Assurance Argument

University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma - OK

Review date: 3/30/2020

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Argument

1.A.1 The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.

The University's focus on the liberal arts and undergraduate education informs the decisions, principles, and practices aligned with its mission. To that end, various stakeholders and constituents evaluate and contribute to the mission statement. In the Spring of 2019, University President Dr. John Feaver appointed an ad hoc Mission Statement Review Committee to meet and discuss the current statement and recommend possible revisions. Representing diverse constituencies, the review committee included one academic division chair, one faculty member from the other three academic divisions, one dean, one staff member, and one student. The review committee made revision recommendations to the university president in the summer of 2019, which the President then opened up to University faculty and staff for input and feedback. The president brought the committee recommendations to the USAO Board of Regents at their September 2019 meeting for consideration. The regents made recommendations, which President Feaver subsequently returned to the review committee for further consideration. The committee met, made some modifications in agreement with the boards' considerations,and returned a revised iteration of the statement. Dr. Feaver presented the proposed mission statement to the regents for discussion at their December 2019 meeting. The revised mission was approved and the university is in the process of distributing the newly adopted mission statement to all university personnel and articulating changes to constituents in the local community and at the state level.

The revised mission statement submitted to the Board of Regents reads: *As the state's sole public liberal arts college, the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma provides a distinctive education in the liberal arts and science, supporting both its interdisciplinary core curriculum and major fields of study with superior teaching. Through its inclusive learning environment, USAO fosters diversity of thought and practice to help students realize meaningful, purposeful, and productive lives as global citizens in a rapidly changing world.*

Due to timing, the majority of this assurance argument was composed before the approval of the new mission, however most areas have been updated to refer chiefly to this newly adopted version of the mission statement as the "current" mission statement, but at times there may be a reference towards the previous mission statement.

1.A.2 The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

The educational mission of USAO is to offer the public a liberal arts and sciences education with a rich interdisciplinary core, which supersedes financial, political, athletic, or otherwise extracurricular interests external to this educational mission. USAO understands and implements its mission through programs and offerings consistent with its mission and objectives.

Academic Programs
USAO offers 23 majors (including teaching certifications) and 24 minors. As a liberal arts institution, the university offers few professional programs, instead focusing on undergraduate programs culminating in the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, or Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees, as approved by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. All USAO students, except transfer students with Associate's Degrees, are required to complete the rigorous 46-hour interdisciplinary studies program, which requires coursework throughout students' academic careers and involves learning through team-taught courses, an educational experience distinct from standard general education core curricula offered elsewhere in the state of Oklahoma. All students have the opportunity to officially declare and complete a Liberal Arts Minor.

In support of its institutional learning goals and emphasis on teaching excellence, the university seeks to employ highly qualified faculty. The university catalog's description of programs of study emphasizes that all degree programs entail a broad range of study and a core program in interdisciplinary studies. The student handbook stipulates that student organizations exist to augment co-curricular goals consonant with the University's educational responsibilities. The faculty handbook details criteria for tenure, which includes faculty members' roles in advancing the university mission through teaching, scholarship, and service. Academic matters and decisions primarily involve the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Academic Council, and University and Faculty Association Committees. USAO was one of 23 institutions nationally recognized in 2018 by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), for which it received an "A" Grade for its core curriculum. The Colleges of Distinction organization recognized USAO for its "Great Teaching" and "Successful Outcomes" in 2019.

Student Support Services
Student support services enrich the academic and campus-life experience. Services are provided in the following areas: academic support, career services, counseling services, disability services, health services, and other general services.

A Student Success Center provides academic support that includes embedded tutoring within the IDS core curriculum and professional success coaching to aid students in achieving academic progress and success. The Student Success Center team monitors and conducts outreach through the Early Alert system. In 2016, USAO received a NASNTI grant to expand the capacity to serve Native American and low-income students. Many interdisciplinary studies courses are now lecture captured, and the videos are accessible to all students in those classes. Additionally, the Neill-Wint Center for Neurodiversity was established to support academic success of students on the autism spectrum.

Among the career services are workshops about interviewing, leadership, resume- writing, and other topics. Residence hall programming provides students with diverse opportunities and experiences. An array of extracurricular offerings are available to enrich the student experience as well, such as athletics, intramurals, and clubs and organizations. Student Services also encourages student interaction with the community as part of the college experience, so various events are coordinated with the community for student engagement. The Student Activities Board sponsors events throughout the year to enrich student life on campus. Student Services also offers a New Student Orientation experience to familiarize students with available services, the environment of the university, and how to succeed in their college experience. The Nobbs Wellness Center is available to all students, faculty, and staff.

Financial Aid office has increased awards every year since 2013 which benefits our student population including the many first-generation students (details in Criterion 4.C.1) and/or those in need of financial assistance to attend college.

Enrollment Profile
The profile of the student body reflects the institutional mission to attract students seeking a broad-based education. Recruiting efforts center around seeking out those students best suited to this type of educational approach. In 2015, the services of Ruffalo Noel-Levitz were contracted to assist in developing a student success plan which involved defining the profile of students suited to USAO's pedigree and offerings. Enrollment entrance requirements, once the most stringent in the state, now include a holistic enrollment option for students as an alternative.

Many students graduate with a double major, or pursue a major with one or more minors. Data shows that between Summer 2017 and Spring of 2019, 36.8 percent of students graduated with a liberal arts minor and 36.1 percent graduated with either a double major or a major and a minor. A Multidisciplinary Studies major (MDS) was added in 2018 to meet the needs of students who have chosen USAO for its liberal arts education and have multiple areas of academic interest.

USAO welcomes students with wide-ranging backgrounds, ethnicities, and interests. The fall 2018 census organizes students into seven broad ethnic backgrounds. The four largest ethnic groups are Caucasian (61%), Native American (14%), Hispanic (10%), and African American (7%). Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Non-Resident Aliens make up the remainder of the student population. In accordance with USAO's role as the state's liberal arts institution, 83 percent of students are Oklahoma residents and 17 percent are from out of state, 10 percent are international students.

1.A.3 The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

The State of Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's website lists the four major categories of institutions of higher education in the state: two research universities, ten regional universities, one public liberal arts university (USAO), and 12 community colleges. USAO's distinct mission and role in the state guides planning and budgeting decisions.

In 2005, the strategic "Mission Enhancement Plan" (MEP) guided the endeavors of the university. In 2019, President Feaver composed a thorough account and evaluation of the MEP strategic plan.

The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan reinforces the spirit of the university mission and objectives, as well as USAO's function as a teaching and learning institution. Built upon the institutional history, the Strategic Plan focuses on its interdisciplinary liberal arts identity, academic resources and facilities, the student experience, sustainability, and its relationship to and engagement with the community

and constituents its serves. This strategic plan and its objectives will guide university progress, planning, and budgeting moving forward.

The USAO Foundation and the university designate funds for a variety of projects in support of the educational and operational mission. A few keystone university expenditures that reflect ongoing support for the basic values of the institution encapsulated in an interdisciplinary, traditional, liberal-arts mission are provided in the following examples: implementation of Jenzabar management system that facilitates faculty, staff, and student access to student information, advisement, and registration; adoption of Canvas in 2018 as the university's learning management system to enhance course flexibility for students and faculty; installation of significant upgrades to campus wireless internet speed and availability completed in 2019; the construction of a new music rehearsal and teaching space built in 2016; advancement of educational technology and classroom upgrades.

Criterion 5.C.1 addresses and provides evidence for budgeting support and allocation alignment with institutional mission and priorities in more detail.

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1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

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

Argument

1.B.1 The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.

USAO's mission, mission-related objectives, and core beliefs are stated in a number of places, including the university catalog, the faculty handbook, and the student handbook. Other documents that articulates the mission, purpose, vision, goals, plans or institutional priorities include University press releases. The USAO web site front page greets visitors with mission related questions "What is a Liberal Arts Education", "Will I Fit in at USAO", and "Why Should I Choose USAO?" The USAO web site also contains the Mission and Objectives of USAO, its Core Beliefs and Distinctions, the nature of the liberal arts, recognitions and accreditations. The university YouTube channel houses well over 100 videos, many of which feature or highlight the mission of the institution through their content, reflective of a liberal arts education.

The mission statement is the building block for the recently completed strategic plan that was approved during the November 2019 USAO Board of Regents meeting. The plan is in the process of being distributed as an internal document to university personnel and a more concise document for external distribution.

University personnel are updated on progress related to the university mission by the university president at faculty and staff convocation each fall. Some documents disseminated or available internally and externally include information regarding the nature or mission of the institution, such as recruiting materials and Commencement Programs. Prospective students are informed of the nature of the institution via mailings, communications, and on each campus tour. Recruiting events often include a team-teaching demonstration and an address by an alum or by the university president regarding the nature of the USAO experience. Brochures printed for recruiting purposes contain information about the interdisciplinary studies core, the foundation of USAO's liberal arts experience. All incoming freshmen students receive a thumb drive pre-loaded with documents explaining and exploring the liberal arts experience.

In 2014, a program called "It Takes a College" (ITAC) was established. ITAC was formulated to develop plans to better inform USAO employees about the nature of the institution and how to articulate its mission to external entities and individuals. ITAC is a university committee with

governing documents detailing its communication efforts regarding the mission. ITAC's "Ten Talking Points" were distributed to all employees, which highlight the mission, objectives, nature, and distinctions of the institution.

1.B.2 The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.

The mission of USAO has not changed significantly since its original charge to operate as the state's liberal arts institution in 1965. The most recent mission statement review process began in the summer of 2019 and culminated in a revised statement proposed and adopted by the USAO Board of Regents in December of 2019. An internal document. "An Interpretive History of the Mission Enhancement Plan", written and distributed by university president Dr. John Feaver in November of 2019, contains a discussion of the future of the institution as it pertains to its mission, role in the state system, community relations, publicity, and purpose. The university's Mission Statement and Objectives, Core Beliefs, and Strategic Plan collectively detail the institution's focus on multiple aspects of operation.

Instruction and Scholarship
USAO's emphasis on teaching and learning is clearly expressed in the mission statement, which references the distinctive liberal arts education, interdisciplinary core curriculum, superior instruction, broad education, and emphasis on life-long learning. Objectives in support of the mission further clarify aspects of the teaching-learning environment at USAO. These focus on the broad academic experience, the IDS core, team-teaching, qualified faculty, fostering curiosity, small class sizes, retention, and USAO's unduplicated role in the state of Oklahoma system of higher education. USAO's Statement of Core Belief affirms its commitment to "integrating knowledge from many disciplines". The Faculty Handbook includes student outcomes that describe the expected skills sets for graduates. The Strategic Plan details goals, objectives, and action steps relating to academic matters.

Research
Objective Eight states that USAO will "foster scholarly activities appropriate to the nature and needs of the university." USAO faculty members are expected to maintain scholarly and/or creative activity and professional development. In support of research, USAO offers an undergraduate Mentored Research program leading to a research endorsement, a Student Showcase and Festival of Arts and Ideas that features student research and achievements, sometimes jointly with faculty members.

Creative Works and Cultural Productions and Opportunities
Creative Works is addressed in Objectives Four and Eight, which detail USAO's commitment "to provide cultural, educational, and professional opportunities which enrich the university and community." Number Seven of USAO's Distinctives references its focus on development of curiosity and creativity. Creativity is also embedded in the IDS core curriculum as all students are required to take two credit hours of Artistic Expression.

Clinical Service
Though clinical service is not alluded to specifically in mission documents, USAO's Statement of Core Belief states that USAO "equips individuals for the 21st century." Clinical experiences are provided for students to facilitate active engagement and experience. Clinical Service is provided

primarily through the teacher and deaf education programs as well as speech-language pathology. These clinical experiences allow students to interact with local schools, teachers, children or classrooms, and provide practical experience in preparation for students' careers.

Public Service

Public service is one means to lead students toward helping students "realize their active roles as global citizens". Public service has also become an effective means for the university to engage with the local community. Students may participate in Service Learning course credit, primarily offered through the Division of Education and Speech/Language Pathology. Personnel in the Speech and Language Clinic provide assessments in local schools and Headstart programs. USAO hosts an annual Giles Symposium on Public Service in support of its mission to prepare students to be engaged members of society. Each spring, USAO organizes Drover Difference Day which is dedicated to serving the surrounding community (more detail in 3.E.1 and 3.E.2).

Economic Development

Though the mission statement doesn't explicitly address economic development, it is critical to the functioning of the institution. Among the outcomes listed in the Faculty Handbook is that students are expected to "explore the richness of global and domestic political and economic systems." Items Three and Five of the Strategic Plan address USAO's ongoing efforts as a "sustainable public liberal arts college" and its "positive impact on the community through civic and cultural interaction and partnering for economic prosperity." USAO's economic impact on the community is significant, pouring nearly two million dollars annually into the local economy. Many facilities on campus are available for use by various local and regional agencies; requests for use of university facilities are available on the USAO website.

1.B.3 The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

USAO is one of the oldest educational institutions in the State of Oklahoma, committed to numerous constituents: students, graduates, faculty, staff, administration. As a public liberal arts university, USAO also recognizes its commitment to the citizens of Chickasha, Grady County, the State of Oklahoma and beyond. USAO's mission identifies the *public* as the constituency of USAO, whose "mission is to provide the public with a distinctive liberal arts and sciences education." The nature and scope of the institution are further defined in the mission statement as a distinctive and accessible liberal arts and sciences education. Institutional Learning Goals discuss how the USAO experience contributes to a life of purpose and meaning through instruction in the disciplines, interdisciplinary values, skills of lifelong learners, and quality of character. Item One of the Strategic Plan affirms the institution's commitment to its "rigorous and distinctive interdisciplinary liberal arts education."

USAO's mission-related objectives further identify the nature and scope of the institution. Objective Two states that USAO's offerings, approved by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, will culminate in three undergraduate degree options: the Bachelor of Arts, the Bachelor of Science, and the Bachelor of Fine Arts. USAO is charged with limiting the number of career, professional or specialized degree programs. USAO seeks to draw the highest quality faculty to deliver the curriculum, more specifically, a faculty whose "interests, knowledge, and experiences transcend their specialized fields... and who are dedicated to liberal arts education." The state has charged USAO with providing the opportunity for students to graduate in three years. USAO's three semester academic calendar facilitates that option, incentivized through a Fast Track program to qualified

students. Some majors have designed degree programs that [outline a three-year graduation option](#). Admissions brochures contain information about the [Fast Track program](#) as well as an introduction to the nature of the institution as it relates to [the core curriculum](#). The recently redesigned USAO web site provides an explanation of the [liberal arts experience](#) on the opening page of the site. Finally, as stated in [Objectives Seven and Eight](#), USAO seeks to "foster scholarly activities" and "provide cultural, educational, and professional opportunities and services which enrich the university and community." This is met through an [extensive calendar of events](#), publicized on USAO's web site and often accompanied by frequent press releases and social media publications. Events that appear on the university calendar include arts events, athletic events, student organization events, Student Activity Board events, academic events, and community events held on campus.

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1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Argument

1.C.1: The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

USAO is committed to refining its role in and commitment to the diverse society in which we live and understands its charge to serve a diverse population as a public institution. Course offerings and degrees are accessible to all students, who come from very diverse backgrounds. The recently approved iteration of USAO's mission statement includes fostering of "diversity of thought and practice to help students realize meaningful, purposeful and productive lives as global citizens in a rapidly changing world".

The Preamble to the Constitution of the university seeks to develop students to "liberate them from prejudice, fear, ignorance, and self so that they may achieve a free life" and "participate in society as productive, thinking, responsible human beings." Institutional Learning Goals challenge students to "discover the advantages...of diversity and perspective while they gain empathy and appreciation for other ideas, cultures, and beliefs." Outcomes stated within the Faculty Handbook include helping students "understand the behavior and welfare of individuals within the larger society" and to "value free inquiry and civil exchange of opinion." Goal four of the Core IDS Goals includes the expectation that graduates are able to "analyze the political, cultural, and conceptual nuances of global issues and understand the various civilizations that contribute to society." Internally, Strategy Two and Three of the strategic plan affirms USAO's commitment to diversity within the student body, in the student experience, and in the hiring of qualified personnel.

The liberal arts pedigree of USAO brings with it a diverse student population, comprised of students from 17 states, 22 countries, and eight ethnicities. These students from other countries bring a richness to the cultural environment at USAO, along with the cultural programming available to all students. The university publishes an International Student Handbook designed to help acclimate students to academic life on campus.

Numerous other programs and events offer the campus and community opportunities to celebrate multiculturalism. The Cultural and Recreation Committee, a university committee comprised of student, faculty, staff, and administration, oversees or supports offerings of cultural opportunities for students. The Davis-Waldorf Performing Arts Series, a four-event annual series, generally has one event each year that features music, art, or dance of other cultures. Music department events feature music of various cultures or underrepresented groups. The institution is host site for an annual tribal Pow- Wow. The Ableson Religious Reconciliation Endowed Chair sponsors an annual lecture, bringing in speakers to present topics related to religion and society and representing numerous religions and belief systems.

New academic programming approved since 2015 include the Public Policy major, the Cultural Studies minor, and the Multidisciplinary Studies major present appealing new options for students interested in exploring a more advanced level of diversity and multiculturalism. The university also sponsors annual short term Study Abroad programs for students to provide them with the opportunity to experience and interact with other cultures. These trips also are open to community members and alums of the university. Though not required of all USAO students, study in foreign language and culture is required of students majoring in teacher education, history, and English. In the summer of 2019, USAO began offering courses at the International Center for the Arts in Monte Castello di Vibio, Italy. This new partnership allows USAO students to have an immersive experience in Italian culture and interact with students from various countries and cultures as courses offered at the center are open to university students across the globe.

In 2016, USAO received a federal NSANTI grant to provide technology and support services for the Native American student population. USAO recruiting efforts reflect commitment to reaching various ethnicities and socioeconomic classes, in addition to, frequent visits to schools with strong Native American, Hispanic, African American, or other underprivileged or underrepresented populations.

Criterion 1.C.2: The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

USAO maintains a continually keen focus on enhancing and maintaining diversity, not only in recruiting and retaining students, staff, and faculty from varied backgrounds, but also in exposing students to diverse cultures and developing an appreciation for a global perspective. Underpinning this commitment to provide a venue for vetting varying viewpoints is a faculty-driven curriculum that by its very nature opens portals to previously underprivileged perspectives. Further academic details and evidence are provided in Core Component 3.B.4.

While the previous version of the mission statement did not explicitly address diversity, the recently adopted revised mission statement states "through its inclusive learning environment, USAO fosters diversity of thought and practice to help students realize meaningful, purposeful lives as global citizens in a rapidly changing world". Committee efforts are underway to draft a syllabus template for all faculty that includes a diversity statement. Currently, inclusion of a diversity statement has been an option for faculty, except teacher education, which requires a statement in syllabi. However, a committee is working on a syllabus template for all faculty, which includes a diversity statement. The proposed interdisciplinary studies core goals include the expectation that graduates "act as participatory citizens who demonstrate empathy, integrity, and appreciation for community diversity". Institutional Learning Goals include the expectation that students "discover the advantages of intellectual curiosity and diversity of perspective while they gain empathy and appreciation for other ideas, cultures, and beliefs", and that graduates "seize the opportunity to act as informed, productive, and intellectually mature global citizens". Data from the 2019 NSSE survey cites USAO as a high-performing institution in its inclusion of "diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments", out-performing southwest public education peer institutions.

Diversity statements, Title IX statements, or Equal Opportunity Employer statements can be found in various places, including the University website, Course Catalog, and the Faculty Handbook. In the fall of 2016 and 2019, mandatory Title IX sessions were offered for all university personnel. All Notices of Vacancy for faculty or staff positions include Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity

Employer statements. A university committee, the Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity Employer, and Diversity Committee, is responsible for reviewing, revising, and updating policies to ensure compliance with state and federal laws.

Student organizations, such as the Prism Club, promote education regarding the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA) community, even sponsoring a professional development workshop for Academic Council members in the spring of 2019. The Intertribal Heritage Club, open to all students, focuses on Native American culture and sponsors events periodically. The United Hispanic Council and the Black Student Alliance are both active within the college community. The Sign Language Club focuses on issues related to the hearing-impaired community. To a lesser extent, the Art Club, University Music Appreciation Club, and the Drama Club address diversity through their attendance at or support of events related to artistic expression in various cultures. In 2016 a food bank was established on campus for all USAO students, including those whose economic situation merited assistance.

On-campus housing provides an opportunity for students with diverse backgrounds to interact and engage with each other. Student Housing forms do not require students to provide information on ethnicity or country of origin. Student Housing forms, however, do allow students to note their gender as female, male, trans-male, trans-female, or neutral. Students also have the option on the housing form to choose gender inclusive housing. The Roommate Preference form also does not require information about race or country of origin, but it does allow students to confirm or deny that they are members the LGBTQIA community. Disability accommodations are coordinated by Student Services, which provides an array of services to meet special needs.

In 2018, the Dr. Ada Lois Sipuel Fischer Center for Social Justice and Racial Healing was established. The Center will be a focal point for interactions, discussions, lectures, and presentations regarding racial healing and justice, equality, empathy, and embracing diversity. In 2017, the Neil-Wint Center for Neurodiversity was established to provide services for students on the autism spectrum. The center works with students on the spectrum, providing them with numerous tools to achieve academic success. The program also involves student mentoring for those students in the neurodiversity program. The USAO's John A. Morris Speech and Language Clinic provides services for local children with developmental needs.

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1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

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

Argument

1.D.1 Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.

For more than a century, the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma has had a distinct role within the state of Oklahoma's public higher education system as the state's only public liberal arts university. The institution's mission is to provide the public with an education that "fosters diversity of thought and practice to help students realize meaningful, purposeful and productive lives as global citizens in a rapidly changing world". The institution addresses its obligation to the public it serves through various offerings, events, and programs. The new Strategic Plan, states in Item V that USAO will "have a positive impact on the community through civic, cultural and economic engagement and partnerships".

While USAO has designed its academic programs to serve any interested student, both its open-ended curriculum and its affordability attract many students from historically under-served and underrepresented populations. The recently inaugurated Dr. Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Center for Social Justice and Racial Healing will use an interdisciplinary approach involving community mentors, workshops, and service-learning projects to examine how peoples' needs and desires interact and intersect with the political, economic and social structures around them.

Each year, USAO holds hallmark symposia that are free and open to the public. The Giles Symposium for Citizenship and Public Service is held each fall and features speakers who have found innovative ways to address pertinent social issues. The spring Emerson-Wier Liberal Arts Symposium brings in bestselling authors, award-winning animators, renowned scholars, and other people who have distinguished themselves in traditional liberal arts fields as keynote speakers. The USAO History Symposium features historians with exceptional knowledge of the American Civil War discussing how lessons from that conflict are relevant to contemporary society. Additionally, USAO hosts the Ableson Religious Reconciliation Lecture once a year, which brings experts from different religious and cultural groups to examine pressing issues within their faith or culture. Collectively, these events have brought in distinguished individuals such as Arun Ghandi, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Margaret Atwood, Neil Gaiman, James Fowler, and Elaine Pagels, drawing large audiences from our campus, our community, and beyond.

In 2018-2019, USAO promoted informed voting by hosting the 12 gubernatorial state candidates for

governor on campus for "Meet the Candidates" presentations, all of which were open to the community. In addition to timely informational events such as this, USAO fosters service to the public through ongoing opportunities and events. USAO has a Child Development Center, offering an educational experience for young children in the community. The campus also hosts Blood Drives, local "Women in Business" luncheons, Grady County Reading Council, Relay for Life, ARTscope, summer camps, an Art Lecture Series, Nesbitt Gallery, ArtWrecker Gallery, Drover Difference Day, Droverstock Annual Spring Triad, Prom Boutique and numerous other events and offerings through which the institution asserts its role as a community leader in educating, informing, and enriching the general public.

1.D.2 The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

USAO understands its role as a non-profit public institution charged with teaching and learning, as stated in the USAO Board of Regents Constitution, and does not have any partnerships or interactions with investors to seek financial returns with the exception of the USAO Foundation, whose investments support dozens of scholarships, academic programs, resources, and other projects vital to USAO's mission. The institution does not contribute to parent organizations or external interests. Academics and educational responsibilities are of primary importance to the operation and success of the institution.

1.D.3 The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

USAO develops strong connections between the local community and its faculty, staff, and students, which can be seen in numerous service initiatives, outreach efforts, and special events. The institution was the only public university in Oklahoma recognized in 2019 by the Colleges of Distinction organization for its "Engaged Students" and "Vibrant Community". In 2015, USAO completed and dedicated "Coming Together Park" on campus as an inviting area for students and the community to gather. Campus facilities and resources are available for community events: the Alumni Chapel, the USAO Ballroom, the pool, Nash Library, Te Ata Memorial Auditorium, and others. For nine years, USAO has organized Drover Difference Day, an opportunity for student, staff, and faculty volunteers to participate in community service projects with the city and local businesses. The USAO Child Development Center not only provides student teachers with real-world experience, it provides an enriching and developmentally appropriate environment where community 3- and 4-year-olds can work on language development, the enhancement of self-concept, sensory acuity, motor development, concept formation, and life skills. USAO also houses the John A. Morris Speech and Language Clinic, providing communication therapy to children with developmental disabilities who live in Chickasha and its surrounding communities. The John A. Morris Speech and Language Clinic is a required practicum of all speech-language majors. USAO partners with the Oklahoma School for the Deaf (OSD) in offering a satellite school, Jane Brooks OSD, for Pre-K through third grade children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

USAO is also dedicated to partnering with outside organizations to address needs pertinent to the area or region. The university holds frequent blood drives for the Oklahoma Blood Institute and hosts Relay for Life. USAO has recently joined forces with the Chickasha Chamber of Commerce to host "Women in Business" which gives businesswomen opportunities to network. A Special Olympics class is offered each May during the Independent Study session, allowing USAO students

to support and interact with children and adults with intellectual and/or physical disabilities. USAO hosts ARTscope, a two-week program to provide arts enrichment for children in the community. In the past, the Chickasha Area Arts Council has provided scholarships for students unable to attend. USAO organizes a Prom Boutique each March to provide area high school students with prom dresses at no cost. USAO hosts Grady County Reading Council meetings during which teachers from surrounding schools gather with USAO Education students and faculty to share best practices for teaching reading in PK-12 classrooms.

USAO provides the campus and local community with diverse and affordable arts events of exceptional quality. The largest event, the Spring Triad, comprised of the Montmartre Chalk Art Festival, Droverstock Music Festival, and USAO Scholastic Meet. The Triad brings in high school students from all over the state to compete academically and artistically, while hundreds of people in the surrounding area visit campus to enjoy the music, chalk art, food, recreation and other activities available. The Davis-Waldorf Performing Arts Series presents "relevant and culturally diverse programming that broadens the aesthetic of our audiences," recently completed its 18th season. Throughout its history, the series has brought to campus acclaimed ballet companies, theatre and comedy troupes, musical groups that range from classical to Irish folk to traditional Zimbabwean vocalists, and offer some form of outreach to USAO students or the wider community, either through masterclasses, workshops, or interactive educational presentations at a local public school. The USAO Alumni Association recently launched a series of free, outdoor concerts known as Listen Local at The Greek that features performers, mostly native Oklahomans, whose styles range from bluegrass to New Orleans jazz. The Theatre Arts department partners with the city of Chickasha and the Chickasha Community Theatre. In the Music Department, the Concert Choir, Chamber Ensembles, and Concert Band perform free public concerts each semester. The Art Department likewise holds frequent events that highlight students' creative and academic proficiency, inviting the public to engage with their works and ideas. The university also houses the Nesbitt Gallery, which features regionally and nationally acclaimed artists. In 2018, USAO established a presence in downtown Chickasha with the purchase of a building now converted into Art Wrecker, a public art gallery open for special events in conjunction with community events. The most extensive university project involving the community was the construction of Coming Together Park. Building the park was a collaborative effort of university personnel and members of the community.

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1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

As the state's sole public liberal arts college, the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma provides a distinctive education in the liberal arts and sciences, supporting both its interdisciplinary core curriculum and major fields of study with superior teaching. Through its inclusive learning environment, USAO fosters diversity of thought and practice to help students realize meaningful, purposeful and productive lives as global citizens in a rapidly changing world.

At the heart of the institution is the unique mission as it guides the institution's operations.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

Argument

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

All USAO activities and programs are operated with integrity and an emphasis on ethical behavior. The college has established numerous policies and processes in support of institutional integrity.

Governing Board

USAO is committed to the mission of providing the public with a distinctive and accessible liberal arts and sciences education that fosters ethics, integrity, and responsibility. As a public liberal arts college with a statewide mission, our institution is subject to the administrative coordination of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) and is governed by an independent board of regents of seven members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the senate. These governing entities provide the umbrella of supervision, management, and operation for USAO – including personnel policies, academic standards, and board-level approval for curriculum, degree programs, and financial matters.

The USAO Board of Regents operates under the USAO constitutional bylaws and follows policies related to ethical conduct and integrity of operations. The board members are statutorily required to complete fifteen hours of training through the State Regents Education Program provided through OSHRE that includes at least two hours of ethics training. Board members sign an oath of office in which they agree to abide by the ethics and conflict of interest policies.

The board meets six times per year and follows the policies set forth in Oklahoma's Open Meeting Act. As a key part of the meeting they receive a detailed review of college finances from the chief financial officer. These financial reviews include details of college revenues, expenditures, and deviations from projected budgets. The board is responsible for approving the annual budget. The college's finances are externally audited annually with the results of the audit presented to the board in open session.

Administration, Faculty, and Staff

USAO has established key administrative policies and practices that sustain institutional integrity and ethical behavior on the part of faculty and staff. All employees of USAO sign a loyalty oath asserting their commitment to supporting the constitution of the United States and the state of Oklahoma. Policies outlining ethical guidelines and requirements can be found in the Personnel Handbook and the Faculty Handbook. These policies include Academic Freedom and Faculty Responsibilities and Ethics, among others. In addition, all faculty and staff members are required to complete Title IX training (2016, 2019).

Academics

Policies and procedures covering all academic affairs begin with Chapter 3 of the Policies and Procedures Manual of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. To further meet its obligations in maintaining the integrity of its academic programs, USAO has a committee structure that includes Curriculum Development review and approval, an Academic Policies and Procedures committee, and an Academic Integrity committee among others.

All academic programs follow OSRHE policy and typically undergo program review every five years or otherwise receive some type of speciality accreditation in lieu of program review. Program review involves a self-study report conducted by faculty in the program and is submitted to the state regents upon approval by USAO's governing board. The following external accreditations are conducted in lieu of the OSRHE program review:

CAEP (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation) for undergraduate teacher education programs.
NASM (National Association of Schools of Music) for undergraduate music programs.
CED (Council on Deaf Education) for undergraduate deaf education programs

USAO's Student Handbook includes the Academic Code of Conduct that provides policies for the disposition of accusations on academic misconduct, including various forms of cheating, plagiarism, appropriation, or improper collaboration. Procedures for appeal are included.

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

Argument

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

USAO's website is the primary information portal for all audiences and provides a transparent view of the university. The site includes admission criteria, program information and requirements for every major, costs to attend, available resources to assist students, academic support, information on accreditation, statistical information on the institution, and campus safety information. The university's newly-redesigned website allows audiences to easily access information on administration, faculty, staff, services, organizations, and informational pages. USAO's website content is updated through the Communications and Marketing Department.

The university website has a section dedicated to information on the USAO Board of Regents. This section identifies the individual board members, their appointment date, credentials, and affiliations. The section also contains the minutes and agendas of the Board's meetings.

The USAO Student Government Association (SGA) provides students with opportunities to participate in the governance of the university. The SGA has a section on the university website where their membership, constitution, bylaws, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and legislation are posted.

USAO's Course Catalog, available in print and online, serves as a comprehensive source of information including a list of courses offered, graduation requirements, major and minor programs, the academic calendar, admissions policies, estimated cost of attendance, and USAO's accreditations. The catalog is updated annually.

USAO's Student Handbook and International Student Handbook both available in print and online, give students guidance on university procedures and student rights and responsibilities. A new Student-Athlete Handbook is also in the process of development. The intent of student policies is not to take away individual liberties, but to ensure knowledge and fair treatment on practices and procedures.

The USAO Communications and Marketing Department creates a number of publications annually to assist the Admissions Department with recruitment. The materials contain information about academic programs, admissions requirements, in-state costs, out-of-state costs and services available to students.

USAO also uses news releases, monthly newsletters, targeted emails, Facebook, Twitter and other forms of social media to disseminate information about the university, events and other offerings on

campus.

Sources

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Argument

2.C.1 The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

The Board of Regents meets six times per year and reviews issues relating to the operation of the University. Notification of board agendas and minutes is disseminated through the University website and notifications of board meetings are posted in public pursuant to the open meeting act.

Three key board-approved documents guide USAO operations. The university Strategic Plan, the college Master Plan, and the Annual Budget (2017, 2018, 2019) are the core documents that set forth the college priorities, plans for resource allocation, and plans for supporting the college infrastructure to meet current and future needs. The governing board is responsible for review and adoption of all three documents. The Strategic Plan and the Master Plan documents are multi-year plans. The annual budget is developed each year in line with the available resources, the current strategic priorities, and the ongoing list of capital and maintenance projects outlined in the Master Plan.

Supplementing the above documents are the President's annual goals **(2015, 2016, 2017)** which are submitted to the board annually.

2.C.2 The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

The USAO Board of Regents has established practices and policies that provide opportunities for internal and external constituencies to actively engage with the board and to present their interests and needs to the board. The agenda and minutes of regents meetings (see evidence in 2.A) show that reports from faculty, students, alumni, and staff are included on each agenda during the open meeting, providing the opportunity for all interests to be heard. All meetings of the board are open to the public and subject to the Open Meeting laws of the State of Oklahoma. The schedule of meetings along with the agendas and minutes for each meeting are posted on the public college website.

2.C.3 The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.

The USAO Board of Regents are established by Oklahoma Statute. The governor appoints regents, and the legislature must approve those appointments. This appointment and approval process, outside the University, ensures the independence of the board. Policies are in place to maintain independence regarding financial disclosures, conflict of interest, confidentiality, gifts, political activities, and nepotism. Major issues for the University are the focus of the regents while day-to-day operational activities are delegated to the university president.

An important institutional practice related to maintaining board independence and autonomy has to do with the acceptance of gifts to the university. All monetary and in-kind gifts are now vetted and accepted through the independent USAO Foundation. The Foundation operates under it own bylaws and has a self-governing Board of Directors that serve as an independent reviewing panel with full authority to accept or reject gifts, thus ensuring that the college governing board is not unduly influenced by large gifts to the college.

2.C.4 The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

The USAO Board of Regents recognize the complexity of the university's operations and delegates the day-to-day operation to the university president as noted in Article II of the USAO Constitution. Through shared governance, the university president delegates to his staff operational responsibilities and to the faculty academic matters noted in the Faculty Handbook.

The Faculty Association is given responsibility of recommending all academic matters, faculty welfare policies, promotions in rank, and selection of faculty as noted in Article III of the USAO Constitution, Section III of the Faculty Handbook, and the Faculty Association Constitution. A State of Academic Affairs Report includes the organizational chart.

Sources

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

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

USAO is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. The principles of academic freedom and freedom of expression are documented and upheld. The Student Government Association promotes and encourages high-quality academics and opportunity for intellectual pursuits on campus. Students' rights are documented in the student handbook and formal grievance policies are available for faculty, staff. and students. In 2017, the USAO Board of Regents approved a social media policy developed by the Academic Policies and Procedures committee and approved by the Faculty Association.

Additional evidence of the university's commitment to truth in teaching and learning is presented in Core Component 2.E.

Sources

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2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

Argument

2.E.1 The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.

USAO provides oversight, structure, and support for responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff, and students. USAO's formulated policy on the appropriate use of computing and networking facilities emphasizes the proper application of information resources. The University considers any violation of appropriate use to be a serious offense. Violators are subject to disciplinary action as prescribed in the student, faculty, and staff handbooks. The Academic Integrity Committee convenes as needed to consider and make recommendations on student violations of the university Academic Integrity Policy.

USAO complies with the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) and has established a procedure for identifying alleged copyright infringement. USAO reviews the procedures for effectiveness and relevance with the most recent report showing a low quantity of complaints and rarely needed recidivism. USAO also pays annual dues for performance rights to Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI) and the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) for performances and for music at sporting events or other campus events.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) provides oversight of faculty and student research. The IRB is comprised of six full-time faculty members, an outside evaluator, and the VPAA. This board reviews research protocols for projects at the university involving human subjects and ensures risks are minimized and participant rights are addressed.

USAO provides support for the pursuit of scholarly activities by both faculty and students. Beyond allocations of information resources, the university emphasizes academic freedom in both faculty teaching and research endeavors, possible opportunities for sabbatical leave, and a thorough patent policy for intellectual effort and research. A University committee for Academic Activity Funds provides financial support for student participation in academic enrichment activities, research, and conference participation. Each year, the Gladys Anderson Emerson Endowment provides funding for faculty creative activity or research expenses. The USAO Foundation designates funding for each academic division for distribution among faculty members in support of research, creative activity, or professional development.

Student research is led in both undergraduate courses and in faculty-mentored research projects. A Director of Undergraduate Research has been designated along with an evolving curriculum for

capstone research projects through the Mentored Research sequence. The year-long sequence of courses guides students through all phases of their chosen project as they work one-on-one with a faculty mentor to identify research methods, gather data, compose a professional paper, and present their work for peer review. One student is awarded the Gladys Emerson award for Undergraduate Research each year.

For students who do not elect the Mentored Research route, Senior Seminar provides a similar semester-long, faculty-guided capstone experience that completes and closes USAO's undergraduate curriculum. Senior Seminar entails a synthesis of the interdisciplinary program by writing and completing a formal project.

As a teaching institution, faculty research is primarily focused on professional development and individual field-specific research activities which are required of faculty and evaluated in the annual Administrative Review and Tenure/Post-Tenure review process. In order to achieve promotion or tenure, faculty members must demonstrate achievement in research or scholarly development and maintain an exemplary record regarding Faculty Responsibilities and Ethics.

Faculty report and provide documentation of research via annual reports and within dossiers prepared for tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review.

2.E.2 Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

USAO has structures in place to provide guidance to students on the ethical use of information resources. The Student Handbook includes policies on academic integrity, degrees of dishonesty, and appropriate academic sanctions. During Freshman Orientation, a special session is held covering academic integrity within higher education.

Because USAO is a small college that prides itself on small class sizes and the mentoring of individual students, the most accessible and consistent source of guidance for all students in the ethical discovery and application of knowledge happens in the classroom and through academic advising. Ethical communication, research, creative problem-solving, and scientific reasoning are included in one of the eight Institutional Learning Goals. Core courses such as, Rhetoric and Critical Thinking, Writing I and II, Individual and Contemporary Society and Senior Seminar/Mentored Research emphasize the importance of academic integrity in the process of developing good consumers, questioners, analyzers, and producers of information. The university also provides access for coursework to be submitted through academic integrity software, Turnitin, which many faculty use for collecting assignments.

The Student Success Center incorporates academic integrity into the annual mandatory training for each student employed as a tutor within any of the centers, in order to provide students guidance in the ethical use of information resources. According to the 2018 Undergraduate Research Survey results, 94% responded that participating in research at USAO enhanced their understanding of the research process.

Nash Library helps promote information literacy by providing services such as reference help for students seeking assistance with papers and projects and access to databases or other available resources in the library holdings. Nash Library offers several levels of library instruction courses, with each class building on the one taught previously. Several sessions are available of each class throughout the semester. These classes help students define research as it applies to their assignment or discipline and assists them with obtaining information from various databases.

2.E.3 The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

USAO has clear published policies on definitions of, expectations for, and reasons for support of Academic Honesty and Integrity in all activities in the classroom and the student appeal process. If a faculty member suspects that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty and does not wish to pursue the informal resolution process, cases of potential academic dishonesty can be referred to the Office of Academic Affairs, which in turn will refer the case to the chair of the Academic Integrity Committee. The faculty member provides a written account of the incident along with supporting documentation. The written account should detail any actions taken by the professor within the confines of the classroom in addition to any conversations with the student regarding the case of academic dishonesty.

The Academic Integrity Committee, composed of faculty members, students, and registrar, may pursue disciplinary action above and beyond that of the faculty member's decision. The committee may hear appeals and recommend supplementary disciplinary action outside of the classroom. Additional penalties may include expulsion, suspension, probation, revocation of scholarship funds, or mandatory service to the college.

Sources

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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma adheres to the policies and procedures outlined in University handbooks and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSHRE) Policy and Procedures Manual and is transparent in its offerings and processes. To verify the policies are followed, several processes are in place to monitor and address issues related to institutional integrity, including research compliance, conflicts of interest, and academic honesty.

Sources

There are no sources.

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

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Argument

3.A.1 Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

USAO courses and programs are current and continuously improved through a variety of formal mechanisms. These formal mechanisms include, but are not limited to, external program accreditation, program reviews, course assessment, program assessment, and student outcomes (e.g. employment and/or graduate programs). There are several channels to conduct assessment (detailed in Criterion 4), provide input, and exercise authority over courses and programs.

Course catalog is updated annually and posted online along with past catalogs. USAO has thorough policies for curriculum changes including customized forms for each type of curriculum change. Program changes are voted on by division faculty, the Faculty Association curriculum committee, Teaching Education Committee when needed, and the Faculty Association before proceeding to the VPAA, President, and Board of Regents. Upon approval, the President submits the change to the Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education (OSRHE) for review and approval where applicable. From the spring of 2016 through the summer of 2019, USAO submitted 90 curriculum changes to the OSRHE including the addition of 46 new courses, dropping 15 courses, eight changes to existing courses, the addition of one major, two minors, and 16 changes to programs or minors. The American Indian Studies program was suspended in 2017.

Programs that are externally accredited demonstrate clear evidence of currency and of appropriate quality for students in the degree programs. USAO has several programs that are externally accredited including deaf education, education, and music. In addition, several education programs are also nationally recognized through external accreditation via their respective organizations including elementary education, early childhood education, social studies, English, mathematics, and science. The physical education teacher preparation program has state accreditation. While these external accreditations focus on the education programs in their respective departments, they provide

additional evidence of the quality of these departments and their programs. While music, elementary, early childhood education, and deaf education use this external review as their program review, programs with not solely focused on education (social studies/history, English, mathematics, science, and physical education) all go through the program review process described below.

USAO's programs are reviewed according to the OSRHE Academic Program Review policy. All programs are in compliance with this process according to the most recent OSRHE program review report. USAO programs are tracked and changes to programs are logged by the OSRHE system. The program review template ensures a thorough review includes data and discussion of: centrality of the program to the institution's mission, program objectives and goals, minimum productivity indicators, faculty credentials, student outcomes, and institutional program recommendations. Program faculty and division chairs complete the review and submit it to the VPAA to complete an executive summary. The program review and executive summary are then sent to the OSRHE for approval. USAO monitors programs according to OSRHE minimum productivity indicators for the minimum number of degrees conferred and majors enrolled in a program. Programs that do not meet these minimums must complete a Low Productivity Report that includes plans for the program.

Programs adhere to OSRHE standards for undergraduate and baccalaureate degrees. For courses, USAO actively participates in the OSRHE Course Equivalency Project. As detailed on the State Regents website, the "Course Equivalency Project (CEP) is a postsecondary education resource service that provides course equivalency information to facilitate student transfer within the Oklahoma System of Higher Education. Its database contains faculty-generated course equivalency information for hundreds of courses offered at public institutions in Oklahoma. Credit for a course within a group can be transferred to any system institution which sponsors a course in that group." Common course descriptions and/or student learning outcomes are created and updated by faculty from different institutions. USAO sends faculty each year to CEP meetings to ensure our relevant courses are included and are meeting the agreed upon guidelines. This ensures numerous USAO courses are current with respect to other institutions in the state and allows students to more easily transfer within the state system of higher education. A sample of the equivalent courses from the accounting and American sign language disciplines is provided, but the vast majority of disciplines represented at USAO are included in the CEP and all disciplines are available on the State Regent's website.

The USAO Academic Calendar is included in the course catalog and approved by the OSRHE according to their standards for academic calendars and credit hours. Furthermore, the course catalog includes additional guidance on the credit-hour load required to graduate in four years. USAO has a small number of courses (online or hybrid) that may utilize alternatives to instruction time in determining credit hours. In these cases, academic credit hours are determined in accordance with OSRHE policy for distance education. Student learning then is assessed through course assignments and/or through the demonstration of specific competencies with the expectation that there is no difference in the academic quality, academic standards including admission and retention standards, and student evaluation standards for courses regardless of delivery method.

3.A.2 The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

In accordance with its mission, USAO is a solely baccalaureate-granting institution. USAO confers Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees. Full descriptions of each degree program, including courses offered, course descriptions, courses required, and

additional requirements are published in the course catalog available on the USAO website and in print as requested. Degree checksheets are also available for each major and minor online as well as requirements for teacher certification in secondary education.

Program learning goals are articulated for every major program as part of the program review process. USAO conducts program reviews every five years in accordance with the program review policy of the OSRHE. The program review template includes a section designated for program goals.

3.A.3 The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

USAO has one campus, no online programs, and primarily delivers its courses in-person. There are a few courses that are delivered in other locations (high schools, education centers, study abroad) or that utilize other methods of delivery (online, hybrid). Regardless of the delivery format or course location, the learning goals for courses are consistent and minimum faculty qualifications are the same based on established policies in the Faculty Handbook. USAO establishes consistent program quality overall through the Program Review process described in 3.A.1. Additionally, university-wide annual program assessment reports (identified in 4.B.2) ensure that students are meeting program learning goals and that programs revise outcomes, assessment activities, and needed resources as necessary. Assessment progress is monitored by the University Assessment Committee. USAO only accepts transfer credit hours from other accredited institutions of higher education. USAO has a consortium agreement with Oklahoma City Community College (OCCC) that allows students to transfer from OCCC to USAO to complete a baccalaureate program in 19 academic programs.

USAO supports concurrent enrollment by high school students (e.g. concurrent enrollment scholarships). High school students must meet the special admission requirements detailed in the course catalog in order to enroll in USAO courses. In the last few years, high school concurrent enrollment has expanded to include select USAO course offerings (college algebra and trigonometry courses) at high schools (Lindsay and Chickasha, OK). As both the college algebra and trigonometry courses are included as part of the OSRHE Course Equivalency Project (CEP), they have the same student learning outcomes not only across the different sections offered by USAO, but across the state. Courses offered for concurrent enrollment are approved through the same curriculum and faculty credential processes. The concurrent enrollment courses offered at high schools are taught by highly qualified (subject area master's degree) high school teachers, hired as adjunct faculty and complete the professional development orientation. In addition, the concurrent enrollment courses offered at the high school are all part of an assessment system specifically designed to ensure they meet the same standards as courses offered at USAO. This system compares grading standards using common questions on exams and a grading rubric. Assessment results are documented in a report for each course and evolved the system.

The vast majority of courses are held in person on campus. A few course offerings are held in other locations in accordance with contractual or consortial arrangements including study abroad and cultural preservation. The cultural preservation Kiowa Clemente language course held at a learning center in Anadarko, OK. In addition, USAO provides study abroad opportunities. USAO began offering courses at the International Center for the Arts in Monte Castello di Vibio, Italy, in the summer of 2019. These courses are organized and evaluated by existing USAO faculty and give students the unique chance to work with other renowned artists and scholars while at the Center.

Currently, USAO provides just a few courses online or in a hybrid format. The Canvas learning

management system provides a solid platform for offering online and hybrid courses and is available to all USAO students and faculty. In addition, USAO invests in full help desk support from Canvas. With some courses being transitioned to online or hybrid formats, USAO takes steps to ensure the rigor and quality of the courses. As one example, in addition to the equivalent syllabus content, courses may employ an estimate of the student workload for an online version of the course.

In the future, USAO plans to expand its online and hybrid course offerings and is devoting significant resources to ensure the quality of these offerings, including various professional development opportunities for Canvas, enrollment for faculty members in an Online Teaching course offered through Midwestern State University, upgrade to campus technology and support, equipment for faculty, as well as, continual oversight of the process by the Assessment Committee and the VPAA.

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

Argument

3.B.1 The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.

USAO's general education program is referred to as the interdisciplinary studies core curriculum or IDS core. As a solely baccalaureate granting institution, the interdisciplinary studies core curriculum is an integral and inseparable component of USAO's mission. In fact, the interdisciplinary studies core curriculum is purposefully included several times in USAO's mission statement and objectives. In addition to fulfilling the mission statement, the IDS core meets and exceeds the requirements of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) baccalaureate mandates for general education programs. The IDS core requires 46 credit hours, well surpassing the OSRHE minimum standard of 40 credit hours. In addition, the IDS core spans the entire undergraduate experience through the inclusion of nine team-taught courses (27 credits) and 14 credits of upper division coursework (3000/4000 level). As part of the Assessment Academy and Quality Initiative Project, the university has currently made progress on the process of closely reviewing and updating the IDS core curriculum.

3.B.2 The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

USAO's IDS core curriculum is an essential component of the institution and required for all majors. This is reflected in the curriculum pursuant to the 1965 directive, the 1993 articulation, and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's goals expressed in the 2005 Mission Enhancement

Plan. Graduates of USAO are expected: to act creatively and passionately in both professional and personal endeavors, to write and speak clearly and persuasively, to think critically and rationally in analyzing information, to apply tools of the scientific method and mathematics appropriately, to understand the behavior and welfare of individuals within the larger society, to explore the richness of global and domestic political and economic systems, religious beliefs, philosophical inquiry, literary contributions, cultural histories, technological developments, and artistic expressions, to value free inquiry, interdisciplinary perspective, and the civil exchange of opinion, to commit to a lifetime of learning guided by a distinctive liberal arts education as a vehicle to interpret new experience and to mold the future.

Instead of the traditional general education cafeteria plan of lower division courses that is common at many institutions, USAO's core curriculum features a shared set of common courses that are designed to span all four years of its students' time at USAO. The IDS core curriculum includes distinctive coursework and specifically addresses the goals articulated. Skills courses teach students to express themselves clearly in both writing (Writing I and II) and in critical thinking and speaking (Rhetoric and Critical Thinking). The artistic and physical expression requirements ensure all students explore creative and physical activities essential for a sound mind and body. Concepts courses such as Mathematics in the Modern World feature quantitative reasoning and its application to society. The Foundations of Science Lab provides an intimate, hands-on experience with the tools of the scientific method. In addition to the skills courses, concept courses emphasize the complexity and interconnectedness of the human world. The interdisciplinary nature of these courses means that they examine topics from multiple academic perspectives and not just from the viewpoint of a single field or specialization. To emphasize the broad, multi-faceted nature of the interdisciplinary approach, these nine concept courses are team-taught with both faculty receiving full load credit. This means that a course in American Civilization, for instance, might be taught by a historian and a literature professor who would examine issues of the American past, identity, and values from the perspectives of both their fields, using literature, art, and film to examine the American tradition, as well as more familiar lecture approaches. These concept courses begin in the freshman year with The Individual in Contemporary Society, which examines the human condition in the early twenty-first-century and the issues and responsibilities that individuals must face in the contemporary world. Later concept courses cover both the Physical and Life Sciences as well as the two courses on the history and nature of American Civilization. The Political and Economic Systems and Theories course examines the global influence of these systems with an emphasis on their application to public policy alternatives in the United States. A three course sequence in the development and impact of World Thought and Culture highlights diverse achievements in architecture, art, theatre arts, literature, music, philosophy, religion, and science. A faculty-guided, independent Senior Seminar or Mentored Research project provides a capstone experience that completes USAO's core curriculum.

While USAO's IDS core curriculum is unique, it is also firmly grounded and more than satisfies the general education framework established by the OSRHE for all state institutions. As a testament to our efforts in this area, USAO has received unsolicited national praise for its IDS core curriculum. The American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) have evaluated the general education programs of more than 1,100 institutions for their What Will They Learn? ratings. USAO is one of only 23 institutions to receive an "A" rating for the requirements of our general education core. In addition, USAO is highlighted by ACTA as a "Hidden Gem."

3.B.3 Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

The various academic programs at USAO specify student-learning objectives that can be mapped back to the Institutional Learning Goals which relate to collecting, analyzing and communicating information; mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and developing skills adaptable to changing environments as evidenced in program objectives and reviews (e.g. Physics 2017). Course syllabi specify the ways in which student-learning objectives are met in each course.

To ensure further that these key student-learning objectives are met, academic programs at USAO require their students to complete a discipline specific cap-stone course (e.g. for Communications, Communications Senior Project; for History, History Seminar; for Biology, Principles of Ecology, etc.) or compile and present a comprehensive portfolio of their work. All USAO students are required to complete an Exit Exam before graduation.

In addition to the courses required within each program, the courses required of USAO's Interdisciplinary core curriculum also engage students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information, mastering modes of inquiry or creative work, and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments. "USAO is distinctive in offering an interdisciplinary, liberal arts core that spans all four years of its students' academic careers. The Interdisciplinary core (IDS) includes two types of classes. Skills courses teach students to express themselves clearly in both speech and writing and to master skills in areas such as mathematics and critical thinking. In addition, concept courses emphasize the complexity and interconnectedness of the human world. The interdisciplinary nature of these courses means that they examine topics from multiple academic perspectives and not just from the viewpoint of a single field or specialization" (USAO Catalog 2019-20, page 45). A faculty-guided, independent Senior Seminar project provides a capstone experience that completes and closes USAO's undergraduate curriculum. Senior Seminar entails a synthesis of the interdisciplinary program through the completion of a formal project. The project may integrate a student's major field with the IDS program. Completion of the Mentored Research sequence will substitute for the Senior Seminar (USAO Catalog 2019-20, page 46).

Finally, perhaps the best evidence that USAO engages students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information, mastering modes of inquiry or creative work, and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments is found in the success of its graduates' career plans and continued education. Each year USAO recognizes a few alumni for outstanding achievements and inspiring public service by induction into the Hall of Fame or the Young Alumni Award.

3.B.4 The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

USAO is committed to providing an education that recognizes human and cultural diversity. USAO's Institutional Learning Goals articulate the importance of "civil dialogue," "unique individuals," "diversity of perspective," "empathy and appreciation for other ideas, cultures, and beliefs," and acting "as global citizens." Our general education program, the required Interdisciplinary Studies Core, establishes our commitment to diversity in the education we offer to all of our students. The core features several courses that specifically focus on human and cultural diversity (e.g. the 9 credit World Thought and Culture sequence -I, II, and III). These courses examine representative thought and expression of a number of world civilizations. Furthermore, they are team-taught, ensuring a diverse disciplinary perspective as well. As evidence of the results of USAO's focus on human and cultural diversity, our 2019 NSSE results reflect that 84% of responding seniors indicated their courses had often or very often included diverse perspectives in class discussions or writing assignments as compared to 49% in comparable Southwest Public Universities

and 62% at other schools in USAO's Carnegie Classification (Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus). Furthermore, USAO did better than our Southwest Public University and Carnegie Classification peers in several other diversity-related questions on the NSSE.

Some programs (e.g. History and Theatre Arts) directly address cultural diversity as key components of their discipline. One of the Psychology program's key components reflects an ethical and social responsibility in a diverse world and includes course offerings in sex and gender, human sexuality, personality, and abnormal psychology. Other programs, such as those in sciences, encounter diversity through societal impacts. Education programs include service learning and diversity surveys via the clinical experiences as part of their requirements. The education surveys include diversity information in different areas including: ethnicity, socioeconomic status, exceptionalities, neurodiversity, gender, school size, and grade level. The Kiowa Clemente course seeks to sustain the Kiowa language, culture, and history as part of its course outcomes.

In addition to curricular offerings, USAO supports centers and services that celebrate diversity. The Neill-Wint Center for Neurodiversity assists students with Autism Spectrum Disorder by providing specialized services for students in the program. Additional services such as peer mentors are provided to enrolled students. The recently created Dr. Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Center for Social Justice and Racial Healing builds meaningful and reciprocal relationships that address systemic problems inhibiting social justice. With an interdisciplinary approach that examines how people's needs and desires connect with the political, economic and social structures around them, the center combines community mentors, workshops and service-learning projects to give Oklahoma's youth the tools and guidance needed to lead positive social change. USAO secured a Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution (NASNTI) grant that has expanded our capacity to serve Native American and low-income students by enhancing classroom instruction through the use of technology.

3.B.5 The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

USAO is solely an undergraduate baccalaureate degree-granting institution. As such, the emphasis is on high quality undergraduate education. Faculty and student scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge are emphasized in that context. Numerous venues are available on and off campus to showcase faculty and student work, many of which are juried or competitive. Faculty are encouraged to involve undergraduate students in scholarship independently or through the mentored research program. The mentored research program has graduated some outstanding students with scholarly activity. Faculty members document their scholarly or creative activity in their annual reports.

Students may choose to participate in individual or group projects through Independent Study opportunities which offer varying interests of scholarship. For example, in 2015 a group of students enrolled in an Independent Study course that worked closely with artist-in-residence Jesus Moroles to design and construct the Coming Together Park on campus that features granite sculptures and gathering spaces.

In 2019, the university hosted its 14th Festival of Arts and Ideas. The goal of the festival is to celebrate the distinctive learning environment at USAO by presenting scholarly and creative work from the faculty, students, staff and alumni. The festival is a unique interdisciplinary conference featuring performances, lectures, discussions and exhibits that exemplify the interdisciplinary, liberal arts mission of the university. Recently, the Festival of Arts and Ideas merged with another event called the Student Showcase to further encourage student participation and to highlight areas of

scholarship alongside faculty.

Students' writing can be published in three on-campus publications that include The Trend, the student newspaper; The Drover Review, an annual journal of scholarly and essayistic student writing; and The Accent, a faculty-mentored publication of student artwork, photography, and poetry. Students present research findings annually in both regional and national conferences. Presentations at Research Day at the Capitol, Texas/Oklahoma Regional Undergraduate Symposium (TORUS), National Conference for Undergraduate Research (NCUR)

The USAO Regents annually recognize outstanding faculty achievement with awards for excellence in teaching, scholarly and creative activity, and service. Gladys Anderson Emerson Undergraduate Research honors a student who has best distinguished themselves in the field of academic research as an undergraduate and Minerva Awards honor students for excellence in academics, leadership, community service, campus involvement, diversity and many other areas. The Te Ata Creative Expression Award honors a USAO student who has best distinguished themselves in the arts and produced substantial creative work in the area of music, art, drama, or creative writing.

USAO students have had the opportunity to perform in the Oklahoma Music Educators Association (OKMEA) Intercollegiate Honor Band, Oklahoma Choral Directors Association Honor Band, annual recital performances, album releases and many other displays of talent. Art Wrecker Studio, open to the community and public, displays diverse, interdisciplinary and hybridized forms of art that reach outside of general conceptions of what art is and can be. The work presented ranges from performance, installation, interactive works, sound, video and mixed media exhibits setup and organized by students and art faculty.

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Argument

3.C.1 The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

As an undergraduate-only university, classes are not taught by teaching assistants without stake in student success or failure. Eighty-four percent (84%) of full-time faculty hold the terminal degree in their discipline. With a student- teacher ratio of 16:1, the majority of classes have fewer than 20 students. Faculty have an average of 10 years of teaching experience at USAO. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of first year (FY) students rated the quality of their interactions with faculty as "high" (NSSE). Fifty-four percent (54%) of FY students and 81% of seniors said instructors gave prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments (NSSE).

Currently, 78% of full-time faculty are tenured or tenure track and provide continuity to the institution. As of 9/27/2019:

> The student to full-time faculty ratio is 16:1
> Of 50 full-time faculty, 39 are tenured/tenure track- 78%
> Of 50 faculty, 42 have a terminal degree- 84%
> 39 adjunct faculty generate only 114.5 load hours (2.9 hours per adjunct - fall 2019 semester)
> The 39 adjunct faculty average only 2.9 load hours each (fall 2019 semester)
> The 39 adjunct faculty include instructors for music lessons and student teacher supervisors
> [Faculty characteristics 2019-2020]
> Minimum faculty qualifications are reported on each faculty member. These are reviewed by the VPAA and the President.

Faculty are heavily involved in most committees, which drive the academic process as demonstrated by the following:
Academic Policies and Procedures Committee creates a forum for the faculty to collaborate with academic administration to develop a comprehensive set of academic policies and procedures. This charge outlines the goals of the committee and its membership. Membership includes one Division Chair, one (faculty) representative from each division, Faculty Association President, the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), and Registrar or designee.

Academic Strategic Planning Committee is responsible for the development and continual evaluation of the academic priorities at USAO. The committee plays a pivotal role during the strategic planning process, gathering stakeholder input to develop and refine the academic strategic goals, measurable outcomes, and implementation plan. The committee reviews benchmarks and provides an adaptable approach in meeting the strategic goals. The committee offers input into the allocation of resources to support the academic strategic plan. Membership includes one faculty member from each academic division nominated by the Faculty Association (FA), FA President, FA President-Elect/Treasurer, all Division Chairs, IDS Director, and the VPAA.

"USAO is an institution whose primary concern is for excellence in teaching and thus is committed to improving the quality of the learning process. To achieve this goal, USAO has a student assessment program designed to measure student progress, throughout the undergraduate experience" (2019-20 Course Catalog, page 21). Senior exit exams provide feedback about the quality of academic programs. The Assessment Committee, chaired by the Director of Assessment, guides the process and procedures for implementing and evaluating assessment on campus. This includes implementation of the comprehensive plan for the development, collection, evaluation, and dissemination of assessment results. The Assessment Committee is made up of four Working Subcommittees and an Advisory Committee. The chair of each Working Subcommittee sits on the Assessment Advisory Committee along with the VPAA, Director of Assessment, and Assessment Coordinator. The VPAA and Assessment Coordinator also serve on all four Working Subcommittees. The Assessment Advisory committee provides oversight, identifies needs, and develops policies regarding institution-wide assessment to strengthen the university and enhance its accountability. The committee provides support, workshops, and consultation with faculty regarding learning outcomes assessment, promotes campus discussion and reflection on assessment results, and provides feedback to ensure assessment data is used to inform decisions.

Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) Committee oversees development, assessment, implementation, and review of the IDS core curriculum. Membership includes the VPAA, the Director of IDS, the Vice President of Business and Finances, and at least one faculty from each division nominated by the President.

Institutional Research supports the University's mission by using official and normative reporting standards to provide accurate and clearly-defined information about the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma to a variety of stakeholders; monitoring, documenting, and disseminating standard data definitions; and building campus understanding of responsible data use. These include IPEDS, state reporting, surveys such as Kiplinger, National Student Clearinghouse National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS), and Student Achievement Measures (SAM).

Another form of assessment is program reviews. Program Review is a systematic way to assess the quality of USAO's academic programs and determine ways to improve the quality of education, scholarship, and service. The purpose is to assure the faculty and administration provide high quality professional undergraduate programs for students and to identify opportunities for improvement in

each program.

Faculty Association of USAO is composed of all faculty members and professional librarians. Through established procedures, the FA recommends policies and procedures in all matters of an academic nature and in all matters affecting faculty welfare. Faculty members participate in decisions concerning curriculum, faculty appointments, reappointments, promotions, and tenure. Faculty are involved further in decision-making through membership on University Committees, Standing Committees, and FA Committees.

Officers of the Association are President, President-Elect/Treasurer, and Secretary and are elected annually by faculty members who hold full-time appointments. The President of the Faculty Association, in consultation with the other FA officers, appoints the members and chairs of FA committees.

The committees for Curriculum, Resources, and Faculty Handbook include at least one member from each academic division and submit their recommendations to the FA for consideration. The FA submits its recommendations directly to the VPAA for consideration.

The functions and procedures of the Curriculum Development committee are to receive, review, evaluate, initiate, and recommend to the Faculty Association regarding the development of, or changes in, courses or curricula. Membership requires one faculty per division and one faculty at large. All members of this committee should have completed at least three years as a full-time member of the faculty at USAO.

As described in criterion 3.A.1, USAO's policies for curriculum changes include extensive faculty involvement for all courses and programs. Customized curriculum change forms that mandate faculty involvement also include the step by step process. All curriculum changes require a five day digital forum for questions and discussion of the proposed curriculum change. Personnel are notified by e-mail about the forum. After the forum, course and program changes are voted on by division faculty, teacher education (if appropriate), the faculty association curriculum committee, and the faculty association before proceeding to the VPAA, the President, and the USAO Board of Regents. Upon approval, the President submits the change to the Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education (OSRHE) for review and approval where applicable. Once the necessary approvals have been received, Academic Affairs makes the necessary arrangements to ensure the course catalog, student information system, and other relevant documents (e.g. degree checksheets) are updated accordingly.

3.C.2 All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

USAO has a strong teaching faculty, properly credentialed to teach, design curricula, and provide oversight for student learning and assessment. Full-time faculty are hired according to the guidelines in the Faculty Handbook, which details the qualifications for hiring, rank, promotion and tenure.

In addition, USAO's faculty qualification process further specifies proper credentials. In accordance with updated HLC guidelines on faculty qualification, USAO implemented a new procedure for credentialing faculty. In general, most instructors at USAO are credentialed through a degree or credential at least one step higher than the students they teach. In some cases, equivalent experience is used in accordance with USAO's faculty qualification policy to credential instructors. The Minimum Faculty Qualification form is completed by all instructors. The same criteria are utilized for the institution's concurrent enrollment program with area high schools. An audit of

faculty credentials via Weave Education software provides a report indicating compliance. A few faculty met the qualifications via tested experience rather than through a degree as noted on their qualification form. A finalized report will be available before the site visit.

3.C.3 Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

As described in the faculty handbook, all full-time faculty members are evaluated annually. Faculty complete an annual report of their performance consistent with faculty responsibilities and ethics. The report includes student evaluations from all courses taught. Faculty members have access to their student evaluations after the grade submission period for that semester closes, allowing faculty to refine their courses based on recent student feedback. The Division Chair discusses the annual report with the faculty member before submitting an administrative review to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Though part-time and adjunct faculty are not required to submit annual reports, some do so using an abbreviated annual report template. In either case, Division Chairs use student evaluations to assess the performance of part-time and adjunct faculty. Division chairs are responsible for approving adjunct faculty appointments.

Division Chairs also submit annual reports and faculty are requested to submit an evaluation of their Division Chair to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Vice President of Academic Affairs meets with each Division Chair and completes an administrative review of their performance as a faculty member and Division Chair.

Annual reports serve as the primary source of evidence for tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review. The criteria and processes for tenure, rank and promotion, post-tenure review, and abrogation of tenure and non-reappointment of faculty are detailed in the faculty handbook.

3.C.4 The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

Through its prompt interlibrary services and subscriptions to a variety of up-to- date electronic professional databases and printed publications, USAO's Nash library helps the faculty remain current in their disciplines and abreast on the developments, advancements, and innovations in related fields of study. More details concerning Nash Library resources are provided in 3.D.4.

USAO provides faculty with opportunities for professional development. Faculty members may request funding from departmental funds or dedicated foundation professional development funds to attend conferences, workshops, etc. They may also request funding from the Gladys Anderson Emerson Research fund. Professional development is offered on campus for things such as instructional technology resources for faculty including MyUSAO, Canvas, Portfolium, as well as training on technology upgrades within classrooms. Annual symposia focus on the liberal arts and civic engagement.

As noted in 3.C.3, USAO requires all regular instructors to be evaluated annually. Student evaluations are required each semester for each course. Thus, on an annual basis, all faculty are provided with opportunities for feedback in all three major areas of faculty performance teaching, professional development/scholarly activity, and service. Each faculty member is provided with a written evaluation, and meets with their division chair to discuss areas of strength and areas of potential improvement.

3.C.5 Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

As a solely undergraduate institution, USAO emphasizes instructor accessibility. The faculty handbook specifically requires instructor accessibility under the section on faculty responsibilities and ethics. Instructors are required to "maintain a schedule of office hours for student conferences, which is to be posted and filed with the Vice President for Academic Affairs." Full-time faculty are required to keep a minimum of eight office hours per week during the fall and spring semesters. Part-time and adjunct faculty are also required to keep a prorated number of office hours based on the courses they are teaching. Faculty who teach during the summer are required to maintain office hours in proportion to the number of courses they are teaching. To document office hours, faculty submit faculty schedule cards that are designed using course meeting times. Faculty schedule cards are completed by faculty and collected at the beginning of each semester, office hours are verified and approved by division chairs, and the schedule cards are then forwarded to Academic Affairs. Schedule cards are also posted outside of each faculty member's office and are also frequently distributed to students via USAO's course management system, Canvas. Furthermore, the faculty handbook includes general guidelines for instructor availability including, "cultivate a sympathetic interest in the scholastic welfare of students and encourage student scholarship and achievement" and "be available as necessary five days a week during business hours to fulfill teaching, advising, and service responsibilities." These clearly specified instructor responsibilities allow USAO to exercise appropriate oversight over instructor availability.

Instructor availability is assessed in part through student evaluations. Student evaluations for all courses include a question on faculty availability. Student responses from these evaluations are reviewed both by the instructor and division chair as part of the annual report and administrative review process as detailed in the faculty handbook. Based on a score of five for a response of the "instructor was almost always available" and decreasing incrementally to a score of one for the "instructor was never available" response, with "I never checked" responses not included in the average, the average score for instructors at USAO between the spring of 2016 through the spring of 2019 was 4.24 out of a maximum possible score of five. A graph of the average score for each semester best displays the results. During this time period, the lowest score reported was 4.13 (higher than "usually available") and the maximum score was 4.4, indicating students are quite satisfied with instructor availability.

Finally, if an instructor is absent and misses class or office hours, they complete an absence from campus form and submit it to their division chair for approval. The division chair evaluates the absence and copies are sent to the instructor, division chair, and Academic Affairs. This provides documentation of known absences during the annual report and administrative review process if instructor availability is a concern. The absence from campus form is also utilized for tracking sick leave for instructors.

3.C.6 Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

The student support services staff at the university are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development. Every position has a specific job description which gives the duties, expectations and qualifications for the position. The qualifications, including experience and education, vary depending on the type of work performed in the position. Applications for full-time positions are completed on-line. After the closing date, all applications are processed and reviewed by

a screening committee to ensure that they meet the position minimum qualifications. The committee holds interviews and forwards the suitable candidates to the hiring supervisor. Every effort is made to have the best qualified candidates and promote diversity.

USAO's Student Success Center (SSC) offers academic support and tutoring. Specifics on how this program supports students are outlined in detail within section 3D. The SSC consists of four professional staff positions including: Program Director, Center Coordinator/Grant Activities Director, Success Coach, and an administrative assistant. The SSC Director and Coordinator both attend an annual national conference each year on a rotating basis (National Association of Academic Advising or Ruffalo-Noel Levitz National Conference for Enrollment and Student Success), as well as many regional conferences (Oklahoma Association of Academic Advising and Assesstivus, Co-Requisite State Academy, campus professional development opportunities (Title IX Training, Autism Spectrum Series, LGBTQI Inclusivity Training, CANVAS and Jenzabar Trainings) and various webinars available throughout each year. The Success Coach was a new position in 2019 and will utilize various approaches for professionally developing the position including participating in NACADA's developed academic advisement curriculm via eTutorial module courses.

Tutors/Mentors are current students who have been successful in their areas of study. Current staffing for these positions are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported. Each hire is required to submit 2-3 faculty referrals and go through a formal interview process. On average, there are 35 student positions within the Student Success Center, as Peer Academic Leader/Mentors, Interdisciplinary Studies Tutors, Writing Tutors, or Math/Science Tutors. Tutors are embedded in a specific course and are required to attend, take notes, and hold weekly study sessions. Tutors must have previously completed the course they are assigned to and earned an A or B in that course. Tutors work closely with faculty to be of academic support to students in the courses. Writing Tutors are provided 10 hours of professional development under an English faculty member designed to address any current need of the writing center. The SSC Director and Coordinator work together to outline the annual training opportunities, revise the SSC Training Guide, annual Training Day presentations and review qualifications for the positions.

The Student Success Center also aids and supports the faculty advisement model which is discussed in detail in 3.D.3.

Financial aid staff consists of Dean of Enrollment Management, Associate Director, and two Specialists. The four financial aid staff members have over 52 years of experience in financial aid. At this time, they have seven NASFAA Credentials, are members of the Oklahoma Association of Financial Aid Administrators, Southwest Association of Financial Aid Administrators, and the National Association of Financial Aid Administrators. The university is supportive in the department attending yearly conferences and trainings offered by the associations previously mentioned, the State Regents, and Federal Government. Through the years, they have held an office in all of these associations and served on many committees. Current staffing for these positions are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported.

Student Services supports co-curricular activities on campus. Staff members are appropriately qualified and trained by meeting the qualifications of each position and regularly attending professional development opportunities, such as Oklahoma College Student Personnel Association (OSCPA), National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), Southwest Association of College and University Housing Officers (SWACUHO). Title IX officers hold the necessary certifications and attend trainings and conferences annually. The University Counselor

maintains the annual L.P.C. requirements of continuing education credits and professional development. USAO offers nearly thirty clubs and organizations students can become a part of, with a mixture of Greek, academic, religious, special interest, and USAO sponsored groups including a variety of intramural sports during each term.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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

Argument

3.D.1 The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

The University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma is committed to providing support for student learning through various services and initiatives, as stated specifically within its Mission and Objectives. In fall of 2018, USAO reviewed the various student populations attracted by the institution: high-quality students, many from traditionally underrepresented groups, including a growing number of Native American students. Admittedly, the institution is not immune to the weakness of the broader educational system in Oklahoma. Preparing students for college is a state-wide problem. Oklahoma consistently ranks among the lowest five states in spending per student in public education (NCES, 2011). Many students come unprepared for the rigors of a college curriculum. The institution previously recognized the need of additional resources to help these students persist and graduate. In 2015, committed to enhancing student achievement, USAO received a Title III grant from the U.S. DoE, under the Strengthening Institutions Program. Support services have been enhanced and expanded to help under-prepared students navigate the demands of university rigor. Support services are provided by numerous areas and departments including the Drover Achievement Program (DAP), Student Success Center (SSC), Student Services, Study Abroad, various learning spaces, and financial support.

University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma
Fall 2018 Student Profile

Headcount	Number	Percentage of Total
Total Headcount	854	100%
Part-time	78	9%
Economic Disadvantage	454	53%

Female	573	67%
Minority (all)	381	45%
Native American	134	16%
In-state/Oklahoma HS Graduates	712	83%
Degree Seeking	832	97%
ACT Scores (Average)	22.49	--
Residential	459	54%

Typical support services are described at length in the course catalog. However, it is important to highlight a few support services that have been enhanced to help meet the needs of our student population. The university Strategic Plan, along with specific student experience planning, provides current goals to meet the needs of the student population.

Admissions: Drover Achievement Program

The Admissions Office has two admission criteria that offer assistance to prospective students who may not meet the standard admission criteria, but have potential for success. Students who fall under Right-To-Try or Holistic admission requirements are required to participate in the Drover Achievement Program (DAP). The Drover Achievement Program is designed to provide additional support for the transition to college. Students within the DAP have one-on-one biweekly coaching meetings with a professional member of the Student Success Team to ensure that students are on track for a successful first year of college. The DAP cohort works closely with student mentors, under close supervision of professional staff. In addition, DAP students are reviewed at the end of the fall term for satisfactory academic progress (SAP). Those students who fall under the minimum requirements for SAP are required to enroll in the College Achievement and Learning Management (CALM) course in the spring term of their freshman year, in addition to continued coaching meetings with the Student Success Team.

Student Success Center (SSC)

The Student Success Center (SSC) offers several valuable resources for USAO students. The SSC promotes academic engagement and success by offering tutoring centers in the areas of math and science, writing, interdisciplinary studies (IDS) courses and peer academic leadership (PAL) mentoring. Students can utilize one-on-one tutoring, small group tutoring, specific course tutoring workshops, and productivity events. These tutoring services are available to all interested students at no additional costs. The SSC offers academic support courses and workshops. The SSC Coordinator and Success Coach provide special population support in the form of extra assistance for exploratory, at-risk, and probationary students. The SSC staff monitor the early alert warning system and assist students in the development of time management skills, study habits, and note-taking techniques, as well as offer guidance in examining post-graduate programs and career exploration.

Neill-Wint Center for Neurodiversity

Earning USAO a spot in the "30 Best Small Colleges for Students on the Autism Spectrum", the Neill-Wint Center for Neurodiversity assists students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the transition to college life and helps ensure post-secondary success. The program focuses on a collaborative model promoting the development of self-advocacy and independent living skills to

encourage strong academic and social progress. Varying levels of academic, social and residential support aid students in meeting their personal and professional goals.

Student Services

Student Services is dedicated to helping students accomplish academic and personal goals. Student Services is continually evolving to complement academic programs and enhance the educational experience. The Student Handbook compiles and publishes information vital to students and answers questions about university life, including the student code of conduct, the academic code of conduct, grievance procedures, the drug and alcohol policy, sexual misconduct, discrimination and harassment policy, the hazing policy, the tobacco policy, and other policies and procedures. In 2015, with commitment to provide an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sex, the university implemented EVERFI program for students, staff, and faculty to complete and comprehend the concerns relating to discrimination, which includes sexual misconduct. In addition, the university also implemented AlcoholEDU program for all students to gain knowledge on the risks associated with drug and alcohol usage. Counseling services have been increased to demand.

Facilities and Learning Spaces

Nash Library provides equitable and open access to information in a variety of formats and provides teaching and learning support for students, faculty and staff. Nash Library promotes information literacy, resources, and spaces to support intellectual endeavors of all users: individual and group study spaces, as well as informational technology, research tools, traditional library collections, electronic resources, wireless networks, a pocket music library, and a hands-on maker space. A 24-hour computer lab is accessible for all students, and a furnished lounge for commuter students. Austin Hall is home to the majority of science laboratories on campus. The Art Annex and Music Annex were both established to provide majors within the program state of the art technology and space to develop their craft. Due to an increase demand for on campus housing, USAO opened a Robertson's Hall in 2018. Robertson includes suite-styles rooms, kitchenettes on every floor, as well as large common areas for student gathering. Students in campus housing are required to attend mandatory informational meetings that cover housing regulations and new developments. The university also opened a coffee shop to provide another avenue for students to casually socialize or study.

International Students and Study Abroad

In 2016, the university introduced a comprehensive International Student Handbook, which contains important information intended to help international students acclimate to USAO and life in Chickasha, Oklahoma as well as maintain immigration status.
USAO has expanded Study Abroad offerings and opportunities to the student population. USAO has been an affiliate with the Study Abroad Association and has organized multiple study abroad offerings each year. In 2019, a new immersive study abroad program in Italy began and is open to all USAO students, as well as students from other institutions and the general public. The program consists of multi-level, multimedia courses in visual arts, humanities, and sciences at the International Center for the Arts (ICA). USAO promotes opportunities through the Fund for Education Abroad to help our students gain financial access to experience the world as a key part of their educational experience.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

USAO provides support for student learning by offering scholarships based on a student's academic performance in high school and/or college. Scholarships may be renewed. Last year, the USAO Financial Aid office provided more than $4,536,000 dollars to students via tuition waivers, athletic scholarships, foundation scholarships, alumni scholarships, room & board waivers, and the Fast Track Scholarship. Full scholarship and financial assistance opportunities are available within the course catalog or university website. In relation to our specific student body, it is worth highlighting the innovative Fast Track scholarship program available for ambitious Oklahoma students to finish their studies in three years. This program aids USAO in the fulfillment of an Objective aligned with the university Mission "to operate on a flexible trimester plan which will permit some students to complete a baccalaureate degree in three years and allow all students to progress in their academic programs at a rate which they desire."

3.D.2 The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

Admissions

Admissions criteria and processes ensure entering students meet the standards for academic success and determine student placements. High school graduates must have completed a core of courses required by OSRHE, meet GPA requirements, and take the ACT or SAT. A limited number who do not satisfy all requirements may be conditionally admitted within the Drover Achievement Program (DAP), which provides access to enhanced academic support, interventions, and a mentoring program designed to assist first-year students making the transition to college both academically and socially. As outlined in 3.D.1, additional support for these student is offered through various opportunities and requires regular meetings with an academic support professional in the Student Success Center.

Advising and Registration

To be placed in college level math, science and composition courses without remediation, students must meet a minimum subject matter score on the ACT (19). Students who score below the minimum subject requirement take a university placement test in order to determine which math, science or composition course the student will be placed in. The remediation instructor may make an additional recommendation for placement based on an in-class diagnostic the first week of the semester.

Students placed in a remedial course also enroll in the college level co-requisite course. The Complete College America co-requisite initiative allows the opportunity to gain experience with college-level coursework and make progress towards completion/graduation while receiving enhanced academic support through the remedial course for students who demonstrate a need in those areas.

USAO offers a New Student Orientation before the fall semester begins. During orientation, students and parents learn about campus services, extracurricular activities, community life, academic resources, and have the opportunity to meet with an advisor to review their schedule and make any necessary changes.

Upon admission, each student meets one-on-one with their advisor. USAO employs a faculty-advisor model. All new students are assigned a faculty member within their selected major as an advisor. All advisors and students have access to degree progress audits and degree checksheets. National

Academic Advising Association highlights "faculty advisors are able to not only guide students through increasing knowledge and developing skill in their respective academic disciplines; but faculty advisors hold unique positions in which they are able to guide students in developing overall educational and career plans" (White & Schulenberg, 2012). Many departments offer program specific advising aids to assist students towards degree completion (Music, Teacher Education, Art, Speech-Language Pathology).

The Student Success Coordinator is the assigned advisor for all undeclared students. Each undeclared student completes an Undeclared Intake Packet to facilitate major exploration and course placement conversations. The initial advising sessions for all incoming students focus on answering questions, introducing campus resources, and preparing students to begin classes. Incoming students are provided an Academic Advising Syllabus that goes over expectations for the advisee and advisor, along with key milestone conversations to initiate each semester along the path to graduation. The SSC provides specific course support with embedded tutoring within IDS courses. Tutors sit-in during class, take notes, and offer weekly individual tutoring sessions and guided group study sessions. All students also have access to writing, math, and science tutors. Utilization numbers for the SSC for the 2018-2019 academic year indicate a high level of student engagement with services.

3.D.3 The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

USAO is committed to the continual improvement of student advisement. While students indicate they are satisfied with past and current advisement processes, the institution has pro-actively engaged in some opportunities to enhance the current model. An Academic Advisement Committee was created in 2017 with a charge to review, explore, and research advisement processes and initiate improved strategies for implementation. Two of the initial strategies were the creation of a university Advisement Handbook and an Advisement Syllabus. The Advisement Handbook will act as a point of reference for the various processes, policies, and practices for advisors. The Advisement Syllabus acts as a guide for students with the expectation of the advising relationship, process, and milestone conversations to have at various points towards degree completion. Advisors have the opportunity to attend professional development opportunities: New Faculty Orientation, MyUSAO Advisement Training Sessions, Oklahoma Academic Advising Association Conferences, and National Academic Advising Association Conferences.

Noticing a trend that most new freshman bring a parent to attend the first enrollment session, in 2019, the Admissions Office coordinated a Saturday enrollment day for new freshman to make the initial advisement appointment more suited to their needs.

As mentioned in 3.D.2, USAO utilizes a faculty driven advising model. Students are assigned a faculty advisor based on major. Additional advisors are assigned for students with multiple majors or a minor. The Student Success Center also enhances advising through supplemental programming and additional advising opportunities. Undecided students are assigned a professional advisor from the SSC and are guided to a choice of major through a detailed intake process and career exploration program. Faculty advisors volunteer to meet with undecided students who show an interest in their program, as well as Division Chairs, who are responsible for advising when a program faculty advisor may be unavailable.

Students with designated majors get the benefit of having a program faculty as their advisor. Program faculty have an intimate understanding of the course requirements, rotations, and offerings, and the expertise in the field to offer guidance within the program and field after graduation. Each program

has a unique set of requirements and faculty advisors are able to emphasize those nuances to their advisees within their program. For example, the Music program distributes their own program specific handbook and milestone checklist, Art developed portfolio requirements, Teacher Education and Speech-Language Pathology have fully detailed program handbooks.

In order to better serve students, in the fall of 2018, USAO rolled out a newly implemented Student Information System (Jenzabar) and campus solution portal (JICS/MyUSAO) to provide additional academic support and guidance towards degree completion. The degree audit program runs an Advising Worksheet Report that checks for student progress towards university requirements and program specific requirements: courses and credit hours earned that apply towards degree, catalog requirements for selected majors and minors, free electives, and cumulative GPA. This technology helps advisors and students by allowing both parties to access information pertaining to a student's path to graduation.

USAO has actively promoted Complete College America's "15 to Finish" initiative encouraging advisors to review and consider the literature on improving the likelihood of completion by maintaining an average of 15 credit hours. USAO employs a flat-rate tuition for students enrolled in 12-18 hours, which encourages students to take more than 12 hours each semester and graduate sooner and spending less to earn their degree.

3.D.4 The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Nash Library
Nash Library includes traditional print and electronic resources, digital scholarship lab, 24/7 computer lab, commuter student lounge, dedicated music library, maker space, and university museum/teaching museum. Nash Library's resources include, but are not limited to, approximately 90,000 volumes, both physical and electronic, interlibrary loans, electronic databases, and electronic reserve capabilities all intended to enhance and support student learning. Nash Library also houses the Student Success Center, study spaces, printers, copiers, scanners, and university's archives. The library offers internships to students for practical experience in basic archival concepts.

WiFi
As research and communication skills are key within the Institutional Learning Goals (ILG), efficient internet access for faculty and students is a necessity. In 2018, survey results indicated that students were not satisfied with internet speed and connectivity. As a result, the institution invested in enhancing technological infrastructure with a full site-survey of the campus's existing WiFi quantity and coverage. The solution was a two prong approach: 1) increase the number of wireless access points, and 2) upgrade the campus's internal bandwidth to support 10-Gigabit instead of 1-Gigabit connectivity. To date, over 500 wireless access points have been installed along with an upgraded internal fiber-optic backbone to support 10-Gigabit connectivity. Additionally, external bandwidth was upgraded to 10-Gigabit, through OneNet/OSRHE, to support the growing demand for data. Student Satisfaction Survey will be administered in later this year and findings will "close the loop" to confirm if students are more satisfied with their internet experience since these improvements have been installed across campus.

NASNTI
The university identified opportunities needed to support effective teaching. In 2017, USAO was

awarded a five-year, $1.7 million grant from the NASNTI program. The program allows non-tribal higher education institutions to improve and expand their capacity to serve Native American and low-income individuals through grants and related assistance. With more than 45 percent of USAO's student body classified as "high-need", the NASNTI program has allowed the university to invest in technology that provides an infrastructure to support teaching effectiveness and accommodate individual learning styles. To date, USAO has updated technology-assisted teaching effectiveness by providing professional development training opportunities to educate faculty in technology enhanced instruction through lecture capture, recorded demonstration, and student-centered active learning methods/flipped classroom and CANVAS learning management system.

One of the grant activities provided faculty with the opportunity to apply for university mini-grants requesting specific technology to assist with curriculum design. Since 2017, 12 faculty mini-grants have been funded for the enhancement of effective teaching resources. Speech-Language Pathology added equipment for information and technology in the area of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) to meet the needs of potential verbally limited clients. Resources were added to the music department with the goal to enhance classroom technology and enable current trends in teaching to be utilized and modeled. A bat-detecting device, Echometer Touch 2, provided the Biology department with technology that enhances lab and research experiences by allowing students to record biological activity via echolocation calls.

Science Facilities and Laboratories
Austin Hall houses science laboratories and faculty offices. The USAO Natural History Museum includes mollusk and snail collections and a herbarium to thousands of specimens. Science laboratories are outfitted with standard equipment (centrifuges, incubators, microscopes, optics tracks, etc.) and safety features (fume hoods, safety showers, etc.). Biology has laboratories for molecular biology (e.g., Cellular & Molecular Biology, Genetics, Microbiology, Biochemistry), organismal biology (e.g. Anatomy, Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy, Physiology, Survey of Organisms), and Foundations of Science Lab. Chemistry has laboratories for inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry, and instrumental and analytic chemistry which houses advanced equipment commonly used by industry or governmental labs. Physics has a dedicated laboratory for both general and advanced labs.

Habitat Area and others
In addition to the standard laboratory facilities and equipment, students and faculty have access to a variety of unique resources including the 145-acre habitat area located three miles west of campus, which includes two ponds, an outdoor classroom, and a small observatory. The observatory dome houses an eight-inch diffraction-limited computerized Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope and a CCD camera. A demonstration energy laboratory is located just south of Austin Hall and includes a 1,000-Watt wind turbine, tanks and equipment for the creation of biofuels. Students and faculty access High Performance Computing (HPC) resources through the University of Oklahoma's Supercomputing Center for Education and Research (OSCER).

Education Program Facilities
The Child Development Center educates children from the surrounding area in a preschool setting for kindergarten readiness skills, while allowing early childhood majors the opportunity to teach, meet parents, and assess learning. Students in the speech-language pathology (SLP) program work directly with clients on communication disorders, perform comprehensive speech/language evaluations, and provide treatment under the direct supervision of two speech-language pathologists certified by the American Speech-language-Hearing Association (ASHA). The John A. Morris

Speech and Language Clinic on campus provides a practicum site and serves clients from the surrounding area. Children from the Jane Brooks School for the Deaf and USAO's Child Development Center also utilize the clinic. USAO partners with the the Oklahoma School for the Deaf to offer two satellite classes through the Jane Brooks School for the Deaf: pre-kindergarten/kindergarten and first/second grade classes are available for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Deaf Education students benefit from experiential learning opportunities from this collaboration.

Music
Music facilities include six offices, two major teaching classrooms, a music pocket library, four performing spaces, six practice rooms, one recording studio, one computer lab, and student lounge. These spaces are outfitted with appropriate teaching tools and resources. The Music Annex provides hearing-health conscious rehearsal spaces for ensemble rehearsals, students recitals, performances, and auditions. The piano room has recently added 14 student pianos and additional teaching technologies. Recently upgraded technology in the music theory classroom includes pedagogical tools and digital resources funded by a NASNTI mini-grant. A $28,000 grant from the Chickasha Community Foundation funded the purchase of a new marimba and a steel drum band, ideal teaching tools for students planning to teach.

Theatre Arts
Theatre facilities include three faculty offices, a work-study office, theatre lecture room, Davis Hall Little Theatre, and one external storage space. Recently, facilities received major upgrades to lighting along with numerous technical issues that have also been addressed. Te Ata Memorial Auditorium rigging system is currently being upgraded, allowing the university to host a broader range of cultural opportunities for students and the community. There are additional planned renovations to the Davis Hall Little Theatre and Te Ata Memorial Auditorium to enhance the performance-oriented educational experience.

Art
Art spaces include four major classrooms/studios, a photo and light room, five faculty offices, a student lounge, a computer lab/teaching space, an art annex that includes space for pottery, sculpture, installation art, and conceptual art, professional space within Nesbit Art Gallery, as well as a studio space downtown, Art Wrecker. Major upgrades to the third floor gallery provide a museum-like experience for student and faculty art shows and exhibits. The painting studio has newly built student work spaces providing a more efficient learning environment for the students.

Outdoor Lighting for Baseball, Softball, and Soccer Fields
In 2018, lights were installed for the baseball, softball, and soccer fields. Prior to light installation, student athletes, often had practice and games scheduled in the afternoon. This created two major issues for these students: 1) in-season absences 2) limited course options. With the addition of field lighting, student athletes are now able to limit absences and able to enroll in late afternoon courses, which has increased scheduling options.

3.D.5 The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

As part of the core curriculum, Senior Seminar or Mentored Research is required of all students. Senior Seminar is a faculty-guided, independent project that provides a capstone experience and includes researching information resources. As a synthesis of the interdisciplinary program, students must compose a well-developed research paper or a formal project.

Mentored Research is an alternative course of study that satisfies the requirement of Senior Seminar. This includes an advanced experience in research and presentation methods that results in a research project suitable for conference and/or publication. In order to be accepted into the program, students must have completed a research-based course relevant to the projects' field or a recommendation from a professor familiar with the student's research experience affirming their preparedness for the large-scaled project.

Several programs also require effective use of research and information resources within course curriculum. For example, Biology, Chemistry, Natural Science, Physics, and Pre-professional programs all require various lab components, research courses, or scientific writing courses. Psychology, Sociology, and History require a research methodology course specific to each field. A few examples of program reviews include indicators that point towards successful implementation of research preparation are: Biology, Physics, Psychology, and History.

The library promotes information literacy by providing services such as reference help for students seeking research guidance. The librarians suggest specific library databases through EBSCO or other resources through their physical collection. Nash Library offers several library instruction courses. These classes help students define research as it applies to their assignment or discipline, and students examine information from various appropriate database sources.

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3.E - Core Component 3.E

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

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

Argument

3.E.1 Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

The enrichment of educational environments is guided by the institution's mission, goals and resources. Educational endeavors include opportunities for student involvement in the development of the whole-person. Participation and leadership in campus activities, honor societies, community service, leadership development programming, mentoring, athletic, campus clubs, nationally affiliated organizations, and scholarly symposia series are a few of the options available to students. These opportunities offer a broad range of co-curricular activities for students with the intention to enhance students' experience toward success.

In 2018, an Assessment subcommittee, the Learning Environment (LE) Team, developed a plan towards the assessment of co-curricular learning. This process included establishing goals and learning outcomes that are essential components of the educational experience that speak to what graduates will know and be able to do upon completion of their degree. The team has identified existing co-curricular opportunities and begun to map out specific event outcomes to the designated LE learning objectives and to the institutional learning goals. This process helped the team focus on the alignment of co-curricular programming.

Student Services organizes engagement opportunities for students. Student Services encourages and supports the thriving of student organizations to serve as valuable educational and social functions by offering students the opportunity to join together in governmental, cultural, political and/or special interest groups. Opportunities within student organizations allow students to serve in leadership roles and contribute to the diversity of activities and perspectives on campus, enriching the overall academic environment. Student Services coordinates a large community outreach day, Drover Difference Day, a day of community service that allows students, faculty, staff, and alumni to make an impact throughout the larger Chickasha community through volunteer opportunities. Each year, over 200 participants volunteer, reflect on their service experiences on what they learned through the experience.

The mission of Intramural Sports is to provide the USAO community with the opportunity to participate in programs that promote an active and healthy lifestyle, sportsmanship and opportunities for development. The Intramural Sports Program is designed to offer various activities, tournaments and special events throughout the year to serve a diverse student body, faculty, and staff.

3.E.2 The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

The University mission statement emphasizes that the education received at USAO aims to "help students realize meaningful, purposeful and productive lives". This claim is investigated through a dedicated assessment sub-committee as mentioned in 4.B.2, the Meaningful Life (ML) Team. The ML Team developed a process to assess post graduation outcomes. This process included establishing goals and learning outcomes that speak towards life after graduation. The team begun to map out specific event outcomes to the designated ML learning objectives and to the institutional learning goals. While, graduates successfully move on to graduate programs and/or find a job placement, the ML team is in the process of developing an updated alumni survey with the aim of data collection in fall 2020.

USAO demonstrates commitment to helping students develop a life of purpose by providing rigorous instruction for disciplinary proficiency, engagement within scholarly dialogue, application of communication of ideas, and development towards civic engagement. USAO demonstrates its commitment to helping students develop a life of meaning by providing guidance towards life planning, an enriched environment that promotes diversity and tolerance, opportunities to exhibit personal scholarship and develop integrity and leadership skills.

Opportunities for on-campus publications include the student newspaper, The Trend, and The Drover Review, an annual journal of scholarly and essayistic student writing. In keeping with the University's interdisciplinary spirit, these avenues for publication promote writing from a range of disciplinary emphases and provide applied experiences for students interested in further developing scholarly writing and literary skills.

Students expand on their leadership skills by providing programs, scholarship opportunities, and the USAO Student Leadership Conference. Students are also encouraged to attend annual campus symposia like the Ray, Mary and Nita Giles Symposium on Citizenship and Public Service, and the Emerson-Wier Liberal Arts Symposium. Students also attend the Davis-Waldorf Performing Arts Series and contemplate art at the Nesbitt Gallery.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma documents that courses and programs are current through an effective and thorough Program Review process. The IDS Core Curriculum is appropriate and comprehensive for the university's liberal arts mission. Qualifications, processes, resources, and services assure the students are served at a high level.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

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

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

Argument

4.A.1 The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

Faculty, divisions/departments, the University, and the University's governing board demonstrate responsibility for quality and rigor of educational programs. USAO performs regular program reviews according to Oklahoma State Regents' Policy Handbook. OSRHE require periodic internal and external reviews of educational programs offered by Oklahoma academic institutions. These reviews are specifically designed to ensure currency, rigor, and quality of programs and course offerings. These reviews include information about the demographics of the program, student academic performance, and changes made to the program. Additional departmental reviews are completed at the discretion of the division during non-review years. Program reviews are provided to OSRHE in accordance with set procedures for new programs, program reviews, executive program reviews, and program changes. Programs are tracked and changes are logged by the OSRHE system. The program review template ensures a thorough review including data and discussion of: centrality to the institution's mission, objectives and goals, minimum productivity indicators, faculty

credentials, student outcomes, and institutional program recommendations. Program faculty and division chairs complete the review and submit it to the VPAA to complete an executive summary for before being sent to OSRHE for the approval process. OSRHE requires low-productivity reports for any academic program that fails to meet five-year average minimum requirement for graduates or headcount. For example, in 2018 the Deaf Education program documents the need for continuation due to its status as an endowed special purpose program and limited justifiable costs to the institution.

In addition, many programs meet specialized accreditation, licensing and certification requirements, and undergo internal and external reviews conducted by peer reviewers as described in Criterion 3.A.1. Programs subject to specialty accreditation are Education, Deaf Education, and Music. While programs that focus purely on education use this external review as their program review, programs with degree programs not solely focused on education (social studies/history, English, mathematics, science, and physical education) also go through the program review process.

4.A.2 The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.

Credit Evaluation
Credits are evaluated under the OSRHE Policy 3.11 and by the USAO Course Catalog on evaluation of transcripts, including credit awards for credit transfer, experiential learning, and prior learning assessment. The Registrar's Office evaluates transcripts (high school and collegiate) and standardized entry exam (ACT, SAT) scores for all incoming students. USAO uses OSRHE Policy 3.11 to apply transfer credits. USAO accepts credits from responsible third parties such as Oklahoma City Community College using the Transfer Matrix and Transfer Articulation Agreements. For students outside of the United States, services of World Education Services and International Credential Evaluations assist in evaluating transcripts.

If the credit request is approved by the University, the Registrar makes a final determination related to transcription of the transfer credit. The Registrar re-evaluates each transcript prior to granting a degree. Through this multilevel quality-control process, USAO ensures that graduates meet the guidelines and policies set forth by OSRHE.

Jenzabar maintains and tracks credits for students and manages prerequisite requirements for course enrollment based on requirements as listed in the course catalog. Additionally, Jenzabar provides access to informal degree audits and unofficial transcripts for students through MyUSAO, the student information system.

Experiential and Prior Learning
In order to ensure currency, quality, and rigor of experiential learning opportunities including internships, practicums, tutorials, independent study, study abroad trips, research, and service learning, each must be approved by an instructor overseeing the experience, the division chair, and the VPAA. Prior learning credit is awarded using the guidelines set forth by the OSRHE Academic Affairs Handbook policy (3.16.1). Standardized examinations such as Advanced Placement, College Level Examination Program, and military service are evaluated by the Registrar. These exams are then correlated to the equivalent course for credit.

4.A.3 The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

All academic majors at USAO participate in the Oklahoma Course Equivalency Project (CEP). CEP oversees the validity of transfer credits for participating institutions. Additionally, the Registrar evaluates all transfer credits to determine if credits are accepted for USAO's core curriculum. Transfer credits are accepted and applied to degree programs generally in accordance with the recommendations in the Transfer Credit Practices Guide published by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO). Consequently, credits from some technical and professional schools may not be applicable toward degree requirements at USAO due to the highly technical or specialized nature of the coursework. The policies regarding transfer credit are outlined in the course catalog and in OSRHE Policies 3.11.

Individual academic advisors use the policies above to assess transfer credits with regard to major and minor degree requirements. If needed, students can provide syllabi from courses completed at their previous institutions to help advisors determine the eligibility of the transfer credit. When credits earned at previous institutions have not directly been equivalent at USAO, substitutions may be considered at the discretion of the program advisor.

4.A.4 The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

Faculty members determine prerequisites for courses in academic programs, and OSRHE confirms and approves these courses as degree requirements. USAO's Course Catalog indicates necessary prerequisites for course enrollment. USAO's Registrar's Office employs Jenzabar to flag students attempting to enroll in courses without completing prerequisites and prevents students from enrolling in these courses without approval. As part of the catalog review process, departments are asked to review and update course prerequisites and to standardize the placement of these prerequisites at the end of each course description. The Registrar verifies the appropriateness of submitted catalog revisions before making changes.

USAO faculty members oversee the curriculum and expectations for student performance. Faculty identify student learning outcomes (SLOs) for each academic program, creating a foundation for course objectives and evaluative processes. Faculty members also create assessment tools to measure student performance and SLOs based on the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, for example Writing I and Writing II rubrics. Resulting syllabi for Writing I and Writing II reflect assessment methodologies that link with stated course objectives. Faculty members in each division/department devise assignments and assessments based upon current practices and theories in their discipline. The appropriate division chair reviews all course syllabi to ensure academic rigor and continued improvement based upon assessment data. The Curriculum Committee receives, reviews, evaluates, initiates, and recommends to the Faculty Association regarding the development of, or changes in, courses or curricula.

As evidenced in 3.D.2, the institution provides sufficient access to learning support and resources. The Director of Nash Library acquire library materials, including digital and online resources. The library also houses computers, tablets, and a SMART Board for student and library instruction. Additional resources are available to students and faculty members through interlibrary loan.

USAO exercises authority over tutoring services through the Student Success Center (SSC). The SSC team hires and trains tutors. The SSC provides tutoring services primarily in IDS, mathematics,

writing, and sciences but also offers assistance in many other content areas. Additionally, in coordination with Student Services, the SSC offers workshops for students to develop career prep and academic skills in note taking, test taking, and study strategies. Computers are available for student use during tutoring sessions and 14 available in an adjoining room. The 24/7 computer lab offers access to six computers. USAO's Director of Network Services oversees technology investments. The University replaces computers in labs on a rotation schedule and reallocates hardware to faculty and staff offices as well as to classrooms and labs. USAO exercises authority over its learning management system, Canvas, through administration of Academic Technology processes. The Canvas Administrator creates all user accounts and course modules.

The faculty serve as the most important learning resource for students attending USAO. The institution maintains faculty qualifications through its selective hiring process, which begins with faculty members helping to determine the parameters of the job description for open positions. Potential candidates proceed through a departmentally-driven search process that culminates in personal interviews with the search committee, division/department chair, and administration. Sharing HLC's recognition that qualified faculty members are vital to the University's ability to provide effective, high-quality academic programs, the University ensures that faculty education requirements are met. Specifically, as part of the search and hiring process, USAO has instituted a Faculty Qualifications review to be initiated by the division chair and completed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Once hired, faculty members participate in annual reviews as prescribed in the Faculty Handbook. Guidelines, credentialing, and policy for faculty qualifications are referenced in 3.C.2.

USAO offers concurrent enrollment to area high school students through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a legal agreement between the University and high schools as per OSRHE standards. The University assures that high school students concurrently enrolled at USAO receive collegiate-level instruction. This methodology integrates concurrently enrolled students into traditional classrooms and ensures that they receive instruction from qualified faculty members. The requirements, examples, and standards are explained in 3.A.3.

4.A.5 The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

Many of the programs that seek specialized accreditation are responsible for training future educators and so hold accreditation from their appropriate professional organizations. These programs include: Deaf Education accredited by the Council on Education for the Deaf, Music accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music, English accredited by the National Council of Teachers of English, History accredited by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), Early Childhood Education accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and Elementary Education accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP). The entire Division of Education's accreditation was reviewed and approved in Fall 2016.

Where official accreditation is not maintained, many of USAO's departments are affiliated with specialized professional organizations and closely align their student requirements with the organization's standards. For example, the Science Teacher Program is affiliated with the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) at both the state and national levels. Faculty of the Speech-Language Pathology department follow accreditation standards of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) when planning curriculum for the undergraduate program. Sociology is affiliated with the American Sociological Association and Communications is affiliated with the National Communication Association.

Many faculty members hold individual memberships in professional organizations, which influence course content and requirements. While the Art Department has no formal association with a state or national association, except in teacher certification, a membership of the National Art Education Association (NAEA) and the Oklahoma Art Education Association (OAEA) is maintained. Several faculty have memberships in numerous scientific organizations, such as the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT), Council for Undergraduate Research (CUR), Physics/Astronomy Division, Society of Physics Students (SPS), and the Oklahoma Academy of Science (OAS). Similarly, the Departments of Chemistry and Mathematics follow the guidelines and standards of the American Chemical Society (ACS) and the American Mathematical Society (AMS), respectively, for the education of chemistry and mathematics majors. Department of Business Administration faculty member hold membership to the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), the Oklahoma Society of Certified Public Accountants (OSCPA), and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), all of which are organizations that set standards for accounting and business reporting, thus allowing university coursework to conform to these standards. For the past decade, the Department of Theatre Arts has made significant curricular changes so that the instruction/content of the program complies with and exceeds the academic standards and learning goals of the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST). Many faculty members additionally hold membership in Association for Interdisciplinary Studies (AIS). Students benefit greatly from information and resources gained through these professional memberships, and data secured from these organizations shapes the programs.

4.A.6 The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes.

USAO has been identified as a College of Distinction for successful career outcomes with the highest percentage of graduates employed within one year compared to any other university in Oklahoma. USAO actively evaluates the success of its graduates through various processes, many of which are currently under revision by the Meaningful Life Committee.

USAO uses a number of sources to measure and contextualize the success of its graduates, including U.S. Department of Education data (2017), NCES (2017, 2018, 2019), Scorecard, NSSE (2014, 2016, 2019), and outside literature based on the return of investment on a Liberal Arts degree. The institution also relies on faculty to report any updated information they may receive from their graduates. Each academic department completes an annual assessment. Included in these reports is an index where faculty are asked to report information related to graduates of the university. Those indexes, along with additional post-graduate data, are then funneled to the alumni department for database updates.

The institution is currently in the process of creating a series of alumni surveys that will include questions about employment and admission rates to advanced degree programs. The surveys will look to indicators aligned to the university's mission and Institutional Learning Goals to equip graduates with the skills needed to maintain a meaningful and purposeful life. These indicators include, but are not limited to, participation rates in fellowships, special programs (e.g. Peace Corps, Military service, Americorps, Teach for America), community involvement and civic engagement. A survey draft has been completed and data collection will begin in 2020. While the program is still in its infancy, the college can point to plans for the assessment of graduates and will begin gathering relevant data following the spring of 2020. The program plan includes gathering data from exit exam/interviews,

alumni survey program, alumni interviews via phone or in person, as well as building a central database. To support and enhance the information from the survey program, the alumni department has contracted with an outside vendor to do a data sweep of social media that will provide specific data that the committee has determined to be an indicator of a meaningful and purposeful life. The current timeline for this data is early summer 2020.

Alumni Relations maintains records on alumni, organizes alumni events, and coordinates with the USAO Alumni Association. USAO Alumni Regional Chapters provide opportunities to gather updated information on alumni and maintain connections (Event Survey, Moving & Making Noise Form). Alumni Relations maintain social media accounts, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, and connects with alumni, which provide updated information on personal and professional successes, contact information, and current employment information.

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Argument

4.B.1 The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

USAO completed HLC's Assessment Academy for its Quality Initiative Project (QIP). Participation in the Assessment Academy began 2015 and successfully concluded in 2019. This initiative provided USAO the opportunity to review and refine the assessment process. This included a review of the IDS core curriculum that comprises USAO's general education program. Faculty on the IDS committee reviewed and updated student learning outcomes in several courses. Furthermore, the IDS committee proposed IDS program goals and a possible revision to the core curriculum. These proposals were not approved, but have sparked continued discussion with a revised proposal currently in progress. The Assessment Academy Reports demonstrate assessment efforts and results. While the original proposal was ambitious, the project facilitated the creation of institutional learning goals for all students who graduate from USAO, motivated a restructuring of the Assessment Committee, and resulted in a comprehensive review of assessment processes and procedures.

Institutional learning goals detail four traits that USAO defines as contributing to a life of purpose and meaning through Instruction in the: Discipline, Interdisciplinary Values, Skills of Lifelong Learners, and Quality of Character. The USAO Board of Regents reviewed the institutional learning goals. The IDS core lays the foundation for students to achieve these institutional goals with degree programs furthering the goals and providing disciplinary knowledge. Furthermore, USAO has a set of student outcomes that further define student learning. In addition to course and department level outcomes, the institutional goals and outcomes for student learning give an overarching purpose and direction for learning.

Assessment processes for courses and degree programs are student focused and faculty driven. Assessment activities begin at the individual course level and are aggregated at the department/division level where conversations take place concerning how to improve student learning. Faculty define the learning outcomes for their courses, determine the means of assessment, and establish performance criteria. Faculty collect assessable artifacts, analyze results, develop and implement program improvement strategies through the program review process. Student learning outcomes reflect what faculty have identified as the primary knowledge, skills, or values students will

demonstrate upon completion of the course. Program learning goals are also defined by the faculty and reviewed as part of the program review process. Course descriptions are included in the course catalog and student learning outcomes are included on syllabi. Some programs utilize curriculum mapping as part of the review and implementation of program goals. Faculty often set performance criteria using rubrics.

Ongoing assessment is undertaken in other departments, in the interest of always improving services to students both inside and outside the classroom. Student Services is focused on cultivating personal growth, leadership development, and creating an environment where students develop as responsible citizens. Co-curricular activities develop a students' social, intellectual, cultural, civic and aesthetic domains. These experiences are ungraded and non-credited. The co-curricular outcomes assessment process closely mirrors and complements the academic outcomes assessment process and map back to Institutional Learning Goals. The assessment process is designed to include assessment of student learning through participation in the activity, student satisfaction with the program, and areas of improvement. By closing the loop and providing feedback, this process helps the co-curricular activities better serve our students through improved activities and programs.

4.B.2 The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

The university regularly assesses learning outcomes of curricular and co-curricular programming, as detailed in the Assessment Plan overview. The Assessment Committee guides the process and procedures for implementing and evaluating assessment across campus. The Assessment Committee is made up of four Working Subcommittees and an Advisory Committee. Along with the VPAA, Director of Assessment, and Assessment Coordinator who serve on all four Working Subcommittees, the chair of each Working Subcommittee composes the overarching Assessment Advisory Committee. The four working subcommittee teams include: Learning Environment, Meaningful Life, IDS Assessment, Academic Disciplines.

Student Services is focused on cultivating personal growth, academic achievement and creating an environment where students develop as responsible citizens. Residence Life has identified several key performance indicators and uses a variety of assessment practices to evaluate programs. These include the use of retention and occupancy data, and a resident student survey administered each spring, which was designed to assess for major factors that influence occupancy rates such as the physical environment, activities and programming offered, and the interaction with residential staff. The department also monitors a variety of additional critical areas including maintenance needs, student conduct, staff training, and campus programming. Facilities and program upgrades/modifications are made consistent with the information obtained through these and other methods (ex: Habitat, AH202, AH213, Music Annex).

In 2018, the Learning Environment (LE) Team developed a university plan towards the implementation of co-curricular learning. This process included establishing goals and learning outcomes that are essential learning components of the educational experience at USAO and speak to what graduates will know and be able to do upon completion of their degree. The LE team will continue to make progress and embark on is closing the loop by documenting specific feedback and action taken after the most recent review of assessment data.
A few examples of co-curricular assessments include:

> Resident Assistant Training
> Pre and Post Freshman Orientation surveys

Alcohol Abuse Education (AlcoholEdu)
Healthy Sexual Relationships and Dating/Domestic Violence Education (HAVEN)
Title IX Training
Rapid Resume
Mock Interviews

The Meaningful Life Assessment Team has developed learning goals that map back to the institutional goals and are in the process of developing a new alumni survey to assess institutional learning goal outcomes. Recently, alumni responded to a brief survey that focused on their experience and connection to the IDS core curriculum, which serves both the IDS Assessment Team and the Meaningful Life Assessment Team in different avenues.

The IDS Assessment Team provides guidance and assistance on the development and review of student learning outcomes within the IDS core curriculum. In 2015, USAO began a review of its general education curriculum. New course-embedded assessment tools have been developed for data collection and analysis to begin in Fall 2020. These efforts will go towards facilitating any needed changes within the IDS core curriculum and to foster continued improvement. Through the 2018-2019 academic year, the focus was at a university-wide level and included ACT CAAP tests. The second phase focuses at the departmental level and included course-embedded assessment in some IDS core courses. The updated IDS assessment plan, uses the HEIghten exam for the university-wide level exit exams and also includes revised course-embedded assessments, to reflect the new goals and outcomes.

Administered each semester, Educational Testing Services Proficiency Profile (ETS) HEIghten Outcomes assess critical thinking of students who have completed between 40 and 75 credit hours and who have fulfilled general education requirements only at USAO (Data 2017, Sample Questions, At a Glance, Research Report). USAO administers the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) on regularly scheduled years for both freshmen and senior students as an indirect measure of student learning (for example: 2014, 2016, 2019). The Assessment Committee evaluates responses to selected questions as indicators of student learning (Snapshot, Pocket Guide). The Assessment Committee uses results to identify successes, address areas of improvement in student achievement, and make specific recommendations for adjustments towards continuous improvement.

USAO employs a consistent and ongoing process for the evaluation of student learning in academic programs. At the program level, faculty members oversee student learning assessment with support from academic administrators and the Office of Assessment. Divisions/departments use student learning outcomes that reflect, to the extent possible, the upper cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (for example: PEST project, WT III project, WT III syllabus). In addition, academic programs utilize both direct and indirect methodologies to assess student learning, to define appropriate measures of success, and to interpret data in order to determine whether program modifications should be made to improve student learning (Details in 3.A.1).

The Academic Disciplines Team assists in the development of student learning outcomes for disciplines, creation of documents and revises program reviews (see Core Components 3.A.1 and 4.A.5). Academic programs are gradually beginning to use Portfolium to assess student learning. This systematic collection will allow the Academic Disciplines Team eventually to collect and evaluate this data more efficiently.

USAO's assessment processes provide a comprehensive framework of policies and protocols focusing on the continuous improvement of student learning and are compliant with OSRHE

policies, consistent with expectations of regional accreditation, and specialty accreditations. Multiple techniques are used to collect data regarding student learning for program outcomes assessment and program review such as course-embedded assessments, surveys, state and/or nationally-referenced tests, advisory councils, focus groups, licensure/certification tests, and exit exams. For individual courses, instructors use student evaluations and analyses of assignments, projects or exam scores to assess student learning and make improvements in subsequent iterations of their courses. In 2018, the faculty annual report was revised to include more information on changes made to instruction based on assessment.

The annual assessment report submitted to OSRHE includes the following areas: Entry-Level Assessment; Mid-Level Assessment; Program Outcomes Assessment; Student Satisfaction Assessment. This summative report, prepared by the Assessment Office with data provided by each unit, is shared with all appropriate entities on campus.

4.B.3 The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

Institutional Research
USAO collects course evaluations from students each semester (aggregate data 2014-2019). This data is provided to instructors and division chairs to help them improve their courses. Faculty report on their student evaluations in their annual report and discuss changes that they plan to make to improve student learning. Surveys are given at the beginning and end of orientation and are used by Student Services to enhance program offerings each year (2017, 2018, 2019). New students at Orientation take an Entering Student Survey (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019). Graduating seniors complete an Exiting Student Survey at Graduation Rehearsal each semester (2017, 2018, 2019). Critical Thinking assessments are given to freshmen during orientation and students taking senior seminar for assessing the IDS core (2017). USAO regularly collects student satisfaction survey data through National Survey of Student Engagement or NSSE (2016, 2019) every third year and in between years using the in-house developed Student Satisfaction Survey (2017). USAO responded to the results of the spring Student Satisfaction Survey that indicated a lack of satisfaction with WIFI with an implementation of a minimal technology fee that was used to update WIFI around campus. Additional student technology surveys also asked questions about classroom technology use (2017) and Lecture Capture Usage (2016).

State Reporting
USAO submits an annual report to the Oklahoma State Regents about assessment practices and outcomes (2017, 2018). This report describes changes made to remedial practices such as the co-requisite program based on the Complete College America guidelines. This includes the English Department beginning a completely co-requisite remedial course structure with Science and Mathematics making a plan to move to total co-requisite remedial courses over the next few years. This study assists in choosing appropriate cut- off scores for course placement tests. USAO submits data to Integrated Postsecondary Education System (IPEDS) each year. This data is used by Admissions to inform decisions about where to recruit new students each year.

Course Development
USAO's general education program consists of an Interdisciplinary Core curriculum that includes team-taught courses where faculty review and discuss course evaluations and what improvements can be made to support student learning when developing syllabi and course structure for the upcoming term. For example, conversations between World Thought III faculty and students resulted in more readings from traditionally marginalized cultures being included in the syllabus. Similarly, American

Civilizations faculty collaborated to revise the mix of essay and outline assignments to better develop different sets of skills. Foundations of Life Science faculty recently revised their reading list. Faculty will begin collecting assessment data during fall 2020 from Writing I and Writing II utilizing the newly revised rubrics (rubrics Writing I, rubrics Writing II).

Academic Calendar and Final Exams

Advisors and USAO policies strongly encourage students to take 15 or more hours each semester in order to stay on track to graduate in a timely fashion. Combined with USAO's adoption of a flat rate tuition for full-time enrollment (12-18 hours), many students had five or more finals spaced over only three days. As a result, modifications to the academic calendar were proposed and adopted to add a reading day and spread out final exams over four days instead of three beginning in the spring of 2019. The academic calendar was also modified to provide more consistent start and end dates for fall and spring as well as simplify the summer semester schedule for faculty and students. Once the new schedule was approved, a revised final exam schedule was created. To minimize the number of students with more than two finals on a single day, we utilized credit hour enrollment data by class time popularity to create a new final exam schedule. These changes have been well received and been adopted for the 2019-2020 academic calendar and final exam schedule. This is another example of USAO using assessment data and student and faculty feedback to improve student learning.

Division of Education and Speech Language Pathology

Teacher education faculty, which includes faculty from art, music, social science, science, deaf education, physical education, math, English, elementary and early childhood faculty, meet annually for a Fall Work Day. Enrollment and demographic data are analyzed and reported in a variety of forms to a number of constituencies. Portfolio data, exit exam data, candidate attrition, diversity and technology use are analyzed at the Fall Work Day. All field experiences including student teaching with principal, mentor teacher, and university supervisor evaluations are analyzed. The Oklahoma State Licensure exams provide assessment data for completers. The State Department of Education surveys first year teachers and submits our graduate data to us and that is analyzed and used for updates in the program. After the Fall Work Day, each program area meets to discuss their specific results and make recommendations for changes, look at data from the prior year and the current year to analyze progress and submit a report to the Division Chair. Faculty discuss the trends and make recommendations for policy change and/or course changes that affect student learning. Strengths and weaknesses associated with elements of the state licensure exams are identified and recommendations for changes occur at program level meetings. The recommendations and changes from the prior year are discussed and evaluated on the Program Worksheet.

4.B.4 The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

USAO maintains processes to assess student learning as described in Criterion 4.B.2. The Assessment Advisory Committee oversees and contributes to subcommittees that focus on specific areas of assessment: Academic Disciplines, IDS Core Curriculum, Learning Environment, and Meaningful Life. These subcommittees provide guidance in the process and methodologies to navigate assessment of student learning. Both direct and indirect assessments from a variety of sources (students, alumni, faculty, employers, etc.) are utilized for meaningful assessment which encompasses the convergence of evidence of student learning. A few examples are provided below.

A pre-post study assesses students in Critical Thinking during freshmen orientation and senior seminar. The assessment is the Heighten Critical Thinking exam which tests the students' ability to creatively solve problems. The assessment was developed to measure logical thinking, decision making, and problem solving. USAO utilizes the assessment for measuring outcomes in the IDS core. Students are tracked from their initial entrance to completion. The original research began with an exam developed by ACT called the CAAP Critical Thinking. However, this exam was recently discontinued, which lead to the adoption of the HEIghten Critical Thinking assessment beginning in the Fall of 2018 incoming freshmen. Data is still being collected for analysis with the new instrument.

Course Evaluations are collected each semester using the SmartEvals software solution. Best practices for data collection and usage were adopted from the SmartEvals suggested practices and guidelines. Data from the survey is collected at the course level and results are given to faculty and division chairs. This data is in faculty annual reviews, program reviews, and state of the division reports as needed. This data also informs syllabi and course changes.

Program Reviews regularly assess department program offerings. The learning outcomes for these programs are described in the program reviews. The curriculum for each program is based on State Regent's required documentation and reviewed every five years (See 4.A.1).

In addition to academic assessments, USAO annually surveys students about satisfaction with campus offerings. Each year at Freshmen Orientation, new students are surveyed about expectations of campus life. This data has been collected annually at Freshmen Orientation since 2013 to inform plans moving forward, with most recent results from 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016. Each semester, seniors are surveyed about their college experience (Fall-Spring 2016-2017, Fall-Spring 2017-2018, Fall 2018-2019). The instrument asks students to report their college experience.

The USAO Assessment Committee record and report on assessment activities. These committees are comprised of faculty and staff. Nearly every member of faculty and staff either serve on an assessment related committee or ad hoc committee. The Committee-on-Committees reviews these groups to ensure active service, reduce overlap and duplication of effort.

New assessments are in the process of development through the Meaningful Life Assessment Committee for alumni experience. The methodology for the study is to create a survey that captures general opinions by recent students as well as post-USAO life events such as jobs, family, and meaningful life fulfillment. A follow-up process using personal interviews and focus groups is planned in conjunction with the survey. These instruments will be used to create a better picture of what USAO does well for students and potential areas of improvement based on alumni responses. The project is still in development, but plans to begin collecting quantitative data as early as Fall 2020.

The Learning Environment Team has identified co-curricular learning outcomes aligned with the Institutional Learning Goals and are in the process of completing their learning environment assessment plan.

USAO submits yearly assessment data to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The Annual Student Assessment Report was recently included in a development to study remediation policy across public universities.

The USAO Assessment Plan details the efforts of the university to assess student learning based on

Strategic Plan goals. These goals are influenced by prior experience and the current Quality Initiative Plans. These plans and goals are based on the Institutional Learning Goals.

In addition to the Assessment Plan, the Faculty Handbook, Staff Handbook, Transfer Agreements, Strategic Plan, and Course Catalog document various parts of assessment of programs: course content, hours required per program, graduation requirements, and program review details.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Argument

4.C.1 The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

The University is committed to continual improvement through attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree programs. This commitment to the institutional goals is demonstrated throughout the Strategic Plan aimed at providing persistent progress in student support and success. One step towards that commitment was a realignment of the Office of Admissions to be under the direct management of the President's Office as enrollment growth is a major institutional priority.

In 2014, USAO underwent a thorough review of retention, persistence, and completion, as it prepared to submit a Title III Strengthening Institutions Grant. Postsecondary National Policy Institute data review indicates that the cultural background of low income and first generation students can result in low retention, persistence, and completion. This information has helped USAO administrators understand why the graduation rate stood at 31%, which was below the Oklahoma average of 46.2% in six years (IPEDS).

Data from the most recent years identified risk factors and potential challenges that USAO's student population experiences. For instance, in 2018, 38.8% of our first-time freshmen were first generation college students, with neither parent having an undergraduate degree. This is not surprising given that about 75% of USAO's students typically come from in-state and Oklahoma is a state where low educational attainment is the norm. In 2010, only 24.8% of Oklahomans 25 years of age or older held a Bachelor's degree or higher. This compares unfavorably with a 30.9% attainment rate for the U.S. as a whole. In addition to a substantial population of first-generation students, nearly 50% of incoming freshmen come from economically disadvantaged households and 26% are minorities. USAO has a significant (15%) population of Native Americans, one of the most

underrepresented groups in higher education. Clearly, many of our students come from both homes and communities in which there are few role models for college success and experience many barriers to college completion.

Although an institution is unable to change the demographic obstacles our students face, USAO feels a responsibility to address deficiencies in our academic programs and strengthen support for students to be able to overcome these obstacles (see 3.D.2). USAO is committed to improving the odds for capable and talented students to be retained at higher rates and provide support to be successful, stay in college and graduate. In the newest Institutional Strategic Plan USAO outlines a plan to determine upcoming targets for retention, persistence, and completion. Prior year goals for retention, persistence, and completion have been documented within the Student Success Plan which outlines annual retention goals and strategies. Targets are derived by Institutional Research and Planning, based on analysis of existing data. To assure targets are appropriate to mission and student demographics, the goals are approved by USAO's Executive Council, President, and presented to the Board of Regents.

4.C.2 The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

USAO regularly collects data for all student cohorts and monitors FTE retention, persistence, and completion for each term. From the time a student first enrolls at USAO until the time that they graduate, the institution records data on credits attempted, credits earned, grade earned for each course, semester GPA and cumulative GPA. Jenzabar EX information database is used to collect and store academic and demographic student information. Academic records are closely monitored and maintained by the Registrar's Office. The institution uses reporting features from student data to inform decisions about recruitment and retention.

Data collection for special projects such as federal grant projects are also collected and monitored. To comply with the terms of the Title III awarded federal Strengthening Institutions and NASNTI grants, cohort-level data is collected and analyzed to track the progress of specific cohorts to determine the effectiveness of intervention strategies linked to academic support outside of the classroom and technological innovations in the classroom.

Institutional research conducts a wide array of analyses including FTE trend statistics on completion and persistence. More in-depth analyses are employed to evaluate long-term enrollment data to test for correlational relationships. The results of enrollment data analyses are used not only to identify characteristics and trends in retention and persistence for cohorts, but also trends in majors and programs. In-depth analytical techniques include trend analyses, mediation/moderation analyses, multivariate regression, and binary logistic regression. One example of an in-depth analysis includes 2016-2017 freshman cohort persistence study, which highlighted persistence by major, retention factors, and 2017-2018 data on switching majors. Institutional research reports to a variety of stakeholders including IPEDS, the State of Oklahoma Education Department, the USAO Board of Regents, and through requested reports to Executive Council, Academic Council, and Administrative Council which includes faculty and departmental staff members. An example of a practical application that derived from data analysis was the creation of the Student Success Center at USAO and further retention planning initiatives.

4.C.3 The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

The Enrollment Management Committee analyzes available data to develop strategies for improving student retention, persistence, and completion and compiles goals and initiatives within the Student Success Plan. This plan informs University practice. After personnel in institutional research collect and analyze data, reports are written for administrative personnel. Special project reports vary greatly, but common reports include information on enrollment (ex: retention and completion), student performance (ex: GPA and performance by major), and program success (ex: graduation statistics by major). The VPAA uses the reports to inform various committees including the Strategic Planning Committee and Academic Council.

As stated in the university catalog, USAO is committed to assisting students to complete a traditional four-year baccalaureate degree. Completion of 124 credit hours is required for graduation from USAO. Consequently, to graduate in four years without attending school during summers, a student must take at least 15 to 16 hours per trimester. This is a full load. Although federal financial aid regulations consider a load of 12 hours to be "full-time" in order to qualify for financial aid, 12 hours is simply not a "full load" for a four-year graduation plan. To encourage students to take a 15+ hour full load, USAO charges a flat rate tuition that entitles students to take 12 to 18 hours, for the same cost. A 3.00 GPA and approval by the Registrar is required to enroll in more than 18 credit hours. The maximum credit hour load is 22 hours in the fall and spring, 15 hours in the 10- week summer term.

In addition, the University maintains student advising as an integral part of faculty members' professional responsibilities. USAO has made efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of advising in order to increase the number of students who declare a major within their first 30 hours. Standardized course rotations and suggested degree plans support this effort. The combined efforts of a block tuition pricing model and the simultaneous encouragement to advise students to enroll in *at least* 15 hours each semester for timely degree completion paid off in an increase in the Fall '14 and Fall '15 of the number of students in more than 15 credit hours of 4.75% and 9.30% respectively, for an initial two-year change of 14.05%. Analysis of retention data has led to these and other initiatives designed to mitigate student attrition rates. These initiatives reflect a pattern of analysis and use of data.

The University also complies with guidelines of Complete College America Scaling Co-requisite Initiative to address the needs of students at all academic levels in order to achieve higher degree completion rates. As a participant in CCA's Scaling Corequisite Initiative, the OSRHE commits to supporting the State System institutions, including USAO, in achieving ambitious but attainable state outcomes.

Additionally, we are in the initial stages of a Complete College America Initiative entitled "Degrees When Due", a college completion initiative designed to help states and institutions increase attainment among the "some college, no degree" population while also closing racial and socioeconomic equity gaps. The Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) selected USAO to participate in Cohort 2 of Degrees When Due. Degrees When Due will grant USAO access to a variety of resources to assist with auditing students' previously earned credits in order to determine the students' most efficient pathway to graduation.

Ancillary retention information is obtained from the Student Success Center, through the collection of real-time data on students in the form of early alerts from faculty, communication with students regarding their academic progress, and individual follow-up. Exit Interviews are completed with each student who fully withdraws from the institution. Information from the Exit Interviews are combined with non-enrolled data lists which are reviewed for Qualified Recruit Back initiatives.

4.C.4 The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

USAO employs the Jenzabar database to collect and store student information. The reporting software InfoMaker is used to generate reports on this data. The Institutional Research Analyst prepares and disseminates this information to external and internal parties.

USAO uses IPEDS methodology and definitions when tracking and reporting retention, persistence, and program completions (IPEDS Procedures, IPEDS Instructions). Cohorts begin with first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen from each year, and status is determined by enrollment or graduation in subsequent review years (IPEDS 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015). The published rates in our Student Right to Know correspond with (and are sourced from) our IPEDS submissions and data used for those submissions.

This methodology fits USAO's student profile in two aspects: 1) USAO has less than one percent of our entering class enrolling as part-time students and fewer than a dozen of the entering students are not degree-seeking, so the cohort definition is appropriate; and 2) our graduation rates utilize the Baccalaureate degree seekers cohort and includes in the completions any completer of a program (4-year) within 150% of the normal time (2008 - 2018).

In addition to our own published rates and the rates provided to IPEDS, USAO submits data to Student Achievement Measures (SAM), which publishes its own rates. SAM rates include students starting at USAO but graduating anywhere within the public higher education system in the United States.

USAO submits graduation rate and retention rate data to third party surveys for their purposes. Third-party instructions are followed when submitting information, even when such instructions may not match those of IPEDS.

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USAO Title III Narrative

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma follows directives from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to assure the quality of its programs through regular program reviews, external accreditations, and the success of graduates following degree completion. A commitment to continual assessment and improvement, USAO demonstrates a commitment to providing a quality educational experience inside and outside of the classroom.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Argument

5.A.1 The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Fiscal Resources
USAO has the fiscal resources necessary to support and sustain effective operation of the college. The college receives revenue from a variety of sources. The Education and General (E&G) budget is funded equally by state appropriations and locally generated revenue. These revenues consist primarily of tuition, mandatory fees (i.e. assessment, technology and connectivity fees) and other mandatory and course-based fees. Since 2007, the university has been faced with decreased state allocations. The portion of the budget supplied by appropriations has moved from 64.5% in FY05 to 47.6% in FY20. The state of affairs of public education in the state of Oklahoma has increased the need for universities to seek additional funding from private sources through fundraising and grant applications. It has therefore been beneficial that USAO has been successful in procuring additional sources of revenue including private fundraising and grant applications (NASNTI, Title III).

USAO has operated in a fiscally responsible manner. USAO submits an annual balanced budget to the Regents, State Regents, and Office of Management and Enterprise Services (OMES). University finances are independently audited annually and the university has consistently received an unqualified audit opinion (Audit: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019).

USAO maintains an independent foundation that supports the mission of the university through scholarships to students, support of programs and investment in capital projects. The foundation assets have increased significantly from $13,055,466 in FY 2014-2015 to $26,481,322 FY 2018-2019.

Fiscal Year	Asset Value	Yearly % Change
2014-15	13,055,466	1.9%
2015-16	14,079,657	7.8%
2016-17	17,324,201	23.0%
2017-18	27,513,665	58.8%
2018-19	26,481,322	-3.8%

Physical Resources

USAO is the only university in the State of Oklahoma that is designated as a National Historic District with the National Historic Registry. USAO has over 123,000 square feet of space dedicated to classrooms, science labs, computer labs, studios, theaters and faculty offices and a 36,000 square foot library that includes study space, computer lab, Student Success Center and commuter lounge. USAO maintains auxiliary space of more than 190,000 square feet that includes a student center, bookstore, cafeteria, two residence halls, and three apartment buildings. The university focuses its capital funds on objectives and needs of current and future students. The Master Plan details current and future plans for maintaining and renovating space to ensure that buildings and facilities remain in top condition.

Human Resources

Despite the cuts in fiscal allocations, USAO has been committed to the academic pursuit and mission as evidenced by maintaining full time faculty members. The college has sufficient human capital to support and sustain educational programs and support for student success. USAO has 50 full time faculty members, and 7.8 full time equivalent adjunct instructors. The college organizational chart documents the structure of educational services, student support, and other nonacademic infrastructure at USAO. Human resource infrastructure include faculty, student services functions, the Nash Library and professional library staff, athletic staff, full time staff support, campus security and safety, administration and fiscal management, technology support, and community engagement.

Technology Resources

USAO's Information Technology (IT) infrastructure supports student learning and college operations and allocates sufficient funds to maintain and upgrade hardware and software with a departmental budget of $436,408. The IT Department is responsible for developing and maintaining the college technology systems including the 14 computer labs throughout campus. There have been numerous large upgrades in recent years including wi-fi access, and more recently an installation of digital information network that electronically interconnects the campus. The enhanced network has a range of uses and provides USAO not only with advanced technology applications for campus use, but now has a bandwidth, communications speed and network latitude that probably has no equal in Oklahoma as USAO is CBTS's first higher education project west of the Mississippi River with this advanced system.

5.A.2 The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to

a superordinate entity.

USAO maintains a strong focus on educational programs and academic support. Thanks to sound fiscal planning and focus on educational priorities, the university has prioritized expenditures on instruction and academic support even as revenue from state funding has decreased. This is demonstrated by a five year average of 68.6% of USAO's budget being devoted to education and retention expenses. A thorough process is in place for budgeting and for monitoring expenses as explained in more detail in Core Component 5.A.5.

5.A.3 The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.

The goals incorporated into USAO's mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the university's organization, resources, and opportunities. The current mission statement has recently undergone a review and update and was approved by the USAO Board of Regents at their November 2019 meeting. Over the past five years USAO has engaged in innumerable endeavors that are a reflection of the mission of the university. The Strategic Plan outlines five commitments.

> *USAO is committed to a rigorous and distinctive interdisciplinary liberal arts education that is relevant and innovative.*
>> USAO's Interdisciplinary Studies Core Curriculum is required for all students who begin their college career at USAO and is a defining feature of the university. In an effort for continual improvement, the curriculum is currently under review to make certain that it effectively reflects the mission of the university while at the same time being relevant and useful to today's students. The IDS Committee has sought feedback from both faculty and alumni.
>
> *USAO is committed to a diverse student body that fosters an integrated and personalized student experience.*
>> The Dr. Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Center for Social Justice and Racial Healing-The center advances the common good by educating and inspiring individuals who are dedicated to the pursuit of social justice through community building, curriculum and pedagogy, and engaged research. Students, faculty, and community leaders hold substantial roles.
>> The Neill-Wint Center for Neurodiversity assists students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the transition to college life and helps ensure postsecondary success through a collaborative model that promotes the development of self-advocacy and independent living skills to encourage strong academic and social progress. Varying levels of academic, social and residential support aid students in meeting their personal and professional goals.
>> The Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI) program at USAO provides assistance to help improve and expand USAO's capacity to serve Native Americans and low-income students.
>
> *USAO is committed to continuously improve institutional capacity that supports a thriving and sustainable public liberal arts college.*
>> The development of the current Strategic Plan started as a commission by President Feaver for the development of "consensus-based recommendations on strategic priorities that are consistent with USAO's distinctive mission and existing budget restraints." The resulting document acts as a guide as the institution progresses.

> The Student Success Center is dedicated to assisting students successfully transition from high school to college.

USAO is committed to communicating a cohesive message to internal and external constituents that is consistent with its mission and objectives.

> The current Strategic Plan and Master Plan both provide the University's vision for the future and act as transparent guides for cohesive planning towards the institution's priorities.

USAO is committed to having a positive impact on the community through civic, cultural, and economic engagement and partnerships.

> From the start, the Dr. Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Center for Social Justice and Racial Healing has been intentional in including the voices of community leaders. As part of the initial planning stages, the center held open forums in Chickasha, Tulsa, and Oklahoma City to gather feedback. The center is a conduit to the community through partnership with the Oklahoma Historical Society and its programs and acts to advance the common good by educating and inspiring individuals who are dedicated to the pursuit of social justice through community building, curriculum and pedagogy, and engaged research. Further evidence of USAO's commitment to public engagement is demonstrated through the variety of symposia, lectures, and performing arts events that the university hosts throughout the year. The following are only *a few* examples:
>> Davis-Waldorf Performing Arts Series
>> Symposium Series
>> Festival of Arts and Ideas
>> Ableson Religious Reconciliation Lecture Series
>> Meet the Candidates
>> ITHC Pow-Wow

Careful monitoring of revenues and expenses (5.A.5), along with human resources available (5.A.1), ensure these goals are obtainable and realistic.

5.A.4 The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.

USAO employees have the requisite training and qualifications for their respective positions. The Personnel and Business Office posts detailed job descriptions that include qualifications for each position and has established policies that ensure all appointments are conducted on the basis of individual qualifications and merit and comply with Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity Policies, Title VI as well as federal laws and regulations. The Personnel and Business Office coordinates recruitment and screening procedures before referring qualified candidates for consideration. In an effort to seek qualified applicants and to develop a diversified applicant pool, the University uses several print and on-line methods.

Regular employment is authorized by the Board of Regents through the action of the President of the University. The President generally accepts recommendations for regular employment from the appropriate vice president through the Personnel and Business Office proceeding after the search committee procedure is fully complete.

Executive and Administrative staff appointments follow an established policy for initiating the search and hiring process. Faculty qualifications and hiring processes are thoroughly detailed with evidence in Core Component 3.C.2. The authority for employment policies stems from public law, the Regents, and the President of the University. Faculty credentials are maintained via Weave Education software and provides a credentialing report on faculty qualifications. A final report will be available

during the site visit.

Each employee must demonstrate ability to do the job through satisfactory work performance during the six-month probation period. Evaluation of personnel is a continuous process; however, all staff members may be formally evaluated annually by their immediate supervisor. Evaluation provides the supervisor with an opportunity to assess the employee for traits identified with quality performances.

USAO encourages and supports professional development of staff and faculty. Faculty regularly engage in professional development activities as outlined in Core Component 3.C.4. Professional staff have opportunities to participate in local training and attend regional and/or national training and professional programs. All faculty and staff participate in a campus-wide Title IX training. The Board of Regents receive an update on staff commendations from the Staff Association President. Evidence and additional examples of professional development for professional staff are provided in Core Component 3.C.6.

The University feels that it is important for educational institutions to encourage degree completion by personnel. Therefore, members of the professional and general staff will be awarded a one-time stipend as follows: $500 for receiving a baccalaureate degree and $1,000 for receiving a master's degree. To encourage skill enhancement and lifelong learning, USAO employees, their legal spouses and eligible dependents are eligible to participate in the Educational Assistance Program that waives one-half of the enrollment fees and all per hour student fees.

5.A.5 The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

The college budget process (detailed in 5.C.3) is transparent and actively engages all campus stakeholders. In addition to regular monitoring of expenses, the university also carefully monitors revenues due to the volatile nature of the funding streams. In the face of recent reductions in state allocations, USAO has proactively managed its resources in order to maintain core academic functions while streamlining other functions. University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma is a public, not-for-profit university supported primarily by a combination of state appropriations and student tuition. The university's budget reflects its emphasis on teaching, with by far the largest portion of its budget dedicated to instruction, and other expenditures clearly following from its public educational mission. In the face of reductions in state appropriations over the past few years, USAO has continued to prioritize its teaching functions while making strategic cuts to staff, administration, and areas that are not core to its mission. For example, an academic ad hoc committee was created concerning budget cut recommendations for an overall potential 10%-17% reduction. In addition, ten staff positions that had been eliminated since 2017. USAO submits a yearly report (SRA3) to OSRHE that provides detail on expenditures divided into functional unit and expense type.

In late September, OSRHE's annual Education & General Budget development process begins with a Survey of Budget Needs. Each institution identifies budget priorities and fixed-cost increases based on system-wide and institutional strategic plans, within limitations varying from year to year depending on the political and economic climate. Institutions must prioritize and submit cost estimates for faculty and staff salary increases, new positions, library acquisitions, and other maintenance and operations support. The President, Vice President for Business and Finance, Vice President for University Advancement, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Services, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs compile all budget requests and finalize budget priorities considering USAO's mission. Tuition and mandatory fee amounts for the new fiscal year are finalized once proposed state appropriations are received. The State Regents' Office

compiles the aggregated requests into a higher education system request, which is presented to the Governor in December and to the Legislature as early as January. By May of each year, the Legislature passes the appropriation bill, and the Governor signs it into law. OSRHE then allocates the appropriated funding to the institutions within the system, and the institution submits its finalized budget for Regents' approval in June. Upon final budget approval by both the Board of Regents and the OSRHE, departmental budgets are provided to budget administrators. The fiduciary processes described in Criterion 5.B.1 and the accompanying financial documents in that section reflect the University's careful stewardship and planning for financial contingencies.

Department heads have access to request an expenditure report for budget tracking purposes. Departments establish and maintain spreadsheets of account transactions, retain copies of purchase order records and then cross-reference with official CFO expenditure reports. For example, the Student Success Center maintains a process for tracking expenditures within the department and at the end of each month requests an official university expenditure report to cross-reference and verify accuracy of line items. This provides an additional layer of inspection for transparency and accuracy to determine any changes in their assigned budgets; determine whether departmental transfers have been posted; make sure that purchases have been properly charged (expenditures by budget line should equal the amount given on the system); and compare account balances with those maintained on office spreadsheets. Monitoring of budget expenditures occurs at the department/division, vice president, and University levels continually throughout the fiscal year. The Vice Presidents provide regular briefings to the University President. Detailed bi-monthly financial report overviews are provided to the governing board. The university is planning to further implement Jenzabar Finance system which will allow authorized users to share, update, store, and report on real-time information across departments.

Purchasing and ordering follow an established procedure depending on the source of funding. For university funds, prior to purchase, a purchase order must be approved by the department head, appropriate Vice President, and the Vice President for Business and Finance. Only after the full approval process, can a purchase be made. For USAO Foundation funds, a specific PO form is available, that goes through a similar approval process but includes approval from the Foundation's Executive Director certifying that the funds are held at the foundation for the purpose requested and verifying to the vendor that the funds will be encumbered for payment.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Argument

5.B.1 The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSHRE) is the agency in Oklahoma that provides the structure for public education at the college level. OSHRE is responsible for determining the functions, course of study for each institution, and sets the standards of education for each institution. OSHRE is also responsible for allocating funds to carry out institutional functions. Separate governing boards assume responsibility for the operation of the individual institutions including the oversight of administrative structures, approving personnel policies, contracting for other services as needed, having custody of records, and acquiring and holding title to property.

The University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma is governed by its own independent board of regents, and is the only public four year institution in the state of Oklahoma with this distinction. The USAO Board conducts meetings six times each year with a standing agenda that includes regular reports from the administration, faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Discussion and action items, strategic planning, institutional policies, staff changes, review and approval of the budget are among the activities that occur at each Board of Regents meeting.

The USAO Board is made up of seven members who are appointed by the Governor of Oklahoma with the advice and consent of the Oklahoma State Senate. Board members serve seven year overlapping terms. The Board packet for each meeting is provided in hard copy form and is sent to the Regents one week prior to each meeting. The Board has established policies that are contained in its bylaws and constitution. The USAO Board has several standing committees: Policy and Procedures, Finances, Academic and Administrative Affairs, Housing and Physical Plant, Public Relations, and Student Life. The chairs of these committees are members of the board and are appointed by the Chair of the Board in July of each year to serve for a term of one year. Special committees can be appointed by the Board as necessary.

5.B.2 The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in

the institution's governance.

The administrative structure of the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma engages all internal constituencies through the shared governance process and includes representation and collaboration with students, faculty, staff, alumni, administration, the USAO Board of Regents, and the Oklahoma State Board of Regents. The organizational structure within the university provides a systematic opportunity for input and dialog for the students through the Student Government Association, the faculty through the Faculty Association, the staff through the Staff Association, and the alumni through the Alumni Association.

The faculty at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma are involved in shared governance, and the purpose of this is outlined in the Faculty Handbook which draws heavily on the American Association of University Professors 1966 Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities. The faculty has primary responsibility in areas of curriculum, instruction methods, faculty appointment and status, and tenure and promotion. The Faculty Association is the official representative body of the faculty. It controls the function and membership of the faculty association committees, and makes recommendations on policy to the appropriate administrators (e.g. Vice President for Academic Affairs). As the representative body of the faculty, the Faculty Association, also passes resolutions to express the will of the faculty to the Administration. It is also available for consultation by the Administration on various issues.

Organized and productive committees help to propel initiatives throughout the university. The aptly named Committee on Committees (CoC) closely reviews University Committees for their charge, efficiency, make-up, nominating entity and also recommends committee membership to the President. Membership includes the VPAA, Vice President of Enrollment Management & Student Affairs, Dean of Enrollment Management, Division Chairs, Faculty Association President, Faculty Association President-Elect/Treasurer, Staff Association President, and the Dean of Students. This committee originated as a request to review the necessity of committees, evaluate the time commitment attached to serving on each committee, review committee membership for redundancy and examine assignment loads on an individual level to encourage engagement across faculty and staff.

The University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma supports shared governance. The Faculty Association, the Staff Association, the Student Government Association, and the USAO Alumni Association serve as the representative bodies of the faculty, staff, students, and alumni, each with its own elected officers and its own constitution. The governing organizations and their chairs appoint representatives to serve on university committees that draft policy and procedure. As a result, the constituencies participate in shared representative governance through these committees. USAO faculty, staff, and students each have representation at the Board of Regents meetings, and through this representation, have a voice and input in Board of Regent matters. In addition to the Board of Regents, the Executive Council, Administrative Council, and Academic Council meet to provide institutional administrative operational oversight.

On-boarding procedures are in place for members of the Board of Regents. Each Board Member gains membership into the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) which fosters understanding challenges leaders face and offers a range of learning and development resources, as well as, an invitation to attend the national Legal Issues in Higher Education annual conference. A multitude of campus visits and experiences aid in each Regent's intimate understanding of the institution. Newly appointed Regents attend the Regents Education Program training alongside the President after becoming appointed. The President also visits with Board members individually to discuss various

necessary information along with details concerning University's mission, current climate and future plans of the institution. Each of these and additional university, local, state, and national professional development provide opportunities to develop familiarity with the institution and higher education.

5.B.3 Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

The University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma utilizes effective collaborative processes that engage faculty, staff, students, and alumni in the the development of academic requirements, policy, and processes. The Executive Council meets with and advises the President on all matters pertaining to USAO. Membership includes the Vice Presidents, Special Assistants to the President, and the Administrative Assistant for the President. The Administrative Council meets with the President to facilitate transparent communication and dialog with the campus at large about institution initiatives and decisions in support of moving USAO forward. Membership includes administrators from all key administrative areas of the University, Vice Presidents, Special Assistants to the President, the Administrative Assistant for the President and a nominated student. Members of these committees often utilize student information data, survey student data, and seek qualitative student focus group data for initiative proposals and decision making.

Through established procedures, faculty members participate in decisions concerning curriculum, faculty appointments, reappointments, promotions, and tenure. Faculty are involved further in decision-making through membership on University Committees, Standing Committees, and Faculty Association Committees. As detailed in the Faculty Handbook, academic requirements, policy, and processes--including approval of new courses and degree programs--are addressed through faculty-based, collaborative organizational structures, involving both Faculty Association and University committees. An example of this is the collaboration for curriculum changes between the Interdisciplinary Studies Committee (University) and the Curriculum Development Committee (Faculty Association). The Interdisciplinary Studies Committee (IDS) reviews the curriculum and implementation of the IDS core. This committee is appointed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs in consultation with the President and consists of the VPAA, the Director of Interdisciplinary Studies, and at least one faculty member for each division. When curriculum changes are recommended by the IDS committee, they are submitted to the Curriculum Development committee which receives, reviews, evaluates, initiates and recommends to the Faculty Association regarding the development of, or changes in, courses or curricula. The chair of the Curriculum Development committee presents the curriculum changes to Faculty Association at large for discussion and voting. Faculty Association president records results of votes and forwards the curriculum changes to the VPAA for approval then forwards it to the university President for approval. After approval at the university level, a Letter of Intent (LOI) is sent to chancellor of the State Regents and the changes are presented to the Board of Regents for a vote of approval. If curriculum changes are approved the university President forwards the changes to the State Regents, where a vote may take place.

Often curriculum changes are initiated by student involvement and feedback. Student evaluations are utilized to not only improve course design for upcoming semesters, but also may initiate changes within the program. Students also discuss special topic courses they would like to see offered. If the faculty member can acquire an appropriate number of students interested in enrolling in the special topics course, the course may be offered in an upcoming semester. Current and former students often are surveyed about their experiences on campus, including academic experiences, such as the Interdisciplinary Core Curriculum.

While curriculum changes are just one example of collaborative initiative and effort, the majority of processes and policies go through similar rounds of constituency and committee involvement. For example, Student Government Association (SGA) actively represents and engages students by providing a democratic selection of student representatives to act as intermediaries between the student body and faculty, staff, and administrator and promotes continued improvement of opportunities for academic discovery and student development on campus. SGA membership consists of all students enrolled at the university. Students may make formal suggestions to their representatives and official student organizations make funding requests for items or events available to the student population as a whole. SGA passes legislation that is distributed directly to the university president, VPEMSA, and Dean of Students for consideration of implementation. Outside of SGA, students also hold membership on over eleven university committees. The President holds Student Convocations and regularly meets with students and organizations to collect feedback and gain insight on the concerns of the current student population.

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

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

Argument

5.C.1 The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

USAO's mission and priorities are reflected in the allocation of resources. A significant part of the mission is to be a teaching institution that provides a liberal arts education and is committed to the innovative team-teaching approach within the IDS core. This requires a focus on teaching excellence, support, and financial assistance to students which is demonstrated by the 68.6% of the university budget that is consistently allocated to educational and retention expenses.

Initiatives are in place to assure that USAO continues to align with and support its mission statement including organizational changes, resource allocation, and budget development. The USAO Board of Regents reviews the annual budget developed through administrative, faculty, and staff support. Resources are allocated by the Vice President of Business and Finance with input from the President's Executive Council. Departments are aware of the University's mission, goals, and strategic plan. With this information, budget directors may request and utilize resources.

5.C.2 The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

Recently USAO has instituted a biannual State of Academic Affairs report. The report provides information concerning the current organizational structure of Academic Affairs, enrollment across the divisions and individual majors, as well as progress made by each unit and current needs. This report is presented to the USAO Board of Regents by the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

In addition to the State of Academic Affairs Report, USAO uses information gathered by the Assessment Committee to guide decisions. The Assessment Committee guides the process and procedures for implementing and evaluating assessment on campus. This includes implementation of the comprehensive plan for the development, collection, evaluation and dissemination of assessment results. The Assessment committee is made up of four working subcommittees and an advisory committee. The chair of each working subcommittee sits on the Assessment Advisory committee along with the VPAA, Director of Assessment, and Assessment Coordinator. The VPAA, Director of

Assessment, and Assessment Coordinator serve on all four working subcommittees as ex-officio members.

Approximately two-thirds of all dollars spent in an annual budget are focused on instructional expenses. A few examples of links between student learning, operations, planning, and budgeting are exemplified in by the following:

> Charges by Credit Hour which includes a Student Assessment Fee for expenses of assessing students
> The Assessment Committee which reviews findings and makes recommendations on development/ purchases/changes of assessments
> The Assessment Office oversees the annual spending with approval by the VPAA
> Ad hoc Academic Strategic Planning Committee which provided recommendations of potential budget cuts that would have the least negative impact on student learning and outcomes including cutting summer course offerings and decreasing the adjunct budget
> Suspension and deletion of the American Indian Studies program to protect the IDS core in the face of extreme budget cuts

Our budgeting process prioritizes all spending with the mission and strategic plan in mind. This allows the University to focus its resources on the most important purpose - educating students for future service to the community. This commitment takes tangible form when the allocation of resources is considered at the university.

5.C.3 The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

USAO engages in regular comprehensive planning. The most recent cycle of strategic planning began in 2016 with the work of the Strategic Priorities Committee which was commissioned by USAO President John Feaver to prepare a report of strategic priorities consistent with USAO's mission and budget restraints. In December of 2016 the committee of administrators, faculty, and staff submitted a report to the President of five strategic recommendations. Those recommendations were the following:
1. A thriving liberal arts mission and interdisciplinary studies program.
2. Competitive salaries, a full compliment of faculty and staff, and a strong professional development program.
3. An enrollment between 1000 and 1,500, a high retention rate, and a vibrant student center and student life program.
4. A strong relationship with the local community.
5. Funding from private donors, grants, and state support sufficient to fund mission priorities.

The work started by the Strategic Priorities Committee was carried forth by the Academic Strategic Planning Committee and resulted in the 2025 Strategic Plan. This plan was approved by the USAO Board of Regents at the November 2019 meeting, and it consists of the following commitments:
1. USAO is committed to a rigorous and distinctive interdisciplinary liberal arts education that is relevant and innovative.
2. USAO is committed to a diverse student body that fosters an integrated and personalized student experience.
3. USAO is committed to continuously improve institutional capacity that supports a thriving and sustainable public liberal arts college.
4. USAO is committed to communicating a cohesive message to internal and external constituents

that is consistent with its mission and objectives.
5. USAO is committed to having a positive impact on the community through civic, cultural, and economic engagement and partnerships.

In addition to the Strategic Plan, a Master Plan was developed to manage current physical resources and plans for the development of future facilities to meet the objectives of the university.

While the Strategic Priorities Committee and the Academic Strategic Planning Committee have set the overall course of planning for the institution as a whole, several other committees are involved in more specialized planning.

External Constituencies are commonly involved in programmatic discussions and considerations. Additionally the university partners with the City of Chickasha on projects that support both the campus and community. One example of this is the planning for the development of the Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Center for Social Justice & Racial Healing at USAO. Focus groups were held in Chickasha, Oklahoma City and Tulsa to move the project forward. Additionally a partnership with the Oklahoma Hall of Fame/Gaylord-Pickens Museum to host the Anita Hill Fundraiser for the announcement of the Center and for student internships.

5.C.4 The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

When it comes to planning for resources, USAO is very conservative. Under the leadership of the Vice President for Business and Finance and the President, the university has adopted a successful strategy that has proven crucial to developing budget projections that are realistic and achievable. As part of budget planning the Vice President presents to the President and Executive Council tuition increases based on enrollment trends. Additionally, budget needs include mandatory annual cost increases to the President and executive council as well as the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

Another example of how USAO has planned for change and understood fluctuations in its sources of revenue, was its application for and award of both a Title III Strengthening Institutions Grant and a Title III NASNTI Grant. As a part of its planning, the institution has found ways to commit to maintaining the Student Success Center, and has been gradually integrating the costs of the program to it's E&G budget. Additionally the University has applied for and received supplemental Title III NASNTI Funding.

Prior to the start of every semester, the VPAA and the division chairs meet to assess the enrollment for the respective semester. In order to help reduce instructional costs those courses that have an enrollment of less than 10 students may be canceled. Exceptions to this policy are made on a case-by-case basis.

5.C.5 Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

USAO planning, on all levels, routinely takes into account changes in technology, shifting demographics, and globalization. Avenues towards strategic planning takes the form of many committees and documents that anticipate emerging factors. A recent development has been the revision process of USAO's Interdisciplinary Core Curriculum. The IDS core is a distinctive

aspect of the educational experience at USAO, and the recent revision efforts have focused on making the core curriculum even more relevant to today's students. The process started with the IDS Committee, and included feedback from the faculty, as well as, feedback from over 200 USAO alums spanning several decades. Armed with this information, the IDS committee will be continuing the revision process to update and revise the core curriculum to make it even more relevant to 21st century students.

Another recent development has been the upgrade of classroom technology. NASNTI grant efforts initially focused on upgrade of instructional technology in IDS classroom spaces. These upgrades have included new smart boards, projectors, lecture capture technology, and audio equipment. The upgrades have helped to greatly improve and modernize the learning experience for USAO students. These improvements in classroom technology are gradually making their way to all classroom spaces. Outside of the classroom, results of a 2018 student satisfaction survey indicated that students were unsatisfied with Internet and connectivity speeds. As a result, the university invested in a campus wide upgrade of the WIFI system as is detailed in 3.C.4 and more recent connectivity upgrades.

In recent years, USAO has undergone a large improvement and upgrade of student services and instructional technology. This included the implementation of various products: the MyUSAO student information system, Canvas learning management system, Portfolium online digital portfolio platform, and Panopto lecture capture/lecture recording system. USAO is also currently in final stages of redesigning the University's website to make it more accessible. Additionally, while USAO does not offer online degree programs, the university has been gradually incorporating more flexible course designs and offered faculty training in online pedagogy. Additionally, the university Strategic Plan reflects the commitment to an evolving academic experience that enhances instruction through multiple modalities.

Although there is national concern about the shift in enrollment rates for higher education, Oklahoma is forecast to remain consistent in HS students and college bound rates through 2030.

Sources

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5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

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

Argument

5.D.1 The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

USAO documents its performance across all departments, both academic and administrative. Programs and projects are routinely evaluated to determine performance towards achieving the desired results. Performance tracking may be done monthly or annually. While financial performance is carefully monitored monthly, the Vice Presidents provide regular briefings to the University President, detailed bi-monthly financial report overviews are provided to the governing board, as well as an annual audit. Information gained from each year's audits aid the institution in performing at its best financially, in managing the cash flow, and in budgeting for current and future years. In order to document committee productivity toward institutional priorities and projects, each University Committee Chair completes an annual committee report that highlights the actions of achievements of the committee effort for the academic year.

Development and documentation of performance has been provided as evidence in all prior criterion. Here are a few measures to highlight that the institution tracks in order to perform at its best:

> Long-Term Enrollment Trends
> Annual Assessment Plan
> Annual Assessment Report OSRHE
> Low Productivity Reports: Deaf Education, American Indian Studies
> Critical Thinking Proficiency
> Program Review Reports
> Entering Student Survey
> Student Satisfaction Reports
> Remediation Assessment
> Student Success Center Utilization
> Co-Curricular Outcomes
> First Destination Survey (Newly Graduated Students)
> Alcohol Education Objectives
> Sexual Assault Education Program
> Integrated Postsecondary Education Data
> National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE): Choosing a College Pocket Results, Snapshot
> Engagement Indicators, Frequencies and Statistics
> Alumni IDS Survey
> Annual Security Report: 2017, 2018

As evidenced above, as well as throughout Criterion 3, learning environment, co- curricular services,

and student support assessments are documented regularly. As evidenced above, as well as throughout Criterion 4, all degree and certificate programs undergo a five-year program review in accordance with OSRHE.

Institutional Strategic Plans

Progress on accomplishing University goals articulated in the former and current strategic plan guides administrative units as they develop institutional assessment plans. Recently an overview of the results from the former strategic plan was assessed: An Interpretative History of the Mission Enhancement Plan (MEP) 2005-2020. The current Strategic Plan provides the framework for the systematic improvement in our operations and the pursuit of our goals as the institution moves forward from the MEP.

5.D.2 The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

The University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma is an accomplished institution that has continuously made improvements over its more than 110 years of existence. Institutional assessment provides USAO the ability to willingly see challenges as opportunities for improvement towards institutional effectiveness, capability, and sustainability. The college leadership, faculty, and staff are firmly committed to using information from ongoing operations as the foundation for improving future performance. Evidence in support of this commitment can be found in prior Core Components and include, but not limited to:

> Recent enhancements to Wi-Fi quality, quantity, and coverage (see Core Component 3.D.4 for survey results)
> Increase in instructional technology and support (see Core Component 3.D.4 for identified needs and results)
> Implementation of academic services in the SSC (see Core Component 3.D.1 for identified needs and services)
> Utilization reports for most effective hours of operation of the SSC and Library services
> Flat rate tuition and Impact
> Remediation Co-Requisite course design to improve progression rates
> Additional support for low income and Native American students
> Additional Counseling Services (see Core Component 3.D.1)
> Student Satisfaction Data
> Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Consultation: 2013, 2016

Additionally, collecting and analyzing certain statistical key performance indicators (KPIs) gathered in various units on campus (academic, business and student affairs) aid in assessing current efforts and potential areas for improvements. A few examples:

> number of majors and graduates in a program
> number of full-time and adjunct faculty in a program
> number of student credit hours produced in a program
> cost of a program by department
> faculty release time by department
> ratio of cost to graduates, credit hours, and full-time faculty
> ratio of student credit hours to full-time faculty

ratio of graduates to full-time faculty

These indicators, along with closely tracking the retention of students and their persistence towards a degree, the data around student progress has led to the conclusion that maintaining 15 credit hours is most critical for student retention, as those under that threshold typically have a lower chance of persisting to graduation. These findings have strengthened the universities commitment to "15 to Finish" Complete College America advising campaign.

Additionally, other parts of this information help drive decisions about new faculty hires, programs, and student success initiatives. As needed, State of Division and a list of division needs are submitted to the VPAA for the Academic Affairs Report. These documents are utilized to make informed decisions on allocation of resources and program changes.

By a mandate from OSRHE, there are minimum KPI's that a program must meet in terms of number of majors and number of graduates. If a program does not meet these requirements over a three-year period then it can be suspended/deleted. Tracking enrollment in different majors and minors at the undergraduate level assists the institution in examining the health of particular majors. Overall student headcount and the breakdown of those counts into the different operational areas of the university allow for tracking the relative success of the student populations. USAO closely tracks the retention and persistence of students and their completion within degree programs. As an example of the institution learning and applying operational experience to improve institutional effectiveness and sustainability, as a result of low productivity, the American Indian Studies program was suspended in 2017.

Another example of USAO's making of data-driven staffing decisions is the recent addition of a tenure-track position in design within the theatre arts program. Historically, this program had as many as five faculty members, but in recent decades it has been a degree program with only one full-time faculty member. In the 2017 program review, the program showed evidence of the ability to attract, retain, and graduate students into successful post-graduate positions when a broader compliment of courses was offered by adjunct instructors. Investment in contract designers raised the quality and sustainability of the productions and also served recruiting efforts. Following the National Schools of Theatre values, USAO determined that theatre is a broad field and no undergraduate program offers a truly excellent or competitive Bachelor of Arts degree in theatre without multiple faculty members. While the department is not yet positioned to qualify for accreditation, the addition of another full-time position is an important step towards building this argument. The thorough annual reports and program review processes, academic programs establish goals and document program results, in order to make recommended changes for potential areas of improvement.

As evidenced throughout this assurance argument and as demonstrated through its mission, integrity, assessment, and budgeting structures, USAO is committed to continued institutional improvement and adaptation to ever-changing external factors. Just as the Mission Enhancement Plan (MEP) provided for USAO in the past, the current Strategic Plan and the campus master plan provides vision and framework for strategic systematic improvement in operations and pursuit of goals. The institution will continue to monitor performance and apply that knowledge to the betterment of the institution and community.

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma supports its educational programs with available resources and has mechanisms in place to maintain and strengthen its offerings in support of its mission. Decisions regarding fiscal and human resources, physical and technological infrastructure, and resource allocations are made to best support the university operations while striving for continual enhancements. Collaborative decision making through governance and administrative structures have resulted in systematic planning that is consistently aligned with our mission and priorities.

Sources

There are no sources.