

Executive Summary

Frostburg State University's Self-Study uses a comprehensive approach focusing on each of the fourteen MSCHE Standards of Excellence. This allowed the University to examine all areas of operation, with the goal of fulfilling the following goals of the Self-Study:

- Produce a report demonstrating that Frostburg meets the standards of accreditation as outlined in the MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education.
- Identify challenges facing the institution and make recommendations for responding to those challenges.
- Model a culture of reflection and assessment that will foster continued evidence-informed planning.

Frostburg State University has aligned its mission and goals with operations, and this is reflected throughout the six chapters of the Self-Study. These goals are demonstrated in student learning outcomes assessment, strategic goal-setting throughout planning units in multiple divisions of the University, and the overall student learning experience at FSU.

With more than 60 individuals engaged to work on the Self-Study, Frostburg State University is proud of the way its faculty, staff, and students have invested in the improvement of the University. The six chapters of the Self-Study were drafted by dedicated working groups who shared information and immersed themselves in a collaborative process of honest reflection. New strategies for assessment and planning have been implemented since the last Self-Study, and many individuals across campus who were not on working groups came together to discuss findings and offer suggestions. This collective engagement is perhaps one of the most valuable activities to come out of the Self-Study process.

We believe that this Self-Study has accomplished the three goals listed above. The report that follows examines Frostburg State University in light of all fourteen Standards of Excellence, providing a detailed analysis with documentation supporting the assertions within. We celebrate our successes in improved planning, resource allocation, and student learning assessment. We also make recommendations for implementing an internal simplified periodic program review process for non-major academic programs; ensuring processes for consistently assessing and promoting the effectiveness of institutional priorities and academic programs; developing Strategic Plan priorities that address resource implications through a transparent process that invites engagement from the campus community; developing a plan for advisor training and assessment; ensuring processes for consistently assessing and promoting the effectiveness of co-curricular and extra-curricular programs; implementing a sustainable process for the assessment of student learning outcomes in the University's General Education Program; and evaluating the diagnostic precision of the current program that places students into developmental Math and basic writing courses. We look forward to the Team Visit and the collegial, instructive practice of peer evaluation.

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Introduction

Frostburg State University was founded in 1898 by the Maryland General Assembly as State Normal School #2. Monies raised by residents, many of whom were coal miners, helped fund the normal school. After two years of study, the first class of teachers graduated in 1904 with a diploma and a lifetime teaching certificate. In 1935, the name of the institution was changed to State Teachers College at Frostburg. The name of the institution was changed again in 1963 to Frostburg State College.

The institution experienced significant growth from 1964-1979. During this time, six residence halls were completed as well as eleven campus buildings including the Chesapeake Dining Hall, Framptom Hall, Fine Arts, Dunkle Hall, Lane University Center, the Lewis J. Ort Library, the Physical Education Center, Hitchins Administration Building, and the Stangle Service Building. In 1987, the institution was granted University status, and the name changed to Frostburg State University. In 1988, Frostburg State University joined the newly formed University System of Maryland. In the years since, Frostburg State University has invested substantially in technology and improving residence halls and facilities. The Performing Arts Center was opened in 1994 and Compton Science Center and Edgewood Commons Apartment Complex opened in 2003. The first new building since 2003, The Catherine R. Gira Center for Communications and Information Technology opened for classes in fall 2014. In recent years, there has been a renewed focus on graduate education. In 2012, Frostburg State University offered its first doctoral degree program, and a Master's of Science in Nursing was implemented in fall 2015.

The main campus of Frostburg State University serves the far western counties of Maryland, as well as nearby counties in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. In addition, many students come from the Baltimore/Washington metro areas. Frostburg State University also serves students at the University System of Maryland at Hagerstown, at Anne Arundel Community College, at Cecil College, and across the globe in online and face-to-face classes. Increasing numbers of international students are attending Frostburg State University, and the University has partnered with 29 international colleges and universities to increase student numbers and provide native students opportunities for overseas study. A partnership with The Language Company was instituted to increase student numbers and ease international students' transition into bachelor's programs in the United States.

Although the University is located in a rural area, it strives for a lively engagement with the world at large, both by serving in place and reaching across the globe. Frostburg State University is committed to offering its students "One University, a World of Experiences."

Recent Developments and Expectations for the Future

The decennial review comes at an important time for Frostburg State University. The University community has a number of challenges to meet in the coming years, and the self-study process will provide an opportunity to examine and assess recent initiatives and their contributions toward the fulfillment of the institutional mission.

New Academic Opportunities and Certifications

New online programs have made a significant impact on the University's planning processes. The new online RN to BSN program and online Master of Science in nursing program are enrolling students at an impressive rate. Frostburg State University started its first doctoral program in 2012,

an applied Doctorate of Education in educational leadership, and graduated its first students in May 2015. A new Nurse Practitioner program is on the horizon.

Recent Initiatives and Points of Pride

Frostburg State University has made significant investments to improve student learning. Experiential learning is in the University's mission, and Frostburg is working to integrate hands-on experiences across its disciplines as well as in extracurricular activities. The President's Experiential Learning and Enhancement Fund (PELEF) is a competitive internal grant for which faculty and students may apply to receive funding in order to promote even more opportunities for hands-on experiences on campus and within the local community. The University has become a leader in the University System of Maryland in course redesign, as a participant with the National Center for Academic Transformation and the Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation. A number of academic departments made successful applications for grants from the Carnegie foundation to improve instructional delivery.

The University also has made a commitment to environmental sustainability in the past several years. The recent Lane University Center renovation and the new Gira Center are both LEED-certified Gold, and the Learning Green, Living Green committee and the newly-formed President's Advisory Council on Sustainability actively promote conservation and education on campus. The Frostburg Grows: Grow it Local greenhouse project, supported by the University and various outside funding sources, involves the conversion of used surface-mined lands into a 5-acre greenhouse and shade house complex designed to train community members for high quality jobs while producing local food and tree seedlings.

Student wellness is important at Frostburg State University. Former President Jonathan Gibraltar positioned himself as a national leader in alcohol education and an invited member and chair of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism's 10-member College Presidents Working Group. The Creating Healthy, Informed, Lasting Lifestyles (CHILL) program, which provides health and wellness education, was launched in 2008 through a charitable gift from AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals. In 2012, Frostburg State University signed a shared jurisdiction agreement with the Frostburg City Police that allows both enforcement entities to improve public safety in the neighborhoods surrounding campus. Also in 2012, the University began co-sponsoring, along with the Maryland Judiciary's Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office (MACRO) and Mountainside Community Mediation Center (MCMC), the Frostburg Sustaining Campus and Community Dialogue Series, which works to strengthen community relationships and foster civility and collaborative problem-solving in Frostburg. In 2013, Frostburg State University's lauded BURG Peer Education Network received the National Outstanding Peer Education Affiliate of the Year Award from the BACCHUS Network.

In fall 2015, two new college rankings studies based on the U.S. Department of Education's 2015 College Scorecard database have been released – one from the Economist and another from the Brookings Institute. While the rankings use different methodologies, each sought to determine the value colleges add to their students' earnings potential. The studies compared former students and graduates' actual earnings to the earnings researchers projected for attendees of such an institution. Both studies found FSU enhanced its former students' earnings potential significantly more than expected for schools of similar type, size and location. The Economist ranked FSU number 101 in the nation of 1,275 four-year non-vocational schools studied, placing FSU in the top 8% of such institutions nationwide. Brookings gave FSU a score of 78 of a possible 100 among all

four-year schools nationwide, placing FSU in the top 25% of all four-year institutions of higher education in terms of value added.

Improvements to Physical and Organizational Structures

Frostburg State University is investing in the renovation and rehabilitation of existing spaces as well as constructing new facilities adapted to 21st Century learning and living. The new Gira Center opened in fall 2014 and a new Education and Health Sciences Building is proposed. The Lane University Center renovation, completed in 2011 and funded through student fees, offers improved meeting and office space, redesigned eating areas, and a new workout area. A new public safety building will break ground in spring 2016.

Although administrative structures are not always visible to the campus visitor, they are vital to institutional progress and improvement. The President's Advisory Council on Institutional Effectiveness (PACIE), formed in 2010, and made up of faculty and administrators, has assisted in writing and implementing the University's strategic plan and monitoring its implementation and progress. PACIE recommended that the institution invest in a primary assessment platform, Campus Labs, which was adopted and has been used with increasing success across campus for assessment and strategic planning.

In 2012, Frostburg engaged Shugoll marketing research firm to help the University clarify its position in the marketplace, including surveying current and prospective students and parents, alumni, guidance counselors, donors, faculty, and staff. Based on those findings, a new marketing and branding campaign entitled "One University, a World of Experiences" was launched in fall 2013. The University engaged Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Higher Education Consulting to devise and implement tactics to improve recruitment and retention rates. The University also revised its First Year Experience program as another pathway to improve student success and freshman-to-sophomore retention rates. Frostburg State University is committed to the goals of its strategic plan and to continual self-assessment.

Current Challenges

Frostburg has encountered substantial financial and administrative challenges in the course of the last two years. A statewide budget cut in 2014 meant that the University had to absorb budget cuts of \$1.4M for FY2014 and \$1.5 for FY2015, which have had an impact on initiatives. In addition, the state of Maryland is experiencing a drop in the number of high school students, and this, coupled with changing demographics, presents challenges for a primarily residential campus.

During the 2014-2015 academic year, many changes took place at the upper levels of administration. The University's president of nine years, Dr. Jonathan Gibraltar, resigned to take a position at another university and Dr. Thomas Bowling, Vice President of Student Affairs, was named Interim President. Associate Provost and Registrar, Dr. Johnston Hegeman, was named Interim Vice President of Student Affairs. The Provost, Dr. William Childs, returned to his faculty position and was replaced by Interim Provost Dr. Ahmad Tootoonchi, former Dean of the College of Business. Dr. Sudhir Singh became interim Dean of the College of Business. The Vice President of Economic Development and Government Relations left to seek other opportunities, and the position was renamed Interim Vice President of International and Government Affairs and filled by former Vice Provost Dr. John Bowman. Some of his duties were taken by interim Assistant Provost Dr. Doris Santamaria-Makang. Associate Provost Dr. Randall Rhodes, co-chair of the Middle States Steering Committee, left for a position elsewhere and was replaced by Associate Provost Dr. Sydney

Duncan, formerly Department Chair of English and Foreign Languages. The Assistant Vice President of Planning, Assessment, and Institutional Research, Dr. Robert Smith, left for a position at another university. He has been replaced by the new Director of Assessment and Institutional Research, Ms. Sara-Beth Bittinger. The Presidential search is taking place in fall 2015, with a timeline of sending a list of candidate names to the University System of Maryland's Board of Regents early in 2016. Other positions likely will remain interim positions until the new President is on board to make final decisions about personnel.

Preparation for Self-Study

In the fall semester of 2013, the Provost and the President of the University appointed two co-chairs to begin the process of the Self-Study and form the Middle States Steering Committee. The co-chairs attended the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Self-Study Institute in November in Philadelphia, PA. After the Institute, the co-chairs in consultation with the President and Vice Presidents, identified a self-study model and the members of Frostburg's Self-Study Steering Committee, many of whom concurrently served as co-chairs of the working groups. Each working group had an administrative co-chair and a faculty co-chair. Dr. Andrea Lex served as the FSU Middle States liaison until March 13, 2015 when Dr. Sean A. McKittrick assumed the role of liaison.

The Middle States Steering Committee

The Middle States Steering Committee includes representatives from the faculty, staff, administration, and student body. Tom Slater serves as the representative from the University System of Maryland's Board of Regents.

Self-Study Steering Committee Co-Chairs

Sydney Duncan, Associate Provost as of August 2015, formerly Chair of English
Randall Rhodes, Associate Provost (resigned, July 2015)

Steering Committee Members

Amy C. Branam Armiento, Faculty, English and Foreign Languages Department
Wray Blair, Associate Provost for Enrollment Management
Henry Bullamore, Faculty, Geography Department
Michael Flinn, Faculty, Computer Science Department
Scott Fritz, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Kelly Hall, Faculty, Educational Professions Department (on leave as of August 5, 2015)
Johnston Hegeman, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs, Registrar
Beth Hoffman, Director of ADA/EEO
Karen Keller, Faculty, Biology Department
Denise Murphy, Associate Director of Budget
Doris Santamaria-Makang, Interim Assistant Provost as of September 2015, formerly Associate Professor, Educational Professions Department
Sudhir Singh, Interim Dean, College of Business
Linda Steele, Program Management Specialist, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Skye Pinney, Student Representative

Advisory Members to the Steering Committee

Tom Bowling, Interim President
John Bowman, Interim Vice President for International and Government Affairs
Ahmad Tootoonchi, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

David Rose, Vice President for Administration and Finance

John Short, Vice President for Advancement

Kathy Snyder, Vice President for Human Resources

Self-Study Model

The University's commitment to the process of the Self-Study has been an effort that has involved more than 60 people working on drafts of the document. The process has been covered in several articles in the student newspaper. Informational meetings took place with the Student Government Association and President's Leadership Circle. A completed draft was released to Frostburg faculty, staff, students, and members of the Alumni and Foundation Boards; the P-20 Councils of Allegany, Garrett, and Washington counties; and the Allegany County Chamber of Commerce Education and Economic Development Committees in November 2015; this was followed by two open forums and a comment period that lasted through the end of the semester. The self-study model chosen by Frostburg State University is the Comprehensive Report Reordering Standards to Reflect the Institution. All fourteen Standards of Excellence are addressed in the Self-Study.

MSCHE Standards of Excellence	Chapters
Standard 1: Mission and Goals Standard 6: Integrity	CHAPTER ONE
Standard 7: Institutional Assessment Standard 14: Student Learning Assessment	CHAPTER TWO
Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, Institutional Renewal Standard 3: Institutional Resources	CHAPTER THREE
Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention Standard 9: Student Support Services	CHAPTER FOUR
Standard 4: Leadership and Governance Standard 5: Administration Standard 10: Faculty	CHAPTER FIVE
Standard 11: Educational Offerings Standard 12: General Education Standard 13: Related Educational Activities	CHAPTER SIX

Frostburg State University's self-study process is designed to examine the ways in which the University aligns its mission and goals with planning and decision-making across divisions. By investigating the processes that guide planning and implementation, the self-study process has allowed the University to critically review the action priorities of its strategic plan and the processes by which those priorities are implemented, assessed, and the gathered data and analysis used in institutional decision-making. The timing and value of the self-study process is important for many reasons, not the least of which is an honest and open review of whether the University is accomplishing its mission and effectively and efficiently engaging in planning.

A new president will bring a new set of priorities, and the University will see many changes in the next few years. However, this study should give an accurate view of the progress that Frostburg State University has made since its last Self-Study as it prepares for an exciting future. Furthermore, this Study will demonstrate that Frostburg has laid a firm foundation for continuing its commitment to transparent evidence-based planning, assessment, and institutional improvement.

CHAPTER ONE

Mission and Goals

Integrity

Standards 1 and 6

Chapter One examines Frostburg State University's (FSU) mission, goals, and integrity with emphasis on how each influences institutional decision-making. The following information demonstrates how FSU is meeting Standards 1 and 6: analyzing the alignment of the University's mission and strategic goals and providing an overview of how they are fulfilled through institutional policies and procedures; providing a respectful campus climate; practicing fair and impartial processes to deal with students and employees; and demonstrating communication integrity to all stakeholders, including current and prospective students, employees, the community, and outside accrediting bodies.

Standard 1: Mission and Goals

Frostburg State University has clearly defined and publicized mission and goals that guide decision making among faculty, administration, staff, and governing bodies. Institutional goals serve as a framework for developing University action priorities that are reviewed and updated annually. Action priorities are established at the Summer Strategic Planning Retreat by the President, Executive Committee, Deans, Chair of Faculty, some invited members of the President's Advisory Council for Institutional Effectiveness (PACIE), and members of the Provost's Office. Originally facilitated by the President, the retreat became guided by the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research. Due to transitions experienced at various levels within the university's administration, a full Strategic Planning Retreat was not held in the summer of 2015.

The Mission of the University

Frostburg State University Mission Statement – Frostburg State University is a student-centered teaching and learning institution featuring experiential opportunities. The University offers students a distinctive and distinguished baccalaureate education along with a select set of applied master's and doctoral programs. Frostburg serves regional and statewide economic and workforce development; promotes cultural enrichment, civic responsibility, and sustainability; and prepares future leaders to meet the challenges of a complex and changing global society.

The president of each public institution of higher education in Maryland is responsible for developing an institutional mission statement and updating it every four years, with approval from the governing board. In the case of University System of Maryland (USM) institutions, the USM Chancellor is responsible for reviewing mission statements submitted by constituent institutions prior to their consideration and approval by the USM Board of Regents and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). The [Institutional Mission Statement](#) follows a standard format and is comprised of the following elements:

- Summary Mission Statement
- Institutional Identity
- Institutional Capabilities
- Institutional Objectives and Outcomes.

In fulfillment of its mission and in keeping with the goals of the Maryland Higher Education Commission's 2013 State Plan for Postsecondary Education and the University System of Maryland's Strategic Plan, Frostburg State University will address a set of long-range goals, noted below, and associated short-range objectives over the next several years. While the submission of these revised statements was slated for 2010 and 2014, FSU had submitted an interim revision of its mission statement in 2012 to reflect the University's new commitment to doctoral education.

At FSU, the mission revision process consisted of a work group identified by the President's Advisory Council on Institutional Effectiveness (PACIE) preparing sections titled "Institutional Identity" and "Institutional Capabilities" and presenting drafts for review by the President, selected campus groups, the Faculty Senate, and the wider campus community. The chair of PACIE and the president presented the document to the Board of Regents in April 2014.

MHEC staff reviewed the mission statements for consistency with the 2013 State Plan. Revised mission statements were recommended for approval at the September 2014 MHEC Commission meeting. No revisions were requested nor questions raised at that time and Frostburg's mission statement was approved by MHEC as per the designated timeline in September 2014.

The Strategic Goals of the University

1. Develop and support academic programs and student services that prepare a changing student population for an era of complexity and globalization.
2. Enhance facilities and the campus environment in order to support and reinforce student learning.
3. Increase student quality and institutional retention and graduation rates while encouraging baccalaureate students to persist to graduation.
4. Recruit and retain diverse and talented faculty and staff committed to student learning and University goals.
5. Promote activities that demonstrate the University's educational distinction.
6. Serve as a collaborative partner in the cultural, social, and economic development in Western Maryland, the region, and the state.

The University's strategic goals are used as a framework to guide annual operational planning at the institutional level. Planning, resource allocation, program and curriculum development, definition of outcomes – both student and programmatic – and efforts toward institutional improvement are guided by collaborative processes involving senior leadership and PACIE, which ensures alignment with FSU's mission and strategic goals and Middle States Commission standards.

The President's Advisory Council for Institutional Effectiveness

The President's Advisory Council for Institutional Effectiveness (PACIE) was formed to assist in the preparation of the University's strategic plan and goals and to monitor implementation and progress based on the Middle States standards and measures of institutional effectiveness. Originally, Council membership included the Chairs of the Faculty Senate and the Institutional Priorities and Resources (IPR) committee of the Faculty Senate, and representation from all University divisions and each academic college.

As conceived, an important role of PACIE was to communicate regularly to the University community information about planning and assessment. Strategic plans provide a brief history and summary of the environment in which FSU operates, and outline institutional goals and action priorities. PACIE was to monitor action priority reporting, develop a planning system, and ensure a model so that elements of the strategic plan, based in the University's Mission, were supported by Planning Units' (divisions, Colleges, departments) action items. The items were to be aligned, measured, and tracked through Compliance Assist, an electronic platform within Campus Labs that serves as a working repository for planning and assessment activities. Tactics and action priorities were to be examined for their continued relevance every year during an annual summer Strategic Planning Retreat; however, priorities were not listed with due dates nor did they list resources needed to implement actions—two elements of effective planning. Revised plans are posted on the FSU website for access by all members of the campus and off-campus communities. The first and most recent plans developed through this process were in [2011](#) and [2014](#).

University leadership realizes that while PACIE has moved Frostburg well along a pathway for continuous quality improvement, reporting quality has not always led to meaningful information that can be used for data-driven strategic planning. Recognizing the need for improvement in the process, the University has adapted by making changes to the Council and its practices. A fuller discussion of PACIE and its revisions are in Chapter Two.

The Alignment of Mission, Strategic Goals and Resource Allocation

Frostburg State University's Strategic Plan goals are reflective of its mission as a "student-centered teaching and learning institution." Goals One through Five focus on providing a comprehensive learning environment for students. The University's commitment to student retention and graduation rates, maintaining excellent faculty and staff, providing proper facilities, and promoting activities of educational distinction all showcase Frostburg's dedication to student learning. Goal Six encompasses leadership in the surrounding region, a particularly important role that Frostburg must play in light of its location in an economically depressed, rural area of Appalachia. Examples of how Frostburg State University's mission statement and strategic goals are used to shape its programs, activities, and the allocation of institutional resources are discussed below.

The process of academic program development is one example of how the University aligns its mission, strategic goals, and resource allocation. The process provides for broad representation in decision-making. When proposing new academic programs, faculty work with administrators and staff to ensure alignment of the program with workforce needs, institutional mission, and resource availability. New academic programming is a faculty-led process that requires approval by at least four campus committees—each with different academic, planning, and resource allocation functions—prior to approval at FSU executive and at state levels.

A proposal for a new program is first approved by a departmental/college curriculum committee for consistency with college curricular goals, market needs, and impact on affected programs and departments. In some programs, Program Advisory Boards are assembled to help shape learning outcomes to meet employer needs. Following departmental and college approvals, new program proposals are submitted to the undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) or Graduate Council (GC) for approval of academic elements. Concurrently, proposals are also reviewed through [a process](#) guided by the Institutional Priorities and Resources committee to examine the budgetary impact of the proposed program offering on the institution. Following approvals by these bodies, the proposal is introduced to the Faculty Senate for approval. Final approvals are granted by the

USM [Board of Regents](#) and the Maryland Higher Education Commission. The commission requires new programs to be aligned to the institutional mission and to reflect state priorities.

Documentation of new program approval by FSU's Faculty Senate is recorded in [meeting minutes](#).

Between 2006 and 2015, 18 new undergraduate programs (including seven new academic concentration areas), one new graduate program, and one new doctoral program were implemented.

Collaborative, Creative, and Scholarly Activities

In support of Frostburg's mission to provide student-centered teaching and learning with a focus on offering experiential opportunities, the University supports scholarly and creative activities of students and faculty through research and participation in the sciences, and the visual, literary, and performing arts. Activities are organized by students, faculty, and staff, often in collaboration with community members, and provide venues to address both local and global issues; and to promote a climate of intellectual, social, and cultural vibrancy within the community and region. Frostburg representatives are also involved in state efforts. "FSU is the hub of the community; FSU is the community. Its leadership is highly respected by USM and its Board of Regents" (interview with USM Regent Tom Slater).

Student, faculty, and community activities are numerous, varied, and scheduled throughout the entire calendar year. The University's commitment to sustaining these programs is reinforced the Institutional Strategic Plan in 2014. The budgets of the offices of the Provost/Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Advancement, and Administration and Finance, and student fees ensure funding opportunities that advance collaborative, creative, and scholarly activities. Highlighted below are a variety of student, faculty, and community opportunities, events, and resources that enrich the lives of people across Western Maryland.

Students

- *Diversity:* [Diversity Center](#)
- *International Education Opportunities:* [Center for International Education](#), which administers [Study Abroad](#); [The Language Company \(TLC\) Frostburg partnership](#)
- *Experiential Learning:* [Office of Student and Community Involvement \(OSCI\)](#); [Office of Leadership and Experiential Education](#); [Appalachian Regional Commission's Teaching Project](#)
- *Civic Engagement and Service-Learning:* [AmeriCorps](#) and other programs; [Alternative Spring Break](#)
- *Extracurricular Activities:* [Bobcat Connect](#)
- *Governance:* [Student Government Association](#)
- *Journalism:* [The Bottom Line](#); [FSU TV3](#)
- *Leadership Opportunities:* President's Experiential Learning Enhancement Fund (PELEF); [President's Leadership Circle](#); [Sloop Institute for Excellence in Leadership](#)
- *Research:* [College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Research Symposium](#); [First Annual Graduate Research Symposium in May 2015](#)
- *Opportunities At Large:* [FSU Foundation's Opportunity Grants](#); [Division of Student Affairs](#)
- *Campus and Center Sites:* [FSU Main Campus](#); [FSU@USMH](#)
- *Underage Drinking Prevention:* [Frostburg Community Coalition](#); [BURG Peer Education Network](#); [Reality Check](#)

Faculty

- *Sabbatical Leave*: [Described in Faculty Handbook \(p. A-89\)](#)
- *College and University Funds*: External grants through the [Office of Research and Sponsored Programs \(ORSP\)](#); [FSU Faculty Development Grants](#); [FSU Foundation's Opportunity Grants](#); and college level funding, e.g., [College of Business Process Manual](#) (pp.90-96)
- *Faculty and Staff Achievements*: The [Professional Achievements](#) publication annually lists and archives faculty and staff accomplishments, as well as academic and community service; however, due to self-reporting procedures to gather information, the publication under-reports the level of scholarly and creative activities of faculty and staff.

Community Involvement

The institution's mission and strategic goals reflect Frostburg's connections to both internal and external contexts and constituencies. In addition to the focus on internal operations, Frostburg's mission and goals recognize its economic importance in the region. The University has pursued partnerships with local businesses, governments, and law enforcement. Frostburg has also instituted new programs to answer workforce development needs and to prepare students for careers around the world.

The words of one FSU Foundation Board members mirror those of all FSU stakeholders: the University is a "chief economic engine" and "cultural asset" within the region. In 2012, an [Economic Impact Study](#) measured FSU's impact as \$173 million on the Western Maryland region and the state of Maryland, with \$121 million impact in Allegany County alone.

As an institution located in the Allegheny Highlands, local Appalachian identity and history is recognized. Diversity in Appalachia is featured in community collaborations. FSU community initiatives foster promotion of area non-profit organizations, environmental sustainability, and service-learning opportunities for students.

Table 1: Frostburg's Community Connections

Creative Community	
Appalachian Festival	Allegany Arts Council
Children's Literature Centre	Maryland Traditions Program of the Maryland
Cultural Events Series	States Arts Council
Frostburg Center for Literary Arts	Mountain City Traditional Arts
Sustainable Community and Town-Gown Relations	
Student and Community Involvement	Mountainside Community Mediation Center
Focus Frostburg	National Association for the Advancement of
Sustaining Campus and Community Dialogue	Colored People
Series	Evergreen Heritage Center
Frostburg Grows	Special Events
Economic Development and Impact	
Small Business Development Center	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce
Sustainable Energy Research Facility	Cumberland Allegany County Industrial
FrostburgFirst	Foundation (CACIF)
	The Greater Cumberland Committee

Community Assets	
Lewis J. Ort Library;	Planetarium;
Harold J. Cordts P.E. Center;	STEMFEST;
Performing Arts Center;	FSU@USMH;
Lane University Center;	Appalachian Center for Ethnobotanical Studies;
Lyric Theatre;	WFWM National Public Radio station
Cultural Events Series;	Frostburg Science Discovery Center
Program Advisory Boards	
College of Business;	Department of Educational Professions;
Engineering;	FSU Foundation and Alumni Association
P-20 Executive Council	

Experiential Learning

Frostburg State University has served as a regional and national leader in promoting experiential education through its field-based learning experiences; classroom-based service learning, co-curricular service, and civic engagement initiatives. For years, FSU has been offering courses and co-curricular opportunities that highlight or embed experiential learning components (See [the 2003 Undergraduate Education Initiative Sub-Committee on Co-Curricular and Experiential Education Final Report](#)). Since the 2006 Self-Study, significant developments have occurred as the University continues to promote its mission as “a student-centered teaching and learning institution featuring experiential opportunities.”

- In 2011, the Provost appointed a Task Force to develop an “experiential transcript” in order to document the co-curricular activities engaged in by FSU students. The Task Force produced a [Report of the Experiential Education Task Force Nov 2014](#) of their recommendations in Spring 2015, and the first phase of a pilot program was implemented in Fall 2015. Drafts were vetted through campus committees and governance.
- The University’s commitment to experiential learning as part of its mission resulted in an organizational change within Student Affairs in 2011. The former Office of Leadership and Civic Engagement was divided into two new offices: (1) Leadership and Experiential Learning and (2) Civic Engagement. The mission of the [Office of Leadership and Experiential Learning](#) is to prepare students to engage in the process of leadership in social, academic, and professional settings through a variety of experiential opportunities founded upon the FSU Leadership Competency Model. The Office of Civic Engagement continues to provide service learning opportunities, a mutually beneficial form of experiential learning allowing students to address and improve upon human and community needs while gaining real world skills that are aligned with their educational and career goals.
- The President’s Experiential Learning Enhancement Fund was created and distributes approximately \$35,000 annually to faculty in order to support projects designed to engage students in experiential learning. The annual allocation amount has remained constant over the past three or four years, while the number of requests continues to grow. For example, the CLAS Dean’s office received 26 applications totaling \$70,338 in requested funds. The office had \$22,510 available, which partially funded 20 projects.

- In September 2013, Frostburg launched a marketing campaign built around the theme, "One University. A World of Experiences." Reflecting a growing emphasis on providing students with transformative experiences as part of their educational journey, the campaign was the culmination of [market research](#) that had been conducted in AY 2012-13.

As efforts in this area developed, FSU has been recognized for demonstrating its commitment to providing opportunities for service learning and engagement to FSU students.

- In December 2014, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) honored Frostburg as a leader among institutions of higher education for its support of volunteering, service-learning, and civic engagement, admitting the University to the 2014 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for the [fourth consecutive year](#).
- FSU's ECHOSTARS program, a living-learning-serving community, received two statewide service awards in November 2013: the Community Partnership Award from Maryland-DC Campus Compact and a Governor's Service Award as a Special AmeriCorps Honoree. These awards came as A STAR! in Western Maryland, the AmeriCorps program of which ECHOSTARS is a part, marked its 20th year at FSU.
- Under the office of Leadership and Experiential Learning, selected sophomores and juniors participate in the Sloop Institute for Excellence in Leadership. President's Leadership Circle members had the option of participating in a multicultural experience while visiting the Amazon Rainforest or teaching clean water practices in rural areas of Uganda. The office is developing a formalized assessment process.
- FSU's participates in the National Initiative on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (Lead Initiative), a program run by NASPA, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, and [FSU has been so successful](#) that other schools are now looking to it for advice.

Resource Allocation

The mission and goals of the University guide its resource allocation decisions, as demonstrated more fully in Chapter Three. Campus perceptions of the opportunity to participate in such, however, are mixed. Based on data from the survey conducted for FSU's self-study, faculty and staff indicated that budget decisions were made more equitably at departmental levels than at college and university levels.

[Twenty-one percent of faculty](#) and [32% of staff](#) agreed that they had adequate input into allocation decisions pertaining to university resources. Further, faculty who agreed that resources were equitably allocated stood at 16% at the university level, 26% at the college level, and 70% at the departmental level. Taken together, these responses indicate that the budgetary process at the institutional level is generally not well understood by faculty and staff at FSU, and that the campus community does not feel well connected to budgetary resource allocation processes. Findings in the survey related to the perceived opacity of resource allocation decision-making mirror previous self-study reporting. Foundation and Alumni Board members, on the other hand, believe resource allocation decisions are strongly aligned with FSU's mission and strategies. The University is

exploring ways to increase the transparency and publication of budgetary decisions, which is explained in more detail in Chapter Two.

The Communication of the University's Mission, Strategic Goals, and Programs

The University undertakes a range of efforts to ensure that the campus and external stakeholders are aware of its mission, strategic goals, and programs. The University's goals are promoted through standing banners in numerous campus buildings and the Office of News and Media Services is responsible for vetting, developing, releasing, and archiving news and information. Efforts include posting on the University's website, publication in the weekly *StateLines* newsletter that is sent via email to faculty, staff, students, board members, and others; *Profile* magazine, which is available online and on paper to parents, students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the university, highlights activities that support the mission and goals. Other media channels include *Employee Newsletters*, *Spotlight Online* (student activities newsletter), and the *Public Calendar of Events*. Presidential legislative budget and other *testimony*, the president's annual *convocation* address (see below), and other public communications reflect campus activities and sentiment. The president's convocation speeches are *archived* and publicly available.

In fall 2014, FSU conducted surveys measuring attitudes about the institution. *Students, faculty, staff*, and members of the *Alumni and Foundation* boards participated. Data indicates that 95% of faculty and staff had read the mission statement, 77% of faculty indicated the strategic plan was widely disseminated, and a high percentage (94% staff and 87% faculty) were aware of goals. Among Alumni and Foundation Board members, more than 70% reported being familiar with the mission and goals. Seventy-five percent of faculty and 83% of staff believe FSU is delivering on the promise of its mission, and over two-thirds understand FSU's position within USM.

Managing for Results

The assessment of institutional priorities and goals is conducted through the University's Performance Accountability Report/Managing for Results (PAR/MFR) report submitted in the third quarter of each year. The PAR/MFR goals reflect the FSU strategic plan and the progress toward their attainment is monitored by the University and reported annually to the Maryland Higher Education Commission, the *University System of Maryland*, and the Maryland Department of Budget and Management. This assessment report, in turn, helps to guide the work of the University's Strategic Planning Committee and the allocation of institutional resources.

This annual accountability submission interprets FSU's institutional performance. Managing for Results data of key goals, objectives, and performance measures for six rolling years with four actual and two estimates are presented, and MFR indicators are negotiated with the state every five years. Indicators generally align with institutional goals. The University largely met its MFR goals and objectives over the period 2006-2014.

According to the *2014 MFR Report*, the goals not met include increasing the number of teacher graduates; improving the 6-year overall undergraduate graduation rate; improving the 6-year graduation rate of African-American undergraduate students; increasing the percentage of African-American women faculty; allocation of replacement costs and reallocation of operating budget to priorities; increasing the percentage of graduates employed one year post graduation; the initial median salary of graduates; and the number of faculty awards. At the time of the writing of this report, no discussion has taken place on these issues except on improvement of the 6-year graduation rate. In 2015, the University was scheduled to review its PAR/MFR goals for possible

revision. However, this was during the late spring and early summer when leadership at the University was undergoing a number of changes, and key personnel were not yet in place in a number of interim administrative positions. The Office of Assessment and Institutional Research requested and received an extension on the review of the goals. At the time of the writing of the Self-Study, the 2015 report had been submitted but not yet reviewed by the state.

In addition to institutional and state documents, FSU consistently submits documents required for Title IX compliance; [Institutional Profile and Significant Developments](#) are submitted to MSCHE; and [compliance audits](#) are conducted by a Certified Public Accountant annually.

Standard 6: Integrity

Frostburg supports a campus climate that fosters respect among students and other members of the community, both on- and off-campus, reporting through its Cultural Diversity Report. Additionally, the University ensures that all policies and procedures, which are available publically via electronic and print sources, are reviewed regularly and in a timely fashion. Frostburg State University demonstrates an adherence to ethical standards and to its own stated policies and public communications. The following serves as evidence as to how FSU is meeting Standard 6.

Establishing a Campus Climate that Fosters Respect

Frostburg State University reviews the progress of its on-campus diversity programs through its [Cultural Diversity Program Progress Report](#), which is submitted to USM on an annual basis. Over the last seven years, FSU has made significant progress toward achieving the five goals established in its 2008 Cultural Diversity Program:

- Recruit and Enroll a Growing Number of Undergraduate Minority and First Generation Students
- Increase the Retention and Graduation Rates of Undergraduate Minority and First Generation Students
- Enhance the Cultural Diversity of Faculty and Staff
- Create a Campus Environment that Promotes the Valuing of Cultural Diversity
- Promote the Understanding of International Cultures.

Progress made on these goals with percentage increases is shown in the most recent report, dated April 2015. Improvement was shown in enrollment of minority and first generation students; in retention of minority and first generation students; in a slight increase in minority faculty; in the institution of new entities to promote diversity; and in the increasing enrollment of international students. The University embraces a diverse population that represents all areas of the state, the region, the nation, and beyond.

Frostburg works to create a welcoming and safe environment that promotes an understanding of and respect for different cultures among all members of its community. The [President's Advisory Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) and [President's Advisory Council Against Gender-Based Violence](#) were formed between 2011 and 2013 to set goals and launch initiatives to improve the campus climate. FSU's campus [Diversity Center](#) "fosters a sense of community among students of all races, genders and national origins."

FSU academic programs of study related specifically to fostering diversity and an inclusive campus climate are [International Studies](#), the [Women's Studies Program](#), the Cultural Anthropology minor, and the [African American Studies Program](#). [Multiple student organizations](#) offer extra-curricular

diversity experiences (Black Student Alliance, African Student Association, Chinese Culture Club, Hillel, Latin American Student Association, Spectrum [LGBTQ+], and others) and, as part of the General Education Program, students are required to take one course identified as a designated "Identity and Difference" course (see [Undergraduate Catalog](#), p. 32).

Results from the 2012 [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#) benchmark comparisons demonstrate that Frostburg State University scored well with students for providing a supportive campus environment. Both first-year students and seniors rated Frostburg State University above the averages for Mid-East publics and above the Carnegie class.

Table 2: FSU Provides a Supportive Campus Environment (NSSE data)

<i>Mean Comparisons</i>		<i>Frostburg State University compared with:</i>								
	FSU	Mid East Public			Carnegie Class			NSSE 2012		
<i>Class</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Sig^b</i>	<i>Effect Size^c</i>
First-Year	70.4	60.2	***	.52	63.3	**	.37	63.4	**	.37
Senior	62.9	57.4	*	.27	60.8		.11	60.5		.12

^a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and by institution size for comparison groups)

^b * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed)

^c Mean difference divided by the pooled standard deviation

More recently, according to the Middle States survey, between 67% and 83% of [students](#), [faculty](#), and [staff](#) agree or strongly agree that academic, co-curricular, and extracurricular offerings promote knowledge of and respect for inclusivity among diverse peoples.

Access to Policies and Catalogs

The University's academic policies, regulations, and procedures are outlined in the current [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) catalogs and supplements, which are available in both print and online format. Students can easily access archived catalogs appropriate to their year of entry and major program online in the Admissions Office, the Ort Library, the Registrar's Office, or academic department offices. The current catalog is distributed to all incoming freshmen during Preview FSU orientation sessions. Regarding accessibility to Frostburg's policies and procedures, results of the fall 2014 Middle States Student Survey showed that the majority of [student respondents](#) (86.3%) claimed to have knowledge of FSU's academic standards; however, a smaller majority (52.6%) was aware of student grievances policies. [Faculty](#) had mixed views of students' knowledge of academic policies and procedures: 46.2% agreed and 31.0% disagreed that students are informed. The majority (80.0%) of [staff](#) members with instructional or advising duties (including all from the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs divisions) agreed that students are informed of academic expectations.

Timely Disclosure of Information and Publication/Accessibility of Data

Through its institutional website, Frostburg State University provides information to prospective students and their families regarding accreditation, retention and graduation rates, and other important data. Additionally, the University has chosen to participate in College Portrait, which is part of the Voluntary System of Accountability. Visitors to FSU's College Portrait page can find

information on admissions rates, student success, classes and campus life, and other important data. The University has several other sources available for factual information and data reporting to be disseminated to the community in an accurate, timely manner. These include:

- [University Accreditation Information](#)
- [The FSU Institutional Research webpage](#)
 - [The Middle States Annual Institutional Profile](#)
 - [Fast Facts](#)
 - [Enrollment Profile](#)
 - [Common Data Sets](#)
- [The National Survey of Student Engagement Pocket Guide](#)
- [The Student Achievement Measure \(SAM\) initiative](#)
- [The FSU College Portrait](#)
 - [Student Learning Outcomes](#)
 - [Student Success and Progress Rate](#)

Individual department webpages have information about special accreditations and the undergraduate student experience. For example, FSU's Social Work major is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and information regarding [assessment of student learning outcomes](#) is posted on the Social Work department's website. The University has made faculty data and comparison data to other institutions readily available.

Periodic Assessment of Policies and Processes

All policies and procedures are reviewed regularly by their respective areas. Changes, updates, or new policies are discussed and approved in a timely manner and communicated in the biennial publication of the Undergraduate and Graduate catalogs and the biannual publication of the Registration Guidelines (published at the time of registration for upcoming terms). As new or revised policies and procedures are approved by the Faculty Senate and/or the Executive Committee, the respective areas on the University website are updated immediately. The Faculty Senate and its committees and subcommittees also have roles in ongoing policy review, as do all major planning units of the university. Additional policies can be found in the [Policy Statements for Students, Faculty, and Staff](#) on the Division of Student Affairs' webpage. This booklet is updated annually.

Security of Student Records and Information

Frostburg State University's policies concerning student records adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and are accessible on FSU's website and in the University's catalog. Frostburg meets federal compliance for protection of student privacy. Registrar's Office staff members maintain student academic records through electronic and paper records. The University's student information system (PAWS) has numerous security features, including limited employee access, password and data encryption, and server security.

Frostburg's information technology policies are reviewed regularly by a University System of Maryland committee, and Frostburg is in full compliance with USM and State of Maryland standards and policies. State of Maryland auditors conduct tri-annual audits for IT security compliance, and the FSU security officer provides an on-going review of institutional practices for effectiveness. The University seeks to enhance its monitoring and review of specific departmental data system software programs in the near future, including the Human Resources' Trakstar and

PeopleAdmin programs and the Brady Health Center's Medcat program.

Student Complaints and Grievances

The policies and procedures for students filing grade grievances are delineated in both the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, and this process includes a timeline that is closely followed. Students are able to file two types of grievances (Grade Grievances and Code of Conduct Grievances), each of which has a specified protocol to be followed as well as a specific method of keeping records. Many grade grievances are settled informally between the student and instructor, but a formal grievance is available to those who remain unsatisfied after speaking with the instructor. For formal grievances, documents outlining the details and outcome of the grievance are kept in the Dean's office and change of grade records are retained by the Registrar's office. The grade grievance policy is located in both the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, reviewed periodically, and submitted to the Academic Standards Committee and Deans' Council for review.

Student behavioral expectations and policies and procedures for addressing behavioral grievances are described in the [Policy Statements](#) handbook, which is updated annually and published on the FSU website. Students, faculty, and staff are emailed the link to the Statements each semester. Transfer students are informed of conduct policies at transfer orientation meetings. Some infractions by students can be addressed with an administrative hearing with the Dean of Students or designee; students referred with more serious conduct violations appear before a Code of Conduct panel. All students facing a potential suspension from the University may request a panel hearing, which is typically balanced in terms of representatives of faculty, staff, and students. In cases involving academic dishonesty, at least two faculty members serve on the panel. During the panel hearings everyone has an opportunity to be heard, and students found responsible for a violation have the right to appeal their sanction(s) to the Vice President for Student Affairs or to the Provost (or their designees) in cases involving academic dishonesty.

Sexual assault cases are handled by the Title IX Coordinator, a position that was made full-time in January 2015. An investigation by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) was initiated in late 2014; when the results of the OCR review are released, the University will implement their recommendations. The University has a process for complaint resolution for distance education. The [Student Consumer Information](#) web page contains much of this information.

Documentation of administrative and panel hearings are kept in the University's student information system and hard copies are stored in the Residence Life Office or the Office of Student Affairs. Records are kept for three years from the date of the incident or graduation of the student, whichever comes sooner; suspension and expulsion records are kept for a longer period. Clery records are kept for seven years in accordance with federal guidelines. The Division of Student Affairs prepares an annual report detailing the types of cases and outcomes of administrative and panel hearings and surveys students who have been referred to the University's judicial system in an attempt to assess the conduct process, but the survey typically has a low response.

Hiring Practices and Other Policies

Frostburg State University has fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of employees. Goal Four of the [Strategic Plan](#) emphasizes the need for diversity in all searches and recruitment efforts. [Procedures for Internal/External Searches](#) are codified in the University's

Human Resources documents. Frostburg policies are in compliance with [USM Bylaws, Policies, and Procedures](#) as well as Americans with Disabilities Act and Equal Employment Opportunity Act through FSU's [Office of ADA/EEO and Immigration Compliance](#). The University had a part-time Title IX Coordinator based in the Office of Human Resources with other duties in ADA/EEO. Frostburg created a full-time Title IX Coordinator position in response to heightened scrutiny following a complaint about the institutional handling of a sexual violence case currently under investigation by the Office of Civil Rights. A national search brought a new Title IX Coordinator, highly experienced in both law and education, who reports directly to the President and is available to faculty, staff, and employees for training and reporting.

Policies for all employees are written in handbooks as appropriate to roles: policies on appointments, evaluation, teaching, tenure, promotion, scholarship and intellectual property, research, service, ethics (including conflict of interest), and dismissal are covered in the [FSU Faculty Handbook](#), [Non Tenure Track Faculty Handbook](#), and [Employee Handbook](#) (for administrative staff). For example, should a staff person file a grievance, the Employee Handbook lists the filing procedure. The Department of Human Resources follows the [USM grievance policy](#) to remediate any issues that arise. Due to the good working relationship between management and labor, most disagreements are solved informally and do not reach the grievance stage. The University has not had a formal grievance since 2010. Employees are encouraged to meet with their supervisors to discuss and remedy problems at the lowest level. For those employees who are represented by a bargaining unit, the union and the Vice President for Human Resources work together to solve issues informally, when possible.

Communication Integrity

All University press releases are channeled through the Office of Communications and Media Relations, which verifies information with the [Office of Assessment and Institutional Research](#) (AIR), and other departments represented in any press release. Campus perception of the veracity of institutional representations to publics is positive, with at least 80% of faculty and staff confirming information in press releases and recruiting information is truthful.

Additionally, information submitted to MSCHE is factual and readily available on FSU's [Middle States website](#) and at the Ort Library. The annual [Institutional Profile](#), [prior 2006 Self-Study](#), [2011 Periodic Review Report](#), [Statement of Accreditation Status](#) are publically available. Communication about the accreditation process is routine. The President and Chairs of the Self-Study Steering Committee kept the campus abreast of progress through electronic communication.

The Office of Assessment and Institutional Research has handled accountability reporting and built a website of materials supporting strategic planning, USM and MSCHE reporting, data accountability, and institutional research. The use of Campus Labs for PACIE reporting has improved accountability and participation across reporting units, although some progress still needs to be made.

FSU's website is the primary source of information, and print and other methods are also used to communicate with interested persons, including prospective students. Program and event brochures are printed and widely distributed and social media outlets. [Facebook](#), [Google+](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#) provide an additional and increasingly important mechanism for communication with various publics. Overall, assessments of integrity occur in pockets across campus; however, they are piecemeal. A formal, comprehensive periodic

assessment of integrity is not in place currently. The University is considering ways in which it might embed the assessment of integrity within ongoing programmatic and divisional assessment processes.

Conclusion

The University is in compliance with Standard 1 by using its well-publicized mission and goals to guide planning and to serve as a roadmap for actions and priorities. FSU's unique location in the University System of Maryland requires outreach to the community, leadership in the region, and support of state initiatives and workforce development needs. FSU is both an academic and cultural center of the rural mountains of western Maryland, and as the mission states, the University's students and its influence reach out to embrace a global perspective. By demonstrating compliance with Standard 6, The University exhibits integrity in its practices with students, faculty, and staff. FSU has made a determined effort to focus on diversity and inclusiveness, while maintaining honesty and truthfulness in publications, advertising, and reporting.

CHAPTER TWO

Institutional Assessment

Student Learning Assessment

Standards 7 and 14

Chapter Two examines Frostburg State University's assessment processes, as well as delineating the progress the University has made since its last review in 2006. For Standard 7, Institutional Assessment, the following evidence is provided to show compliance: a general overview of the planning and assessment processes for creating and sustaining a culture of assessment; the mechanisms used for sharing results of assessment; and how those results have influenced revisions to ongoing institutional improvement. To demonstrate compliance with Standard 14, Student Learning Assessment, the following support is presented: assessment processes; connections of outcomes to institutional learning goals; collection and dissemination of data; and verification of the "closing of the loop" of student learning outcomes assessment.

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

Frostburg State University's annual process for developing and implementing the assessment that evaluates its effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals, as well as its compliance with accreditation standards, is ongoing and dynamic. Frostburg State University's practices to meet Standard 7 through a documented, organized, and sustained assessment process are aimed at the evaluation and improvement of programs and services. Documentation is provided that assessment is taking place at the institutional level and the program level not only within academics, but in student programming and other divisions of the University. Evidence of strategic planning based on assessment results is also provided. Importantly, the University understands that its institutional assessment process needs revision to become more effective. Those revisions are underway.

The Institutional Assessment Process

Frostburg State University is committed to achieving its mission through a process of planning and assessment that evaluates its overall effectiveness in attaining its goals and its compliance with accreditation at the institutional, program, and student learning levels. FSU's institutional effectiveness is designed to be measured by a combination of internal and external reporting including seven-year and mid-point program reviews, specialized accreditation reports, annual planning reports, student learning outcome reports, and a variety of additional assessments. While these assessment measures have been ongoing for many years, collective efforts to gather and analyze assessment results so that common themes and issues could be identified for action at the institutional level are recent. An institutional effectiveness assessment plan was approved by the former President. However, it is very theoretical and was neither well-vetted through institutional processes nor implemented. A new [Draft Institutional Effectiveness Plan](#) has been developed, a document that will have the input of the campus community and will serve as a practical roadmap for conducting University assessment practices as the University builds on its progress in institutional assessment.

Planning - Creating a Culture of Assessment

Since 2006 the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research has been involved in planning institutional assessment through the development of the strategic plan. With the development of the planning process, new structures were established to guide the planning processes at different levels: the Student Learning Assessment Advisory Group (SLAAG) was redefined in 2010 from its

previously existing format, and the President's Advisory Council on Institutional Effectiveness (PACIE) was formed in 2010 by Dr. Gibraltar as a consultative body to the president's Executive Committee and to attendees at the Summer Strategic Planning retreat. Since then, assessment work at the university level is supported by PACIE and SLAAG and takes two important directions:

1. The first direction is at the institutional level and focuses on the assessment of the University's strategic goals and priorities.
2. The second direction is at the program level and involves the assessment of academic programs, student programming, and the assessment of student learning outcomes.

The accomplishment of these goals has been uneven. At the institutional level, not all divisions have strategic plans and not all planning units have reported outcomes. The assessment of academic programs has been more successful, including the formation of the Graduate Learning Assessment Advisory Group (GLAAG), which will monitor the quality of the graduate assessment of student learning and facilitate the reporting of graduate assessment data to the AIR Office.

Campus Labs

The University has made a significant financial investment in institutional assessment by partnering with Campus Labs to implement a software platform that houses much of the institution's assessment efforts. The essential services delivered by this tool help build an evidence-based culture of assessment. Furthermore, Campus Labs provides a uniform reporting solution that allows for the collection of multiple measures throughout the institution in support of all assessment efforts.

Campus Labs' Compliance Assist program is widely used for strategic planning across the divisions and in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) for student learning outcomes assessment, with most of the programs housed in CLAS filling out their Program Learning Goals there. At this time, 32 of the 34 CLAS programs put assessment updates in Compliance Assist and were reviewed in AY 2014-2015 and/or 2015-2016. The Colleges of Business and Education currently are not using Campus Labs' Compliance Assist to track their Program Learning Goals. Strategic planning reports in academic departments are not uniformly uploaded to Campus Labs. However, all three Colleges have strategic plans on their respective websites, and all three have their plans in Compliance Assist so that departments can link through them to the University-level strategic planning goals. The University encourages all academic departments to adopt Compliance Assist for strategic planning.

At the divisional level – Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Human Resources, Administration and Finance, International and Government Affairs, and University Advancement – strategic planning is uneven. Some divisions and their respective planning units have contributed valuable information to guide forward movement for their divisions, but other divisions are just coming on board with strategic plans and outcome reporting.

Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness, Strategic Goals, and Priorities

Since 2010, PACIE has gathered evidence to support the process for the development of the University's strategic plan. Additionally, PACIE ensures a model for reporting so that all major divisions of the University are included in reviews of the strategic plan. This includes the expectation that data will be reported annually and effectiveness assessed by planning units. Tasks assigned to PACIE are as follows:

- Promote, monitor, and evaluate progress on ongoing institutional renewal and effectiveness.
- Establish and revise (as necessary) the process for ensuring that the University meets Middle States accreditation standards.
- Ensure an integrated planning model in which the strategic plan drives planning across all the divisions and planning units of the University.
- Provide, with the strategic planning process, a focal point for working with planning units to develop annual planning goals and budget priorities.
- Recommend actions to the president of the University for consideration in the budgeting and resource allocation cycle.

Since 2010, PACIE has reviewed the University's strategic plan, mission, and goals annually to identify key priority issues. Such issues have included experiential education, student quality and persistence, facilities, graduates' preparedness for success, and defining aspects that are distinctive and distinguished. In 2011, based on its new mission statement and strategic plan, the University submitted revised Performance Accountability Report/Managing For Results (PAR/MFR) goals for review by the University System of Maryland and appropriate state agencies, which upon approval by the University's president and his Executive Committee, became the six goals that framed the current institutional outcomes established as measures of institutional achievement and performance. As the strategic plan was updated each year, the differing iterations of the strategic plan, mission, and vision since reviews started in 2010 were made available on the AIR website and thus demonstrate the strategic planning process. PACIE reports for 2013 and 2014, which were intended to help inform those iterations, may be found [here](#). However, it is unclear how much influence the PACIE reports had on strategic planning.

According to the PACIE cycle for review and updating of the strategic planning process, the strategic plan is reviewed and updated every year. However, due to turnover in key positions, the review did not take place in fall 2015. In previous years, reporters and responsible units were identified for each action priority according to a process guided by the [Strategic Plan Template](#), found at the bottom of the PACIE webpage, which includes the data sets and assessments used by each respective unit. During the previous two fall semesters, identified reporters and responsible teams attended monthly PACIE meetings to present the Mid-Year Progress Reports, which were collected into a single document to record advancement of action priorities. In addition to the progress on action priorities, the full [Mid-Year Progress Report](#) includes setting benchmarks, targets, tactics, resources concerns, and data to be collected. The Vice Presidents were invited to PACIE to discuss division-level initiatives for Institutional effectiveness and assessments. For additional documented information about PACIE's activity since 2010, visit the *Minutes* site in the PACIE [Website](#).

[Final Reports](#) generally are submitted in Campus Labs' Compliance Assist by June 1 of every year and posted on the PACIE website. Final Reports were reviewed and compiled by the Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Accreditation and a member of the AIR office, then sent for review by the President and his Executive Committee. The report generated by the Executive Committee review is intended to provide input that is shared at the Summer Strategic Planning Retreats to inform the writing and design of the next year's strategic plan. The President's Executive Committee meets regularly on a bi-weekly basis and is ultimately responsible for planning and making the decisions that will frame institutional operations. However, for previous years a lack of documentation exists to support the decision-making process for making final

recommendations.

Over the last several years of PACIE reporting, it became clear that the council turned into a clearinghouse for reporting rather than a true advisory body. While many units came on board with strategic plans and action priorities, the relevancy of information being gathered hindered the ability of PACIE to offer effective recommendations for strategic planning at the University level. Information quality suffered as quantity increased and the Council grew too large to function effectively. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council, a proposal was presented to the President's Executive Committee to reduce the number of PACIE representatives, reduce the number of university-level action priorities, and simplify the reporting form. The [reconstituted PACIE](#) should provide a more focused report for strategic planning at the institutional level, with meaningful reporting that will allow the Executive Committee to set targeted action priorities for the coming year.

Assessment at the Program Level

Academic Programs

Responsibility for guidance and support of ongoing assessment of academic programs, non-academic programs, and student learning outcomes is assumed by the AIR Office. Responsibility for gathering data and conducting the actual assessment within academic departments and non-academic units rests internally within those departments and units, in consultation with Deans and supervisors.

Periodic Academic Program Review

The Periodic Program Review (PPR) is a university-wide academic program review process composed of two components: an Internal Program Review or Self-Study (compiled by academic program representatives) and an External Review Report (developed by contracted external reviewers). The PPR is designed to help ensure that current academic programs are up to date, support the mission and goals of the University, are delivered effectively to the students, and make the best use of the University's faculty, staff, and other resources. In compliance with USM requirements, each academic program performs a PPR every seven years, although some departments in the College of Business undergo five- year reviews. The [Program Review Schedule](#) lists the review years for every program through 2019, and the [Program Review Summary](#) lists the academic program reviews from the last five years (2011-2014).

Under guidelines and policies established in July 2006 and updated in August 2014 ([Program Review Process Guide](#)), PPRs serve as the foundation for assessment initiatives through the identification of program priorities, so that reviews focus on program quality, student learning outcomes, and alumni and employer satisfaction. The PPR requires academic departments to assess the learning outcomes of their students and to evaluate the relationship between their programs and the mission of the University. They must report on student and faculty profiles, the service and professional development activities of faculty, and the adequacy of library holdings and facilities. Similarly, they must evaluate the program's course of study and curricular materials. Moreover, an evaluation must be made of student technology fluency and the application of information technology to instruction (e.g., the web enhancement of instructional materials, the deployment of online courses, and the use of interactive video). Reviews must also include an evaluation of student learning outcomes in relation to educational objectives, using departmental, institutional, or common indicators of student performance (Praxis, LSAT, GRE, portfolio,

internship, field experience, etc.). The experiences and views of graduates, as ascertained by the Frostburg State University Alumni Survey, are also carefully evaluated. In addition, the final product from external reviewers should be a report that explicitly identifies program strengths and weaknesses and suggests recommendations for program improvement. Please see documents pulled from Compliance Assist for recent PPRs for programs in [English](#), [Environmental Analysis and Planning](#), and [Philosophy](#). (The documents' internal links only work within Compliance Assist Planning.)

The final step in the process is for the departments to complete the [Program Review Certificate Template](#). These are collected by AIR and submitted to MHEC and the USM Board of Regents. Some administrative and educational support units undergo periodic reviews or have been subject to audit by external agencies, but usually less regularly. Since 2012, departments and divisions are required to upload program review data into Compliance Assist. Programs address the suggestions of their outside reviewers in their plans for improvement. In CLAS, annual reports to the Dean outline the progress that programs are making toward achieving the priorities addressed through the program review process. Program reviews of the COB programs occur at the institutional level every five years (for business administration, accounting, MBA) and every seven years for economics. The College of Business departments do not have their own department-level goals, and the College's reporting at the institutional-level occurs annually via reports to PACIE uploaded to Compliance Assist. Departments in the College of Education follow the seven-year cycle for PPRs, in addition to the program-specific reports required by the Specialized Professional Agencies (SPA) for accreditation. The College of Education and its departments are in the process of developing their strategic plans for program improvement. Once the plans are approved, the College can put in place an annual reporting process.

Accreditation

Frostburg State University values and encourages external accreditation as an indicator of program excellence. Equally valued by the University is the required and extensive review of the curriculum, faculty, budget, facilities, library, and student learning outcomes required by accreditation. The university is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and a full list of accredited programs is found in Chapter 6.

Assessment of Student Programming

The Division of Student Affairs has [an active strategic plan](#) that links to the University goals and uses assessment as a means to guide improvement of evidence-informed programs and services that facilitate student success. In an effort to systematize and strengthen assessment across the division and to address the recommendation highlighted in the 2006 self-study that "All student services should develop assessment plans that focus on student learning outcomes yet include other indicators of program efficacy to inform policy and planning," then Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. Thomas Bowling, created a Program Review Task Group in fall 2009. The charge to the group included five tasks:

1. Develop a framework for periodic departmental self-study and program review that involves continuing annual assessment of goals and outcomes and encourages regular exploration of in-depth topics.
2. Develop timelines for departmental program reviews, according to division and departmental needs and processes. The timelines will likely entail a comprehensive departmental self-study approximately every three years.
3. Assist departments in developing their own plans.

4. Assist units to connect department assessment, institutional effectiveness, and University strategic planning.
5. Create an assessment of the progress the division and constituent units are making toward developing a “culture of assessment.”

The 10-member task group met bi-weekly throughout the 2009-2010 academic year to study effective assessment models at other institutions and created a Student Affairs program review process template that involves both a program self-study and an outside team review. The task group produced a number of documents to guide programs through the review process: a [Quick Start \(to program assessment\) Guide](#), a [Program Review Checklist](#), a set of [assessment and program review definitions](#), a [Program Review Worksheet](#), and a [Program Reviewer’s Template](#) for reporting the review team’s findings. The [ten programs](#) within the Office of Student Affairs scheduled the completion of their program reviews in spring 2011. Annual reporting on goals and outcomes between program reviews is ongoing in a number of these units, including [Counseling Services](#), Student Conduct, and [Wellness](#). Other units are providing annual reports to the Vice President of Student Affairs but not uploading them to Campus Labs. Departments within Student Affairs also [practice strategic planning in Compliance Assist](#).

In a joint examination of the Cultural Diversity Program, the University can demonstrate an across-divisional assessment effort. The Diversity Center (a unit of the Office of Student Affairs), and the President’s Advisory Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (PACDEI), which plays an important role in fostering a respect for diversity at the University, worked together to examine the Cultural Diversity Program. Through this collaboration, the Cultural Diversity Program identified three initiatives relating to Strategic Plan goals as the focus for their work in 2009-2010: recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff; (2) recruitment and retention of diverse students in the area; and (3) cross-cultural curricular and co-curricular activities. These initiatives led to the selection of the following action priorities based on an analysis of the program’s strategies and recommendations from PACDEI:

1. Continue to support the recommendations of the University’s *Closing the Achievement Gap* Task Force, which includes establishing a supplemental instruction program and expanding the University’s [course redesign efforts](#).
2. Continue the University’s *Minority Recruitment and Retention Plan* to help further diversify the faculty and staff at the University.
3. Include the Women’s and African-American Studies programs as part of the University Cultural Diversity Program.
4. Identify an Admissions Counselor to work with prospective students from the Hispanic-Latino and Asian communities in the region.
5. Explore establishing a support center on campus to assist first generation domestic students for whom English is a second language. The possibility of providing English as a Second Language (ESL) services on campus for international students will also be carefully examined.
6. Enhance the international climate of the campus through increased international student enrollments, international programming, and overseas opportunities for students and faculty.

Annual Progress Reports documenting the achievements of the Cultural Diversity Program, are developed by the Office of the Provost, and housed in the Provost’s Website

(<http://www.frostburg.edu/admin/provost/reports/>). According to the latest annual report, the University continues to implement and evaluate strategies and initiatives according to their contributions to the following diversity goals:

1. Recruit and Enroll a Growing Number of Undergraduate Minority and First Generation Students
2. Increase the Retention and Graduation Rates of Undergraduate Minority and First Generation Students
3. Enhance the Cultural Diversity of Faculty and Staff
4. Create a Campus Environment that Promotes the Valuing of Cultural Diversity
5. Promote the Understanding of International Cultures.

Frostburg State University has made significant progress in recruiting and enrolling minority students and in increasing retention and graduation rates (see Chapter Four). The student Middle States survey noted that

- 67% of students agreed/strongly agreed that they had expanded their knowledge of diversity and multicultural awareness through events or programs they had attended
- 72% of students agreed/strongly agreed that courses they completed enhanced their knowledge of the contributions of diverse cultures and peoples
- 83% of students agreed/strongly agreed that faculty members demonstrate a respect for a range of backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives in their classes.

The University has improved the quality of student programming assessment since its last Self-Study, and more information about the assessment of non-academic programs may be found in Chapter Four (Student Support Services) and Chapter Six (Related Educational Activities).

Assessment Progress in Other Divisions

Strategic planning based on assessment has been used fairly successfully in student learning outcomes assessment and the program review process. The division of Administration and Finance has been successful in developing and following a strategic plan and setting action priorities that connect to University goals and advance the division. For example, many planning units under the division of Administration and Finance (Athletics, Facilities, Finance, and the Office of Information Technology) report annually on progress in Compliance Assist. The Human Resources division has a strategic plan and annual reporting. In the division of Academic Affairs, the Colleges and the Library have developed plans and reporting structures. Other units under Academic Affairs submit annual reports to the Provost, but those reports are not linked in Compliance Assist. University Advancement, under the direction of a new Vice President, currently is working on a strategic plan.

Sustaining the Institutional Culture of Assessment

Creating a culture of assessment across the institution has been an ongoing endeavor at Frostburg since the last Self-Study. Parallel with the efforts associated with the creation of this assessment culture, a more intensified effort to sustain that culture of assessment across campus became a priority of the institution in order to develop procedures to ensure that results and data are being used to encourage continuous improvement. Creating PACIE and acquiring Campus Labs has helped with this process. In response to these efforts, since the 2011 MSCHE Periodic Review Report, the University has developed additional assessment policies and procedures and has improved (although not perfected) the use of assessment results to help fulfill the mission and goals, as well

as to facilitate the outcomes of academic and administrative and educational support departments/units.

Examples of successful use of assessment practices exist throughout the University. The COE and COB, because of accreditation, are good examples, and CLAS has demonstrated significant progress given that all programs in CLAS are now assessing student learning outcomes. Athletics, the Academic Success Network, the Office of Student Wellness, Brady Health Center, and the Counseling Center, among others, show that FSU has an active culture of assessment. However, the University still has considerable work to do in order to have data-based evidence reported to the groups and individuals who guide the strategic planning process. The University is committed to evidence-informed continual improvement and has made significant investments in time and resources to inform strategic planning. This year, with the loss of key personnel, the leaders of the University had to take a serious look at the institutional assessment procedures. As a result, the University has committed to a course-correction to the President's Advisory Council on Institutional Effectiveness to ensure a more effective and efficient institutional assessment process.

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

The following evidence is presented to show how Frostburg State University has made great strides in the assessment of student learning since its last Middle States Review: the creation of the CLAS Assessment Council, College of Business Assurance of Learning Committee, and the College of Education Conceptual Framework. [Course redesign](#) has improved completion rates many courses. Clearly articulated statements of expected student learning outcomes at all levels and for all programs that aim to foster student learning and development are addressed in Standard 11, which is found in Chapter Six.

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The [CLAS Assessment Council](#) was developed in 2007 as a result of a recommendation by Middle States to “move quickly to implement all components of FSU’s proposed student learning assessment plan and to address the unevenness in assessment within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.” Promoted by the administration as a college priority, assessment has been developed by CLAS faculty who consider it a vital tool for evaluating and improving student learning, curriculum, and programmatic effectiveness. The council members include eight elected CLAS representatives who represent humanities, arts, STEM, and social sciences, along with the new Director of AIR and the two Associate Deans of CLAS. Middle States requires that results from student learning outcomes assessment be used to make changes in courses, curriculum, and the assessment process itself. The CLAS Assessment Council ensures that departments conduct student learning outcomes assessment and close the loop by using assessment data to make these changes. During the past eight years, CLAS has made significant progress in implementing a program of student learning assessment:

Each of the undergraduate major programs within CLAS has developed learning goals that are tied to the University’s Institutional Learning Goals. Each program has designed and implemented student learning outcomes assessment plans. These plans were reviewed by at least one member of the CLAS Assessment Council. All program plans and assessment updates are uploaded into Compliance Assist.

The CLAS Assessment Council reviews of assessment updates are posted in Compliance Assist and

cover the following questions:

1. Do the assessed courses follow the assessment plan?
2. Is relevant data provided for all courses assessed, and does the update address how learning goals are successfully met (or not met)?
3. Does the report address how the findings have informed departmental/course changes?
4. Does the report address any changes made to the departmental assessment plan?
5. Overall, does the report clearly articulate how the assessment plan has been implemented in the past year, results of assessment, and how results have been interpreted and informed decisions within the department? Please specify any unclear information.

All undergraduate programs in CLAS have their assessment plans uploaded into Compliance Assist. Also, 32 of the 34 programs have uploaded assessment updates within the past two years into Compliance Assist. For examples, please see [Chemistry](#) and [Philosophy](#).

In the spring semester of 2015, the Senior Research Analyst for the AIR Office, the Chair of the CLAS Assessment Council, and an Associate Dean for CLAS, reviewed all of the plans and assessment updates for the major programs in CLAS as well as reviews by CLAS Assessment Council members. They then completed Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes Process Rubrics for the thirty-three programs as well as a comprehensive report for the University's Student Learning Assessment Advisory Group (SLAAG). As part of the "assessment of assessment" process, CLAS department chairs and undergraduate program coordinators completed an Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes Process Rubric for their major programs to identify student learning outcomes assessment strengths and weaknesses, as well as improvements that need to be made in their courses, curricula, and assessment processes. This "[assessment of assessment](#)" is important to the process of closing the loop and demonstrating institutional improvement.

College of Business

The College of Business maintains a comprehensive assessment program that links the mission of the college to the University's mission. The fundamentals of the assessment program are the learning goals developed for the Bachelor's and Master of Business Administration degree programs.

As part of the College governance structure, there is an Assurance of Learning Committee (AoLC) composed of faculty representatives from the four academic departments and student representatives. The permanent committee chair is the Assurance of Learning (AoL) coordinator, a faculty member whose part-time assignment is to manage the AoL efforts of the College. Depending upon its tasks and recommendations, the AoL coordinator works with the academic departments, the College Curriculum Committee, the College Graduate Policy Committee, the College Executive Committee, and the Dean and Associate Dean.

The AoL coordinator and the College are guided by two documents prepared exclusively for the management of the AoL efforts: the AoL Plan, and the AoL Management System, both contained in the [AoL Report](#). Both documents are the product of deliberations by faculty. The plan was created in 2006, with revisions following, and the management system was created in 2007, with minor revisions following. These documents offer the details of the purpose, scope, tasks, and responsibilities of the AoL effort.

Helping to guide the College of Business, the AoL coordinator is guided by the following concepts:

1. Student achievement, learning goals, and objectives are the most important elements in assessment efforts.
2. The goal of assessment is to enable faculty and administrators to make decisions that will improve instruction and the educational experiences of students.
3. Faculty must be fully involved in all substantive assessment planning and implementation.
4. The college will use a variety of assessment measures and tools, both direct and indirect.
5. The college desires to improve, continuously, student achievement and learning. To this end, it will develop a cycle of assessment activities and will make decisions, annually, regarding improvement of instruction.
6. Students will be significantly involved in decisions made regarding assessment policies and practices through appointments to faculty committees (Assurance of Learning, Curriculum, Student Advisory Committee, and Advisory Board).

Using both direct and indirect assessment methods, the AoL coordinator evaluates student achievement semester-to-semester relative to the learning goals. Direct assessment tools include tests and a variety of course-embedded tasks and activities, with much of the embedded assessment work accomplished within capstone courses in the Bachelor's degree program and in the MBA program. Embedded assessment collects information about student performance and learning that is built into course teaching-learning processes and activities and is usually reflective of knowledge acquisition and its application.

In 2010, the College of Business earned its initial extended AACSB accreditation. The fundamental components of the assessment program are the learning goals for the Bachelor's and MBA degree programs. With a change in leadership, the summer and fall of 2011 involved an in-depth, internal audit and programmatic review. This programmatic review sparked changes within the AoL program.

1. Improved Rigor in the Development of an AoL Plan and AoL Management System: The prior system lacked internal validity to a degree that made it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions about the efficacy of the pedagogical interventions; i.e., no conclusive mechanism determined whether teaching and learning practices impacted educational outcomes. The College opted for considerably more rigor and launched several initiatives to close the existing gaps.
2. Curriculum-Driven Assurance of Learning: In 2010, the college launched a comprehensive survey to three key stakeholders: faculty, students, and alumni, to better understand stakeholder concerns regarding the efficacy of Professional Development I and Professional Development II courses. The survey was discussed at an AACSB Assessment Seminar in 2013 and received positive feedback as an external "event" aimed to inform curricula and assessment activities. Significant curricula and AoL programmatic changes occurred based on this survey feedback.

The College of Business has continued to monitor student learning annually, both as part of its commitment to ongoing improvement in student learning outcomes and as part of the AACSB accreditation process. The College underwent a second successful accreditation review in October 2015 and is scheduled for its next review in five years.

College of Education

The College of Education has two academic departments: Educational Professions and Kinesiology and Recreation. Each department follows the accreditation protocols and cycles established by its respective accreditation agency to ensure that assessment processes lead to the achievement of student learning outcomes.

Department of Educational Professions/Professional Education Unit

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) lead the accreditation review process for the Department of Educational Professions. In accordance to NCATE and MSDE accreditation requirements, the Department of Educational Professions assessment system includes those programs from the departments of Kinesiology and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) that are part of the program of study for the preparation of teachers, and this organizational structure constitutes the Professional Education Unit (PEU). The PEU consists of [multiple certification programs](#), 14 undergraduate and two graduate.

The PEU's professional commitments to knowledge, teaching competence, and student learning are evident in the Unit's [Conceptual Framework](#). The Conceptual Framework provides the underlying philosophy and goals for all programs in the unit, and represent the major attributes that graduates should exhibit and that the Unit faculty value. All the program assessment tasks, expectations, and outcomes are designed to meet the Unit's Conceptual Framework.

The Conceptual Framework has been used by faculty members in the professional education programs as a guide for redesigning the programs, syllabi, assessments, and early field and intern evaluation forms. Major course assignments and assessments across programs provide evidence that candidates demonstrate each of the six attributes included in the Conceptual Framework. All course syllabi within programs of the Unit follow a specific format. Course assessment data and course/faculty evaluations are used to revise syllabi.

Processes Used to Evaluate Competency Levels

All programs (graduate and undergraduate) within the unit have identified learning goals that relate to student learning outcomes aligned to the *Conceptual Framework*, General Education Competency Areas, professional standards, and state content standards. Course syllabi in the Unit follow a common format. As part of this format, major assessments are listed in categories of knowledge, skills, or dispositions. Since initial certification programs (undergraduate and Master of Arts in Teaching) have common standards, common assessments are administered across the programs. Internship evaluations and portfolio presentations are assessed using the same rubric and similar processes. For the Master of Education and Doctor of Education, major program assessments were developed to meet the Specialty Professional Associations Standards.

Accreditation Review – Spring 2015

In compliance with NCATE and MSDE accreditation requirements, the assessment system for the PEU must contain processes that look at all the programs and include steps for aggregating and separating data to conduct key assessments. At the programmatic level, the assessment processes are planned, designed, and implemented, but most data collected are used strictly for individual program analysis and evaluation. Little evidence exists to show that the assessment of PEU processes are monitored at the unit level.

During the recent NCATE accreditation visit, the lack of an assessment structure at the unit level led to a failure of Standard 2. Recommendations from the visit conducted in spring 2015 resulted in a preliminary report from the NCATE Board of Examiners indicating that the Education Professional Unit met five of the six NCATE standards (Standards 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6), but did not meet Standard 2, which deals with collection and analysis of assessment data.

Recommendations from the [NCATE Board of Examiners' final report](#) indicate that changes must be made to support that the unit makes use of data collected to evaluate the efficacy of its courses, programs, and clinical experiences. The accreditation decision in the Action Report from the Commission of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), formerly NCATE, granted continued accreditation status to the College of Education at the initial teacher preparation and advanced preparation levels for two years. A full visit addressing all standards will take place in spring 2017.

Department of Kinesiology and Recreation

The [Department of Kinesiology and Recreation](#) includes undergraduate programs and one graduate program. To ensure achievement of students' learning, the assessment processes for each program are aligned to both accreditation requirements and professional organizations standards.

Programs accredited in this department include

- Health and Physical Education through NCATE, following standards outlined by both the American Association for Health Education (AAHE) and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE).
- Athletic Training through the Commission on the Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE)
- Recreation and Parks Management undergraduate program through The Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT).

The Exercise and Sport Sciences program has begun the process of seeking accreditation through The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). The Adventure Sports Management program that began in Fall 2015 will seek certification through COAPRT. The Recreation and Parks Management graduate program is not accredited, as no accrediting body exists for graduate programs. The final phase of the program includes the capstone project, which requires application of the skills and knowledge gained throughout the program.

Graduate Education

Graduate programs in Psychology (Masters in Psychology Accreditation Council), and Business Administration (AACSB) are beholden to their accrediting agencies to provide evidence of the assessment of student learning. After review by their accrediting agencies, the faculty members respond to recommendations in order to receive continued accreditation status. The graduate program in Computer Science is the exception. The department plans to assess this new program by determining whether COSC 635 and COSC 640 meet student learning outcomes. Other graduate programs have learning outcomes assessed internally or will soon be assessed under the new Graduate Institutional Learning Goals by the Graduate Learning Assessment Advisory Group.

Online Learning

FSU provides for comparable quality of teaching/instruction, academic rigor, and educational effectiveness of courses and programs regardless of the location or delivery mode. Many online courses are delivered within programs that do not have the option of face-to-face instruction.

Frostburg's RN-BSN, MSN, MBA, MS in Recreation and Parks Management, and Special Education programs are delivered online only, but approval and review processes for the online-only programs and course offerings go through the same procedures as do face-to-face programs.

For online courses that also have face-to-face versions, current assessment systems at the course and program level are applied to the online environment. A [survey](#) designed specifically to assess online course delivery is given in online courses in summer and intersession. The survey was developed to assess issues of access, level of participation, and student experience in the online courses. This survey continues to be conducted each summer and intersession and the results are reviewed by the Distance Education Advisory Group (DEAG). The assessment of online courses and delivery at the college level is not a separate process and is embedded in the various programmatic reviews, including GEP assessment, annual evaluations of faculty, and accreditation processes, including NCATE, AACSB, and CCNE, as listed in the [FSU Online Education Procedures, Guidelines and Information](#). The programs at Catonsville, Cecil, and Arundel Mills are covered under external accreditors and conform to those standards.

The assessment process for online courses at the University begins with course evaluations, which are designed to assess quality and modes of instruction. The course evaluation tools have been adjusted to better solicit answers from online learners. Any issues discovered are addressed by the chairs, department evaluation committees, deans, and/or departmental curriculum committees. While the assessment of online education is embedded in the overall traditional assessment process of the institution, many positive initiatives for assuring quality in online education are in place outside of this assessment process:

A recent redesign of the faculty provides online training on relevant and up-to-date best practices for teaching and learning online. This training is modeled after Quality Matters™ standards. All faculty who teach online are required to complete this training. The Instructional Design and Delivery (IDD) department has recently provided an option for voluntary online course review, which offers a review of the course design to assure that quality standards are addressed within the course. Support is provided by IDD to make course adjustments to align course design with content. Faculty who submit and complete the review process are awarded a "Best Practices Course" badge to place in their course.

All online RN to BSN courses have been reviewed and received outside review and approval for Quality Matters™. The new MSN program will be submitting courses for review in the near future. The MBA program has initiated student focus groups, which will be implemented each semester in the capstone course to collect feedback from students for use in program improvement. The MBA program is delivered entirely online, and this process has been initiated as part of the program improvement plan.

DEAG and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved a [student survey](#) implemented in all online courses in fall 2014 designed to evaluate online course delivery and design. Response to this survey was minimal, and as a result, DEAG will be discussing how this tool can be disseminated in the future to garner more student participation. This survey was intended to collect data to inform improvement of online course design and delivery policies and practices.

In fall 2013, an outside evaluator was engaged to review all courses offered online in the Master of Education - Special Education program. This review was based on the Quality Matters™ rubric. Upon completion of this review, the consultant offered feedback to the Program Coordinator for course

improvement, which was then implemented.

Sharing and Using Student Learning Assessment Information

The [Student Learning Assessment Advisory Group \(SLAAG\)](#) is tasked with finding ways to improve student learning and the process of assessment of student learning. As part of this group's charge, it maintains a common language of assessment throughout the institution. It also reviews existing assessment practices and measures, monitors their effectiveness, and suggests modifications as appropriate. Similarly, the newly created Graduate Learning Assessment Advisory Group (GLAAG) is charged with monitoring the effectiveness of graduate assessment practices. GLAAG recently developed [graduate institutional learning goals](#). Fully documented use of student learning assessment information as part of institutional assessment has not been a specifically documented action priority of the institution to date, although it is likely to be prominent in the next review of the University's Strategic Plan.

Institutional Support for Student Learning Assessment Efforts

Currently, the AIR Office directs student learning assessment at the institutional level. The University has invested in Campus Labs in order to facilitate student learning assessment, as well as program goals, action priorities, and program review. Although Frostburg State University has moved all program review and capstone assessment to Campus Labs' Compliance Assist, a noted drawback is that training on how to use the software has not been required for faculty and staff. Furthermore, student learning assessment data is not stored universally in Compliance Assist across campus. While CLAS uses Compliance Assist to report student learning data, only two departments in the College of Business have uploaded student learning outcomes assessment to Compliance Assist. In the College of Education, no programs use Compliance Assist, while some programs reportedly use TaskStream as an electronic database for collection, analysis, and storage of data. The University purchased Campus Labs to centralize reporting on student learning outcomes and strategic planning. Campus Labs' Compliance Assist is an effective tool to provide evidence that student learning outcomes assessment is taking place and that all student learning outcomes link to the institutional learning goals (and thus to the Mission and Strategic Plan). However, the tool is not being used consistently across the University.

Closing the Loop of Assessment

The CLAS Assessment Council reviews programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to ensure that they are using student learning outcomes assessment to improve learning, pedagogy and curricula. The College of Business documents the closing of the loop in its [Assurance of Learning Report](#) every five years as part of its accreditation process. The report is generated by the Coordinator of CoB Assurance of Learning Program and an Assurance of Learning Committee. In the College of Education, the Unit Assessment System is based on collaboration with the professional community. Program Coordinators in the college assemble the evidence of performance and program outcomes. In concert with departmental and program committees, the Office of Unit Assessment plans strategies to gather evidence on candidate performance. In fact, assessment of student learning for major programs is also part of the Periodic Program Review process, discussed more fully in Standard 7. However, a similar review process does not exist for academic programs that are not majors, such as minors, concentrations, or other special programs. These programs are an important part of the student learning experience at the University, and thus should practice similar processes for student learning outcomes assessment.

Recommendation: Establish and implement an internal simplified periodic program review process for non-major academic programs, such as minors and certificates.

Analysis of the Institutional Culture for Assessing Student Learning

In 2006, there was no consistent student learning outcomes assessment at Frostburg. Now, every program has been through the process at least once. An increasing number of divisions are using strategic planning to drive action priorities. Many units are non-academic, and yet contribute to student learning outcomes. One of FSU's goals is to continue annual assessment efforts and work with the departments/units that have not provided assessment updates in the past year to move them to an annual reporting cycle, and to include student learning outcomes when appropriate.

Faculty and staff members are beginning to understand their roles in assessing student learning. Middle States Survey data shows that nearly 70% of faculty members and 58% of staff members who responded believe that "assessment drives planning at the department level." However, only 46% of faculty and 52% of staff believed that the department assessment results were factored into planning and the college and University level. Many faculty and staff are willing to serve on departmental and University assessment committees, yet others refuse. This may be due to the perception that departmental and planning unit assessments are not used in a meaningful way outside of the department/unit, that it is additional unsupported work, or that the value of self-assessment is not recognized.

Conclusion

The University has made considerable progress in institutional assessment since the 2006 Self-Study, although the leadership and the community certainly recognize that improvements can be made. Refining the institutional assessment process to deliver more meaningful data for strategic planning is a priority for the institution.

The University's programs are designed to support the mission of preparing students to "meet the challenges of a complex and changing global society." As indicated above, student learning is assessed at various points in their academic careers through learning outcomes at the course and program levels. In addition, a number of programs are accredited at the national level. Faculty and employees all should be encouraged to engage in meaningful assessment for continuous improvement of the University as a whole and the student learning experience in particular. Through this engagement, the University will be able to ascertain that all endeavors at all levels are assessing outcomes, setting goals to improve programs based on this feedback, and meeting these goals effectively and in a timely manner.

Recommendation: Ensure processes for consistently assessing and promoting the effectiveness of institutional priorities and academic programs to the University community. Ensure the use of Campus Labs' Compliance Assist to highlight and publicize assessment successes across the University.

CHAPTER THREE

Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

Institutional Resources

Standards 2 and 3

Frostburg State University ensures that decision-making and budgeting processes produce a learning environment that facilitates student success. The following evidence is presented for the University's compliance with Standard 2: a tradition of institutional improvement based on solid research and experience; resource allocation tied to strategic planning initiatives, as evidenced in the Goal 3 of Strategic Plan; and budgeting and fiscal planning processes guided by state law and University System of Maryland policy. The following evidence is offered for Frostburg State University's compliance with Standard 3: external audits of financial records and technology areas; meeting the instructional needs of the University community by following an approved facilities master plan; and using an open and collaborative process to address resource allocation, technology needs, and equipment replacement/modernization.

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal

Frostburg State University makes an effort to ensure well-researched decisions are made with appropriate strategic planning, data, and campus consultation. The recent economic recession required that the University engage in a thoughtful and extensive process of self-examination. The departure of President Gibraltar in June 2015 will mean changes in the University's decision-making process as the Interim President and the future President influence that process. For the University, the fiscal challenges of the state of Maryland were exacerbated by the economic downturn and lack of population growth in the Maryland high school population. The result was a 24% decline in first time freshman enrollment (from 1074 freshman in 2007 to 819 in 2012) that has impacted the University for several years. The University responded aggressively by identifying the key aspects of its operation and changing its recruitment approach during the 2013-2014 academic year.

The Strategic Planning Process at Frostburg State University

Strategic planning has been a part of Frostburg State University culture for many years. As a result, FSU can demonstrate meeting the fundamental elements of having clearly stated goals and strategies, and having a planning process that is clearly communicated. In addition, optional analysis describes the continuous planning process, the institutional culture for planning, and institutional support for planning. The first written strategic plan was titled an "[Institutional Plan and Selected Implementation Strategies](#)" for the 1999-2000 academic year. The strategic planning process and the campus culture relating to strategic planning has changed dramatically as the University has moved to implement recommendations in the 2006 Self-Study. [The Strategic Plan for 2014-2015](#), produced by an iterative collaborative process involving more than 40 individuals, is built around six goals. Annually, action priorities for each goal may change or be revised. Some may be deleted when circumstances change or the target has been met. Similarly, new action priorities or revised performance standards will be added as opportunities or problems become clear. Many of the action priorities remain the same because they are core aspects of the institution (the commitment to experiential learning) or additional work is needed to completely address the problem of sustainability and growth of enrollment.

Strategic Planning at the University essentially follows the classic model: Consider the environment in which the University operates, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the institution, and

identify opportunities consistent with the institutional mission. However, in terms of public presentation of the plan, much of the fundamental research is excluded. To facilitate the strategic planning process, President Gibraltar created the [President's Advisory Council on Institutional Effectiveness \(PACIE\)](#) in 2010. More information about PACIE is contained in Chapter Two. For the last four years, the University's Strategic Plan has been available online only. This is designed to emphasize the campus community that it is a real working plan, and not a document to put on the shelf. The development of the annual strategic plan begins at the Summer Strategic Planning Retreat. However, due to the loss of key personnel in spring/summer 2015, only an abbreviated planning session was held in summer 2015.

The University seeks to make all constituencies aware of the strategic plan. The President frequently references the plan in his addresses and [convocations](#), and thirty banners displayed in public places show the [six core goals](#) of the plan. The 2014 Middle States survey of the campus community indicated that most people were aware that the University had a strategic plan. Data from the survey showed [87% of the faculty](#) and [94% of the staff](#) were aware of the six goals of the strategic plan. At a March 2015 focus group of students, 50% of the students attending indicated they were aware of the strategic plan. Follow-up discussion found they noticed the banners across campus, had seen mentions in the student newspaper, had seen emails referencing it, or had discussed it at a meeting of the President's Leadership Circle.

Table 3: Questions Related to Strategic Planning on the Fall 2014 Faculty and Staff Survey

Survey Item:	Faculty	Staff
Aware of goals identified in University Strategic Plan	87 %	94 %
Read the FSU Mission Statement	95 %	95 %
Have input into the Strategic Plan	47 %	42 %
Strategic Plan is widely disseminated on campus	77 %	83 %
Strategic Plan directly affects goals of my department	67 %	78 %

While the strategic planning process has become institutionalized at Frostburg State University now, changing perception of the role and significance of the strategic plan has taken several years. As indicated in the table above, a lower percentage of respondents feel they participated in the plan or that it affects goals at the departmental level.

Campus Labs' Compliance Assist platform is Frostburg State University's fully integrated and comprehensive online solution for managing and presenting planning, assessment, and accreditation reports. FSU required software that supported strategic planning and accreditation, assessment of student learning, periodic program review, project dashboards, an early alert system for at-risk students, and the ability to track student experiential activities. Campus Labs supplied these solutions.

The most recent change to the strategic planning process was the effort to link the actions of each planning unit in the University to the strategic plan. In addition to reporting by those most directly

tied to the action priorities, a second level of reporting was initiated in the 2014- 2015 academic year. PACIE implemented a planning module within Compliance Assist that allowed for a centralized reporting process linking each planning unit's action priorities across departmental, divisional, and institutional levels. Each individual planning unit was asked to report what they had accomplished in support of institutional goals and action priorities. Thirty-nine individual planning units (see table below) were identified during summer 2014. On April 17, 2015, a training program was presented to assist the individual planning units in the reporting process. For example, the College of Business was considered an individual planning unit, rather than the academic departments within the college. The difference in approach is significant. In the past, institutional research would report the most recent retention data to PACIE, but this year each planning unit was asked to explain what it contributed to improving retention.

Table 4: Individual Planning Units for Strategic Planning and Reporting

	Primary Planning Unit (Division):	Individual Planning Unit:
	Office of the President	
1		Human Resources
2		General Counsel
3		Title IX Coordinator
	Academic Affairs	
4		College of Business
5		College of Education
6		College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
7		The Ort Library
8		Academic Success Network
9		Admissions/Financial Aid
10		Registrar
11		Assessment and Institutional Research
12		International Education
13		Research and Sponsored Programs
14		Graduate Services
	Student Affairs	
15		Lane Center
16		Student Activities and Greek Life
17		Cultural Events
18		Residence Life
19		Student Conduct
20		Student Wellness and Alcohol Education
21		Health Services
22		Counseling and Psychological Services
23		Civic Engagement
24		Leadership and Experiential Learning
25		Diversity Center
26		SAFE Office
27		Career Services

28		Preview FSU
29		Veterans Services
	Administration and Finance	
30		Athletics
31		Auxiliary Services
32		Facilities
33		Finance
34		Technology
35		University Police
	University Advancement	
36		Alumni Affairs
37		Communications and Media Relations
38		FSU Foundation
	Economic Development and Government Relations	

There are some challenges for the University. While an individual is responsible for reporting progress on a specific action priority to PACIE, it not assumed that the individual is responsible for reaching the standard. The plan, the goals, and the action priorities are University-wide and require the cooperative work of many on campus. Instructions for those completing the report and the reporting template are available through the [PACIE website](#).

However, over the last two years, the University has recognized that requiring every planning unit to report to PACIE has led to an overload of information that has proved unhelpful for university-level planning. Therefore, a number of changes (as discussed in Chapter Two) will be instituted to gather more meaningful data to guide the cycle of reporting and strategic planning.

The Decision-Making Process at Frostburg State University

Frostburg State University has a process that relies on the Vice Presidents to play an active role in decision making on campus, both for their own divisions and working as the Executive Committee for the University as a whole. Staffing and budgeting decisions are made at the Vice Presidential level.

A primary example of this process is the hiring of the Noel-Levitz consulting firm (now Ruffalo Noel-Levitz). The University needed a new functional plan to address enrollment issues and the consulting firm was awarded a two-year contract with the possibility of further extensions. The preliminary results include a more targeted approach to student recruitment, the expansion of geographic areas of active recruitment, more timely response to student applicants, earlier financial aid awards, admission of honors students to the honors program at the time of acceptance, and several other changes. Overall, the number of fully qualified admitted first-time students increased for 2014-2015, along with gains in transfer students. For 2015-2016, transfer students have increased, while first time freshmen declined about 2%.

The Student Affairs Division provides examples of several types of decisions. A vacant Assistant Vice President position was reclassified as a Coordinator for Veterans Services position to align with FSU Strategic Goals and meet the needs of an increasing volume of veterans or dependents using veteran benefits. The University currently is providing services to 136 veterans and dependents and has opened a new Veterans Center on campus. In addition, the salary savings allowed creation of two doctoral internship positions to meet the increased need for counseling services. The amount re-allocated to support this internship program was approximately \$30,000. Student Affairs also reclassified a Coordinator of Advising position to a Director of Student Development position to add value to experiential learning priorities. Student Affairs reallocated funds to support a significant cross-cultural experience for the students in the President's Leadership Circle (PLC). A costly membership in a professional association was cancelled and FSU discontinued the practice of awarding a scholarship to each of the students in the PLC. The savings have been reinvested to provide opportunities for students to participate in programs in Uganda, Dubai, Prague, Ecuador, and India. The amount reallocated was approximately \$45,000 per year. Over the past four years, 46 students have participated in the program.

The Office of Human Resources eliminated non-essential travel to fund online recruitment, contract administration, and employee evaluations. The Office of Information Technology reorganized internally to better align functions with the needs of the University. For example, the Systems Engineering team was created to support and maintain services and systems in the cloud and on-premises. As the trend to move IT services to cloud-based services continues, FSU must have a team that understands the systems used to support the University, the locations of data, and how the systems interact. The newly-created Instructional Design and Delivery department assists, trains, and supports faculty with Blackboard and other technologies used to enhance student learning. The Networking and Telecommunications Department was modified to focus solely on networking, wireless, and phone systems for the University. Academic Computing was renamed Technology Services to help students, faculty, and staff with technology questions and troubleshooting through the Help Desk and PC/Mac support services. In addition, to combat increased cyber security threats, an Information Security Officer was hired to ensure the University's data are properly secured.

In the Division of Administration and Finance, the University and Student Billing Office has reduced costs associated with overtime staffing and postage costs by giving students the option to enroll in direct deposit for student loan refunds (since 2011) and all student refunds (since 2013). Estimated savings in staff and postage is \$5,000 per year. By implementing electronic presentment of 1098T tax forms and bringing the operation back to the campus, the University saved about \$1,500 per year in postage costs. Earlier access to tax information allows students to complete FAFSA forms in a timely manner supporting University retention efforts. Additionally, the 1098T electronic process reduced paper consumption and is in accordance with sustainable campus goals. Similarly, a new contract for the operation of laundry facilities in the Residence Halls effective for fall 2014 uses the highest-efficiency laundry machines available, saving FSU \$8,300 in contract fees, \$4,800 in electricity, and 264,298 gallons of water each year. A Dining Services contract signed in 2014 requires the contractor (Chartwells) to make capital investments of \$7,216,500 in dining area renovations and food service equipment upgrades throughout the term of the contract, including renewal years. The University replaced all the fluorescent lamps in the Performing Arts Center with LEDs to reduce electricity costs and received a \$39,000 check from Potomac Edison to purchase the LEDs.

The University made several changes to increase retention and support recruitment. To better align these efforts, academic support units, such as the Advising Center, the Registrar's Office, and the coordination of the required course for new freshmen, Introduction to Higher Education (ORIE), were transferred from Student Affairs to Academic Affairs. In addition, the Provost reallocated approximately \$72,000 for FY 2015 to provide funding for strategic retention needs. Under the leadership of the Associate Provost/Registrar, the [Academic Success Network](#) was created to enhance student success and retention. One part of this was expanding the role of the advising center and renaming it the Center for Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR). With additional spending to support improvements in the ORIE 101 course and increased support for tutoring, the percentage of first-time freshmen on academic probation was reduced from 24% to 16% in one year. Operational funding for the Assistant Provost for Student Success and Retention was increased from \$500 to \$3,000. The Provost was also able to support a number of initiatives in the colleges.

Survey data from [faculty](#) and [staff](#) had several questions about the budgeting and decision making process on campus. In spite of efforts to make the process as transparent as possible, concerns about the budget and the budget making process remain.

Table 5: Campus Survey Questions relating to Budget

Survey Item:	Faculty	Staff
Budget decisions are made in an equitable manner at the department level	75 %	58 %
The process of creating FSU's annual budget is clear	18 %	29 %
FSU adequately maintains and updates equipment	Not asked	69 %
FSU maintains and updates instructional technology and computing equipment	68 %	Not asked

Institutional and Unit Improvement Efforts

Frostburg State University can point to a record of institutional and unit improvement efforts over the last several years. Interestingly, the process, format, and timeline vary significantly across the campus. In some cases, the process is largely driven by on-campus concerns while, in other areas, external entities drive critical parts of the review and improvement efforts. Several parts of the University, both academic and non-academic, have specialized accreditations that require periodic review and improvement efforts.

In the Academic Affairs division, the primary strategy for program improvement is the [Academic Program Review](#) process directed by the University System of Maryland Board of Regents as outlined in Code of Maryland Annotated Regulations (COMAR) Sec 12-160IV. The academic program review process, in use since the 1980s, reviews all academic majors on a rotating schedule. Historically, reviews were done on a five- year cycle, but the USM is transitioning to a seven-year review cycle. From 2011–2014, the University [completed review of 47 programs](#) in both the undergraduate and graduate areas. The impact of the academic program review process is discussed in other chapters of this report.

Institutional improvement in the non-academic areas has traditionally used other approaches. In certain units, the University relies on external accrediting agencies to help identify appropriate standards of service. For example, the University Counseling Center is accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services. Frostburg has been accredited in this area since the 1970s and recently received counseling reaccreditation. The Brady Health Center is accredited

by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care through December 2015. The Health Center is preparing for reaccreditation and is working to ensure that staff meet professional development requirements and maintain their licenses and/or certifications. While the University Police Force is not currently accredited, all officers have completed a Maryland Police Training Commission Certified Program as required as well as additional training. Fiscal year 2016 capital funding approved for a new University Police building should remove remaining barriers to accreditation.

Assessment of Planning and Resource Allocation Efforts

The planning and resource allocations efforts described above document the increasing role strategic planning plays in decision making and budgeting at the University. In spite of many steps to make the budget process transparent, many consider the process something of a mystery. Some staff and faculty still focus on their core roles and do not see how the strategic plan affects their work. At the same time, most faculty and staff realize the importance of enrollment stability, the way experiential education allows Frostburg to offer a unique educational experience, and the manner in which sustainability links academic experiences, non-academic programming, and residential life.

Institutional committees play a critical role in this process. Monthly meetings of the Faculty Senate involve open questions for the President and Provost. These questions may be informational or may focus on the difficult budget and planning issues facing the University. The Faculty Senate's [Institutional Priorities and Resources Committee](#) (IPR) (Faculty Handbook, p. C-35) is specifically charged with examining fiscal issues that affect faculty and academic programming. This includes annual review of the budget and consideration of the fiscal impact of new academic programs. In response to a request from the President to help set priorities for academic affairs spending, the IPR committee produced [a detailed report of unmet needs](#).

Sustainability initiatives are a key element of the University Strategic Plan. The University has made a number of changes to reduce energy and water consumption, and benefited through reduced operating costs. In 2014, the President created the President's Advisory Council for Sustainability to bring together students, faculty, and staff. A student fee of \$15 per semester (undergraduates only) implemented in fiscal year 2016 will allow this group to support three types of sustainability projects. The fee will fund expanded student-proposed and -led sustainability programs on campus (including residence halls) and in the community. The fee will also be invested in increased sustainable operations of the campus and will support student leadership in sustainability. In summary, the fee should allow for energy saving improvements, educational programming (both academic and co-curricular), and increased student participation in the American Association for Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE).

The table below shows first-year results of asking the individual planning units to describe what areas of their work support any of the University Strategic Plan goals. The most notable finding was the large number of planning units that actively support some of the key goals of the strategic plan. At least two-thirds of the planning units cited evidence of work to support experiential learning, recruitment and retention, and faculty/staff development. A majority of planning units report they contribute to marketing, sustainability, technology and facilities improvements, and engagement with the regional community.

Table 6: Individual Planning Unit Strategic Plan Survey Results (Spring 2015)

Strategic Goal or Action Priority	Percentage of Responding Individual Planning Units
Individual Planning Units with written unit strategic plan	66
Does the planning unit contribute to the University Strategic Plan Action Priority of:	
Implement marketing and branding	51
Student recruitment and retention	74
Support of experiential education	85
Sustainability Initiatives	59
Engagement with the regional community	55
Facilities Improvement	65
Technology Improvements	60
Graduation Rate improvement	59
Faculty and Staff Professional Development and Recognition	66
Increase the academic profile of first time students	48

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

Frostburg State University has continued to move forward even as the nation has faced an economic recession. The University has been committed to careful use of resources, including human, fiscal, physical, and community. During the economic crisis, the University experienced budget reductions as well as mid-year budget cuts. In FY 2015, the approved budget was cut by \$195,689 in July, and additional budget adjustments resulted in a reduction of \$1,252,683. In the last seven fiscal years, the University was directed to reduce fund balances to address current needs, leaving the University with very limited resources to address emergency situations. While the University left positions unfilled and all employees experienced furloughs, no employee was laid-off during this period. Like all USM schools, Frostburg State University is required to maintain a fund balance. The USM fund balance represents the accumulated value of unspent general funds carried over from one budget year to the next, set-asides for specific initiatives, proceeds from revenue generating contracts, investment income and the unrestricted portion of the System's endowment. Fund balance is one of the elements considered by rating agencies in determining the System's bond rating.

Table 7: State Appropriation Budget Reductions at FSU

Fiscal Year	Operating Budget Reductions	Fund Balance Reductions
FY 2015	\$1,067,543	\$380,829
FY 2014	\$378,149	\$984,385
FY 2013	\$258,735	\$159,570
FY 2012	\$0	\$127,527
FY 2011	\$448,391	\$1,924,157
FY 2010	\$1,318,426	\$2,617,606
FY 2009	\$1,184,596	\$916,107
Seven Year Total	\$4,655,840	\$7,110,181

The Use of Institutional Resources

Frostburg has several strategies to ensure the effective use of institutional resources. Some examples include cooperative agreements in which the University participates. For example, FSU has an agreement with Arundel Mills Community College to offer an engineering degree program there. The experience with that program allowed for the development of a program with a different engineering specialization to be offered by FSU at Cecil College. Facilities and equipment costs are largely borne by the other sites. A financially similar program in adventure sports management has been implemented with Garrett College, with the adventure sports equipment provided by Garrett College.

The refocused Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) program approval process implemented in fall 2014 requires a more detailed documentation of the need for a program with respect to state workforce shortages and an examination of enrollment and costs associated with proposed new academic programs. Faculty participation in this process is through proposal review by the IPR Committee. During the 2014-2015 academic year, the committee revised its charter to be fully consistent with the new MHEC process. Information on the external environment must use official State of Maryland Department of Labor statistics to describe job trends in the field of a new academic program. In addition, IPR will implement in fall 2015 a requirement to review enrollment, costs, and revenues associated with new academic programs approved three years previously.

Allocation of Resources

With the resources of the University stretched thin, the allocation of assets and the allocation of faculty and staff can be challenging. Allocation of assets begins with the decisions of the Executive Committee, collectively and individually. In Academic Affairs, the Deans allocate funds among departments and frequently retain funds for college-wide initiatives. The process of allocating faculty positions requires a detailed position justification. Replacement of vacated faculty positions is not guaranteed, and this has frustrated some faculty members. Sometimes, a year or two may elapse before a position is authorized. Each Dean invites academic departments to request new or replacement positions, with a narrative describing the need for the position, and listing of the expected workload for the position. A copy of the [position request form](#) for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences illustrates the process.

The allocation of faculty and staff is highly influenced by state budget guidelines that require external approval to create each permanently funded position. Such fully benefited positions are known as PIN positions. Rarely are new PIN positions made available to the University. In some cases, the state could create a new PIN position without state funding (Flex PIN), which the University has to fund. This is costly and rare. As a further complication, the state does not fully fund even authorized PIN positions on the assumption that normal circumstances will create vacancies. As a result, the University may hold some positions vacant. In summary, the decision to fill any PIN position is carefully considered and frequently involves reassignment of the position to an area of greater need consistent with institutional priorities or a redefining of responsibilities.

For other initiatives, it may be necessary to develop new funding sources. For example, the Student Government Association approved an increase in the student activity fee to support, among other initiatives, more late-night programming, which has resulted in the very successful [Late@Lane](#) program. In the Academic Affairs area, due to a lack of increase in departmental operations budgets over the last two decades, some departments have been forced to initiate course fees to cover rising costs of inflation. Course fees were approved for selected courses that have unusual

expenses associated with providing instruction. As a result, several computer laboratory courses added fees similar to course fees for some music and visual arts courses that have been in place for many years. In all areas of the University, the use of grants remains an important but challenging approach to budget issues. The University established the [Office of Research and Sponsored Programs](#) (ORSP) in 1988 to assist faculty and staff in getting external funding.

A continuing challenge for the University (as well as many other state agencies) is expenditures mandated by the state that are not always supported with additional state funds. Annually, the University receives mid-year adjustments to health insurance and retirement plan costs. The University never receives 100% funding from the state, so it must make up the revenues elsewhere. The increase in the state minimum wage also has had an effect. A small number of student workers were paid at minimum wage levels and the increase required the University to reconsider wages for several classes of workers, which resulted in a reduction of total hours worked. Salaries, wages, and benefits continue to rise, even though the overall budget stays the same. Resources could be shifted from other areas, but cutting programs or services may have unintended effects on recruiting, retention, or other support services. Another matter is the rise in the hiring of contingent and adjunct faculty, a national topic of interest in higher education. This is challenging the traditional business model of the University, as online programs, where many of these faculty teach, do not generate fees at the same level as on-campus programs. Changing demographics in the state have also had an effect on revenue, as Maryland is graduating fewer high school students.

The Financial Planning and Budgeting Process

The financial planning and budgeting process for the University is driven by the requirements of the State of Maryland, which provides specific guidelines and timelines for both operating and capital budget submissions. As a result, the process of preparing the next year's budget begins quite early and requires review of enrollment projections, state employee benefits, and many other items. In recent years, the budget request for the fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) must be submitted to the USM central office by early October. The University plans to work toward moving its strategic planning timeline earlier in the year to better anticipate state budget issues. That said, Frostburg has not been late in making a budget submission in the last four decades. When questions about the budget are presented to the University, they are promptly addressed. Each year, some of the University System of Maryland institutions directly present testimony on the budget request to legislative committees. President Gibraltar last presented testimony in February 2015. Capital requests require separate presentations and testimony. An example of [testimony for capital projects](#) is provided by the explanation of the need for the new University Police facility, which was funded in the FY 2016 capital budget.

On campus, the Executive Committee has primary budget decision responsibility. In recent years, the challenge has been to manage mid-year reductions in state support. Within divisions of the University, the budgeting process is based primarily on historic spending patterns. With limited or no new funding, only modest changes have been possible. In Student Affairs, Directors are not hesitant to inform the Vice President of new needs as they arise. The best example of this is the creation of the doctoral internship program. There was a documented need for additional services in the Counseling Center and one of the counselors was familiar with a national internship program, so he developed a proposal to use savings from a retirement to fund the two interns. In the end, FSU retained the professional position in another area and used the salary savings to fund the doctoral interns. The Vice President of Student Affairs states, "through regular communication I am made aware of needs and provide funding as I am able that are consistent with strategic priorities."

Frostburg State University recognizes the financial and professional benefits of engaging in the procurement of grants. While FSU is largely a teaching institution, efforts have been made over the past five years to incentivize faculty and staff to write proposals and manage grant programs through grant funded summer salaries and reassigned time. Not only does the engagement in robust grant programs allow for greater student experiential learning and faculty/staff professional development, it also allows for the recovery of indirect costs which are returned to the academic departments engaging in grants as well as the University's General Fund. For academic grants, 40% of the recovered indirect costs are redirected to the General Fund and for non-academic grants, 70% of the recovered indirect costs are redirected to the General Fund.

Recognizing that grants can be a significant revenue source for the University's General Fund, efforts have been made in the past two years to procure more awards that not only require little to no matching (which costs the University resources), but also allow for maximum indirect cost recovery. Such awards generally are made only by Federal Agencies. In an effort to focus on larger, Federal opportunities, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs has encouraged faculty to consider writing fewer, but larger, proposals than they traditionally have written. Over the past five years, the number of awards made to FSU has dropped by 22%, but the average award amount has increased by 62%. In 2010, 64 new awards were made, totaling \$4,497,301; whereas in 2014, 50 new awards were made, totaling \$5,700,000. Grants play a significant role in Student Affairs. Most notable is the Drug Free Communities grant, which provides the University \$625,000 in funding over five years to address high risk drinking among area youth (both at the University and in high schools). This project supports strategic goals of improved retention and higher graduation rates.

The work of the FSU Foundation is also critical in providing funding needed by the University. Review of the FSU Foundation Statements ([FY2014](#) and [FY2015](#)) includes information of the endowment performance. At the present time, the FSU Foundation has pooled endowment funds with the University System of Maryland Foundation and does not exercise day-to-day authority over the management of endowment funds. The Foundation holds funds that support 387 endowed scholarships as compared to 197 scholarships in 2005. Currently, 47 endowed non-scholarship funds support a variety of other university initiatives. Annual fund dollars are used to support a number of projects, including competitive grants to faculty and staff for projects that align with Foundation priorities for the year. Similarly, the University endowment has increased from \$8.5 million in 2005 to \$18,005,979 in February 2015. Many of the Foundation's activities are not widely known in the campus community. The University should seek to raise awareness of the role the Foundation plays in supporting the University's Strategic Plan and its learning goals.

The Facilities Master Plan

Frostburg State University follows an infrastructure and facilities master plan. COMAR regulations require each campus to have a 10-year (minimum) plan with a 20-year land use element. The plan must be updated every five years and accepted by the state's Department of General Services. The facilities plan must consider campus land use, land acquisitions, building use, restoration of buildings, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, utilities extensions and improvements, telecommunications needs, and new construction. The plan is required to present a recommended sequencing of projects, a description of the mission of the University, and data on enrollment, programs and staff. In addition, campus master plans are now required to be consistent with the "smart growth" goals of [PlanMaryland](#).

The [most recent complete plan](#) was finished in 2002. The plan was prepared by the consulting firm of Kling and Stubbins, which assisted with an [update](#) of the plan in 2008. Given that the recent economic climate allowed only modest changes during the period from 2008 to 2011, FSU chose to update the plan internally with the assistance of staff from the University System of Maryland. The [2011 update](#) saved FSU over \$100,000. Currently, the campus has a total of 262 acres of land. The instructional, administrative, and support buildings that were constructed with state funding are estimated to have a replacement value of \$140,847,785. In addition, there are buildings supported with user fees, including residence halls, the Lane University Center and the dining hall. Data on all campus buildings, including construction date, purpose, and square footage, is available through the [Budget webpage](#). The campus provides improved recreational fields, athletic complexes, an arboretum, and has substantial undeveloped land.

The 2001 Master Plan provided the outline for three projects that were completed during the planning period. The renovation of Gunter Hall as an academic building was completed in 2002 at a cost to the state of \$5.4 million. Approximately \$1 million in federal grant funds were also used in the project. To address student housing needs, Edgewood Commons, leased to MEDCO, was completed in 2002 and provides housing for 406 students. The demolition of old Compton and the construction of the new Compton Science Center at a cost of \$31.9 million were completed in 2003. Given the central location of the building and the role of President Lillian Compton, FSU's first female President, in guiding the college through a difficult period, the University chose to retain the Compton name on the new building.

The 2008 and 2011 updates to the campus facilities plan included renovations to the Cordts Center that were completed between 2010 and 2014 and the Gira Center for Communications and Information Technology (CCIT) building completed in 2014. In addition, the University completed the new Bobcat Stadium Press Box, renovated the Lane University Center, installed more energy efficient lighting, and completed the first phase of a storm water management project. Several projects suggested in the 2008 plan update remain in the planning or construction phase. These include further renovations in the Cordts Center and the afore-mentioned new campus police station.

The Sustainable Energy Research Facility (SERF), a grant-funded project for an off-the-grid research building, was opened in October 2012. Problems implementing various aspects of the facility and limited programming has meant the building has been slow to be brought online. Therefore, few outcomes for research and instructional use are available. In response, the University hired a new SERF director in March 2015, but he left the position in August 2015. The University currently is evaluating the best use of the facility.

In the longer term, FSU's plans include a new Education and Health Sciences Building, but state budget concerns have delayed the project, and the University has decided to relocate the building from the tentative site suggested in the 2011 plan. The testimony of University officials to state legislative bodies on the University's capital funding request for 2014 describes the need for the new building. The University is committed in the plan to developing facilities to support sustainability in operations and in the instructional program. Two older academic buildings, Old Main and Guild Center, are slated for renovation, and several athletic fields need to be upgraded. There is also a desire to improve and expand student housing on campus and the University is seeking approval and funding for a new 437-bed student residence hall. Improving residence halls is a part of the facilities master plan and an action priority in the strategic

plan. The University had 1560 students living on campus in fall 2015. Typically, more students live on campus during the fall semester. In fall 2014, 1622 resided on campus, while there were 1505 residents during spring 2015. Improvements to the residence halls are seen as a critical step in growing enrollment and encouraging student retention. The oldest residence hall in use opened in 1919 while the newest on campus opened in 1976. Since 2007, the University has committed funding to renovate six uphill residence halls originally constructed between 1957 and 1965. These halls have an attractive location for students, but needed cosmetic, infrastructure, roofing, and HVAC upgrades. These residence halls, housing a total of 475 students, were each taken “off-line” for a semester to complete renovations. Improvements included paint and carpeting, restroom upgrades and installation of in-room heat controls. Initially, this resulted in increased student satisfaction, but the failure to complete in-depth infrastructure improvements (such as air conditioning and better common spaces) has meant that satisfaction levels have since declined, and a new cycle of wear and tear is now evident.

Table 8: Renovation Expense for “Uphill” Residence Halls

	Amount Spent (\$)	Number of Halls	Hall Completed
FY 2008	906,260.76	1	Sowers
FY 2009	766,187.49	1	Diehl
FY 2010	871,898.12	1	Allen
FY 2012	1,088,999.95	1	Gray
FY 2013	1,197,491.03	1	Simpson
Total	4,830,837.35	5	

The themes of improvement in residence halls, infrastructure, and technology intersect. While the University has made improvements in all areas, more work is needed. Wireless Internet access is available in most academic buildings on campus and has been added this year to all the residence halls.

Meeting the Educational Needs of the Frostburg State Community

The University’s strategic focus on improving instruction has led to notable improvements in instructional spaces and equipment since the 2006 Self-Study. For the fall 2014 semester, the University utilized a wide range of general classrooms, seminar rooms, and specially equipped laboratory spaces. Classrooms vary in size and the level of technology provided. There are “smart” classrooms with state of the art equipment, but many more instructional spaces with Internet connections, data projectors, and appropriate furniture. In addition, motor pool vehicles supported the experiential instruction mission of the University.

The University uses a student “Technology Fee” to fund a variety of instructional technology projects including hardware and software. In addition, the University has used approximately \$40,000 per year provided by the FSU Foundation to replace faculty computers in recent years. The instructional computer labs in the new Gira CCIT building were funded by operating funds dedicated to opening the new facility. Replacement or upgrades in the Gira CCIT, as in other instructional areas, will likely be handled with funds from the Technology Fee. The Ort Library upgraded its ability to support a variety of databases used by faculty and students. However, the Library faces the need to upgrade its electrical system to handle securely the demands of technology. The goal of the University is to replace each computer every four years, but budget

constraints have made this impossible for the last two fiscal years. The current computer inventory on campus is 3,515 units as of July 1, 2015. The Help Desk assists faculty, staff, students and campus visitors with hardware and software issues. Providing for more timely software and hardware upgrades is challenging for all institutions given rapid advances in technology.

Meeting the varied and changing space needs for instruction and instructional support requires planning and careful consideration. In general, space assignments, including both instructional and office space, are the responsibility of the academic Deans or the division Vice President. In the College of Business, the process is documented in the [COB Process Manual](#) (p. 38). The other colleges use a more informal process in most cases, with the exception of the new Gira CCIT building. In this case, a highly structured process was used to allow the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to allocate space in the new building and vacated spaces in other buildings. This involved completing a “Space Allocation Planning Form” with current spaces identified. In those cases where space is reallocated among divisions of the University, which is uncommon, decisions are made at the Executive Committee level. As some departments of the University have indicated a need for additional space, a more coordinated approach to room assignment may be needed.

Auxiliary Operations

Maryland institutions face regulations that require separate funding approaches for auxiliary operations. However, many of these activities are important to students and staff, and directly influence student and staff recruitment and retention. Several aspects of auxiliary operations are mentioned in the strategic plan and/or the campus facilities master plan as needed projects. Renovation and expansion of the Lane University Center was completed as noted above. Six residence halls were renovated and several athletic fields were improved. A new Press Box for Bobcat Stadium (including restroom and concession spaces) was constructed using student auxiliary facility fees. This project was necessitated by the need to complete utility infrastructure improvements within the stadium. The Chartwells firm, which manages campus food services, has committed to over \$7 million in renovations and improvements to the Lane University Center and the Chesapeake Dining Hall.

Independent Financial Audits

Frostburg State University strives to meet all audit and financial reporting requirements. At present, the University seeks to meet at least 15 different financial reporting or audit standards. See Table 9 for a list of standards the University follows. In addition, the University maintains a number of institutional controls on financial transactions.

Table 1: General Accounting Principles, Laws, Regulations, and Procedures used by Frostburg State University, FY 2015

Principle or Regulation	Agency	Focus of Concern
Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)	Entity	All financial reports
Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB)	Entity	All financial reports
Internal Revenue Service regulations	Federal	To accept federal funds
Office of Management and Budget Circulars	Federal	Various specialized areas
Code of Maryland Annotated Regulations (COMAR)	State	Use of state funds

Procurement Card Manual	State	Use of state Pro-cards
Department of Budget and Management Policies and Procedures	State	State budget submissions and construction projects
Comptroller of Maryland—General Accounting Division Policies and Procedures	State	All Financial reports
Treasury and Banking Services Policies and Procedures	State	Payments to and by the University
USM Board of Regents Policies	State	Employment, Tuition and fees
Policy Manual	FSU	Operational procedures
Administrative Services Procedures Manual	FSU	Operational procedures
Granting Agencies	Federal, state and Private	Allowable expenditures and reporting requirements

At least three groups of external auditors regularly review FSU's fiscal records. In addition, the University periodically experiences additional specialized external audits. Annually, the University conducts an internal audit of its financial data, which includes audits associated with the preparation of annual fiscal reports, monitoring of construction projects, fraud investigations, assurance of compliance with guidelines, and some additional areas. In addition, the University annually arranges for independent audits of key areas of operation. At present, an independent auditor examines financial statements, enrollment reporting, and the operations of the University's public radio station, WFWM. In addition, independent auditors prepare the reports used by the University in response to Circular A-133, which affects cost recovery on grants to the University and financial aid to students.

Every three years, FSU is audited by the State of Maryland Legislative Auditors. The audits are conducted on campus and involve review of University records, on-site inspections, and interviews with randomly selected staff members across the campus. The legislative audit is designed to ensure that the University is in compliance with a broad range of operational requirements placed on state agencies. However, the primary areas of concern are financial/operational/compliance audits and information technology audits. The last legislative audit was for the period from June 1, 2009 to June 3, 2012. The final report was completed and submitted to FSU on August 21, 2013. The auditing team was on campus for approximately 12 weeks.

In the information technology area, the most recent state audit occurred in October 2014. In this case, the audit was a follow-up to a special October 2013 Network Vulnerability Management Assessment. A conference with the USM auditor on November 4, 2014 resulted in recognition that the University had mitigated the five findings of the audit successfully. The findings were mitigated quickly because they involved providing better documentation of University procedures or improving monitoring strategies. In fall 2014, the University was undergoing a further audit related to information security issues tied to the PeopleSoft software used for student and employee records and financial records. The results of this review are not yet available.

The University makes three types of financial reports (budgets, financial statements, and audit

reports) available for public inspection by placing them online or providing links to online reports of other state agencies. The [budget of the University](#) is publicly available on its own website and [previous year budgets](#) are also available online for easy comparison. Closely linked to this is the [tuition and fee schedule](#) for the current academic year. The [state budget](#), which includes both operating and capital budgets, is available, and the University System of Maryland places the most [current institutional financial statements](#) online annually. In addition, the [results of recent state audits](#) are available and the [most recent A-133 audit](#) completed to facilitate indirect cost recovery on grants is also online.

Conclusion

FSU has made significant process in increasing transparency and ensuring the decision-making process is based on solid evidence. However, the impact is most evident at the institutional level. Unfortunately, at the planning unit level, the results are decidedly mixed. Some individual planning units have easily aligned their goals and priorities with the institutional plan while other planning units still see their mission in an operational sense and do not reprioritize their work to be consistent with the University strategic plan. The first time individual planning units were formally identified and asked to explain their work related to the strategic plan was during the 2014-2015 academic year. Eight of the forty individual planning units did not respond to questions about their unit plan. The responses of other units indicated that they had not previously considered themselves as planning units with a need to align their efforts with the institutional plan, but expectations are that the proposed changes to PACIE will improve some of these issues.

Many units of the University, representing all divisions, were able to cite specific examples of resources decisions, generally involving reallocation of resources, to meet strategic needs. In some cases, the changes involved relatively modest amounts of money, but in other cases, significant funding was directed to an issue of strategic importance. Similarly, FSU can demonstrate significant efforts to collect and review appropriate data related to programming and decision making. This is illustrated by efforts at program assessment, the development of capstone courses, and annual assessment in the Academic Affairs areas. In several other parts of the University, data collection and analysis has contributed to informed decision making.

The University has benefited from its plan to enhance institutional effectiveness. This has formalized and institutionalized the strategic planning process, although as discussed more fully in Chapter Two, the process continues to evolve. Additionally, circumstances do not always allow action priorities to be completed in a single academic year.

In terms of the evaluation of the effectiveness of resource allocation and expenditure, the recent years of budget challenges and short-notice cuts have negatively affected the ability of the University to respond in a fully considered manner. Sometimes cuts were taken from funds not yet expended, rather than based on a careful strategic evaluation of the situation. Thus, the criteria for decisions are often not clear. For example, a decision made by a former provost to cut 100 sections over two semesters, a decision not vetted with Deans or faculty, caused concerns since it had the potential to affect the central core of the mission. Additionally, a spring 2015 decision to reduce the number of graduate assistantships while increasing the

graduate stipend generated significant concern because the criteria for the decision was not clear to faculty.

The University must also address issues related to stagnant revenues. While reliance on state funds has declined for several years, the University has been slow to develop strategies to increase revenue other than through enrollment growth. In particular, the University struggles to meet the matching fund requirements of some grants. While the FSU Foundation under the Office of University Advancement has made tremendous strides in advancing its support of the University, significant and difficult work remains. Although the change of institutional leadership at the presidential level will delay the next major fundraising campaign, the additional time will allow the Advancement office the opportunity to build the framework to move through the next pre-campaign planning phase in a much stronger position. Finally, as the State's economic health rebounds and enrollment increases, FSU will be able to invest in strategic priorities – such as allocation of appropriate resources to compensate faculty and staff and to improve facilities – through a more inclusive and timely process.

Recommendation: Develop Strategic Plan priorities that fully address resource implications through a transparent process that invites engagement from the campus community.

CHAPTER FOUR

Student Admissions and Retention

Student Support Services

Standards 8 and 9

In support of its Strategic Plan, Frostburg State University has invested significant resources toward providing an accurate and clear representation of the student experience at FSU, improving student recruitment, and enhancing services that support persistence and completion. The Fundamental Elements of Standard 8 (Student Admissions and Retention) and Standard 9 (Student Support Services) are discussed in this chapter. The following evidence is presented to demonstrate how Frostburg State University is meeting Standard 8: publicized admissions policies; programs and services for underprepared students; information on financial aid and transfer credit; and retention efforts. For Standard 9, the evidence will show that the University offers the following: appropriate services; advising; procedures for handling complaints and student records; and student support services assessment.

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

This section focuses on efforts made to admit, retain, and graduate high-quality students with skills commensurate with Frostburg State University's mission. The University's policies and procedures with respect to admission, time to graduation, financial aid, and transfer credits are easily accessible and clearly communicated to students. The retention rates of African-American, minority, and all first-time students from the fall 2014 cohort have increased significantly over the last five years (see *Retention and Graduation Rates* section below) due in part to new initiatives such as the establishment of the Academic Success Network (ASN) and the Center for Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR).

Student Focus Group

In the spring of 2015, a [student focus group](#) was formed to garner [students' opinions](#) on the integrity of FSU's marketing and admissions materials. Student participants stated that:

- The FSU website was the best way to find information, but some areas were difficult to navigate. Also, some departmental webpages were out of date.
- Most policies (e.g., the AP credit policy) were easy to find in the catalog, but others were difficult to locate, including:
 - The technology fluency requirement policy; and
 - The policy on eligibility for participation in commencement.
- The image portrayed during the recruitment process was accurate.
- The University has exceeded (student) expectations.
- Current and archived [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) catalogs are online as static PDFs, but are not easily searchable.
- Frostburg should better "tout" its "faculty, alumni, and academic rigor."
- The University's "reputation needs to catch up with (its) reality."

The University is partnering with Ruffalo Noel-Levitz on a website redesign targeting prospective students, which will help Frostburg tell its story. It is important to remember that Frostburg's

current students use the website as well. Searchable documents would be helpful, as would encouragement for departments to keep webpages current.

Aligning Admissions with the Institutional Mission

The Office of Admissions' policies are reflective of FSU's mission and its commitment to providing educational opportunities for a diverse population of students within and outside of Maryland. The Enrollment Management Committee (EMC) was formed to set institutional enrollment priorities and assist with the preparation of the institution's enrollment plan, which is developed with attention to the current state of primary recruitment markets. This includes an [environmental scan/situational analysis](#), which is prepared as part of the enrollment plan.

The EMC was originally a body of approximately 27 persons, many of whom were not reporters of information. In fall 2015, the decision was made to reorganize EMC to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and communication. A much smaller committee consisting of key staff persons directly involved with recruiting and retention was formed to gather information and make and implement recommendations for change. The newly-reconstituted EMC will report once a semester to a larger advisory group.

The Changing Landscape of Higher Education

Frostburg continues to monitor its primary recruitment areas, which have experienced significant demographic changes. The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) [Report](#), 8th Edition, projected declining numbers and increased diversity in Maryland (and many other states). Maryland is expected to continue to see a decline in the overall number of high school graduates and their average SAT scores until 2021. Following this trend, the number of White, Non-Hispanic graduates is expected to decrease by 19% by 2020. However, the number of Hispanic high school graduates is projected to more than double over the same time period.

To address these changes and meet recruitment and enrollment targets, FSU identified a five-county region of Central Maryland (Washington, Frederick, Carroll, Howard, and Montgomery) as a primary recruitment territory. Frostburg had seen a decrease in the number of enrolled freshmen from Frederick County (an area which has traditionally been strong), so it increased visibility with a fall reception in Frederick to increase applications and interest. As a result, the University experienced a 62.5% increase in the number of first-time students from Frederick County between fall 2014 and fall 2015. Table 10 presents trends in the geographic area of first-time students from Maryland over the last five years.

Table 10: Trends in Geographic Area of First-time Students from Maryland

Maryland County	Term				
	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
Allegany	87	90	85	95	94
Anne Arundel	52	40	58	67	52
Balt County	82	64	88	97	91
Calvert	18	19	20	31	19
Caroline	5	3	10	3	8
Carroll	20	26	39	34	18
Cecil	26	17	20	17	31
Charles	46	49	31	54	49
Dorchester	0	2	2	6	3
Frederick	47	57	45	32	52

Garrett	21	13	20	14	2
Harford	25	15	23	28	24
Howard	24	34	31	40	29
Kent	4	1	1	5	4
Montgomery	83	88	96	101	112
Prince George's	106	104	132	138	138
Queen Anne's	12	7	11	8	8
St. Mary's	24	16	22	19	22
Somerset	0	3	0	2	0
Talbot	7	5	4	2	5
Washington Co.	28	32	23	33	34
Wicomico	3	7	9	8	9
Worcester	3	10	3	8	6
Baltimore City	46	48	46	43	61
Total	769	750	819	885	871

Data Source: Student Enroll Population File

In addition, Frostburg recognizes the need to increase recruitment efforts outside of Maryland. Effective for the fall 2015 semester, residents of Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Ohio living within 120 miles of Frostburg may be eligible for a newly expanded Regional Tuition Rate. With this reduced tuition rate, students in the Regional Tuition Rate zone can attend Frostburg for a cost competitive with many in-state rates at public institutions around the region and one that is more affordable than at most private institutions. The revised policy was approved by the University System of Maryland Board of Regents in April 2015.

The Admissions Office has worked with Ruffalo Noel-Levitz (RNL) to help recruitment efforts at every level of the admissions funnel, including strategies to recruit honor students, athletes, and transfer students. The number of first-time full-time freshmen increased by 7.1% between fall 2013 and fall 2014, but is down 2.9% between fall 2014 and fall 2015. Similarly, the number of transfers rose by 12.4% between fall 2013 and fall 2014, but declined 2.3% between fall 2014 and fall 2015 (see Table 11). Therefore, it is difficult to say whether changes made by RNL in the Admissions Office have been worth the investment. The contract with RNL has been substantially reduced and will continue through 2015-2016 with only a turnkey email program for prospects and consultation and build-out of a new web design. The University expects to have the technology in place by 2016 to manage these tasks in-house.

Table 11: Trends in Registration Type of First-time Students (Undergraduate)

Registration Type	Term				
	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
Concur. HS Reg.	31	16	22	41	35
Continuing	3302	3218	3161	3232	3323
1st-time Student	828	819	897	961	933
Re-Admit	85	75	73	63	68
Transfer	470	468	507	570	557
UG 2nd Degree	15	35	44	48	45
Total UG	4731	4631	4704	4915	4961

Data Source: Student Enroll Population File

Review of enrollment data shows some unique challenges for Frostburg State University, including a significant decline in the number of female and out-of-state freshmen. The percentage of female freshmen has decreased from 49% in fall 2009 to 44% in fall 2015. New strategies to address such declines include an Early Action admission plan, increased marketing of the University's unique majors, and additional recruitment in the Regional Tuition Rate areas. In addition, the University will increase efforts to add more qualified students into the top end of the funnel to drive more students from prospect to inquiry and from inquiry to applicant.

Admission Information, Policies, and Data

Prospective undergraduate students are provided with [admissions information](#), including [application deadlines](#) and [international admissions](#), from online and print sources as they explore the possibility of applying to FSU. Admissions information is also provided through several publications, including the undergraduate Catalog, [Viewbook](#), and other recruitment brochures. Through the College Portrait webpage discussed previously, prospective FSU students can also find information and data regarding the competitiveness of the admissions process and the profile of admitted students, which includes the number of first-time and transfer students who applied, were accepted, and who enrolled. Additional data includes first-time students' performance on standardized tests, average high school GPA, and class rank. Prospective graduate students are provided with [admissions information](#) on the University website. The Office of Graduate Services connects with prospective students to discuss admissions policies and has several publications available in print and on the website including the graduate catalog and [Viewbook](#).

Admissions staff travel extensively and communicate with students, parents, and guidance counselors during presentations at schools and college fairs. They share information on the application process, high school GPA, SAT test scores at the 25th and 75th percentile, and the emphasis on the rigor of high school course selection. In addition, the transfer admission process is communicated to prospective students during visits to community colleges. This information is shared during Saturday Open House programs through information sessions regarding the admissions process. Weekly visitors are provided with an admissions information session and the offer to meet individually with an admissions counselor.

TransferCredit

The awarding of transfer credit to incoming students (freshmen and transfers) is managed by the Office of Admissions. The Transfer Coordinator and other admissions professionals review official transcripts from two-year and four-year institutions and make decisions about student admission and the awarding of transfer credit. Admitted students receive a transfer credit evaluation with their letter of admission. This evaluation details the number of credits transferred, FSU equivalencies, FSU catalog assignment, and student classification. The Office of Admissions updates these evaluations as additional credits are completed.

Admissions staff members visit all of the Maryland public community colleges during the University System of Maryland transfer fairs and make visits to those institutions, allowing staff to meet face-to-face with students to help guide them through the admissions process. Staff meet with prospective transfer students during regular hours and provide transfer information sessions at Admissions Open House programs. Established transfer credit policies (Institutional, MHEC, and the American Council on Education) are used to determine the transferability of courses and possible FSU course equivalencies. These policies guide the determination of acceptance of transfer credit

to meet FSU's general education program requirements.

Students transferring from Maryland public community colleges can plan course selection through the University System of Maryland's [ARTSYS](#) website (The Articulation System for Maryland Colleges and Universities). This website allows students to check course transferability from any public two-year college to nearly all four-year institutions in the state. In addition, ARTSYS also allows students to search for majors and recommended transfer programs to different four-year institutions. The Transfer Coordinator regularly updates Frostburg State University's section of ARTSYS to insure that prospective transfer students are seeing current, accurate information.

Retention and Graduation Rates

Over the past five years, Frostburg State University has experienced significant increases in second-year retention rates and six-year graduation rates of African American, minority, and all first-time students (see Tables 12 and 13). For the second year in a row, Frostburg's second-year retention rates for African Americans (83%) and minorities (80%) exceeded that of the total student population (77%). While the six-year graduation rates for these student groups has grown over the same time period, the graduation rate for African-Americans (44%) and minorities (43%) continues to be less than that of all first-time students (49%).

Table 12: Second-Year Retention Rates of First-Time, Full-Time Students

Cohort Year	All FTFT	African American	All Minority
2010	71%	71%	70%
2011	72%	77%	74%
2012	77%	80%	78%
2013	76%	79%	79%
2014	77%	83%	80%

Table 13: Six-Year Graduation Rates of First-Time, Full-Time Students

Cohort Year	All FTFT	African American	All Minority
2005	45%	43%	40%
2006	44%	41%	39%
2007	47%	44%	43%
2008	49%	44%	43%
2009	53%	50%	50%

Data Sources: Student Enroll Population File

Degree Information System File

[Retention data](#) also show improvement within particular student populations. Since 2009, FSU has historically shown an average 8% gap in retention rates between male and female students, with females retained at the higher rate; this gap has been reduced to 6% for 2014 . Another positive

trend is the retention rate of African-American males to that of white males. Since 2011, African-American male retention has been an average of 8% higher than white male retention; the retention rate of African-American males in the 2014 cohort is 14% higher than that of white males – 83% compared to 69%.

Student Persistence and Completion Initiatives

Partnership with Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Higher Education Consulting

Beginning in the fall of 2013, Frostburg began a partnership with Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Higher Education Consulting to assist with undergraduate recruitment efforts, student retention, the financial aid awarding process, and market analysis. The firm undertook an extensive review of the institution's efforts to promote student persistence and graduation; made numerous recommendations; and worked with administrators to create an action plan that established retention initiatives, upgraded academic support programs, and developed new processes and tools for AY 2014-2015.

Admissions counselors were trained in territory management strategies and given access to the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Forecast Plus tool to help focus their efforts on the prospective students who are most likely to enroll. The University also worked with RNL to develop recruitment messages, marketing materials, and messages about campus life. Frostburg is currently engaging in a redesign of its website in consultation with RNL. The focus of this redesign will be to enhance marketing to prospective students, including revising the website to be more compatible with different mobile devices, better search engine optimization, and an enhancement of the academic program information available to prospective and current students.

Eight-Semester Plans

In an effort to provide undergraduates with clear and timely pathways to program completion, academic departments prepared [eight-semester plans](#) for all baccalaureate programs. These plans were distributed to the Center of Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR) and shared with ORIE 101 instructors, who serve as the initial advisors for freshmen. Additionally, many plans were also posted on [department websites](#) and distributed to advisors. These plans demonstrated that students can complete any single academic major within 120 credits and eight semesters, unless program accreditation, certification, or licensure requires additional coursework.

The eight-semester plans initiative was piloted in fall 2014. Subsequent evaluation of the pilot identified concerns regarding the frequency of course offerings and their effect on the ability of students to follow the plans. For example, an eight-semester plan may call for a course in the introductory sequence to be taken in the spring of a student's freshman year, but due to fiscal issues, few or no sections of that course may be offered, or the number of seats may be limited. This problem is especially acute if a high-demand course is part of the eight-semester plan for multiple programs across the University.

In light of program modifications made during AY 2014-2015, the eight-semester plans were returned to departments in summer 2015 to allow departments to make adjustments and reflect changes in staffing and frequency of course offerings. These plans have proven both useful and popular with ORIE advisors and students, but maintaining a library of updated plans as course offerings change may prove challenging for the Academic Success Network, which oversees the ORIE 101 program.

Introduction to Higher Education (ORIE 101)

Introduction to Higher Education (ORIE 101), the required orientation course for first-year students, was restructured for fall 2014 to ensure four major themes that support student success were covered: making connections and understanding expectations, managing workload and seeking support, academic planning and advising, and reflective planning for experiential learning. ORIE instructors assumed an intensive advising approach with first-year students throughout the first semester and into the second. As students select a major, the ORIE advisor ensures that the appropriate connection is made with the major department. The fall to spring retention rate for the course was over 91%, an improvement from the 89.7% average of the previous four years.

Freshman Progress Survey

In fall 2014, Frostburg instituted a Freshman Progress Survey to be completed at the third and fifth weeks of the fall semester and the third week of the spring semester by all faculty who teach first-time students. The survey asks instructors to identify any issues they may have encountered that would impact a student's success. ORIE advisors can provide interventions ranging from a simple conversation with a student to establishing a plan for tutoring or other support services. For the semester in which the survey was implemented (fall 2014), just under half of the faculty responded to the surveys, but 100 fewer freshmen received academic warnings than fall 2013 (418 vs. 518) in a first-year class that was 64 students larger (961 vs. 897). A healthy 83.3% of fall 2014 freshmen ended their first semester in good academic standing, compared to 78.3% the prior fall.

Academic Enrichment Series

The Academic Enrichment Series (AES), a cooperative program between Frostburg's divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, features workshops on learning strategies, technology skill building, and career development. The following student participation numbers include individuals who participated in more than one workshop. During the reporting period (fall 2013-spring 2014), there was nearly a 6% increase in the number of attendees, with 628 participants attending 16 different themed sessions in comparison to 593 during the previous reporting period (fall 2012-spring 2013). There was a fall-to-fall increase in attendance (fall 2012: 191 and fall 2013: 325); however, the spring-to-spring attendance decreased (spring 2013: 402 and spring 2014: 303).

Beacon Early Warning System

The Beacon early alert system continues to be an effective tool in Frostburg's efforts to identify academically-at-risk students and provide appropriate and timely interventions. Frostburg saw a 9% growth in the number of faculty and staff using its Beacon early warning system during the past academic year: from 153 in AY 2013-2014 to 167 in AY 2014-2015. The number of notations posted on the system had a substantial 23% increase from 2,853 to 3,514 over the same time period. Increased use by athletic coaches and wide use by instructor/advisors of the Introduction to Higher Education (ORIE 101) course were noted. Not included in the reported number of notations are the Encouragements, a new feature of Beacon, which allows faculty to post positive comments about students' academic performance. 94% of freshmen (900 of 957 students) completed the Student Strengths Inventory (SSI) as part of their ORIE 101 course and were scored on six non-cognitive attributes, which factored in individual risk indices for retention probability and academic success. Students discussed the results of the survey with their ORIE instructor/advisor.

The First-Year Experience Program

Frostburg continues to recognize the critical nature of students' first year on campus and provides opportunities to better integrate these students into campus life, both socially and academically. In

AY 2013-2014, members of the First-Year Experience (FYE) Work Group determined that, in order for the FYE program to be successful, it must focus on the teaching of core skills and the implementation of strategies for students' academic success. The group conducted surveys and campus forums to solicit input from faculty and staff. Four forums in AY

2013-2014 addressed topics such as past survey data from students and instructors, curricular design, workload, resources, and second- semester and summer programming.

The [Championship Forum](#), a program funded by a Maryland College Access Challenge Grant and designed to improve the persistence rate of Pell-awarded, academically at-risk freshman and sophomore male students, concluded in spring 2015 after three years. Program participants met regularly with a coach/mentor; attended workshops on learning strategies, financial literacy, and personal development; and participated in weekly study halls with tutors. In AY 2014-2015, fifty-five students participated in the program, with 95.2% enrolled in fall 2014 semester and 92.7% returning for spring 2015. Both rates were 10% higher than the persistence rate of a comparable cohort of non-participants. In addition, 92.2% of the participants were in good academic standing at the conclusion of the spring 2015 semester.

Course Redesign - Developmental Math (DVMT 100)

While [a number of courses have gone through redesign](#), one important example to student success and persistence is Developmental Math. Developmental Math 100, Intermediate Algebra, was redesigned in 2011 to improve its historical 41% failure rate and gender achievement gap. Overall, the redesign has been successful in reducing failure rates, which averaged 22% over the last seven semesters. Initially, males outperformed females for the first two semesters of full implementation of the redesign. Once the course grade structure was changed from pass/fail to A, B, C, females have slightly or significantly outperformed males (range: 5% - 19% difference). Nevertheless, the average failure rate per gender since the redesign is significantly better than historical measures: Females: 18% instead of 35% historical rate (a 17% reduction); Males: 25% instead of 44% historical rate (a 19% reduction). In 2014, the redesign team made changes to align the DVMT 100 curriculum with one of the next math courses students would need to take: MATH 119, College Algebra. The instructional software was switched to the same one used in Math 119 and standards were raised. Students in DVMT 100 are now engaging in additional math problem solving to help them succeed in their next math course. For the spring 2014 semester, females achieved the highest success rate in DVMT 100 since the redesign: 94%. Their success rate for the fall 2014 semester was 84%. For males, the spring 2014 success rate in DVMT 100 was 75% and for fall 2014 was 73%. Thus, more students are now passing DVMT 100 than they have historically, despite the increased workload.

Poor attendance and inefficient time management skills may be more of an issue for the male students, which likely reflects the same maladaptive student behaviors that are impacting the male achievement gap at Frostburg. Changes were made in the spring 2015 semester to help with these issues. The main instructor of DVMT 100 already employs a variety of techniques to assist all students, including the use of Beacon alerts, early warnings, and pedagogy aimed at adaptive student behaviors. The redesign of DVMT 100 should be able to maintain its results, and the new change in attendance may positively impact the gender-based gap.

Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework

After investigating a number of tools during the past year, FSU will join other universities in the University System of Maryland in using predictive analytics to improve student success. The

University will use the [Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework](#) (PAR) to develop predictive models for student achievement, engagement, and completion. PAR will be used in conjunction with the Student Success Matrix to match and evaluate the impact of intervention programs designed to improve student outcomes, such as success rates, retention rates, and time to completion rates. In fall 2015, the University will begin populating the systems data store; it is expected to be made available to the campus community by fall 2016.

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are monitored at the program/department level and reviewed by the three colleges' respective curriculum committees. In addition, each program on campus has a designated capstone course through which programs document students' satisfaction of program learning outcomes. AACSB, NCATE, and other accrediting agencies provide guidance on how to measure and document those learning outcomes. The University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUCR) assumes the role of establishing templates and reporting structures for new courses in the Interdisciplinary offerings in the General Education program. The Academic Affairs Committee review proposals for these and all other courses. Additional information about learning outcomes and forms for proposals can be found in Chapter 6.

Standard 9: Student Support Services

This section focuses on how Frostburg State University provides student support services necessary to enable students to achieve the institution's goals. The University has made significant efforts to address student needs, handle student grievances and complaints in a reasonable manner, and safeguard the security of all student records. In addition, FSU ensures that NCAA policies and procedures are properly addressed and reported.

Providing Student Support

A variety of services that support the needs of students can be found within the divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. The University provides several programs and services to assist students in academic planning. During the summer freshmen (during orientation program Preview FSU) and transfer students are served by faculty advisors and professional staff who provide academic advising services.

Student support services and programs, co-curricular programs, and academic advising are coordinated and revised to implement evidence-based best practices.

The University's ability to deliver options in residential living environments, academic support, and activities that promote leadership development, experiential learning, volunteerism, and athletic programs is reflected in the importance that students place on the options. The importance of these options is reflected in the results the [2012 NSSE data](#) and in the [Middle States Student Survey](#) administered to students in fall 2014. Of the students who responded to the survey:

- 72.5% strongly agreed or agreed that it is important for the University to provide volunteer opportunities for students.
- 71.7% viewed Leadership and Experiential Learning as either very important or somewhat important.
- 67.34% strongly agreed or agreed that they expanded their knowledge of Diversity and Multicultural Awareness through events or programs.
- 62.37% viewed the Student Government Association as very important or somewhat

important.

- 52.5% viewed Intercollegiate Athletics as very important or important.
- 41.54% viewed Greek Life as either very important or somewhat important.

Academic Success Network

During the summer of 2014, Frostburg State University created the Academic Success Network (ASN), an integrated series of best practices in student advising and student support that is designed to work across divisions and disciplines. The creation of the Network was the result of a two-year study by the First-Year Experience workgroup, in which a review of student data and consultation with partners at Ruffalo Noel-Levitz identified the most effective components of the University's student support network and where better bridges between these elements could increase effectiveness. The programs under the ASN umbrella are Freshman Orientation and Retention; Programs Advancing Student Success; Student Success and Retention; Developmental Mathematics; TRiO Student Support Services; Tutoring and Academic Skills; the Center of Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR); Disability Support Services; and the Registrar's Office.

Since the creation of ASN and CAAR, the coordination and delivery of retention programming has become more focused. The inclusion of academic support services, advising for freshmen and undecided students, and services for students on academic probation under the umbrella of the Academic Success Network has facilitated communication, coordination, and collaboration among the individual offices and programs designed to support students and improve retention and graduation rates.

In the fall of 2015, the ASN leadership partnered with representatives from each College and the Chair of Faculty Senate to develop second- year retention initiatives. These plans have been folded into the [2015-2016 ASN Retention Plan](#).

The TRiO Student Support Services (SSS) Program

The [TRiO Student Support Services \(SSS\) program](#) works to improve the retention and graduation rates of low-income and first-generation students who enter the University with a documented need for academic support. Many of these students are placed in developmental mathematics courses and specified basic writing sections of English 101 in their first semester. For the 2013-2014 academic year, 91% of SSS participants were retained, a rate well above that of the general University population. Annual reports are made to the funding agency, the U.S. Department of Education, and to interested parties on campus; however, plans are being made to produce an annual electronic newsletter that will be distributed to all faculty and staff in an effort to better inform the University community about the goals, services, and target population of the TRiO SSS program.

Students eligible to participate in Student Support Services (SSS) and other TRiO programs are identified via federal requirements. As a federally-funded program, SSS is constantly assessing its activities to comply with the terms of its grant funding. It reports annually to the federal government on its five required services:

- Academic Tutoring
- Advice and assistance in postsecondary course selection
- Education/counseling to improve financial and economic literacy

- Information in applying for Federal Student Aid
- Assistance in completing and applying for Federal Student Aid
- Assistance in applying for admission to Graduate School and obtaining Federal Student Aid.

The Tutoring Center

Frostburg State University's partnership with educational consultants Ruffalo Noel-Levitz was a significant investment toward improving recruiting and retention. RNL suggested a shift in the Tutoring Center's mission from trying to cover every subject area for which students have requested tutoring to a more focused attention on courses with high D-F-W rates. Thus, a new [mission](#) was created for the Tutoring Center and a redesign into separated centers for writing, business, natural sciences, mathematics, and computer science. Given that several of the courses with high D-F-W rates were in the humanities, social sciences, and other liberal arts areas, a plan was developed to offer a different type of assistance to students struggling in those courses. Since the difficulties students encounter in these courses is less related to understanding the material and more to insufficient learning strategies, the director of Academic Skills Development in the Programs Advancing Student Success (PASS) office developed a peer-assisted learning program to address the need to provide assistance to students in liberal arts courses. This program was [piloted in the spring 2015](#) semester and fully implemented in fall 2015.

Center for Academic Advising and Retention

Programming for all students on academic probation and academic warning is coordinated by the Assistant Provost for Retention and Student Success in the Center for Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR). Workshops are available throughout the semester to help students learn how to improve their academic success. In addition, an academic recovery program for freshmen, coordinated by the Assistant Provost for Student Success and Retention, is offered each semester. To date, there has been little assessment of the effectiveness of these programs.

As a retention effort, the Registrar's Office, CAAR, and PASS collaborate to survey students at the close of the spring registration period who have not registered for fall semester classes to determine how to help them register. Working with the Financial Aid, Student Billing, and Student Affairs offices, ASN staff help students resolve holds on registration and work with them individually to select courses and register.

The Diversity Center

[Frostburg's Diversity Center](#) increases students' cultural intelligence levels by encouraging the development of skills needed to work within a diverse campus community. The Center offers activities, workshops, and programs to help students, faculty, and staff develop a better understanding of cultural differences and a respect for individuals with backgrounds different from their own. Workshops are held for all campus constituents as part of FSU's affiliation with the National Coalition Building Institute, Inc. (NCBI). All first-time students are required to attend a two-hour introductory workshop as part of their Introduction to Higher Education (ORIE 101) course. Post-workshop assessment of student satisfaction, as reported in the [Center's year-end report](#), was positive.

Additionally, the Diversity Center serves as an advising and support resource for student organizations that focus on diversity issues, such as the Black Student Alliance (BSA); Spectrum (LGBTQ+); the Hillel (Jewish Student) organization; the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW); Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.; the Latin American Student Organization (LASO); and the recently

established Chinese Cultural Club. However, a 2014 leadership retreat for these student organizations was poorly attended. A strategic plan for the Center is in development, and assistance with tracking and assessment may be needed to provide meaningful data to guide future activities.

Disability Support Services

The Office of Disability Support Services works closely with faculty to provide a positive learning experience for students with any diagnosed and documented disability. Some of the services available to students through DSS include the following:

- Testing Accommodation
- Academic Advising
- Interpreting Services
- Braille
- Note-taking Services
- Readers/Scribes
- Assistive Technology
- Electronic Textbooks

At the beginning of each semester, the student may choose to notify the faculty of his/her disability and the accommodations to be provided. It is the student's and the instructor's responsibility to discuss the accommodations in order to arrive at an equitable arrangements that is mutually satisfactory. The Instructor may choose to arrange accommodations or DSS will provide those accommodations.

Financial Aid Office

The Office of Financial Aid provides information and assistance to help navigate the process of financing a college education. Financial Aid staff members are available at recruitment programs such as Admissions Open House events. They also speak at financial aid programs and guidance counselor workshops. In addition, they meet regularly with prospective students during their campus visits and also counsel current students. The Financial Aid Office assists in the local region with financial aid information nights and FAFSA completion workshops. They conduct on-campus presentations about financial aid and financial literacy as requested by different departments (e.g., the Academic Support Network, the Athletics Department).

The office maintains current information and links on the Financial Aid [webpage](#). Links are provided to direct students to federal, state, and institutional funds. Information about satisfactory academic progress, debt management, and other key information is available. The Office of Financial Aid stays current with all of the changes at the federal and state level. Staff regularly attend conferences and participate in webinars to stay updated on all changes and work with IT staff to make sure that the internal system can reflect current information in the awarding process. Staff serves the important role of making sure that the institution is in compliance with all federal and state regulations. This includes compliance with Title IV regulations and having a net price calculator on the website.

Honors Program

The primary program offered to high achieving students at FSU is the University [Honors Program](#). Over the past three years, the Honors Program has experienced significant growth, with the number of enrollees in honors courses increasing from 52 students in fall 2012 to 233 in fall 2015 (a 348% increase). In fall 2015, 157 new freshmen in honors enrolled at the University, representing 16.8% of the overall freshman class. This growth is partly attributed to the fact that entrance into

the Honors Program has been streamlined. For students eligible for the Honors Program, the Admissions Office integrated students' acceptance to the University, an offer of a merit scholarship, and an invitation to join the Honors Program into one mailing. Regular attendance at recruiting events and visits with students from the four local high schools (Bishop Walsh, Mountain Ridge, Allegany High, and Fort Hill) have also contributed to growth in the enrollment of honors students from Allegany County, which has increased from 11 honors students in 2012 to 43 in fall 2015 (a 291% rise).

The Center for International Education

All international students on F1 (degree seeking) or J1 (exchange visitor) visas are served by the Center for International Education (CIE), which offers a variety of programs to assist these students in cultural and social integration to the campus and to promote cross-cultural communication and understanding. The University is making efforts to recruit and integrate F1 students through 2+2 and 3+1 programs with universities overseas. The CIE works with faculty in the English department to place students in specific sections of MDFL 190, 290, or ENGL 101, depending on the students' proficiency levels.

Athletics

The FSU athletic policies and practices are reviewed regularly and follow NCAA Division III policies. A review also shows there is consistency in applying University academic, student behavior, and financial aid policies to student athletes. [NCAA Financial](#) and [Demographics](#) reports are submitted regularly.

The NCAA requires a self-study review of institutional policy and practices every five years. In addition, an analysis shows that FSU is compliant with Title IX gender equity with the number of female athletic sports and the financial support for individual woman athletes. Frostburg is updating facilities to create more female team locker rooms. Finally, the athletic department conducts an FSU student athlete climate survey each spring semester to assess student athlete experiences at the institution.

The Department of Athletics works closely with student-athletes during the recruitment process. In the area of student retention, the Department of Athletics has worked on a number of fronts to make sure that student-athletes have the tools and information to be successful. This begins with the orientation programs for new students. Students work with their advisors to develop class schedules that do not conflict with daily practice times. As with the recruitment process, the retention and academic monitoring of student-athletes varies by coach and sport. Many coaches have study hall requirements and also require individual meetings to discuss academic progress. They work closely with the Academic Success Network and Beacon early alert system to make sure student needs are being met and academic and personal struggles are being addressed. In addition, a number of male students who meet academic and financial guidelines participated in the Championship Forum, which helps students with academic and personal success. Other measures have been taken to help student satisfaction and retention, including a new state-of-the-art athletic training facility and keeping the Cordts Physical Education Center open later at night to provide additional activities for students.

Advising

All students are assigned either a full-time faculty member or staff member who is serving as adjunct faculty as their academic advisor. All new freshmen are advised by their Introduction to

Higher Education (ORIE) instructor during the first semester. Following their first semester, students transition to being advised by the academic department housing their major. Transfer students without a declared major are advised by the Center for Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR). Both the College of Education and the College of Business have advising centers that supplement faculty advising. The CAAR office remains available to students throughout their time at Frostburg. Data gathered through the [Student Middle States Survey](#), the [2012 NSSE](#), and the [Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction](#) surveys show that advising satisfaction is generally good.

Advising plays a key role in ensuring timely program completion. Many faculty and staff, while believing advising to be important to their jobs and effective in their own departments, do not believe that advising is valued at FSU or that advisors are properly trained (see Table 14). Advising does not count toward a faculty member's workload or evaluation in respect to the calculations for merit pay. Advising concerns are often compounded at the satellite sites due to staffing reductions and distance from support offices at the Frostburg campus.

Table 14: Faculty and Staff Survey Responses Regarding Effectiveness of Advising

Percentage of survey respondents who agree or strongly agree:	Faculty	Staff*
Academic advising is an important part of my job	72.20%	82.00%
Academic advising is effective in my department	74.20%	Question not asked
Academic advising is valued at FSU	56.30%	50.00%
Academic advisors are adequately trained	38.50%	42.00%

* Includes all Academic Affairs and Student Affairs staff, and any other staff member whose duties include instruction or advising

The Academic Advising Council is a body of elected and appointed faculty and staff who are charged with ensuring communication of institutional policies and goals for academic advising; monitoring and recommending revisions to the academic advising delivery system; and reviewing academic advising training programs.

Advisor trainings, provided semi-annually, provide resources to increase knowledge of the advising process. However, more attention must be given to closing the loop on advisor assessment to see whether the training results in more effective advising. As shown in the table above, many faculty and staff feel that advising is not valued by the University and that training is not adequate. While there has been some discussion of including advising in yearly faculty evaluations, which might indicate that advising "counts" toward merit, tenure, and promotion, effective measurements are not available at this time to assess advising ability.

Recommendation: Develop a plan for advisor training and assessment incorporated as part of annual faculty evaluations and staff evaluations, as appropriate.

The results of the fall 2014 Middle States Student Survey show that the majority of student respondents agreed on the importance of and their satisfaction with academic advising at FSU (see Table 15).

Table 15: Percentage of Student Respondents from 2014 Middle States Student Survey

Question: My academic advisor...	Importance ¹	Satisfaction ²
* Is approachable	96.5%	87.0%
* Is concerned about my success	95.9%	85.9%
* Helps me set goals	90.7%	73.0%
* Is knowledgeable about the requirements in my major	96.9%	84.7%
* Provides me with accurate information about academic programs, policies, procedures, and resources	96.4%	80.5%

Transfer advising is currently coordinated through the Admissions office with assistance from CAAR. Currently, no additional services are offered specifically to transfer students. However, when there was an Advising Center in the Division of Student Affairs (which ceased to exist with the creation of CAAR in 2014), this Center offered additional services to transfer students. Specifically this Center collaborated with Residence Life to create a transfer student community in one of the residence halls. The Center then met monthly with these students to assess their needs and develop programs that helped them become more engaged and involved on campus. Feedback was gathered at these sessions and used to plan for further events. The feedback from these sessions also highlighted a need for additional presentations during transfer advising sessions about opportunities at FSU outside the classroom. These presentations are now being made by Student Affairs staff. However, when advising functions were absorbed into CAAR, the special housing opportunity for transfer students was discontinued. The University recognizes that transfer students, who lack the experience of the freshman orientation course, need to feel an immediate connection to the University. Therefore, Frostburg is exploring ways to better connect the transfer population to the opportunities and services available to them on campus.

Undecided transfers and students who are exploring their major options are advised by CAAR. These students receive advising support and are often referred to work with professionals in the Career and Professional Development Center (CPDC). Like the freshmen, once a major is identified, upperclassmen are handed off to ensure that the appropriate connection is made with the major department, creating a seamless transition to a faculty advisor in the academic departments. Transfer students at FSU's instructional sites and additional locations rely on advisors and program coordinators on-site who advocate for students and help them connect back to offices in Frostburg (e.g. Admissions, Financial Aid, Billing, and the Registrar) and to use coordinated services (like tutoring).

Support for Distance Education Program Students

Students enrolled in a wholly online degree program represent another unique transfer population. Some programs offer to their students a [Distance Learning primer](#), which covers topics such as:

- What is Online Learning?
- A Few Things Every Online Student Needs to Know
- Distance Learning Facts
- Getting Started
- Are You Ready for Online Learning?
- Computer Requirements
- Communicating Online
- Learning Effectively

This primer includes tools and an [online readiness survey](#) to help online students assess their technical skills. The survey provides a score, which helps students predict their likelihood of success in an online course. The primer and survey are not mandatory for any fully-online program. The Instructional Design and Delivery (IDD) department within the Office of Information Technology (OIT) is developing a plan to assess participation in and success of this primer, but it has not been deployed. Students in online programs have access to other University services through email, phone, and website.

Assessment of Services

Processes are in place for assessment of student support services at the divisional level. Three programs underwent the program review process in the past few years: TRiO Student Support Services; Disability Support Services; and the Tutoring Center. Each of these services was evaluated by a team of staff members drawn from the Student Affairs and Academic Affairs divisions. Program review reports, coupled with recommendations from the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz consultant, led to planned improvements in these programs. Based on a recommendation from the Program Review team, the Student Support Services staff revised their method of collecting data about the types of services they provide to program participants. The change will allow the program to better track and report the specific services provided.

The Tutoring Program was both the subject of the program review process and a focus of the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz consultant's attention. As a result, the method by which tutoring is now delivered on campus has changed to an all center-based system that serves select 100- and 200-level courses. With this change came a move away from assessing the scope of the program in a broad sense (e.g., number of tutors, number of students served, number of courses tutored) to a more focused attempt to assess measurable learning/growth goals for both students and tutors. A [survey was developed and administered in the spring 2015](#) semester to students receiving tutoring; the purpose of the survey was to begin to measure their growth in developing learning strategies. This survey, as well as feedback gathered from tutors, will help to guide tutor training and program administration in ensuing semesters.

Qualified Professionals

Personnel in the areas of student support services who are directors or associate directors have degrees or experience in the areas in which they provide services. The program directors and associate directors of all student services hold proper credentials and/or appropriate years of experience. Search committees follow strict guidelines assuring the quality of personnel. For

example, areas of expertise, years of experience, and academic achievement are considered when individuals are hired. Students employed by programs and departments often are required to meet certain standards. For instance, tutors must have a minimum 3.0 GPA and have the opportunity to participate in a certified training program (CRLA). Additionally, Resident Assistants participate in extensive training.

Conclusion

Frostburg State University has made significant investments in accurately representing the student experience at the University, in recruiting and retaining students, and in improving student services to support persistence and completion. The University's commitment to offering a quality education with timely graduation rates can be seen in the newly-created Center for Academic Advisement and Retention. The ongoing review of policies, procedures, and services is a demonstration of the University's commitment to offering new services to the students while evaluating and updating existing services.

The University is justifiably proud of the strides it has made in recruiting and retaining minority students. However, work still needs to move forward on recruiting and retaining students of all backgrounds. While there has been some recent progress in the six-year graduation rate, this remains an area of concern. Frostburg's investment in a partnership with Ruffalo Noel-Levitz helped in some areas, and it is hoped that the upcoming participation in the PAR Framework for data analytics will help identify predictors and interventions for students-at-risk. Frostburg has committed to aligning its resources with these important initiatives.

CHAPTER FIVE

Leadership and Governance

Administration

Faculty

Standards 4, 5, and 10

Frostburg State University's shared governance structure demonstrates its commitment to open conversation about major decisions shared by the University community. Thus, multiple governing bodies working together share responsibility for the proper functioning of the institution. Governance and leadership work from the level of the faculty and administration up through the USM Board of Regents, which has the highest level of responsibility for FSU. Standard 4 is demonstrated through FSU's collegial governing system, and appropriate documents, policies, and procedures for the governing process. Compliance with Standard 5 is evidenced through demonstration of appropriate leadership qualification in senior administration, qualified staffing, and a clear organizational structure. Standard 10 is demonstrated through faculty qualifications, procedures and criteria for appointment and advancement, and the University's commitment to academic freedom.

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

The University Level

The collegial governance bodies of Frostburg State University include the Faculty Senate, the President's Staff Advisory Council, and the Student Government Association (SGA). Each of these governing bodies is responsible for its own set of policies and responsibilities to the constituents of the campus community it represents and functions based on strict by-laws that are reviewed and updated periodically via participation of individual members. The purpose of by-laws for each governing body is to ensure adequate representation and participation of their constituents in the decision making process.

The Faculty Senate

The Faculty Senate formulates and recommends policies and adopts resolutions concerning a variety of academic and operations issues. It consists of 27 Faculty Senators, plus Council of University System Faculty (CUSF) representatives (except the alternate), the Chair of the Graduate Council, and the Chair of the Chairs' Council. Its policies are updated yearly through governance committees. The [Faculty Handbook](#) subcommittee of the Faculty Concerns Committee converts the updates into policy language. The Faculty Senate is the primary policy development body on behalf of FSU faculty. The Senate meets eight times per academic year and Faculty Assemblies are held three times per year. All regular meetings of the Faculty Senate are open to any member of the University community. The shared governance structure at Frostburg State is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The President's Staff Advisory Council

The President's Staff Advisory Council advises the President of Frostburg State University and represents the University on the Council of University System Staff (CUSS). Its responsibility is to consider and make recommendations on institutional and state-wide issues affecting staff employees who are not in a collective bargaining unit having an exclusive representative or who are in such a unit but are excluded by law from participating in collective bargaining. In addition, the Council communicates such staff employee concerns to the President and informs such staff employees at FSU of Council and CUSS activities and USM's related actions.

The [Council of University System Staff](#) provides a voice for staff employee concerns in reference to basic decisions that affect the welfare of employees of the University System of Maryland. The Council speaks for all Nonexempt and Exempt Staff employees on Regular and Contingent II Status, who are not represented by a union under collective bargaining. The Council is comprised of staff employees with representatives from each of the 12 USM institutions and the University System of Maryland Office (USMO). Institutional membership is proportionate to the number of staff employees at each institution. Frostburg has two primary members and two alternate members serving. The [Employee Handbook](#) outlines FSU staff policies and expectations.

The Student Government Association

The [Student Government Association](#) expresses student opinions on University affairs and budgets, and allocates the student activity fee. A President, Vice President, and Treasurer are elected by the student body. A Secretary is appointed from the elected senators. Eight off-campus students, eight on-campus students, six at-large students, and one transfer student are elected by the undergraduate student body. The Secretary is appointed from the number of at-large senators, reducing the total number of at-large seats to five and the total number of seats to 25. Included in the 25 seats are one non-traditional student and two freshmen, who are appointed by the SGA President. According to the 2014-2015 president of the SGA, in matters related to students' activities, there exists a high degree of cooperation and interaction between SGA and the staff of the student activity center. Control of a significant portion of the student activity fee means that the SGA plays a major role in prioritizing initiatives covered by those fees.

The State Level

The USM Board of Regents

At the highest level, FSU is governed by the University System of Maryland [Board of Regents](#). The members of the Board of Regents are appointed by the Governor. There are 17 total members, including one student regent. Each regent is appointed to a five-year term of office by the governor of Maryland. Regents may not serve more than two consecutive terms and do not receive compensation for their services. According to the USM website, the purpose of the Board of Regents is to "oversee the system's academic, administrative, and financial operations; formulate policy; and appoint the USM chancellor and the presidents of the system's 12 institutions." The [bylaws](#) of the Board of Regents certify its independence from the chief executives of the universities within the system and the Chancellor, which guarantees its authority to govern and manage the entire University System of Maryland.

The Board of Regents certifies to MSCHE and other bodies that its member universities are meeting Middle States standards. In addition, the Board of Regents conducts five-year evaluations of each University President. The ethics policy for the Board of Regents I-7.0, the purpose of which is to comply with Section 12 of Senate Bill 682, Chapter 515 of the Laws of Maryland, 1999, requires that the Board of Regents adopt a policy to govern the public ethics of Regents, that such policy be consistent with all the applicable provisions of Title 15, Subtitle 5 of the State Government Article, which already governs the Board of Regents, and that the policy includes a prohibition against a member of the Board of Regents, for compensation, assisting or representing any party in any matter before the Maryland General Assembly.

The Board of Regents' [Effectiveness and Efficiency Initiative](#), implemented in 2004 and formalized

into a full committee in 2011, serves the USM's goals of Quality, Accessibility, Affordability, and Accountability. The recent focus of the Effectiveness and Efficiency Committee has included improving the USM operating model, increasing quality, serving more students, and reducing the pressure on tuition. Annual reports are made to the Board of Regents on these and other issues.

Maryland Higher Education Commission

Frostburg State University is also responsible to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). The commission is Maryland's "higher education coordinating board responsible for establishing statewide policies for Maryland public and private colleges and universities and for-profit career schools. The commission also administers state financial aid programs that affect students on a statewide basis." Its Division of Planning and Academic Affairs is responsible for "establishing minimum requirements for issuing certificates, diplomas, and degrees by public and nonpublic institutions of postsecondary education in the State of Maryland in accordance with State regulations [COMAR 13B.02.03](#)." It is also responsible for "approving institutions wishing to operate and offer degrees and/or certificates within the State of Maryland."

Standard 5: Administration

Frostburg State University greatly values diversity among its students, faculty, and staff. Diversity is inclusive of race, gender, culture, national origin, and ethnicities. As of January 2015, the University's workforce consists of 1055 full-and part-time employees (386 faculty and 669 staff members). The percentage of minority faculty members (currently 12.2%) has remained fairly constant over the past five years. Additionally, 47% of all FSU faculty are female. Minority staff members are currently employed at a rate of 7.5%, with females representing 58%. The least diverse population for most of the last 10 years was upper administration. In spring 2015, the University was at 11% minority, but only 18% female in upper administration.

President's Executive Committee

Frostburg State University operates with a qualified Executive Committee, which provides leadership to the institution and works with the President to set priorities and allocate resources for the University.

The executive committee membership consists of the following persons:

- Vice President, Academic Affairs (Provost)
- Vice President, Student Affairs
- Vice President, Administration and Finance Vice President, Human Resources
- Vice President, University Advancement
- Vice President, International and Government Affairs

The interim President has added the Chair of Faculty Senate and the Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Accreditation to the membership of the Executive Committee.

The President's Cabinet is another venue for discussion of priorities and resource allocation that includes other senior administrators and faculty, but it was not convened under the 9-year presidency of Dr. Gibraltar. While the President's Advisory Council on Institutional Effectiveness took the place of the President's Cabinet in many ways, PACIE has not worked as well as it should to provide meaningful outcome reporting and to guide the Executive Committee in strategic planning for the next cycle. For more information on PACIE, the proposed changes to its charter, and the reorganization of its membership, please see Chapter Two.

With the departure of Dr. Gibraltar, a number of individuals have moved into new positions. The Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Economic Development and Government Relations (now International and Government Affairs) have moved or resigned. This might present a particular challenge going into an accreditation review, but FSU is fortunate that the current Interims in the offices of the President and Student Affairs are seasoned Middle States evaluators. Most senior administrators have many years of service, experience with accreditation, and a deep understanding of the institution. Frostburg has a detailed [organizational chart](#). A quick overview of current senior administrators is found below.

Table 16: Senior Administration

Position	Individual	Credentials	Reporting	Years @ FSU	
				Years	Months
President (interim)	Tom Bowling	Ph.D.	Board of Regents	38	11
VPAA (interim)	Ahmad Tootoonchi	Ph.D.	President	26	0
VPSA (interim)	Johnston Hegeman	Ed.D.	President	33	1
VPHR	M. Katherine Snyder	M.B.A.	President	16	2
VPAF	David Rose	B.S.	President	30	1
VPUA	John Short	J.D.	President	0	6
VPIGA (Interim)	John Bowman	Ph.D.	President	36	11
Dean, College of Business (interim)	Sudhir Singh	Ph.D.	VPAA	22	9
Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences	Joseph Hoffman	Ph.D.	VPAA	34	0
Dean, College of Education	Clarence Golden	Ed.D.	VPAA	16	0
Executive Director of the Library	Lea Messman-Mandicott	Ed.D.	VPAA	24	11

Assessment of Administration

Periodic assessment of the leadership and governance structure of FSU takes place on a number of levels. According to USM [policy](#), the Chancellor evaluates the performance of each constituent institution President and center Director (chief executive officer) annually, and discusses with the designated select committee of the Board of Regents the results of that evaluation and consequent recommendations for compensation actions.

The Provost, Vice Presidents, and Deans are evaluated annually through the Performance Management Process (PMP) that focuses on specific objectives for the year. The Provost and Vice Presidents meet with the President to assess their performance over the past year, while the Deans are evaluated by the Provost. Administrators can receive one of five ratings from “outstanding” to “unsatisfactory” on a range of topics including planning, leadership, decision making, and others.

The President, Provost, and Deans also receive yearly evaluations by the faculty through a process developed by the Faculty Senate. The Executive Director of the Library is evaluated by library faculty. A summary of the evaluations is presented publicly at a Faculty Assembly and individually to the President, who also receives a copy of the Provost's faculty evaluation materials. The Provost

receives a copy of his evaluation materials, and those of the three Deans, from the Chair of the Faculty. Copies of the Deans' evaluations and of the Executive Director of the Library are presented to each of them, though it is unclear what affect these evaluations have on improvement or changes in administration.

The University System of Maryland (USM) consults with the chairs of Faculty Senates across the system regarding issues of shared governance. The process of periodic assessment of the effectiveness of administrative structures and services is supported by a number of policies and procedures within the University and within the USM. The University System of Maryland regularly seeks input from the representatives to the Council of University System Faculty (CUSF) of the various institutions related to this topic. Addressing this concern continues to be an on-going discussion at both Frostburg and at the USM level. Policies exist on [shared governance](#) in the USM, but a standard policy across USM on the evaluation of campus administrators does not exist, although Frostburg conducts an evaluation yearly.

Frostburg has a number of offices and working committees designed to support administrative decision making and the dissemination of information. Existing structures are in place at FSU that require reporting on a broad spectrum across multiple levels and layers of the University structure. Largely, this is the domain of standing as well as ad hoc working committees tasked with various reporting functions, as well as the revision of documents reflective of a range of externally required elements such as mission statements and the University vision and its related strategic plan. The use of Compliance Assist has been instrumental in improving both reporting and the linkages between these documents. More information about the use of Compliance Assist may be found in Chapters Two and Three.

The membership of these standing and ad hoc committees tends to be based on a system of representation reflective of the units of organization within the University, including from the three colleges; division-level participation from other component parts of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs; and the Office of Human Resources. Ideally, this membership provides a vehicle for tri-directional communication, with representatives on various committees communicating up to their supervisors, down to their constituencies, and across to those who share a common administrative function.

Examples of these committees include:

- PACIE, which is explained in more detail in Chapter 2
- Provost's Advisory Council, which advises the VPAA and includes the three Deans and their Associate Deans, the Executive Director of the Library, three Associate Provosts, two Assistant Provosts, the Director of Graduate Services, the Director of Special Academic Services, and the Director of Assessment and Institutional Research
- Achievement Gap Task Force, which works to improve retention for identified at-risk groups
- Enrollment Management Committee, which examines recruiting and retention strategies
- Student Learning Assessment Advisory Group, which is explained in Chapter 2
- Faculty Senate.

The Office of Assessment and Institutional Research (AIR) provides critical data and analyses

supportive of these committees and is responsible for the generation of both internal and external reports. The Office supports University-wide planning and assessment efforts; develops and conducts student engagement studies; develops and conducts analytical studies concerning the instructional enterprise; develops and distributes a wide range of data products for internal and external individuals, groups, units, and organizations; supports administrative evaluation efforts; conducts program reviews for internal and external agencies; and supports special studies for the Faculty Senate. Very recently, the Assistant Vice President in charge of the office left the University, but a new Director was promoted from within the Office, thus maintaining continuity of operations.

Several ad hoc committees were convened within the last two years by the Chair of Faculty Senate on the topics of workload, student evaluation of faculty, and faculty bullying. Results and recommendations from these reports will be shared and discussed at Faculty Senate and in forums across the University in the fall and spring of 2015-2016. The University's collegial shared governance system allows productive discourse involving faculty, staff, and administration on issues of concern to the campus.

Standard 10: Faculty

Faculty members in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the College of Business, the College of Education, and the Lewis J. Ort Library effectively support Frostburg State University's mission and programs. These qualified professionals design, develop, and assess programs for the students in their disciplines; they maintain close contact with students and consider teaching their primary responsibility.

There are three categories of faculty at FSU: full-time teaching faculty, part-time teaching faculty and full-time non-teaching faculty. Full-time non-teaching faculty includes faculty administrators and librarians that are employed over a 12-month period. Teaching faculty consist of 33 full-time contractual faculty, 215 tenured/tenure-track faculty whose work is supplemented by the contractual instructors, and 134 part-time faculty (adjuncts and contractuels). Teaching faculty are employed over a 10-month period.

Curriculum Development

Faculty members play a major role in all aspects of FSU curriculum development, including the General Education Program (GEP) and courses for their respective programs. The University Faculty Handbook states that the Faculty Senate is the principal decision-making body of the University on matters relating to academic programs and policies at the graduate and undergraduate level. Through the Faculty Senate's Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) and the Graduate Council (GC), faculty members are charged with the responsibility of reviewing and acting upon curriculum proposals at an institutional level.

All course and curriculum changes begin at the department level. College approval is then followed by reviews by the curriculum committees of the various colleges (COB, COE, CLAS). The next step is University approval through the University Undergraduate Curriculum Requirements sub-committee (UUCR), AAC, and IPR, if reallocation of resources is necessary. Pending approval in all of the previously mentioned committees, the curriculum change is sent to Senate for a vote. Major curriculum changes are sent to the University System of Maryland and the Maryland Higher Education Commission for final approval.

Demonstrated Excellence in Teaching, Service, and Professional Achievement

Ensuring qualified faculty begins with the hiring process. Candidates apply for positions that are supported by USM job specifications and/or job descriptions. Ads for the position are based upon those documents and clearly state essential job duties and responsibilities as well as qualifications necessary to be considered for the position. Interested parties apply through PeopleAdmin, FSU's online applicant tracking software. Initial review of applicants, whether performed by HR or by the specific search committees, matches the qualifications of the applicants with the qualifications for the job. Those best suited for the position are moved on to the interview stage. Human Resources ensures that all searches are conducted according to best practices and encourages development of a diverse applicant pool.

Lists of faculty achievements are compiled each year by the [Division of Communications and Media Relations](#), the [College of Business Accreditation Maintenance Annual Report](#) (pp. 12-16), and the [College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Achievement Booklet](#). In addition, FSU presents annual [Faculty Achievement awards](#) in teaching, service, and professional achievement. In 2012, Dr. Gibraltar established the Distinguished Faculty Achievement Award to recognize and encourage those faculty members whose activities move FSU forward by advancing the University's mission and goals and its strategic planning initiatives. The annual process to ensure excellence in teaching and other activities begins at the department level. The evaluation process is outlined clearly in the [Faculty Handbook](#) (pp. A-23—A-46) and the [Non-Tenure Track Faculty Handbook](#) (pp. 9-10). Also, members of FSU's faculty have been recipients of the USM Board of Regents [Faculty Achievement Award](#), most recently Dr. Robert Kauffman for public service and Dr. Yan Bao for teaching.

The University has made efforts to provide appropriate institutional support for its faculty. Examples include the Instructional Design and Delivery Department, which is available to assist faculty in all aspects of traditional, hybrid and online teaching, course development, and update of current online courses and the Center for Teaching Excellence, which promotes student learning through instructional development of the faculty.

Frostburg also supports its faculty in the area of faculty development. Examples include [Faculty Development Grants](#), administered through the Faculty Development and Sabbatical Subcommittee. The Subcommittee's budget since 2000 has remained at \$25,000, but was increased to \$50,000 for the fiscal year 2014-2015. Outside grants are managed through the [Office of Research and Sponsored Programs](#), which maintains a list of opportunities and set of procedures for compliance. On campus, the Office of Information Technology provides [conference and training](#) opportunities. In addition, faculty development is supported by the President's Experiential Learning Fund (PELEF) awards, Foundation awards, and merit pay. The PELEF awards were convened under Dr. Gibraltar to support enhanced experiential learning opportunities and involve student and faculty interactions outside of the classroom.

The inability to award regular COLA and merit pay, as mandated by the state of Maryland, meant that rewards for achievement added to base salary were not available for a number of years. A banked merit equity model was approved by Faculty Governance and Administration and the averaged amount was included in faculty salaries for the 2015-2016 academic year. However, additional budget shortfalls have again resulted in a freeze in merit for faculty, resulting in a predictable detrimental effect on faculty morale. Low faculty salaries also impact the ability to recruit and retain qualified and diverse faculty.

The faculty at FSU is actively engaged in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Frostburg State's Center for Teaching Excellence is staffed by an advisory group of faculty across all disciplines engaged in the identification and sharing of best practices in undergraduate education. Frostburg also hosts two annual regional educational conferences – the [Regional Conference on Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship](#), and [TASTE: Technologies and Strategies for Teaching Excellence](#).

Frostburg faculty implement best practices in teaching and learning in their courses to improve student outcomes. The University's participation in the USM Carnegie Course Redesign initiative serves as a recent example. Eight introductory courses, including the Freshmen Composition course as well as the Introductory Psychology course, were redesigned using research from the National Center for Academic Transformation to improve learning outcomes, remove bottlenecks, and improve efficiency. A key feature of many of these redesigned courses is the inclusion of undergraduate learning assistants or peer mentors in the instructional process. Revisions are ongoing. [The 2014 Redesign report is included here](#).

University faculty actively engage in disciplinary scholarship that also contributes to student learning and professional development. For example, 80 or more student-faculty collaborative research projects are presented each year at the [CLAS Undergraduate Research Symposium](#). These research projects are also regularly accepted for presentation in regional, national, and international conferences. University faculty serve on the editorial boards of disciplinary journals to help disseminate this research including three FSU-sponsored or cosponsored journals: *The Activist*, the *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, and the *Journal of International Business Disciplines*. Faculty scholarship and service often leads to other experiential learning opportunities, such as the College of Business's Global Experiential Learning initiative.

Standards and Procedures

All standards and procedures are published on paper and online in the [Faculty Handbook](#) (Policy on Academic Appointments, Reappointment, and Tenure/Permanent Status pp. A-1 to A-7; Faculty evaluation pp. A-23 to A-46; Faculty Grievance Procedure pp. A-47 to A-49; Termination of Academic Appointments pp. A-60 to A-61; FSU Promotion Standards and Procedures pp. A-79 to A-81; Tenure/Permanent Status and/or Promotion (pp. A-81 to A-88). Criteria for Non-Tenure-Track faculty are in their [handbook](#), also available online and on paper. [USM policies](#) are available online and through various offices on campus.

Staff who teach may also be evaluated through a Performance Management Plan (PMP). The PMP is a vital component of the management process. It is a communication tool allowing supervisor and employee to review the past year and plan for the next one, to address areas that need improvement, and to celebrate successes. It is a requirement of the University System of Maryland as well as Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the American Federation of State, Local, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). TrakStar, a software program used for constructing and reviewing PMPs, enables each employee to tie individual goals to the FSU Strategic Plan. This further solidifies goals set forth in the strategic plan by establishing how employees at every level contribute to the University's success.

Frostburg's commitment to the principles of academic freedom are referenced on pages A-i to A-ii in the Faculty Handbook, and also in III-1.00 – Board of Regents Policy on [Faculty, Student, and Institutional Rights and Responsibilities for Academic Integrity](#). The University's HR policies and procedures dealing with faculty are driven by state guidelines and revised as needed. Assessment of these policies and procedures takes place based on changes at the state level.

Conclusion

The University is committed to maintaining a strong shared governance system. The collegial governance bodies, including Faculty Senate, the President's Staff Advisory Council, and the Student Government Association (SGA), ensure adequate participation of all constituents in the decision making processes of the University. Recent changes in several administrative personnel have brought challenges to FSU at all levels. In particular, addressing strategic plans and moving forward with priority items is difficult in light of the possibility that the strategic goals may undergo a substantial change under new leadership. The University benefits from retaining several highly experienced individuals in administrative and leadership positions who are committed to the Institution and will lead FSU through the changes in leadership.

CHAPTER SIX

Educational Offerings

General Education

Related Educational Activities

Standards 11, 12, and 13

The [FSU Mission Statement](#) specifies that the University's academic programs are designed to graduate students who can "meet the challenges of a complex and changing global society." In order to reach this goal, the University offers numerous programs and advanced degrees using various modes of delivery from traditional face-to-face instruction to more innovative ways of reaching students beyond our campus grounds. Establishment of compliance with Standard 11 includes evidence demonstrating congruence with mission and assurance of the content, rigor, breadth, and length of educational offerings; formal programs designed to foster coherent student learning experiences and promote synthesis of learning; periodic evaluation of effectiveness of co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences; resources to support educational programs (Library and technology support); and transfer credit policies. Standard 12 compliance is demonstrated through providing a state-approved General Education program consistent with the University Mission; its clearly described requirements; and the skills that build from coursework to General Education Learning Goals to Undergraduate Education Learning Goals. Standard 13 compliance includes evidence for policies and procedures for awarding transfer credit and credit for prior learning; standards of quality for additional locations and other instructional sites; quality instruction in distance education programs; and satisfaction of legal and regulatory requirements.

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

Frostburg State University offers students a [baccalaureate education](#) along with a select set of [applied master's and doctoral programs](#). These programs are taught by faculty in three colleges: the College of Business, the College of Education, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Frostburg State University has actively sought opportunities to collaborate with other USM institutions and community colleges, to increase offerings available to students, and to serve regional and statewide workforce needs. The University provides online instruction at the undergraduate and graduate levels and also offers select programs at off-campus locations throughout the state (see discussion of Standard 13 in this chapter). The University strives to ensure that all programs are of high quality, regardless of delivery format or location. Faculty members and staff collaborate to provide meaningful learning experiences beyond the classroom in the form of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities that complement curricular programs.

Congruence with Mission and Assurance of Content, Rigor, Breadth, and Length

Frostburg State University offers 48 major areas of undergraduate specialization in education, business, science and technology (STEM) disciplines, the creative and performing arts, and selected programs in the humanities and social sciences.

Ten graduate programs provide specialized instruction for students involved in or preparing for professional careers. The MS in Computer Science is growing quickly and attracting a significant number of international students. Graduate degrees in nursing are currently enrolling students and Frostburg began offering an Ed.D. program in 2012 to support the state's workforce development needs in educational leadership. With the absence of terminal degree programs in educational

leadership west of Baltimore, Maryland, this program serves approximately 33% of the state.

Program descriptions in the University's undergraduate and graduate catalogs illustrate the curriculum and suggested course sequences for each program. Course descriptions provide a content overview of each course and detail any pre-/co-requisite requirements. Course syllabi provide further evidence of the sufficiency of course content and must follow the format specified in the [Faculty Handbook](#) (PN 2.025), including providing course objectives. Curricular rigor, breadth, and length are achieved through the established course sequence for each program, which includes foundational coursework leading to advanced requirements through the establishment of pre- and co-requisites. These are established through review of new courses through the governance process, through approval of new programs by MHEC, and through periodic program review. Existing academic program outcomes are aligned to the institutional mission through program review. At the undergraduate level, program outcomes are aligned to the institutional learning goals. There are no graduate learning goals currently at the institutional level; however, the process has been initiated by the Graduate Council and the goals are currently under development.

New programs are developed following the policies and procedures set by the University System of Maryland and MHEC. New programs are most often initiated by academic departments and reviewed at the College-level by the Dean and/or a curriculum committee. The Institutional Priorities and Resources Committee of the Faculty Senate reviews all new programs for consistency with the institutional mission and for resource requirements, while the Graduate Council and the Academic Affairs Committee focus on the strength and currency of the proposed curriculum for graduate and undergraduate programs, respectively. The Faculty Senate, the Provost, and the President must then approve all new program proposals. Programs then must be approved by MHEC and the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents requires a follow-up review after three years on all new programs to ensure accountability that all goals stated in the program proposal are being met.

Formal Programs Designed to Foster Coherent Student Learning Experience and Promote Synthesis of Learning

FSU is committed to providing a liberal arts education for all students, as demonstrated in its Statement on Liberal Education presented in the Undergraduate Catalog. This is achieved in part by ensuring that the academic experience of all undergraduate students includes an interdisciplinary general education program in the liberal arts and sciences, including the development of core skills. All students complete courses in the humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, and arts, as well as colloquia and Identity and Difference courses.

Statement on Liberal Arts Education: We believe that education empowers students and frees them from ignorance by informing them about the world, its histories, methods of inquiry, and values. Liberal education develops students' intellects and enhances their love of learning and awareness of individual and social responsibility by encouraging them to learn and apply knowledge to solve important problems

[General Education Program \(GEP\) Goals](#) (p. 31) focus on providing students with liberal knowledge and skills of inquiry, critical thinking and synthesis, core skills, values and social responsibility, and appreciation of cultural identities. [Undergraduate Institutional Learning Goals](#) (p.2) are identical to GEP Goals, with the exception of the addition of providing specialized knowledge in the discipline that is achieved through completion of the major requirements. The synchronization of goals

promotes cohesion and synthesis across the curriculum. The curriculum under each undergraduate major specialization is designed according to requirements of the Maryland Higher Education Commission and the respective professional organizations and accrediting agencies for each discipline.

Regardless of major, all undergraduate students are required to complete a capstone course/experience to assess what students have learned in their particular program. Departments have the flexibility of creating such an experience appropriate for the structure of their majors. Options include courses, projects, and presentations. All capstone experiences must be approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Requirements Subcommittee. Departments are expected to develop and implement appropriate procedures to assess thoroughly the students' levels of actual learning within the major as demonstrated in the capstone experience. The reviews of undergraduate capstone experiences are handled differently within each of the three colleges, but each process ensures that evidence of data-driven assessment and program improvement is being collected and reviewed. In CLAS, the CLAS Assessment Council reviews all capstone assessments. [In the most current report](#), the departments highlighted in red show departments that need to submit updates this spring/summer. The COB follows its Assurance of Learning model, which is tied to AACSB accreditation. The College of Education follows NCATE accreditation standards for the educational unit and SPA standards for program-specific assessments. With the exception of the Master of Science in Applied Computer Science, all graduate programs culminate in a capstone experience.

Periodic Evaluation of Effectiveness of Curricular, Co-Curricular, and Extra- Curricular Experiences

This section addresses periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences. Assessment of student learning is addressed in Chapter Two of this document.

The University provides many co-curricular and extra-curricular programs and services that enhance curricular offerings and the overall student learning experience. These range from clubs to honors societies to athletics to Greek life. Since one of the University's [Institutional Priorities](#) is to "enhance experiential and applied learning opportunities for students both inside and outside the classroom," these co- and extra-curricular activities are essential to support and enrich the development of well-rounded students who are prepared for a complex global society. Strategic planning and formal evaluation or assessment processes serve as a basis for continual improvement of many of these programs and ensure that students are provided with opportunities that contribute positively to their educational and personal development. Nineteen programs that provide co-curricular and extra-curricular activities were contacted in order to assess if they had (1) implemented a strategic plan, (2) conducted formalized evaluations of students and/or programs, and (3) utilized evaluation or assessment results as a basis for improving programs and services dedicated to student development and student learning. The programs contacted are listed below along with a summary of their strategic planning and assessment activities.

The strategic planning and assessment processes of co-curricular and extra-curricular programs are summarized as follows:

- Only seven of the 19 programs contacted have a formalized strategic plan; three are currently developing plans;

- Almost all programs have established formal processes for evaluating the effectiveness of the initiatives they support on behalf of students;
- Formal evaluation instruments utilized by the programs include both quantitative and qualitative evaluative measures;
- Communication of assessment results or other evaluations to students is inconsistent;
- Processes for utilizing assessment results for the purpose of continuous improvement of programs is uneven.

Table 17: Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities – Strategic Planning and Assessment

Program (including link to program website)	Do you have a written strategic plan for your area?	Do you evaluate and assess the experience the student has? Is there a formal process? If so, when is it done?	Describe whether it is quantitative/ qualitative, or both.	Are assessment results reported/ communicated to students?	Do you have a formalized process for utilizing assessment results?
Alcohol/Wellness Program	Yes	Formal process, instant, monthly, end of semester; ever three years	Quantitative	Yes	Yes
Academic Success Network - Center for Academic Advising and Retention CAAR/FAAR	Unknown	Formal process, end of semester	Both	Yes	No
Academic Success Network - Developmental Math (DVMT)	No	Formal process, end of semester	Both	Yes	Unknown
Academic Success Network - Disability Support Services	Yes	Formal process, end of semester	Qualitative	No	Yes
Academic Success Network - Programs Advancing Student Success (PASS)	Yes	Formal process, end of semester	Both	Yes	No
Academic Success Network - Student Support Services (SSS) TRIO	Yes	Formal process, end of semester	Both	Yes	Yes
Academic Success Network - Tutoring Center and Academic Skills	Yes	Informal process, instant, end of semester	Both	No	No
Athletics/Intramurals	No	Formal process, end of season	Qualitative	No	No
Brady Health Center	Yes	Formal process, every three years	Both	Yes	Yes

Program (including link to program website)	Do you have a written strategic plan for your area?	Do you evaluate and assess the experience the student has? Is there a formal process? If so, when is it done?	Describe whether it is quantitative/ qualitative, or both.	Are assessment results reported/ communicated to students?	Do you have a formalized process for utilizing assessment results?
Career & Professional Development Center	Yes	Formal process annually	Both	No	Yes
Center for International Education	Yes	Formal process, end of semester (experience)	Qualitative	No	No
Counseling & Psychological Services	Yes	Formal process, pre- and post-session; termination, end of semester	Quantitative	Yes	Yes
Diversity Center	No	Formal process; pre- and post-program	Both	No	No
Greek Life	No	Formal process, Inconsistent (last one in 2012)	Both	Yes	Unknown
Judicial Program/Student Conduct	Yes	Formal process, instant, monthly, end of semester, annually	Quantitative	Yes	Yes
Leadership & Experiential Learning	Under development	Formal process, pre- and post-program	Both	Yes	Unclear
Residence Life Office	Under development	Formal process, Bi-ennially	Both	Yes	No
Student & Community Involvement	Unknown	Formal process, instant, annually	Both	Yes	Unclear
Veterans Services	Yes	Formal process annually	Both	No	Yes

Communication of the results of assessments or evaluations to students is inconsistent among co-curricular and extra-curricular programs. Twelve of the programs communicate results to students as a way of “enabling students to understand their own educational progress.” Where assessment results are shared with students, some are broadly communicated through messaging, such as alcohol awareness statistics, while others are directly provided to students. The latter is most common in the programs of the Academic Success Network and in programs such as Counseling

Services where services are tailored to meet the needs of individual students. In cases where results are not directly shared with students, some programs report using assessment data with staff as a means of improving programs.

Formal processes of utilizing evaluation or assessment results for continuous improvement of programs do not appear to be established as a matter of practice for most co-curricular and extra-curricular programs. Approximately 75% of the programs contacted in Table 17 did not have a formal mechanism for utilizing assessment results for improving their programs or the student experience. Most of the programs that did not report having a strategic plan also did not have a method for applying the assessment results to continuous improvement of their programs.

All of the programs described above, with the exception of the Career and Professional Development Center and Veterans Services, have formal processes in place for the purpose of evaluating their effectiveness; however, communication of the results of assessments or evaluations to students is inconsistent. Further, utilization of assessment results for continuous improvement of programs are not established in most cases. Systematic and sustainable processes to plan, assess programmatic effectiveness, and utilize the assessment results for continuous improvement should be developed for all co-curricular and extra-curricular programs offered at FSU. Therefore, the following recommendation is tied with the recommendation at the end of Chapter Two.

Recommendation: Ensure processes for consistently assessing and promoting the effectiveness of co-curricular and extra-curricular programs to the University community. Ensure the use of Campus Labs' Compliance Assist to highlight and publicize these assessment successes across the University.

Resources to Support Educational Programs Library Staff and Services

Library staff includes 10 professional librarians holding an ALA accredited library degree and 14 non-exempt support staff employed in the library. Current staff members meet basic library services such as reference, circulation, interlibrary loan, acquisitions, and cataloging. Librarians each serve as liaisons to academic departments and collaborate with faculty to develop the library's collection; each fiscal year, academic departments are assigned a specific allocation for purchasing books and audiovisual materials. Librarians also maintain online subject guides supporting academic programs that are available to students and faculty via the Library's [website](#). Reference services are provided to support student and faculty research. These services are offered at the Library Reference Desk, via an email service and participation in a 24 hour/7 day online chat service called Maryland Ask-Us-Now; a consultation service for one-on-one in depth research assistance is also offered.

The Ort Library provides 86 computers, two scanners, and photocopiers in public areas of the building; single computers are also placed in five group study rooms. The Library also provides areas for students to use audiovisual materials, including listening booths and a Presentation Room. Wireless technology is also available throughout all floors of the Library.

Library Instruction & Assessment of Information Literacy

The library supports the information literacy initiatives by offering a hands-on instruction program in the Library Instruction Center (LIC), which houses 33 computer workstations. Library Instruction is also available for online courses via Blackboard Collaborate.

The library has clearly [established learning goals](#) for both information literacy and higher level information fluency competency levels. First-year students enrolled in all English 101 and English 111 sections receive mandatory information literacy sessions taught by library faculty. Outcomes from their information literacy instruction sessions are formally assessed via a survey instrument. Overall scores have consistently exceeded the benchmark of students answering 70% of the survey questions correctly; however, librarians collaborate with English faculty to address specific concepts where student responses demonstrate potential weaknesses. Additionally, most first year students receive an introductory tour of the library and its services during Freshman Orientation (ORIE) classes.

Library instruction can be tailored to meet the goals and learning outcomes established at any undergraduate or graduate level. Evaluation and revision of information fluency instruction for upper level undergraduate and graduate courses is included in the Library's current strategic plan. In addition to Library instruction sessions, [subject and research guides](#) that complement library instruction sessions are available.

Library Resources Supporting Academic Programs

The library currently holds approximately 292,000 monographic and serial bound volumes in its collection, 22,000 audiovisual items, and subscribes to approximately 400 journals, magazines, and newspapers in print and electronic formats. The library also subscribes to approximately 60 databases that cover a variety of academic disciplines and include over 43,000 full text journals. The library began providing students, faculty, and staff access to electronic books beginning in 2012; the collection totals approximately 90,000 titles in 2015.

Frostburg State University is one of 16 institutions participating in the University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions (USMAI) Consortium of libraries, a collaborative resource sharing group currently managing three unique information and document delivery systems, catalogUSMAI, OneSearch and Research Port. The OneSearch and Research Port systems providing access to the library's research databases are accessible through the Internet to all currently registered FSU students, faculty, and staff on a 24 hour/7 day basis. Interlibrary loan services extend access to the holdings of thousands of libraries in the United States.

Assessment of Library Resources & Services

The library has developed a [strategic plan](#), which has been entered into Compliance Assist. Currently, assessment of library services and facilities is conducted throughout the year primarily based on the collection of usage statistics, although the library staff is examining other forms of metrics that may be implemented to evaluate the impact that the staff, the collections, information literacy instruction, and the technology has on student learning and faculty satisfaction. The library does not yet have a formal process in place for reporting its assessment data. Development of a systematic process in this regard will enable the library to more effectively use assessment information for the purpose of continuous improvement of its services.

The Library's operating budget, from which funds are allocated for purchasing items to enhance the subject collections, has not increased during the past two decades, although this is slightly ameliorated by access to USMAI. As a result, the Library has experienced a gradual reduction in its ability to add new materials in support of academic programs on campus, particularly online materials. As the trend in higher education continues to encourage new programs in professional

and STEM related fields to meet national workforce needs, it is important that the library improve the quality and quantity of its holdings in these disciplines.

TechnologySupport

In the fall of 2013, Frostburg State University hired a Chief Information Officer (CIO), centralizing technology support and initiatives for the first time. The Office of Information Technology (IT) was formed with the following departments within IT: Technology Services; Networking and Telecommunications; Enterprise Systems; Systems Engineering; and Instructional Design and Delivery.

Since the reorganization and hiring of the CIO, several important changes have taken place to enhance support for academic programs. Staff has been realigned within IT in response to areas of need and a new Security Officer position was created. A new team has been established to provide support and enable the University to better leverage its cloud-based systems. Help Desk coverage has been expanded, with a third party company providing 24 hour/7 day support for password problems and issues with Blackboard, FSU's Learning Management System (LMS). The Office of Information Technology is in the process of developing a strategic plan; however, an established process already is in place to ensure regular upgrades of hardware and software in support of academics. Larger, campus-wide software purchases (e.g., Blackboard) are assessed as license end dates approach. A committee, including students and faculty, is formed to evaluate the software and investigate other options available to the University. Following this assessment, a request for proposals is initiated and options are evaluated based on a set of established criteria.

Upgrades to wireless and network equipment are based on the end life of the product (typically every seven to eight years). Laboratory computers are updated every four years. The process for identifying and assessing the technology needs of the University is through a standing administrative advisory group. The Technology Advisory Group (TAG) consists of the CIO and other members of the Office of Information Technology, Assistant Provost, Vice President for Administration and Finance, Registrar, Library Director, Director of Annual Giving, and six faculty members (including one from the Computer Science and Information Technologies Department). Student technology fees are placed in a fund used to upgrade laboratories and classrooms. Requests to expend these funds are submitted annually by academic departments and Student Affairs, and prioritized by the Deans, the Provost, and the Vice Presidents for Student Affairs and Administration and Finance, and reviewed by TAG. The current model of a centralized Technology Fund managed by a committee has enabled the University to significantly enhance its classroom and laboratory resources, but this has limited the amount of funding available to improve overall network coverage for the campus. However, in 2015 the University committed funds through an increase in room rates to put WiFi in all the campus dorms. This decision was seen as important to recruiting and retention.

The greatest challenge currently being faced in the Office of Information Technology at FSU is the growing need for additional personnel and funding resources necessary to provide support for educational offerings. The campus has an aging network infrastructure and limited wireless coverage outside buildings. Bandwidth likely will need to be increased in the near future. The University is working to secure data on its networks, but it proves challenging to comply with best practices with limited staff to support these efforts.

Educational Offerings and the Mission

Frostburg State University is a student-centered teaching and learning institution.” Partnerships with accrediting bodies such as the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) have encouraged FSU to continually develop, refine, and improve upon programmatic offerings.

Frostburg’s mission statement states that students receive “a distinctive and distinguished baccalaureate education along with a select set of applied master’s and doctoral programs.” For a full list of the 48 majors, please see the [Undergraduate Catalog](#), p.3. In addition, FSU “serves regional and statewide economic and workforce development.” Examples include Education, Engineering, Information Technology, Secure Computing and Information Assurance, and Nursing.

The University has responded to a changing market by developing [fourteen programs](#) at the graduate level, including the online Master’s programs in Parks and Recreation, Nursing, Business Administration, Special Education, and Applied Computer Science; and face-to-face Master’s programs in Education, Applied Computer Science, Counseling Psychology, and Wildlife Fisheries and Applied Ecology and Conservation Biology; and the Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership.

The demand for FSU’s areas of expertise has led to partnerships with community colleges across the state to offer 2+2 programs, such as [Engineering at Arundel Mills](#), Recreation and Parks Management with a concentration in [Therapeutic Recreation at the Community College of Baltimore County at Catonsville](#), and [Adventure Sports Management at Garrett College](#). A Materials Engineering program at Cecil College was implemented in Fall 2015, along with an Associate’s to Bachelor’s option that will allow students who are accepted to [CCBC’s Associate’s to Bachelor’s Nursing degree](#) to take RN-BSN courses simultaneously to complete both degrees in nine terms, including summer and intersession terms.

To offer students a true global experience, the University has moved to establish international partnerships to increase enrollment and offer native students opportunities to work with international students and to study abroad. Frostburg has increased the number of international students in fall 2015 to 116 total students on campus, including 32 undergraduates, 50 graduate students, and 30 exchange students, the largest cohort ever enrolled. New cooperative degree programs are in process that should bring additional students from overseas to matriculate at Frostburg. These include China University of Mining and Technology with a B.S. in Accounting, Hunan University of Commerce (China) with a B.S. in Economics, and Hanoi University of Industry with a B.S. in Computer Science. Frostburg began a new Hospitality Management concentration under the Business Administration major in fall 2015. This program is the result of collaboration between Frostburg, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and Vanung University in Taiwan, and marks Frostburg’s first collaboration with a historically black institution.

Review of Academic Programs

All academic programs, both proposed and existing, are evaluated by the University. In many cases, programs not only will be assessed internally in terms of student learning, but also will be reviewed externally by accrediting agencies (see Table 18 below). For instance, the graduate program in Nursing will have a visit in spring 2016 by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. Most programs in the College of Business are reviewed by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools

of Business. Link to College of Business Reports sent by Singh (in folder). COE in my email. Similarly, the findings from National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education for the College of Education are also available. Faculty, staff, and administrators use the recommendations in these reports to revise programs and improve assessments in order to provide a rigorous and competitive education.

Table 18: Accredited Programs

Major Programs	College	Accrediting Agency
Accounting	CoB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)
Athletic Training Program	CoE	Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE)
Business Administration	CoB	AACSB
Early Childhood/Elementary Education	CoE	National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
Economics	CoB	AACSB
Electrical Engineering	CLAS	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)
Elementary Education	CoE	NCATE
Elementary/Middle School Dual Certification	CoE	NCATE
Materials Engineering	CLAS	ABET
Nursing	CLAS	Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)
P-12 Programs	CoE	NCATE
Recreation and Sports Management	CoE	Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Related Professions (COAPRT)
Secondary Programs	CoE	NCATE
Secondary/Adult Generic Special Education	CoE	NCATE
Social Work	CLAS	Council on Social Work Education
Graduate Programs	College	Accrediting Agency
Business Administration	CoB	AACSB
Counseling Psychology	CLAS	Masters in Psychology Accreditation Council
MAT, M.Ed., Ed.D.	CoE	NCATE/CAEP

These and other programs are also assessed on a regular basis through the Periodic Program Review process (see Chapter Two).

Coherent Student Learning Experiences and Synthesis of Learning

Frostburg State University “foster[s] a coherent student learning experience” through its liberal arts education. The General Education Program offers preparation for all majors and is interdisciplinary in its scope. The courses are purposeful in terms of meeting student learning outcomes delineated in the institution’s Undergraduate Education Initiative and the Undergraduate Institutional Learning Goals, including oral and written communication. The evidence for the success of student learning is measured by the capstones required by each program.

First-year undergraduate students reported in the 2012 Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) that they believed that had a strong record in offering instruction to students in the following areas:

- Analyzing basic elements of an idea or theory: 79%
- Synthesizing and organizing ideas: 67%
- Making judgments about value of information: 72%
- Applying theories or concepts: 71%
- 20% of FY students write more than four papers between 5 and 19 pages and 23% write at least one paper of at least 20 pages.
- 34% of FY students frequently make presentations in class.

These data are consistent with those from similar institutions and show that first-year students believe they are receiving a foundation for higher-level learning that engages the Undergraduate Institutional Learning Goals. (For more information on the institutional learning goals and their connection to the general education learning goals, see Standard 12.)

Frostburg State University’s small class sizes (89 % of classes have fewer than 30 students) and its reputation as a College of Distinction for its excellence in student engagement, high-quality teaching, vibrant community and successful graduates, demonstrates that the University has a commitment to nurturing the connection of faculty to students. Faculty conference with students, oversee and conduct research with students, and mentor students.

As shown in the 2012 NSSE survey, Student/Faculty interaction, which measures satisfaction with quality time spent discussing grades or assignments, career plans, and ideas outside of class; working with faculty on activities or research project other than coursework; and receiving prompt feedback. This is equal to comparable institutions for both freshmen and seniors.

Table 19: Student Satisfaction with Faculty Interaction

Mean

Comparisons

Frostburg State University compared with:

Class	FSU	Mid East Public			Carnegie Class			NSSE 2012		
	Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c
First-Year	36.9	34.2		.14	36.1		.04	35.9		.05
Senior	49.8	42.4	*	.33	43.7	*	.28	42.9	*	.32

^a Weighted by gender and enrollment status (and by institution size for comparison groups)

^b * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 (2-tailed)

^c Mean difference divided by the pooled standard deviation

In the 2012 NSSE, by spring of their senior year, 68% of students participated in some form of practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignment. The NSSE is conducted every three years, so these data will be reassessed soon to measure student engagement across a variety of areas.

Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Due to the absence of a single outside accrediting body overseeing the programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), an explicit statement of program goals and student learning outcomes does not exist for the college as a whole. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, however, uses Campus Labs' Compliance Assist in order for departments to input annual reviews of courses and programs and to demonstrate linkages to the Undergraduate Institutional Learning Goals. Learning outcomes for program capstone experiences and other evaluated courses demonstrate connections to the Undergraduate Learning Goals and the Middle States Institutional Learning Objectives through virtual mapping in Compliance Assist. Examples of departments that use Compliance Assist to demonstrate this scaffolding are [Chemistry](#) and [Philosophy](#). In the last two years, many other programs also have established these linkages in Compliance Assist, thus building a web to capture the relationship of a program's student learning outcomes with the University's Undergraduate Learning Goals. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has made great strides in this area since the last accreditation visit. Please also see full learning outcomes reports for [Chemistry](#) and [Philosophy](#).

The College of Business

FSU's College of Business (CoB) has an Assurance of Learning program, which reports to the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. The CoB's learning goals are vetted regularly by the faculty, shared consistently with the CoB advisory board, and are assessed using both rubrics and a pre- and post- research design that captures learning outcomes. The CoB has [six specific learning goals](#) for its undergraduate programs. All learning goals and objectives are linked to the Undergraduate Institutional Learning Goals. All learning objectives and goals are assessed at least twice during a five-year period, according to the accrediting body. However, in the CoB, assessment occurs more frequently using the [CoB rubrics](#). The AACSB process of annual self-evaluation and periodic external reviews of accomplishments are designed to ensure an environment of continuous improvement.

The College of Education

In the College of Education (CoE), all initial certification and advanced programs are guided by the CoE unit conceptual framework, which includes six outcomes and their respective indicators. These student learning outcomes reflect the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to develop learning communities. The Unit's graduates are expected to be dedicated professionals, instructional leaders, continuous assessors, educational advocates, collaborative bridge-builders, and reflective decision-makers. Each program in the CoE also addresses the student learning outcomes reflected in the standards for the program's Specialized Professional Association (SPA).

Most Frostburg State University course syllabi contain a section entitled Course Objectives, which serves to highlight the student learning outcomes. Syllabi conform to PN 2.025 on pp. B-20-21 in the [Faculty Handbook](#). Some examples of FSU syllabi include the [College of Business template shell](#);

BIOL 328: Economic Botany; DVMT 095: Pre-Algebra Mathematics; ENGL: Sample Syllabi; GEOG 114: Honors Human Geography; and PSYC 150: General Psychology.

Evaluation of Curricular, Co-curricular, and Extra-curricular Experiences

Co-curricular experiences offered by programs such as [The Office of Leadership and Experiential Learning](#) use the [Leadership Competency Model](#) to assist in the design of the [Leadership Retreat](#), the [Sloop Leadership Institute](#), and the [President's Leadership Circle \(PLC\)](#). The office uses some of the questions in both the design and the pre- and post-assessments. Also, the Office of Civic Engagement has been using the questions for the [Alternative Spring Break](#) assessment. The questions in this model are available in a format that permits assessment of students from their freshman year into their senior year. In addition to tracking students by class, the University tracks them individually over the four years, and soon will have individual follow-up with students interested in developing leadership skills on campus. Along with other opportunities, the student newspaper, *The Bottom Line*, provides students with news and gives its reporters and editors experiential learning opportunities that may be co-curricular (Field Experiences and internships graded for credit) or extra-curricular.

Students are offered a range of extra-curricular opportunities at the University. The fraternity and sorority system is active and strong, and the [Office of Greek Life](#) has a dedicated staff member to guide fraternities and sororities through the governance and pledging processes. The Student Government Association (SGA) distributes student fees and works closely with administration. The Black Student Alliance (BSA), the African Student Association (ASA), the Wildlife Society, and various other clubs, honor societies, wellness activities, and intramural sports groups give students opportunities to participate in campus life outside of the regular classroom. The University uses [Bobcat Connect](#), part of the Campus Labs package, to track student involvement, manage student elections for clubs, and recommend activities to students based on their interests and goals. Many of the extra-curricular programs are housed in the area of Student Affairs. For examples of year-end reports, see the [Office of Student Wellness](#) and the [Office of Leadership and Experiential Learning](#). Athletics is discussed more fully in Chapter Four.

During the 2012-2013 academic year, the discussion of the first-year students' Introduction to Higher Education course (still commonly called ORIE) curriculum and practices was included in a broader discussion of the newly-formed First-Year Experience (FYE) Work Group with the goal of aiding student success and retention. From those discussions, a significant change to ORIE for the fall 2014 semester was that all ORIE sections – even those not part of a learning community – would have a seminar component. The ORIE course was restructured in Spring/Summer 2014 to incorporate many ideas that grew out of work with the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz consultant. For instance, the course ensures that four major themes, which support student success, are covered: making connections and understanding expectations, managing workload and seeking support, academic planning and advising, and reflective planning for experiential learning. In addition, ORIE instructors now assume an intensive advising approach with first-year students in the first semester and into the second semester through the drop-add period. As students select a major, the ORIE advisor ensures that the appropriate connection is made with the major department, creating a handoff with an advisor to help ensure that all students experience a smooth transition to a new advisor. More information about the progress of assessment in all co- and extra-curricular experiences is found in Table 17 above.

Literacy and Technological Competency Skills Across the Curriculum

As noted above, the Library staff has designed an Introduction to Research workshop for all first-year writing classes and Information literacy is assessed for all students in these classes. Many programs have specific technology skills required in their curricula so all Frostburg State University students must meet a technology fluency requirement in order to graduate. They do this by taking one class from an approved list of courses or by passing a test of Basic Information Technology Skills (BITS test). Because the BITS test has a historically high failure rate, few students actually take it. The approved courses count toward the students' 120-credit hour requirement, although this has the effect of a hidden GEP requirement. Other USM schools assess tech fluency within individual majors, and Frostburg State University likely will consider this option in its upcoming GEP review.

Accelerated Degree Programs in Education

FSU's education programs are under the umbrella of NCATE accreditation standards. The University has two cohort model programs that require summer attendance to complete within an accelerated time frame: the [Master of Arts in Teaching program](#) (1 year) and the [Ed.D. in Educational Leadership](#) (3 years). At FSU, students may choose a MAT in either Elementary or Secondary Education. The MAT Secondary program is offered at both the Frostburg and USMH campuses.

The Master of Arts in Teaching assures the same level of educational expectations, rigor, and student learning as the traditional undergraduate programs. In 2014, the MAT-Elementary program received national recognition from the Association of Childhood Education International (ACEI) for meeting that organization's standards for preparing elementary teachers. The MAT-Secondary program was recognized with conditions by a group of associations headed by NCATE in 2014. The program submitted an updated report in February 2015. Both programs adhere to the College of Education's Conceptual Framework (cf. [Program Handbook](#), pp. 50-51), which identifies the critical knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for effective beginning teachers. The Ed.D. program also was included in the the NCATE accreditation review of advanced programs.

Assessments for the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, Masters of Arts in Teaching-Elementary, and Masters of Arts in Teaching-Secondary ensure that accelerated programs are held to comparable standards of traditional teacher education programs, cf. MAT SPA reports.

Adult Learners

The RN-BSN, MBA, Ed.D., and various other programs across all three colleges primarily serve an adult learner population. Published policies on [transfer credit](#), [credit by exam](#), [veterans' education](#), and prior learning assessment in the Nursing program specifically support the needs of adult learners with regards to program orientation, flexibility of assignments, mandatory online synchronous meeting times, synthesis of information, use of the adult learners' prior experience in assignments, and creativity in regards to practicum sites to meet expected student outcomes. In addition, FSU offers a number of online courses to help adult learners to schedule around a variety of personal and professional needs, including over 120 classes in the summer and over 80 during Intersession.

Assessment of Student Learning and Program Outcomes

In the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the CLAS Assessment Council requires programs to show how assessment data is used to close the loop of assessment and provide proof of student learning, and this also a part of the Program Review process. The colleges of Business and Education are held

accountable to demonstrate how assessments are used to make improvements by their respective accrediting bodies. This fundamental element is addressed in detail in Standard 14 (See Chapter Two).

Graduate curricula providing for the development of research and independent thinking at the advanced level are detailed in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and on the Graduate Services [website](#). Faculty with credentials appropriate to the graduate curricula are listed publicly on the graduate program pages of the [Master of Science in Nursing](#), [Master of Science Counseling Psychology](#), and the [Master of Science in Recreation and Park Management](#). The Office of Graduate Services is working on updating websites and will soon include a separate page for each graduate degree, which lists the faculty members dedicated to each program.

Frostburg State University has made great strides in undergraduate learning outcomes assessment since 2006. Recently, the University realized the need to determine the process for overseeing and reviewing the graduate programs' learning outcomes assessment plans and updates. The Graduate Council has developed the plan, which is moving through governance and should be approved by December 2015.

Standard 12: General Education

The following section presents evidence to show how Frostburg State University's General Education Program (GEP) aligns with Code of Maryland (COMAR) and Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) standards, how it is distinctive, and how it is assessed.

Frostburg has worked within the state-mandated parameters of the [Code of Maryland Regulations](#) to develop its current General Education Program. Through collaborative decision making involving the Faculty Senate, Academic Affairs, and the University Undergraduate Curriculum Requirements committee (UUCR), the GEP has been linked to the University's mission and to Maryland requirements as demonstrated by the GEP learning goals, ([Undergraduate Catalog](#), p. 31). The General Education Program (GEP) consists of a minimum of 40 credit hours and is required of all students, ([Undergraduate Catalog](#), p. 32). General education requirements are clearly and accurately described in the undergraduate catalog. The GEP conforms to MHEC and COMAR state-mandated parameters.

Core Skills of the General Education Program

The Core Skills of the GEP (Composition, Advanced Writing, and Mathematics) provide opportunities for students to gain a level of fluency in the seven skills identified by Middle States. These skills are applicable to coursework in a major of study. ENGL 101 (First-Year Composition) develops introductory-level writing skills, which are further refined in the 300-level, discipline-specific writing courses (see p. 32 of the [Undergraduate Catalog](#)). Mathematics skills are developed through specific courses and/or [course sequences](#) designed for specific disciplines.

The Undergraduate Education Initiative (UEI), which helped to create the University's current General Education Program, lists seven core skills that are applicable to all major coursework. These courses are listed on p. 32 of the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) and are described below.

Table 20: Connection of UEI Skills to General Education Program

UEI Skill	GEP Fulfillment
Written communication	Core Skills, #1 and #2
Scientific reasoning	Modes of Inquiry, Group C
Quantitative reasoning	Core Skills, #3
Technology fluency	p. 29, #9 of the Undergraduate Catalog
Information literacy	Core Skills, #1 and #2
Critical thinking	Modes of Inquiry, Group E
Oral communication	No dedicated course in the GEP

Frostburg's Undergraduate Education Initiative indicated the need for oral and writing intensive courses in the curriculum in its final report. At the time of the [report \(2004\)](#), budgetary constraints prevented the implementation of the committee's recommendations. The University Undergraduate Curriculum Requirements Committee (UUCR) was charged in 2013 with reviewing the original UEI directives and two ad hoc committees made up of UUCR members (including the Chair of the committee and Chair of Faculty Senate) were created. The results of these reviews and recommendations are contained in the combined [final report](#) of these two ad hoc committees. The ad hoc committee on written communication agreed with the original UEI mandate, although they made some minor revisions. The ad hoc committee on oral communication indicated that the mandate on oral communication is more problematic than the original UEI report indicated and is an area of concern. The committee put forth some options for implementation. The UUCR's final report will be presented to the faculty at two open forums in 2015-2016 for discussion and feedback.

Values, Ethics, and Diverse Perspectives

The University's GEP is distinctive in that it includes both interdisciplinary Colloquia and an Identity and Difference course. These courses incorporate the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives through two of the required Modes of Inquiry. One of the FSU Colloquia (IDIS is taken before the student accumulates 45 credit hours and the second is taken later in his or her academic career. These Colloquia are interdisciplinary in content, while the Identity and Difference courses are more discipline-specific. The Colloquia and Identity and Difference courses demonstrate the University's commitment to preparing students to be citizens of a diverse and complex society. However, IDIS 150 and 350 have proven difficult to staff as faculty often have to teach these courses on overload. The University has had to manage the IDIS requirements through creative staffing solutions, which can mean increased costs in some semesters, or substitutions for other Modes of Inquiry courses. Identity and Difference courses, housed within departments, are often used to serve major requirements as well as GEP requirements. Therefore, Identity and Difference sections often are easier to staff, but fill more quickly. The University plans to explore this as it reexamines the GEP.

Assessment of General Education Outcomes

General Education Program (GEP) assessment follows guidelines and goals that are consistent with identified student learning outcomes in General Education subject/skill areas and are usually completed by evaluating samples of student performance using a rubric system. Integral to its design, a program of General Education must have its own set of learning goals, which supports institutional goals and lends itself to ongoing assessment. The recommendations set forth within the report of the Undergraduate Education Initiative (UEI) established a set of outcomes-oriented

learning goals that serve as the foundation for assessment of student learning in General Education and reference both the curricular expectations of MHEC and the institutional learning goals. These outcomes-oriented learning goals are described by the following seven basic skills to be acquired as part of the GEP:

1. **Critical Thinking** - Reflective, self-directed thinking about questions, problems, and decisions both inside and outside of the classroom.
2. **Information Literacy** - A set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.
3. **Oral Communication** - The process of people using verbal and nonverbal messages to generate meanings within and across various contexts, cultures, channels, and media.
4. **Quantitative Reasoning** - The ability to apply basic concepts and understand issues relating to number or quantity.
5. **Scientific Reasoning** - The ability to logically solve problems through the application of the scientific method.
6. **Technology Literacy** - The ability to apply knowledge to practical purposes through electronic or digital products and systems.
7. **Written Communication** - Communication through strong, organized thesis formulation and support; clear, concise, coherent language; and awareness of audience and purpose.

The University's [Basic Skills Overview](#) summarizes established benchmarks and methods of measurement for each skill. Details of assessments as established by the *UEI Guidelines*, along with the respective rubrics for each skill may be found on the [AIR website](#).

From 2010 to 2012, the Assistant Dean of CLAS completed the GEP/Core Skills Assessment to ensure that FSU is providing all students with opportunities for skill enhancement as defined by institutional, MHEC, BOR, and Middle States guidelines. The process also mapped out the interrelationships between institutional, programmatic, and unit-level and course learning goals. The report documented mechanisms for assessing student achievement of learning outcomes; the translation of intentions into documentable realities; and an organized and systematic format for the collection and reporting of information. These annual reports contained excerpts from the sponsoring department's reviewer, references to documents that were part of the course portfolio, and an evaluation by the Assistant Dean. Reports were produced in [2010](#), [2011](#), and [2012](#).

In 2012 the Assistant Dean was appointed Associate Provost, and the responsibilities associated with conducting the GEP assessment were not transferred or reassigned. In the spring of 2015, the Provost reassigned the function of GEP assessment to the AIR office. The Student Learning Assessment Advisory Group (SLAAG), which includes representation from all colleges, the Provost's Office, and AIR, discussed a plan to assign the assessment of each learning goal to an academic department. The GEP has not been reviewed in 10 years and a broad examination of both the GEP content and assessment processes is needed. To that end, the University has joined with other USM schools in conversations sponsored by the Kirwan Center for Academic Transformation, whereby discussions of best practices can take place across the System. Additionally, a General Education Review Committee, made up of faculty and staff, has begun to reexamine the GEP. A proposal for assessing GEP courses using a model based on the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) VALUE rubrics is also under discussion.

Recommendation: Implement a sustainable process for the assessment of student learning outcomes in the University's General Education Program.

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

This section discusses programs or activities that are characterized by particular content, focus, location, mode of delivery, or sponsorship. Evidence is provided on policies and procedures for awarding credit for prior learning. A discussion of FSU's additional locations and other instructional sites is presented, with evidence provided on how those program offerings meet standards for quality comparable to those of other institutional offerings. Evidence is provided on the University's distance education programs and how they meet institution-wide standards for quality of instruction and how FSU satisfies applicable legal and regulatory requirements for these programs.

Evaluation of Prior Learning

FSU awards credit-by-examination for Advanced Placement, the College Level Examination Program, International Baccalaureate Programme, and special departmental examinations. No credit for other prior learning experience is awarded by the University, with the exception of credit for students admitted into the RN to BSN Nursing Program. In the final academic semester, RN to BSN students must provide proof of an unencumbered RN license to be awarded 30 credits prior to graduation. These credits are awarded for successful completion of the Associate of Science in Nursing and the National Council Licensure Examination in their final academic semester, in order to meet the total 120 credits for the BSN degree at FSU.

The Admissions Office evaluates transfer credit from other accredited institutions following the General Education and Transfer Policy of the [Maryland Higher Education Commission](#) (Page 245-248 of FSU Undergraduate catalog). The Associate Provost evaluates standardized test results following the [Policy on Credit-by-Exam and Other Non-Traditional Learning](#) (Page 239-242 of FSU Undergraduate catalog). More detail on this is described in Chapter 4 of this Self-Study. For military education, FSU follows [the American Council on Education \(ACE\) credit recommendations](#). The Admissions Office receives different types of transcripts from the different branches, which detail the individual's learning experience and the recommended course credit to be awarded.

Additional Locations and Other Instructional Sites

As evidenced when it began offering its programs at the Hagerstown Center in 1988, Frostburg State University's mission statement reflects a strong commitment to offering programs to the surrounding region. In January 2005, the Hagerstown Center became the [University System of Maryland at Hagerstown \(USMH\)](#). In addition to FSU (which serves as the managing institution), four other University System of Maryland (USM) institutions also offer degrees at USMH: Towson University, University of Maryland College Park, University of Maryland University College, Coppin University, and Salisbury University.

Frostburg State University currently serves transfer students who have completed an Associate's degree by offering upper-division courses in the satisfaction of completion of several bachelor's degree programs at USMH: Liberal Studies, Business Administration, Sociology, Psychology, and Early Childhood Education. FSU also has graduate education programs at USMH that lead to Masters of Education degrees in Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Leadership (formerly

Administration and Supervision), Special Education, Interdisciplinary, and Reading. Additional offerings include the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in both elementary and secondary education and the Doctor of Education program in Educational Leadership, which was initially offered at USMH in the fall of 2013. New doctoral cohorts enter the program at the Frostburg campus and at USMH in alternating fall semesters. A feasibility study is currently underway to look at a Physician's Assistant program to be offered through FSU at USMH, with the possibility of a second location on the Frostburg campus in the future.

FSU undergraduate courses are also offered at other instructional sites in Maryland. Courses in the electrical engineering concentration in the B.S. in Engineering program may be completed at the Arundel Mills Regional Higher Education Center. FSU began offering programs at several additional locations in fall 2015. A collaborative program with Cecil College is offered in which students earn an Associate of Science degree in Engineering at Cecil and then continue to complete a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering at FSU. In collaboration with Garrett College (GC), students completing an AAS degree in Adventure Sports Management at GC can complete a Frostburg BS degree in Adventure Sports Management or, via a reverse articulation agreement, students earning a Bachelor's degree in Adventure Sports Management at FSU may earn an Associate of Applied Science in Adventure Sports at GC; the program is delivered on the GC campus.

A collaborative program with Community College of Baltimore County has been offered since 2001 in which students earn an A.A.S. degree in Recreation, Parks, and Tourism at CCBC and then continue to complete a Bachelor of Science in Recreation and Parks Management at FSU. Also at CCBC, a collaborative program is offered in which students earn an Associate of Science Degree in Nursing at CCBC followed by a Bachelor of Science in Nursing at FSU. Beginning in fall 2015, CCBC was reclassified from an instructional site to an additional location as more students take advantage of FSU's online roster and graduate with 50% of their bachelor's credits from FSU.

Frostburg also has entered into an agreement with the University of Maryland, University College (UMUC) to provide FSU's professional teacher educational course sequence to UMUC students for Maryland State teacher certification in secondary education at the Ramstein Education Center in Ramstein, Germany. Frostburg is also examining the possibility of offering its own bachelor's program in Secondary Teacher Education at Ramstein. Once the delivery of that degree program is approved, FSU and UMUC will seek state approval to offer a joint degree at the Ramstein site. Frostburg had originally hoped to offer that joint degree by fall 2014, and accordingly Middle States was asked to approve the Ramstein Education Center as an additional location for that FSU program, but the design and approval process through the Maryland Higher Education Commission for the B.S. in Secondary Teacher Education has taken longer than expected. As a result, it is now anticipated the degree at Ramstein will be offered no sooner than fall 2016. For the interim, FSU will continue to offer the professional teacher education course sequence to UMUC students. During this bridge period, FSU has received approval from Middle States to reclassify Ramstein as an additional instructional site for the current professional teacher education course sequence. In preparation for that implementation and once FSU is assured of meeting the expectations for an additional location, FSU will resubmit the substantive change proposal for the reclassification of the instructional site back to an additional location.

FSU also offers a section of selected courses to students enrolled in one of two local high schools. Students at Fort Hill High School have the option of earning college credit by taking an entry-level mathematics course and students at Mountain Ridge High School can enroll in an entry-level

psychology course.

Adequate and Appropriate Support Services

Frostburg students enrolled in courses at additional locations and other instructional sites have access to all student services at FSU via web-based technology developed to support academic programs at off-campus facilities. Blackboard, the University's online Learning Management System, allows students to access course materials and to communicate and collaborate online. Online services available through the Ort Library website include information database subscriptions, interlibrary loan services, reference assistance and other online resources.

At the USMH Library, a full-time librarian and 2 part-time library assistants provide reference and research assistance and services to students. The library, which is open 63.5 hours a week (including Saturday hours), provides students with two dedicated computer labs each with 23 desktop computers, wireless access to databases from their home institutions, and one standalone database (BizMiner) that was purchased primarily for use by FSU business students. Overhead projectors and document cameras are available to instructors in many classrooms.

At CCBC, Garrett College, Arundel Mills, and Cecil College, students receive academic advising and support, course registration, financial aid, and all other services from the community college while pursuing their associate's degree. After students transfer to FSU and become bachelor's degree-seeking students, they receive course registration, advising, financial aid, library, and all other services from the Frostburg campus. FSU offers almost all student services online. Students can apply to the University, pay their bills, register for courses, view and accept financial aid, view their academic records, request and use library materials, purchase textbooks, be advised, post a resume, access information about jobs, and request specific services such as disability accommodations or career counseling. At CCBC, Arundel Mills, and Cecil, the Frostburg faculty member is housed on those campuses and serves as the academic advisor for students in the bachelor's program. For students at Garrett College, the distance is 32 miles to the FSU campus, enabling easy access for those students to in-person advising.

Frostburg State University is responsible for providing Disability Support Services to students at these locations and works with students and instructors to be sure necessary accommodations are reached. Advisors are present at all of the sites to assist students with scheduling, etc. However, some issues with advising consistency have arisen for students who must take a lower division course. Since USMH offers only upper division courses students may have to take a lower division course at another institution and courses at other institutions may not fit the requirements for the student's major and/or FSU's General Education Program.

Assessment

All of the additional locations are individually accredited by Middle States and many of the programs offered at the other sites are also accredited by other agencies (i.e., Engineering is accredited by ABET and Business Administration is accredited by AACSB). Programs at other sites are included in the University's program review cycle. FSU students at all of the sites regularly receive information on FSU policies and procedures.

Distance Education

The principal mission of online education at FSU is to enhance student access to the University's academic programs. Of equal importance, FSU online education is intended to help students

acquire the technical skills and online learning strategies important to the pursuit of their academic and career goals. By developing and teaching online courses, FSU faculty also acquire new instructional skills important to their professional growth and development. Faculty members wishing to teach online must complete the University's Teaching Online Certification Program, which introduces faculty to the FSU online course template and gives instruction on creating dynamic course content in the Blackboard Learning Management System. The University is committed to providing students and faculty the support and resources they need to succeed as participants in online education.

Distance Education Offerings Meet Institution-Wide Standards

Frostburg effectively uses technology to enhance instruction and provide greater access to its curricular offerings. The University's online courses and academic programs assist students in completing their programs of study in a timely manner and allow non-traditional students to earn credentials required for career advancement.

Frostburg State University enhances online educational opportunities through its summer and Intersession online initiatives, which have experienced continued growth since their inception. For Intersession 2015, 79 course sections were offered and total enrollments reached 618. In the summer of 2014, Frostburg offered 214 online course sections and experienced a 5.5% increase in online course enrollments from the previous year. In February 2014, Frostburg's fully online M.S. in Recreation and Parks Management was ranked a "Best Buy" among the management and administration master's programs by GetEducated.com, the consumer guide to online colleges. This program also ranked tenth among all competing options nationwide. The online Bachelor's in Nursing program ranked as fifth "Best Buy" in 2013, while the online MBA program was rated a "Best Buy" for AACSB accredited online MBA programs in both 2010 and 2012. In 2015, the MBA program was listed as number 12 in Affordable Colleges Foundation's ranking of the nation's Best Online MBA Programs.

All online courses are formally evaluated. The assessment of faculty teaching performance in online courses is conducted through the University's faculty evaluation process. The University's Distance Education Advisory Group, which is composed of faculty and staff and is part of University governance, monitors the academic and technical experiences of students enrolled in online courses. Department assessment plans address Frostburg State University program/tracks delivered at the University System of Maryland at Hagerstown (USMH), demonstrating consistency in the program learning outcomes at this location. Since Frostburg State University faculty offer the classes at USMH, the classes are approved and monitored in the same way as courses on the main campus. In addition, at the course level, consistency across syllabi in terms of stated student learning outcomes demonstrates program coherence in the application of the overall assessment plan for online programs. For instance, the Nursing program posts its [program objectives](#) prominently on its website, along with its mission. The online MBA is parallel in rigor and content with the face-to-face option. As with face-to-face courses, arrangements are made through course substitutions to ensure that students in fully-online programs who are governed by older catalogs can finish their degrees in a timely manner.

The Distance Education Advisory Group (DEAG) includes individuals elected from faculty and appointed representatives from Information Technology and Academic Affairs. As part of the faculty governance structure, DEAG engages multiple constituencies to evaluate distance learning

and make recommendations to the Office of the Provost. Recognizing that the University's distance education offerings have grown exponentially and separately across the University, the advisory group currently is undertaking the first campus-wide review of Frostburg State University's online education practices using the industry-standard Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Programs, published by the Sloan Consortium.

Applicable Legal and Regulatory Requirements

Frostburg State University complies with federal regulations on the verification of student identity. The University requires that students use a secure User ID and Password to access online distance education coursework. A complex password protocol was instituted to ensure a high level of protection. As new identification technologies are developed and become more sophisticated, FSU anticipates that institutions will be required to verify the identity of students beyond a User ID and Password. However, it is expected that students' privacy will be protected regardless of the verification method. The Office of Instructional Technology (OIT) has also investigated the use of proctoring equipment and software, but opted against the technology after reviewing it. The OIT continues to monitor and investigate emerging technologies for student authentication.

In response to the US Department of Education's State Authorization regulation, Frostburg has followed the direction of the Department to contact individual states for determining authorization requirements. This process spanned six months, and a final report and recommendations for moving forward with states that require authentication for distance education was presented to the Distance Education Advisory Group (DEAG) in June 2015. However, Maryland has received approval for membership in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), an agreement among member states that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offerings of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. Frostburg will be a SARA member. This should result in the University's ability to forgo the process of individual state authentication, which will improve its ability to serve students without the added financial and human resource burden that individual state authorization will cause.

Basic Skills

Frostburg State University meets the needs of underprepared students through its class offerings and support services. Information about the rigor and rationale of FSU's certificate programs and distance education is provided. Finally, the mechanisms in place to ensure timely degree progression and student verification for online courses is outlined.

Testing and Placement

Prior to entry, all first-time students are administered placement tests to assess college readiness in the areas of mathematics, reading, and writing. Transfer students with more than 12 transfer credits who have not received credit for ENGL 101 (Freshman Composition) or a credit-bearing mathematics course also are required to complete the appropriate placement tests. Based on their test results, students may be required to enroll in specific courses during their first semester of classes. Students may not withdraw from these courses and are required to re-enroll until a passing grade is earned.

Preview FSU, the on-campus introductory experience for entering freshmen, includes many activities, orientation events, on-site testing, and registration. (During the 2015-2016 academic year, the program is undergoing a thorough review by an interdivisional workgroup led by the Dean of Students.) Since time during this first experience might be better spent in introduction and

orientation, the Programs Advancing Student Success Office and others have been exploring alternative modes of delivery for placement tests, such as online formats. The University is also in the process of evaluating current placement tests in reading, writing, and math. This item was on the agenda for the Remediation Committee and is also a future goal for the Basic Writing Advisory Committee (BWAC).

Maryland Senate Bill 740 states that each public institution of higher education in the state must require the pathway for each degree-seeking student to include credit-bearing mathematics and English courses in their first 24-credit hours. Last year, the University revised its policies to reflect this law. Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards and the PARCC assessments will allow certain students to enroll in credit-bearing math courses their first semester of college irrespective of FSU's placement process results. The implication of College-Readiness standards on testing, placement, and – down the road – on retention and time-to-degree, is a challenge that all universities will face.

Recommendation: Evaluate the diagnostic precision of the current program that places students into developmental Math and basic writing courses, and make appropriate improvements.

Developmental Programs and Student Persistence and Academic Achievement

Placed students are those who score below diagnostic placement tests in reading, writing, and mathematics. These tests are given to all first-time students who do not have transfer credit for Core Skills in English 101 or Math. In 2013, a report compared the pass rates for advanced composition students in placed and non-placed ENGL 101 sections, and the placed students were about 5% below the non-placed students for passing. Likewise, the PASS office found only a 5% difference in retention and graduation rates between placed and non-placed students. This finding underscores how well the support services meet student needs; however, the comparison has not been conducted for placed math students since 2006. Instead, the main research in the past five years, since the redesign of DVMT 100, has been tracking how well those students (Math Level 1) do in their next level (Level 2) math course and comparing that to students who tested at Math Level 2. A full discussion of placement testing may be found in Chapter Four.

Recognizing a need to bolster student success, and using matching funds from the University System of Maryland, Frostburg State University has signed an agreement to purchase Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework (PAR) software to analyze student data. This software should help identify predictors for student attrition. Ideally, PAR also will track interventions, thus improving retention and time-to-degree while assessing which interventions provide the most successful outcomes.

Assessment of the Effectiveness of Support Services for Under-Prepared Students

Both courses offered by the Developmental Math department, DVMT 095 (Pre-Algebra) and DVMT 100 (Intermediate Algebra), are led by an instructor. This instructor is aided by trained student learning assistants with whom students work extensively during class meetings. In addition, students can receive support from developmental math tutors at the Tutoring Center. For the fall semesters of 2012-2014, the average pass rate was 82% for DVMT 095 and 77% for DVMT 100.

For those students who enter the university needing assistance with writing skills, the English Department offers sections of Freshman Composition (ENGL 101) that are smaller in size than other

sections, allowing more individualized attention for under-prepared students. Students also are encouraged to seek help from Writing Center tutors. For the fall semesters of 2012-2014, the average pass rate for students in the basic writing sections was 72%. The English department was part of the course redesign efforts discussed earlier and is further examining its basic writing course curriculum (and regular English 101 curriculum) based on current recommendations from the Council of Writing Program Administrators. For more information, please see Chapter Four, Standard 9.

Certificate Programs

All students who complete certificate programs are matriculated Frostburg State University students who are also completing a baccalaureate program. Due to the Title IV Federal Regulations regarding gainful employment disclosures, the University reviewed its offerings. The University is in compliance with all Title IV regulations. Currently, four certificates are offered: three in Computer Science and one in International Area Studies ([Undergraduate Catalog](#), p.4). These offerings also support FSU's mission to "develop and support academic programs and student services that prepare a changing student population for an era of complexity and globalization." All students completing certificates are full-time degree seeking students at FSU; therefore, they already have access to student support services. All courses within the certificates are also embedded in majors and minors. The University's only non-credit offerings are both in Music and are tied to coursework to demonstrate proficiency and assessment. The courses exist so that they appear on student transcripts to demonstrate that students have met the proficiency benchmarks.

Degree Progression

Newly developed eight-semester plans for all majors are on file in the Office of the Provost and many departments have posted these plans on their websites. All ORIE instructors have the plans available for advising first- and second-semester students and advisors in major departments often use them to help students map the best pathway to timely completion of their degrees.

In every student's admission letter, he or she is provided with an advisor and contact information. Some programs hold online orientations for newly admitted students, particularly cohort-based programs. For example, the Department of Nursing posts sample [progression plans](#) (scroll to bottom of the page) for both undergraduate and graduate degrees. However, the department also provides more tailored progression plans during advising to meet the individual student's needs in terms of other obligations, such as work, family, and community, to meet their desired graduation date.

The Office of Graduate Services provides MBA students with a recommended course sequence, access to the MBA program coordinator/advisor, and the website also addresses "[Program Progression](#)" and "[Course Load and Scheduling](#)" (scroll to bottom of the page). This program also offers every course every semester to ensure degree progression and allow for planning.

The University's M.S. in Applied Computer Science is a new online degree program. All graduate students meet with the same advisor. Whether the student is a Frostburg graduate or from another university, the program provides an unvarying rotation that allows for its completion within 18 months (summer enrollment is assumed). The program addresses the need for international students to enroll in an additional six credits. Frostburg will soon have course sequences for all online graduate programs on its Graduate Services website.

In the cases of terminated or substantially modified programs, courses are left on the course inventory until the department deletes them through governance. The University also has a policy pertaining to course substitutions, which can be found on page 34 of the [Undergraduate Catalog, Governing Graduation Requirements, Item 4. B](#). Under this policy, course content cannot be supplied outside of the institution, but must be internally provided. As such, validation by faculty of course materials or technology-based resources developed outside the institution is not necessary.

Conclusion:

The scaffolding between the skills required to succeed in the various educational offerings provides coherence in the connections between those skills, the General Education Learning Goals, and the Undergraduate Institutional Learning Goals. Soon the Graduate Learning Goals will continue that structure. Resources and assessments are in place to support curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular learning, thus offering students a well-rounded learning experience. The General Education Program was developed following State of Maryland mandated parameters to provide students with a well-rounded liberal arts education in the fine arts, humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, in addition to interdisciplinary offerings. Revision of GEP courses must comply with State of Maryland guidelines, and improved assessment is a University priority. Procedures are in place to identify students that are not adequately prepared for college, and support and courses are available to help these students acquire the necessary skills to be successful. Online learning is supported, and the University complies with the federal guidelines for privacy and security. The collaborations across campus, particularly those between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, confirm the commitment to student learning. Frostburg State University is dedicated to providing students with the education and supplemental experiences they need to become “future leaders [prepared] to meet the challenges of a complex and changing global society.”

Final Thoughts and Recommendations

Frostburg State University looks forward to engaging in the intense and collegial process of the accreditation visit. The University has demonstrated through this Self-Study that it is committed to student learning and continuous quality improvement in all areas of the University. More than 60 people worked on drafts of the Self-Study, and the campus community was involved in conversations all through its development. The University is justifiably proud of this willingness of so many to engage in the reflective examination of the ways in which FSU serves the educational and support needs of student learners, engages in evidence-based planning, and assesses its academic and operational practices. This has been a productive process for Frostburg and has led to thoughtful recommendations for areas of improvement. The University offers the following recommendations for consideration:

1. Establish and implement an internal simplified periodic program review process for non-major academic programs, such as minors and certificates.
2. Ensure processes for consistently assessing and promoting the effectiveness of institutional priorities and academic programs to the
3. University community. Ensure the use of Campus Labs' Compliance Assist to highlight and publicize assessment successes across the University.
4. Develop Strategic Plan priorities that fully address resource implications through a transparent process that invites engagement from the campus community.
5. Develop a plan for advisor training and assessment incorporated as a part of annual faculty evaluations and staff evaluations, as appropriate.
6. Ensure processes for consistently assessing and promoting the effectiveness of co-curricular and extra-curricular programs to the University community. Ensure the use of Campus Labs' Compliance Assist to highlight and publicize these assessment successes across the University.
7. Implement a sustainable process for the assessment of student learning outcomes in the University's General Education Program.
8. Evaluate the diagnostic precision of the current program that places students into developmental Math and basic writing courses, and make appropriate improvements.