

# **Assurance Argument**

## **Oklahoma Panhandle State University - OK**

**Review date: 10/19/2020**

# 1 - Mission

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

## 1.A - Core Component 1.A

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The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference 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 and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

## Argument

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### Response 1.A.1

On [October 12, 2017](#), a Strategic Planning Council was formed by the President to evaluate and revise if necessary the University's mission statement, which at the time stated: "[The mission of OPSU is to provide higher education primarily for people of the Oklahoma Panhandle and surrounding areas through academic programs, cultural enrichment, lifelong learning experiences, and public service activities. The educational experiences are designed to prepare students for roles in agriculture, business, education, government, and industry and to enrich their personal lives.](#)" The Strategic Planning Council was [comprised of](#) one faculty representative from each of the five schools at that time (now three colleges) in an effort to have a faculty-led revision process. After revising the Strategic Plan, the Council presented the proposed revision to the Executive Council, a group comprised of the University President, the Provost, the Vice President of Operations, the Associate Vice President of Fiscal Affairs, the Associate Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and the Director of Athletics. Following brief revisions, the mission, goals, and vision were presented to and approved by a larger representative group of [faculty, staff, and administration](#) on March 9, 2018. In the ensuing months, a Strategic Plan Scorecard was developed, and benchmark data were collected by the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Assessment. The final version of the mission, vision, values, and goals was made formal when they were presented as the OPSU Strategic Plan and approved by the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges on [June 14, 2019](#).

## Response to 1.A.2

The University's mission, vision, and goals were updated through the process described in 1.A.1, beginning in October 2017 and receiving formal approval from the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges on [June 14, 2019](#).

The University's [goals and vision](#) articulate the extent of the emphasis of the mission within the following areas:

In instruction and scholarship, learning is the ultimate outcome, which relates directly to the first goal of the University's Strategic Plan—Student Learning—which states, “Through empowerment, innovation, access, and student-centered support, Panhandle State will shape lifelong learners and improve student outcomes.” This is tracked specifically through the key performance indicators and measures of faculty-student ratio and average class size. The third goal listed in the University's Strategic Plan is Graduate Production, which also can be viewed as the outcome of the University's instruction and scholarship. For example, students learn the material through in-class/online instruction and their own scholarship; by learning and passing courses, they meet the degree requirements and graduate. Graduate production is defined as the University's ability to “Provide comprehensive student experience focused on promoting excellence across each student's academic career to graduation and beyond.” The University's vision also emphasizes instruction and scholarship through the statement that “Oklahoma Panhandle State University, a national leader among regional universities, will empower its learners and community through the cultivation of lifelong opportunities.” Hence, the opportunities OPSU provides through on-campus cultural, academic, and athletic activities promote empowerment to our students.

OPSU's emphasis on economic development is evidenced in the Lifelong Learning goal of the Strategic Plan. Through innovative partnerships and community engagement, the University participates in the economic development of the region it serves. Lifelong learning's economic development is tracked in the [key performance indicators and measures](#) through the number of community partnerships the University has. Specific instances of economic development that take place through the Lifelong Learning goal include partnerships with educational and career technology centers and partnerships with local businesses and industry groups. For example, OPSU has received a two-million-dollar gift to endow a scholarship to provide a [gap scholarship for education majors](#) in high-demand subjects and education specializations for schools in the Oklahoma Panhandle. In addition, OPSU partnered with High Plains Technology Center to apply for and receive an [Economic Development Administration grant](#) to open a Technical Education Center in Guymon, Oklahoma, to provide occupational training in high-demand industrial technology fields.

While not addressed specifically within the Resource Optimization goal, economic development is implied within this goal, which states that “Engagement, partnerships, and collaboration will empower Panhandle State to cultivate all resources responsibly.” A review of the [key performance indicators and measures](#) reiterates the University's emphasis on improving the quality of education for the University population through funds raised both by the University overall and by specific organizations within the University, such as the Art Department's annual fundraiser, the [Paul Farrell Memorial Art Auction](#); the rodeo team's annual [Top Hand Auction](#); the business club and computer club's fundraiser, [Perfect Pairings](#); and the [Panhandle State Foundation](#). Due to how rural this area is, the communities in the Oklahoma Panhandle are quite self-sufficient, but they still work together to support each other. The multiple partnerships OPSU has with businesses in the area help provide these businesses with a solid supply of qualified employees. The funds raised by the University provide students with scholarships, thereby allowing them to become qualified employees. The funds

raised by University organizations increase opportunities for students, enhancing their ability to become qualified employees. Thus, the current OPSU mission, and more specifically the Resource Optimization goal, reference the University's emphasis on economic development.

Public service is so critical to the operations of OPSU that reporting of both University and community service takes place in multiple measurements, including the [faculty professional development reporting form](#) and the [staff professional development reporting form](#), both of which are used in the [employee evaluation process annually](#). Public service is also assessed as part of the faculty promotions and rank and tenure qualifications outlined in the [Faculty Handbook](#). Examples OPSU's public commitment abound through faculty, staff, and students' volunteering at local events, such as [Guymon Community Clean-Up](#), [throughout each semester](#). The University's fourth goal emphasizes lifelong learning, articulating OPSU's intent toward the local and surrounding communities as one to "Improve the quality of life and transform the communities we serve through engagement and partnerships." Given the remoteness of the Oklahoma Panhandle region, opportunities for lifelong learning are scarce. However, through events sponsored and/or hosted by OPSU, such as [musical and theatrical productions](#), [guest speakers](#), and [free courses](#), the community has greater opportunities for exposure to new ideologies, cultures, and experiences, all of which promote lifelong learning. The University's vision statement also reinforces the commitment to public service by stating that it will "empower its learners and community through the cultivation of lifelong opportunities." Thus, the opportunities OPSU provides to the community demonstrate the University's emphasis on public service within the vision.

### Response to 1.A.3

The [Strategic Plan](#) identifies the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the provided offering and services of OPSU.

The nature of an organization, by definition, relates to the structuring of that organization. In its broadest sense, OPSU is an educational institution, and the University's motto, "progress through knowledge," stated in our mission statement, addresses the institution's educational nature. As an institution of higher education, more specifically as a regional university, OPSU has a strong foundation in agriculture. Our mission statement intentionally begins with the word *rooted* to imply the importance of agriculture within the University, the community, and the region. While agriculture remains important to the University, degree offerings have expanded to meet the needs of the region. Today, OPSU offers degrees in the fields of business, education, liberal arts, mathematics, nursing, and sciences. Narrowing to the specific organizational structure, OPSU is committed to the concept of resource optimization as stated in the goals of the University. One of the ways in which OPSU has optimized resources was [consolidating some of the academic units](#) on campus during Summer 2018. At that time, the five schools (School of Agriculture; School of Business and Technology; School of Education; School of Liberal Arts; School of Mathematics, Science, and Nursing) consolidated into three colleges (College of Agriculture, Science, and Nursing; College of Arts and Education; College of Business and Technology). The faculty-led proposal was intended to promote sustainability and a better sharing of resources.

The scope of an organization refers to its chosen focus. The focus of OPSU was addressed fully in section 1.A.2. To reiterate that section, OPSU's mission, vision, and goals have allowed the University to focus on three main areas: instruction/scholarship, economic development, and public service. The goals and vision included within the mission document, as discussed in 1.A.2, articulate



how current activities relate to the scope of OPSU.

The area most visible within [OPSU's mission and related documents](#) is the institution's intended constituents. While the mission refers to "students," the purpose of the University's goals is to "Provide excellence to all stakeholders." The goals further address "lifelong learners," "students," and "communities we serve." Our vision states our constituents as "learners and community."

#### **Response to 1.A.4**

The profile of OPSU's students has changed over the years, staying in line with the demographic profile of Texas County, Oklahoma. Population estimates as of [July 1, 2019](#), for Texas County indicate a Hispanic or Latino percentage of 47.0%, an increase of 5.0% since 2010. In February 2018, [OPSU was notified](#) that it had met the requirements for Hispanic Serving Institution status, a minimum of 25% Hispanic student body. This designation follows the increase in Hispanic students in the region. In addition, the overall graduation rate has increased from [14%](#) to [27%](#) as well.

OPSU produces educational, athletic, and cultural opportunities for our students and our area communities. These opportunities include choral and band presentations, theatrical presentations, Hispanic cultural nights, collegiate rodeo, and athletic competitions. The [addition of soccer](#) to our athletics offerings encourages unique athletic offerings for students within our region. Also, the development of a disc golf course, a walking trail, and the availability of a wellness facility—the Noble Activity Center—affords students, staff, faculty, and community members opportunities for exercise and wellness. The recent building of a [shooting sports complex](#) will also give students an opportunity to compete on the Panhandle State Rifle, Pistol, and Archery team. The opportunities for students and the community have increased tremendously over the last five years. The [No Man's Land Museum](#), which operates in partnership with the Oklahoma Historical Society and OPSU, offers a wide variety of notable exhibits dedicated to preserving and representing the history of the area. These diverse opportunities support the [mission](#) through the preparation of students for the "global community" through the promotion of the Lifelong Learning goal to "improve the quality of life and transform the communities we serve through engagement and partnerships."

To meet the ongoing needs of students across the increased reaches of OPSU, the University maintains a platform for the delivery of curriculum, including traditional classes on campus, online courses delivered through D2L Brightspace, and a newly added program through the University called [Early College High School](#) through which students receive an associate degree from OPSU when they graduate from high school. The increase in online courses and degrees are at the forefront of the University's offerings. These diverse modes of delivery support the [mission](#) through the inclusion of students in "student learning through empowerment, innovation, access, and student-centered support."

Recently, OPSU has added the [Academic Resource Center](#) to its services for students. The mission of the Academic Resource Center is to maximize the academic success and persistence to graduation of the students that the University serves through testing services, disability services, counseling services, career services, and individualized tutoring services. In addition, the Academic Resource Center collaborates with other campus offices and with faculty to support the development of knowledge and personal growth of our students.

In addition to the three full-time and one part-time staff members, the Academic Resource Center

also provides students with peer coaching and tutoring as well as access to Tutor.com services, and it has developed a well-received Student Success course taught within each discipline of the University to first-semester students.

### Response to 1.A.5

The University's website articulates its [Strategic Plan](#), which includes the mission, vision, values, and goals, and it emphasizes the plans and institutional priorities through the key performance indicators and measures.

The Strategic Plan, especially the emphasis on "Progress through Knowledge," is articulated throughout public documents and reporting, and information provided by the key performance indicators and measures is used in decision-making. Following is a non-exhaustive list of public documents containing the Strategic Plan:

- [OPSU Assessment Plan](#)
- [General Catalog](#)
- [Budget Request](#)
- [Recruitment](#)
- [OPSU University Profile](#)
- [Recruitment Materials](#)

### Sources

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- 10\_12 Strategic Planning
- 2017.01.18 HALO Offers Self Defense Course in Guymon
- 2018.08.08 New Structure to See Multiple Benefits
- 2019.01.16 Beto O Rouke Guest Speaker
- 2019.02.05 Annual Top Hand Auction Sets Record
- 2019.02.11 Perfect Pairings Sees Another Great Year
- 2019.03.06 Paris Comes to the Panhandle
- 2019.03.11 19th Annutal Art Auction Sees Achievement
- 2019.05.31 Soccer debut
- 2019.06.14 Board Meeting Minutes
- 2019.06.14 Board Meeting Minutes (page number 9)
- 2019.11.22 EDA Grant Announced at Welding Technology Training Center Groundbreaking
- Academic Resource Center
- Acceptance Banner 2024
- Budget Adjustment Form
- CCOM\_OPSU\_Mag\_Jan17
- CCOM\_Panhandle\_Magazine\_2019\_01
- CCOM\_Panhandle\_Magazine\_2019\_01 (page number 10)
- Community Clean Up
- Executive council 2017-2018
- Executive council 2017-2018 3.8
- Executive council 2017-2018 3.8 (page number 3)
- Executive council 2017-2018 Highlighted

- Faculty Evaluation Form
- FINAL OPSU\_Viewbook\_V4
- GNRI\_2020\_OPSU\_Assessment\_Plan
- HSI Designation
- IPEDS\_Graduation\_Rates\_Data 17-18
- IPEDS\_Graduation\_Rates\_Data 17-18 (page number 18)
- IPEDS\_Graduation\_Rates\_Data 18-19
- IPEDS\_Graduation\_Rates\_Data 18-19 (page number 16)
- KPI all
- KPI Resources Optimization 2
- No Mans Land Historical Society
- NY Resolutions 2020 Mailer
- OPSU Catalog 2015\_2016
- OPSU Catalog 2015\_2016 (page number 21)
- OPSU Early College High School Proposal
- OPSU-Employee\_Performance\_Appraisal
- Panhandle State Foundation Homepage
- Shooting Sports Complex
- Staff Reporting Form
- strategic plan Final copy
- Strategic Planning Committee Mtg 3\_9\_2018
- Texas County Census facts

## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
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 external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

### Argument

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#### Response to 1.B.1

Oklahoma Panhandle State University's (OPSU) mission and vision reflect a commitment to a public obligation with services provided to those outside the institution.

OPSU partners in many ways with Goodwell Public Schools, and in recognition of this partnership, Goodwell Public Schools has received the [Regents Business Partnership Excellence Award](#). In one partnership program, OPSU and Goodwell Public Schools have developed a modern, shared-use football and soccer stadium. Another shared-use project is an [after-school program](#) with Goodwell Public Schools and Guymon Public Schools for elementary schoolchildren. This program, designed to provide exceptional after-school care and learning experiences for children, is spearheaded by the OPSU Education Department, as elementary education students as well as students in other fields, supervised by certified public-school teachers, staff the program.

One of the [newest partnerships](#) is an early college program, [Early College High School](#), that allows local high school seniors to graduate with an associate degree. In addition, many students from other area high schools attend regular classes at OPSU through concurrent enrollment.

Another example of a public obligation effort is OPSU's annual hosting of a [swine clinic](#) in January in partnership with Goodwell Public Schools. The clinic focuses on showing swine and is open to and attended by students and parents from the area. The event is beneficial to 4-H and FFA members as well as their parents and local agriculture teachers.

#### Response to 1.B.2

OPSU is a state institution functioning under the [Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agriculture and Mechanical Colleges](#) for general governance and the [Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education](#) for academic programs and financial support. The budget for OPSU is developed annually based on the University's strategic plan and campus master plan. The budget is submitted for approval to both the Board of Regents for Oklahoma Agriculture and Mechanical Colleges and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

According to the [2018 Financial Statement](#), OPSU's top budget items included employee compensation and benefits, contractual services, and supplies and materials. The Fiscal Year 2018 financial statements from 2016 to 2018 reflect a [declining trend in non-operating revenue](#) amid an era in Oklahoma Higher Education of [declining state appropriations](#). Declines in these areas prompted careful decision-making regarding maximizing budgetary decisions to promote the mission of the University and prompted evaluations of all areas of spending. To ensure that instructional costs take priority over other costs, OPSU went through a transition and restructure to become better at optimizing the resources the University has even though the institution is operating with fewer resources from the State than it did in the past. Besides the transition from five schools to three colleges, reductions were made via retirements, realignments, and freezing unfilled positions, which reduced the financial burden of the salaries and benefits associated with those freezes. There were also reductions made to equipment budgets across the university, and the purchasing of equipment has been taking place through capital funds since Fiscal Year 2018. The University's strategic budgeting process encourages all budget heads to [align budgets and spending to the Strategic Plan](#), especially as they impact the strategic goals and impact the University's key performance indicators and measures. External pressures from state appropriation reductions coupled with internal changes to the Strategic Plan to align budgetary decisions to the Strategic Plan demonstrate great strides in resource optimization.

As previously stated, OPSU [publicly articulated](#) four goals in 2019 in support of its mission: Student Learning, Resource Optimization, Graduate Production, and Lifelong Learning. While the aforementioned budget items have decreased, within [student learning](#) retention has increased, enrollment has increased, course completion rates have increased, and the University was able to create the Academic Resource Center in Fall 2018 to further address, emphasize, and support student learning.

The University has become more optimized in its [use of resources](#) as budget amounts decreased, yet outside dollars raised by the University have increased, grant dollars raised by the University have increased, the number of donors to the University have increased, outside dollars raised by the Panhandle State Foundation have increased, and the overall number of scholarships distributed and scholarship dollars have increased.

### **Response to 1.B.3**

The [OPSU Bull Test](#), which has been running for 68 years, serves as an example of University's engagement with its external constituencies. In [2019](#), 49 bulls completed the test and were sold. The bull test provides a service to local and regional cattle breeders, connecting the University to identified constituents in the agricultural industry. The bull test was first organized in July of 1952 and consists of scientifically feeding registered bulls born between September of the previous year and March of the current year for five months between September and February.

In [2018](#), OPSU partnered with Anchor D Bank and the Freeman family to modernize and improve the football stadium and basketball arena. This partnership provides more modernized, safer facilities for the athletes as well as an area for local high schools to utilize as well. The local schools have also partnered with OPSU to allow the [use of sports facilities and fields](#).

In addition to the above, the community of Goodwell has the use of the [OPSU McKee Library](#) and [Noble Activity Center](#), as there is none in the community except for the ones on campus. The

community members can also be a part of cultural opportunities including [choir](#), [band](#), and [theatrical productions](#).

## Sources

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- 03.13.2019 Goodwell Public Schools Receive Regents Business Partnership Excellence Award
- 2017.10.27 Oklahoma Panhandle State University offering early college credit
- 2017.11.07 Panhandle Partners for the Future
- 2018.04.09 Anchor D Receives Regents Business Partnership Excellence Award
- 2019.02.07 Swine Clinic Supports Community Partnership
- 2019.02.20 Bull Sale Results
- 2020.02.04 68th Annual Beef Bull Performance Test
- Budget Adjustment Form
- Carroza Program English 11.15
- Ensemble Participation
- FAFF\_2018\_Financial\_Statement
- FAFF\_2018\_Financial\_Statement (page number 10)
- FAFF\_2018\_Financial\_Statement (page number 16)
- FY2018 State Appropriations Overview
- KPI Resources Optimization 2
- KPI Student Learning 1
- Noble Activity Center
- opsu board of regents
- OPSU Early College High School Proposal
- opsu osrhe
- PLC\_OPSU-LIBR-001\_McKee\_Library\_Policy
- PLC\_OPSU-LIBR-001\_McKee\_Library\_Policy (page number 5)
- strategic plan Final copy



## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

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The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

### Argument

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#### Response to 1.C.1

Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) diligently works to illustrate to on-campus and off-campus constituents the value of participating in curricular and co-curricular cultural activities that prepare students for citizenship and workplace success. For example, various courses across the different colleges and fields have components directed at understanding world events, cultures, humanities, economies, and histories, such as [Humanities 4000: Foundations of Western Civilization](#); [Economics 2113: Principles of Macroeconomics](#); [English 3353: World Literature](#); [Agriculture 4983: Agricultural Marketing](#); [Earth Science 2014: Natural Hazards](#). The descriptions of these courses illustrate that coursework in those classes includes significant content regarding multicultural perspectives of religion, ethnic heritage, humanities, and history, providing students with opportunities to learn and experience global ideas aimed at breaking down barriers of prejudice and ignorance.

Further, the University supports campus activities that foster an understanding and appreciation of cultures beyond and within U.S. borders. The OPSU Hispanic American Leadership Organization (HALO) is a well-respected and active student group that sponsors various events to highlight and educate about Hispanic culture and history. In conjunction with Hispanic Heritage Month, HALO hosts a yearly [Noche de Gala](#) featuring Alma Folklórica, the Guymon High School Mexican dance troupe; Latin American food; and an honored speaker of Hispanic origin who is either an OPSU graduate or a leader in the local, state, or national Hispanic community. In the past, HALO developed a month of lectures and activities about minority cultures in the U.S., such as black Americans and women. HALO members distinguish themselves at the OPSU commencement exercises by wearing a *serape* stole indicating their heritage and participation in the organization. This campus organization carries and provides leadership opportunities for OPSU students as well. For instance, HALO members have served in student government, have won National Hispanic College Quizzes (1,2), and have [secured scholarships and national internship opportunities](#) by dint of their heritage, HALO affiliation, and leadership experience.

OPSU students and faculty also participate off-campus in cultural and diverse activities. In Spring 2019, Guymon, Oklahoma, through the auspices of the Main Street Guymon office, created a "world" event called [Pangaea](#), which featured local residents—including many OPSU representatives—from the world's seven continents. Participants shared food items and their country of origin's history with

the individuals who came to experience the event. Several OPSU faculty and students with international origins represented their native countries.

OPSU understands and fosters the belief in providing opportunities to participate in events and college courses that broadcast the importance of global understanding for success in today's world beyond graduation. Students from different walks of life and diverse backgrounds have been, and continue to be, successful in various fields and positions, such as [marketing at a bank](#) or [IT security at NASA](#).

### **Response to 1.C.2**

OPSU demonstrates that incorporating as many cultures as possible among its student body is healthy and educational. To prove such inclusivity regarding the student body, in [Fall 2019](#) the University's student body consisted of 52% Caucasian, 29% Hispanic, and 19% of a variety of races.

The University encourages student participation in all activities regardless of participants' backgrounds, with the understanding that diverse cultures contribute to a better understanding of a global community and the preparation of successful students. To illustrate that OPSU celebrates inclusivity, [beginning in Fall 2019](#), soccer became an official NAIA sport offering with both men's and women's teams. Regarding the addition of soccer teams, President Tim Faltyn said, "We have a diverse campus and community. Soccer will offer opportunities for athletes, as well as an activity that crosses many cultures already living in our region. Anytime you can both bolster our athletics program, while also serving a broad segment of our region, it's a win-win situation." To illustrate the international flavor of OPSU soccer, in 2019, 16 men from at least 13 nations populated the [men's soccer roster](#).

In addition, the Hispanic Services Office provides support and camaraderie for students of Hispanic heritage. According to the office's [mission statement](#), services offered include financial aid and scholarship information, student advocacy, and leadership development, as evidenced in the office's assistance of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) students' paperwork and renewals, as well as in aiding Hispanic students obtain federal internships.

Furthermore, OPSU is committed to diversity in its treatment and consideration of job applicants from all cultures as well as faculty members or staff members with minority or international origins. To this end, OPSU upholds its value of inclusion in its [mission documents](#), as it celebrates its diversity by publicizing the talents and successes of minority constituents, including a celebrated artist, an alumnus and English instructor, an Oklahoma Indian elder, a mathematics and physics instructor, an education faculty member, and an agricultural business faculty member. OPSU proudly heralds and shares its integrated global activities and representatives with the region.

### **Response to 1.C.3**

OPSU consistently fosters multinational and global points of view. For example, the University is proud to announce that it is the [only state Hispanic Serving Institution \(HSI\)](#) of higher education in the State of Oklahoma. The U.S. Department of Education bestowed this title upon OPSU, as the University has a Hispanic/Latino enrollment of at least 25%. In addition, OPSU supports [Upward](#)

[Bound](#), a federal program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. This program invites area minority and/or disadvantaged high school students from 8th grade to recent high school graduates to campus during the summers to experience the collegiate atmosphere, live in dormitories, reinforce common core studies, develop lifelong learning skills, participate in community service opportunities, and travel to unique locations for additional learning. Upward Bound introduces prospective college students to college life, and the experience shows them OPSU's welcoming atmosphere where students who wish to gain an education may do so by earning an undergraduate degree that can contribute to improving their lives and to a more prosperous and satisfying future.

Black History Month is celebrated yearly in February, and events ([films](#), speeches, [re-enactments](#), concerts, etc.) are supported by all segments of the University, though not only during this particular month. For instance, in February 2015, the Music Department held a concert featuring [African American](#) composers, and later that year *[Driving Miss Daisy](#)*, a play featuring an African-American character and African-American as well as Jewish issues and themes, was performed by students and faculty in November 2015. To further awareness of minority issues, HALO has also sponsored [events](#) to acknowledge Women's History Month. To foment cultural entertainment and pride, a play—*[Waiting for the Hearse](#)*—was mounted both with performances in Spanish and performances in English through the auspices of the financial support of the Masonic Grant for Cultural Enrichment and performed by bilingual students and community members.

Another play supported financially by the Masonic Grant for Cultural Enrichment in Fall 2017 was originally written in Spanish by Peruvian playwright Mariana de Althaus. The play—*[No One Cries in This Play](#)*—was translated with the playwright's permission by the director of the production and OPSU instructor of Spanish and English. Cast members included Hispanic actors, student volunteers who auditioned for the roles. Participants in these theatrical events recognized the value of the multicultural aspect of this campus-sponsored performance.

To further foster a climate of respect, awareness, and understanding among its constituents, and to further support the University's mission, vision, goals, and values—among which inclusion is prevalent—a Council for Diversity and Inclusivity was formed in Summer 2020. The council is comprised of faculty and staff, and its [mission](#) is to “create an environment of inclusivity, acceptance, and growth,” as it “serves individuals and groups of all identities and intersections.”

[OPSU's Strategic Plan](#) addresses inclusion and diversity; specifically, the mission has a focus on “success in a global community.” One of the values of the Strategic Plan is “Inclusion: We embrace and support diverse cultures.” As a result of such, the University strives to sow and reap the benefits of acknowledging and celebrating its diversity through a myriad of programs, events, and opportunities available to all University constituents; as a result, OPSU illustrates to a broad audience that knowing and respecting multicultural achievements and contributions are vital to us all.

## Sources

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- 2015.02.24 African American Composers
- 2015.10.28 2015 Hispanic College Quiz Show
- 2015.11.17 Driving Miss Daisy
- 2016.11.08 Waiting for the Hearse
- 2017.10.03 National Hispanic College Quiz
- 2017.10.25 No one cries in this play

- 2018 Black History Month
- 2018.08.01 Great Summer for Upward Bound
- 2018.09.05 Hispanic Heritage Month Kicks off with Alumni Banquet
- 2019 Mens Soccer Roster - Oklahoma Panhandle State University Athletics
- 2019.05.31 Soccer Beautiful Game debut
- AG 4983 Spring 2020 syllabus
- CCOM\_Panhandle\_Magazine\_2017\_11
- CCOM\_Panhandle\_Magazine\_2017\_11 (page number 6)
- CCOM\_Panhandle\_Magazine\_2019\_09
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- Diversity and Insusion webpage
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- Hispanic Student Services
- HSI Designation
- Hum4000 Syllabus rev. 2.25.2020
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- NCES Enrollment Fall 2019
- Pangaea Program
- strategic plan Final copy
- Syllabus EASC 2014 Natural Hazards Online 1st Session Spring 2020.pdf
- Womens History Month Flyer 2017

## 1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

### Summary

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Dr. Tim Faltyn was selected by the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges in [April 2016](#) to serve as Oklahoma Panhandle State University's (OPSU) 15th president. In July 2017, [Dr. Julie Dinger](#) and [Dr. Ryan Blanton](#) were hired by OPSU to serve as Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs and Vice President of Outreach, respectively (these positions' titles changed to Provost and Vice President of Operations, respectively, in July 2020). The new administration brought new energy and focus to campus; therefore, the mission of the University underwent an update to reflect the new vision. That update was formally approved by the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges on [June 14, 2019](#). Since the mission's approval, the [Strategic Plan](#) has also been updated to align closely with the new mission, vision, and goals of the University. Both the mission, as well as its components, and the Strategic Plan are available publicly on the University's website. Significant efforts have been made to align with the mission and its components the different programs, support services, enrollment profile, budgeting priorities, diversity, processes, activities, and commitments. In so doing, OPSU has demonstrated an understanding of its position as a regional university under the authority of a land-grant board and is prepared to apply its mission to promote excellence in the preparation of students for success in a global community.

### Sources

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- 04-29-16 Special Board Meeting MINUTES.pdf
- 04-29-16 Special Board Meeting MINUTES.pdf (page number 2)
- 2017.03.31 Dr. Dinger Named Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs
- 2017.04.04 Blanton Named Vice President of Outreach
- 2019-06-14 Board Meeting Minutes
- strategic plan Final copy

## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

### 2.A - Core Component 2.A

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The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

### Argument

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#### Response to 2.A.1

Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) began developing a revised mission statement in Fall 2017 in a broad faculty-driven effort organized by the Office of Academic and Student Affairs at the [direction](#) of the President, beginning with a kickoff [meeting](#) with a Strategic Planning Council comprised of faculty representatives nominated by the academic deans from each academic school. The new mission statement was formally adopted after being approved by the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges on [June 14, 2019](#).

A Strategic Planning Council was called by the Provost on [October 12, 2017](#). The group, comprised of faculty representing each of the five schools (now three colleges), worked by email and in regular face-to-face [meetings](#) to develop the draft language of a new mission, vision, and shared values which would eventually become the central elements of the University's Strategic Plan. The group presented its draft for comment to the President in [November 2017](#) and in [February 2018](#) received feedback that informed the presentation to the campus community in a month later. The group was tasked with revising the mission for review, discussion, and approval by a larger group of University representatives in [Spring 2018](#). In the ensuing months, a Strategic Plan Scorecard with key performance indicators and measures was developed based on the draft goals and feedback from group members. Benchmark data were collected by the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Assessment. Using those data, targets were made for each key performance indicator and measure. The final version of the Strategic Plan, including the mission, vision, values, and goals were formally adopted upon approval by the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges on [June 14, 2019](#).

#### Response to 2.A.2

OPSU operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources, and auxiliary functions. Integrity in financial functions is evidenced by the processes and policies which the University



follows to ensure fiscally responsible budgeting processes and annual budgets which are overseen and approved by the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges, as outlined in board policy [Finance and Management 2.01](#). The University's governing board approves the annual budget annually in May, and upon approval, the proposed budget including proposed rates for tuition, fees, room, and board are brought before the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education every year in [June](#) for final consideration and approval. In addition to the oversight and control provided by the governing and coordinating boards, OPSU is subject to annual external audits and periodically undergoes area or unit-specific audits from the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges Office of Internal Audit at the request of the University leadership. The Office of Internal Audit's operations are set forth in the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges Policy [Operations of the Office of Internal Audit 1.09](#) and include risk-based audit services for the Board and all institutions.

Auxiliary functions—such as the Firestone Meat Laboratory, the University farm, the OPSU Bookstore, and athletics ticket sales—are subject to the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges [Office of Internal Audit](#). The University Farm and agriculture operations underwent analysis ([1](#), [2](#)) by the Office of Internal Audit in 2017/2018, which resulted in several improvements in internal control, inventory practices, and internal policy changes including two-signature sign-off for livestock sales. The Information Technology Assessment Audit from [May 2020](#) included recommendations for improvement in physical access security, asset tracking and management, campus information security, and staffing. Of these recommendations, [asset tracking](#) has already begun. These audits demonstrate that the University operates with integrity, as each time an audit is performed, recommended actions are used to improve operations.

OPSU operates with academic integrity as evidenced in policies located in the annual [General Catalog](#) and [Student Code of Conduct](#). In the General Catalog and in the Student Code of Conduct, violations of academic integrity are explicitly outlined as are methods for addressing suspected violations of academic integrity. All syllabi also have a [memo](#) sent by the Office of the Provost about Academic Integrity.

The University complies with Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education policy regarding integrity in all aspects of its operations, including academic integrity. Many policies and procedures are overseen by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to ensure academic integrity, including the following policies: [Retention Policies 3.9.1](#), [Credit for Prior Learning 3.16.1](#), and [Student Assessment and Remediation 3.20.3](#). In addition to these policies with explicit protections regarding academic integrity, the University submits all new program requests, program modifications, contractual and consortial arrangements, and credit for prior learning for approval by the [Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges](#) and the [Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education](#) with specific provisions to ensure academic integrity.

Integrity is also evidenced in the Office of Human Resources and its [hiring practices](#), which follow national guidelines for Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as well as policies established by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the state, and the governing board. Further, OPSU does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, and veteran status in its programs and services.

## Sources

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- 1.09 Operations of the Office of Internal Audit
- 2.01 Finance and Management
- 2019.06.14 Board Meeting Minutes
- 2019.06.14 Board Meeting Minutes (page number 13)
- 2020-6-24-State Regents Agenda - special meeting(1)
- AM Policy Manual
- CATS\_2019-2020\_OPSU\_General\_Catalog
- CATS\_2019-2020\_OPSU\_General\_Catalog (page number 64)
- Consulting Report for Management
- Faculty - Academic Integrity Policy
- HR\_AAP\_Document
- Internal Audit office
- OPSU Consulting PAR Report
- OPSU IT Assessment Audit
- OSRHE Chapter 3
- OSRHE Chapter 3 (page number 86)
- OSRHE Chapter 3 (page number 151)
- OSRHE Chapter 3 (page number 190)
- PLC\_Student\_Code\_of\_Conduct
- PLC\_Student\_Code\_of\_Conduct (page number 8)
- President VPASA Strategic Plan
- Strategic Planning Council Campus Meeting and Committee Assignments 3.9.18
- Strategic Planning Council Final Update and Next Steps 11.17.17
- Strategic Planning Council First Meeting
- Strategic Planning Council Planning Meeting 11.10.17
- Strategic Planning Council Updates President 2.14.18
- Telecommuting Procedures and Form
- Telecommuting Procedures and Form (page number 9)

## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

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The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

### Argument

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#### Response to 2.B.1

The Oklahoma Panhandle State University's (OPSU) [General Catalog](#) includes program requirements for all degree levels. The catalog is updated yearly through a process that begins with drafts given to each director and/or dean responsible for each section to revise, with final approval of the revised drafts given by the Provost. In addition to the General Catalog, course schedules are available every semester for students to register in courses for the following term. The [course schedule](#) goes through a three-draft approval process. Once the college deans have approved the third draft, the schedule goes live on Self-Service Banner (OPSU's data management system) for students to browse. In addition, both the General Catalog and the course schedule are accessed publicly through the OPSU website. Students can also check the progress they have made in their degrees digitally through the use of [Degree Works](#) on Self-Service Banner or on paper and PDF format through the use of [curriculum maps](#). Curriculum maps are updated as necessary by program heads, and advisors can use these when they meet with advisees to plan the semester ahead.

The OPSU website is the University's most visible and fastest means of communicating with all stakeholders. The Office of Communications and webmaster work directly with the various campus departments, offices, and organizations to ensure the accuracy of their respective content on the University website. For instance, academic offerings and requirements are updated on the website from the General Catalog on a yearly basis; faculty and staff information is coordinated and validated through Human Resources, the campus email system, and individually supplied updates when room/building or phone information changes; information about the costs to students is coordinated through the Office of Fiscal Affairs and the Office of Financial Aid; and information regarding the governance structure and accreditation relationships is coordinated through the Provost and the Office of Assessment.

A [personnel directory](#) is available online with office, phone, and position information. As staff and faculty are hired or move offices or change phone numbers, they can submit new or updated information by using the "[Request an Update](#)" button to update their information on the website. This request is automatically sent to both the webmaster and the Human Resources director to ensure that the request for changes in the directory is aligned with the corresponding position listed in the Office of Human Resources. When an employee is hired or exits university employment, the webmaster is included on the welcome and exit emails that include the information which should be added or changed in the directory. The Office of Human Resources and the webmaster work together each

semester to ensure accuracy through the use of employee and title checks. Information about [faculty and staff degrees](#) are included in the annual General Catalog. This information is checked annually through the revision of the General Catalog by the Office of Academic and Student Affairs.

The General Catalog includes a listing of [tuition and fees](#) as well as [cafeteria meal plan](#) costs, and the OPSU website also has available a [Net Price Calculator](#), built using the U.S. Department of Education's calculator. [Housing costs](#) are available on the Housing webpage and in the [General Catalog](#).

The governance structure of our institution is found on the website under the [General Information](#) section. On that page is a link directly to the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges website. Also included is a direct link to the Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education.

A published list of all current [accreditations and statuses](#) is found at the OPSU website listing of accrediting agencies for the institution and its programs and the University's status, including (but not limited to) the Higher Learning Commission, the Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation, and the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing. The state Office of Educational Quality and Accountability [2019 annual report](#) also contains information on OPSU's accreditation of its teacher education program.

## Response to 2.B.2

As a public institution of higher education, OPSU's top priority is the education of its students. OPSU is classified by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education as Regional University. The functions of a Regional University are laid out in policy [OSRHE 3.2.4](#) and include:

- Both lower-division and upper-division undergraduate study in several fields leading to the baccalaureate degree.
- A limited number of programs leading toward the first-professional degree when appropriate to an institution's strengths and the needs of the state.
- Graduate study below the doctor's level, primarily in teacher education but moving toward limited comprehensiveness in fields related to Oklahoma's manpower needs.
- Extension and public service responsibilities in the geographic regions in which they are located.
- Responsibility for institutional and applied research in those areas related closely to their program assignments.
- Responsibility for regional programs of economic development.
- Perform other functional or programmatic responsibilities as authorized by the State Regents.

The University contributes to the educational experience of its stakeholders in different ways and has evidence about claims for its contributions to educational experiences.

Learning takes place in all aspects and facets of the University, including in its engagement with the local community. For its community engagement, OPSU keeps a [community events calendar](#) where schedules and descriptions of events are recorded. The key performance indicators and measures from the Strategic Plan for the [Lifelong Learning goal](#) are also recorded to keep track of the number of community partnerships, the number of students reporting community outreach, attendance at

events, and the progress made from one year to the next.

In addition to the typical classroom/online work, experiential learning takes place on campus. For example, the [University farm](#) and the [Firestone Meats Laboratory](#) are two such locations, as students move from theory learning to actual practical, hands-on learning. Health and Physical Education majors whose studies concentrate on sports and exercise management take two internship courses ([syllabus 1](#), [syllabus 2](#)) during which they work alongside and are supervised by the Head Athletics Trainer during games in which situations they learn by doing and applying already-learned concepts. Education students also have a major [experiential learning](#) period when, during their last semester, they student teach at a public school where they have the opportunity to put into practice what they learned in their college classes.

For OPSU to continue on its path to being more self-sustained and less reliant on governmental monies, economic contributions to the University play a major role. Economic development contribution claims are evidenced in the key performance indicators and measures as a part of the [Resource Optimization](#) goal by tracking money raised by the University and the Panhandle State Foundation, number of scholarships and their total value, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) recipients, and housing occupancy.

## Sources

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- 2019 OEQA Annual Report
- 2019 OEQA Annual Report (page number 8)
- AS in Business Administration Curriculum Map 3.14.19
- CATS\_2019-2020\_OPSU\_General\_Catalog
- CATS\_2019-2020\_OPSU\_General\_Catalog (page number 8)
- CATS\_2019-2020\_OPSU\_General\_Catalog (page number 26)
- CATS\_2019-2020\_OPSU\_General\_Catalog (page number 28)
- Course Schedule
- Degree Works
- Events Calendar
- Firestone Meat Lab
- Housing Rates
- HPE Internship 1 syllabus and grid for fall 2019
- HPE Internship syllabus II
- KPI Life-Long Learning 4
- KPI Resources Optimization 2
- Net Price Calculator Web
- OPSU Accreditation
- OPSU General Information webpage
- OSRHE Chapter 3
- OSRHE Chapter 3 (page number 14)
- Personnel Directory Update Form
- Student Teaching EDUC 4750 Jerry Mihelic Spring 19
- University Farm



## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

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The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Argument

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#### Response to 2.C.1

The Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges is trained and knowledgeable with respect to the University's financial and academic policies and practices and exercises legal and fiduciary responsibility for Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) as laid out in [Governance Policy 1.03](#) which outlines the responsibility of the board to promote open communication between presidents and the board and to provide advice and consultation with presidents regarding all matters related to the institutions it oversees, especially those of strategic importance and those which pose the possibility of significant risk to the institution.

Board members receive an orientation from the Board CEO upon appointment to the board and receive continuing support from the Administrative Office of the Board as set forth in policy [Operations of the Executive/Administrative Office of the Board 1.07](#). In addition to the support from the Administrative Office of the Board, [annual retreats](#) for all board members are held to provide professional development and additional opportunities to enhance understanding of each system institution's position and challenges for the upcoming year.

In [Finance and Management Policy 2.01](#) are outlined the key standards and procedures regarding the financial information and reports to be submitted regularly to the board for review and include accounting and fiscal management according to NACUBO standards, fiscal year budgets for approval of each university function, enrollment reports, housing occupancy reports, livestock reports, Quarterly Financial Statements, and Quarterly Employment Reports.

#### Response to 2.C.2

The Governing Board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance OPSU as set forth by policy [Structure of the Institutional Agendas for Board Meetings and Identification of Items](#)



[\*Requiring Action by the Board 1.12\*](#). This policy aids presidents in identifying the matters which require formal action from the Board, and those which are deemed to be information items not requiring action but of significance for the Board to inform deliberations. Institutional presidents are required by statute to keep the Board informed of all essential and sensitive issues in addition to those issues outlined as requiring Board approval. The Board has full responsibility and authority as specified by law to control and administer all institutions within the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges according to Article VI, Section 31a of the Oklahoma Constitution and policy [\*Constitutional Authority of the Board 1.01\*](#).

### **Response to 2.C.3**

The Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during decision-making deliberations. Internal constituents may address the board regarding the institutional business as set forth in policy [\*Presentations to the Board by Representatives of the Campus Community 1.11\*](#). External constituencies may address the board according to [\*Requests by the Public for Information or to Present Matters to the Board 1.17\*](#).

### **Response to 2.C.4**

The Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external policies according to the policy [\*Ethics 3.05\*](#), which outlines specifically the critical importance of ethical behavior and integrity in all endeavors including the promotion of fair, respectful environments; the dignity and respect of all persons; the responsibility to maintain the public trust; the critical importance to maintain privacy and confidentiality of all official records; the need to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations; the avoidance of conflicts of interest which would erode credibility; the importance of acting responsibly and in good faith; and the need for scrupulousness of all business dealings including the responsibility to report suspected fraudulent or unethical activity through the Board's confidential reporting process.

### **Response to 2.C.5**

Throughout the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges [\*Policy Manual\*](#) are references to the responsibility of each institution to develop an appropriate policy regarding specific areas for which the board delegates day-to-day management of operations. One such example of this delegation is found in [\*Student Activities and Organizations 1.19\*](#). Academic matters for which board approval is required include new courses, new instructional programs, curricular and degree modification, off-campus course offerings, new degree programs or the termination of degree programs, and report of program reviews as outlined in policy [\*Structure of Institutional Agendas for Board Meetings and Identification of Items Requiring Action by the Board 1.12\*](#). These academic matters are proposed to the Board for approval by OPSU after consideration of internal process and constituencies. In addition, any institutional policy deemed necessary by OPSU is expected to be developed and approved according to [\*1.12\*](#) or [\*Institutional Policies 1.13\*](#).

In addition to the aforementioned specific areas where the Board delegates authority for daily operations to the University, the [\*Governance Philosophy 1.03\*](#) provides for the Board to delegate executive powers specifically to the institution's President and his assistants. This policy further outlines the consultative relationship and expectation for open communication between the Board and the President.

## Sources

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- 2020-08-27 28 Board Retreat Agenda
- AM Constitutional Authority of the Board
- AM Ethics Policy
- AM Finance and Management Policy
- AM Governance Philosophy
- AM Institutional Policies
- AM Operations of the Executive. Administrative Office of the Board
- AM Policy Manual
- AM Presentations to the Board by Reps of the Campus Comm Policy
- AM Requests by the Public for Info or to Present Matters to the Board
- AM Structure of Institutional Agendas... Policy
- AM Student Activities and Organizations

## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

### Argument

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#### Response to 2.D

Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) believes that “[academic freedom is essential to both teaching and research](#).” In our academic setting, the University considers academic freedom a fundamental pillar for the advancement of truth, and this freedom carries responsibilities. While faculty are entitled to full freedom in their research and publishing endeavors, OPSU expects its teaching staff to continue performing their other academic duties adequately. In the classroom, faculty have the freedom to discuss appropriate, germane subject matters, for it is these discussions that promote the advancement of knowledge and truth.

Outside the classroom, the faculty member is a citizen free from institutional censorship or discipline; nevertheless, the position held in the community imposes special obligations on the teacher. When using social networking websites, utmost discretion is necessary when posting personal information, images, or language via the University’s technology, equipment, or email addresses, for the public may judge the entire profession or institution by the individual’s posts. The website created by the Office of State Finance and the Office of the State Attorney General contains the latest information to help understand the scope and/or limitations of the use of social media by state employees.

Academically, students have the freedom to choose classes. For example, in the [general education curriculum](#), all students have choices of history classes to take, humanities classes to take, liberal arts and science classes to take, and/or social science classes to take, and in their major areas, most [degree plans](#) have room for elective courses, giving students further opportunities for academic choices.

### Sources

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- BA in English Curriculum Map
- CATS\_2019-2020\_OPSU\_General\_Catalog
- CATS\_2019-2020\_OPSU\_General\_Catalog (page number 72)
- HR\_Faculty\_Handbook
- HR\_Faculty\_Handbook (page number 43)

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

### Argument

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#### Response to 2.E.1

Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) is a regional public university where faculty are encouraged to engage in research. Research encouragement is addressed through the [annual reporting](#) of faculty professional development, and it is also included as a part of moving up in [rank and achieving tenure](#). The University has an [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB) committee comprised of faculty across several disciplines whose task is to provide oversight and ensure compliance, ethical behavior, and fiscal accountability.

OPSU applies for grants through the Oklahoma State University Agriculture and Mechanical Colleges system grant writer. This employee operates under Oklahoma State University's (OSU) policies. As a result, OPSU uses [OSU Grants and Contracts Policies and Procedures](#) when providing oversight in grant operated research.

#### Response to 2.E.2

Education and teaching are at the forefront of OPSU's mission and operation, and to that aim, the University has a number of support services that effectively ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by faculty, students, and staff.

The Marvin E. McKee Library has current databases, which in the past years have [increased their offerings](#). Through the use of these databases, research and scholarly practice are done using the most appropriate and up-to-date resources available to the University's stakeholders, allowing for integrity and accuracy.

In addition, professional development funds are available, such as the [Baughman Funds](#) for faculty and staff, which can be used in various ways--from traveling to conferences, to dues for online meetings, to tuition reimbursement. In the recent past, for instance, Baughman Funds have most frequently been used towards the completion of graduate degrees by both staff and faculty.

OPSU operates with academic integrity and provides support by ensuring the Academic Integrity

Policy is located in different places that make it easily available to students, faculty, and staff. The full Academic Integrity Policy is available in the [General Catalog](#), and a shortened version can be located in the [Student Code of Conduct](#). In addition, every course syllabus includes a [statement](#) regarding academic integrity from the Office of the Academic and Student Affairs.

To support students and ensure integrity of research and scholarly practice, the Academic Resource Center offers all students access to [Tutor.com](#) and [on-campus peer tutors](#), as access to these tutoring services provides the student population with the opportunity to ensure they carry out their work with academic integrity.

Furthermore, students and faculty have access to [Turnitin](#), a web-based application that matches text similarities to determine plagiarism. By using this application, students can check their work to ensure they meet academic integrity practices. Mathematics courses, for example, use an algorithm-based computer program called [Connect Math](#) through which students get different problems than their peers do to ensure integrity in scholarly practice and to deter students' cheating in homework assignments. Also, homework is considered more of a reinforcement opportunity instead of an assessment of student learning, and, as a result, homework only counts as a small portion of the students' final grade.

### **Response to 2.E.3**

OPSU provides students guidance in the ethics of research and the use of information in the various classes that require students to conduct research. For example, in the required [composition](#) courses, faculty introduce best practices for conducting research and appropriate ways to integrate sources into students' writing. The first-year student success course [addresses](#) plagiarism and professionalism as well as effective ways to use the library's search engine to locate peer-reviewed articles and journals.

While there are no campus-wide research practice guidelines, each faculty member who oversees research projects provides students with guidance on research ethics and appropriate use of information resources. For example, the Animal Welfare Committee has the [policy](#) to clarify the appropriate care of animals for agricultural courses.

The Marvin E. McKee Library also provides a LibGuide on [citation styles](#), [writing](#), and [plagiarism](#), which students can use to ensure they follow appropriate guidelines for the integration of sources into their writing as they work on their research projects.

### **Response to 2.E.4**

Academic honesty and integrity are important in all facets of all educational settings; therefore, OPSU ensures that its Academic Integrity Policy is available in various locations for all stakeholders to be aware of it. For instance, the Academic Integrity Policy is available in full in the [General Catalog](#), and the [Student Code of Conduct](#) also addresses issues of academic honesty and integrity. When academic honesty and integrity are not followed, the University has infractions reported on an [academic misconduct form](#), which is used to report said academic misconduct to the Dean of Student Affairs. On a student's first offense, plagiarism is treated as a learning opportunity, during which the Dean of Student Affairs counsels the student on plagiarism and gives him/her strategies to

avoid it, explaining why this action is a problem. The student is placed on one semester of conduct probation. Academic penalties are given by the instructor of the class in which the academic misconduct occurred. On a repeat offense, the Dean of Student Affairs alerts the Provost in the event she would like to recommend any action. The conduct penalty is somewhat greater, as academic misconduct is addressed as a [code violation in section two](#) of the code of conduct.

## Sources

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- 1213 syllabus--Fall 2020
- Academic Misconduct Form
- Animal Usage Policy
- CATS\_2019-2020\_OPSU\_General\_Catalog
- CATS\_2019-2020\_OPSU\_General\_Catalog (page number 64)
- COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS 2020\_updated
- COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS 2020\_updated (page number 11)
- Connect Math
- Faculty - Academic Integrity Policy
- HR\_Faculty\_Handbook
- HR\_Faculty\_Handbook (page number 63)
- IPEDS\_Academic\_Libraries\_Data
- IPEDS\_Academic\_Libraries\_Data (page number 3)
- LibGuide Citation Styles
- LibGuide Copyright and Fair Use
- LibGuide Technical Writing
- OSU Grants and Contracts Policies and Procedures
- PLC\_Professional\_Development\_for\_Faculty\_and\_Staff\_Plan
- PLC\_Professional\_Development\_for\_Faculty\_and\_Staff\_Plan (page number 3)
- PLC\_Student\_Code\_of\_Conduct
- PLC\_Student\_Code\_of\_Conduct (page number 8)
- Professional Development Form
- Turnitin
- tutor
- Tutor request form
- Week 4 - Student Professionalism
- Week 4 - Student Professionalism (page number 2)



## 2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

### Summary

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Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) acts with integrity in all aspects of its operations. To ensure fair and ethical behavior, OPSU follows the policies presented by its governing board and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, as well as other state, federal, and accrediting agencies. The University's governing board is knowledgeable of OPSU's financial and academic policies and practices, and it exercises legal and fiduciary responsibility for the University. In addition, OPSU undergoes audits regularly, and the University uses a system of checks and balances to ensure that all information disseminated is accurate and updated and supportable for any claim it makes. Furthermore, OPSU is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression, as evidenced through policy and practice. It is also committed to academic honesty and ethical research practices using accessible policy, training, and programs to ensure success.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

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

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

### 3.A - Core Component 3.A

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The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its 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

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### Response to 3.A.1

As an institution of higher education, Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) understands that rigor appropriate to its degree offerings is necessary. To that aim, courses and programs at OPSU are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.

All academic programs undergo [program reviews](#) on a four-year rotational basis, a process more frequent than the five-year required by the State of Oklahoma. Each program maintains an [assessment plan](#) and if the data require a plan update, it can be updated yearly. Assessment evidence is collected annually via a process called [Annual Assessment](#). A part of each program's Annual Assessment requires a reflection about changes made to the program's assessments and benchmarks to help decide if they meet the program's student learning outcomes, created under that institution's shared academic goals across all programs. The [general education](#) curriculum has a unified assessment plan with evidence collected each term. At the moment of this writing, as we just updated our baseline, we are working on getting data to determine what improvements and changes need to take place to continue improving student outcomes.

When program and course changes need to be made, all information is submitted to the [Curriculum Committee](#) for review through first and second readings for approval prior to any implementation.

In addition, to ensure OPSU's rigor and course requirements are similar to those of other universities, OPSU is a member of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's [Course Equivalency Project](#), a network of universities whose program heads in the different disciplines come together once a year to discuss how their individual course offerings align with those of other universities in the state in order to make smoother transferring credits among universities in the Oklahoma System of Higher Education. The Course Equivalency Project has already aligned course descriptions and goals, and in Fall 2020, alignment and discussion of student learning outcomes will

take place.

### **Response to 3.A.2**

OPSU shares three academic learning goals across all programs, all of which align with the University's mission and Strategic Plan. These goals, which are found in the [OPSU Assessment Plan](#), include the following: (1) Oral and Written Communication: Communicate effectively using written, oral, and symbolic languages; (2) Analytical and Quantitative Reasoning: Read and think critically by analyzing, assimilating, and applying information; and (3) Social Responsibility and Cultural Awareness: Be an aware and active participant in the global, dynamic community.

These learning goals help align each program to the [mission](#) of the University. For example, goal 3 emphasizes the "success in a global community" aspect of the OPSU mission. Goals 1 and 2 are focused on "promoting excellence" of student success, a main portion of the University's mission. Under these goals, each academic program creates [unique student learning outcomes](#) to achieve their specific programmatic needs.

### **Response to 3.A.3**

OPSU has the [same three learning goals](#) for each program, and the objectives and student learning outcomes in each program correspond with the three University-wide learning goals. Regardless of the mode of delivery, each program's student learning outcomes are the same to ensure consistency across modes of delivery and class sections. In the courses which are taught both on-campus and by distance delivery, the course objectives align, as shown in syllabi for History 1323: History of the United States 1877 to Present ([on-campus](#), [distance delivery](#)). The information may be slightly different due to academic freedom, but the course outcomes in the course are the same.

OPSU's program quality is consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations. Quality is ensured through the use of standardized assessment plans for programs delivered by OPSU regardless of format or modality. Program goals, student learning outcomes, and assessments of student learning are outlined by discipline, in a program that has the approval to do so. A course or courses that are offered online and in traditional formats will have the same [assessment plan](#), and the outcomes of these assessments are then applied to decision-making regarding the effectiveness of the course, program, supports, etc.

The University also participates in dual credit and concurrent enrollment programs governed by Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education [Policy 3.10](#). Faculty teaching courses to concurrently enrolled high school students are appropriately qualified and assessed based on outlined program assessment; all outcomes are identical regardless of where or how the course is delivered. Online credit hours are equivalent to in-seat credit hours, as stated in the [Online Policy](#), and credit hour calculations follow the OPSU [Credit Hour Policy](#), which is based on the Carnegie Unit. During COVID-19, programs and the faculty in those programs went to great lengths to ensure that when moving to a digital classroom, the instruction was modified to ensure students could still master the content despite the [change in the mode of instruction](#) and moved quickly to adapt and plan for future needs should circumstances require them. Faculty were [guided and supported](#) one-on-one by program chairs in moving courses online during the temporary suspension of in-person instruction in Spring

2020. They also received [guidance](#) for course planning in Fall 2020. In addition, faculty participated in group video conferences [weekly](#) to share resources and techniques across disciplines. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education provided [resources and guidance](#) to all Oklahoma State System institutions on best practices and strategies for online adaptation.

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## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

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The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. 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. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

## Argument

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### Response to 3.B.1

As per the University's [mission statement](#), Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) is devoted to preparing students for success in a global community; to that end, the [general education curriculum](#) pulls classes from different fields of study to ensure students receive a well-rounded education that does indeed prepare them to succeed in the global world after their graduation.

The [general education program](#) also follows the same three University-wide goals that all other programs do. Each goal has the most basic level of student learning outcomes using level 1 of Bloom's taxonomy verbs. OPSU articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements in the [General Catalog](#).

### Response to 3.B.2

The [mission of the general education program](#) at OPSU is to ensure that each student becomes acquainted with the major areas of knowledge shared among all educated individuals, and to that end, students take classes from [different fields of study](#); this curriculum supports the University's [mission](#), as the program gives students the foundation to succeed in a global community. The general education program is founded on the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's [definition](#): "a standard curriculum required in all undergraduate programs . . . provid[ing] broad exposure to multiple disciplines and emphasiz[ing] the learning of facts, values, understandings, skills, attitudes, and appreciations believed to be meaningful concerns that are common to all students by virtue of their involvement as human beings living in a global society." This [framework](#) is grounded on the Higher Learning Commission's Statement on General Education. The goals of OPSU's general

education program are grounded on the [eight student outcomes](#) listed in the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's Academic Affairs Policy, outcomes which speak to the need for a rounded general education.

### Response to 3.B.3

All [academic programs](#) and [general education](#) share the Social Responsibility and Cultural Awareness goal, whose aim is for each student to "Be an aware and active participant in the global, dynamic community." Because this goal is an important aspect of each program to fulfill before students complete their degree requirements, OPSU offers various courses that address multiculturalism and diversity, such as [Education 2233: Diversity in Education](#), a course for pre-service teachers, and [Sociology 2243: Multicultural Sociology](#), a course in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences that is usually taken as a part of the general education program.

To further promote cultural awareness, the University's Cultural/Entertainment Committee provides campus-wide opportunities to experience the arts by sponsoring various speakers and performers. In addition, the Panhandle State Foundation maintains a [Masonic Grant Endowment for Cultural Enrichment](#), a competitive program open to all faculty and staff to receive funding to bring culturally diverse experiences to the University annually.

The [Council for Diversity and Inclusivity](#) was established in Summer 2020 at the request of the President to address issues surrounding inclusion and diversity in our community and on campus in a proactive way. The Council drafted and ratified a mission that established its purpose as well as action steps to promote diversity and inclusion.

OPSU is also a [member](#) of the Hispanic American Colleges and Universities (HACU) and is a federally designated [Hispanic Serving Institution](#) (HSI). In addition, students have the opportunity to participate in the [Hispanic American Leadership Organization](#) (HALO), which stays very active on campus by offering cultural events for [Hispanic Heritage Month](#), [Black History Month](#), and [Women's History Month](#).

Currently, the University is developing a [study-abroad program](#) that will be available for students, staff, and faculty. The first study abroad trip, scheduled to take place in Spring 2020, was postponed until May 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The group on this trip will visit several countries where they will have the opportunity to experience diverse cultures and people. Aligned with the University's [mission](#), the study-abroad program [aims](#) to "enable students to obtain the skills necessary to participate successfully in the global community" providing opportunities to experience various cultures while learning by participating and forming "a clear understanding of the world as a whole."

### Response to 3.B.4

Supporting OPSU's [mission](#) and its idea of "Progress through Knowledge," faculty and students regularly contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge in various ways.

Faculty in several fields actively contribute to scholarship. For example, faculty in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences have been doing scholarly work in the field of cultural studies by



publishing their work in an [anthology](#) and by writing a book. In addition, they regularly attend conferences where they [present papers](#) and lead [scholarly discussion](#) sessions. One faculty in English and humanities has also stayed active with [published books](#) and presentations throughout Oklahoma and Kansas. In the Department of Education, one faculty has [presented her research](#) at a national conference. Faculty involvement in conferences and scholarly work has opened the door for students to also [attend conferences](#); similarly, faculty's involvement in research and scholarship brings opportunities for them to share said scholarship with the students in their courses. In the field of agronomy, one faculty member and some of his students teamed up with a professor at Baylor University in a sunflower study, whose results were written in a scholarly paper, which appeared in *Phytologia* in [2016](#). Another study was published in [2017](#).

In addition to contributing to scholarship, OPSU faculty also make creative contributions in art, music, and theatre, fields that also support the University's mission, as they further contribute to the preparation of students for a global world. In the field of art, faculty excel in art shows where their talents have made them [recipients of awards](#). Their experience and expertise easily translate into [learning opportunities](#) in their classrooms, where students also learn to present and showcase their creative works at [campus art shows](#). Music faculty remain engaged creatively in their field as well. Not only are musical works performed on campus—both by [faculty](#) and [students](#)—but faculty have also served as [judges in district contests](#) and students have [performed](#) off-campus. Even though OPSU does not have a theatre department, faculty in the Department of Communication—in conjunction with students—have presented theatrical performances ([1,2,3](#)), which give students opportunities to collaborate, problem-solve, be creative, and learn about others.

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## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. 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, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. 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.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

### Argument

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#### Response to 3.C.1

As Oklahoma Panhandle State University's (OPSU) [mission](#) states, the University strives to prepare its students for success in a global world, and such preparation begins with students' being in a community of diverse people. Therefore, OPSU does not discriminate in its hiring processes of faculty and staff and follows the [Affirmative Action Plan](#) (AAP) and the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) guidelines, which are a part of the AAP, as posted on the Human Resources website. Guidelines and process for hiring faculty (including full-time, part-time, adjunct, online, dual credit) are in compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's guidelines and specialized accreditors, as appropriate.

#### Response to 3.C.2

For Fiscal Year [2019](#), OPSU had 50 full-time faculty and 57 part-time faculty members, which amounts to a student-to-faculty ratio of 16:1. The average number of years full-time faculty remain employed at OPSU is [11.67 years](#), which proves great continuity among faculty.

Due to the average number of years faculty are employed at OPSU, there is a high level of consistency in the [Curriculum Committee](#), the group which oversees and approves curriculum and student performance expectations. Program heads tend to be those faculty members who have many years of experience at the University, and one of their principal roles is to assess student learning in

their respective programs.

Faculty employed at OPSU have the necessary [credentials](#) set by the Higher Learning Commission, a master's degree with at least 18 hours of graduate work in the field they teach. The complete list of full-time faculty is available in the [General Catalog](#) with information about the highest degree earned, teaching content area, and year when each was hired.

### **Response to 3.C.3**

In order to ensure that all instructors are appropriately qualified, OPSU [maintains](#) resumes and official transcripts for all teaching faculty in the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. In addition, [job descriptions](#) detailing the qualifications of each teaching position are filed in the Office of Human Resources. Faculty must meet the minimum qualifications in order for hiring consideration.

### **Response to 3.C.4**

At the heart of the mission of OPSU is "progress through knowledge;" therefore, ensuring that all instructors' performance is evaluated regularly contributes to the quality of instruction for the University's students. The Faculty Handbook includes the [policies](#) followed to evaluate teaching staff, which is done in two ways: by the dean of the college and by the students in the instructors' classes.

Annually, the deans of each college [evaluate](#) their faculty to "provide a primary basis for the improvement of instruction." Each evaluated faculty receives a copy of the evaluation, and another copy is filed with the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. In addition, to motivate teaching excellence, evaluations by deans are also used for the purpose of [promotion and tenure advancement](#).

Student evaluations of faculty occur towards the end of every semester when [evaluations](#) become available for all courses taught by all faculty (full-time and part-time) via EvaluationKIT. Students complete their course and instructor evaluations anonymously. After the end of the semester, individual faculty members receive the evaluation results directly from EvaluationKIT. If desired, individual faculty members may also [use their own evaluation instrument](#) in their classes in addition to the University-wide EvaluationKIT instrument.

### **Response to 3.C.5**

The University has multiple processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles. Required methods include the semester Welcome Back event ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)) at which faculty have professional development in various topics, such as grade book and syllabi training, learning management system use and classroom set-up training, Institute for Learning Environment design workshop, online course development and delivery, Banner (data management system) training, online course development and online teaching practice training, and incident management training. Faculty are also required to explain their plans for academic growth and professional development in the [Professional Development Plan](#) form every year early in the fall semester, and then at the end of the spring semester, explain how that plan was fulfilled.

Non-required methods include regular on-campus [professional development](#) activities free of charge to faculty, and [Baughman funds](#) designated for professional development opportunities, such as virtual and on-location conferences and workshops as well as continuing education opportunities and graduate classes.

### **Response to 3.C.6**

Instructors are accessible for student inquiry by holding required office hours, as per the [Faculty Handbook](#). Each semester, full-time faculty post office hours outside their offices and send the same information to their dean and to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. In addition to regularly scheduled office hours, faculty are also available to hold conferences with students by appointment. Faculty also include their office hour schedules in their [syllabi](#). Instructors who teach online classes are required to respond to student requests within 48 hours, as per the [Online Policy](#).

### **Response to 3.C.7**

In order to provide the best student support services to its stakeholders, OPSU employs appropriately qualified personnel and provides training and professional development opportunities.

For example, tutors are provided by the [Academic Resource Center](#) through two sources: peer tutors and professional tutors. In-person peer tutors are on-campus students who have done well in the courses they tutor. Typically, they are upperclassmen majoring in the area they tutor. On some occasions, the Academic Resource Center pairs a student with a peer tutor who is currently taking the same class so that the student can work alongside his/her peer tutor. The Academic Resource Center offers its tutors training in the areas of communication, mentoring, and study skills to be able to better relay information to the student the peer tutor is helping. Online professional tutors are provided through the [Tutor.com](#) service, which is free to students and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. At the beginning of each semester, students receive eight hours of access to the service; if they use all their time, they can ask the Dean of Academic Resources to add more to their account, which is also done free of charge.

Financial Aid advisors are qualified for their position by the [requirement](#) of having earned at least an associate degree upon hire. Once hired, training is a major part of the Office of Financial Aid. The financial aid director completes required and appropriate training provided by the U.S. Department of Education, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Association of Financial Aid Administrators, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, among others. These trainings take place as often as weekly to stay up to date with important information about policy and procedure, as well as the more recent COVID-19 and CARES Act information.

OPSU faculty perform the academic advising of all students, and all advisors are retrained each semester in [advising workshops](#). To help faculty advise properly and accurately, these workshops allow for information about changes, especially those in general education courses, to be accessible to all advisors. These workshops also include [information](#) dealing with sports, eligibility, international students, and other concerns that may not be closely related to each faculty's subject area.

Central to the University's [mission](#), the notion of "Progress through Knowledge" recognizes that

learning takes place across the institution and is not siloed in the classroom experience alone. Co-curricular activities and their staffing have grown in recent years. The University has realigned budgets to increase the staff available in the [Academic Resource Center](#) which helps students place into internship opportunities, and the Student Services Office has added a [Student Life Coordinator](#) to increase co-curricular opportunities. The Resident Advisors (RA) program has increased opportunities for students to learn problem-solving and interpersonal communication skills outside the classroom, as they help to deliver an exceptional student experience.

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## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

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The institution provides support for student learning and resources for 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 offerings 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 and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

## Argument

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### Response to 3.D.1

Given the diverse populations of students that Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) has, the University provides student support services to suit their different needs.

OPSU has been a [Hispanic Serving Institution](#) (HSI) since 2018. The Office of Hispanic Student Services was created to address the needs of the University's Hispanic student population, which as of 2019, is [28.7%](#) of the student body. The [Office of Hispanic Student Services](#), staffed with bilingual personnel, contributes to supporting the persistence, retention, and graduation of Hispanic students by providing "academic support, cultural understanding, and academic guidance and counseling referrals for Hispanic students," as stated in its [mission](#). In addition, the Office of Hispanic Student Services assists students with issues pertaining to college transition unique to Hispanic students. This office also provides support with scholarship applications, DACA renewals, resume building and creation, and national internship applications through the [Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities \(HACU\)](#), of which OPSU is a member.

The First-Year Experience program has been designed by the Academic Resource Center specifically to address the needs of first-generation students. According to our 2018-2019 Introductory Survey given in the Student Success course required of all freshmen, [47%](#) of the freshman class self-identified as first-generation college students (students whose parents did not graduate from college). In the First-Year Experience program, each freshman is assigned a peer mentor who provides regular electronic updates to the Academic Resource Center regarding all aspects of the first-year experience and provides face-to-face mentoring sessions for the freshmen assigned. The peer mentors also serve to provide a "help-line" to their mentees. This program allows first-generation students to have a communication avenue with more experienced students who can serve as guides while new students learn to navigate through the University environment and academia.

OPSU has different support services for its online students. For example, the Academic Resource Center provides each student with free access to [Tutor.com](#), a website where students can meet virtually with a tutor in a live session 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or they can submit papers for revision and feedback. At the class level, students can join faculty virtual office hours to confer

with their instructors, an implementation that is a result of moving classes online during the COVID-19 pandemic in Spring 2020. Advisement sessions via Zoom also give online students a more personal experience. At the program level, online programs continue to work tirelessly to ensure their students are sufficiently supported to succeed. For example, the [nursing program](#) supports its online students fiscally through a scholarship fund and academically through current, comprehensive, and accessible learning resources and technology, as evidenced by the program's recent self-study report for its continued accreditation visit. In addition, the implementation of the [Dean of the College of Online Programs position](#) in Summer 2020 will contribute to addressing student concerns related to advising, enrollment, degree planning, and career. This new position creates a centralized hub where information technology (IT) issues and student concerns can be better addressed, as well as academic consistency can be achieved by ensuring that all online offerings are uniform to aid in accessibility and clarity.

### Response to 3.D.2

In order to support students in achieving their goals and excelling in the classroom, OPSU provides learning support and preparatory instruction to meet students' needs.

The [Academic Resource Center](#) provides tutoring services to address the academic needs of all students both in-person and online. All students have an eight-hour allowance on [Tutor.com](#) automatically loaded into the online portion of every class, and the service is available 24 hours a day for subject tutoring and paper revision. If students use their eight hours, they can contact the Academic Resource Center and request additional access time. In-person [peer tutoring](#) is available by appointment. Tutors' work days depend on their class schedules, and staffing varies by semester. Peer tutors cover different fields, and an emphasis is placed on tutoring the gateway math and English courses as well as other general education courses.

In addition, the Academic Resource Center offers peer mentoring. Peer mentors are juniors or seniors tasked with supporting other students in time management and study skills, as well as educating students about resources on campus and socialization opportunities and helping students stay academically focused.

As a [Pearson Testing Center](#) for students and community members, the Academic Resource Center tests for hundreds of professional certification exams including teaching certifications, insurance certifications, and GED exams.

[Career counseling](#) is also available to students who would like to explore career paths, as students can seek help deciding which major or career path matches with their skills, work values, and interests. The Academic Resource Center also provides assistance with writing resumes and application letters by appointment, and it manages the [Career Central Network](#) website, which includes businesses that advertise jobs and internships for students. Career Central Network also provides resume and interview workshops for students.

Further assistance to students is provided through the [Early Intervention Form](#), which is used to report changes in behavior that may lead to a decrease in academic performance in students. By means of this form, instructors may report changes in students' behavior or performance in classes. Others may also use the form if they notice a student's change in behavior. The idea behind this type of reporting is that if behavior changes are noticed early on, adequate help can be provided to

students to ensure their success.

[Counseling services](#) are provided for students dealing with different matters, such as stress, anxiety, and depression. If a student requires mental health support beyond the scope of practice of the mental health provider on campus, a referral can be given to counseling services either in Guymon, Oklahoma, (ten miles from campus) or in the student's town of origin.

Disability services are granted to anyone who provides documentation for disability as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act through OPSU's [Disability Accommodations Policy](#). Disability accommodations can include, but are not limited to, extended time on tests or timed assignments, leniency for absences, moving a classroom from upper floors of a building with no elevator either to the first floor or to a building with an elevator, audiobooks, options to have tests or assignments read to students, an on-campus aide to provide assistance with mobility and/or carrying classroom materials.

To ensure that students are placed in courses for which they are appropriately prepared when admitted to OPSU, [entry level course placement](#) is determined using their ACT or SAT examination scores and/or Accuplacer testing (computer placement tests). All students upon admission are assigned an academic advisor who places them in classes. If the student has not submitted ACT/SAT scores, the student is placed in the necessary co-requisite gateway course(s). If a first-time student age 21 or older has no reported ACT/SAT scores, the student is placed in the necessary co-requisite course(s) and can opt to take the Accuplacer test to evaluate course placement. If remediation is required, OPSU uses PLUS courses to meet students' academic needs. The co-requisite model PLUS courses (English 1115, Math 1475, Math 1515, Math 1525) count five hours toward course load, while three credit hours count toward graduation requirements. The PLUS courses utilize a student-centered, just-in-time remediation approach, which enables students to receive the necessary support in gateway courses to better prepare them for their university career.

Specific programs, such as the [Teacher Education Program](#) and the [Nursing Program](#) have specific requirements that students need to fulfill prior to their acceptance into each program, such as class standing, prior coursework completed, minimum GPA, among others.

OPSU understands that for its students to be successful in the classroom and beyond, they need to have the appropriate support and resources that will facilitate their learning. Therefore, through the Academic Support Center and its varied resources students receive the support that can help them thrive in classes. In addition, to ensure students are properly prepared for the demands of college education, correct placement is essential; therefore, OPSU uses a co-requisite model to help students who require remediation to be successful.

### **Response to 3.D.3**

OPSU understands that students thrive when they are guided and mentored in their academic programs, and to maximize student performance, the University relies on faculty to serve as academic advisors to students in their own fields. Therefore, faculty members perform the academic advising of all students, and all advisors are trained and kept updated each semester in [advising workshops](#). To help with advising responsibilities, an [advising checklist](#), [curriculum maps](#), and [Degree Works](#) are available in different locations for ease of access. The curriculum maps are paper versions of what is required by each program to complete its degrees, based on the most current information in the

[General Catalog](#), along with a tentative schedule of when to take each course. Degree Works is a program available to students through their Aggie Access, the OPSU information portal. [Degree Works](#) helps students to see what percentage of their degree they have already completed by showing them what courses they have finished in their curriculum map and what courses still need to be completed.

Advising generally takes place once a semester soon before the period for registering for the following semester begins. At this time, each student meets with his/her academic advisor one-on-one to put together a schedule of what courses the student needs to take the following semester. During the summer, when faculty are not on campus, the dean of the college performs the advising.

### **Response to 3.D.4**

In order for teaching and learning to take place in the most effective manner, OPSU offers its students and faculty the necessary infrastructure and resources both in terms of physical spaces and materials and in terms of digital spaces and tools.

In terms of physical spaces, students and instructors count with classrooms and laboratory spaces for classes. Most of these areas are equipped with technology: WiFi access, SmartBoards, whiteboards, laptop hook-ups to projectors, etc. In addition, in the last couple of years, there was a complete [overhaul of classroom furniture](#), as decades-old desks were replaced with tables and chairs to accommodate students more comfortably and allow for more surface space for books and laptops and better classroom setup for different styles of teaching.

In terms of digital spaces and tools, everyone on campus has access to an email address, which greatly contributes to communication. All classes also have a companion digital site, Aggie Scholars, where students can easily access their grades and course materials. Because everyone was set up with access to the Learning Management System, moving to a digital classroom when the COVID-19 pandemic hit campus in March 2020 was not as problematic as it could have been if every class had not had access to this platform prior to that date. Currently, classrooms are also being equipped with cameras to facilitate synchronous teaching, as due to COVID-19 some classes are being taught synchronously and in-person while exercising social distancing.

Also, during the pandemic when the campus was closed, the University [sent electronic devices, such as laptops and tablets](#), to students who did not own one so that they could complete the semester successfully. As Fall 2020 begins, students on campus who do not own a computer and are taking classes on campus may also check out an electronic device from the Academic Resource Center or from the Marvin E. McKee Library. This particular resource for students is very timely considering that this semester there is a mixture of classes taught face-to-face as well as online and via Zoom, and by borrowing an electronic device, those students who do not own one can continue their education without delays or setbacks. Faculty also have access to the University's shared file system, the P Drive, where shared documents are stored, making the storage of information more centralized and the access to materials easier and more streamlined. Faculty can also connect with each other and exchange information via the Faculty Lounge on our Learning Management System.

In terms of support resources for students, as mentioned before, the University counts on the [Academic Resource Center](#), where students are provided with tutoring services, counseling, peer coaching, mentoring, testing services, accommodations, and early intervention. The [Marvin E.](#)

[McKee Library](#) also provides educational support by means of its materials—databases, physical books, ebooks, etc. At the library, students can access a computer lab, printing and scanning services, and study spaces.

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### **3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary**

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

#### **Summary**

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Regular program reviews take place at Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) to ensure courses and programs are current and to ensure consistency across the University while also ensuring programs are appropriate to the level of credentials awarded as well as consistent with other institutions in the state. Rooted in our mission, our programs, including the general education program, prepare students for success in a global world by providing an education that follows the Higher Learning Commission's statement on general education. In addition, our programs recognize the importance of acknowledging and living in a diverse, multicultural world, as students and faculty contribute to scholarship and creative works. Faculty are appropriately qualified for their teaching responsibilities and are evaluated regularly to ensure teaching excellence; in addition, the University offers different opportunities for professional development. OPSU also provides adequate support for students and faculty to contribute to the education endeavors ranging from academic resources to physical and digital infrastructure.

#### **Sources**

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*There are no sources.*



## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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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

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The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
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 ensure 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 ensures 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 ensures that the credentials 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.

### Argument

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#### Response to 4.A.1.

[Programs reviews](#) are done at Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) on a four-year cycle, more frequently than the state-required five years, to give the University one year of cushioning to act upon the reviews' findings and to implement changes as necessary. When a program goes through a [review](#), it looks over required questions and [metrics from the state](#) as well as internal questions to provoke thought about the program's needs. As part of the review, the program makes recommendations of what changes are necessary for continued improvement. These recommendations are considered when programs are reviewed internally by the [Assessment Committee](#), a group comprised of the Provost, the academic deans, faculty, the Assessment Coordinator, and the Institutional Research Director. As a result of the internal program review, the Assessment Committee makes suggestions for each program, and each program acts upon said suggestions. For example, in the last program review for the [Nursing RN to BSN](#) program, the recommendation was made to hire more faculty. This was acted upon within the next year to help the student-to-faculty ratio which was too high prior to changes; as a result, the [full-time nursing faculty roster increased](#) from Fall 2016 from 2.5 full-time faculty and 1.5 adjunct faculty members to 4 full-

time faculty and 2 adjunct faculty in Fall 2018.

At the end of the program review, each program completes a [program cycle plan](#), which is used to make four-year action steps for each of their student learning outcomes as well as a timeline for the entire program learning goals. The [annual assessment](#) of each program reflects these goals and action steps, allowing for action on these.

#### **Response to 4.A.2**

OPSU evaluates all credit that it transcripts through the Course Equivalency Project, departmental exams, prior learning assessment, the American Council on Education, and deans and department chairs.

OPSU is a member of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's [Course Equivalency Project](#), which provides course equivalency information to ease student transfer of credits within the Oklahoma System of Higher Education. The project's database contains faculty-generated [course equivalency information](#) for hundreds of courses in different disciplines offered at institutions in Oklahoma.

Transfer credit is transcribed through [institutional evaluation](#). Experiential learning is awarded in the form of either departmental exams or [prior learning assessment](#). Departmental exams and prior learning assessments, such as Advanced Placement (AP) exams or College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams, are transcribed to a student's OPSU transcript after the student has earned 12 credit hours with OPSU and are awarded the Credit By Exam-Pass (CBE-P) grade.

[Third-party evaluators](#) include the American Council on Education (ACE), for transcripts of any students; World Education Services (WES), for international students; and Joint Services Transcripts (JST), for students who have served in the military. All transfer work from online education services must be submitted to the American Council on Education, and the official transcript from the American Council on Education is then sent to OPSU. Transcripts from the American Council on Education are evaluated by a dean or department chair to determine the acceptance or denial of the credits and the equivalent course at the University.

At the moment, OPSU has one articulation agreement between its Nursing RN to BSN Program and Seward County Community College (SCCC) in Liberal, Kansas. This [articulation agreement](#) allows students from SCCC to transfer general education and major-specific credits without having to retake classes already approved in the agreement.

#### **Response to 4.A.3**

OPSU participates in the [Course Equivalency Project](#) under the supervision of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Institutions under the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education meet annually on a rotating basis to include all disciplines covered by the project. Representatives from the field of study from each institution meet, comment, and agree on common course definitions and student learning outcomes for courses to be included in the [Transfer Matrix](#). Transfer credits are awarded in accordance with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education [student transfer policy](#) (for transferring credits from institutions within the state of Oklahoma). Credits for

courses [transferred](#) from out-of-state institutions are awarded based on the rigor and course content of the class or on established [articulation agreements](#). Course descriptions are reviewed by the appropriate faculty member on campus, such as a dean or program chair, and credit is awarded accordingly. If OPSU does not offer the course whose credit is being transferred, the credit will be transcribed as an elective course at OPSU.

OPSU accepts [transfer credits](#) from accredited institutions, and transfer credits are evaluated by the admission and records office in accordance with established articulation agreements, admission by transfer to OPSU, transfer course lookup, and transfer credit policies.

#### **Response to 4.A.4**

OPSU establishes prerequisites for courses to ensure student success in courses that require prior content and process learning. Prerequisites are established by the program heads of their programmatic courses and are approved at regular meetings and in consultation with the University-wide [Curriculum Committee](#).

Course rigor is based on expectations of [student learning](#), which undergo [annual assessments](#) and go through a once-every-four-years [program review](#). Program reviews are internally reviewed by the Assessment Committee, and both processes analyze the programs' abilities to meet set benchmarks as well as the needs of the stakeholders in the appropriate field. In addition, many courses are a part of the [Course Equivalency Project](#), which provides course equivalency information to ease student transfer of credits within the Oklahoma System of Higher Education. The project's database contains faculty-generated course equivalency information for hundreds of courses in different disciplines offered at institutions in Oklahoma.

To ensure students are prepared to meet the rigor of their education, learning resources are provided in a variety of ways. For example, the [Marvin E. McKee Library](#) offers information via its databases and catalog as well as access to computers, printers, and scanners. The [Academic Resource Center](#) provides tutoring services, testing services, counseling services, mentoring, and peer coaching. Faculty offer individual student conferencing via [established office hours](#), both on campus and virtual.

OPSU ensures that faculty are properly credentialed to assume teaching responsibilities. Job descriptions ([1,2](#)) detailing preferred requirements and responsibilities of each teaching position are filed in the Office of Human Resources, and prospective faculty must meet the qualifications in order to qualify for hire. In addition, the Office of Academic and Student Affairs keeps records of all faculty's official transcripts and resumes to ensure all faculty meet the minimum requirements for teaching at their level.

OPSU offers some courses to area high school students for dual credit through [policy](#) that is guided by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. This concurrent enrollment policy establishes admission and placement criteria, workload limitations for high school students, minimum GPA requirements for maintaining enrollment in collegiate work, etc. Courses for which high school students may receive dual credit are taught by fully qualified faculty from OPSU and must meet minimum academic credential requirements.

### Response to 4.A.5

OPSU is [specially accredited](#) through three other agencies: the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (OEQA), and the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). The Teacher Education Program is dually specially accredited through [CAEP](#) and through Oklahoma's [OEQA](#). The Nursing RN-to-BSN Program is specially accredited through [ACEN](#). Both of these programs are accredited to assist students in getting their licensure for either education or nursing, thus having the opportunity for success in their chosen fields, supporting [OPSU's mission](#) to prepare "students for success in a global community."

### Response to 4.A.6

OPSU evaluates the success of its graduates in a variety of ways in order to inform decision-making for programs through the program review process. Program reviews, such as the ones for [nursing](#) and [elementary education](#), are part of the University's [Annual Assessment Plan](#), which provides timelines and procedures for assessment and review for the institution. The results of this annual plan are submitted to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education in the [Annual Assessment Report](#). Specific to evaluating indicators for the success of graduates from OPSU, the University evaluates all programs on a four-year cycle. The Program Review Process, which must be approved by the [Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges](#) and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education according to its [Policy 3.7 Academic Program Review](#), [includes](#) the analysis of employment information for graduates, information regarding those who continue into graduate programs of study, and information for those who transfer to other institutions. The program and any indicators used to assess graduate outcomes demonstrably connect to the OPSU's mission and include results from the Alumni Survey, industry data, and self-reporting from recent graduates. Also, beginning in 2020 program chairs have access to [Student Tracker](#) for data.

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## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

### Argument

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#### Response to 4.B.1

Oklahoma Panhandle State University's (OPSU) [Strategic Plan](#) outlines institutional-level goals, the overarching idea of which is that we continually operate under a culture of improvement in order to provide excellence to all stakeholders. Broadly speaking, student learning is a strategic goal outlined in the Strategic Plan with correlated [key performance indicators and measures](#), and student learning is featured across the [general education student learning outcomes](#) and includes social responsibility and cultural awareness, which are achieved and assessed across the institution's co-curricular offerings.

Assessment of student learning and learning goal achievement is assessed in different ways.

The annual University-wide [Assessment Plan](#) is a living document that guides assessment activities at the institutional and program levels. The Assessment Plan document outlines assessment practices relating to entry-level course placement, general education program assessment and review, academic program assessment and review, institutional surveys, and state reporting. The [Cycle of Programs](#) outlines when academic programs undergo a program review at OPSU. The Assessment Plan lists student learning goals with appropriate benchmarks set for [general education](#) and for each [academic program](#). Each year the benchmarks listed are used in the evaluation of [annual program assessments](#), which is accomplished collaboratively between the Office of Assessment and the program heads. Program heads communicate whether the benchmarks have been met, and based on those results, they determine what changes need to be made.

At the course-level, it is required that [course syllabi](#) outline and clearly communicate student learning outcomes, as well as the manner in which each outcome is assessed. Instructors use a wide variety of instruments to assess student learning directly and indirectly. Such instruments [include](#), but are not limited to, pre/post-test scores, research projects, case studies, written reports, oral presentations, discussions, group presentations, calculation work, rubrics, employer surveys, course grades, peer evaluations, class participation, standardized exams, departmental exams, skill performance, student work samples, student surveys, and self-evaluations.

University-wide, student learning is assessed as a part of the [Strategic Plan](#) through the goals of student learning and graduate production. These goals are measured through [key performance](#)



### [indicators and measures.](#)

At OPSU, we believe learning takes place everywhere on campus, not just in the classroom. This is especially true when considering the third of the institution's [general education](#) program goals, “Social Responsibility and Cultural Awareness.” Therefore, by continuously operating under the culture of improvement ideology, it is imperative that we assess co-curricular activities and programs too. These are also measured as a part of the Strategic Plan through the [Lifelong Learning goal](#). The University's scorecard is used to record and measure attendance at major events as well as participation in clubs and at sporting events.

To assess the events taking place on campus, especially as they relate to general education outcomes, a variety of internal [surveys](#) are administered at the events themselves and by email to those student populations who attended the events. At the end of an athletic program's season, students take the Student Athlete [Exit Survey](#), which asks student athletes about coaching and sports medicine.

[Course evaluations](#) are also administered at the end of a course for all students in that course. Two other major surveys are used annually in the spring: the [Graduation Survey](#), for that year's graduating students, and the [Student Opinion Survey](#), for all students. When students apply for graduation, they fill out a graduation survey, which asks questions about student satisfaction, student participation, quality of education, and future plans. Results from these surveys are compared with data from the previous three years, where necessary. Each spring, the University sends out the Student Opinion Survey, which asks about satisfaction with student affairs. Results from these surveys are used for future planning and continuous improvement purposes.

## **Response to 4.B.2**

At the institutional level, [key performance indicators and measures](#) from OPSU's Strategic Plan are analyzed to guide the many decisions made at the executive and administrative levels. These results inform decision-making when it comes to budget [creation and evaluation](#).

OPSU's [Annual Report of Student Assessment Activity](#) submitted annually to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and published on the OPSU website contains an “Analyses and Findings” section for entry-level assessment and course placement, general education, program outcomes, and student engagement and satisfaction. In the “General Education Assessment” and “Program Outcomes” sections, the instructional changes made from the assessment are reported.

Yearly program [assessment](#) and the once-every-four-years [program reviews](#) analyze assessment results, action steps taken, and changes to be made. These action steps are taken, and the changes made occur at the program level for courses within the program and are aimed at improving student learning to better meet and exceed benchmarks of student learning outcomes.

In meetings across campus, assessment results are also communicated to measure results and improve student learning. For example, the General Education Assessment Committee used assessment results to [revise student learning outcomes and benchmarks](#). These were then instituted and used to assess students with revised, better measures.

Assessments that take place at the course level are designed to directly improve student learning. [Course syllabi](#) must contain information about how each learning outcome for the course is

assessed, and the instructor of the course uses results from assessment activities to improve student learning. Some of the ways in which faculty improve their courses are reflected in the [Annual Report on Student Assessment Activities](#). The analyses of such findings happen in a variety of ways depending on the assessment instrument used, such as portfolios, written assignments, pre/post-tests, etc.

### Response to 4.B.3

The [Strategic Plan](#) for OPSU is analyzed annually using the [key performance indicators and measures](#), which are collected throughout the academic year and checked each summer to analyze progress towards meeting the five-year benchmarks. Many offices, including administrative ones and the Panhandle State Foundation--as well as faculty serving as program heads--contribute to the collection of these data in data analyses that take place across campus. Different offices oversee different key performance indicators and measure; therefore, each office with a key performance indicator and measure responsibility collects the data and ensures that information is updated. The collected data are then sent to the Assessment Coordinator and the Director of Institutional Research for analysis. The Office of Assessment then releases the analysis information to the corresponding program heads and offices through the [website](#), which adjusts plans and processes to work on improving each key performance indicator and measure for the next academic year.

According to the overview of the annual [OPSU Assessment Plan](#), the “purpose of assessment of student learning at Oklahoma Panhandle State University is to support the mission of the university.” Assessment at OPSU is a cyclical process that includes the setting of learning outcomes, data collection to measure achievement of those outcomes, analysis, and interpretation of results, and use of those results to initiate change in the learning outcomes. Four main areas of institutional assessment outline our assessment plan: entry-level courses, general education, academic programs, and institutional surveys—each of which guides the University to set, assess, collect, and analyze and interpret data in order to contribute to the improvement cycle.

The [Assessment Committee](#), comprised of administration, deans, faculty, and staff, evaluates entry-level course placement annually. Data analyzed to improve entry-level coursework placement include course completion rates, persistence to graduation in degree and major fields, student retention, demographic values, etc. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's [Annual Report on Student Assessment Activities](#) compiles this information, which is then disseminated throughout campus primarily in two ways: each summer, the report is added to the website, and each August the report is attached to an email sent to program heads about assessment for the school year.

The purpose of academic program assessment and review is to guarantee an improvement in an amended program plan and meet the University's [Strategic Plan](#). It is necessary to encourage the growth of student learning, and development is best found through frequent feedback to improve pedagogy and curriculum. Assessments, reviews, and program plans are included in the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's [Annual Report of Student Assessment Activity](#). Academic program [assessments](#) occur annually, encouraging analysis of student learning outcomes in relation to the [General Education Program goals](#) and any additional program goals. The assessment is submitted by the appropriate program head to the dean of the college and to the assessment coordinator, who will review it. The assessment coordinator provides feedback, if necessary. Academic [program reviews](#), which are prepared by the program heads, are staggered to occur every four years for each program. The review of the program is done by the [Assessment Committee](#), which

is comprised of the Provost, college deans, faculty, the Assessment Coordinator, and the Director of Institutional Research. To avoid conflicts of interest, excepted from this process are those faculty whose programs are being reviewed; other stakeholders may be included as necessary. During this process, assessments from the last four years are reviewed to analyze academic program goals and student learning outcomes. The Assessment Committee then [proposes changes](#) to be instituted for the next cycle. The program head uses these recommendations to create a [Program Cycle Plan](#) of adjusted student learning outcomes, benchmarks, action steps, and long-term goals for the program.

Student learning is not only assessed through coursework, but it is also indirectly assessed by surveys to measure impact. Institutional surveys include, but are not limited to, [Student Success Survey](#), [Student Opinion Survey](#), [Graduation Survey](#), and the [Great Colleges To Work For Survey](#). The Student Success Survey is used to help faculty make sure that students are developing essential skills to succeed in the University. The Student Opinion Survey is an anonymous survey created using the questions in the Higher Learning Commission's Student Opinion Survey and extra questions created by the institution. The results from this survey are analyzed by the Office of Student Affairs, the deans, and the administration to adjust our operations as necessary and disseminate the results as needed. The Graduation Survey is used annually to assist the Commencement Committee and other groups on campus such as the Alumni Association, the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Financial Aid among others. Results from the Graduation Survey are compared with the previous three years of data. The [Great Colleges to Work For Survey](#) "was developed after a meta-analysis of 'best workplaces' and engagement surveys and our ongoing research studying organizations that have been successful in building workplace cultures that enhance performance. The survey instrument measures the extent to which employees are involved and engaged in the organization and ultimately, the quality of the workplace engagement."

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## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve 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, 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

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#### Response to 4.C.1

The [Strategic Plan](#) of Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) has three goals that address retention, persistence, and completion: [Student Learning](#), [Graduate Production](#), and [Resource Optimization](#). These measures have a five-year target for success and are measured specifically through the key performance indicators and measures of first-to-second-year retention rate, successful course completion rate (not I, NP, U, W, F), percent of freshmen attaining 30 institutional credit hours in one year, the four-year graduation rate of first-time full-time students, the six-year graduation rate of first-time full-time students, unduplicated 12-month headcount, degrees and certificates awarded, percentage of students who fill out FAFSA, and the percentage of students who filled out FAFSA and receive a grant or scholarship aid.

OPSU's vocabulary for student retention, persistence, and completion is [defined](#) by the University's Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Assessment. The definitions are as follows:

- a) Completion: IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) four- and six-year graduation rate information
- b) Persistence: Retention of all students
- c) Retention: Fall-to-fall, spring-to-fall, and fall-to-spring depending on needs and excluding non-degree and concurrent and graduated students

#### Response to 4.C.2



The Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Assessment maintain a [calendar of reporting](#) which shows the schedule of when certain data are reported internally and externally to state, federal, and other entities. Information that is gathered and analyzed can be found on the OPSU website on the [key performance indicators and measures](#) page and on the [Institutional Research and Assessment](#) page. These show information about academic and co-curricular analyses that have taken place, such as surveys, academic assessments, and the state and federal outcomes pages for the University.

The [key performance indicators and measures](#) are used to analyze how OPSU is reaching the goals set in the [Strategic Plan](#), which has targets to be reached in the five years the Strategic Plan covers and is all-encompassing in its data collection. The key performance indicators and measures specifically cover student retention, persistence, and completion through the measures of first-to-second-year retention rate, successful course completion rate (not I, NP, U, W, F), percent of freshmen attaining 30 institutional credit hours in one year, four-year graduation rate first-time full-time students, six-year graduation rate first-time full-time students, unduplicated 12-month headcount, degrees and certificates awarded, percentage of students who fill out FAFSA, and the percentage of students who filled out FAFSA and receive a grant or scholarship aid.

The [Persistence and Completion Committee](#), also titled the Enrollment Management Retention Committee, has a [Retention Efforts Calendar](#) which outlines what the committee must accomplish. The calendar includes deadlines by which to analyze and use information, such as students who have not filled out their FAFSA, students who could be contenders for Conditional Enrollment (students are allowed to enroll in the next semester conditionally, based on account balances at the bursar's office), and advisement information to share and remind students and advisors of important dates.

### Response to 4.C.3

The [Persistence and Completion Committee](#) typically meets twice a month and has a working [agenda](#) to evaluate OPSU's persistence and completion efforts and progress. [Conditional Enrollment](#) is one of the improvements made as a result of looking into why students took more than four years to graduate. It was discovered that one of the reasons students did not graduate in a timely manner was an inability to get into needed courses. If students had to wait until after they paid their bills to register for courses, many were closed, leaving students unable to enroll in them. To make sure students could persist until graduation, the committee proposed doing a conditional enrollment, which applies to students who have an unpaid bill. These students have the opportunity to enroll in the next semester's courses with the understanding that their schedule will be dropped on the Friday prior to the start of classes if they have not worked with the bursar on their bill. This process students to save their place in courses but also ensures that the bills are being paid.

The Nursing RN-to-BSN Program, while doing its [program review](#) in Fall 2018, noted that "Additional support is needed for online students in this arena as well. Students need better access to other services such as financial aid, student services, admissions, etc. Currently, students are able to reach these departments, but often the information needed is simple and with better orientation students would be more self-sufficient in these areas. A comprehensive orientation program could effectively resolve most to all of these issues." This pushed forward the idea to do an online orientation, as the Nursing RN-to-BSN Program is fully online. A [microsite](#) was developed in Fall 2019 to communicate more effectively with online nursing students regarding admissions requirements, the application process, tuition and fees, and frequently asked questions. In addition, OPSU also partnered with Capital Education in Summer 2019 (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) for enrollment services



and now have dedicated admissions staff to support online prospective students through the application and registration process. Students receive email, phone, and text support as they prepare to begin courses through the end of the add/drop period. While Capital Education is at the front of these services, all final admissions decisions are made by OPSU.

Furthermore, an [orientation module](#) is included in each online course hosted in the Canvas Learning Management System used for online programs. The content of this module includes course policies, department policies, and school policies. It also includes a link to the Nursing RN-to-BSN Program [Student Handbook](#). Also, embedded within the orientation module is the [OPSU Student Orientation](#), which contains three units: Using the Virtual Campus, which focuses on course navigation, profile settings, and a help library; School Policies and Resources; and Succeeding as an Online Learner, which includes tips and best practices for online students.

### Response to 4.C.4

OPSU uses the IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) definitions for the collecting of student retention, persistence, and completion of program data. There are also the [definitions](#) from the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Assessment which further define the difference between this terminology. The definitions are as follows:

- a) Completion: IPEDS four- and six-year graduation rate information
- b) Persistence: Retention of all students
- c) Retention: Fall-to-fall, spring-to-fall, and fall-to-spring depending on needs and excluding non-degree and concurrent and graduated students

OPSU defines *retention* differently from IPEDS by including all students with all degree plans; OPSU also has its own institutional definition of *persistence*.

The [key performance indicators and measures](#) are collected each year in the same way and at the same time dependent on when that data piece becomes available, which reflects good practice. The internal [scorecard Excel working book](#) shows that this information is sourced the same for each collection of data. Keeping data extraction consistent allows for the best and most consistent analysis.

### Sources

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- CapEd 6\_12\_20 External Relations Mtg
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- CapEd 6\_12\_20 Student Services Mtg
- CapEd 6\_12\_20 Technology Mtg
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- Conditional Enrollment Timeline
- Definitions for Institutional Reporting Research and Assessment

- Institutional Research and Assessment webpage
- Key Performance Indicators and Measures from web
- KPI all
- KPI Graduate Production 3
- KPI Resources Optimization 2
- KPI scorecard sources of information
- KPI Student Learning 1
- NUR\_RN\_to\_BSN\_Student\_Handbook
- Nursing BS Report highlighted orientation pg 8
- Nursing BS Report highlighted orientation pg 8 (page number 8)
- Nursing Orientation Course Module
- Nursing webpage
- OPSU online orientation
- Persistence and Completion Committee 2020.3.13 Agenda
- Retention Efforts Calendar
- strategic plan Final copy

## 4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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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

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Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) does regular program reviews and acts on the data found in order to improve its programs. Following both internal, state, and federal policies, the University evaluates credits brought by transfer students to ensure validity. Course prerequisites for our own courses and course rigor are determined by the University's programs and are related to regular assessments and reviews, and some of the programs, such as nursing and education, hold specialized accreditations. To further assess student learning, the OPSU uses surveys to look at student success both in advanced studies and in the work field after graduation. Program assessment for both academic and co-curricular programs occurs in a regular cycle in a collaborative effort among different areas of the University. Results from these assessments allow OPSU to modify processes to assist with persistence, retention, and completion.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## 5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

### 5.A - Core Component 5.A

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Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

### Argument

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#### Response to 5.A.1

Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) is governed by the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges. The Board's regular meetings occur eleven months per year in a public forum. The University President, as well as key executive administrators, represents OPSU at each [regular Board meeting](#), presenting information about the University's operating status and accomplishments. As part of its commitment to proper stewardship of the public trust, the governing board provides a [service](#) by which constituents may anonymously report potential ethics violations. At OPSU, administration, faculty, and staff are represented by varying councils, senates, and associations including the Executive Council where chief administration collaborate for decision-making; Deans Council, comprised of academic leaders who report to the Executive Council; Staff Directors, comprised of staff offices leadership; duly elected Faculty Senate; Staff Association; and Student Government Association, in addition to varying committees and ad hoc working groups which work cooperatively across departments of the University.

The entire University departments, positions, and roles are reflected in the OPSU's [organizational chart](#), which is updated annually as part of the budgetary approvals process. The University Executive Council has a [working agenda](#) that includes updates for executive leadership on the work of the Deans Council and operational departments. The Deans Council has a [working agenda](#) to include working items for Academic Affairs, including budgetary planning, data analysis, program planning, and other items requiring action for academic leadership. Different working groups and committees work within the committee structure and report through their dean and program chair leadership regarding key decision-making, etc. An example of this coordinated effort comes in the [program review process](#), which engages key faculty from across disciplines to discuss program review

results and make recommendations to academic leadership for action; once these recommendations are accepted by the Deans Council, they are taken to the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges for [consideration and approval](#) before formal submission to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

OPSU's shared governance is evidenced by the various internal constituent groups which meet to engage in planning and in policy and procedure development. One such group is Faculty Senate, which meets monthly. Eligible faculty members hold biannual terms, and new officers are [elected](#) each year. Faculty Senate is an important deliberative body, which serves as a voice for the faculty, as it facilitates faculty participation in establishing policies with the University administration. It also helps to create processes by which to do these policies.

Executive Council is comprised of senior leadership from across the University and advises the President regarding key areas, and it provides guidance and decision-making for the University in a coordinated fashion. Representatives in the Executive Council include the President, the Provost, the Vice President of Operations, the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Associate Vice President of Fiscal Affairs, and the Athletic Director. This body provides area updates for all leadership, reviews operations across the University, and provides counsel for coordinated responses to issues regular and extraordinary.

At the time of this writing, the Deans Council is comprised of the deans and associate deans for academic units on campus: the Academic Resource Center; the Office of Student Services; the College of Agriculture, Science, and Nursing; the College of Arts and Education; the College of Business and Technology; and the College of Online Programs. These representatives have a [working agenda](#) regarding regular items that are routine in nature, including annual planning, academic programming and support, and troubleshooting areas of need as they arise. Agendas and minutes are kept, and when needed, program chairs are included in meetings for key decisions and in times when extra supervision or help is necessary, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Academic policymaking takes place in different areas on campus but is ultimately reviewed and approved by the Deans Council before being ratified and published. An example of this process took place in Summer 2020 when the deans ratified a [policy](#) regarding Online Education. The [Online Policy Committee](#), appointed annually to review policy regarding online education, revised the policy in Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 and brought the policy before the [Deans Council](#) (with program chairs present for full representation), debated and took comments regarding the policy changes, and ratified the policy.

The Directors group, which is not exclusively academic in nature, is comprised of directors and area leaders from across departments on campus who meet on a regular schedule. These leaders provide area updates and assist one another in the planning and execution of key operations, including special projects; the group also support one another in their efforts. [Minutes](#) for these meetings are made available in the campus-wide shared file system.

The [Staff Association's](#) goal is to communicate ideas that provide a more positive environment for students, faculty, staff, and administrators. The association, dedicated to helping make a safe and respectful work environment, is comprised of ten eligible staff employees, and it actively engages in fundraising for a staff scholarship, campus beautification, and staff support initiatives. Officers of the Staff Association are elected annually.

The Student Government Association ([1](#), [2](#)) includes students elected within each of the following

areas: academics (one per department), housing (two per residence hall and married student housing and two representing off-campus housing), student classification (two per class), and campus organizations (one per organization). The Student Government Association holds meetings every other Wednesday, with the Student Government Association Executive Council meeting on the in-between Wednesdays. In addition, they meet with the University President and Provost monthly, if schedules permit, even though the bylaws only require these meetings to take place once a semester to consult on important decision-making.

Members of the [Curriculum Committee](#) include college deans, program chairs, the Registrar, the Director of Assessment, and the Director of Institutional Research. Curriculum changes are submitted to the Provost by the dean of each college. Items are then placed on the Curriculum Committee agenda for a first and second reading approval [process](#). Typically, there is a virtual and a face-to-face meeting in both fall and spring semesters. Once items have been approved at second reading, they are submitted to the Academic Council, whose members are the Provost, the Faculty Senate President, the Registrar, and the Student Government Association President. The council will then approve second reading items. Once items have been approved by the Academic Council, substantive changes (e.g. program modifications, new program requests, program deletions, etc.) are considered by OPSU's governing board, the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges. Non-substantive changes (e.g. course description changes, course title changes, prerequisite changes, etc.) are updated in the Banner system and in the OPSU General Catalog after Academic Council approval. Once substantive items are approved by the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges, they are then submitted to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for final approval. Once items have been approved by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, they are considered approved, updated in the Banner system, and then placed in the OPSU General Catalog.

Decision-making at the University is a broad and collaborative process that engages each decision-making body when appropriate for deliberation. One example of this shared decision-making process is illustrated in the [Student Union Renovation project](#). Beginning in Fall 2018, executive leadership embarked on a study to ascertain whether the Student Union, which was built in 1967, could be renovated. After a series of discussions with Fiscal Affairs and Academic and Student Affairs, the recommendation was made to the University President to pursue a major renovation project. To fund this project, the University required additional funding sources and needed to enter a Master Lease to pursue the project.

## Response to 5.A.2

The University campus leaders, faculty, staff, and community members have developed a [Strategic Plan](#) and communicated that plan to internal and external stakeholders by publishing it on the University website. Data supporting progress toward goals in alignment with the Strategic Plan are regularly collected and [publicly reported](#). For example, the University administration and the Office of Assessment survey [employees](#) and [students](#) to collect data to inform decisions about the campus environment; the Office of Student Affairs surveys [students](#) to collect data about residential life, student services, and student activities.

Financial and administrative decisions are made based on fiscal reports and recommendations made by the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges [Office of Internal Audit](#) and by external auditors. An example of this process took place in Fiscal Year 2018 when a



special audit of Agriculture Operations (1, 2) was conducted at the request of executive leadership for the operations of the OPSU School of Agriculture (which has since been consolidated into the College of Agriculture, Science, and Nursing); functions analyzed included the University farm and livestock and procedures for procurement and liquidation, the University meats laboratory, and all other agriculture programs and operations. The Office of Internal Audit provided management recommendations that were then implemented over the course of the next fiscal year to improve the operations of agriculture at OPSU. Some changes included moving the meats laboratory from the academic reporting structure to the auxiliary function, which allowed for better cash controls and reconciliation processes. Other changes included formalizing the process for livestock acquisition and reconciliation after the sale or death of livestock, two-party sign-offs for sales, and monthly reconciliation of livestock inventory. The data and advice provided by internal audit allowed the administration to improve operations in agriculture.

Regular internal monthly, quarterly, and annual fiscal reports assist the University in strategic decision-making and monitoring to ensure the fiscal health and operational stability of the institution. Monthly cash position statements, financial statements, and enrollment projections allow the University leadership to set priorities for investments, repairs, and deeper analysis in program effectiveness. One example of this is a [report](#) that the OPSU President shared with the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges; that report was subsequently shared with faculty, staff, alumni, and external constituents, to analyze the overall health and stability of the University. From this report, the decision was made that the University could proceed with a faculty and staff stipend for Fiscal Year 2021.

### Response to 5.A.3

The University administration set up groups that work collaboratively to ensure academic requirements, policies, and procedures. Some of those collaborative working [groups](#) include committees such as the General Education Assessment Subcommittee, the Online Policy Instruction Committee, the Curriculum Committee, the Academic Council, and academic departments.

For example, as shown in 5.A.1, the Curriculum Committee [approves changes](#) shown by program chairs and deans, and final approval is then given by the Academic Council. This collaboration among the different groups ensures that academic requirements are led by faculty and confirmed with the help of staff and students.

### Sources

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- PLC\_Online\_Policy
- Staff Association Constitution and Bylaws
- Strategic Plan webpage
- Student Athlete Exit Survey
- Student Government Association ByLaws
- Student Government Association Constitution
- Student-Opinion-Survey

## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

### Argument

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#### Response to 5.B.1

Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) is able to provide excellent education offerings due, in part, to its qualified and trained operational staff, who are hired based on specific preferred qualifications for each position. Therefore, when a position becomes available, the Office of Human Resources publishes a [job description](#) that includes a list of preferred qualifications that must be met before a new employee is hired.

For continued growth, all staff are encouraged to pursue professional development through [on-campus](#) professional development opportunities, conference attendance, and training opportunities. Annually, the staff [report](#) their professional development opportunities.

In addition, OPSU has infrastructure sufficient to support its operations. There is a campus [help ticket system](#) set up for problems or concerns in two areas: IT/Technology and Maintenance and Grounds. Once the form is completed, the help ticket system allows the appropriate departments to be alerted. The University [has](#) 24 buildings on campus and eight buildings on the University farm. Also, OPSU maintains modern classrooms, computer laboratories, science laboratories, agricultural facilities, and other learning environments to support its academic mission.

In Fall 2018, the University began a Master Planning process to develop a campus [Master Plan](#) to ensure that campus infrastructure can support the educational needs into the future. The Master Planning process began with [campus-wide meetings](#), individual college and department meetings, and executive meetings to determine the goals and priorities for the next ten years. Studio Architecture was [approved](#) by the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges on September 13, 2019, to assist in the development of a comprehensive Master Plan over the next three years. Currently, several major [repairs](#) to roofs and infrastructure are in progress.

To ensure the continuity of OPSU's Information Technology infrastructure, the University underwent and [Internal Audit](#) of IT resources through the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges' Office of Internal Audits. The report found that OPSU's Information Technology infrastructure is sound, has the capacity for growth in the future, and all

recommendations from the audit are being addressed. The COVID-19 pandemic was a true test of the University's ability to develop and deploy online instructional programs, and OPSU was able to continue, and in some areas, enhance the educational experience.

### **Response to 5.B.2**

The [mission](#) of OPSU is appropriate and realistic given the University's operating environment. The university's [function](#) is set forth by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and includes the following:

- A. Both lower-division and upper-division undergraduate study in several fields leading to the baccalaureate degree.
- B. A limited number of programs leading toward the first professional degree when appropriate to an institution's strengths and the needs of the state.
- C. Graduate study below the doctor's level, primarily in teacher education but moving toward limited comprehensiveness in fields related to Oklahoma's manpower needs.
- D. Extension and public service responsibilities in the geographic regions in which they are located.
- E. Responsibility for institutional and applied research in those areas related closely to their program assignments.
- F. Responsibility for regional programs of economic development.
- G. Perform other functional or programmatic responsibilities as authorized by the State Regents.

The goals of the University's [Strategic Plan](#) are Student Learning, Resource Optimization, Graduate Production, and Lifelong Learning. These goals all [support](#) the University's mission, as it relates to the overall picture of higher education in Oklahoma and the region. Student Learning is the first goal and is central to all OPSU's operations, as the University seeks to provide programs for students that meet the demands of the local economy and region as set forth by the function outlined by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Resource Optimization is the goal of increasing the efficiency with which our resources are consumed as well as seeking out opportunities for new resources, such as through grant-making, foundation support, etc. Graduate Production is the University's goal of increasing the graduation rate for students and expanding opportunities for certifications appropriate to our mission and function. Lifelong Learning speaks to OPSU's commitment to the community it serves, providing public good and opportunities to expand learning for faculty, staff, alumni, and community.

### **Response to 5.B.3**

OPSU has a well-defined process for budgeting and monitoring its finances. For the past several years, the University has been developing a broader, holistic, and comprehensive budgeting process that allows for input from every department across campus and ties the budget process to the assessment of programs and alignment to the university [Strategic Plan](#). The budgeting [process](#) begins

in March, when the Comptroller, Associate Vice President of Fiscal Affairs, and Vice President of Operations review annual contracts for price adjustments and run Salary Planner reports for the Executive Council. [Budget adjustment forms](#) are sent to each department head to review budgets and make a request for additional funds, which must be tied to goals within the University Strategic Plan.

In April, the University conducts campus-wide meetings with the Executive Council, deans, and directors to prioritize budget requests considering anticipated state appropriations and tuition and auxiliary enterprise revenues. External and internal assessments, such as the previous fiscal years' internal and external audits, [cash flow assessments](#), and financial statements, program performance assessments, as well as reviews of tuition, course fees and fee revenue, and anticipated state appropriations are used to construct a preliminary budget. New allocations or, as has been the case the past year, budget reductions, are analyzed for impact to core mission functions, alignment with the University Strategic Plan, and overall impact to the University's mission.

While the comptroller assembles the [budget](#) in preparation for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges for approval, the Executive Council meets with each college and major department to discuss budget requests to determine their priority for the upcoming fiscal years and begins developing the final budget. Each department is notified of the status of its budget prior to submittal to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and to the [Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges](#) for approval in June of each year.

The finances of OPSU are under continual monitoring both within the institution and the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges [Office of Internal Audits](#). The Board approves all major purchases and budgetary actions during its regularly scheduled board meetings. Additionally, the University provides regular reports to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Externally, OPSU conducts an external financial audit each year ([2019](#), [2018](#), [2017](#)) to ensure compliance with all state and federal accounting standards and regulations. More importantly, OPSU uses Banner and [OK Corral](#), purchasing and budgeting software shared within the Oklahoma A&M System, to allow budget directors and department heads to maintain real-time monitoring of budgets.

#### **Response to 5.B.4**

The University allocations ensure that educational purposes are achieved. [Budget requests](#) are tied to the Student Learning goal or to a [key performance indicator and measure](#) as outlined in the [Strategic Plan](#), which are key areas for which budgetary priorities are assigned. Budgets for academic areas are held harmless as much as possible in the planning process. While there have been [decreases in budgets](#), these decreases have come primarily in the form of not filling unfilled positions. In other words, when it has proven difficult to fill a staff or faculty position, that position has been frozen to hold the department harmless. In the Fiscal Year 2021 budget cycle, academic leadership at the Deans and Department Chairs meeting have [outlined their priorities](#) regarding refilling those frozen positions as enrollment either grows or state appropriations remain steady.

#### **Sources**

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- Panhandle\_Magazine\_2020\_03 roof pg 11
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- Property Insurance Survey
- Staff Reporting Form
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## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

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The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
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, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

### Argument

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#### Response to 5.C.1

Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) entered a comprehensive redesign of the Strategic Plan beginning in Fall 2017 with the appointment of a [Strategic Planning Council](#) comprised of faculty representatives from each academic unit (five schools in 2017 which were later consolidated into three colleges). This council met during Fall 2017 in the Office of Academic and Student Affairs and created a draft of the mission, vision, and values which were then shared at a campus-wide meeting in [Spring 2018](#) for comment and to create working groups to aid in the creation of what would eventually become the goals and key performance indicators and measures. The process resulted in [formal approval](#) in Summer 2019 when it was ratified by the University's governing board. Since its formal adoption, the University has updated and maintained a scorecard of the [key performance indicators and measures](#) for each broad University goal. [Annual budget adjustment](#) and allocation of resources come from a requester's ability to successfully document how the request will impact one of the University goals through its impact on a key performance indicator and measure. An example of this commitment of resources to a budget request which helps the University achieve one of its goals comes from the [Fiscal Year 2021 budget](#), in which a [request](#) for additional monies to support our international student program was requested and documented to improve our ability to meet our Student Learning goal. Therefore, OPSU allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities. The budgeting process is tied to the [Strategic Plan](#) as shown in the [Budget Adjustment Form](#). While not all requests may be granted in a single budgetary year, budget heads are encouraged to document their needs and how they will impact the University goals for reference for when new monies become available.

The University's mission provides the foundation for the budgeting process. University resources are allocated in support of the mission and are aligned with the Strategic Plan. During years of declining state support, the University has diversified and increased its funding sources to successfully meet its primary goals of student learning, resource optimization, graduate production, and lifelong learning.

As part of the annual budget approval [process](#), the University President and the Executive Council present the broader institutional budget priorities to the governing board as part of the [budget presentation](#) for approval; for Fiscal Year 2021, this included sustaining the enrollment growth experienced in the previous fiscal years, improving technology and facilities, strengthening academic and activity programs, and investing in infrastructure. These priorities allow the University to achieve its mission through contributions to student learning and graduate production as well as through investments in facilities and infrastructure. The University is then able to achieve [key performance indicators and measures](#) related to resource optimization and lifelong learning.

### **Response to 5.C.2**

Assessment of student learning is linked to the overall evaluation of operations, and the results of the assessment of student learning contribute to the annual evaluation of operations and inform future planning and budgeting. The [Assessment Plan](#) and the results of [annual assessments](#) and [program reviews](#) are made available on the University's internal shared file system for review by University stakeholders. Annual assessment of student learning and [general education assessment](#) are used as part of the comprehensive program review (a process outlined in the annual Assessment Plan), and recommendations for additional program investment or recommendations to reduce the investment in a program come through the program review process.

As part of annual internal reporting, the Office of Assessment and the Office of Institutional Research complete a [return-on-investment analysis](#) for academic programs. This investment analysis describes the planning process on how to improve each department and helps demonstrate the effectiveness of efforts to improve recruiting, retention, and graduation for a respective program. In Spring 2020, the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges Office of Internal Audit provided an external firm, BKD, to conduct an intensive review of all academic and program budgets to provide detailed margin analyses for programs. The resulting dashboard was released in Summer 2020, later than the Fiscal Year 2021 budget preparation cycle, but the information has been used to help understand the result of investment in programs historically and will be used in future budgetary decision-making.

Each department or budget head completes a comprehensive annual analysis of needs during the budgeting process. For example, the nursing program conducts the assessment of student learning annually. Recent analyses have highlighted the need for more faculty so that class sizes could remain manageable and to decrease the [student-to-faculty ratio](#). This analysis was used as a rationale to [increase budgets](#) for both full-time and adjunct faculty.

### **Response to 5.C.3**

OPSU relies on the whole institution as part of the planning process, including the perspectives of both internal and external constituent groups. For example, when the new Strategic Plan was in development, external constituencies including alumni and key community members [were consulted](#) for feedback. The Association of Alumni and Friends leadership and the Panhandle State Foundation leadership participate in all campus-wide meetings and deliberations to help document and represent the perspectives of the constituencies they serve.

Other ways that the University engages in systematic planning to include external and internal stakeholders come from advisory committees such as the [Oklahoma Panhandle Research and Extension Center](#) Operational Advisory Committee, which helps oversee the operations and planning for the University farm/Oklahoma Panhandle Research and Education Center. OPSU works cooperatively with Oklahoma State University to maintain and improve the farm as an academic enterprise. The committee is set forth by a [memorandum of understanding](#) signed by the University and Oklahoma State University and includes both faculty and staff from OPSU and OSU, as well as community members.

#### **Response to 5.C.4**

OPSU plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in state appropriations and enrollment. While budgets are created on an annual fiscal-year basis, multi-year planning is required to account for longer-term trends in enrollment and revenue sources. Many reports [developed](#) as part of this annual analysis are prepared and analyzed by executive leadership and shared with both the governing board and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Enrollment trends and trends in state appropriations are specifically evaluated for their impact on the institution's ability to meet its long-term debt obligations and annual costs of operation.

#### **Response to 5.C.5**

Institutional planning includes evolving external factors, including shifts in the market, the demography of the region, demands of the economy as well as state appropriations. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education provide [current guidance](#) regarding regional, national, and international forces for consideration during institutional planning in regular update digest emails and in monthly constituency meetings of chief academic officers, chief student affairs officers, and chief financial officers, which include legislative updates during the legislative session and include updates on external factors important for consideration.

In addition to guidance from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, the institution remains current with external factors and pressures through professional memberships. Some such memberships include the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the Oklahoma Association of College and University Business Officers, and the Higher Learning Commission annual conference. In addition, programs are encouraged to participate in state and national level professional organizations to support the institution's ability to be at the forefront of external factors for which we should plan.

#### **Response to 5.C.6**

OPSU implements plans for systematic improvement of operations and student outcomes. The results of annual planning are evaluated each spring as part of the annual planning process and specifically include evaluating [key performance indicators and measures](#) improvement realized over the prior year as a result of investment or lack of investment in a budgetary priority. The University scorecard functions both as an internal and external guidepost for planning and evaluating the effectiveness of

planning for the institution. The external key performance indicators and measures [dashboard](#) provide the public and any interested stakeholders the opportunity to see the institution's progress toward our goals. The [internal scorecard](#) provides a source of data and functions in a spreadsheet on the internal shared file system where program heads or leaders may suggest adding new indicators for goal attainment, which provides the University the broader planning ability to allow this document to "live."

## Sources

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- 10\_12 Strategic Planning
- 2018-2019\_OSRHE\_OPSU\_Annual\_Student\_Assessment\_Report
- 2018-2019\_OSRHE\_OPSU\_Annual\_Student\_Assessment\_Report (page number 9)
- 2020\_OPSU\_Assessment\_Plan
- Budget Adjustment Form
- Budget Timeline
- FY21 Budget Priority Requests International Students
- General Education Assessment Plan
- KPI all
- May COI Agenda
- MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT OPREC Draft 11 - BRH Rev
- Nursing BS Report
- Nursing FY FT count
- OPREC pg 4
- OPREC pg 4 (page number 4)
- OPSU Fall 2020
- OPSU FY21 Budget
- Scorecard Excel Working Book
- strategic plan Final copy
- Strategic Plan webpage
- Strategic Planning Committee Mtg 3\_9\_2018
- Strategic Planning Council Campus Meeting and Committee Assignments 3.9.18 Highlighted
- Template Annual Assessment 2020

## 5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

### Summary

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Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) is governed by the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges, and it shares governance in its decision-making with the different groups and councils across campus comprised of staff, faculty, students, and administration as well as external stakeholders. The University makes decisions informed by data from the Strategic Plan and uses audits and regular fiscal meetings to inform the University's fiscal decisions. Academic requirement policies and processes are also a collaborative endeavor, as policies and process are set by the appropriate committees and councils, such as the General Education Committee or the Online Policy Committee, and are supported and approved by students and staff.

Every aspect of OPSU is founded on its mission, and its main objective to provide an excellent education to its students. To that end, the University supports educational offerings by providing resources to further qualify and train its personnel via professional development opportunities and appropriate infrastructure to support its daily operations—whether academic or otherwise. The support offered by the institution is constantly analyzed and revised to ensure that all needs are considered, and priorities are set based on the University's Strategic Plan.

In addition, OPSU has a well-defined budget process that ties into the University's mission, includes stakeholders across campus, and uses internal and external assessments in its construction to help prioritize spending. Budget requests are tied to the Student Learning goal and to the key performance indicators and measures.

OPSU plans and makes improvements in a systematic and integrated manner. The University's mission serves as the foundation for the budgeting process, and all requests and approvals are based on priorities that help achieve the mission. In regard to academics, the University looks at the return on investment in academic programs in order to prioritize properly, and assessment of student learning is done both internally and externally.

OPSU follows state guidance for institutional planning, which is done in a multi-year plan to ensure the institution's ability to meet its long-term debt obligations and annual costs of operation. Different areas and stakeholders are invited to contribute to the University's Master Plan, such as the Panhandle State Foundation and the Association of Alumni and Friends.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*