

Assurance Argument  
Illinois Wesleyan University -  
Bloomington, IL

Review date: 11-16-2026

## 4 - Sustainability: Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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The institution's resources, structures, policies, procedures and planning enable it to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational programs, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

### 4.A Effective Administrative Structures

The institution's administrative structures are effective and facilitate collaborative processes such as shared governance; data-informed decision making; and engagement with internal and external constituencies as appropriate.

#### Argument

**Direct Reports, Cabinet, and Board of Trustees:** IWU has organizational structures that establish clear lines of authority and formal relationships between employees and across units to address the needs of students, faculty, alumni, and other University constituencies. As noted in Criterion 2.A., lines of authority generally lead to the Vice President or Provost level, who reports directly to the President and frequently meets as a group, as well as with other administrators as the President's Direct Reports or Cabinet. The Cabinet includes members of the Direct Reports group, as well as the chair of the Council on University Programs and Policy (CUPP), the Associate Provost, and the Chief Information Officer. Direct Report meetings occur weekly throughout the year and include the discussion and implementation of major topics, plans, and policies, including the preparation of subject materials for Board of Trustees meetings, while Cabinet meetings occur monthly. Each Direct Report member is responsible for establishing and assessing unit goals on a monthly basis. The President summarizes the information and provides a report to the Board of Trustees when necessary. (1)

**Academic Affairs and Faculty:** The Academic Affairs unit comprises the Provost, the Associate Provost, who holds a permanent appointment and is reviewed periodically, and one Dean. The Dean of Curricular and Faculty Development serves a three-year term, renewable only once. The Dean position is selected internally from among the faculty. All academic units report directly to the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, as do the Assistant Dean for Student Success, Registrar, University Librarian, Director of the International Office, Director of the Center for Engaged Learning, Director of the Writing Center, and the Director of Advising. The Provost meets regularly with the Deans, Chairs, and directors. In addition to organizing themselves according to their academic unit, faculty also meet on a divisional basis as follows:

- College of Fine and Performing Arts

- College of Liberal Arts
- School of Business and Economics
- School of Educational Studies
- School of Nursing and Health Sciences

The IWU faculty is organized primarily in the general faculty meeting, where several standing and appointed committees provide reports concerning faculty governance. These committees include the Council on University Programs and Policy, the Promotion and Tenure Committee, the Assessment Committee, the Curriculum Council, the Faculty Development Committee, the Hearing Committee, the Information Technology Governance Committee, the Data Governance Committee, and the Council for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Administrators serving on these committees do so on an *ex officio* basis and do not directly participate in the decision-making process. Members of these standing committees (as well as CUPP) serve two-year terms, except the Assessment Committee (rotating three-year terms), allowing many faculty members to participate in committee service. (2)

**Staff:** The representative staff body, the University's Staff Council, typically consists of three exempt staff, three non-exempt staff, and three at-large staff (exempt or non-exempt). Staff Council members are elected on a non-representational basis for a three-year term. The Council serves in an advisory capacity to the President and provides an opportunity to gather and share questions, concerns, and comments about general and specific University issues. Council members meet with the University administration regularly to discuss opinions, concerns, and recommendations, seeking mutual agreement to achieve improvements. The Staff Council also solicits nominations and conducts staff elections for University committees. (3)

**Students:** The University has a strong Student Senate serving as the voice of the student body. It is committed to representing the needs and opinions of the students to the administration and providing the campus with a forum for discussing important matters. The IWU Student Senate is comprised of 36 senators, nine students representing each class. The Executive Board of the IWU Student Senate comprises the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Chief of Staff, a Sustainability Commissioner, a Comptroller, and an Advocacy and Awareness Commissioner. The current Standing Commissioners are the CAB Commissioner, the Inclusion & Awareness Commissioner, and the Civic Engagement Commissioner. Student Senate officers are invited visitors to regular Board of Trustee meetings and standing committee meetings (i.e., Academic Affairs, Business Affairs, Campus Life, Advancement, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion). Various members also participate in administrative and faculty committees. Administrative committees include the following: (4)

- Academic Appeals Board
- Alumni Technology Advisory Board
- Campus Safety Committee
- Council for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

- Council for University Programs and Policies
- Curriculum Council
- Information Technology Governance Committee
- Petrick IDEA Center
- Undergraduate Research Advisory Committee

As described above, the University's administration, faculty, staff, and students have representation, albeit in different forms, in several administrative and faculty committees that provide input concerning academic requirements, policies, and processes. Contributions are also accepted from representative bodies (e.g., Student Senate, Staff Council). However, as noted in Criterion 3, the faculty are directly responsible for the following:

- The selection, retention, promotion, and economic status of faculty.
- The academic freedom of individual faculty members to determine and pursue their own teaching and research, and their unencumbered participation in the political and social life of the wider community.
- The review and maintenance of the curriculum.
- The establishment of the standards of admission, separation, achievement, and graduation of students.
- Personal contact with and counsel to students.
- Planning for the academic and fiscal future of the University.
- Assistance in the selection of the President of the University and others concerned with academic affairs.
- Encouragement of responsible student participation in the University community. (5)

The IWU faculty carry out these responsibilities in several ways. For example, evidence concerning student learning assessment, strategic curricular planning, Shared Curriculum assessment, external reviews, and course development may be found in Criterion 3.

Since the University's reaccreditation visit in the fall of 2022, recent evidence of the administration utilizing data elements to reach informed decisions includes the employment of UQ Solutions to assist decision-making concerning new academic programs. 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 (Fall 2023), as well as supply chain management, criminology, and communications (Fall 2024). (6)

Additional administrative actions in recent years that were data-driven include the following evidence:

Gonser Gerber Consulting: A national advancement consulting firm hired to assist the University with its upcoming capital campaign. Services include University (internal) and external market assessments, reports, and recommendations concerning our campaign readiness and the development of the campaign plan itself (e.g., priorities, procedures, timeline, budget) (2021-2023). (6B)

**Tommy Titan Chatbot:** As part of the University's retention efforts, IWU partnered with EdSights to employ a chatbot (named after IWU's mascot) to engage and help students over text messages. Non-cognitive data is collected from students about their college experiences. Students are automatically connected to helpful on-campus resources. These engagements are utilized to identify students who may be at risk of leaving the University. In addition, the data elements provide the administration with useful information concerning student issues and questions regarding various services (2021 and forward). Tommy's targeted, proactive messages are intended to build a sense of connection and motivation while identifying students at risk to specific staff in academic and student affairs, as well as financial aid. (7)

**Property Management:** Since 2021, the University turned over its rental properties to its management partner, Core 3, which is responsible for marketing, occupancies, leases, maintenance, turnover cleanings, and many of the other day-to-day responsibilities of IWU's properties. In 2023, the University identified 17 houses to sell. The plan was to sell over time so as not to flood the market, and to sell to owner-occupied buyers to maintain the neighborhood in which IWU resides. To date, 15 houses have been sold for approximately \$2 million, or 5% higher than the list price established by CORE 3 market analysis. Rents on Houses still maintained by the University have been increased by 30%. (8) Updated 02.03.25

**Arnold Health Services (AHS):** Over the past few years, the University's health services were examined for outsourcing, which was initiated by a desire to further reduce expenses through partnership and increase the quality and access to healthcare. On April 1, 2023, Carle Health Partners assumed responsibility for the clinical management and day-to-day operations of the University's Arnold Health Services. Nearby Carle BroMenn Hospital provides urgent care and emergency care to IWU students. By providing healthcare to that population at AHS, Carle Health hopes that preventive care and health education will be enhanced, and referrals to specialists in women's health, behavioral health, and orthopedics will be increased. (9)

**Academic Affairs Initiatives:** Since the University's last reaccreditation evaluation from the HLC in the Fall of 2022, Academic Affairs has engaged in a handful of tasks concerning innovations in the curriculum (e.g., new academic certificates (noted in Criterion 4.C.) and majors previously noted), as well as efficiencies in leadership staffing, teaching loads, transfer student recruitment, and the academic calendar. Some of these initiatives are described below: (10)

**Dean's Model:** As of August 2025, the University has four separate schools operating under the Dean's Model, a revised structure of Academic Affairs which includes the following:

- School of Business and Economics
- School of Educational Studies
- College of Fine and Performing Arts
- School of Nursing and Health Sciences
  - As of now, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences remains with chairs and directors with reduced compensation
  - Total savings in course releases/stipends: \$136,000

**Teaching Load Adjustment:** Each academic unit where faculty lines are "housed" will

increase the number of students taught (occupied seats) by 14% (approximately 1/7th to capture the student units of a 7th course for all full-time faculty). The result will be a gain of 1,785 seats, which equates to approximately 119 courses (given an average course size of 15) - reducing the number of adjunct faculty by 119 results in financial savings of an estimated \$500,000.

**Teaching Track:** As of the 2024-2025 academic year, two faculty members have been hired on the new teaching track (Educational Studies and Athletics), while a total of 10 instructional staff members transitioned to teaching track status. IWU's faculty successfully introduced and passed language related to the teaching track for the Faculty Handbook, codifying the new faculty category and providing opportunities for advancement in rank and sabbatical leave. There is also clear language for contract renewal and iterative review. (11)

**Competitive Sabbaticals:** Beginning in the 2023-2024 review cycle, the number of approved sabbaticals (to be taken the following year) will be limited to 1/7 of the eligible faculty body (those faculty members eligible for the sabbatical leave program based on length of service). The Dean of Curricular and Faculty Development will communicate the number of leaves available to those faculty who are scheduled to submit applications the semester before their applications are due. (12)

## **Sources**

*There are no sources.*

## 4.B Resource Base and Sustainability

The institution's financial and personnel resources effectively support its current operations. The institution's financial management balances short-term needs with long-term commitments and ensures its ongoing sustainability.

### Argument

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. Since 2017, the University has established and utilized a Search Advocate Program. (1) (2)

Professional development opportunities, when resources are available, include attendance at professional conferences, campus workshops, and webinars/online training. It should be noted that professional development opportunities are not equally available across all employee groups, especially exempt and non-exempt staff. The University does not have a centralized staff development program, so it is within supervisors' purview to identify opportunities and the resources required to implement developmental training. Recent evidence of improvements in professional development includes the addition of LinkedIn Learning as a new e-learning resource available to all Illinois Wesleyan faculty, staff, and students. Adopted over the 2023-2024 academic year, LinkedIn Learning is a digital library of thousands of courses covering a wide range of topics to develop professional or leadership skills, learn new software, improve financial literacy, or boost confidence, creativity, and well-being. Faculty have the opportunity to serve as curators and assemble content to enhance student learning experiences. Students can expand their technical skills and explore career planning and job-searching resources. Staff may pursue professional or personal development goals. (3) Details concerning the appointment, qualifications, and evaluation of faculty members are described in Criterion 3.

Human Resources oversees the personnel needs of the University. This office is involved in the hiring and evaluation of exempt and non-exempt staff, while the Office of the Provost oversees the hiring and evaluation of faculty. As of Fall 2025, the University employs 293 full-time and 8 part-time exempt and non-exempt staff personnel. There are 104 full-time and 101 part-time instructional faculty members. The student-to-staff ratio is 12 to 1, while the student-to-faculty ratio is 5.6 to 1. Details concerning the demographics and occupation classifications for full-time IWU employees are available via the University's Fact Book. (4)

The Business and Finance Division monitors the fiscal resources of the University and provides the current and projected budget outlooks on an annual basis. IWU relies on three main sources of revenue: annual giving to the Wesleyan Fund, a draw from the endowment (based on a four-year rolling average), and tuition, fees, room, and board net of student financial aid. In general, student revenue accounts for approximately 60% of the University's total revenue, while annual giving and the endowment provide approximately 5% and 35%, respectively (as of FY 24). (5)

The University's endowment market value has grown over the past few years and has maintained its value of over \$260 million between FY 2021 and FY 2023, while the Wesleyan Fund continues to hover around \$2.5 million. Over the same period, the University's enrollment has hovered between 1,500 and 1,580 FTE. The average financial aid discount for IWU was 60%. To maintain the overall quality of the institution and to reconcile a continuing budget deficit largely due to the enrollment decreases over the past several years, the University significantly reduced expenditures and staffing in all areas and supplemented its revenue via additional draws from the endowment. Details concerning the planning process for enrollment management and budgeting is noted in the University's Cash Flow Analysis Report previously noted in 4.A. (6) (7)

The Board of Trustees formally reviews and approves the annual audit of the University's finances, prepared by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, each October. The Board is also provided with the reports of credit rating agencies, the two most recent of which are Moody's March 2025 and Standard & Poor's October 2025 reports. IWU's Standard & Poor's (S&P) rating is A-stable, which signifies that the University has a low credit risk and is considered financially stable. The University's current Moody's rating is Baa3. (8) (9)

The University's Chief Information Officer, working with the Information Technology Services staff, oversees day-to-day information technology operations as well as the implementation of technology projects and initiatives for the campus community. The University benefits from an outstanding group of 18 full-time staff and student workers who work to meet technology needs. IT Services is divided into three departments:

- Client Services, which comprises all of our customer-facing functions;
- Enterprise Services, the stewards of our Banner ERP system, and
- Security/Infrastructure, which keeps the back-end systems safe and running smoothly.

The IT Governance Committee provides input when developing appropriate policies, projects, and technology solutions. This group has a broad representation consisting of students, faculty, and staff. After a recent upgrade in the Fall of 2024, campus connectivity to the internet is high, consisting of a 2 Gb/s fiber uplink to CIRBN (handling primarily administrative and infrastructure) and a 10 Gb/s fiber uplink to Frontier (handling academic and student needs). If one internet provider fails, the other provides fault tolerance. Established in 2023, there is also a Data Governance Committee, which is tasked with reviewing and updating existing policies related to data access, quality, and security, as well as implementing new policies as required. This effort is aimed at ensuring compliance with federal and state regulations and eligibility for cybersecurity insurance. (9A)

The Vice President for Finance and Operations and the Director of the Physical Plant monitor the majority of campus physical resources. The Capital Projects Group, which consists of the Vice President for Finance and Operations, the Provost, the Associate Provost, the Director of Physical Plant, the Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, and the Chief Information Officer, plays an important role in determining resource allocations between projects. While they do not make allocation decisions for the largest building projects that are often funded through private gifts, they are integrally involved in the allocation of resources toward important and often expensive renovation, renewal, and maintenance projects (e.g., elevator or chiller replacements, roof replacements, computer

hardware upgrades). The Capital Projects Group solicits requests for funding concerning renovation and renewal projects from many units on campus; they carefully rank these projects in light of the budget allocated for renovation and renewal and make their recommendations to the President. New construction projects, renovation, and maintenance proposals are also frequently on the agenda at the President's Cabinet meetings. Of particular concern in these discussions is whether projects are within budget and are meeting mission-driven objectives of promoting a safe and accessible community sustainably. Consultative mechanisms are constructed to be essential elements in the budgeting and planning processes.

Since the University's last HLC reaccreditation evaluation in 2022, a handful of construction projects have taken place, including the following: (10)

- Munsell/Ferguson Hall Renovation - \$19 million (residence hall)
- The Petrick Idea Center – Approximately \$17 million (a state-of-the-art center with fully-equipped makerspaces, an amphitheater for pitches and workshops, startup offices, and numerous collaboration spaces)
- The Ames Library (cooling tower relocation)
- Kappa Delta Home - \$600,000 (new sorority home)
- State Farm Hall - \$1 million (general repairs)
- Memorial Center (Sodexo food space renovation)
- Emerson Hall - \$1.9 million (formerly Sigma Chi)
- Donnocker Hall - \$800,000 (purchased from Kappa Delta)

Aspirations within the University's mission, vision, and planning materials drive the prioritization and budgeting of initiatives. Each Vice President and the Provost is responsible for establishing priorities on an annual basis concerning the initiatives under their purview. The President and the Board of Trustees review these priorities, ensuring alignment of strategies and resource allocations with the University's mission documents. The budgeting process begins with the Vice President for Finance and Operations, who is responsible for establishing the University's annual budget, as well as budget projections and monitoring the institution's financial resources regularly. These tasks are completed after consulting with numerous stakeholders, including the President and members of the President's Cabinet. Budget models and projections are regularly shared with the Board of Trustees.

Open public meetings with faculty and staff are conducted as necessary to review projected budgets. Budgetary issues are regularly discussed within the representative faculty body, the Council on University Programs and Policy. The President also reports on the budget regularly during monthly faculty meetings. In addition, budgetary issues are sometimes addressed by the President at the Faculty-Staff Breakfast at the beginning of the fall semester. Additional open forums are scheduled as necessary. The President also apprises the Staff Council, the representative staff body, of University budget updates. These meetings not only deal directly with imminent budget issues but also serve as forums for discussing those issues that have major implications for institutional resource allocations. Proposed annual budgets are subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees, who customarily review and vote on budget proposals for the following year during their May (preliminary) and October (final) meetings. Annual budgets are always discussed and reviewed within the context of three-year budgetary projections. (11)

Overall, the interactions noted above concerning the University's budgetary issues provide

the transparency required for constituencies to assess and provide feedback. These interactions are especially important when aligning resources and mission-driven planning priorities.

The institution's resource allocation process is driven by the University's mission documents, which focus on the educational experiences of its students. The budgeting process involves all Vice Presidents and the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, who provide updates and progress on the planning initiatives to the President's Direct Reports and Cabinet. Within Academic Affairs, the Provost meets regularly with the Associate Provost and the Dean of Curricular and Faculty Development, as well as the Chairs, Deans, and Directors of the Colleges and Schools, to discuss the Academic Affairs portion of strategic planning and the budget impact of actions taken and/or proposed. The President makes final recommendations to the Board of Trustees for their approval.

## **Sources**

*There are no sources.*

## 4.C Planning for Quality Improvement

The institution engages in systematic strategic planning for quality improvement. It relies on data, integrating its insights from enrollment forecasts, financial capacity, student learning assessment, institutional operations and the external environment.

### Argument

The planning and decision-making processes to successfully allocate resources require an assessment system that is flexible, efficient, and responsive to changing realities. This system is in place at the institutional level and exists throughout most of the academic and administrative units. Decision-makers have access to a myriad of survey data, gathered by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The University has an established Peer Group of institutions, which is used to assess its institutional strengths and challenges within a broader higher education environment. Additionally, academic and administrative units participate in yearly reviews, where their performance is evaluated. In addition to the assessment of student learning, as described in Criterion 3, academic units conduct external reviews of their operations. Data gathered from the institution's auditors is regularly shared with members of the President's Cabinet and the Board of Trustees. In addition, the President's Cabinet participates in annual retreats, where agenda setting and prioritization of yearly objectives are determined by consensus.

Two comprehensive examples of evidence regarding the strong links between the University's assessment, planning, and budgeting processes are the development of the University's Capital Campaign and IWU's current strategic planning materials, which began in the 2019-2020 academic year. (1)

### 2019 to Present - Strategic Planning

Work concerning the University's new planning priorities began in January of 2019, which was largely directed by the Strategic Planning Coordination Committee (SPCC). Although no longer in service, the SPCC's membership included a large number of trustees, faculty, staff, and students who met throughout the 2019 calendar year as a committee and in work groups pre-pandemic. A variety of assessment data elements were examined to assess potential initiatives and priorities, including admissions and enrollments, degree attainment, operating capacities by academic unit, and alumni success. Work group topics investigated as potential initiatives included the transfer student experience, an IDEA Center, continuing professional development opportunities, facilities, summer courses, new academic programs, and inclusive excellence. Over the 2020 calendar year through today, the University continues to engage in planning priorities to ensure continuous quality improvements, which include the following: (2)

- **Transfer Student Experience:** The University continues its initiatives concerning guaranteed admissions agreements with Illinois community colleges. Agreements with the City Colleges of Chicago, Heartland Community College (Normal), Lincoln Land Community College (Springfield), Harper College (Palatine), and Prairie State College

(Chicago Heights) are established. Illinois Central College (Peoria), and Parkland Community College (Champaign) are next on the articulation front. (3)

- **Enhanced Athletics:** Over the past few years, the University has enhanced and/or added several athletic teams to increase enrollment growth. A listing is provided within the next few paragraphs. (4)
- **Summer Term:** Illinois Wesleyan University students, high school juniors and seniors, alumni, community members, and faculty and staff are eligible to enroll in the University's June and July Summer Term courses. (5)
- **Petrick IDEA Center:** The 14,850-square-foot facility will serve as a hub for imagination, creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship, featuring prototyping tools, an amphitheater, collaborative meeting and teaching spaces, a test kitchen, 3D printers, sewing machines, power tools, audio/video equipment, and more. (6)
- **Certificate in Data Analytics:** Knowledge and skills associated with exploring, analyzing, and visualizing data to aid decision-making. (7)
- **Center for Engaged Learning:** A central hub of programs in which students can enhance their undergraduate experience through learning beyond the classroom and seek assistance with developing writing, presentation, and research skills. (8)
- **Low Cost Models Consortium:** Experimental courses beginning over the 2021-2022 academic year to gauge University fit in hopes of exploring new majors. Scheduled to be discontinued in 2026-2027.
- **New Academic Programs:** Over the past few years, the University has added several new majors to its academic offerings, including some re-tooled programs. A listing is provided within the next few paragraphs (9)
- **True North:** Beginning in the 2024-2025 academic year, the President established a special enrollment management committee to examine the specific characteristics of the University's recruitment strategies, ensuring accountability across sectors (e.g., academics, athletics, transfer students, financial aid). True North consists of the Vice President for Enrollment, Chief of Staff, the Athletic Director, the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, and the Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness.
- **Office of Campus Culture (OCC):** Over the 2024-2025 academic year, three major programs were evaluated: Influencing and Maximizing Positive Academic and Campus Transitions (IMPACT), Succeeding Through Empowerment and Proactiveness (STEP), and the Summer Enrichment Program (SEM). The report highlighted the very positive results of these programs on the success of several students (e.g., facilitating engagement, sense of belonging, relationships, and intellectual and personal development). Annual program reviews will commence on an annual basis. (9A)

As noted throughout Criterion 4, the University's budgeting processes are directly linked to its mission and planning priorities. The Vice Presidents and Provost determine priorities concerning which goals and strategies will be addressed in a given fiscal year. Many of these decisions are vetted through the appropriate committees and venues for consultation, thus completing the link between the assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

The University's work concerning its Assurance Argument for the Higher Learning Commission is an excellent example of planning processes that encompass the institution while considering the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups. Over each HLC-related exercise, an Accreditation Leadership Team (ALT) is formed, comprised of appointed faculty and staff who review and contribute material and narrative as it develops

across a multi-year timeline. In addition to the ALT, a vast number of University constituencies make direct contributions to the content of the Assurance Argument. Feedback and suggested revisions are solicited campus-wide. Final versions of the reports are made available to the public via the Re-accreditation Self-Study website. (10)

Other examples include the planning and development of the University's capital campaign and the current strategic priorities. As noted earlier in Criterion 4, work groups were formed to address the strategic planning goals and priorities. Each work group consisted of various University students, faculty, staff, trustees, and alumni. Drafts of the work group reports were shared with constituencies during the planning processes. The work groups ensured an inclusive planning process through the use of forums, surveys, online feedback forms, alumni magazine communications, and numerous meetings with campus constituencies and committees. The strategic priorities emerging from the 2019-2020 work groups were initially vetted with the Board of Trustees in October 2019, with additional updates to the Board over the 2020-2021 academic year. Updates to the Board continue on an annual basis. (11)

The planning practices noted for the HLC reports and University priorities are evident in other initiatives as well. Policies concerning tuition and salary increases are annual topics for discussion in Direct Reports and Cabinet meetings, before seeking Board of Trustees approval. The Staff Council and the Council on University Programs and Policy also review significant budget proposals and reconciliations. It is also common to communicate budgetary issues in faculty meetings and open forums when necessary. The Capital Projects Group, as described earlier in Criterion 4, is another example of evaluating, planning, and budgeting that solicits campus-wide input in establishing operative project and expenditure priorities.

Externally, these significant planning issues are shared with the Alumni Association, which consists of six special interest alumni groups (e.g., Council for IWU Women, Minority Alumni Network, Pride Alumni Community) and prospective donors. In sum, the University has several processes in place that ensure transparency in the planning and development of initiatives that welcome the perspectives from internal and external constituent groups.

The University's planning mechanisms are based on a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional planning includes internal and external factors, specifically those having an impact on fluctuations concerning enrollment, revenue, and expenditures. Based on the University's employment of environmental scanning regarding its place within the higher education landscape, IWU is consistently seeking continuous quality improvements in its operations through a variety of planning prioritizations. Examples of these operational improvements were listed in 4.A. (e.g., Academic Affairs Initiatives, Dean's Model, Teaching Track, Teaching Load).

The most recent example of evidence concerning student learning assessment and systematic and integrated planning is the Teaching and Learning Goals in Academic Affairs. Utilizing historic assessment and enrollment intelligence from the Shared Curriculum, Academic Affairs began its processes to develop a strategic plan for its division over the 2025-2026 academic year. The central emphasis of this planning process was to align the University's priorities with Academic Affairs, with the student experience at the center of ALL priorities. One specific theme outlined in the draft plan was "Stabilizing Enrollment Through Academic Program Development." Four strategies were identified to further this assessment, which in Spring 2026, included the following approach: Create an effective

process for regular review and assessment of student learning in the Shared Curriculum and the Writing Program. Although early in its development, this strategy will be supported by external reviews of the Shared Curriculum, Writing Program, and Gateway Colloquia (Self-Study in Spring 2026; External Review visit early Fall 2026; Action Plan in Spring 2027). (11A)

Over the past several years, the University has experienced declining enrollment, resulting in budget deficits requiring reconciliation. On an annual basis, the University has engaged in personnel adjustments, benefit restructurings, academic and administrative program reviews, and additional draws from the endowment. Recent evidence concerning modifications to the University's business model includes the following:

### **New and Re-tooled Academic Programs (majors)**

- Art (graphic design)
- Data Science
- Supply Chain Management
- Entrepreneurship
- Nutrition
- Professional Sales
- Kinesiology
- Public Health
- Criminology
- Quantitative Finance
- Communication
- Educational Studies: Physical Education
- Physics (quantum)

### **New Academic Certificates**

- Dance
- Data Analytics
- Intercultural Competence
- Reading Intervention

### **New and Enhanced Athletic Programs**

- Tennis

- Bowling (men & women)
- Stunt (women)
- Wrestling
- Titan Pep Band
- Track & Field
- Flag Football (women)
- Volleyball (men)
- Spirit Squad

### **Grant Summary: McCallister & Quinn**

The University has engaged McCallister & Quinn to assist the University in revitalizing the Grants Office. McCallister & Quinn is a premier federal grant consulting and government relations firm. Based in Washington, DC, their unique approach has helped clients secure federal resources. A recent example includes the “Building Capacity to Increase Global Engagement Across the Curriculum” grant. Funding from the grant, which was active through 2025, was used to establish a Global Engagement Fellows program at IWU; develop internships with a global focus and short-term study abroad experiences; increase intercultural competence of faculty through workshops; and enhance existing Hispanic studies minors offered within business and health programs. (12)

The University’s enrollment, revenue, and budget projections concerning the aforementioned initiatives may be observed in the HLC’s requested materials from the University’s 2022 comprehensive evaluation. Evidence includes IWU’s budget, its five-year projections and assumptions for revenue and expenditures, including enrollment targets. (13)

To anticipate and address internal and external factors in University planning, IWU has several reporting mechanisms that provide important evidence concerning its operational performance.

**EAB Solutions:** In 2024, the Office of Admissions consulted with EAB Solutions to explore strategic planning to improve financial aid packaging, revenue generation, and retention. (13A)

**Benchmark Report:** This annual report provides data elements on 23 key performance indicators comparing IWU and its Peer Group for internal and external monitoring, management, and planning. Indicators are arranged in four broad areas: Financial Resources and Expenditures, Enrollment Management, Diversity, and Student Success. (14)

**IWU Fact Book:** An online resource that contains a wide range of statistical information on the University and focuses on 10-year trends in important measures, financial and non-financial. (15)

**IPEDS Data Feedback Report:** This benchmark and peer analysis report features data elements specific to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), which

includes students (enrollment and graduation rates), student charges, program completions, faculty and staff figures, and financial information. (16)

**Information Technology (IT) and Data Governance Committees:** The IT Governance was convened in 2021 to assist the campus in establishing up-to-date technology policies and procedures. This committee plays a major role in the University's ongoing cybersecurity compliance requirements. Most recently, the Committee has been providing leadership and direction concerning the University's compliance with the Gramm Leach Bliley Act (GLBA). The GLBA has established cybersecurity rules and regulations concerning the Privacy, Safeguards, and Pretexting Rules. The University has formalized cybersecurity training using KnowB4. Over the 2024-2025 academic year, the Data Governance Committee developed a policy to define the data classification requirements for information assets and to ensure that data is secured and handled according to its sensitivity and the impact that theft, corruption, loss, or exposure would have on the University. This policy provides direction to IWU regarding the identification, classification, and handling of information assets. (17)

**Council for Independent Colleges (CIC) Financial Indicators Tool (FIT):** Based on KPMG's Composite Financial Index, CIC's FIT provides a financial performance assessment tracked over time and benchmarked against peer institutions. Four financial ratios are featured: measuring resource sufficiency, operating results, financial assets, and debt management. These ratios are presented individually and combined into a single index score indicating the financial health of the institution tracked over six years. (18)

**Council for Independent Colleges (CIC) Key Indicators Tool (KIT):** The KIT is a customized benchmarking report with 20 indicators of institutional performance in four key areas: student enrollment and progression, faculty, tuition revenue and financial aid, and financial resources and expenditures. (19)

**Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Composite Financial Index:** Data elements submitted annually to the HLC include ratios concerning the University's primary reserve, equity, and net income to calculate a composite financial indicator score. The HLC reviews institutions' financial information to determine whether it operates with integrity in its financial functions. (20)

**Moody's and Standard and Poor's :** These annual reports provide assessments of the University's creditworthiness regarding securities and financial obligations. Strengths and challenges are identified, as well as recent developments concerning IWU and its marketplace. (21)

**Asset Essentials by SchoolDude:** A web-based, work management system in the Physical Plant that tracks performance indicators, including the time to complete customer requests, the ratio of corrective to planned maintenance, maintenance efficiency (i.e., comparing estimated time to complete work to actual time), and employee backlog. (22)

## Sources

*There are no sources.*

## **Criterion 4 - Summary**

The institution's resources, structures, policies, procedures and planning enable it to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational programs, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

### **Argument**

IWU's resources, structures, and processes are mission-driven and continually directed toward improving the quality of its educational programs. The University's integrated planning and performance assessments position the institution to address future challenges and opportunities. The evidence provided reveals strong governance and administrative structures, endorsed by the Board of Trustees, that promote collaborative decision-making across all constituencies. The institution is aware of its enrollment management and budgeting challenges and is using analysis and planning to address the issues.

### **Sources**

*There are no sources.*