



## Comprehensive Quality Review Report

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### *Submission Instructions*

**Draft report:** Send the draft report, Federal Compliance worksheets and other applicable documents to the institution's HLC staff liaison. In the subject line, include the phrase "Draft Team Report," the institution's name and the liaison's surname (e.g., "Draft Team Report—Narnia University—Stenson").

**Final report:** Send the final report, Federal Compliance worksheets and, if applicable, multi-campus evaluation form as a single PDF file to [finalreport@hlcommission.org](mailto:finalreport@hlcommission.org). In the subject, include the phrase "Final Team Report," the institution's name and HLC staff liaison's surname (e.g., "Final Team Report—Narnia University—Stenson").

Institution: Metropolitan State University    City, State: St. Paul, Minnesota

Date of On-Site Visit: 02/27/2017-03/1/2017

### **Evaluation Team**

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List names, titles and affiliations of each peer reviewer and indicate the team chair.

Dr. Connie Wilson, Professor Emeritus, University of Indianapolis- Team Chair

Dr. James O'Donnell, Dean, School of Arts & Letters, Truman State University

Dr. Deborah DeGan-Dixon, Associate Dean, Central Methodist University

Dr. Jay Kahl, Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Assessment, Dakota State University

Dr. Pamela Monaco, Dean, School of Graduate & Continuing Studies, North Central College

### **Background and Purpose of Visit**

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#### **A. Overview of the Comprehensive Quality Review (CQR)**

A CQR is required as part of the Year 8 comprehensive evaluation of the AQIP Pathway cycle and may also occur in Year 4 based upon institutional request or HLC determination. The goals of the CQR are to:

- Provide assurance that the institution is meeting HLC’s Criteria for Accreditation. (With respect to the optional Year 4 CQR, the goal is to alert the organization to areas that need attention prior to its next Reaffirmation of Accreditation. Such concerns may be signaled during the Systems Appraisal process in the third year of the cycle.)
- Provide assurance that the institution is meeting the Federal Compliance Requirements (Year 8 only).
- Facilitate the institution’s continuing quality improvement commitment, confirming that a developing or established Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) culture and infrastructure exist that advance organizational maturity in relation to the AQIP Pathway Categories.
- Verify any issues identified in Action Project Reviews, Systems Appraisals or HLC actions.
- Validate process level development and deployment as described in the Systems Portfolio.
- Identify actions taken to minimize identified strategic issues and to alleviate potential accreditation issues.
- Review CQI priorities and progress, including how Action Projects are integrated into the institution’s overall performance improvement strategy.
- Review distance and/or correspondence education delivery, if applicable (Year 8 only).
- Evaluate distributed education (multiple campuses), if applicable (Year 8 only).
- Develop an initial recommendation regarding Pathway eligibility (Year 8 only).

## B. Purpose of Visit and Institutional Context

Include a statement that indicates the primary purpose of the evaluation. Include all the elements of the visit. Example: “The team conducted a comprehensive evaluation visit that included a multi-campus review and an embedded change review.”

For institutional context, provide a statement of the basic characteristics of the institution. This could include the institution’s mission, comments on changes to the institution since its last comprehensive evaluation (including new administrative team members), notable points of the institution’s strategic plan, or other topics.

Founded in 1971, Metropolitan State University is an open access, comprehensive university with more than 60 undergraduate programs, 12 master programs, two doctoral programs and seven certificate programs. The University has four primary locations and more than 20 instructional sites. Metropolitan State University is a member of the Minnesota State system. Metropolitan State University serves a diverse and underserved population of adult and transfer students online as well as in the classroom. The mission of the University is “The University is committed to academic excellence and community partnerships through curriculum, teaching, scholarship and service designed to support an urban mission.” The mission is lived through numerous community partnerships and experiential learning experiences for students. The Core Values include excellence, diversity and inclusion, engagement, an open and respectful climate and integrity. Diversity is emphasized through a set of designated racism courses noted as the RIGR curriculum that is mandatory for all students. Metropolitan State University has been recognized as the 16<sup>th</sup> of the 50 safest campuses in the United States. The University recently received \$2 million in funding for its foundation from the Carter Foundation.

The University has undergone changes in its leadership in the past few years including a new President and interim Provost and Executive Vice President. Academic Affairs and Student Affairs were merged in addition to reorganization of the academic units. Four new deans are in place that were previously in the faculty ranks.

The University has followed-up on each of the four Strategic Challenges presented in the 2015 Systems Appraisal Report. In addition, the University has an Action Project to address academic program review that was noted in the Quality Highlights Report.

### C. Unique Aspects or Additions to the Visit

List the specific additional evaluations conducted as part of the visit. These may include an embedded change request, additional location confirmation visit, campus evaluation visit, etc. Separate documents for these evaluations are available at [hlcommission.org/team-resources](http://hlcommission.org/team-resources).

Also list any unique aspects of the review, such as any virtual or in-person meetings with stakeholder groups or institutional partners. Simply provide a list in this section, as the topics will be elaborated on below or in separate documents.

There are no unique aspects or additions for the Comprehensive Quality Review for Metropolitan State University.

### D. Additional Locations or Branch Campuses Visited (if applicable)

None

### E. Distance Delivery Reviewed

If applicable, summarize the distance and correspondence education reviewed as part of this evaluation. Reviewers are required to evaluate an institution's distance and correspondence education as part of the comprehensive evaluation and to ensure that the institution's stipulations on distance and correspondence education are accurate. Review HLC's [Protocol for Reviewing Distance Education and Correspondence Education](#). Do not include the team's commentary or evaluation findings in this section; these belong in the Criterion section. See the Criterion section for more information.

### F. Notification Related to Third-Party Comments

A broad range of constituents were notified of the pending CQR visit. Notices included appropriate contact information for the HLC. Notifications included the Hmong Times 11/23/2016, La Prensa-Y-Sabor 11/18/2016 and the Alumni Newsletter 11/2016. Other venues included the East Side Review, Downtown Journal and Sun Post. No third party comments were received.

## II. Compliance with Federal Requirements

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See the separate [Federal Compliance Overview](#) in preparing this section. The team's completed Federal Compliance and Credit Hour worksheets should be submitted with this report.

## III. Fulfillment of the Criteria for Accreditation

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### Determining a Core Component is Met, Met with Concerns, or Not Met

The team conducts its review and determines whether the Core Component is Met, Met with Concerns, or Not Met. The team incorporates its review of the Subcomponents into the review of the related Core Component. Beneath each Core Component, the team provides its findings in evidence statements. Evidence statements are typically 2–3 sentences in length and include the context, the evidence and the finding of team. Some evidence statements may need further support with bulleted evidence sentences that address the Core Component and include the subcomponents as appropriate to the institution. Each evidence statement should address only one topic.

The evidence statements should present an accurate assessment of the institution in relation to the Core Component, including both positive and negative findings. However, the balance of the statements should support the overall determination of the team for that Core Component and for the Criterion. The statements in total must lead to and support the team determination on the Core Component and Criterion. Note: In some cases, a single area may be of such concern that it alone shifts the balance to a Core Component being Met with Concerns or Not Met.

Concerns, as defined in relationship to the Criteria, are accreditation issues that require HLC to intervene and monitor the institution to ensure that issues have been resolved. HLC assumes that institutions that meet the Criteria and Core Components can always improve and that evaluation teams will routinely identify issues and comment on ways an institution might or even should improve in relationship to the Criteria. These are not accreditation concerns. When a team determines that a Core Component is “Met,” improvements may be indicated, but no monitoring should be recommended.

However, when a team determines that a Core Component is met, but identifies an issue that must be improved and requires HLC monitoring at the level of an interim report or focused visit, the team should indicate that the Core Component is “Met with Concerns” and recommend the appropriate monitoring. Often such issues are more pervasive or chronic; they may have been cited in previous evaluations and improvements have not been made or the improvements made are not sufficient.

If there are multiple issues that indicate deep, systemic problems at the institution or the evidence is so lacking that it fails to demonstrate that the institution fulfills the Core Component, the team will indicate that the Core Component is “Not Met.”

**Evidence for Each Core Component.** Following the determination of each Core Component, the team presents evidence that supports its determination. Evidence should be provided in evidence statements as defined above.

### **Determining a Criterion is Met, Met with Concerns, or Not Met**

Criterion Is **Met**. If all of the Core Components are met, the Criterion is met.

Criterion Is **Met with Concerns**. If any Core Component is met with concerns, the team must find that the Criterion is met with concerns. In Part V of the team report, the team will recommend monitoring appropriate to the concerns. If the team identifies serious concerns with one or more Core Components or finds that multiple Core Components are met with concerns, the team chair should consult with the HLC staff liaison to determine whether the team should recommend that the institution be placed on Notice.

*A note on recommendations for monitoring: Institutions on the Standard or Open Pathway will have a review within four years of the current comprehensive evaluation. Institutions on the AQIP Pathway have frequent interactions with HLC as a part of the pathway cycle. Therefore, the past practice of monitoring institutions through progress reports is not useful in this new approach to reaffirmation and the progress report option has been eliminated. Monitoring options are limited to interim reports and focused visits.*

Criterion Is **Not Met**. If any Core Component is not met, the Criterion is not met. In these instances, the team will recommend either probation or withdrawal of accreditation.

**Summary Statement on Each Criterion.** Following the determination of each Criterion, the team summarizes its findings and observations on the overall Criterion, including strengths, opportunities for improvement, and advice. If the Criterion is met with concerns or the Criterion is not met, the team summarizes its rationale and evidence. The team's recommendation is made in Part VI of the team report.

## **Criterion 1. Mission**

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

**Core Component 1.A:** The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

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

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

**Subcomponent 3.** The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

### **Team Determination:**

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

Provide evidence statements that address institutional strengths, needed institutional improvements, and accreditation concerns. The statements in total must lead to and support the team recommendation on the Core Component and Criterion.

### **Evidence:**

The University was established in 1971 to serve the needs of non-traditional students, particularly those whose educational needs were not being met by other colleges and universities as stated on its website.

Metropolitan State University periodically reviews, refines, and reaffirms its mission as an urban, public university, focused on accessibility, flexibility, and affordability for its diverse community and student population. The process generally involves faculty, staff, and administration. Following Appreciative Inquiry efforts in 2014, a Strategic Positioning Team reaffirmed the mission and vision in its development of a strategic positioning statement as noted in the Draft Strategic Positioning Statement.

The President's 2017 Work Plan, MnSCU Planning Priorities, Metropolitan State Strategic Priorities Worksheet and the Facilities Master Plan documents provide further verified by evidence of the mission being integral to strategic priorities. The mission calls for community engagement, faculty and deans articulated ways that the academic programs engage the community through internships, clinicals and experiential learning.

University Policy 2070 (New Program Approval) governs the approval of new or revised academic programs. Specific documentation of alignment with the mission, vision, and values of the university is required. The University reports that the Provost and the Vice President of Student Affairs meet monthly with the Deans and Directors Council to adjust services provided to students. Recruitment efforts are targeted to non-

traditional students to ensure consistency with its mission. The new Program Approval process ensures the institution's programs, support services, and enrollment are consistent with mission as verified in the open faculty session during the team's visit.

Supporting documents indicate a direct link of academic program offerings at the undergraduate and graduate levels to the University's mission. Additionally, student support services targeting diverse student groups and the enrollment profile, reviewed by the Team, verify alignment with the mission in serving non-traditional and diverse student groups. Faculty verified through examples how the mission is carried out with community partnerships, community faculty, and student experiential learning for students.

The Team noted that Appreciative Inquiry sessions were conducted with the faculty, staff and academic administrators. Themes were generated from a variety of documents, reviewed by the team, the Appreciative Inquiry Report, indicated a number of priority areas for the University to address including: communication and timely response; collaboration; community engagement; student centeredness; quality education; academic innovation; anti-racism and cultural competence; recognition; culture; and faculty and staff support functions as described by faculty in the open session.

A cross-divisional group co-led by the Provost and President of the Inter Faculty Organization revised, reviewed and reaffirmed the strategic positioning statement as verified by the team. The Strategic Positioning Group merged into the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee plus the Resource Committee to assure the strategic priorities are integrated into the budget allocation. The Resource Committee is responsible for the alignment of budgeting and planning. The Team's review of planning documents confirms that strategic priorities are integrated into the budget allocation process including the Metropolitan State Strategic Priorities Worksheet.

**Core Component 1.B:** The mission is articulated publicly.

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

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

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

#### Team Determination:

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

#### Evidence:

Metropolitan State University's mission, vision, and values are communicated through the University's web site, in documents, and incorporated into planning exercises and presentations. The mission and values statements are found on the University's home page under the Why Metro tab-About the University. The mission statement clearly articulates the University's nature and constituents: *Metropolitan State University is a comprehensive urban university committed to meeting the higher education needs of the Twin Cities and greater metropolitan population. The University will provide accessible, high-quality liberal arts, professional,*

and graduate education to the citizens and communities of the metropolitan area, with continued emphasis on underserved groups, including adults and communities of color. Within the context of lifelong learning, the university will build on its national reputation for innovative student-centered programs that enable students from diverse backgrounds achieve their educational goals. The University is committed to academic excellence and community partnerships through curriculum, teaching, scholarship and services designed to support an urban mission. The mission reflects its urban service area, diverse community, and response to community needs by defining its constituents and the services that it provides. The Team reviewed the 2015-16 Convocation presentation that articulated the mission, vision and values as well as the presentation to the St. Paul Rotary Club on January 10, 2017 that outlined the same for external constituents.

The vision statement reflects the mission: *Metropolitan State University, a member of the Minnesota State College and University System, will be the premier urban, public, comprehensive system university in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and will provide high-quality, affordable educational programs and services in a student-centered environment. The faculty, staff and students of Metropolitan State will reflect the area's rich diversity, build a culturally competent and anti-racist learning community and demonstrate an unwavering commitment to civic engagement.* The five values are also derived from the mission to include excellence, engagement, diversity and inclusion, open and respectful culture and integrity. Metropolitan State's mission, vision, and values are periodically reviewed and refined as its offerings expand. Its mission and vision were addressed as recently as 2014. However, the Board does not have a regular review cycle outside of significant changes or the planning process.

Potential employee interview questions are mission-related and new employees receive information during orientation. A rigorous hiring processes exists that includes interview, orientation and on-boarding process with mentors that address cultural fit.

The Team confirmed that Metropolitan State developed a document listing strategic priorities that was endorsed by the Strategic Planning Advisory Council on 2/1/2016 which covers 2016 to 2020. The seven priorities include student success, organizational culture, growth in student enrollment, quality and continuous improvement, innovation, financial stewardship, and community engagement and sustainability.

**Core Component 1.C:** The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

**Subcomponent 1.** The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

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

#### **Team Determination:**

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

#### **Evidence:**

Metropolitan State's policy for developing new programming requires that new programs be proposed by faculty. Proposals formally address requirements and external reviewers provide feedback. Specific criteria that are addressed include consistency with mission, academic policies, integrity, quality, redundancy, demand, and resources. The academic program approval process policy and procedure documents, reviewed by the team, including Policy 2020, 2070 and Procedure 207, provide evidence that programs are directed to meet the needs of society.

The University provides a variety of student services designed to meet the needs of its highly diverse student

body. These include: Multicultural Services, Veteran Services, Disability Services, TRiO, Student Parent Center; and, International Student Services. Websites for online access to support services for diverse student groups were verified.

With an average age of 31 and an average of 75 transfer credits each, many undergraduate students arrive at Metropolitan State knowing the field of study they intend to pursue. A variety of courses, offices, and processes assist students in assessing the appropriateness of their chosen field.

Student diversity is reflected in the 42% students of color minority student population. All undergraduate students are required to take an approved racial issues class as noted in various documents pertaining to correspondences with students and stakeholders. Policy and procedures for racial issues course designation, implementation plan and graduation requirements are clear. Students articulated an understanding of the requirement for racism course (RIGR) and are able to address this requirement in their program or through designated courses.

The MNSCU policy and procedure documents to add programs that meet society's needs evidence the University's role in society. The Team verified documents and a presentation: Board presentation on Partnerships with Communities of Color, and Equity and Diversity plan; a charter for the Equity and Diversity Council; and, a guide to Supporting Safe and Inclusive Campus Climates.

**Core Component 1D:** The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

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

**Subcomponent 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.

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

**Team Determination:**

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

**Evidence:**

The University's mission statement clearly states its role and responsibilities as an urban public institution of higher learning as noted on the website. The mission statement reflects a commitment to its public obligation through academic and support systems to serve a diverse student body. Specifically, the University states: "Through academic excellence in undergraduate, graduate and continuing education, and integrated community engagement we prepare students to be lifelong, self-directed learners and educated citizens in a globally interconnected society". In addition, the University organizational chart reviewed by the team confirms a direct reporting relationship of the Institute of Community Engagement and Scholarship with both the President and Provost. Deans and the faculty provided several examples of programs created to address community needs for skilled workers in specific fields such as urban education environment and the concurrent BSN MANE program.

Based on its mission statement, the University views itself as an innovative partner that engages the community while preparing students for success. It embraces students' cultural identities and life

experiences, and provides flexible and affordable options. In addition, the University received an invitation to the American Democracy Project and participates as an anchor on Securing Regional prosperity. Additionally, the team verified that the University was recently awarded the Carnegie Classification of Engagement and the President's Honor Roll for Community Service.

The team reviewed the Strategic Priorities Worksheet and Strategic Priorities Diagram documents that provide evidence that the University places a priority on its educational mission rather than external interests. Other documents the Team reviewed include Community Engagement Data, a Community Engagement diagram, Entrepreneurship Community Collaboration and a Partnership Grid for 2015, evidence the University engages the community to meet identified needs. The University also provides incentives for faculty to engage in the community as verified in the Community-Based Learning and Engaged Scholarship document. Various examples of academic programs that directly address expressed need of the community are documented including course catalog descriptions for Arts and Cultural Heritage certificate, Advocacy and Political Leadership, and Supply Chain and Operations Management. The Team verified documentation on input sought from its communities including the COM MBA Focus Group report, Tech Community Advisory Board agenda of 4/2016, 10/2013 and 11/2012.

### Team Determination on Criterion 1:

- Criterion is met
- Criterion is met with concerns
- Criterion is not met

### Summary Statement on Criterion:

Criterion 1 is met as the mission is easily articulated and well understood by a broad range of constituents. The mission is widely communicated on the website, in published documents and in external meetings. The mission is student-centered with a focus on teaching. Further, the mission is lived through recruiting students of color and diverse cultural backgrounds that reflect the University's community through partnerships and experiential learning developed within the curriculum. Mission guides the planning and budgeting processes that are aligned with the University's mission of serving the public good.

## Criterion 2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

**Core Component 2.A:** The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

### Team Determination:

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

### Evidence:

As evidenced through review by the Team, Metropolitan State follows the policies established by the state and MnSCU, publishing them on its web site, in policy manuals, campus-wide notices, and orientations. The University has financial processes in place to ensure that any purchase or contractual service that incurs a financial obligation receives approval and encumbers funds in advance of the purchase. In the event that an obligation is incurred outside of this process, a form is completed explaining the violation and corrective action, and then the appropriate Vice President and Chief Financial Officer must sign the form. MnSCU auditing procedures ensure that other areas of the institution follow fair and ethical practices.

Expectations regarding conduct for all employees are codified in published documents and the System Office additionally provides lists of specific inappropriate, fraudulent, and dishonest acts. The System Office is participating in a system-wide training effort to educate employees about the Code of Conduct.

In fiscal year 2014, the University had a significant deterioration of the Composite Financial Index (CFI) and it developed a financial recovery plan. Monitoring reports have been submitted semi-annually and the CFI has improved quickly to an acceptable level.

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

#### Team Determination:

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

#### Evidence:

Metropolitan State clearly presents information to students and the public regarding admission requirements, student characteristics, costs of attendance, undergraduate and graduate catalogs, financial aid, net price calculations, popular majors, average class size, student services, and campus security. The Team reviewed this information and found it to be accurate and assessable to stakeholders. Institutional accreditation information including its HLC membership, AQIP, and program-based accreditors is located at <http://www.metrostate.edu/why-metro/higher-learning-commission-and-aqip-participation/accreditation>. This information includes the most recent accreditation membership notices received by the institution. Current information and data regarding Metropolitan State's participation in the VSA is easily found on the College Portraits website, but not easily found on Metropolitan State's website.

**Core Component 2.C:** The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

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

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

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

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

**Team Determination:**

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

**Evidence:**

Oversight responsibilities of the board are defined by the State of Minnesota statute. State law requires the Governor to appoint MnSCU board members in a way that balances the interests of labor, business, race, gender, geography, and ethnicity. The 15-person board must include student, resident, and labor representatives. Board mission, operating parameters, and membership are codified through published documents.

The MnSCU Board of Trustees recently provided a report on the system-wide strategic planning process entitled *Charting the Future*. Through this process, the board has adopted a strategic framework to ensure educational access, workforce and community partnerships, and affordable delivery of educational opportunities. This was preceded by a system-wide planning process and the establishment of strategic workgroups composed of various internal and external constituencies. These workgroups held statewide listening sessions with bargaining units, student associations, campus communities, MnSCU's Leadership Council, and the Board.

As evidenced through review by the Team, MnSCU Board Policy 1C.1 defines the Board of Trustees code of conduct, which includes language specific to minimizing undue influence and potential conflicts of interest. In addition, the MnSCU Board of Trustees has an internal audit process in place to ensure that it is acting in the best interest of the institution.

Delegation of day-to-day management of the institution to the administration is defined by state statute and outlined under MnSCU Board Policy 1A.1. State statute requires that, "to the extent practicable in protecting statewide interests, the board shall provide autonomy to the campuses while holding them accountable for their decisions." MnSCU Board Policy 4.2 describes the role and responsibilities of university presidents in relationship to Board and institutional mission and goals. Delegation of academic matters to the faculty is established through other University policies. The team's meeting with the Board of Trustees confirmed this information.

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

**Team Determination:**

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

**Evidence:**

As verified by the Team in its review, the Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities, Article 4 of the faculty contract, and Human Subject Review Board materials document the university's commitment to academic freedom. Code of Conduct matters are communicated to faculty on its web site, workshops, presentations, and departmental meetings. In 2014, Metropolitan State adopted a new Student Academic Integrity Policy. This policy is robust in its developmental design, while communicating clearly to students the institution's expectations in academic integrity.

The International Center for Academic Integrity recently selected Metropolitan State University as the recipient of a Campus of Integrity Award, recognizing the University for strides made in improving the campus climate of academic integrity.

**Core Component 2.E:** The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge by its faculty, students, and staff.

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

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

**Subcomponent 3.** The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

#### Team Determination:

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

#### Evidence:

Metropolitan State's Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) reviews the ethical design of both faculty and student research when humans are the research subjects. The HSRB has the authority to suspend or terminate approval of research that is not being conducted in accordance with the HSRB's requirements or that has been associated with unexpected serious harm to subjects. The HSRB has created a training module that is provided in the online learning platform (D2L) that walks applicants through the initial process of human subjects research at Metropolitan State, and has provided a workshop on the process at Faculty Conference proceedings, one of which was offered in the Spring 2017 program.

Faculty, students, and staff are encouraged to review CITI training every two years at no cost to themselves or their departments. HSRB policy requires that all student research projects involving human subjects be approved by the board or reviewed by a CITI-educated faculty member who takes formal responsibility for overseeing the student's research process.

The University believes that academic integrity violations create an opportunity to provide students with further education about appropriate standards for academic work. Faculty and administrators cooperatively developed an updated Student Academic Integrity Policy (Academic Affairs Policy 2190 and Academic Affairs Procedure 219), adopted January 6, 2014. This policy represents a shift away from treating integrity violations as conduct issues and toward a new emphasis on providing educational interventions. Any charges of academic dishonesty are submitted through a published academic integrity report form.

As confirmed by the Team, offices at Metropolitan State that have gathered and posted on the website resources and guidance in the ethical use of information include the Library, Center for Academic Excellence, and Student Counseling Services. The policy statement appears to be clear and complete. In addition, the Academic Integrity Report is made easily available on the University web site.

## Team Determination on Criterion 2:

- Criterion is met
- Criterion is met with concerns
- Criterion is not met

## Summary Statement on Criterion:

The institution operates with integrity in its functions, presents itself clearly to its students and the public, and has a governing board that is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution. The governing board works to preserve and enhance the institution, maintains independent and broad perspectives when making decisions about the institution, and ensures that the day to day management of the institution is clearly delegated to the institution. The institution is committed to freedom of expression, maintains policies regarding academic integrity, and provides oversight on the responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge.

## Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

**Core Component 3.A:** The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

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

**Subcomponent 2.** The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

**Subcomponent 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).

## Team Determination:

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

## Evidence:

The General Education/Liberal Studies/Goal Areas University Policy #2010 (revised March 2009) is a University policy developed to align common outcomes of the general education and liberal studies curricula. Supporting documentation shows that both policy and procedure are present. In addition, Metropolitan State has clear transfer tools and resources on the website and in the catalog. The policies (Transfer Policy #2120, MnSCU Policy #3.21 and #3.39, and MnSCU procedures #3.21.1 and #3.27.1) are listed in multiple locations and are clear and follow standard practice. A list of articulation agreements was also provided. A proposed reorganization of the assessment is currently underway via HLC's Assessment Academy. Through interviews, the team also noted that the University may utilize AAC&U VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) assessment in the future.

At this time, the University is piloting a new Academic Program Review process, which was derived from an HLC Action Project. This procedure includes a step for involving key stakeholders and includes internal targets and external benchmarks. The purpose of an Academic Program Review is to facilitate a high quality and meaningful learning experience for students by evaluating program relevance and effectiveness.

As confirmed by the team, Metropolitan State University has processes in place to ensure program-learning outcomes are consistent with the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the university with each college having 1-5 outcome measures. In addition, the University's Program Navigator system, the Program Overview Planning Tool, and the Curriculum Committee review all guide new program development. The team verified that these processes were documented with policy and supporting examples.

It is unclear if the expectations for ensuring quality at Metropolitan State University are the same regardless of modality or location. Although the University provides resources, training, and individual support for faculty during the developmental process for online courses, the team noted inconsistencies upon review of course syllabi and online course offerings. The review of a random sample of online courses taught in Fall 2016 indicates the need for standardized expectations of faculty teaching online courses. Of the samples reviewed, only 10% indicated the course credit. Although navigation of the D2L site was usually consistent, students would be challenged to know where to find key information with respect to course description, learning outcomes, projects and the weight of each project, expectations with respect to participation, late work, engagement with others, and basic skills required for online learning success. Some syllabi included information about student support services, academic integrity policies, and technology requirements, but other syllabi had no information.

A review of course syllabi before posting could eradicate some information that could confuse students. For example, one course informed students that no stereos, cell phones, beepers or children could be brought into the classroom. As the course is online, this information does not seem appropriate. Another course informed students that there would be no class during Thanksgiving week because the University does not allow classes that week. As one of the benefits of online learning is the lack of disruption to learning because of weather, holiday or other cancelations, this comment appears more appropriate for a face-to-face class than an online course. Finally, one course indicated that students may have difficulty accessing the course because of heavy demand on the system and students should try again after thirty minutes.

Inconsistency between sections of the same course could present some educational challenges to both faculty and students. When learning outcomes and the course description for a 100-level course are different, students may not be equally well-prepared for the next course in the sequence.

As Metropolitan State University embarks on a deepening commitment to assessment, the University has the opportunity to review learning outcomes for all levels of a course. For example, one expects that the learning outcomes for lower level courses will include more "understanding" verbs and at the graduate level more "creating" verbs. When reviewing learning outcomes, the team could not always discern a 100-level course from a 600 level course.

One of the challenges facing all universities is educating the public about the rigor and appropriateness of online learning. Online learning and teaching take more time than learning and teaching in a traditional classroom. Although it may be appropriate to suggest that some undergraduate courses in a face-to-face modality may require six hours of homework/outside work, an online course would always take considerably more time. In addition, online learning is still, at times, equated to correspondence courses. When it is not clear to students that they will be actively engaged with others and that their professor will have an active presence in the online course, it is hard to distinguish online learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century from the 20<sup>th</sup> century models.

The courses reviewed include:

- ACCT 210-50 and -51: Financial Accounting
- CF 445 50 and 51: -Electronic Discovery II
- CGS 380: Digital Evidence Analysis
- CJIS 101-50: Introduction to Criminal Justice
- CJS 382-40: Topics in Criminal Justice: Technology in Policing
- COMM 355-50 and-51: Intermediate Intercultural Communication
- DSCI 434-50 and 51: Operations Management

MPNA 600: Practical Research for Public Administration and Non Profit Management  
MPNA 660: Strategic Human Resources Management  
THEA 321: Directed Readings  
WRIT 231—50 and 51: Writing II  
SPAN 101-50 and 51: Beginning Spanish  
MGMT 600-50: Practice Research Methods for Managers  
PHYS 101-50: Introduction to Astronomy

The team was able to review and verify from interviews and student survey documents that the University uses quality assessment tools. While not mandated, most courses utilize the Instructional Improvement Questionnaire (IIQ) student survey. The IIQ provides ongoing feedback that individual faculty members can review for indicators of course effectiveness. IIQ results, however, are not consistently shared with department chairs or deans to inform faculty development; nor are results provided in a timely fashion. The team verified that regular reviews of teaching quality are conducted during the tenure and promotion process for resident faculty.

Faculty submit a Professional Development Report (PDR) once every two years for review by the dean of the college within which they teach. The team verified that the Training and Faculty Development Center, and the PDR, provide development opportunities for faculty.

The team verified that Metropolitan State University uses certification bodies, advisory boards, and professional practice standards to identify other key stakeholder groups and determine their needs.

The team verified that each program undergoes review every five years through the University's academic program review process through University Procedure 255. In addition, supporting documentation verifies that new program learning outcomes are guided by the Program Navigator system.

**Core Component 3.B:** The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

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

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

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

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

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

#### Team Determination:

- Core Component is met  
 Core Component is met with concerns

Core Component is not met

**Evidence:**

The team was able to verify that General Education and Liberal Studies (GELS) core goal areas are aligned with its mission, and students achieve them through an array of upper- and lower-level courses. The GEL committee is charged with assessing and proposing changes. Supporting documentation and forms, such as the Change Request Form, verify that the process is appropriate.

After review, the team verified that the University articulates the purpose, content, and intended learning outcomes to students. MnSCU's Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) requires all Metropolitan State University students to earn forty credits in the ten general education and liberal science core goal areas. The GELS (General Education and Liberal Studies) Committee, a faculty committee representing all of its colleges and schools, is responsible for ensuring that Metropolitan State complies. In addition, the team noted that Metropolitan State University uses its web site to inform visitors of the courses that satisfy the GELS goal areas, the University's liberal studies requirements, credit requirements, and the required achievement levels. The University demonstrates that curriculum is relevant and aligned with student, workplace, and societal needs through the GELS guidelines, policies, Degree Audit Reports, and the new program review procedure that now involve key stakeholders.

The team verified that the University has forty-four curriculum areas among all of its colleges offer courses, which satisfy GELS goal areas. The sample DAR report also informed the team of assessment methods including how the University communicates programs' purposes and content through learning outcome goals; and how the University communicates levels of achievement. In addition, it was noted that prior learning assessment and independent studies enable students to achieve goals.

The team was able to verify that the University designs, aligns, and delivers co-curricular activities to support learning. In addition, the team reviewed information and data from MnSCU Enrollment Analytic including NSSE, FSSE, PACE, and Trends and Highlights Data.

The team verified the University's commitment to multicultural affairs with review of supporting documentation and meetings with student service staff. The Multicultural Affairs Office helps prospective and current underrepresented and underserved students. Also, the University offers advocacy, transitional advising, cultural events and activities, student development, retention initiatives, and cultural competency training. Recently, a new organizational unit within the Academic and Student Affairs division placed all student support services under the Associate Provost for Student Success. This organizational change included the Dean of Students; Center for Academic Excellence; Advising; Placement Assessment; Parent Center; Counseling Services; Women/LGBTQ; Career Services; TRIO Programs; International Student Services; Veterans Services; Multicultural Affairs; Student Leadership; Center for Accessibility Resources; Judicial Affairs; Healthcare Navigator; and Student Orientation and Commencement. This group coordinates student support services and has retention, persistence, and success as its primary goals.

**Core Component 3.C:** The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

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

**Subcomponent 2.** All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

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

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

**Subcomponent 5.** Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

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

#### **Team Determination:**

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

#### **Evidence:**

The team verified that the University ensures sufficient number of faculty and staff to carry out classroom, non-classroom programs and activities, and support services. Metropolitan State University uses a Volunteer System of Accountability (VSA), from which it ranks first in student-faculty ratios and with classes with fewer than 30, compared to four other universities.

According to procedure and supporting documentation, personnel changes are reviewed by the President's Council each year during the planning and budgeting process. Instructional faculty (IFO) play the primary role in the hiring processes for both new resident and community faculty. The team verified through Procedure 501 that the required and preferred qualifications are developed by the departmental faculty and approved by the Provost and appropriate dean.

The team noted that the Master Agreement between the Inter-Faculty Organization (IFO) and MnSCU stipulates that an earned doctorate or other appropriate degree is required for appointment as an assistant professor; higher ranks require a designated number of years of experience. Official transcripts must be submitted prior to hire and maintained in personnel files. In addition to the faculty's educational degree, part-time community faculty are hired based on their expertise in a specialized field, business experience, and leadership in the community.

The University's teaching evaluation process was verified by the team through supporting policies, procedures and interviews. Each bargaining unit agreement and each plan addresses the need for regular evaluation. Faculty members have faculty development plans that address a faculty member's teaching, scholarly achievement, continuing preparation, and university and community service. An Instructional Improvement Questionnaire (IIQ) may be used to provide instructors with student feedback from the courses they teach.

The team verified through interviews that the Center for Faculty Development provides programs, activities and resources designed to support resident and community faculty, including professional development funds and tuition waivers that support departmental goals and instructional, service, or research priorities of the University.

The team verified through interviews that all resident faculty are expected to hold a minimum of 10 regularly scheduled office hours per week during academic terms as stated in the Inter-Faculty Organization (IFO) contract. Faculty are also available to answer student inquiries by off-site meetings, telephone, e-mail, and discussion boards. Faculty are also contracted to provide academic advising and academic training is provided. While community faculty are not required to hold regularly scheduled office hours, the team noted from interviews that many make themselves available and accessible to students.

The State of Minnesota, as part of collective bargaining processes, determines the minimum skills, credentials and experience required for non-instructional positions. Metropolitan State, which has discretion over each individual position description, has University Policies 5010 and 5020 and related procedures in place to guide the process. Procedures were recently updated in 2014. Supporting documentation noted that Metropolitan State uses external and university-sponsored trainings and meetings to increase skills and knowledge of its student support staff. Advisors and tutors receive onboard and ongoing training on site, through webinars, and through training materials. However, the team noted from interviews that professional development funding and opportunities are limited and/or inconsistent across departments, especially with staff.

**Core Component 3.D:** The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

**Subcomponent 1.** The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

**Subcomponent 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.

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

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

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

#### **Team Determination:**

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

#### **Evidence:**

The team verified that Metropolitan University provides student support services to address the needs of students who are at-risk, underprepared, veterans, first-generation, multi-cultural, low-income, and students with disabilities. The University's descriptions of services were verified by the team.

As verified by the team, processes, services, feedback, placement policy, and assessment process are in place for identifying and advising students who have learning support needs. MnSCU-assigned placement tests and advising are designed to ensure appropriate course placement. (MnSCU Board Policy 3.3.) The TRiO program, the Writing Center, and Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) provide academic support services to students.

The team verified through student and faculty interviews and supporting documentation that academic support services, such as advising and library and/or research assistance are provided and effective.

The team verified that faculty are responsible for, and typically effective in, developing appropriate clinical practice sites in certain programs. Interviews from some students suggest a need for additional internship and practicum opportunities in other programs. The University might consider ways to promote the Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship, which share referrals as community opportunities emerge for practicums, internships, and course-based project sites.

**Core Component 3.E:** The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

**Subcomponent 1.** Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution’s mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

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

**Team Determination:**

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

**Evidence:**

The team verified that the University’s co-curricular programs contribute to the educational experience. GELS courses that carry a Community Engagement (CE) designation, defined as “providing students the opportunity to gain knowledge outside of the classroom and inside the community,” reflect Metropolitan State’s commitment to “community partnerships through curriculum, teaching, scholarship, and services designed to support an urban mission.”

The University’s Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship (ICES), an Academic Affairs department, routinely collaborates with faculty in planning out-of-class activities to directly support learning objectives. By evidence of Metropolitan State University’s listings of community, student, cultural, and civic engagement activities; the team verified that the University supports students’ educational experiences.

**Team Determination on Criterion 3:**

- Criterion is met
- Criterion is met with concerns
- Criterion is not met

**Summary Statement on Criterion:**

Criterion Three focuses on how the institution determines appropriate degree programs, general education goals and outcomes, effective staffing and support services, and applicable co-curricular activities. Supporting documents in the University’s drop box were provided; additional evidence and data were obtained through on-

site meetings, tours, and team discussions. The academic program review is a newly revised process that enables the University to evaluate program effectiveness, set targets and benchmarks, and validate through key stakeholders. While the visiting team recognizes the program review process is new to the University and will require time to fully implement, the evidence is lacking to fully support Criterion 3A. The University would benefit from standardized syllabi and/or a template to articulate the purpose, content, and intended learning outcomes; in addition, some form of quality review for online courses is needed. The team also recognizes that the University is in the process of developing an assessment plan through HLC's Assessment Academy; therefore, the visiting team is recommending a monitoring report in relation to assessment of student learning and Core Component 3A.

## **Criterion 4: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement**

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

**Core Component 4.A:** The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

**Subcomponent 1.** The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

**Subcomponent 2.** The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.

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

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

**Subcomponent 5.** The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

**Subcomponent 6.** The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

### **Team Determination:**

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

### **Evidence:**

Faculty ensure that courses and programs are up to date and effective through assessments of student learning outcomes, five-year program reviews, advisory board input, and, where applicable, program accreditation. The process also relies on the advice of community faculty, many of whom represent government agencies, businesses, and non-profits. Critical to all these processes are the ongoing research, scholarship, and professional development that ensure that faculty members are engaged and current in their disciplines. As evidenced prior to arrival of the visiting team and verified upon interviews with the Student Learning Taskforce, the Action Project on changing the Program Review process is nearing completion with six pilots, one from each college.

As evidenced in University Procedures 255, the Program Review process is supplemented with data from the Office of Institutional Research and completed after the Provost/Vice President forwards the draft to the Faculty Issues Committee to review and approve. It is unclear, however, if assessment report evidence is shared broadly across the community. It is suggested that Metropolitan State University look at avenues to share its learning from assessment to more of its stakeholders – both for transparency and for sharing of best practices.

The awarding of transfer credit is facilitated through several processes. The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) applies to all colleges and universities in the MnSCU system, including Metropolitan State.

Metropolitan State University was selected by the Carnegie Foundation to receive its Community Engagement Classification through 2025. Through this effort, the institution logged over 67,000 hours of community service across 100 faculty and their respective courses in 2013/14.

As indicated in Criteria 3A, the team reviewed a number of syllabi for courses offered online fall 2016. The random sample indicates inconsistency with respect to the information provided to students. For example, two sections of the same course do not indicate the same course prerequisites, consistent learning outcomes, or expectations for student learning. Rigor does not appear to be consistent, according to the syllabi. Some 600-level courses appeared to have similar learning outcomes and projects to lower level undergraduate courses.

Evaluators use established guidelines for assessment processes and evaluation criteria. These guidelines are consistent with both MnSCU and Metropolitan State policies and procedures, as well as with national best practices such as those recommended by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). The University also recognizes nationally and locally recommended exams for assessment, consistent with recommendations by MnSCU policies and procedures and by the American Council of Education (ACE)

The Master Agreement between the Inter-Faculty Organization and MnSCU stipulates the credentials for dual credit teaching faculty members need to be identical to their counterparts at the University level as well. The University does not have any dual credit offerings. The Dean of the College of Liberal Arts stated that a recent review was done of faculty qualifications in the past year.

Program faculty determine the preparation needed for specific courses and programs. The same standards apply to courses offered to high school students through Minnesota's Post-Secondary Education Option (PSEO). Through the use of prerequisites, students are informed about the background needed to successfully complete a course or program. These preparation requirements are communicated through active advising, information on the University's web site, marketing materials, and other publications.

Metropolitan State University has program accreditation for its degrees in Nursing, Social Work, Urban Education, Law Enforcement, Advanced Dental Therapy, and Alcohol and Drug Counseling. The Deans, in conference with the visiting team, confirmed that the new Program Review process is sensitive to the demands of accreditation re-affirmation documentation that is incumbent with keeping these accreditations in good standing.

Graduation Surveys, portfolio submissions, and tests of specific content provide measurements included in a program assessment report provided to the Executive Vice President and Provost. Copies of recent assessment reports were provided to, and verified, by the visiting team.

**Core Component 4.B:** The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

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

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

**Subcomponent 3.** The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

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

#### Team Determination:

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

#### Evidence:

Metropolitan State conducts regular program reviews, updating learning outcomes to meet professional standards. The EVP/Provost is responsible for assessment. Program faculty determine program-related assessment tools that include tests, portfolios, and other tools related to licensure criteria. Institutionally, the EVP/Provost along with the Office of Institutional Research selects instruments for assessing outcomes that include NSSE, ALI, and PSOL. A new position, Coordinator of Assessment, was added as a part of recent restructuring. As of the team visit, however, this position has not been filled. The University communicates programs' purposes and content through learning outcome goals and communicates levels of achievement through program assessment reports.

Goals for student learning are incorporated into course and program outcomes, which align with GELS and MnSCU requirements. Progress towards accomplishing these goals is assessed through the DARS system.

The GELS Committee, comprised of faculty from each college and school, assesses and proposes changes. Assessment of co-curricular activities is built in to course curriculum. Faculty members individually assess learning outcomes for courses and programs. NSSE is used as a primary tool for institutional assessment of curriculum.

Metropolitan State University is currently a member institution in the Assessment Academy for the Higher Learning Commission. As such, Metropolitan State University has focused on Program Review as an avenue for increasing its assessment efforts. However, the institution could consider a program review of its General Education coursework to ensure consistency, share best practices, and showcase teaching effectiveness.

As evidenced by the proceedings from the last five Faculty Conference proceedings, Metropolitan State University is engaged in discussions about assessment of student learning on a regular basis. The institution could consider a stand-alone day to highlight assessment activities on campus, along with the composition of an Annual Academic Assessment report that encapsulates all this information into one document.

**Core Component 4.C:** The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

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

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

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

**Subcomponent 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.)

#### **Team Determination:**

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

#### **Evidence:**

Metropolitan State's strategic planning process uses historical data to determine targets for student retention, persistence, and completion. Each year's goals are based on making year-over-year improvements. Utilizing the Asmussen Retention Report and internal data, the university has set a goal to increase retention by 2% in fiscal year 2015.

A Retention Task Force addresses obstacles that may prevent students from persisting and completing their degrees. The task force is addressing more effective and efficient assignment of advisors, a more streamlined major declaration process, and a newly revamped student orientation session. An annual report to MnSCU leadership includes goals for the year; progress made on the goals along with retention, persistence, and completion ideas to be implemented during the next year.

The visiting team met with the Associate Provost for Student Success and his direct reports. As early as the week after the visit, this department will begin a strategic planning session of its own, with an emphasis on student success across retention, persistence, and completion. The department shared recent projects that spanned multiple departments to fulfill student needs, but also noting they felt under-staffed.

A Retention Task Force recommended the implementation of an "early alert" system. Welcome Days were established in response to data and trends observed from frontline personnel interactions with first-semester students.

Metropolitan State created a coordinator of advising services position in 2014. The coordinator is responsible for improving the University's advising training and assessment, advocating for and enhancing advising services, coordinating advising processes throughout the colleges for more consistency and accuracy, and improving communication between Student Affairs, academic advisors, and upper administration. The Director of Advising Effectiveness noted creation of an Advising Website, a syllabus for advisers, and an Online Learning Success Guide. These documents were reviewed by the visiting team.

The University uses numerous surveys to assess the quality of its academic support services, such as the Priorities Survey for Online Learning (PSOL), Adult Student Priorities Survey (ASPS), the Adult Learner Inventory (ALI), and National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). These surveys provide the University with internal benchmarks from previous surveys and benchmarks against other institutions that complete the

same surveys. At the same time, the institution deploys several methods for obtaining satisfaction and effectiveness data through qualitative and quantitative means. The Director for the Center for Academic Excellence and Director for the Center for Accessibility Resources noted a recent development of providing tutoring in ASL (American Sign Language) to tutor students in their native language. This program was intended to launch the week after the CQR visit.

#### Team Determination on Criterion 4:

- Criterion is met
- Criterion is met with concerns
- Criterion is not met

#### Summary Statement on Criterion:

Metropolitan State University has provided evidence that supports its commitment to demonstrating quality of its education, assessing student learning and using results to inform better teaching, and a commitment to improving retention, persistence, and completion efforts on campus. Unfortunately, the institution needs to increase its emphasis on more outcomes measurement and sharing the products of this examination with the rest of the institution. The visiting team is suggesting a monitoring report for Metropolitan State University to address the inconsistencies across the University in regard to syllabi with omitted learning outcomes, course descriptions, calendar and/or listed learning activities and credit hour allotment related to Core-Component 4B. As it stands now, the Program Review process is significantly better than its preceding process, which was uninformative and not tied to the institution's budget. The newly revised process will help the institution make considerable improvements in numerous areas, increase sharing of best practices, and promulgate into reliable measurements of student learning. Metropolitan State University is also identifying and supporting processes for ensuring quality of instruction, and its newly restructured Student Success Office is keenly aware of cross-departmental efforts that can impact retention, persistence, and completion.

#### **Criterion 5: Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness.**

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

**Core Component 5.A:** The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

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

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

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

**Subcomponent 4.** The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.

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

**Team Determination:**

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

**Evidence:**

The University utilizes the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policies to guide the appropriate budget allocations, but under the leadership of the current president, the University is undertaking a more transparent approach to financial management than in the past.

Under the leadership of the current president, Metropolitan State University has brought renewed energy and focus to the financial health of the University. The team met with the CFO and others involved in the budgeting process. Under a new CFO, irregularities of the past budgeting process have been eliminated and a culture of transparency and engagement involves the fiscal management at the University. In meetings with administrators and deans, the institution is moving to a more responsibility centered budgeting approach but is currently employing a more targeted based approach. The University acknowledged a great deal of distrust in the recent past with regards to how funds were appropriated and how projects were paid for. The increased transparency has resulted in deans actively engaging in the budget process and with a greater awareness of the necessity for greater efficiency in all operations. Evidence that the financial health of the University is undergoing positive change is the most recently published Composite Financial Index. In 2014, the CFI for Metropolitan State University was (.08), the second lowest of the seven schools in the MnSCU. The CFI of 1.45 is lower than the projected CFI as reported in the 2015 Systems Portfolio, but it is the first positive improvement of this score since 2010.

The President has been clear in several documents that the primacy of education programs and student support guide the budget process, as noted in the FY 2017 Budget Forum, the Facilities Planning Advisory Notes, and the FY 2017 Workplan.

Although the University has indicated the inclusion of the entire campus in the budgeting process, the team did not hear a universal agreement that the budget process is a transparent process that engages everyone. It should be acknowledged that a culture of distrust is difficult to change, particularly when suppositions about the past are acknowledged as true. It will be important for the entire campus, including deans, to engage faculty in an understanding of the changes in process and to continue efforts to engage all faculty and staff.

Despite obvious movement in the right direction with respect to financial management, Metropolitan State University must continue to strive to curtail expenses when possible in order to reach the goals expected by both the MnSCU and the institution. The team heard from the CIO and CFO about the challenges of the technology infrastructure.

The team reviewed the process for hiring. The University employs the templates developed by the state system (MMA and MSUAASF) and the position audit to ensure that duties and expectations for all positions are clear and consistent, and all staff and faculty meet the qualifications for these positions. Recruitment, Screening, and Selection for MSUAASF Positions University Procedure #502 provides clear and detailed directions for the entire hiring process. The University recognizes the impact of high turnover on its ability to function efficiently. Some factors, such as the competition for employees in high-demand fields, are beyond the University's control. The University is beginning the process to address other reasons for turnover.

The team reviewed Metropolitan State’s process for building budgets to accomplish institutional goals while providing budgetary targets for divisional leaders who must also develop tactical considerations. Metropolitan State recently experienced a budget shortfall due to declining enrollment and unanticipated construction costs. The operational reserves required by MnSCU policy allowed for academic programs and student services to be unaffected. A financial recovery plan has been implemented with MnSCU to improve the institution’s financial position over the next few years. Because the University predicted flat enrollment growth but realized a 3% growth in spring enrollment, the University is able to meet the required fund balanced, as indicated in the February 8, 2017 letter to the Vice Chancellor and CFO from the President.

The team confirmed that the Facilities Planning Group reviews faculty needs and requests changes, making appropriate recommendations to the president. Planning for technology is done within the IT department. Recent and planned changes to the budgeting process include a mid-year review and establishing a budget advisory committee to link budgeting decisions with the strategic plan. The team confirmed through the visit the collaborative planning underway between the CFO and the CIO to develop a process to address technology infrastructure challenges.

The University has fully executed its new Academic Plan. This plan requires departments, programs, colleges, schools and centers to examine data about past operations, information about external and emerging opportunities and threats, and develop a plan of academic offerings matched to the university’s strategic goals. During the team visit, deans and the provost spoke of the careful considerations going into course schedules and building utilization in order to curtail expenses.

**Core Component 5.B:** The institution’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

**Subcomponent 1.** The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution’s governance.

**Subcomponent 2.** The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight for the institution’s financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

**Subcomponent 3.** The institution enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

**Team Determination:**

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

**Evidence:**

As a member of the Minnesota State College and University system, Metropolitan State relies on many system-wide policies to promote effective leadership. The team confirmed that these policies include the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policies Chapter 7—General Finance Provisions—to provide the delegation of duties and responsibilities for state colleges and universities with respect to university leadership and financial decisions and oversight. In addition, Chapter 1—System Organization and Administration Section C-Code Conduct and Ethics-- provides the framework to ensure the board functions in

a collegial, respectful and approach manner to further the educational enterprise. In a phone interview with trustees and systems' officers, the team confirmed the solid commitment of the state educational system to the administration and mission of Metropolitan State University. The Board recognizes the value of Metropolitan State University in closing the achievement gap and serving the needs of the very diverse community. The Board serves the system, not the individual college, but sees that this educational region will be strengthened through the investment and support provided to Metropolitan State.

In the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Procedures document, Chapter 2–Students provide the guidance to all campuses about the value of student involvement in decision making and the mechanisms for achieving this input. During the team visit, the University was very clear about the dedication to inclusion of all constituencies in the decision making progress. Students are included in most invitations to serve, but few can afford the sacrifices this service would entail. The team confirmed during the visit that listening sessions for students and presidential open office hours provide opportunities for students to voice concerns and satisfaction with their academic experience.

The team reviewed the Metropolitan State University Policies and Procedures: University Procedure #100, in effect since 2014, which defines the University's chief officers, their roles in proposing and promoting changes to policies and procedures, and the methods for seeking these changes.

Metropolitan State administrators are required by collective bargaining agreements and employee plans to obtain input from its internal constituencies before implementing policies and procedures. Metropolitan State Procedure 100 (University Policies and Procedures) requires vice presidents to consult with faculty, staff, or student end-users as well as a MnSCU office before making changes affecting their area of responsibility. MnSCU Board Policy 2.3 (Student Involvement in Decision-Making) requires the university to consult with the Student Senate regarding issues that significantly impact students. The team confirmed during its visit that the administration works closely with the five bargaining units.

The President's Work Plan is developed jointly with the MnSCU Chancellor. An annual MnSCU audit provides assurance checks that Metropolitan State is in "...compliance with the policies and regulations of the board and institutions are effective in meeting their goals and objectives". The internal audit staff also offers professional advice for best practices. The conversation with the trustees and members of the MnSCU Chancellor's office confirmed the relationship between the systems office and the colleges and universities.

Metropolitan State's current academic plan was developed using a real-time strategic planning process. This process included the interim provost and the academic deans. Since its implementation in 2013, the plan has been used to guide budgeting, hiring, and program development decisions. In addition, deans consult with department and program chairs, the provost, and academic and student affairs leadership at the Deans and Directors Council meetings. The team confirmed during its visit that deans meet as part of the cabinet and represent the faculty in all deliberations. Semester meetings as well as regular workshops at the college and school level engage all faculty, including the large community faculty, in the work of the university.

**Core Component 5.C:** The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

**Subcomponent 1.** The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

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

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

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

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

## Team Determination:

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

## Evidence:

The review team reviewed a number of documents related to the planning process at the University. The November 14, 2016 memo from the Chancellor clearly states the tenuous situation for state higher education institutions in Minnesota. In this document, the chancellor provides revenue strategies, cost saving strategies, and obligations of the state system to support higher education. The September 9, 2016, FY 17 Workplan, from the President outlines seven risks, most based on feedback from the Nov. 2015 HLC Feedback on AQIP Systems Portfolio, and includes tactics to address the risks. The Workplan also outlines the risks or challenges posed from changes in state funding, demographics of students and the region, competition, and other emerging factors. Specific goals and timelines are also included to address these risks. The FY 2017 Workplan is informed by strategic plans at the state level, such as the Metro Area Baccalaureate Plan and *Charting the Future*, as well as by the facilities Master Plan. As confirmed by the team visit, planning at the MnSCU system level allows for appropriate participation for Metropolitan State.

The Board of Trustees Report from April 18, 2015, outlines the process for developing new programs and increasing enrollments at Metro. The plan begins with research into needs and competition and is reflective of workforce needs and educational needs of parts of the city. During the visit, the team learned how the community and workforce needs become the catalyst for new program development. Partnerships begin through addressing a workforce deficiency, and new programs often develop through pipeline demand from community college transfer opportunity. The “Eds and Meds” relationship with local hospitals and the need to address the shortage in acute care nursing has led to the expansion of the Rn to BSN program, an example of how the University collaborates with its various communities.

The team reviewed the Strategic Planning Process Update Memo, dated November 24, 2015, from the then president and provost, to now current president, who indicates the priorities in the planning process: Student Success; Growth; Diversity; Community Engagement; Innovation; Quality and Continuous Improvement; Organizational Culture; and Financial Stability. The team reviewed the Strategic Plan Overview, dated February 2, 2017, which provides an overview of the integrated planning process, 2016-2020. Through a focus on one strategic goal—increase total degrees awarded—the document illustrates the engagement with the campus community on determining the action steps at the division, department, and program levels to reach the goal. An example shared during the campus visit is the PAR Pilot Project, which provides an opportunity to focus on one critical obstacle to student persistence—an unsuccessful course attempt—and a pilot project of galvanizing multiple departments and offices in a team based approach to helping these students persist. Through the use of data, the University determined that 55% of students who have an initial unsuccessful academic attempt in one course will not persist beyond the second semester.

Alignment is achieved through its real-time planning, West Metro planning, and some recent internal organizational changes. Reorganization at Metropolitan State has resulted in developing its strategic plan and academic plan into a single document that it distributes widely. A Resource Allocation committee considers facilities and staffing plans. The committee will meet at least twice a year with the Strategic Planning Committee to assure that the budget is aligned with, and will support, strategic priorities. The team confirmed during its visit the integration of the strategic plan with the budgeting process.

Metropolitan State used an appreciative inquiry approach during the first half of 2014 to engage internal stakeholders on matters of institutional identity, strengths, and its future. In addition, the interim president has appointed a Strategic Planning Advisory Committee to continue its work following the drafting of a strategic positioning statement. The results of the various councils and committees developed under the new administrative leadership is evident through the Strategic Enrollment Management Council. The team both reviewed the document and spoke with university members about the plan. The engagement of a broad-

based team approach to achieving enrollment goals through the analytics project, exemplifies the University's collaborative and inclusive process to achieving goals.

**Core Component 5.D:** The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

**Subcomponent 1.** The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

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

#### Team Determination:

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

#### Evidence:

The team reviewed MnSCU Accountability Dashboard that includes the financial index, completion/persistence/retention rates, licensure pass rates, facility condition, and enrollments. The dashboard provides this information to the Board, institutions, guests, and others. As the University continues to build its culture of continuous improvement, the University plans to expand the use of dashboards. This is an important step.

The team reviewed the monthly update reports (ASA Monthly Operations Data 201608-201612), which chart DARS, enrollments, partnership enrollments, student services usage, and so forth. These reports provide an accessible method to compare month over month data. Cross-references with other reports indicate responses to these data.

The team reviewed the documentation of the Kaizen Academic Success Workshop, held over three days in August 2014, which demonstrates teamwork to identify opportunities for improvement with respect to students' ability to access services. Goals and targets are set. The similar process was used for an AQIP project to address hiring practices. The common approach to solving challenges indicates not only communication across units but the willingness to use successful processes.

Metropolitan State University's improvement projects that follow a 6-step process including identification of need, project proposal, project selection, project approval, implementation, and evaluation. Team leaders for AQIP and institutional improvement initiatives are also now required to present findings and lessons learned upon completion of projects. Finally, the University piloted a platform for soliciting and responding to qualify improvement ideas. While initially effective the platform did not prove to be an effective means of soliciting new ideas. The President has undertaken a redesign of the university's committees, workgroups and taskforces to make sure improvement ideas are generated at the operating level and communicated to the executive team for resource allocation.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness provided the team the document listing the priorities and responsibilities of the Office and the projects for the FY 2017-2018 year. Among the many projects were a consistent emphasis on improving data management capabilities and to inform decision making across all units. A particular goal is the centralization of resources for the University community.

#### Team Determination on Criterion 5:

- Criterion is met
- Criterion is met with concerns
- Criterion is not met

### Summary Statement on Criterion:

The visiting team recognizes the tremendous effort new leadership has dedicated to bringing greater accountability and stability to its management of all resources and fulfillment of its mission as an open access university that serves the underserved. The University uses the budgeting process as an essential planning tool, ensuring that student achievement remains the priority, and the appropriate investments are made in facilities, people, technology, and partnerships to promote and support student achievement. Continuing to focus on a sound budgeting model that reflects the changing higher education landscape will be essential to the University's growth and stability. The investment in the development of faculty, staff, students, and community provides for a strong model of shared governance and inclusion. Continued work in building the trust and confidence of the University community is essential. The current dedication to transparency in operations, communication and the use of data to inform projects and assess results will continue to build this trust and confidence.

## IV. Commitment to Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

### Levels of Organizational Maturity in Relation to the AQIP Pathway Categories.

Please provide a brief paragraph or two that captures the team's perception of the institution's overall level of maturity (and the relevant challenges and strengths) and how the institution might further advance its quality agenda.

Metropolitan State University's most recent Systems Appraisal indicated that all Categories except for Category 6, had processes that were mostly reactive. Results in all Categories were labeled as reactive. The Quality Highlight Report demonstrates that the institution is taking its four Strategic Challenges seriously and is addressing each to create sustainable, systematic processes. The University is examining success measures to align processes with results, setting internal targets and locating external benchmarks in its data sets.

The University has also worked on stabilizing turnover in employees and filling leadership positions. The presidential Workplan illustrates how the University is working toward alignment of its planning and budgeting processes. Integrating AQIP Action Projects to carry out some of the key Strategic Planning objectives may elevate the maturity level in various Categories. Participation in the HLC Assessment Academy may further the work on program review, identifying program and University learning outcomes and measures of effectiveness. In addition, initiating annual attendance of the HLC meeting by institutional leadership and accreditation personnel may serve the institution well in its quality agenda and continued operational maturation.

### Evidence of Principles of High Performance Organizations

Please provide a brief paragraph or two that indicates how and where the institution demonstrates its systematic approach to continuous quality improvement through the aspirational values found in the Principles of High Performance Organizations.

The Quality Highlight Report and updated documents provided to the team suggest Metropolitan State has created focus to address many of its strategic challenges. Included in this focus is beginning to set intentional targets and benchmarks for performance, becoming more data-driven, increasing administrative transparency, and creating more intentional guidelines for hiring employees. Metropolitan State has focused these activities with agility and

intentionality, and the importance of clearly identifying and addressing its recent and serious employee turnover has been acknowledged. Its leadership has been thoroughly engaged with addressing these challenges, and through its recent work there is promise that Metropolitan State will succeed in developing a cultural commitment to ongoing quality improvement. In its recent Action Projects, Metropolitan State has completed some work that is across silos and bargaining units. The University's next round of Action Projects presents an outstanding opportunity for Metropolitan State to increase the breadth and depth of campus collaboration while addressing additional campus challenges.

## V. Commitment to the AQIP Pathway

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Provide brief bullet points for each section that demonstrate success or progress in each area.

### Actions That Capitalize on Systems Appraisal Feedback

The University noted the four Strategic Challenges and Category feedback in its Quality Highlight Report. Progress on addressing each of the four challenges are noted as is improvement that address each of the Categories. In particular, the University is working on assessment processes, has launched a new Strategic Enrollment Management Council, reorganized its structure for better alignment, implemented predictive analysis, revised its complaint process, revised the employee performance appraisal form for alignment with University, unit and employee goals, implemented a more integrated planning process, added enhancements to data utilization through a Data Governance structure, and revised the budgeting process.

### Actions That Capitalize on Strategy Forum Participation

The University implemented an Action Project on program review as a result of the Strategy Forum and has completed part 1. This included the formation of a task force to redesign the process. Additionally, the University attended the Assessment Academy in 2016.

### Actions That Capitalize on Action Projects

Metropolitan State University has two current Action Projects with one recently completed in the anticipation of a part two and another in the evaluation phase. These include *Creating and Testing a New Program Review Process-Part I*, *Data Pathway and Alignment for the Five Year Survey Plan*, and *Budget Redesign Process*. Summary progress is reported on two of the projects. The University is engaging in several strategic initiatives currently that can be deemed short term or less than one year projects. Metropolitan State is encouraged to look at these for potential new formal projects. During the team's visit, the University indicated it has begun work on an Action Project focusing on use and ownership of student surveys e.g. NSSE data along with increasing reliance on external data sets.

### Commitment to Active Engagement in the AQIP Pathway

The AQIP Steering Committee has been reenergized and is focused on building the culture of quality throughout the University. There is demonstrated commitment to moving forward on continuous quality improvement with the strategic initiatives, engagement in the HLC Assessment Academy and in Action Projects.

## VI. Team Recommendation

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### A. Affiliation Status

### 1. Recommendation for Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Metropolitan State is recommended for reaffirmation of accreditation.

### 2. Recommendation for Eligibility to Select Next Pathway

Indicate whether the institution is eligible to select its next pathway, or if, in the judgment of the team, the institution should be limited to the Standard Pathway.

Metropolitan State University is eligible to select its next pathway.

### 3. Criterion-Related Monitoring Required (report, focused visit):

#### Monitoring:

- 1) A monitoring report is required for syllabi consistency that includes a course description that matches the catalog description among course sections of the same class, student learning outcomes, allocation of credit hours, learning activities/assignments commensurate with the credit hour allocation, and a calendar. The due date is January 12, 2018 to evidence a broad range of sample syllabi that include these basic components.
- 2) A monitoring report is required for assessment of student learning that includes identification of program learning outcomes that align with the course objectives/outcomes, associated measures for the learning outcomes and designated internal targets for the measures. The due date is May 7, 2018 to evidence a variety of program assessments.

#### Rationale: (Provide a holistic rationale for this recommendation.)

MSU has no current process in place to review existing course syllabi for consistency across class sections. While the University notes this problem, a monitoring report will place greater urgency and resources to make it happen to meet the report due date. MSU participates in the HLC Assessment Academy with a project focused on program review. However, annual assessment of student learning has made slow progress in having all academic units identify student learning outcomes. Only programs with external accreditation appear to have learning outcomes, with measurements and internal targets identified. A monitoring due date of one academic year will complement the work done within the Assessment Academy project on program review and spur more robust progress on annual assessment campus-wide.

### 4. Federal Compliance Monitoring Required (report, focused visit):

#### Monitoring:

- 1) A monitoring report is required for creating and implementing an attendance policy in relation to Federal Compliance as noted within that report with a due date of July 7, 2017 to evidence the policy, location on the web site and a few sample syllabi with the policy contained.

#### Rationale: (Provide a holistic rationale for this recommendation.)

Metropolitan State University recognizes a need for a monitoring report to place priority on creating the policy and implementing it beginning with summer courses.

## B. HLC Sanction or Adverse Action

None

## VII. Embedded Changes in Affiliation Status

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If the team reviewed a substantive change request in the course of its evaluation, indicate the type of change below. Complete the Embedded Change Report, available at [hlcommission.org/team-resources](http://hlcommission.org/team-resources).

**Type of Change: NA**

# Appendix A

## Interactions with Constituencies

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### Administrative Leadership

**Ginny Arthur**, President  
**Amy Dunn**, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management  
**Bruce Biser**, Chief Finance Officer  
**Bruce Lindberg**, Director Institutional Effectiveness  
**Carol Bormann Young**, Provost  
**Craig Morris**, Chief Diversity Officer  
**Deb Gehrke**, Chief Human Resource Officer  
**Deb Vos**, Executive Director Metro U Foundation  
**Steve Reed**, Chief Information Officer  
**Tom Cook**, Special Assistant to President

### Mission & Planning & Serving External Constituents

**Allen Bellas**, Faculty Economics  
**Amy Dunn**, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management  
**Bill Baldus**, Director Career Center  
**Greg Mellas**, Director Institute for Community Engagement & Scholarship  
**Jill Sondergaard**, Program Manager, Travelers EDGE + Pathways  
**Kristine Hansen**, Alumni Relations  
**Tom Cook**, Special Assistant to President

### Student Success Services

**Andrew Cseter**, Director TRIO  
**BernaDette Suwarah**, Student success Coordinator  
**Christa Spielman**, Women & LGBTQ Coordinator  
**Doug Knowlton**, Associate Provost for Student Success  
**Herbert King**, Dean of Students  
**Jodee Fitzgerald**, Coordinator of Healthcare and Wellness Services  
**Jules Thompson**, Director Center for Academic Excellence  
**Kate Southwick**, Director Advising Effectiveness  
**Kristin Jorenby**, Director Center for Accessibility Resources  
**Michael Peterson**, Counseling Services  
**Phil Fuehrer**, Director Student Development  
**Santos Martinez**, Coordinator Chicano/Latino Student Services  
**Steve Campos**, Coordinator Veterans & Military Student Services  
**Kamal Elbasher**, Director of International Student Services  
**Sue Fust**, Director Student Parent Center

### Institutional /effectiveness

**Chris Maas**, Director of Facilities  
**Dina Inderlee**, Coordinator of Academic Affairs  
**Jean Alaspa**, Director Auxiliary Services and Scheduling  
**Kat Lui**, College of Management  
**Sara Solland**, Director Service Management IT  
**Steve Reed**, Chief Information Officer

### Board of Trustees and Chancellors

**Alex Cirillo**, Trustee  
**Jay Cowles**, Trustee  
**Lynda Milne**, Associate Vice Chancellor  
**Ron Anderson**, Vice Chancellor

### Deans

**Carl Polding**, College of Individualized Studies  
**Chris Schafer**, Library & Information Services  
**Craig Hansen**, College of Liberal Arts  
**Frank Schweigert**, College of Community Studies & Public Affairs  
**Judith Graziano**, College of Nursing and Health Sciences  
**Rene Antrop-Gonzalez**, School of Urban Ed  
**Shonda Craft**, Associate Dean College Community Studies & Public Affairs  
**Sue Fitzgerald**, College of Sciences

#### **Learning Assessment Team**

**Bryan Litsey**, P.O.S.T Coordinator/Academic Advisor, School of Law Enfrc  
**Carol Bormann Young**, Provost  
**Frank Schweigert**, Dean College of Community Studies & Public Affairs  
**Judith Graziano**, Dean College of Nursing and Health Sciences  
**Kat Lui**, Dean College of Management  
**Leslie Morrison**, Faculty Nursing  
**Michael Stein**, Associate Faculty Information/Computer Sciences  
**Nicholas Hartlep**, Associate Faculty Urban Education  
**Pat Borchert**, Faculty College of Management  
**Rene Antrop-Gonzalez**, Dean School of Urban Ed  
**Ruth Zietlow**, Faculty Library Services  
**Tori Sadler**, Faculty Communication, Writing and Arts

#### **Distance Education Support**

**Andrew Marz**, Office & Administrative Specialist  
**Bilal Dameh**, Instructional Designer  
**Bob Bilyk**, Director Center for Online Learning  
**Jack Buckholz**, Media Specialist  
**Owen Hansen**, Online Learning Specialist  
**Travis Morgan**, Senior Instructional Technologist

#### **Distance Education Faculty**

**Carol Lacey**, Associate Faculty College of Individualized Studies  
**Carolyn Whitson**, Faculty Literature and Language  
**Debi Eardley**, Assistant Faculty Nursing  
**Jenny Dosch**, Faculty Accounting  
**Joe Arvidson**, Community Faculty Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice  
**Joel Wilson**, Faculty Accounting  
**Katryna Johnson**, Faculty Marketing  
**Nancy Miller**, Associate Faculty Human Services  
**Raj Sethuraju**, Associate Faculty Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice  
**Susan Hilal**, Faculty School of Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice  
**Susan Misterek**, Associate Faculty Decision Science  
**Deb Eckberg**, Associate Faculty, Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

#### **Integrity Session**

**Bruce Biser**, Chief Financial Officer  
**Craig Morris**, Chief Diversity Officer  
**Danielle Hinrichs**, Associate Faculty Communications, Writing & Arts  
**Doug Knowlton**, Associate Provost for Student Success  
**Greg Mellas**, Director, Institute for Community Engagement & Scholarship  
**Paul Spies**, Faculty Urban Education,  
**Steve Reed**, Chief Information Officer  
**Sue Raddatz**, Assistant Director Human Resources  
**Tammy Durant**, Associate Faculty Literature & Language, Department Chair  
**Therissa Libby**, Associate Faculty Human Services  
**Valerie Geaither**, Professor Human Services

### **Quality Improvement Team**

**Bruce Biser**, Chief Financial Officer  
**Bruce Lindberg**, Director, Institutional Effectiveness  
**Carol Bormann Young**, Interim Provost  
**Cynthia DeVore**, Director, Institutional Research  
**Deb Gehrke**, Chief Human Resource Officer  
**Doug Knowlton**, Associate Provost for Student Success  
**Joyce Paxton**, Director, AQIP  
**Lois Larson**, Director, Financial Aid  
**Pat Borchert**, Faculty, College of Management  
**Ruth Zeitlow**, Faculty, Library Services  
**Shelly Auldrich**, Associate Registrar  
**Steve Reed**, Chief Information Officer  
**Travis Morgan**, Senior Instructional Technologist

### **Federal Compliance Team**

**Amber Eisen Ramgren**, Associate Registrar  
**Amy Dunn**, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management  
**Bobbie Anderson**, Director, Gateway  
**Daryl Johnson**, Registrar  
**Joe Rockers**, Director, Academic Program Partnerships  
**Joyce Paxton**, Director, AQIP  
**Julio Vargas Essex**, Director of Admissions  
**Lois Larson**, Director, Financial Aid  
**Lori Page**, Academic Scheduling Coordinator  
**Vicki Tschida**, Technology and Reports Coordinator  
**Caron Bormann Young**, Interim Provost  
**Ashley Weatherspoon**, Director, Student Partnerships & Collaborations

### **Inter Faculty Organization**

**Alec Sonsteby**, Associate Faculty Library Services, Secretary  
**Andrew Carlson**, Associate Faculty, College Liberal Arts Convener  
**August Hoffman**, Faculty Psychology, President IFO  
**Barbara Beltrand**, Associate Faculty Accounting, Treasurer  
**Christine Larson**, Associate Faculty, Library Services Convener  
**Fred Carpenter**, Associate Faculty, Associate Faculty Caucus Convener  
**Michelle Filkins**, Faculty Library Services, Vice President  
**Susan Misterek**, Associate Faculty College of Management Convener  
**Therissa Libby**, Associate Faculty, Community Studies & Public Affairs Convener

**Faculty-** 23 faculty representing various programs, community and full-time faculty

**Students-** 19 students representing various programs and levels (2 students from Student Senate)

**Staff-** 26 staff members representing various academic and non-academic service areas

**Assessment Consultation- Focus A-** 14 faculty members from various units

## Appendix B

### Principal Documents, Materials and Web Pages Reviewed

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Metropolitan State University web sites: financial aid, admissions, Student Services, Student Life & Leadership, Student Senate, home page, library, safety/security, various program and services pages (Center for Academic Excellence, Center for Accessibility Resources, Counseling Services, Student Services for specific ethnicities and other subgroups)

Student Handbook  
Metropolitan State University Catalog UG 2015-2016  
Accountability Dashboard Index

History of Metropolitan State  
Academic programs to support the mission  
Facilities Master Plan  
Provost's Work plan and 2017 President's Work plan  
MnSCU Planning priorities & priorities interconnection  
Metropolitan State priorities descriptions & emphasis  
Description of multicultural partnerships  
Equity and Diversity Plan & Equity and Diversity Council Charter  
MnSCU Policy & procedure to add programs to meet society's needs  
Activities to support the mission  
Services to support diverse population  
Metropolitan State policy on degrees  
Metropolitan State policy and procedure on approving new programs  
Annual report on Securing Regional Prosperity  
Processes, participation & description for community engagement  
Participation in "Created Equal" Program  
Higher Ed Commission Community Service Honor Roll  
Metropolitan State Partners  
AQIP Steering Committee membership & charter  
Programs added to serve community – CACHC, MAPL, SC and Ops  
Presentation to MnSCU Board of Trustees: Partnering with Communities of Color: Student, Academic, and Institutional

7.1 Finance and Administrative Authority of Board and Chancellor and Presidents  
7.4 Financial Reporting  
7.7 Gift and Grants Acceptance Procedure  
1C.0.1 Employee Code of Conduct  
1C.1 Board of Trustee Code of Conduct  
Employee Code of Conduct Training  
1C.2 Fraudulent or Other Dishonest Acts  
Identity authentication for testing center process  
1C.1 Board Code of Conduct Policy  
1A.1 Board Organization and Admin Policy  
4.2 Appointment of Presidents Policy  
Faculty Academic Freedom  
Academic Integrity Guide and student policy  
Metropolitan State academic appeals procedure  
Civic engagement activity  
List of Student Organizations & List of Resources and Volunteer Opportunities  
Activity related to commitment to anti-racism  
Carnegie official announcement of re-classification  
Resources: Guides for students and faculty regarding use of info  
Approval of project budgets and pending property acquisition. (Parking ramp and Student Center)  
Courses approved for Gen Ed applies to all degree programs  
List of program specific accreditations and certificates

Metro State Program Review Plan Jan 2017  
Various examples of completed program reviews  
MnSCU Charting the Future FY 17 Work plan  
Metropolitan State Policy: assessment-of-student-learning  
Various examples of program assessment plans  
Process for annual appropriation of state funds  
HR plan for turnover reduction  
Plan for integrated planning of 2016-2020  
FYI budget tasks and timeline  
BOT Code of Conduct  
Finance and administrative authority of BOT and President  
Strategic Enrollment Management Council Goals, Data, Actions, Results  
Metropolitan State policy & procedure: Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)  
Contractually required Time allocated for advising, office hours  
Use of Academic Alert to warn students of poor performance, by type of alert & class standing  
Metropolitan State policy & procedure regarding approving programs  
Metropolitan State policy regarding baccalaureate-degree requirements  
Metropolitan State policy regarding general-education-liberal-studies  
Metropolitan State procedure for approving programs  
MnSCU guidelines MN Transfer Curriculum  
MnSCU Policy & Procedure Academic Programs  
Support for online course development to standards  
Contractual allocation of funds for faculty development for community faculty  
Categories for evaluation of faculty in all five criteria  
Center for Faculty Development Accomplishments--AY2016-2017  
Metropolitan State Academic Program Review Policy 2550  
Metropolitan State Transfer Credit Policy  
Retention Taskforce Goals and Actions  
Online Advising Guide (draft)  
Faculty Conference Proceedings 2015-2017  
Budget redesign process and meeting notes 2016-2017, Budget Forum Feb. 2, 2017  
Strategic Plan Overview Feb. 2, 2017  
President letter to system CFO 2,8, 2017 regarding Financial Recovery Plan's progress



## Federal Compliance Worksheet for Evaluation Teams

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### ***Evaluation of Federal Compliance Components***

The team reviews each item identified in the *Federal Compliance Filing by Institutions* (FCFI) and documents its findings in the appropriate spaces below. Teams should expect institutions to address these requirements with brief narrative responses and provide supporting documentation where necessary. Generally, if the team finds in the course of this review that there are substantive issues related to the institution's ability to fulfill the Criteria for Accreditation, such issues should be raised in the appropriate parts of the Assurance Review or Comprehensive Quality Review.

This worksheet is to be completed by the peer review team or a Federal Compliance reviewer in relation to the federal requirements. The team should refer to the *Federal Compliance Overview* for information about applicable HLC policies and explanations of each requirement.

Peer reviewers are expected to supply a rationale for each section of the Federal Compliance Evaluation.

The worksheet becomes an appendix in the team report. If the team recommends monitoring on a Federal Compliance Requirement in the form of a report or focused visit, the recommendation should be included in the Federal Compliance monitoring sections below and added to the appropriate section of the Assurance Review or Comprehensive Quality Review.

Institution under review: Metropolitan State University

Please indicate who completed this worksheet:

- Evaluation team
- Federal Compliance reviewer

**To be completed by the Evaluation Team Chair if a Federal Compliance reviewer conducted this part of the evaluation:**

Name: Connie S. Wilson

- I confirm that the Evaluation Team reviewed the findings provided in this worksheet.

## Assignment of Credits, Program Length and Tuition

(See FCFI Questions 1–3 and Appendix A)

1. Complete the [Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours](#). Submit the completed worksheet with this form.
  - Identify the institution's principal degree levels and the number of credit hours for degrees at each level (see the institution's Appendix A if necessary). The following minimum number of credit hours should apply at a semester institution:
    - Associate's degrees = 60 hours
    - Bachelor's degrees = 120 hours
    - Master's or other degrees beyond the bachelor's = At least 30 hours beyond the bachelor's degree
  - Note that 1 quarter hour = 0.67 semester hour.
  - Any exceptions to this requirement must be explained and justified.
  - Review any differences in tuition reported for different programs and the rationale provided for such differences.
2. Check the response that reflects the evaluation team or Federal Compliance reviewer's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
  - The institution meets HLC's requirements.
  - The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
  - The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
  - The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

### Rationale:

MSU has an appropriate minimum number of hours required for its degree levels. Doctoral hours range from 72 to 80 and Master hours range from 32-62 beyond the baccalaureate, with all bachelor degrees at 120 hours. Approximately 20 syllabi were reviewed and the catalog was reviewed to verify this information. There are few tuition differences within degree levels, with the exception of the BSN, BS in Dental Hygiene, the MSN and MS in Dental Hygiene which have a practicum component and have a higher tuition rate. There is also a higher rate for both undergraduate and graduate online courses. Rates are published on the website at <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/university-info/university-info/financial-management/tuition-and-fees>. Undergraduate tuition is set at \$7,565 annually and graduate at \$390 per credit hour. There is also a listing of fees including computer, parking, graduation, application, student activity, orientation and transcript fees. All tuition and fees follow the Minnesota State Board Policy 5.11.

### Additional monitoring, if any:

None

## Institutional Records of Student Complaints

(See FCFI Questions 4–7 and Appendixes B and C)

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1. Verify that the institution has documented a process for addressing student complaints and appears to be systematically processing such complaints, as evidenced by the data on student complaints since the last comprehensive evaluation.
  - Review the process that the institution uses to manage complaints, its complaints policy and procedure, and the history of complaints received and resolved since the last comprehensive evaluation by HLC.
  - Determine whether the institution has a process to review and resolve complaints in a timely manner.
  - Verify that the evidence shows that the institution can, and does, follow this process and that it is able to integrate any relevant findings from this process into improvements in services or in teaching and learning.
  - Advise the institution of any improvements that might be appropriate.
  - Consider whether the record of student complaints indicates any pattern of complaints or otherwise raises concerns about the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation or Assumed Practices.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
  - The institution meets HLC's requirements.
  - The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
  - The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
  - The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

### Rationale:

The institution has a clear student complaint policy and process in the student handbook and an online process. Complaints are directed to the appropriate person with a definitive timeline for acknowledgement and response to the student. Complaints are aggregated by year with a noted range of 135 to 79 complaints in the past three years, mostly related to newly instituted parking fees. MSU resolves most complaints within seven business days. Improvements were reported based on the complaints from the last few years including new advisor assignments and the creating of a centralized Advising Center to accommodate walk-ins, additional advising positions have been added, a service manager was added to Information Technology and improved communication has occurred with student in regard to parking fees. Another improvement is the regular monthly reports of complaint information is provided to the Provost, supervisors, directors and deans. Finally, cashier and some registrar functions such as printing transcripts, were moved to Gateway for greater student accessibility. Gateway services are available at all locations with extended hours in the evening to serve adult students, and on Saturdays.

Additional monitoring, if any:

None

## Publication of Transfer Policies

(See FCFI Questions 8–10 and Appendixes D–F)

1. Verify that the institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public. Policies should contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions.
  - Review the institution’s transfer policies.
  - Review any articulation agreements the institution has in place, including articulation agreements at the institution level and for specific programs and how the institution publicly discloses information about those articulation agreements.
  - Consider where the institution discloses these policies (e.g., in its catalog, on its website) and how easily current and prospective students can access that information.
  - Determine whether the disclosed information clearly explains any articulation arrangements the institution has with other institutions. The information the institution provides to students should explain any program-specific articulation agreements in place and should clearly identify program-specific articulation agreements as such. Also, the information the institution provides should include whether the articulation agreement anticipates that the institution (1) accepts credits from the other institution(s) in the articulation agreement; (2) sends credits to the other institution(s) in the articulation agreements; (3) both offers and accepts credits with the institution(s) in the articulation agreement; and (4) what specific credits articulate through the agreement (e.g., general education only; pre-professional nursing courses only; etc.). Note that the institution need not make public the entire articulation agreement, but it needs to make public to students relevant information about these agreements so that they can better plan their education.
  - Verify that the institution has an appropriate process to align the disclosed transfer policies with the criteria and procedures used by the institution in making transfer decisions.
2. Check the response that reflects the team’s conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
  - The institution meets HLC’s requirements.
  - The institution meets HLC’s requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
  - The institution does not meet HLC’s requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
  - The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

MSU has clear transfer tools and resources on the website and in the catalog. The policies (Transfer Policy #2120, MnSCU Policy #3.21 and #3.39, MnSCU procedures #3.21.1 and #3.27.1) are listed in multiple locations and are clear and follow standard practice. A list of articulation agreements was also provided. On the website, the articulation list links to a Minnesota Transfer page. MSU follows state policies and procedures as evidenced in samples of credit transfer.

Additional monitoring, if any:

None

## Practices for Verification of Student Identity

(See FCFI Questions 11–16 and Appendix G)

1. Confirm that the institution verifies the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided through distance or correspondence education. Confirm that it appropriately discloses additional fees related to verification to students, and that the method of verification makes reasonable efforts to protect students' privacy.
  - Determine how the institution verifies that the student who enrolls in a course is the same student who submits assignments, takes exams and earns a final grade. The team should ensure that the institution's approach respects student privacy.
  - Check that any costs related to verification (e.g., fees associated with test proctoring) and charged directly to students are explained to the students prior to enrollment in distance or correspondence courses.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
  - The institution meets HLC's requirements.
  - The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
  - The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
  - The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

MSU verifies student ID with a StarID and password. The University is also looking into proctored online exams. No additional fees are charged to the students for proctoring services. All other fees including a technology fee information is accessible to students on the website.

Additional monitoring, if any:

None

## Title IV Program Responsibilities

(See FCFI Questions 17–24 and Appendixes H–Q)

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1. This requirement has several components the institution must address.
  - The team should verify that the following requirements are met:
    - **General Program Requirements.** The institution has provided HLC with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department has raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities.
    - **Financial Responsibility Requirements.** The institution has provided HLC with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department has raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion 5 if an institution has significant issues with financial responsibility as demonstrated through ratios that are below acceptable levels or other financial responsibility findings by its auditor.)
    - **Default Rates.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its three-year default rate. It has a responsible program to work with students to minimize default rates. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department has raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. Note that for 2012 and thereafter, institutions and teams should be using the three-year default rate based on revised default rate data published by the Department in September 2012; if the institution does not provide the default rate for three years leading up to the comprehensive evaluation visit, the team should contact the HLC staff.
    - **Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, and Related Disclosures.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.
    - **Student Right to Know/Equity in Athletics.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The disclosures are accurate and provide appropriate information to students. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion 2, Core Component 2.A if the team determines that the disclosures are not accurate or appropriate.)
    - **Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies.** The institution has provided HLC with information about its policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The institution has demonstrated that the policies and practices meet state or federal requirements and that the institution is appropriately applying these policies and practices to students. In most cases, teams should verify that these policies exist and are available to students, typically in the course catalog or student handbook and online. Note that HLC does not necessarily require that the institution take attendance unless required to do so by

state or federal regulations but does anticipate that institutional attendance policies will provide information to students about attendance at the institution.

- **Contractual Relationships.** The institution has presented a list of its contractual relationships related to its academic programs and evidence of its compliance with HLC policies requiring notification or approval for contractual relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a contractual relationship that may require HLC approval and has not received HLC approval, the team must require that the institution complete and file the change request form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Substantive Change Application for Programs Offered Through Contractual Arrangements on HLC's website for more information.)
  - **Consortial Relationships.** The institution has presented a list of its consortial relationships related to its academic programs and evidence of its compliance with HLC policies requiring notification or approval for consortial relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a consortial relationship that may require HLC approval and has not received HLC approval, the team must require that the institution complete and file the form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Substantive Change Application for Programs Offered Through Consortial Arrangements on HLC's website for more information.)
- Review all of the information that the institution discloses having to do with its Title IV program responsibilities.
  - Determine whether the Department has raised any issues related to the institution's compliance or whether the institution's auditor has raised any issues in the A-133 about the institution's compliance, and also look to see how carefully and effectively the institution handles its Title IV responsibilities.
  - If the institution has been cited or is not handling these responsibilities effectively, indicate that finding within the Federal Compliance portion of the team report and whether the institution appears to be moving forward with the corrective action that the Department has determined to be appropriate.
  - If issues have been raised concerning the institution's compliance, decide whether these issues relate to the institution's ability to satisfy the Criteria for Accreditation, particularly with regard to whether its disclosures to students are candid and complete and demonstrate appropriate integrity (*Core Components 2.A and 2.B*).
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
- The institution meets HLC's requirements.
  - The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
  - The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
  - The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate

reference).

#### Rationale:

MSU has student loan default rates that are appropriate and one of the lowest in the state: 2011- 6.6, 2012- 5.9 and 2013 5.7. MSU complies with the Cleary Act and reporting campus crime information. Appropriate information is located on the Safety and Security website for easy access. There is an academic progress policy, but no attendance policy in place. The Financial Aid office has a procedure for non-attendance. MSU is provisionally recertified through Dec. 31, 2018 for Title IV. There have been no program reviews by the Department of Education in the past seven years. The University does not have a relationship with any particular external student loan services and provides information on its website. MSU has had no fines, penalties or letters of credit imposed by the Department of Education.

Information provided by MSU on this report was accurate and was verified including the materials published by the Safety and Security Office on campus crime. The University does not offer athletics. There are no consortial or contractual relationships. There have been no federal investigations related to required disclosures.

Information about the Federal Responsibility Requirements and the financial ratios were provided by the University: FY 2013- 2.20, FY 2014- 0.00, and FY 2015- 1.55 along with an explanation for the ratios that relates to construction of three buildings and parking ramp. The Composite Financial Index for 2016 was acceptable to the Higher Learning Commission per the University with no further review with justification that there is resolution of financial issues related to construction. The University has a five-year financial recovery plan and reports regularly to Vice Chancellor & Chief Financial Officer of Minnesota State. The latest report filed by the CFO to the Vice Chancellor was 2/27/2017 that indicated steady and appropriate progress on the plan. Additionally, the President also filed a report with the Vice Chancellor in 2/8/2017 on the financial recovery plan that the team reviewed.

The OMB Circular for June 30, 2015 found no material weakness and no discrepancies related to Metropolitan State.

MSU publishes a student handbook on Rights and Responsibilities that provides relevant policies and services. The Financial Aid web site contains appropriate student consumer information in regard to fees, satisfactory academic progress, loan repayment, cost of attendance, Net Price Calculator, entrance and exit counseling for loan repayment, Title IV refund policy, transfer policy, gainful employment information and FERPA rights. <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/student-services-support/student-services/student-resources/students-right-to-know-act>.

#### Additional monitoring, if any:

A monitoring report to ensure an attendance policy is created and accessible to students and faculty is recommended to be in place by July 1, 2017. Accessibility to include website and syllabi to reflect best practice.

## Required Information for Students and the Public

(See FCFI Questions 25–27 and Appendixes R and S)

1. Verify that the institution publishes accurate, timely and appropriate information on institutional programs, fees, policies and related required information. Verify that the institution provides this required information in the course catalog and student handbook and on its website.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

- The institution meets HLC's requirements.
- The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
- The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
- The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

**Rationale:**

MSU provides clear, timely and accurate information on the web, in the catalog, and student handbooks. A long listing of websites provides appropriate information to students and the public. The MSU website is clear, easy to navigate and the search on the site works well. A few links were not working such as creative learning spaces and the link for online learning. It appears the website was being updated.

**Additional monitoring, if any:**

None

## **Advertising and Recruitment Materials and Other Public Information**

(See FCFI Questions 28–31 and Appendixes T and U)

1. Verify that the institution has documented that it provides accurate, timely and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its accreditation status with HLC and other agencies as well as about its programs, locations and policies.
  - Review the institution's disclosure about its accreditation status with HLC to determine whether the information it provides is accurate, complete and appropriately formatted and contains HLC's web address.
  - Review the institution's disclosures about its relationship with other accrediting agencies for accuracy and for appropriate consumer information, particularly regarding the link between specialized/professional accreditation and the licensure necessary for employment in many professional or specialized areas.
  - Review the institution's catalog, brochures, recruiting materials, website and information provided by the institution's advisors or counselors to determine whether the institution provides accurate, timely and appropriate information to current and prospective students about its programs, locations and policies.
  - Verify that the institution correctly displays the Mark of Affiliation on its website.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
  - The institution meets HLC's requirements.
  - The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.

- The institution does not meet HLC’s requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
- The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

**Rationale:**

MSU has clear, timely and appropriate information about accreditation, programs, locations and a wide array of policies on the web, in print and recruiting materials for current and prospective students. MSU has a Web Policy and a procedure for review of published material. The webpage contains a link to the HLC AQIP and HLC Accreditation web pages that include appropriate HLC contact information and the Mark of Affiliation with a link to the HLC web site. The program pages contain information about accreditors and what is required for licensure and employment e.g. BSN MANE program.

**Additional monitoring, if any:**

None

### **Review of Student Outcome Data**

(See FCFI Questions 32–35 and Appendix V)

1. Review the student outcome data the institution collects to determine whether they are appropriate and sufficient based on the kinds of academic programs the institution offers and the students it serves.
  - Determine whether the institution uses this information effectively to make decisions about planning, academic program review, assessment of student learning, consideration of institutional effectiveness and other topics.
  - Review the institution’s explanation of its use of information from the College Scorecard, including student retention and completion and the loan repayment rate.
2. Check the response that reflects the team’s conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
  - The institution meets HLC’s requirements.
  - The institution meets HLC’s requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
  - The institution does not meet HLC’s requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
  - The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion 4.B.

**Rationale:**

The University gathers appropriate data from academic programs and completes program reviews every 5 years with embedded assessment. Various samples of program review were provided. Program Review

was the focus of their HLC Assessment academy project and is a current Action Project. Departmental assessment reports are in the early stages of development with learning outcomes being defined for programs without external accreditors. Programs with external accreditation have student learning outcomes posted on their program website. General Education assessment is occurring in compliance with MnSCU requirements.

The student learning outcome data collected and analyzed are appropriate and include retention, completion, graduation and transfer-out rates as well as gainful employment. MSU also participates in the Voluntary System of Accountability.

Additional monitoring, if any:

The Team has additional documentation in Criteria 4.B. in relation to assessment of student learning with a recommendation of a monitoring report.

## Publication of Student Outcome Data

(See FCFI Questions 36–38)

1. Verify that the institution makes student outcome data available and easily accessible to the public. Data may be provided at the institutional or departmental level or both, but the institution must disclose student outcome data that address the broad variety of its programs.
  - Verify that student outcome data are made available to the public on the institution’s website—for instance, linked to from the institution’s home page, included within the top three levels of the website or easily found through a search of related terms on the website—and are clearly labeled as such.
  - Determine whether the publication of these data accurately reflects the range of programs at the institution.
2. Check the response that reflects the team’s conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
  - The institution meets HLC’s requirements.
  - The institution meets HLC’s requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
  - The institution does not meet HLC’s requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
  - The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

The University publishes student learning outcomes that include completion, retention, graduation rates and transfer-out information and gainful employment that is easily accessible from the home page. MSU notes that the Minnesota State System (NMSCU) provides IPEDS data and there is a scorecard with outcome data that is available.

Additional monitoring, if any:

None

## Standing With State and Other Accrediting Agencies

(See FCFI Questions 39–40 and Appendixes W and X)

1. Verify that the institution discloses accurately to the public and HLC its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditors and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence.

The team should consider any potential implications for accreditation by HLC of a sanction or loss of status by the institution with any other accrediting agency or of loss of authorization in any state.

**Note:** If the team is recommending initial or continued status, and the institution is now or has been in the past five years under sanction or show-cause with, or has received an adverse action (i.e., withdrawal, suspension, denial or termination) from, any other federally recognized specialized or institutional accreditor or a state entity, then the team must explain the sanction or adverse action of the other agency in the body of the assurance section of the team report and provide its rationale for recommending HLC status in light of this action.

- Review the list of relationships the institution has with all other accreditors and state governing or coordinating bodies, along with the evaluation reports, action letters and interim monitoring plans issued by each accrediting agency.
  - Verify that the institution's standing with state agencies and accrediting bodies is appropriately disclosed to students.
  - Determine whether this information provides any indication about the institution's capacity to meet HLC's Criteria for Accreditation. Should the team learn that the institution is at risk of losing, or has lost, its degree or program authorization in any state in which it meets state presence requirements, it should contact the HLC staff liaison immediately.
2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

- The institution meets HLC's requirements.
- The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
- The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
- The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

MSU has program accreditation for nursing, social work and business that are current. There are also program certifications. This information is clear, accurate and specific on the web site.

Additional monitoring, if any:

None

## Public Notification of Opportunity to Comment

(FCFI Questions 41–43 and Appendix Y)

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1. Verify that the institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third-party comments. The team should evaluate any comments received and complete any necessary follow-up on issues raised in these comments.

**Note:** If the team has determined that any issues raised by third-party comments relate to the team’s review of the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, it must discuss this information and its analysis in the body of the assurance section of the team report.

- Review information about the public disclosure of the upcoming visit, including copies of the institution’s notices, to determine whether the institution made an appropriate and timely effort to notify the public and seek comments.
  - Evaluate the comments to determine whether the team needs to follow up on any issues through its interviews and review of documentation during the visit process.
2. Check the response that reflects the team’s conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:
    - The institution meets HLC’s requirements.
    - The institution meets HLC’s requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
    - The institution does not meet HLC’s requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
    - The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

MSU provided opportunities for students, alumni, faculty, staff and community members to submit comments, used appropriate avenues for notification and used the HLC template. No third party comments were received.

Additional monitoring, if any:

None

## Competency-Based Programs Including Direct Assessment Programs/Faculty-Student Engagement

(See FCFI Questions 44–47)

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1. Verify that students and faculty in any direct assessment or competency-based programs offered by the institution have regular and substantive interactions: the faculty and students communicate

on some regular basis that is at least equivalent to contact in a traditional classroom, and that in the tasks mastered to assure competency, faculty and students interact about critical thinking, analytical skills, and written and oral communication abilities, as well as about core ideas, important theories, current knowledge, etc. (Also, confirm that the institution has explained the credit hour equivalencies for these programs in the credit hour sections of the Federal Compliance Filing.)

- Review the list of direct assessment or competency-based programs offered by the institution.
- Determine whether the institution has effective methods for ensuring that faculty in these programs regularly communicate and interact with students about the subject matter of the course.
- Determine whether the institution has effective methods for ensuring that faculty and students in these programs interact about key skills and ideas in the students' mastery of tasks to assure competency.

2. Check the response that reflects the team's conclusions after reviewing this component of Federal Compliance:

- The institution meets HLC's requirements.
- The institution meets HLC's requirements, but additional monitoring is recommended.
- The institution does not meet HLC's requirements and additional monitoring is recommended.
- The Federal Compliance reviewer/evaluation team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Rationale:

MSU has no competency based or direct assessment programs.

Additional monitoring, if any:

None

## **Institutional Materials Related to Federal Compliance Reviewed by the Team**

Provide a list of materials reviewed here:

The Federal Compliance Worksheet  
Student Complaint Policies  
Transfer Policies (website)  
Tuition and Fees  
Appendices  
Websites:

University Calendar: <http://www.metrostate.edu/events/other-university-calendars/2016-2017-academic-calendar>  
Grading: <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/course-info/course-info/undergraduate-academic-procedures>  
Admissions: <http://www.metrostate.edu/admissions>  
Academic Program Requirements: <http://www.metrostate.edu/academic-programs>  
University Policies & Procedures: <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/course-info/course-info/university-policies-and-procedures>  
Tuition and Fees: <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/university-info/university-info/financial-management/tuition-and-fees>  
Refund Policies: <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/university-info/university-info/financial-management/tuition-refunds>  
Financial Aid: <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/student-services-support/student-services/gateway>  
Student Services and Support: <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/student-services-support/student-services>  
Student Conduct Code: <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/course-info/course-info/student-handbook/student-conduct/student-code-of-conduct>  
Judicial Affairs: <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/student-services-support/student-services/judicial-affairs>  
Student Complaint Process: <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/course-info/course-info/student-handbook/student-conduct>  
Student Education Records: <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/course-info/course-info/registrars-office/student-records>  
FAFSA: [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)  
Academic integrity: <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/university-info/university-info/center-for-faculty-development/teaching-and-learning-resources/teaching-resources/academic-integrity-policy-and-procedures>  
Office of the Registrar: <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/course-info/course-info/registrars-office>  
Disclosure Information: [http://www.metrostate.edu/applications/drep/files/Non-Disclosure\\_Directory\\_Information\\_Request.pdf](http://www.metrostate.edu/applications/drep/files/Non-Disclosure_Directory_Information_Request.pdf)  
Student Consumer Information: <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/course-info/course-info/financial-aid-helpful-information/student-consumer-information>  
Transfer: [http://asa.mnscu.edu/transfer/policies/docs/SmartTransfer\\_Web.pdf](http://asa.mnscu.edu/transfer/policies/docs/SmartTransfer_Web.pdf)  
Security Services: <http://www.metrostate.edu/student/university-info/university-info/safety-and-security>

Catalog

Student Handbook

20 syllabi that were identified. All syllabi were promptly provided.

Credit Hours and Clock Hours Worksheets

Scorecard

IPEDS

Website on advertising and recruiting

Departmental Assessment Reports

Accreditation pages

Audits

Campus Crime Information

Notices of opportunity to comment



## Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours

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Institution Under Review: Metropolitan State University

Review the *Worksheet for Institutions on the Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours*, including all supplemental materials. Applicable sections and supplements are referenced in the corresponding sections and questions below.

### Part 1. Institutional Calendar, Term Length and Type of Credit

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#### **Instructions**

Review Section 1 of Appendix A. Verify that the institution has calendar and term lengths within the range of good practice in higher education.

#### **Responses**

##### **A. Answer the Following Question**

1. Are the institution's calendar and term lengths, including non-standard terms, within the range of good practice in higher education? Do they contribute to an academic environment in which students receive a rigorous and thorough education?

Yes       No

Comments:

MSU has a standard calendar with a few accelerated terms but the hours are still appropriate in all cases. The report was easy to follow and the hours were all within the good practice suggestions. In sum, the calendars and term lengths were appropriate to providing a solid educational experience.

##### **B. Recommend HLC Follow-Up, If Appropriate**

Is any HLC follow-up required related to the institution's calendar and term length practices?

Yes       No

Rationale:

Identify the type of HLC monitoring required and the due date:

## **Part 2. Policy and Practices on Assignment of Credit Hours**

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### ***Instructions***

Review Sections 2–4 of the *Worksheet for Institutions on the Assignment of Credit Hours and Clock Hours*, including supplemental materials as noted below. In assessing the appropriateness of the credit allocations provided by the institution the team should complete the following steps. The outcomes of the team's review should be reflected in its responses below.

1. **Format of Courses and Number of Credits Awarded.** Review the *Form for Reporting an Overview of Credit Hour Allocations and Instructional Time for Courses* (Supplement A1 to the *Worksheet for Institutions*) completed by the institution, which provides an overview of credit hour assignments across institutional offerings and delivery formats.
2. Scan the course descriptions in the catalog and the number of credit hours assigned for courses in different departments at the institution (see Supplements B1 and B2 to *Worksheet for Institutions*, as applicable).
  - At semester-based institutions courses will be typically be from two to four credit hours (or approximately five quarter hours) and extend approximately 14–16 weeks (or approximately 10 weeks for a quarter). The descriptions in the catalog should reflect courses that are appropriately rigorous and have collegiate expectations for objectives and workload. Identify courses/disciplines that seem to depart markedly from these expectations.
  - Institutions may have courses that are in compressed format, self-paced, or otherwise alternatively structured. Credit assignments should be reasonable. (For example, as a full-time load for a traditional semester is typically 15 credits, it might be expected that the norm for a full-time load in a five-week term is 5 credits; therefore, a single five-week course awarding 10 credits would be subject to inquiry and justification.)
  - Teams should be sure to scan across disciplines, delivery mode and types of academic activities.
  - Federal regulations allow for an institution to have two credit-hour awards: one award for Title IV purposes and following the federal definition and one for the purpose of defining progression in and completion of an academic program at that institution. HLC procedure also permits this approach.

3. Scan course schedules to determine how frequently courses meet each week and what other scheduled activities are required for each course (see Supplement B3 to *Worksheet for Institutions*). Pay particular attention to alternatively structured or other courses completed in a short period of time or with less frequently scheduled interaction between student and instructor that have particularly high credit hour assignments.
4. Sampling. Teams will need to sample some number of degree programs based on the headcount at the institution and the range of programs it offers.
  - For the programs sampled, the team should review syllabi and intended learning outcomes for several courses, identify the contact hours for each course, and review expectations for homework or work outside of instructional time.
  - At a minimum, teams should anticipate sampling at least a few programs at each degree level.
  - For institutions with several different academic calendars or terms or with a wide range of academic programs, the team should expand the sample size appropriately to ensure that it is paying careful attention to alternative format and compressed and accelerated courses.
  - Where the institution offers the same course in more than one format, the team is advised to sample across the various formats to test for consistency.
5. **Direct Assessment or Competency-Based Programs.** Review the information provided by the institution regarding any direct assessment or competency-based programs that it offers, with regard to the learning objectives, policies and procedures for credit allocation, and processes for review and improvement in these programs.
6. **Policy on Credit Hours and Total Credit Hour Generation.** With reference to the institutional policies on the assignment of credit provided in Supplement A2 to *Worksheet for Institutions*, consider the following questions:
  - Does the institution's policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution?
  - Does that policy address the amount of instructional or contact time assigned and homework typically expected of a student with regard to credit hours earned?
  - For institutions with courses in alternative formats or with less instructional and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy also equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably achieved by a student in the time frame allotted for the course?
  - Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that HLC will expect that credit hour policies at public

institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

- If so, is the institution's assignment of credit to courses reflective of its policy on the award of credit?
  - Do the number of credits taken by typical undergraduate and graduate students, as well as the number of students earning more than the typical number of credits, fall within the range of good practice in higher education?
7. If the answers to the above questions lead the team to conclude that there may be a problem with the credit hours awarded the team should recommend the following:
- If the problem involves a poor or insufficiently detailed institutional policy, the team should call for a revised policy as soon as possible by requiring a monitoring report within no more than one year that demonstrates the institution has a revised policy and provides evidence of implementation.
  - If the team identifies an application problem and that problem is isolated to a few courses or a single department, division or learning format, the team should call for follow-up activities (a monitoring report or focused evaluation) to ensure that the problems are corrected within no more than one year.
  - If the team identifies systematic noncompliance across the institution with regard to the award of credit, the team should notify the HLC staff immediately and work with staff members to design appropriate follow-up activities. HLC shall understand systematic noncompliance to mean that the institution lacks any policies to determine the award of academic credit or that there is an inappropriate award of institutional credit not in conformity with the policies established by the institution or with commonly accepted practices in higher education across multiple programs or divisions or affecting significant numbers of students.

### ***Worksheet on Assignment of Credit Hours***

#### **A. Identify the Sample Courses and Programs Reviewed by the Team**

The website, catalog, and specific syllabi from master's level course (samples), online classes, and accelerated classes were scanned. Specific course syllabi in biology, chemistry, math, ethics, writing, psychology, management, and marketing were viewed. Independent study syllabi were also assessed.

#### **B. Answer the Following Questions**

##### 1. Institutional Policies on Credit Hours

- a. Does the institution's policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution? (Note that for this question and the questions that follow an institution may have a single comprehensive policy or multiple policies.)

Yes

No

Comments:

MSU has clear policy statements on awarding credit and the minimum meetings and hours required. Policies are consistently applied across face-to-face, online, and accelerated.

b. Does that policy relate the amount of instructional or contact time provided and homework typically expected of a student to the credit hours awarded for the classes offered in the delivery formats offered by the institution? (Note that an institution's policy must go beyond simply stating that it awards credit solely based on assessment of student learning and should also reference instructional time.)

Yes  No

Comments:

The policy and the worksheet included number of meetings and number of hours for online, face-to-face, and accelerated courses.

c. For institutions with non-traditional courses in alternative formats or with less instructional and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably achieved by a student in the time frame and utilizing the activities allotted for the course?

Yes  No

Comments:

NA. MSU does not have non-traditional course.

d. Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that HLC will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

Yes  No

Comments:

MSU has a clear policy that follows good practice in higher education.

## 2. Application of Policies

a. Are the course descriptions and syllabi in the sample academic programs reviewed by the team appropriate and reflective of the institution's policy on the award of credit? (Note that HLC will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

Yes  No

Comments:

The catalog has clear descriptions and clear credit hours. The credit hour policy is clear. However, the syllabi quality was very inconsistent with only some syllabi include course descriptions, learning outcomes, credit hour allotment, and a clear list of assignments, especially within the business, nursing, and psychology syllabi. The Writing 331 class sections are an example of syllabi inconsistencies. MSU may want to ensure a minimum syllabus template to include course description matching the catalog and consistent across sections of the same course, learning outcomes, credit hours, learning activities/assignments, and a calendar. More documentation is provided under Criteria 3.A. and 4.A. of the Comprehensive Quality Review report.

b. Are the learning outcomes in the sample reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution's policy on the award of credit?

Yes  No

Comments:

Yes, for the syllabi that had learning outcomes included. However, there were some syllabi that did not have clear student learning outcomes or credits listed on the syllabi. The catalog is clear. Further documentation is provided in the Comprehensive Quality Review report (3.A. and 4.A.)

c. If the institution offers any alternative-delivery or compressed-format courses or programs, are the course descriptions and syllabi for those courses appropriate and reflective of the institution's policy on the award of academic credit?

Yes  No

Comments:

The online and accelerated courses seemed to match with the F2F versions of the courses.

d. If the institution offers alternative-delivery or compressed-format courses or programs, are the learning outcomes reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution's policy on the award of credit? Are the learning outcomes reasonable for students to fulfill in the time allocated, such that the allocation of credit is justified?

Yes  No

Comments:

The online and accelerated courses matched learning outcomes with the face-to-face classes in the sample reviewed. The compressed formats seemed appropriate.

e. Is the institution's actual assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution reflective of its policy on the award of credit and reasonable and appropriate within commonly accepted practice in higher education?

Yes  No

Comments:

Based on the worksheet, catalog, and the syllabi, the assignment of credit to courses seems reasonable. However, as noted previously some syllabi did not include the credit hour allotment for the course.

**C. Recommend HLC Follow-up, If Appropriate**

Review the responses provided in this worksheet. If the team has responded “no” to any of the questions above, the team will need to assign HLC follow-up to assure that the institution comes into compliance with expectations regarding the assignment of credit hours.

Is any HLC follow-up required related to the institution’s credit hour policies and practices?

Yes                       No

Rationale:

The policy is clear and the majority of the syllabi were consistent. However, there was a great deal of difference in the quality of the syllabi. A syllabus template and syllabi checklists may be valuable (e.g., include credit hours, include course descriptions, etc.).

Identify the type of HLC monitoring required and the due date:

**D. Systematic Noncompliance in One or More Educational Programs With HLC Policies Regarding the Credit Hour**

Did the team find systematic noncompliance in one or more education programs with HLC policies regarding the credit hour?

Yes                       No

Identify the findings:

Rationale:

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### Part 3. Clock Hours

#### ***Instructions***

Review Section 5 of *Worksheet for Institutions*, including Supplements A3–A6. Before completing the worksheet below, answer the following question:

Does the institution offer any degree or certificate programs in clock hours or programs that must be reported to the Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes even though students may earn credit hours for graduation from these programs?

Yes                       No

**If the answer is “Yes,” complete the “Worksheet on Clock Hours.”**

**Note:** This worksheet is not intended for teams to evaluate whether an institution has assigned credit hours relative to contact hours in accordance with the Carnegie definition of the credit hour. This worksheet solely addresses those programs reported to the Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes.

Non-degree programs subject to clock hour requirements (for which an institution is required to measure student progress in clock hours for federal or state purposes or for graduates to apply for licensure) are not subject to the credit hour definitions per se but will need to provide conversions to semester or quarter hours for Title IV purposes. Clock hour programs might include teacher education, nursing or other programs in licensed fields.

Federal regulations require that these programs follow the federal formula listed below. If there are no deficiencies identified by the accrediting agency in the institution’s overall policy for awarding semester or quarter credit, the accrediting agency may provide permission for the institution to provide less instruction so long as the student’s work outside class in addition to direct instruction meets the applicable quantitative clock hour requirements noted below.

Federal Formula for Minimum Number of Clock Hours of Instruction (34 CFR §668.8):

- 1 semester or trimester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction
- 1 quarter hour must include at least 25 clock hours of instruction

Note that the institution may have a lower rate if the institution’s requirement for student work outside of class combined with the actual clock hours of instruction equals the above formula provided that a semester/trimester hour includes at least 30 clock hours of actual instruction and a quarter hour includes at least 20 semester hours.

***Worksheet on Clock Hours***

**A. Answer the Following Questions**

1. Does the institution’s credit-to-clock-hour formula match the federal formula?

- Yes       No

Comments:

NA

2. If the credit-to-clock-hour conversion numbers are less than the federal formula, indicate what specific requirements there are, if any, for student work outside of class.

NA

3. Did the team determine that the institution’s credit hour policies are reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that if

the team answers “No” to this question, it should recommend follow-up monitoring in section C below.)

Yes       No

Comments:

NA

4. Did the team determine in reviewing the assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution that it was reflective of the institution’s policy on the award of credit and reasonable and appropriate within commonly accepted practice in higher education?

Yes       No

Comments:

NA

**B. Does the team approve variations, if any, from the federal formula in the institution’s credit-to-clock-hour conversion?**

Yes       No

**C. Recommend HLC Follow-up, If Appropriate**

Is any HLC follow-up required related to the institution’s clock hour policies and practices?

Yes       No

Rationale:

NA

Identify the type of HLC monitoring required and the due date:

## Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

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<b>INSTITUTION and STATE:</b>	Metropolitan State University, MN
<b>TYPE OF REVIEW:</b>	AQIP Comprehensive Quality Review
<b>DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:</b>	Comprehensive Evaluation to include a Federal Compliance Reviewer.
<b>DATES OF REVIEW:</b>	2/27/2017 - 3/1/2017

No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements

### Accreditation Status

Nature of Institution

Control: Public

**Recommended Change: No Change**

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Degrees Awarded: Bachelors, Masters, Doctors

**Recommended Change: No Change**

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Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2009 - 2010

Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2016 - 2017

**Recommended Change: 2026 - 2027**

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### Accreditation Stipulations

General:

Accreditation at the doctoral level is limited to the Doctor of Business (DBA) and the Doctor of Nursing Practice. The University's programs in Taiwan are limited to current College of Management academic programs, i.e., the BS, the MBA, and the MMA; its program in Hong Kong to the MBA, and its program in Singapore to the BS in Business Administration.

**Recommended Change: No Change**

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## Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

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None.

### Recommended Change:

- 1) Interim report due 7/7/2017 on creating and implementing an attendance policy in relation to Federal Compliance.
  
  - 2) Interim report due 1/12/2018 on syllabi consistency that includes a course description that matches the catalog description among course sections of the same class, student learning outcomes, allocation of credit hours, learning activities/assignments commensurate with the credit hour allocation, and a calendar.
  
  - 3) Interim report due 5/7/2018 on assessment of student learning that includes identification of program learning outcomes that align with the course objectives/outcomes, associated measures for the learning outcomes and designated internal targets for the measures.
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### Institutional Data

Educational Programs		Recommended Change:
<b>Undergraduate</b>		
Certificate	24	_____
Associate Degrees	0	_____
Baccalaureate Degrees	59	_____
<b>Graduate</b>		
Master's Degrees	17	_____
Specialist Degrees	0	_____
Doctoral Degrees	2	_____

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### Extended Operations

#### Branch Campuses

None

**Recommended Change: No Change**

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#### Additional Locations

Anoka-Ramsy Community College, 11200 Mississippi Blvd., Coon Rapids, MN, 55433-3470 - Active

Century College, 3300 Century Avenue N, White Bear Lake, MN, 55110 - Active

## Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

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Dental Education Center, 1670 Beam Avenue, Maplewood, MN, 55109 - Active

Hennepin Technical College - Brooklyn Park, 9000 Brooklyn Boulevard, Brooklyn Park, MN, 55445 - Active

Hennepin Technical College - Eden Prairie, 13100 College View Drive, Eden Prairie, MN, 55347 - Active

Inver Hills Community College, 2500 East 80th Street, Inver Grove Heights, MN, 55076 - Active

Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Education Center, 9110 Brooklyn Boulevard, Brooklyn Park, MN, 55445 - Active

Midway site, 1450 Energy Park Dr., St. Paul, MN, 55108 - Active

Minneapolis campus, 1501 Hennepin Ave. , Minneapolis, MN, 55403 - Active

Normandale Community College, 9700 France Avenue S, Bloomington, MN, 55431-4399 - Active

North Hennepin Community College, 7411 85th Avenue North, Brooklyn Park, MN, 55445-2299 - Active

Ridgewater College, 2101 15th Avenue NW, Wilmar, MN, 56201 - Active

Ridgewater College, 2 Century Aveune SE, Hutchinson, MN, 55350 - Active

Riverland Community College, 2200 Riverland Drive, Albert Lea, MN, 56007 - Active

Riverland Community College, 965 Alexander Drive SW, Owatonna, MN, 55060 - Inactive

Riverland Community College, 1900 8th Avenue NW , Austin, MN, 55912 - Inactive

South of the River Education Center, Minnesota Workforce Center-Burnsville, Burnsville, MN, 55337 - Active

St. Paul College, 235 Marshall Ave, Saint Paul, MN, 55102 - Active

**Recommended Change: No Change**

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### Distance Delivery

11.0802 - Data Modeling/Warehousing and Database Administration, Certificate, G.C. Database Administration

11.1003 - Computer and Information Systems Security/Information Assurance, Certificate, G.C. Information Assurance (IA) and Information Technology

30.9999 - Multi-/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other, Bachelor, B.A. Individualized Studies

51.3808 - Nursing Science, Doctor, Doctor - Nursing Practice

51.3808 - Nursing Science, Master, Master - Nursing Science

51.3813 - Clinical Nurse Specialist, Certificate, Certificate - Wound Care Nurse

51.3813 - Clinical Nurse Specialist, Certificate, G.C. - Continence Care Nurse

51.3813 - Clinical Nurse Specialist, Certificate, G.C. - Ostomy Care Nurse

51.3813 - Clinical Nurse Specialist, Certificate, G.C. - Wound Ostomy Continence Nurse

52.0201 - Business Administration and Management, General, Bachelor, B.S. in Business Administration

52.0201 - Business Administration and Management, General, Bachelor, B.S. Management

52.0201 - Business Administration and Management, General, Master, M.B.A. Business Administration

52.0205 - Operations Management and Supervision, Bachelor, B.A.S. Industrial Management

52.0206 - Non-Profit/Public/Organizational Management, Bachelor, B.A.S. Organizational Administration

52.0206 - Non-Profit/Public/Organizational Management, Master, MPNA Public and Nonprofit Administration

52.0801 - Finance, General, Bachelor, B.S. Finance

52.1001 - Human Resources Management/Personnel Administration, General, Bachelor, B.S. Human Resource Management

52.1201 - Management Information Systems, General, Certificate, G.C. Healthcare Information Technology Management

52.1201 - Management Information Systems, General, Certificate, G.C. Management Information Systems (MIS) Generalist

52.1201 - Management Information Systems, General, Master, M.M.I.S. Master's of Management Information Systemes

52.1401 - Marketing/Marketing Management, General, Bachelor, B.S. Marketing

## Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

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**Recommended Change: No Change**

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### **Correspondence Education**

None

**Recommended Change: No Change**

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### **Contractual Arrangements**

None

**Recommended Change: No Change**

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### **Consortial Arrangements**

None

**Recommended Change: No Change**

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