performance or exhibition. Visiting faculty are eligible for \$600 to attend a professional meeting, with a \$200 supplement for those who formally participate. (8)

IWU has maintained several internal grant programs that seek to assist faculty in their efforts to improve teaching and further scholarly activity. Artistic and Scholarly Development (ASD) grants are designed to support “professionally significant artistic and scholarly activity.” Grant awards total \$3,500 for an individual and \$5,500 for a joint proposal from two or more faculty members. In addition to offering assistance for travel related to one’s project, the hiring of student workers, or the purchase of needed materials, individuals can receive stipends of up to \$2,000 for their work.

Faculty can also apply for Curriculum Development (CD) grants and Instructional

Development (ID) grants. A stipend or budgetary allocation of \$2,000 is available to individual faculty who wish to significantly revise an existing course or create a new one; monies are allocated according to the number of faculty involved and the number of courses revised or created when joint proposals are submitted by two or three faculty. In addition, individual faculty can apply for a \$500 Instructional Development grant program, whereby the enhancement of one's pedagogy is promoted.

As noted in the 2025-2026 Faculty Development Handbook, a total of \$56,190 was awarded by the University in 2024-2025 for faculty development grants. The following grant funds were awarded for faculty support: (9 & 10)

- \$31,808 to support 6 faculty Artistic/Scholarly Development (ASD) one- and two-year grants;
- \$2,708 to support 3 faculty Continuous Professional Development (CPD) grants;
- \$16,724 to support 9 Curriculum Development (CD) grants;
- \$1,950 to support 4 Instructional Development (ID) grants; and
- \$3,000 to support 2 Grant-Incentive Program (GIP) grants

Further evidence concerning faculty development can be found in the University's faculty leave programs. The Pre-Tenure Leave Program is designed to provide a concentrated opportunity for professional development for faculty in the period before tenure consideration. Tenure-line faculty at the rank of assistant professor in their second, third, or fourth years are eligible to apply for a pre-tenure leave (11), where they receive a semester leave at full pay and benefits. The Faculty Development Committee (FDC) reviews the applications, and the Provost and Board of Trustees approve the leaves.

Faculty members who complete six academic years of full-time service are eligible to apply for a competitive (as of 2025-2026) sabbatical leave (12) and each seventh year thereafter. Under the terms of this program, faculty receive a semester leave at full pay with benefits or a complete academic year-long leave at half pay. These periodic leaves allow faculty members to engage in professional activities that would not otherwise be available, including such activities as advanced study, research, writing, painting, and composing, but not excluding other intellectual activities. The FDC works with faculty who apply to the program to ensure that their projects will contribute to their professional growth and development. Additional evidence concerning the University's junior and regular sabbatical leave programs may be found in these examples of past awards. (13)

Established in 2018, the Gardner-McNew Faculty Scholars Program (14) awards the most outstanding leave and pre-tenure proposals from one tenured and one pre-tenured faculty member, as selected each academic year by the Faculty Development Committee. Recipients will receive an award certificate and \$3,000 to be used as a stipend or to defray costs of supplies, research, travel, and data collection. As noted by a former Provost and Dean of the Faculty, this program "...incentivizes faculty to engage deeply in the scholarly and creative work that sustains cutting-edge classroom learning, undergraduate research experiences, and connections to next steps in the workforce or graduate study for our students."

Further development opportunities include the numerous workshops held for faculty regardless of rank or time served at the institution. One example is the regularly held workshop for new Gateway instructors (15), where course expectations, syllabi construction,

and best practices involving writing and critical thinking assessments are discussed. The Gateway Colloquium seminar emphasizes the teaching of critical thinking through writing and is the first of three required writing-intensive courses offered during a student's time at the University. The Writing Center Director guides the workshop.

The Council for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETAL) regularly offers faculty workshops concerning writing instruction, May Term planning, electronic portfolios, teaching and reading poetry, working with science students, teaching circles, technology, and diversity in the classroom. (16)

IWU faculty members are expected to be committed and engaged instructors who provide support for student learning both inside and outside of the classroom. By communicating their interests in close interactions with students through their active participation in departmental and campus-wide programming, the faculty members foster such interactions, which are made possible by the small sizes of IWU's courses. Data elements from the 2024 Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Alumni Survey provided evidence concerning the quality of the University's student-faculty interactions in and outside of class. Results were consistent with alumni from the University's comparison group. (XX)

2024 Alumni Survey Combined Values of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree."

	5-Year	10-Year
<i>Faculty interest in teaching and students...</i>		
Genuinely interested in students.	97%	95%
Interested in helping students grow in more than just academic areas.	84%	84%
Good at providing prompt and useful feedback.	92%	90%
Willing to spend time outside of class to discuss issues of interest and importance to students.	93%	82%
<i>Faculty interactions...</i>		
My nonclassroom interactions with faculty had a positive influence on my personal growth, values, and attitudes.	95%	83%

My nonclassroom interactions with faculty had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas. **86%** **79%**

My nonclassroom interactions with faculty had a positive influence on my career goals and aspirations. **81%** **77%**

I developed a close, personal relationship with at least one faculty member. **81%** **75%**

I was satisfied with the opportunities to meet and interact informally with faculty members. **88%** **82%**

Illinois Wesleyan has a sufficient number of staff members for high-quality programs and student services. Although the University has a history of having a leaner personnel structure than its peer institutions, through careful planning and budgeting, position requests are made, reviewed, and allocated as they align with institutional priorities. Recent growth in staffing has been in areas of strategic priority, including enrollment management, advancement (e.g., capital campaign), athletics (e.g., new sports), and information technology. However, it should be noted that there have been several concerns regarding attrition and retention among staff in traditional areas, leading to increased responsibilities for the staff who remain. These increased responsibilities, coupled with changes to benefit programs, have left some staff demoralized and, at times, created tension that has an overall impact on staff recruitment and retention. Despite these challenges, IWU remains consistently effective and successful thanks to its dedicated staff members. (17a)

Staff members providing student support services in tutoring, financial aid, advising, counseling, career services, health services, and co-curricular duties are guided by the professional standards outlined within several regional and national student-centered organizations, including, but not limited to:

- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
- National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)
- Illinois Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (ILASFAA)
- National Academic Advising Association (NACADA)
- Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)
- American College Personnel Association (ACPA)
- National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
- American Counseling Association (ACA)
- American Psychological Association (APA)

- American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)
- American Association of Diabetic Educators (AADE)
- American College Health Association (ACHA)

Professional staff positions require the appropriate degree and professional experience that meet the demands of the position. These qualifications, including professional licensures and similar credentials, are made explicit in job postings and position descriptions. (18) Professional development opportunities, when resources are available, include attendance at professional conferences, campus workshops, and webinars/online training. An example of evidence concerning the broad array of professional development opportunities undertaken by staff may be examined in this listing (19) of conferences, training seminars, and webinars across multiple divisions.

Sources

There are no sources.

3.D. Support for Student Learning and Resources for Teaching

The institution provides student support services that address the needs of its student populations, as well as the teaching resources and infrastructure necessary for student success.

Argument

The student services provided by IWU include a wide variety of assistance and resources that support and facilitate student learning and development. Examples include the following:

- **Office of Academic Advising:** Promotes quality and effective academic advising by serving as a readily accessible resource on all aspects of advising for the IWU community. (1)
- **Hart Career Center:** Offers services for students and alumni that include Career Counseling and advising for: Internships, Graduate School, and Job Searches. (2)
- **Orientation Programs:** Coordinates several signature programs for first-year and transfer students and their parents and guardians. Four primary programs are offered: Turning Titan: New Student Orientation, Rising Titan (Summer Orientation), IMPACT, International Student Orientation, Transfer Student Orientation, and Experience IWU: Parent Orientation. (3)
- **Arnold Health Service:** Provides quality, accessible, comprehensive, and cost-effective health care that enables students to achieve their academic and intellectual potential. Operated by Carle Health Partners since April 2023. (4)
- **Counseling and Consultation Services:** Promotes student personal growth and well-being through a variety of mental health services, including counseling, outreach, consultation, and coping strategies, including time and stress management skills. (5)
- **Office of Student Accessibility Services:** Secures and maintains documentation of disabilities, determines reasonable accommodations, and works with the student, faculty, and staff to develop plans for providing such accommodations. In collaboration with the library, Accessibility Services also provides whatever text, audio, or video content a student needs to be able to access curricular materials. (6)
- **International Office:** Assists international students in their cultural and educational transition to the University and country and manages the Study Abroad programs. (7)
- **Do Good Leadership Program:** Two leadership programs offering students the opportunity to learn and develop leadership skills, identify their leadership styles, and strengths. (9)
- **Office of Multifaith Engagement:** Supports the work of several Registered Student Organizations that represent different faith traditions, and offers programming exploring and practicing faith and spirituality, interfaith community, and social justice. (10)

New students receive direction to courses and programs from the time they are admitted until they graduate. As noted in the IWU Catalog, entering students with sufficiently high

scores on Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs (11) may receive both credit and placement in selected IWU courses. In some areas, the University administers examinations to determine placement and/or proficiency, which permit exemption from certain courses. Requirements concerning entering students majoring in the fine arts (art, theatre arts, music) include auditions, portfolios, and interviews, depending on the degree sought.

One form of introductory instruction is the University's Gateway Colloquia (13), which are small, discussion-oriented classes designed to develop students' proficiency in writing academic and public discourse. All students must complete a Gateway Colloquium by the end of the freshman year. These seminars seek to do the following:

- Introduce students to the process of intellectual inquiry and develop students' critical thinking skills;
- Develop students' ability to evaluate competing ideas and experiences;
- Develop students' skills in the conventions and structures of presenting knowledge in written academic and public discourse, and on strategies for effective revision; and
- Engage students in learning activities that prepare them for academic life at the University

Center for Engaged Learning

Over the 2019-2020 academic year, the University established the Center for Engaged Learning (CEL). The CEL is a strategic initiative of the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty. Its mission is to promote and strengthen opportunities for students to participate in distinctive programs in the classroom and the community while also ensuring access to faculty, staff, and peers who can help to support their success in the classroom and beyond. (14)

Examples concerning the Center's primary focus include the following:

Pathways: The Titan Pathways program provides the building blocks of a successful IWU experience in a flexible three-phase framework: transitioning, thriving, and transforming. Pathways can be a very helpful tool during your advising sessions and is a guide for navigating the many opportunities available to you here at IWU. (15)

Student Success Resources: The CEL offers workshops and resources to improve persistence and student success, including time management, discipline, organization strategies, self-advocacy, and wellness. (16)

Summer Scholars & Other Fellowships: IWU hosts a vibrant summer research community. Students can apply for a variety of programs, including the Eckley Summer Scholars & Artists, the Summer Enrichment Program, and fellowships in chemistry, economics, and environmental studies. There are also fellowships available during the school year and post-baccalaureate opportunities. (17)

Community Service & Volunteering: IWU has a wonderful connection to the Bloomington-Normal community. Our "town-gown" relationship is strong and provides IWU with unique and meaningful opportunities to learn, serve, and lead. Students interested in getting involved in the community will find many local nonprofits and community coalitions that welcome IWU students. (18)

Writing Center & Tutoring Services: All tutoring services at IWU are free. Peer tutors, teaching assistants, and course-embedded tutors are based in academic departments. Detailed evidence concerning the Center's programming and professional development activities may be observed through its annual and multi-year reports. (19)

Action Research Center (ARC): The IWU Action Research Center is dedicated to the relentless pursuit of innovative ideas that transform communities. Since 2003, ARC has connected the campus and the community in meaningful ways that create impactful change and address pressing social justice issues. (20)

IWU students have the opportunity to do original research at the undergraduate level, collaborating with faculty who are at the top of their fields. Because Illinois Wesleyan is an entirely undergraduate institution, students are offered research and creative opportunities without competition from graduate students. As previously noted in 3.B., the John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference is a distinctive example of student research opportunities. Other evidence concerning some of the work that has resulted from faculty mentorship of students is available via the IWU Digital Commons. (21)

In partnership with the Hart Career Center, the Office of Academic Advising also hosts the annual Majors and Minors Fair. (23) The Fair provides students with opportunities to learn more about available majors and minors within an academic discipline and to converse with associated faculty and upper-class students. Additionally, academic units have an opportunity to showcase and promote their disciplines to students.

For over 10 years, IWU's English as a Second Language (ESL) Service has sought to support the University's international students and their academic and professional needs by providing ESL instruction and help with academic writing, reading, and speaking. The primary goal is to enhance the learning experience of international students and support the University's community. (24)

Illinois Wesleyan University is dedicated to and recognizes the importance of exceptional academic advising as a critical aspect of students' educational experiences. Through the utilization of reflective advising, the missions and goals of faculty advisors and the Office of Academic Advising at the University are for faculty and staff to: (25)

- Actively collaborate with students to reflect upon, develop, and implement cohesive and holistic educational plans as they pursue their academic, professional, and personal goals;
- Establish engaged partnerships with students based on shared responsibility;
- Guide students to campus resources that will assist them in achieving their goals; and
- Foster an understanding and deep appreciation of the purpose and value of the liberal arts in higher education.

During a student's first year at IWU, they are assigned to an advisor who is a faculty member in their declared major department, or to a dedicated first-year advisor (outside of the department) specifically trained to advise for the declared major department. Students assigned to a dedicated first-year advisor (outside of the department) will be assigned to a faculty member in their declared major department beginning in their second year of study. Once they are assigned to an advisor in their declared major department, a faculty member in the declared major department will continue to advise them through graduation. Students

with more than one major will have an advisor in each department.

If a student enters IWU as undeclared, they will be assigned to a faculty advisor specifically trained to advise undeclared students. Students who do not have a declared major after their first year may stay with their assigned advisor or may choose to be assigned to the Director of Academic Advising, who will assist with the major exploration process. When an undeclared student declares their major, a departmental advisor is assigned at that time. Students at any point in their educational career who are undeclared or who are contemplating a change in major are also encouraged to see the Director of Academic Advising. Evidence concerning the guidelines for first-year academic advising is outlined in the First-Year Advising Guide. (26)

Advising satisfaction is monitored at the first-year level via the First-Year Student Satisfaction Survey (FYSSS) (2023 & 2024) and the First-Year Student Experiences Survey (FYSES) (2025 & 2026). (27)

First-Year Academic Advising

FY Advising	2023	2024	2025	2026
Very Satisfied and Satisfied	83%	87%	92%	91%

The Thorpe Center, The Ames Library, & Technology

The Thorpe Center for Curricular and Faculty Development is designed to enhance academic excellence throughout the IWU campus. Its resources offer support to the campus faculty as they pursue their work as teachers, scholars, and curricular innovators. Thorpe Center programs encourage reflective discourse and the sharing of views and experiences among faculty, as they relate to issues involving the theory and practice of teaching, course development, academic program design, and scholarly inquiry. (27a)

The University expends significant resources to provide the required technology to support curricular and pedagogical needs. The Ames Library provides computers throughout all five levels, including a computer lab classroom. (28) Students, faculty, and staff also have direct borrowing privileges at over 125 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 90% of Illinois higher education students, faculty, and staff. (28a)

Information technology plays a key role in facilitating close student-faculty relationships and engaged learning experiences. For example, the School of Nursing & Health Sciences has the Simulation Center, which recreates a hospital setting equipped with sophisticated, computer-run manikins. The School also has an Anatomage 3D Medical Imaging Table, a virtual dissection table, to facilitate a hands-on learning approach. (29) (30)

The University's campus offers over 100 classrooms, labs, and meeting spaces with computers and presentation technology. In 2020, there were significant resources committed to adding cameras and microphones to more than 40 teaching spaces. (31) At the same time, our campus entered into a Zoom site license covering all faculty, staff, and students. Similar technology is available in the Language Resource Center, housed in the Center for Liberal Arts, which provides faculty and students with computer and audio-visual support for learning a second language. (32)

IWU has a WiFi 6 network on internal locations and select exterior locations. The campus has over 600 access points, with individual access points located inside each dorm room. (33)

Illinois Wesleyan has been investing in its cybersecurity position for the last several years and currently has a staff of two analysts and a Chief Information Security Officer working to mature the University's security posture. Basic controls are in place for campus resources, and initiatives in IT Governance, Policy Development, Data Classification, and Risk Management are ongoing. Cybersecurity training is provided to campus stakeholders via KnowBe4, and additional services and resources are provided through a partnership with DeepSeas (Formerly GreyCastle).

Another example of technology in the classroom at IWU is State Farm Hall (SFH). SFH has 47,800 square feet of space on four levels featuring the latest trends in learning technology. The environment provided within SFH has allowed both students and faculty to experiment with innovative multimedia, which has fostered students' development with new tools and techniques that are consistent with and greatly complement an IWU education. Examples of the benefits of SFH include the use of multimedia presentations (e.g., news reports, videos, and audio). Additionally, the facility also provides flexible teaching and space arrangements. SFH's 19 classrooms, seminar room, and auditorium-style case study room provide multiple options that allow faculty to match class layouts to their specific courses and styles of student-faculty interactions. Over the 2021-2022 academic year, a new computer lab was added to support the Bloomberg Finance Lab. (34) (35)

The Ames Library plays a significant role in supporting effective teaching and learning. The library provides approximately 200 online databases, over 400 print journals, over 300,000 print and e-book volumes, access to over 90,000 online journals, as well as streaming video and audio collections. In addition, the Tate Archives and Special Collections Department is dedicated to offering unique curricular experiences with primary sources in all formats: artifacts, digital objects, manuscripts, and print. The University Archivist is also responsible for collecting, maintaining, and providing access to historical records of the University's academic, corporate, and cultural life. The Digital Commons, the institutional repository managed by the Library, hosts student Honors projects from across campus, nine peer-reviewed student journals, programs from IWU's annual undergraduate research conference, and videos from major campus events. IWU Scholars hosts almost 20,000 scholarly and creative works from faculty, many of it openly accessible to users worldwide. Library faculty members work closely with instructional faculty in academic units to provide classroom and individual research consultation, both in-person and online. The building provides many spaces for study, rest, and reflection, including rooms for collaborative work, studios for creating videos and podcasts, a relaxation room, and a variety of software to support surveys, graphic design, and scholarly work. The Library is also home to the Writing Center, the Action Research Center, the Office of Student Accessibility, the Testing Center,

the ITS Help Desk, and several ITS staff. The Thorpe Center for Curricular and Faculty Development supports faculty in their teaching and research and is home to the Dean of Curricular and Faculty Development and instructional design and technology staff. The Library is a member of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois, a network of over 100 Illinois college and university libraries whose online catalog provides access to the 38 million volumes held by these academic libraries as well as 750 public and special libraries in the state. The Library is also a member of the Center for Research Libraries, which provides access to unique primary source material from around the world. The Ames Library opened on January 9, 2002, and is named in honor of B. Charles Ames '50 and Joyce Eichhorn Ames '49.

Among the disciplines, the sciences require significant resources to pursue research activities with students, a mission-driven commitment. This necessitates access to laboratory space and first-rate equipment. A list of the equipment available to science majors in physics, chemistry, and biology appears on the Physics department website and is noteworthy for its inclusion of equipment including a sixteen-inch telescope that is situated in the Mark Evans Observatory, as well as more traditional apparatuses including electromagnets, cryogenics and a vacuum, various spectrometers, lasers, an electron and other microscopes, a refrigerated centrifuge, a spectrophotometer, gas chromatographs, and an electron capture detector. Department of Psychology facilities include observation, control, and psychophysiology rooms, and behavioral, cognitive, developmental, and experimental labs. Theatre Arts students perform in either the McPherson Theatre or the E. Melba Kirkpatrick Laboratory Theatre, while students in the School of Music often perform in the Westbrook Auditorium of Presser Hall. Shaw Hall also provides several rehearsal and workshop spaces for music and theatre. (36)

Sources

There are no sources.

3.E. Assessment of Student Learning

The institution improves the quality of educational programs based on its assessment of student learning.

Argument

IWU has clearly stated student learning outcomes, effective processes, and methodologies for assessment University-wide. As described in Criterion 1.A. and 3.B., the Shared Curriculum, the foundation of an IWU education, has eight student learning goals distributed across 14 categories. These goals are assessed on a routine basis with an emphasis on direct measures of student learning. Faculty members teaching within each Shared Curriculum 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 Shared Curriculum (aka General Education) assessment reports are available via the following reports, which outline the various uses of information to improve student achievement within the program. (1) As noted earlier in Criterion 3.A., the Assessment Committee (AC), in consultation with the faculty, revised the student learning goals/outcomes within the Shared Curriculum in 2025 to provide greater assessment quality. (1A)

Assessment within the academic units is coordinated by the University's Assessment Committee (2), which consists of three faculty members, the Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness (*ex officio*), the Dean of Curricular and Faculty Development (*ex officio*), and one student. The Associate Vice President, Dean, and student are non-voting members of the Committee. The functions and purview of the Assessment Committee are as follows:

- Establish effective policies and practices for assessment of student learning by all departments, schools, interdisciplinary programs, and university-wide programs (including May term, study abroad, internship, and the Shared Curriculum). All policy recommendations from the Assessment Committee shall be submitted to the faculty for approval.
- Receive and review annual assessment reports from all departments, schools, and programs;
- Collect, maintain, and make available to appropriate constituencies a repository of assessment reports (3) from all departments, schools, and programs;
- Provide feedback to each department, school, and program about the effectiveness of its assessment process; and
- Evaluate the extent to which each department, school, and program has performed assessments consistent with effective policies and practices, and share this evaluation with the university community.

The assessment of student learning goals (4) within academic units is described in Criterion 3.A. 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 a staggered basis (one-, two-, or three-year cycle), academic units submit an Assessment Report (AR) in the fall, which contains the results and actions of the unit's assessment efforts over their past assessment cycle to improve student learning. A summary of the AR (5) is provided in the reports for campus-wide dissemination. For those academic units that are not due to submit an AR in the fall, they are required to submit a Yearly Update, which outlines the intended assessment focus and work to be accomplished over the next academic year and assessment cycle. 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 assessments consistent with effective policies and practices. Assessment resources, AR summaries, and exemplary assessment-related materials are available via the Student Learning Assessment webpage. (6) Minutes concerning the Assessment Committee are also available. (7)

There are several assessment resources provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) that supplement the University's assessment efforts. The analyses of student learning assessment data elements occur at the institutional level through the collection of benchmark data from national survey instruments, largely organized through the University's membership in the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS). Recent surveys administered include the following: (8)

HEDS Alumni Survey (AS): The AS asks alumni about the quality and impact of their educational experiences, including co-curricular activities such as internships, study abroad, and community service. The survey also asks alumni to evaluate the impact of their education on their postgraduate critical thinking, problem-solving, and other learning outcomes. Finally, the survey asks about postgraduate employment, college satisfaction, and college debt.

HEDS Graduating Student Survey (GSS): The GSS asks graduating students to evaluate teaching practices and institutional conditions they experienced as undergraduates, assess the impact of their college experience on their intellectual growth and development, and describe their plans following graduation.

HEDS New Student Survey (NSS): The NSS is designed to prompt new students to think about their goals for college, their vision for the successful life they want to lead after college, and how their experiences in college can help them move towards their vision of success (administered 2021 through 2023).

HEDS Returning Student Survey (RSS): The RSS is designed to prompt students to reflect on their vision of post-college success, their reasons for staying in college, and the college experiences that have most prepared them to accomplish their goals for life (administered 2021 through 2023).

First-Year Student Satisfaction Survey (in-house) (FYSSS): The FYSSS provides student opinions regarding levels of satisfaction with various aspects of University life (resources, offices, etc.). The information provided is significant in assessing the first-year experience at IWU, especially regarding retention efforts and the evaluation of campus resources (administered through 2024).

IWU First-Year Student Experience (in-house) (FYSE): The FYSE provides student opinions concerning their self-efficacy, sense of belonging, and satisfaction with several

University resources vital to the first-year experience. The information provided is utilized to gain further insight into the correlations between student integration, engagement, satisfaction, and retention. (9)

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 the Trustee, Cabinet, Staff Council, and various committee and divisional meetings. (10)

Sources

There are no sources.

3.F. Program Review

The institution improves its curriculum based on periodic program review.

Argument

Current and New Program Reviews

As mentioned briefly in Criterion 3.A., 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 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. (1)

Additional evidence concerning the review of current and new academic programs includes the employment of UQ Solutions. (1A) Utilizing six metrics that identify new programs with the lowest risk and the highest growth potential, the UQ Solutions Market Analyzer examines potential programs by market growth, market segment growth, competition, expected program size, career outcomes, and mission alignment. Evidence concerning the effectiveness of this exercise includes new academic majors in public health, professional sales, and quantitative finance, established in the Fall of 2023. Additional new majors include supply chain management, criminology, and communications, established in the Fall of 2024. (1B)

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 on 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. The Council aims to foster and enhance student learning, development, and achievement." As noted in recent Student Affairs Annual Reports (11), several co-curricular programs offered by the Division of Student Affairs are assessed on an ongoing basis. For example, counseling and health services conduct regular quality service follow-up questionnaires. Likewise, the Office of Student Involvement (OSI) facilitates leadership experiences that offer students the opportunity to develop leadership skills and identify their leadership styles and strengths. In 2024-2025, IWU partnered with the JED Foundation to conduct an external review that led to a strategic plan for mental health and suicide prevention consistent with the Titan HEART SAMHSA grant. (12) **(Evidence is out of numerical sequence due to narrative relocation)**

The University's Office of Business and Finance has also engaged in program reviews regarding human resources and information technology. Both of these initiatives greatly informed the administration regarding the required quality improvements in personnel and procedures. As a result of these assessment exercises, both offices underwent significant structural adjustments. (2)

IWU Programs Accredited by Specialized Accreditation Commissions:

The School of Nursing and Health Sciences: 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.

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

Sources

There are no sources.

3.G. Student Success Outcomes

The institution's student success outcomes demonstrate continuous improvement, taking into account the student populations it serves and benchmarks that reference peer institutions.

Argument

Annually, the University administers the First Destination Survey (FDS), (1) a University-developed instrument that captures students' employment and educational plans for the year following graduation. The survey is administered in April and continues for nine months, allowing for updates and submissions of missing information. Approximately 87% of students graduating over the 2023-2024 (Class of 2024) academic year responded to the FDS, indicating that 73% were employed full-time, while 20% 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 offerings received by students for employment and graduate-professional school are available as well. More detailed information concerning the above may be accessed in the FDS reports, while 10 years of employment and continuing education information is available via the IWU Fact Book. (2) The FDS reports are widely disseminated across campus, and many of the findings (3) are posted in news releases, within the "Outcomes" webpages, and the Major-to-Career Connector 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 does not always coincide with a specific career.

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. (4)
- According to the 2025 National Science Foundation Survey of Earned Doctorates, IWU ranks 4th overall among the nation's 179 Private Baccalaureate Colleges: Diverse Fields (Carnegie Classification) in the number of graduates who go on to earn doctoral degrees. (5)
- Each year the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) evaluates Illinois Teacher Preparation Programs on the academic strength and racial/ethnic diversity of candidates, how well candidates perform on state teaching assessments, how well program completers are faring in the classroom, the extent to which program completers are employed in Illinois public schools, and the persistence of these employees in their positions.
- School of Nursing: The NCLEX is a national licensure exam that students must pass before earning their license as a Registered Nurse. The 2023 state average pass rate stood at 85% while the national average was 89%. While the 2024 state and national

averages will not be available until early 2025, the 2024 IWU nursing graduates are well above the 2023 benchmarks at 97%.

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 IPEDS Data Feedback Reports, Fact Book, CDS, and IWU Facts webpages. (6)

The University also reports retention and graduation rate information through its annual IWU Benchmark Reports (internal and external – IPEDS), which provide data elements on key performance indicators on IWU and its Peer Group for internal and external monitoring, management, and planning. The Peer Group consists of 11 institutions that were selected using several characteristics (e.g., programming, student outcomes, resources). Over the past three years, the University has performed above 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 Group median. Additional information is obtained on an annual basis via the Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Consortium, which serves as a data element depository for over 100 institutions similar to IWU. Over recent years, the University has admitted approximately 40 to 50 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 from year one of admission to year two. The six-year graduation rate for transfer students is generally in the low-to-mid-eighties. (7)

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. Last administered in 2024, IWU alumni graduating five- and 10years 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: (8)

2024 Alumni Survey Combined Values of “Very much” and “Quite a bit.”

	5-Year	10-Year
Careful reading: Comprehension and analysis of written texts within and across genres.	78%	83%
Critical thinking: Examination of ideas, evidence, and assumptions before accepting or formulating a conclusion.	93%	93%

Creative thinking: Developing or combining ideas, images, or expertise in innovative ways.	81%	73%
Information literacy: Locating, evaluating, and using information effectively and responsibly for a particular purpose.	88%	95%
Quantitative literacy: Seeking, understanding, and using quantitative information appropriately to solve problems or make arguments.	86%	81%
Effective writing: Conveying accurate and compelling content in clear, expressive, and audience-appropriate prose.	83%	88%
Effective speaking: Conveying accurate and compelling content in clear, expressive, and audience-appropriate oral presentations.	69%	67%
Teamwork: Contributing to a team, facilitating the work of team members, and fostering a constructive team climate.	84%	73%
Problem solving: Designing, evaluating, and implementing a strategy to answer questions or achieve a goal.	88%	86%
Integrative thinking: The habit of connecting ideas and experiences, and the ability to transfer learning to novel situations.	76%	76%
Ethical reasoning: Recognizing ethical issues, examining different ethical perspectives, and considering the ramifications of alternative actions.	67%	65%
Graduate and Professional school	86%	78%
Current Career	74%	65%
Continued Learning	64%	72%

Sources

There are no sources.

Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The rigor and quality of each educational program is consistent regardless of modality, location or other differentiating factors.

Argument

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 and continuous quality improvement. 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 Shared Curriculum. Goals concerning student persistence and completion are defined, and progress is closely monitored and enhanced through several initiatives employed by faculty and staff. Alumni success in educational and professional endeavors is observed through several internal and external collections of information, which is used to improve programming and promote the educational achievements of IWU students.

Sources

There are no sources.