1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution’s emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution’s academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

The University of South Dakota (USD) is located in the southeast corner of the state along the bluffs of the Missouri River in the city of Vermillion. USD is home to the state’s only medical school and law school, and the mission and vision are representative of a Midwestern liberal arts flagship university.

1.A.1: The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.

USD was the first university established in the Dakota Territory in 1862. It is one of six, separately accredited public universities governed by the South Dakota Board of Regents (SDBOR). The university has a statutory mission defined by South Dakota Codified Law which reads as follows:

“Designated as South Dakota’s Liberal Arts University, the University of South Dakota, established and located at Vermillion, in Clay County, shall be under the control of the Board of Regents and shall provide undergraduate and graduate programs of instruction in the liberal arts and sciences and professional education in business, education, fine arts, law and medicine, and other courses or programs as the Board of Regents may determine.”

The SDBOR implements the statutory mission in SDBOR Policy 1:10:1 and recognizes the mission of USD as:
“To be the best small, public flagship university in the nation built upon a liberal arts foundation.”

“The institution is also charged with promoting excellence in teaching and learning, supporting research, scholarly and creative activities, and providing service to the State of South Dakota, the region, and beyond.”

The SDBOR mission policy for each institution is subject to review, most recently via a special analysis report completed in AY 2018-19. Based on the report, the SDBOR worked to revise the mission policies for the six regental institutions and approved those revisions to mission statements at its October 2019 meeting.

The university also states a set of values which reads as follows:

“The University of South Dakota is committed to becoming a regional leader in diversity and inclusiveness initiatives and the practice of Inclusive Excellence.”

Since inclusive excellence is part of the University’s values and was articulated as a strategic theme of the 2013-2020 Strategic Plan, the Quality Initiative project for this accreditation cycle was devoted to Diversity and Inclusive Excellence. Specifically, the project was developed to provide structure to improve the enrollment, persistence, and completion of students of color at the University.

1.A.2: The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution’s emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.

Mission documents are current and emphasize the various aspects of our mission. This is reflected in the themes of our strategic plan, our general studies programs, faculty research, and our service to the community, state, and region.

The five strategic themes of the 2013-2020 Strategic Plan embody the mission, vision, and values as mentioned in 1.A.1. The themes for the 2013-2020 strategic plan are:

- Undergraduate, graduate, and professional student experience
- Research, scholarship and creative work
- Liberal arts and learning
- Diversity and inclusiveness
- Community and university relations

USD is the liberal arts flagship in the state and has a general education program consistent with its liberal arts foundation. Academic programs range from associates to graduate degrees and are appropriate to our mission, as described in the Academic Catalogs.
As a Carnegie doctoral university with high research activity, faculty participate in research with a total of $36,681,634 in funds awarded in AY2019. Faculty scholarship and research are captured within Digital Measures and posted to individual faculty webpages. Each year faculty members are acknowledged for excellence and achievement in research via the President’s Award for Research. Recipients receive a $3000 award and a plaque. The Sanford School of Medicine (SSOM) publishes an annual Selected Publications and Awards document on its webpage to highlight research and scholarship of its faculty and staff. In addition, the SSOM was awarded the 2017 Foreman Award for Outstanding Community Service, a national award considered the top honor from the Association of American Medical Colleges.

USD has a significant impact in the community of Vermillion, Sioux Falls, and the state of South Dakota. For example, members of the USD community participate in a variety of boards, councils, and service organizations within the Vermillion community. In addition, the Community College for Sioux Falls (CCSF) hosts the Discovery District and the Gear Center in Sioux Falls. Faculty and students are involved in a variety of research, internships, and clinical opportunities across the state and region (for example: Sanford School of Medicine Frontier and Rural Medicine sites for rural medicine, South Dakota Biomedical Research Infrastructure Network, and the Center for Brain and Behavior Research). Finally, USD has a native student bridge program which is a partnership between Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation and USD. Native American Students from the Indian University of North America are eligible to take freshmen level university courses through USD during the summer after high school graduation while working in internships with the Crazy Horse Memorial. USD has clearly embraced the mission of a flagship liberal arts institution.

The University of South Dakota has an impact on the economy of the state. In a recent (2016) Economic Impact Analysis, USD was shown to generate approximately $786 million of annual economic impact and directly supports 1,581.3 full-time jobs. Finally, the analysis documented that USD acquired $19 million in federal and private grants and contracts for research, development, and projects.

1.A.3: The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.

USD is charged with promoting excellence in teaching and learning, supporting research, scholarly and creative activities, and providing service to the State of South Dakota, the region, and beyond. Our mission, vision, and values reflect this charge, and documents referenced in 1.A.1 outline these expectations.

1.A.4: The institution’s academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

South Dakota codified law states that USD shall provide undergraduate and graduate programs of instruction in the liberal arts and sciences and professional education in business, education, fine arts, law, and medicine, and other courses or programs as the Board of Regents may determine. The current offerings of programs at USD reflect this law and SDBOR policy, are consistent with the mission, and are typical of a public liberal arts institution of its
size. Currently, the institution offers 3 Associates Degrees, 75 Bachelor’s Degrees, 36 Master’s Degrees, 2 Specialist Degrees, and 20 Doctoral Degrees housed within eight colleges and schools (College of Arts & Sciences, College of Fine Arts, Sanford School of Medicine, Knudson School of Law, School of Health Sciences, School of Education, Beacom School of Business, and the Graduate School). Specific information about the degrees offered at USD can be found in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs.

The current enrollment profile of the university reflects the statutory mission, the implemented mission set forth by USD, and the articulated mission outlined in SDBOR policy. As of fall 2019, USD enrolled 9,920 students. Of those, 7,475 were undergraduates; 6,154 were female, and 8,209 were white. The common data set, SDBOR Factbook, and Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment (IRPA) data tools provide up-to-date enrollment data for faculty, staff, students, and the public to review.

USD provides a comprehensive suite of services to students typical of a public liberal arts flagship and our stated mission. These units, reporting to the Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, support student success. The Student Service Organization Chart describes these services and their reporting structure. Student services are also provided to students in the Law and Medical schools via their specific student service personnel.

USD’s academic support offerings are reflective of our mission. For example, the University Libraries (I.D. Weeks Library and Wegner Health Sciences Library) provide resources and services for faculty, staff, and students of the university. The I.D. Weeks Library also serves the K-12 teachers and students in the state. The Wegner Health Sciences Library, located at the USD Sanford School of Medicine in Sioux Falls serves the School of Medicine, Sioux Falls-based School of Health Sciences programs, as well as hospitals and other partner institutions located in Sioux Falls. Students are provided advising and other career placement support via the Academic and Career Planning Center (ACPC). The ACPC provides a learning specialist and also support students via first year experience, the writing center, tutoring, career services, and supplemental instruction. Students wishing to participate in international experiences can find assistance at the Gallagher Center for Experiential Learning and Education Abroad. The Gallagher Center (GC) supports students in service learning opportunities and undergraduate research. Finally, USD maintains a robust Honors program to support enriched academic experiences.

1.A.5: The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

At USD, the purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, and priorities are clearly articulated through the website under the About USD link and are also found in the 2013-2020 strategic plan. In 2019, the Strategic Plan Task Force, comprised of faculty, staff, students, and administrators, began work preparing a new strategic plan which will be based on continuous improvement and adhere to the mission of USD.

The Graduate and Undergraduate Catalogs quote or reference the mission of USD on the About USD pages. In addition, the mission is reflected across campus in various handbooks [Faculty
and Medical School Faculty Handbook], by the President, and individual campus unit statements. Each of the colleges and schools have their own Mission, Vision, and Values statements articulated on their respective webpages, and each reflects the overall mission of the institution. Academic departments can add a philosophy statement to their department webpages which reflect their individual mission.

After 21 years, USD’s 17th President retired, requiring the university to begin a Presidential search during the 2017AY. The Leadership Profile included a description of the history of the institution and its mission and values to ensure that the incoming President would be vested in the culture of USD. In the Fall of 2018, President Gestring announced her priorities for the state and region which highlight the liberal arts and flagship mission of the university.

Sources

- 2019ResearchFunding
- 2020_University of South Dakota Institutional Update
- CommonDataSet
- Data Tools Webpage
- Graduate Education and Applied Research Center _ USD
- Leadership Profile - USD Presidential Search 12-21-17 FINAL
- Medical School Faculty Handbook
- Mission and Values Webpage
- QI University of South Dakota SD
- Research Awards _ USD
- Sanford School of Medicine Foreman Award _ USD
- SDBOR Economic Impact Analysis-Final
- SDBOR FY2020Factbook
- SDBOR Policy 1-10-1
- SDBORSpecialAnalysisInstitutionalMissionStatements
- SDCL13-57-1
- SouthDakotanPresidentialPrioritiesArticle
- SSOM Publications and Awards 2018
- Student Services Org Chart
- USD 2013-2020 Strategic Plan
- USD Colleges and Schools Mission and Vision Statements
- USD Discovery District _ USD
- USD-Faculty-Handbook-1
1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

1. The institution’s actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution’s educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1.B.1: The institution’s actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.

USD is a public institution under the purview of the SDBOR as set forth by the South Dakota legislature, and as such, has no outside investors or parent institutions. The actions and decisions of the institution serve the people of the state of South Dakota and the region. This is reflected in the strategic themes of the 2013-2020 Strategic Plan mentioned in 1.A.2 and in the themes for the FY2025 Strategic Plan which are: Student Affordability, Academic Excellence, Communication, Diversity, Facilities and Infrastructure, and Serving South Dakota.

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

USD is the public flagship university in the state of South Dakota. The annual budget allocations for the university must be submitted and approved by the SDBOR. The most recent budget allocation for fiscal year 2020 indicates that USD allocates 54.2% of funds to instruction, academic support, scholarships, and fellowships, 13.4% to research and public service, 15.7% to maintenance and institutional support, and 16.7% to student services and auxiliary operations (i.e., room and board).

1.B.3: The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

USD engages with its external constituencies in a variety of ways. The University hosts one SDBOR meeting each year which allows the broader university community to connect with a variety of external stakeholders (e.g. board members, SDBOR leadership, etc.). Also, since the current strategic plan is set to end, one of the most significant ways the institution has engaged its external constituencies recently is via the AY25 Strategic Plan development. From May through early October 2019, the Strategic Plan Task Force (SPTF) met with over 70 stakeholder
groups which included thousands of individuals both within and external to the University. Groups consulted include: Vermillion City Council, the Vermillion Chamber and Development Company, Vermillion Human Relations Committee, community participants in the UpNext coffee hour, Community Connections Center, SDBOR, the Governor’s Office Staff and Cabinet, more than 15 SD state legislators, Black Hills Playhouse board, executives from the two largest health care systems, Sioux Falls alumni, USD Foundation and Alumni board members, and members of two of the tribal nations in the state. Each stakeholder meeting included an activity designed to get feedback that would aid in development of a vision for USD.

Stakeholders are also engaged at the program level at USD. Various programs and centers across campus utilize advisory boards to assist with planning and evaluating effectiveness of programming and curriculum. These boards include, but are not limited to:

- Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment Advisory Board
- Wegner Health Sciences Libraries
- Dean’s Advisory Board Beacom School of Business
- Industrial Advisor Board Computer Science
- Sanford School of Medicine Community Advisory Committee
- Community Advisory Council (Center for Disabilities)
- National Music Museum Board

The change of name and structure of the Sioux Falls location to the Community College for Sioux Falls is another example of how USD serves its constituents. A recent internal analysis concluded that there is a great potential for growth among unserved populations in the Sioux Falls area. Specifically, 30% of the graduating classes among Sioux Falls and area high schools do not attend post-secondary educational institutions, and approximately one-half of these are admissions eligible (based on USD Admissions criteria). Given the data from the report and the workforce needs of the Sioux Falls area, USD implemented a change in the focus and administrative structure of the Sioux Falls location. The location was rebranded as the Community College for Sioux Falls (CCSF) and is now moving toward a concerted effort to develop an increased focus on general education, associate’s degrees (the Associate of Arts in General Studies and the Associate of Science in Integrated Science), and certificates that USD currently provides. Additional programmatic offerings provided at the CCSF will be designed and targeted to meet higher education access needs and workforce needs of the Sioux Falls community.

While the university libraries serve the faculty, staff, and students of USD, it is also an example of how the institution engages with its external constituencies. The Wegner Health Sciences Library is the designated Resource Library for the state of South Dakota for the Greater Midwest Region of the National Library of Medicine, National Network of Libraries (a sample contract and activity report are provided for review). The Wegner Health Sciences Library supports the health sciences information needs of the region.

**Sources**
- CCSF MOU and SDBOR Approval
- GMR sample Activity Report
- SDBOR FY20 Budget Allocation 6_A_BOR0819
- University Center Future
1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Argument

1.C.1. The institution encourages curricular or co-curricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.

General education is the foundational core of an undergraduate education. It provides students with a comprehensive educational experience and prepares them for study within their major. The foundational coursework teaches students to think critically and communicate effectively, solve problems, generate new ideas and create knowledge, make connections between academic disciplines, respect and understand differences, and develop intellectual curiosity and love of learning as citizens and leaders.

Schools and colleges across campus provide students with the opportunity to participate in service learning. For example, the SSOM provides opportunities for medical students to serve through volunteer activities at Indian reservations, Hutterite colonies, flu shot clinics, and service at the Coyote Clinic in Sioux Falls. Programs in the School of Health Sciences participate in service learning opportunities which include free clinics in Guatemala, dental hygiene clinics, flu shot clinics, hearing and vision screenings, and children’s summer camps. The Knudson School of Law provides students the opportunity to serve in free tax clinics and provide legal service work through the Pro Bono Program. In addition, the Gallagher Center for Experiential Learning and Education (GC) oversees the Alternative Week of Off-Campus Learning (AWOL) program where students have the opportunity to participate in service learning during campus breaks (spring break, semester break, summer break) or on long weekends. Opportunities are provided locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

The GC also provides support for students wishing to study abroad. Students can participate in Faculty-Led Programs (FLP) which are short experiences abroad with a USD faculty member. The FLP trips are typically associated with a course in an academic program. Students also have the opportunity to spend an immersive semester or year studying abroad through the direct programs option. If students wish to have an off-campus experience but don’t want to
spend it internationally, they have the opportunity to participate in the National Student Exchange.

Other co-curricular activities are offered at USD to prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success. Activities sponsored by the Center for Diversity and Community (CDC) provide educational opportunities to enrich and support USD’s academic mission. Students have the opportunity to participate in the campus Student Government Association (SGA) or the system-level Student Federation. SGA members serve as student representatives on a variety of committees across campus (for example, the Assessment Committee, Accessibility Committee, and the President’s Council for Diversity and Inclusive Excellence).

The Native American Cultural Center provides opportunities for the campus community to experience a variety of perspectives to prepare them for living and working in a global society. Native Student Services also provides students with the opportunity to understand the culture of the Native communities of the region. For example, the Wacipi (powwow) is an annual cultural event co-sponsored by the Native Student Services, Tiospaye Student Council, and the CDC.

1.C.2 The institution’s processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.

USD’s processes are designed to ensure inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations. There are HR policies, Student Rights and Responsibilities policies and procedures, and disabilities/accommodations statements which strive to ensure fair treatment for all individuals across campus.

USD is committed to the concept of Inclusive Excellence. Diversity had been noted as an issue of concern in the two previous HLC comprehensive evaluations. As a result, in 2015, the university submitted a Quality Initiative (QI) proposal specifically directed toward improving upon diversity and inclusive excellence, culminating in structural and policy changes which ensure that improvements can continue and inclusive excellence can become rooted in the overall culture of the institution. The President’s Council for Inclusive Excellence was the committee charged with overseeing the work of the QI, and now works to ensure that the principles are incorporated into the culture of USD. As a result of the work with the QI, enrollment, retention, and graduation rates of underrepresented students have increased, policies have been updated or created, training opportunities have been provided, and committees have been formed to address inclusive excellence across the institution. To facilitate and incorporate a cohesive inclusive voice, the Associate Vice President of Diversity has been added to the Executive Council, Dean’s Council, and many other committees across campus.

Other examples of how USD is committed to activities and processes for inclusiveness are outlined below.

- In 2018, USD reinstated the role of Native American Academic Advisor in the Academic & Career Planning Center. The position had been eliminated when it was vacated in fall 2015, with the goal that all academic advisors would be trained to serve our Native American population. However, data from the Institutional Research Planning and
Assessment Office (IRPA) showed a marked decline in Native American retention rates that may have been attributed to this vacated position. In fall 2018 the position was reinstated. This academic advisor is charged with working specifically with Native American undergraduate students, providing support that begins with the registration process for incoming students, continues in the role as primary or secondary advisor for students’ first 45 credit hours, continues as a secondary advisor to the major advisor, and concludes at graduation.

- In order to address an issue that was shown to disproportionately affect under-represented students at USD, members of the Academic and Career Planning Center, Academic Affairs, Enrollment Services, Student Services, and the Campus Bookstore worked collaboratively to develop a comprehensive book loan program for undergraduate students. This program allows students to apply for an interest-free book loan at the beginning of each semester, ensuring that they are prepared to be fully engaged in their courses.

- USD has also secured important grants and programs to support student success initiatives associated with diversity. In 2014, USD was named as a participant in the South Dakota Jumpstart program, funded by a First in the World grant through the Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). In order to address first year retention disparities among low-income and Native American students in South Dakota, the program provided Summer Bridge experiences, summer coursework, books, and the support of a designated retention advisor to two cohorts of students. Thanks to the coordinated effort with Admissions and the Academic and Career Planning Center, USD served the largest number of Native American students (41) of the seven participating institutions in the state.

- In 2015, USD was awarded a TRiO Student Support Services grant. This federal grant program provides support to 144 students meeting low-income, first-generation, and/or disability guidelines and demonstrating academic need. Each year the grant has met or exceeded its goals related to the retention, graduation, and academic good standing of its participants. Activities supported by the grant include tutoring, mentoring, academic advising, personal and career counseling, financial and economic literacy, goal setting, cultural enrichment, and graduate school counseling. The program not only serves a high number of underrepresented students at USD, but it also employs professional staff who advocate for improved policies and practices for all underrepresented students at USD.

1.C.3 The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff, and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives.

As mentioned in 1.C.2., USD is committed to inclusive excellence and has made significant transitions to incorporate those principles into institutional culture. Structural examples of USD’s commitment to inclusive excellence include the move to inclusive restrooms across campus, moving to gender inclusive housing options, and the development of a preferred name policy for institutional records with the conversion to Banner.
In 2017, USD was awarded a grant by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute as part of their Inclusive Excellence Initiative establishing the USD Inclusive Science Initiative (USD-HHMI). The grant challenges its recipients to facilitate institutional change to better meet the needs of these underrepresented students, and USD places an emphasis on American Indian students who represent the largest racial minority group in South Dakota. The grant has supported the creation of a First Year Experience (FYE) course, provided training for faculty via Entering Mentoring workshops, and meets regularly to discuss inclusive issues across the institution. The grant has also helped to support other campus diversity and inclusive excellence initiatives such as the Cross Roads antiracism training and MLK day of faculty service.

The Office for Diversity provides programs and training opportunities to faculty, staff, and students to support inclusive excellence efforts of USD. The programs available include a Talking Change Making Change program for students and faculty, Social Justice Training workshops, First Fridays, an online Safe Zone Training to address LGBTQ+ issues, and a Diversity Symposium which hosts invited speakers each spring.

Respect for intellectual diversity and freedom of speech is also reflected at USD. Each syllabus is required to contain a statement on Freedom in Learning. Additionally, on September 6, 2019, USD hosted an open forum to address intellectual diversity and free speech. The forum featured the President, Provost, and General Counsel from USD along with the General Counsel and President of Academic Affairs of the South Dakota Board of Regents.

In 2019, the South Dakota Legislature passed SDCL 13-53-53 which requires that the SDBOR prepare and submit a report to the Governor outlining institutional actions associated with intellectual diversity. The first report submitted by the SDBOR summarizes policy changes and actions taken by each of the six state universities.

Sources

- 2019-12 HHMI IE Group meeting
- 2020 Faculty Entering Mentoring Announcement
- 5_J_BOR_REVISEDIntellectualDiversityReport
- BIOLOGY 151 syllabus F19
- CDC Events and Programming _ USD
- Faculty-Led Programs _ USD
- Health Sciences Service Learning _ USD
- Presidents Council AY19 Report
- Presidents Council AY19 Report (page number 3)
- QI Proposal
- QualityInitiativeMeasures
- SafeZoneTrainingInformation
1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

The University of South Dakota, the first university in the Dakota Territory, is the flagship liberal arts institution for the state and supports the state’s only law and medical schools. The mission is defined in South Dakota law, reviewed by the South Dakota Board of Regents, and refined and advanced by the faculty, staff, and students of the institution. The curriculum, co-curriculum, and general education core are foundational to the liberal arts mission. As such, USD provides students with a robust honors program, the ability to participate in undergraduate research, a rich study abroad program, and opportunities to participate in service learning and develop civic engagement skills.

Sources

There are no sources.
2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

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

Argument

The University of South Dakota is a public university which acts with integrity and conducts its operations ethically and responsibly. As a state institution, transparency is part of the routine work of the organization. Faculty and staff at USD are state employees so salaries are listed via the state’s OPEN SD transparency website. The transparency website also contains information on contracts, grants, and budgets for state entities, including USD. As a public institution which is part of a regental system, policies, guidelines, board meeting agenda items, and other data and information associated with student outcomes are provided on the state’s Board of Regents website. USD’s website provides current and accurate information to students and the public, and USD policies and procedures are posted for faculty, staff, and students within the MyUSD portal.

2.A.1: The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.

As mentioned in Criterion 1, the mission is directed by the state legislature with the SDBOR reviewing and revising the mission as needed. However, the institution has the ability to create vision statements and documents in support of the legislated mission. These statements and documents are reviewed and revised during the strategic planning process. In AY2019-2020, the institution commenced the strategic planning process again with part of the work dedicated to creating identity and vision for the institution moving forward for the next five years. The Strategic Planning Task Force identified key stakeholders, both internal and external, to represent all aspects of the university and invited them to participate in listening sessions and stakeholder surveys. The data gathered were used to develop the new strategic plan and vision for USD for the next five years. The 2025 Vision Statement has been drafted as part of that process and concept papers for each of the six strategic themes (Academic Excellence, Student Affordability, Communication, Diversity, Facilities and Infrastructure, and Serving South Dakota) have been drafted and posted.
2.A.2: The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

USD operates with integrity across the institution, and policies governing integrity are in place at both the institutional level and system level through the SDBOR. Discussions of the various policies are captured within their respective headings below.

Human Resources and Civil Rights:

Human resources maintains a suite of support materials associated with hiring and onboarding new employees. The Hiring Handbook outlines procedures for filling positions and search committee procedures to ensure integrity with the hiring process. In addition, HR provides new employee onboarding materials (I-9 and W-4 documentation, Acceptable Use Policies, Personal Data Statements, etc.) to assist supervisory personnel with getting new employees ready for work at USD and a New Hire Checklist for supervisors to ensure the onboarding process runs smoothly. Human Resources also provides new employee orientation sessions related to policy and benefits orientation, time and leave reporting, and Title IX requirements to all new employees at the university.

USD has policies to protect the civil liberties of its students, faculty, and staff. The Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination policy (SDBOR Policy 1:19) is found on the SDBOR webpage, in the MYUSD portal, and is also included in the USD academic catalogs and Student Handbook. SDBOR Policy 1:17 is the Harassment Including Sexual Harassment policy, and it is also included in the academic catalogs for student reference. Title IX policies (SDBOR Policy 1:17 and SDBOR Policy 1:17.1) are posted in the academic catalogs, and any grievance for these, along with grievance for non-discrimination, are referred to the Director of EEO and Title IX Coordinator. USD also follows the SDBOR Policy 1:18 for Human Rights Complaints. Students can grieve academic complaints via SDBOR Policy 2:9, but if it appears that the complaint might suggest a human rights, non-discrimination, or Title IX issue, it will be resolved for civil rights before being investigated within the SDBOR Policy 2.9 process.

Faculty and staff also have the ability to lodge a formal grievance. Grievance polices were formally available for faculty as outlined within Section VIII of the Council on Higher Education (CoHE) agreement and within SDBOR Policy 4:7. As the CoHE has recently been eliminated by legislative action (Spring 2020), SDBOR Policy 4.7 is the current grievance process. Aspects of the CoHE agreement are currently being incorporated into relevant SDBOR policy. Non-faculty Exempt (NFE) employees and Civil Service (CSA) employees have grievance policies reflective of their respective roles on campus.

Anyone, whether faculty, staff, student, or community member, may file a formal complaint with USD via the complaint form found on the website. Complaints lodged via the online form are reviewed by the President’s office and forwarded to the appropriate campus office. Additionally, each campus office tracks the written complaints made directly to them and forwards the complaint with resolution to the Provost’s office for tracking.

Financial Resources:
SDBOR has a Conflict of Interest policy that applies to faculty and staff of all Board of Regents institutions. In addition, the University Senate has a committee (Committee on Financial Conflicts of Interest) which oversees institutional level conflict of interest issues for faculty on campus. The university’s Conflict of Interest Review Board meets as needed during the academic year to identify real or potential financial conflicts of interest as outlined in the USD Financial Conflict of Interest Policy, recommend management plans to the Vice President for Research, and monitor the implementation of those plans. In addition, principal investigators or co-principal investigators must prepare an Investigator Financial Disclosure per SDBOR Policy 4:32 and any investigator within Public Health is further responsible for complying with SDBOR Policy 4:32:1.

USD has a policy, informed by SDBOR Policy 5:3, for entering into contracts and memoranda of understanding with third party vendors. An example of this policy in practice is the move from the previous bookstore provider to Akademos as the official vendor for the institution. This process is referenced and discussed in Criterion 5A2. USD also has a policy on Auditing Standards, and the SDBOR has policies associated with the budgeting and budget allocation process (referenced in 5.B.3). At USD, the University Budget Committee examines alterations of university budgets to increase transparency of university spending and prioritization of funds.

General Activity Fee funds are disbursed by a committee with majority student membership. This is regulated on campus by the General Activity Fee Policy, which is informed by SDBOR Policy 3:18. Total disbursements from this fee are large and go to fund student centered activities like the Volante (the student newspaper), Fan Participation, the Center for Diversity and Community, Student Government Association, Native Student Services, Campus Recreation, and the operation of the Student Center.

**Academic:**

Academic integrity is regulated via BOR policies 2:12, 2:23, 2:33, and 3:4. USD also has an Academic Misconduct policy which outlines the procedures faculty must follow when moving forward a case in accordance with SDBOR Policy 2:33. The policy is placed in the course catalogs and in the MYUSD portal for faculty and students to reference. The Faculty Handbook has both an Academic Integrity Statement and a Faculty Statement of Professional Ethics. Also, faculty include a statement on academic integrity in course syllabi. USD also has academic policies and procedures associated with FERPA, Academic Appeals, Courses and Grading, Equal Opportunity, and Withdrawal housed within the course catalogs.

**Auxiliary:**

USD is a Division 1 institution, and as such, must maintain compliance with the NCAA. The university maintains a website with information for students on NCAA rules, banned substances, agent guidelines, and student-athlete employment information. The USD NCAA Compliance Office is responsible for maintaining compliance with NCAA rules. The Department Chair for Communication Sciences and Disorders serves as Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) to ensure academic integrity of university athletics.
The Vice President for Research monitors any issues related to research misconduct by faculty. The USD Misconduct in Research Policy is informed by 42 CFR 50, Subpart A and by SDBOR Policies 4:14 and 4:37. Faculty, staff, or students can lodge a research misconduct complaint anonymously via the online link. Other information on research integrity are described in 2E.

**Sources**

- 2025 Vision Statement
- AACGuideline5.3SyllabusRequirements
- Academic Excellence Concept Paper
- Academic Integrity Pages From USD Faculty Handbook
- Academic Policies - The University of South Dakota
- Center for Diversity and Community GAF
- Communication Concept Paper
- Concerns and Complaints
- Diversity Concept Paper
- Facilities and Infrastructure Concept Paper
- Fan Participation Information
- NCAA Compliance Webpage
- NewEmployeeChecklistforSupervisors
- New-Employee-Orientation-Schedule
- Professional Ethics Pages from USD-Faculty-Handbook
- Research Misconduct Complaint Form
- SDBOR Policy 1.17 Harassment including Sexual Harassment
- SDBOR Policy 1.17.1
- SDBOR Policy 1.18 Human Rights Complaint Procedures
- SDBOR Policy 1.19 Equal Opportunity Non-Discrimination Affirmative Action
- SDBOR Policy 2.9
- SDBOR Policy 2-12
- SDBOR Policy 2-23
- SDBOR Policy 2-33
- SDBOR Policy 3-18
- SDBOR Policy 3-4 Student Code of Conduct
- SDBOR Policy 4.7 Faculty Grievance
- SDBOR Policy 4.8 NFE Grievance Procedure
- SDBOR Policy 4.9 CSA Grievance Procedure
- SDBOR Policy 4-14
- SDBOR Policy 4-32
- SDBOR Policy 4-32-1
- SDBOR Policy 4-35 Conflict of Interest
- SDBOR Policy 4-37
- SDBOR Policy 5-3
- SDBOR-COHE Agreement (HE) 2016-2019
- SENATE BYLAWS APPROVED 3 Feb 2016
- Serving South Dakota Concept Paper
- Student Affordability Concept Paper
- Student Government Association GAF
- Syllabi for Academic Integrity
- USD Academic Misconduct Policy
- USD Contract Approval Policy
- USD Financial Conflict of Interest Policy
- USD General Activity Fee Policy
- USD Hiring Handbook
- USD Misconduct in Research
- USDBudgetCommitteeMinutes
2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

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

Argument

2.B.1: The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.

USD utilizes its website to provide prospective students, parents, and the public with information about the university. The Consumer Information page of the USD website includes links to resources for financial aid, the registrar’s office, programs with specialized accreditation pages, and institutional research data. Each unit on campus is responsible for maintaining their respective webpages and ensuring that information provided on the pages are updated and accurate. Any changes required are submitted to the Digital Communications Specialist in the marketing department for upload.

The Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IRPA) office submits data as required for IPEDs and publishes its Common Data Set report on the IRPA webpage. USD also submits data annually to the SDBOR for inclusion in the statewide Fact Book and dashboards.

Academic catalogs (undergraduate and graduate) provide students information on admissions policies (Application Procedure, Undergraduate Admissions Requirements, Placement, Regental Transfer of Credit, Transfer of International Credit, Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy, Pre-Admission Immunization Requirements, and Housing), academic policies, general education requirements, and information related to financial aid, tuition, fees, state authorization, licensure, and certification. The catalogs are reviewed annually to ensure accuracy of all the information provided.

The admissions page of the website provides prospective students information on applying to the university. Standard undergraduate admissions requirements are set by the SDBOR in Policy 2:3. These admissions requirements are posted on USD’s Freshman Admissions Requirements webpage for reference along with information on how to apply to the university.

Accreditation relationships are linked to respective program web pages, and information on accreditation relationships is provided to the SDBOR. Licensure pass rates for respective
programs are also reported on their associated program web pages, and the SDBOR includes licensure pass rates in the Fact Book. Accreditation letters are housed in individual program offices and in Academic Affairs.

2.B.2: The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

As a liberal arts flagship, USD has a strong commitment to research and creative scholarship, experiential learning, community engagement, and economic development. Commitment to research is evidenced by the Council for Undergraduate Research and Creative Scholarship (CURCS) which is a group of faculty and staff whose goal is to advance research and creative activity among undergraduate students. CURCS administers a number of the undergraduate research programs. Students also have the opportunity to present their research and creative scholarship in the annual IdeaFest event. Students also have the opportunity to participate in several summer research programs such as National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU), Biomedical Research Infrastructure Network (BRIN), South Dakota Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCOR), and the NIH funded Summer Program for Undergraduate Research in Addiction (SPURA).

The Gallagher Center for Experiential Learning & Education Abroad (GC) serves as the hub for coordination of opportunities for service learning and study abroad. Service learning is part of the curriculum for a variety of courses on campus (e.g. Sustainable Society, Business Service Learning Experience, Justice and Compassion, and The Interprofessional Health Team), and students can also participate in service-learning outside of the classroom in community based projects. Other service learning activities are described in 1.C.1. The study abroad opportunities open to students at USD include Faculty-Led programs, experiences associated with courses, and immersive semesters spent at a college or university abroad.

USD has a commitment to community engagement which is evidenced in the community based service learning projects, clinical and internship opportunities, and fine arts presentations and performances which are open to the public. Major initiatives like the GEAR Center, the Discovery District, and the Small Business Development Center within the Beacom School of Business are examples of the combination of community engagement and economic development. As a public flagship, service to the community, region, and state are part of USD’s mission, vision, and values.

Sources

- Apply for Freshman Admissions _ USD
- CommonDataSet19-20
- Consumer Information _ USD
- IdeaFest _ USD
- Licensure Passrate Pages from SDBOR FY2020Factbook
- SDBOR Dashboards Webpage
- SDBOR FY2020 Factbook
- SDBOR Policy 2-3
2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Argument

2.C.1: The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution’s financial and academic policies and practices: the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

The South Dakota Board of Regents, its purpose, authority, and powers have been established in Article 14 Section 3 of the South Dakota Constitution (chapters 13-49 through 13-62). Under this legislative designation, the SDBOR has the “full power, responsibility and authority to supervise, coordinate, manage and regulate the system.” (SDBOR Policy 1:1). SDBOR Policy 1:0 describes the structure and roles of the Board of Regents, Board of Regents Staff, and the Presidents and Superintendents of the schools under the purview of the SDBOR. To facilitate the function of the board, there are committees to review and make recommendations on particular matters: Committee on Academic and Student Affairs, Committee on Budget and Finance, and the Audit Committee. The SDBOR staff oversees the administrative functions of the board and leads specialized committee structures for representation across the institutions within the system: Academic Affairs Council, Student Affairs Council, Business Affairs Council, and the Technical Affairs Council. These committees move forward curriculum, budget requests, and policy changes to SDBOR board staff for submission to the board of regents for approval and discussion.

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

The SDBOR and all regental schools are state entities and as such, must conform to transparency mandates for fiscal and operational functions. Therefore, all SDBOR agenda items and meeting
minutes are available to the public via the SDBOR website. Each board meeting is also streamed live for the public to view via a link on the same website.

The SDBOR deliberations reflect the academic priorities of the public institutions of the state of South Dakota. The SDBOR must approve curricular changes, institutional budgets, policy changes, tuition and fees, and capital projects. Each meeting follows the format illustrated below:

- **Board Work** – this element of the meeting addresses the approval of the agenda and minutes for the previous meeting.
- **Executive Session** – this element of the meeting is a closed session where board members discuss personnel matters, pending and prospective litigation, contracts, marketing, and consultations with legal counsel.
- **Welcome and Introduction Sessions** – this element of the meeting consists of a welcome address from the institution hosting the meeting, a report from the Executive Director, and other special information items or action items.
- **Consent Agenda** – this element of the meeting includes presentation of items from Academic and Student Affairs, Budget and Finance, and Routine Informational Items that board staff recommend for approval.
- **Academic and Student Affairs** – this element of the meeting includes presentation of items from Academic and Student Affairs which require discussion, recommendation, and possibly action.
- **Budget and Finance** – this element of the meeting includes presentation of items from Budget and Finance which require discussion, recommendation, and possibly action.
- **Campus Community Forum** – this element of the meeting allows members of the community to engage with the entire board through an informal question and answer session.

Current discussions and resolutions of the SDBOR that have enhanced USD include in-state tuition for students from Nebraska and the change in the memorandum of understanding for the Community College for Sioux Falls, both of which are discussed in 5.C.5.

2.C.3: The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution’s internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

The SDBOR considers internal and external stakeholders in its decision making. The recent decision to provide in-state tuition to Nebraska residents and the change in control and structure of the Community College for Sioux Falls (both described in 5.C.5) are examples. All SDBOR agendas and minutes are open to the public and individuals may review former meeting materials on the SDBOR website. Building requests are another example of the SDBOR responding to institutional needs. The most recent example for USD is the October 2019 discussion of the Health Science Building.

2.C.4: The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties.
As outlined in SDBOR Policy 1:3, the SDBOR has nine members which are appointed by the Governor and then confirmed by the state senate. As stated in South Dakota Codified Law 13-49-2 “No two regents may be residents of the same county and no more than six can be from the same political party. One regent shall be the student regent…”. Regents are bound by conflict of interest and must disclose any at the beginning of each board meeting.

2.C.5: The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution’s administration and expects the institution’s faculty to oversee academic matters.

The President of USD has been delegated the authority to govern the day-to-day management of the institution via SDBOR Policy 1:0. The policy states that “The Board delegates to the presidents and superintendents the responsibilities for managing and operating the individual institutions within the framework of a Unified System.” The President’s role is further outlined in SDBOR Policy 1:6.

The SDBOR expects that faculty are active in teaching, scholarship, and service. These expectations are outlined in SDBOR Policy 4:38.

Sources

- SDBOR Agenda Items Home
- SDBOR Policy 1.0
- SDBOR Policy 1.1
- SDBOR Policy 1.3
- SDBOR Policy 1.6
- SDBOR Policy 4-38
- USD Health Science Building Discussion 6_D_BOR1019
2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

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

USD is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. The SDOBR Policy 1:11 guarantees academic freedom (in both teaching and research) to all faculty from SDBOR institutions and provides that student performance should be evaluated “solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.” The Faculty Handbook includes the language of the SDBOR policy on academic freedom for faculty reference. To ensure that students understand the commitment to academic freedom, syllabi include the Freedom in Learning statement:

“Under Board of Regents and University policy, student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact the dean of the college or school that offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.”

The Student Handbook includes a link to SDBOR Policy 3:3 which states that “The institutions shall ensure the rights of free speech and expression and shall encourage the timely and rational discussion of topics whereby the ethical and intellectual development of the student body and general welfare of the public may be promoted.” The Student Handbook also links directly to SDBOR Policy 1:32 which is the Commitment to Freedom of Expression policy.

Sources

- SDBOR Policy 1.11 Academic Freedom and Responsibility
- SDBOR Policy 1.32 Commitment to Freedom of Expression
- SDBOR Policy 3-3
2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

Argument

2.E.1: Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) oversees USD’s research function. The ORSP assists faculty, oversees compliance functions, and administers policies associated with research at the institution. The Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Program is part of the educational and outreach activities of the ORSP. The program is offered annually both on-campus and online. Students are provided face-to-face training via summer workshops offered by BRIN, and a credit-bearing course is available for students in Basic Biomedical Sciences, Biology, Biomedical Engineering, and Chemistry.

Animal research is overseen by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) to ensure research and facilities abide by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) guidelines and regulations. USD is an AALAC accredited institution and has listed policies to ensure the proper training of researchers and care of research animals on the website and within the MyUSD portal. Meeting minutes reflect updates of policies and approval of submitted protocols. A protocol form is provided as evidence part of this process.

The Human Subject Protection Program oversees all research conducted by university affiliates, as well as research conducted at two regional VA health centers. USD is the only SDBOR institution to be accredited by the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs (AAHRPP) and was one of the first five programs accredited in the nation. The USD Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews, approves, and monitors research projects involving humans and/or their data. It has a federal-wide assurance with the Department of Health and Human Services and applies the federal regulations to all human subject research, regardless of funding or review level.
The Technology Transfer Office (TTO) is USD's intellectual property (IP) administration hub which manages IP via SDBOR Policy 4:34 and USD Intellectual Policy. The TTO also holds the responsibility of managing IP assets developed at the university. The office assists faculty and students in moving innovative ideas from USD into the marketplace. This involves evaluating invention disclosures and working with the University Senate IP Committee to determine patentability and commercial potential. It also involves drafting, negotiating, and executing legal agreements such as material transfer agreements, non-disclosure agreements, technology development agreements, sponsored research agreements, and commercialization licenses.

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

The ORSP provides faculty with support services for research. Grant Specialists are available to assist faculty with researching grant possibilities, submitting of grant forms, external review of proposals, and processing grant awards. As described in the previous section, the ORSP also oversees intellectual property, human subjects training, and other training courses to ensure researchers are meeting ethical expectations.

The University Libraries offer the research tools expected of a research intensive, flagship institution. The Library Annual Report provides data associated with lending, access, and instruction provided at the University Libraries each year. Faculty, staff, and students have access to a variety of academic databases, journals, books, government documents, special collections, and archives. Researchers have access to Research Guides and reference librarians. Librarians also provide information on copyright protections and authorship to those that need assistance.

2.E.3: The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.

Students have access to the Tutorials and Information Literacy webpage through the library. This site provides lessons and videos on research skills, academic integrity, citations, and more. The Liaison Librarians provide information literacy sessions in all English courses and other courses if requested. Students are also provided opportunity for CITI training which is outlined in section 2.E.1 above.

2.E.4: The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Section C.2.1 of the SDBOR Policy 3:4, Student Code of Conduct, addresses student expectations for academic integrity, and section 3 of the policy outlines the process associated with allegations of misconduct. Academic integrity is also governed by SDBOR Policy 2:33, Student Academic Misconduct and USD Policy 1.017. Allegations of academic misconduct are adjudicated within the Student Rights & Responsibilities office through SDBOR Policy 3:4.

Sources
- Animal-Use-Protocol
- Human Subjects Information
- Information Literacy instruction Data Library
- LibraryAnnualReport2017
- SDBOR Policy 2-33
- SDBOR Policy 3-4 Student Code of Conduct
- SDBOR Policy 4-34 Intellectual Property
- USD Intellectual Property Policy
- USD Policy 1.017
2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

The University of South Dakota operates in an ethical, transparent, and responsible manner. As part of a state regental system, USD is bound by system-level policies associated with curriculum, governance, finances, and operations. Academic freedom and integrity are integral to the institution and codified in both regental and institutional policy.

Sources

There are no sources.
3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Argument

The University of South Dakota was authorized in 1862 by the Dakota Territory Legislature, and first offered classes in 1882 under the auspices of the privately incorporated University of Dakota. Since that time, the University has been growing and adapting to the needs of the state of South Dakota, our immediate four-state region, our nation, and the world. Degree programs have been an important part of that growth and adaptation. As our region has changed, new programs have been added, and obsolete ones eliminated. USD’s first academic unit, the College of Arts and Sciences, was established in 1883, the School of Law began offering classes in 1901, the School of Medicine in 1907, Continuing Education in 1916, the Schools of Business and Education in 1927, the Graduate School in 1929, the College of Fine Arts in 1931, and the School of Health Sciences in 2007. Each of these programmatic additions were made to respond to or anticipate the needs of our community, state, and region.

Just this past year, USD assumed autonomous control of the Sioux Falls location that had been jointly shared between three Regental institutions. This location has changed its name and reshaped its vision. The USD Community College for Sioux Falls plans to provide two-year transferable associate degrees, noncredit workforce education for local businesses, noncredit community education classes for retirees, four-year completion degrees, and specific graduate programs. This is vital for a state that has no traditional community colleges, and its programs directly serve the region’s largest city. A full listing of academic programs indicates the type of accessible, flexible, and relevant educational experiences this unit will provide.
USD has been continuously accredited by the Higher Learning Commission since 1913. The University currently offers undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs within the South Dakota System of Higher Education. As the oldest institution in the regental system, the University of South Dakota serves as the flagship and the only public liberal arts institution in the state. These distinctions provide a framework for the type and quality of our programs.

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

The undergraduate and graduate catalogs document the required curriculum for every program offered at the university, including, majors, minors, specializations, and graduate and professional degrees. Beyond that, however, our courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded, as evidenced by the number of accredited programs, the program review process, the curriculum oversight process, and the success of our students.

Many of our individual schools, departments, and programs have received accreditation from their appropriate professional organizations, and these are documented within the undergraduate and graduate catalogs. USD and the SDBOR encourage departments to seek specialized accreditation where appropriate. For example, during the 2018-19 academic year, the Department of Biomedical Engineering submitted a request to seek ABET accreditation for the B.S. in Biomedical Engineering. In some cases, rather than specialized accreditation, programs may base their curricula on national standards. For example, the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics bases its language programs on ACTFL national standards, and the Department of Psychology revised its undergraduate curriculum in Fall 2017 to align with the American Psychological Association Standards of Accreditation for Clinical Psychology guidelines.

USD has a robust curricular process to ensure that academic programming is current and rigorous. If a program seeks to submit a request for curricular change (substantive program modifications, new certificate program requests, new site requests, new specializations, intents to plan, requests to seek specialized accreditation, new minor requests, new undergraduate degree program requests, new graduate degree program requests, and inactivate or terminate a program), the faculty must move the request through the curricular process. The first group to review the request is the designated committee within the school or college. The request will move through the curricular process. The first group to review the request is the designated committee within the school or college. The request will move through each committee level of the process as long as it is approved at the previous level. Depending on the program requesting the curricular change, the request will move to either the USD C&I committee (Undergraduate, Sanford School of Medicine, Knudson School of Law) or the Graduate Council (graduate level programming). Requests moving through the USD C&I then move to the Senate before reaching Academic Affairs while those submitted to Graduate Council go directly to Academic Affairs. After approval in Academic Affairs, curricular proposals will move to the Academic Affairs Council of the SDBOR and if necessary, on to the agenda for the SDBOR. Examples of curricular proposals moving through the USD C&I Committee and the Graduate Council are provided for review. Academic Affairs tracks all request for an academic year and posts on the website for transparency. Academic catalogs are updated annually accordingly.
Academic Program Review is regulated by SDBOR Policy 2:11, which mandates a 7-year review cycle. The program review process makes use of specialized accreditation reports (AACSB letter) as well as internal reviews for non-accredited programs. The USD Program Review Handbook outlines the processes and procedures used for academic program review at the University of South Dakota, as well as the schedule of programs to be reviewed.

Academic program reviews demonstrate programmatic commitment to a contemporary and coherent curriculum, well developed assessment processes, engaged student learning, and the currency of faculty and instructional staff.

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

Program faculty define and devise student learning goals within each academic program. As outlined in the faculty handbook (p. 20), the faculty members of the individual academic units determine their programs’ intended outcomes, select and utilize appropriate assessment methods and measures, analyze the resulting data, and develop recommendations for improvement based on what they have learned. Graduation requirements for all undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs are clearly articulated in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs. In addition, many departments have graduate student handbooks that articulate graduation requirements and expectations for degree attainment.

Programmatic learning goals are primarily housed within a campus-wide comprehensive assessment platform, Nuventive. This system provides a single “one-stop shop” for department-level performance data, strategic goals, and student learning outcomes. Nuventive is available to all faculty members and select staff. Some programs have specialized accreditation requirements and use their accreditation reports rather than Nuventive to track progress on student learning goals. The Sanford School of Medicine learning objectives are found within the curriculum section of their website, and focus on Patient Care, Medical Knowledge, Practice-Based Learning and Improvement, Interpersonal and Communication Skills, Professionalism and Systems-Based Practice.

Courses that are dual-listed (e.g., 400/500) are required by SDBOR Policy 2:8 (section 2.4) to have separate syllabi that document the difference in the quality and depth of work appropriate to graduate education. Dual-listed course syllabi must outline the student learning outcomes, goals or objectives specific to academic level.

The general education curriculum is underpinned by six learning goals adopted by the SDBOR and can be found within the undergraduate catalog. More information about the learning outcomes of our general education curriculum can be found in 3.B.1 and 3.B.2.

3.A.3. *The institution’s program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).*
The University of South Dakota ensures consistent, high-quality learning goals across all modes of delivery, whether that be at the new Community College for Sioux Falls and other locations, dual credit courses, online, DDN (telecourse), hybrid, or through contractual and consortial arrangements. Representative syllabi from BADM 369 (Vermillion, Sioux Falls and online) and SOC 100 (Vermillion, Sioux Falls, online, and in-district) demonstrate that while teaching techniques may differ, the learning goals and expectations for quality are consistent.

The Board of Regents also mandates a comprehensive quality assurance process for all online, hybrid, and DDN courses, including quality assurance standards. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at USD conducts the quality assurance check and tracks data related to the consistency of educational experiences for students. The CTL annual report presents some of these data, and objectives 9-12 specifically look at the online modality. Data from this report indicate that USD students rate their educational experience more positively than the national average regardless of modality, and that faculty perceive that the CTL training processes are effective. Past data from this report (Objective 10, AY13-14 report) have led to an increased emphasis on earlier faculty training and a revision of the online faculty orientation.

Dual Credit (Fall 19, Spring 20) courses are primarily taught online but are also offered on USD’s campuses (including the USD Community College for Sioux Falls), or via contract with specific school districts (in-district delivery). These courses are considered USD courses, are taught by USD faculty, and share the same learning goals. We have attached as examples syllabi from BIOL 151, ENGL 101, HIST 121, MATH 114 (In-District), MATH 114 (Online), MATH 114 (Sioux Falls), MUS 100, POLS 250, and SPCM 101. Faculty (with the exception of the in-district courses) are not even aware if dual-credit students are in the course unless the students identify themselves as such.

Sources

- 13-14 CTL Annual Report
- 2018-2019 Curriculum
- 2019 Fall BADM 369 Syllabus F2F-online-SF combined
- AAC Guideline 5.8
- AAC Guideline 5.9
- AACSBSouthDakota_Uof_Extend_BOARD_CIRC_FINAL LETTER_05092019
- About USD and Accreditations - The University of South Dakota - Acalog ACMS™
- Assessment Page from FacultyHandbookJuly2018
- AY19 CTL Annual Report
- BME-Request to Seek Accreditation BME BS
- Combined Soc 100 syllabi
- Community College for Sioux Falls Programs _ USD
- DCSPRINGCCSF
- DCSPRINGFLYEROOnline
- Dual Credit Syllabi samples
- dualcreditfall2019
- ENGLDual Listed Courses
• GC Minutes 2018.11
• General Education Requirements - USD
• Graduate Student Handbooks _ USD
• GraduateCatalogDegreePrograms
• Medical School Competencies and Learning Objectives
• ModernLanguagesProgramReview
• Nuventive Student Learning Outcomes Report
• Prog SubMod PSYC BA
• Program outcomes
• SDBOR Policy 2.11 Assessment
• SDBOR Policy 2.8
• SPAN 101 U025 Introductory Spanish I FA18-DSCG
• UndergraduateCatalogDegreePrograms
• USD Community College for Sioux Falls _ USD
• USDCandIProcess
• USDCI Minutes 2019.04.01
• USDProgramReviewHandbook

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

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution’s mission.

Argument

3.B.1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.

The University of South Dakota, with its distinct focus on the liberal arts, views its general education curriculum as a signature element of its core value proposition. Consequently, the quality of this curriculum occupies a position of tremendous importance in the life of the university. The foundational coursework teaches students to think critically and communicate effectively, solve problems, generate new ideas and create knowledge, make connections between academic disciplines, respect and understand differences, and develop intellectual curiosity and love of learning as citizens and leaders.

The general education curriculum is based in a traditional distribution requirement which incorporates the following goals:

- Students will write effectively and responsibly and will understand and interpret the written expression of others.
- Students will communicate effectively and responsibly through listening and speaking.
- Students will understand the organization, potential, and diversity of the human community through study of the social sciences.
- Students will understand the diversity and complexity of the human experience through study of the arts and humanities.
- Students will understand and apply fundamental mathematical processes and reasoning.
Students will understand the fundamental principles of the natural sciences and apply scientific methods of inquiry to investigate the natural world.

SDBOR Policy 2:11 further requires programmatic incorporation and assessment of Cross-Curricular Skills in every undergraduate program to facilitate the adoption of broad general education skills within academic programs. These skills go beyond the typical distribution model of general studies and represent the traditional liberal arts and 21st Century skills. Each undergraduate program is responsible for selecting five of the eleven cross-curricular skills that best fit the particular program. The eleven cross-curricular skills are:

- Inquiry and Analysis
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Information Literacy
- Teamwork
- Problem Solving
- Civic Knowledge and Engagement
- Intercultural Knowledge
- Ethical Reasoning
- Foundational Lifelong Learning Skills
- Integrative Learning
- Diversity, Inclusion and Equity

USD’s general studies curriculum, differentiated by Associates and Bachelor’s degrees, are found in the undergraduate catalog. The USD General Education Assessment Handbook outlines the processes and procedures used for general education assessment.

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

The University of South Dakota is a vibrant combination of innovation, artistry, and discovery. This is demonstrated through the broad learning skills of our general education curriculum and the disciplined exercise of intellectual inquiry that is a core feature of our curriculum and our culture. While the framework for general education is consistent across the system, as specified in SDBOR Policy 2.7 and AAC Guidelines 8.2 and 8.4, SDBOR Policy 2.11, the Board of Regents mandates that each institution integrate and extend general education learning into its programs of study in a manner consistent with, and supportive of each institution’s mission, vision, and values, and any requirements of ongoing institutional or program-specific accreditation or approval. This is accomplished by allowing institutions to develop and offer system-approved courses as per AAC Guideline 8.4. A review of the courses approved for general education for USD reflects the nature and philosophy of a liberal arts, flagship institution.
3.B.3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.

"Mitakuye Oyasin" (We are all related) - Lakota proverb

USD is committed to offering an education that embraces the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live. We recognize that USD exists on the ancestral lands of Native American tribes whose heritage and culture continue to enrich our community to this day, and it is with profound respect that we acknowledge the indigenous peoples of this land.

USD is committed to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment, conducive to the exploration and discovery of diversity, because we recognize that such an environment is an essential part of the teaching and learning process. The efforts to create this environment arise from many directions--from student and faculty initiatives, from the curricula itself, and from administrative support from the program level up to the president’s office.

The USD curricula recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work. This is one of the core ideals within the general studies learning outcomes. For example, the third learning outcome for SGR 3 states that students will “Analyze the extent and impact of diversity among individuals, cultures, or societies in contemporary or historical contexts using social science methods and concepts.” The first learning outcome for SGR 4 states that students will “Demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of values, beliefs, practices, or ideas embodied in the human experience.” At the department/program level, student learning outcomes that focus on the topic of diversity are shown in these examples.

The seriousness with which the university takes this criterion can be marked by the fact that it was the subject of our Quality Initiative. This initiative, the “Campaign for Inclusive Excellence: Increasing the Recruitment, Retention, and Success of Students of Color,” was a five-year project aimed at directing efforts toward the institution’s strategic goals associated with diversity and inclusive excellence. The QI showed notable successes, including statistically significant gains in student satisfaction in aspects of diversity and inclusion, increases in enrollment and retention, and a gain of 20.1 percentage points in our 4-year graduation rate for students of color. While we are pleased with our successes, we also recognize that we have more work to do to eliminate the gap in measures of success between our white students and our students of color. The data and structural changes made as a result of the QI were instrumental in USD’s selection as one of only 24 universities nationwide to receive a five-year, $1 million grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute to bring more diverse people into the study of science. USD’s Inclusive Science Initiative focuses on faculty mentorship, integrating a student’s cultural identity with a scientific identity, and the use of data to determine the factors that impact a student’s motivation to choose and remain in a science major.

3.B.4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution’s mission.
USD leverages its role as South Dakota’s flagship university to provide an environment where university research can be applied and commercialized to help grow South Dakota’s economy and serve its citizens. This is reflected in such centers as the USD Discovery District, the Graduate Education & Applied Research (GEAR) Center, the Center for Brain and Behavior Research (CBBRe), and the Government Research Bureau. USD also recognizes that scholarly activity and creative research are the foundation of extraordinary teaching. The 2019 President’s Research Awards reflect the strength and diversity of research at USD, with recognition given to faculty in Computer Science, Biology, Biomedical Engineering, and Music.

USD faculty and students participate in research and creative scholarship across all colleges, schools, and disciplines. The University of South Dakota has a Carnegie classification of “Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity.” The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs has overall responsibility for the University's research function by assisting faculty and researchers, establishing and administering policies governing the conduct of research, and overseeing the management of research programs (see 2.E.1). The FY2019 Annual Report onExternally Sponsored Programs shows that external funds have steadily increased the past five years and are at an eight-year high, after a drop following the FY11 recession (and reduction in federal and state grant availability). Undergraduate research is also supported by the Gallagher Center for Experiential Learning and Education Abroad.

All tenured and tenure-track faculty are expected to develop a research/creative scholarship program as appropriate to their position and the percentage of their workload dedicated to these activities. These expectations are generally described in the Faculty Handbook (p. 21), the Expectations of the Faculty (university wide), and specifically described by department expectations for the faculty (for example see Music, Mathematical Sciences, Librarians, and Business).

Graduate and undergraduate research is a priority for the university. Graduates have access to Graduate School Research and Creative Scholarship Awards, while undergraduates have access to the CURCS Mini-Grant Program. Individual programs supporting research include the Biomedical Research Infrastructure Network (BRIN), Summer Program for Undergraduate Research in Addiction (SPURA), Undergraduate Research Fellows, Center for Brain and Behavior Research (CBBRe), the USD Neuroscience, Nanotechnology & Networks program, the U.Discover Summer Scholar Program, the Student History Conference, and the Coyote Capital Management organization. This support has tangible impact. During the Fall 2019 semester alone students received national recognition in areas such as Brain and Behavior Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and Alternative Dispute Resolution. For students, the culminating university celebration of research is USD’s annual IdeaFest, a premier symposium that showcases the many contributions of our students, both graduate and undergraduate. Last year, 401 students representing 43 academic or co-curricular organizations participated.

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Argument

3.C.1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

USD is committed to becoming a regional leader in diversity and inclusiveness initiatives and the practice of Inclusive Excellence. We do not just want to reflect the current diversity in our region, but to lead as a progressive example of what inclusive excellence means in a region where demographics are changing.

Our commitment to diversity begins with the hiring process. The University of South Dakota Best Hiring Practices guidebook, implemented in 2013, provides guidance toward forming a diverse search and screen advisory committee (p. 9), actively recruiting and building an excellent and diverse pool of applicants (p. 21-25), and discusses the influence of unconscious assumptions and biases (p. 32-37). The USD Hiring Guidelines Handbook provides the procedural guidelines for all hires.

While hiring is the first step, the university goes further to ensure we reflect the fullest range of human diversity through a variety of support mechanisms. The President’s Council on Diversity and Inclusiveness leads this effort. For example, the President’s Council was an important
advocate for the implementation of a preferred name policy in USD’s new institutional database. This allows faculty to change the way their name appears on University websites, including the learning management system. The Center for Diversity and Community (CDC) serves primarily students, but facilitates events that support faculty and staff expressions of diversity as well. The USD Faculty and Staff of Color Association (FSCA) is a group dedicated to building community among faculty and staff of color at the University of South Dakota. One of the objectives of FSCA is to support the Inclusive Excellence efforts of the university, in particular those initiatives that impact faculty and staff of color. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers workshops that address diversity issues such as gender and sexuality in the classroom, and digital accessibility. These units (and others) often work together to facilitate broader conversations. For example, the CTL, CDC, FSCA and many other units worked together to bring Dr. Patricia Matthew to campus Spring 2020 as part of a larger series of events discussing her book *Written/Unwritten: Diversity and the Hidden Truths of Tenure*.

USD hiring practices and support mechanisms have resulted in tangible positive impacts. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of July 2018 15.6% of the population of South Dakota identified itself as non-white. The SDBOR Fact Book 2019 (p. 31) indicates that 17.2% of USD faculty identify as non-white, up from 14.2% in 2013 (p. 55). The work of the Quality Initiative (p. 4) has shown a corresponding increase in the number of students of color, from 10.9% in 2013 to 13.6% Fall of 2018. Staff diversity is a little less, with 10.52% indicating that they are non-white as of June 2019. At USD, 49.2% of faculty identify as female, while 50.8% identify as male. This is by far the most female-heavy doctoral institution in the SDBOR, as referenced in the SDBOR FY20 Factbook. USD recognizes and supports many other types of diverse groups, such as veterans, employees with disabilities, LGBTQ+ communities, and more. However, data on this, due to the confidential nature of these protected groups, is limited.

As mentioned in the mission and related documents, USD aspires to lead the state in the implementation of Inclusive Excellence. We want to be the diversity the state will become.

3.C.2. *The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning; and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.*

USD has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to successfully carry out the mission of the university in both their classroom and non-classroom responsibilities. They provide important leadership in areas such as curriculum development and assessment, and they do so while maintaining impressive research and creative activities profiles, and while providing educational experiences that are recognizably higher than national averages.

As reported in the AY19 the Institutional Update (p. 17), USD employed 428 full-time faculty, 652 part-time faculty, 865 full-time staff and administration, and 93 part-time staff and administration, with a 14.47 to1 Student-Faculty ratio. The trend in staffing can be seen in the table below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>AY17 (pg. 26)</th>
<th>AY18 (pg. 26)</th>
<th>AY19 (pg. 17)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time Faculty</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time Faculty</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time Administration</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time Administration</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time Staff</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time Staff</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-to-Faculty Ratio</td>
<td>18.00:1</td>
<td>14.53:1</td>
<td>14.47:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Evidence that these individuals provide effective, high-quality programs and student services is broadly measured through rankings such as U.S. News and World Report (Best National University, Best for Rural Medicine, Best Online Graduate Business Programs) Princeton Review (Best 382 Colleges, Best Law School) and Forbes (America’s Top Colleges). Further, data (p. 15) from the classroom evaluation tool, IDEA, indicate that USD faculty and courses consistently rank above the raw mean national average for both face to face and online courses.

Faculty play a critical role in the oversight of the curriculum. As described in 3.C.1, the C&I Review process documents the path that curricular requests must take. All requests originate from the department or division, and are approved through the C&I or Graduate Council committees. These committees both have a majority faculty voting membership and report to the University Senate.

Faculty are the foundational level for assessment of student learning for the university. Faculty define learning outcomes for courses and programs and develop assessment protocols for the measurement of those outcomes. They choose from approved general education cross-curricular skills for their undergraduate programs. Faculty interpret the results of course- and program-level assessment (see assessment reports in 4.B) and develop curricular changes (see 3.A.1) as a result of assessment findings. Assessment is driven by faculty at the department and program level, and faculty also serve on school, college or university-level assessment committees. These committees coordinate and systematize the development, execution, monitoring, and revision of local assessment plans.

The vast majority of faculty and high-level administrative search committees include faculty representation. USD follows HLC policy on faculty credentials (see 3.C.3). Graduate faculty status is granted by the Graduate Council as per the Graduate Faculty Review and Approval
Process which follows HLC guidelines. Faculty comprise the voting majority of this committee.

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

As described in the SDBOR 2019 Fact Book, faculty are appropriately qualified, with 74.1% holding a terminal degree. Faculty who are not qualified by academic degree are qualified by tested experience as provided in HLC guidelines. Undergraduate faculty qualified by tested experience must be approved by the chair of the department and reviewed by the dean.

All graduate faculty—whether qualified by degree or by tested experience—must be approved through the Graduate Council, as specified in the faculty handbook (p. 11). Evidence of this process can be seen in their minutes. Information regarding the professional/technical experience and competency in the discipline related to the teaching assignment must be demonstrated in the C.V. The Department/Division Chair must also address the relevance of the prospective graduate faculty member’s “…skill sets, types of certifications, or additional credentials and experiences that would meet the tested experience requirements…” relevant to the content of the courses and degree level to which the faculty member will be assigned to teach. A list of the graduate faculty for 2019, including degree, is found in the Graduate Catalog.

Dual Credit courses are considered USD courses, are taught by USD faculty, and faculty are typically unaware that there are high school students in the course. Most are taught online or on USD’s campus, and are part of the regular course catalog (see 3.A.3). Three in-district courses physically taught within the high schools were offered beginning Fall 2018. Faculty for these courses (listed below) are considered USD faculty, are selected and approved by department chairs, and are qualified as per HLC guidelines. A Dual Credit coordinator is in communication with all partner schools to facilitate this process. In-district dual credit courses and their faculty are:

- **MATH 114, instructor 1**: MS in Mathematics (Focus on Education)
- **MATH 114, instructor 2**: MA in Mathematics
- **SPCM 101**: MS in Communication Studies

**3.C.4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.**

Annual Performance Evaluations are a requirement for instructional staff of all ranks, including instructors within the lecture series, tenured and tenure-track faculty, faculty librarians, and non-faculty overtime exempt instructional staff. These faculty evaluation standards are documented in the USD Faculty Handbook (p. 13) and the Medical School Faculty Handbook (p. 15). The process for tenured and tenure-track faculty was formerly governed by COHE/SDBOR agreement section 12 (p. 43). The South Dakota legislature recently (spring 2020) eliminated the COHE so the expectations within the COHE agreement are currently being incorporated into
SDBOR policy. Expectations for faculty evaluations are presented in the faculty handbook (chapters 3-7) and the “Expectations of Faculty with Professional Rank” document. They are further defined by specific programs and/or departments (see examples from Library, Mathematical Sciences, and Music).

The COHE/SDBOR Agreement further specified that student surveys of teaching are to be used (12.4, p. 53) a practice which will continue even though that agreement is no longer in effect. SDBOR guidelines govern the administration of these surveys. Current USD practice is to survey every course that meets a minimum enrollment (five or more enrolled students) every semester. An alternate survey is provided for course sections that do not meet this requirement. Most units use the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction, a few units such as the Law School use their own instrument. Graduate students who are instructors of record are evaluated through this process as well.

Chairs and Deans are also evaluated regularly. They are evaluated annually by their supervisor, as are all university employees. They are also evaluated every three years by their faculty and staff, in accordance with SDBOR guidelines.

3.C.5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

USD values and supports professional development for its instructors. The annual review process described in 3.C.4 ensures that faculty are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles. Student feedback on teaching is incorporated into this process, and chairs have an opportunity to provide specific input on a faculty member’s teaching. Faculty in accredited programs are subject to review and assessment by their accrediting organizations. For example, the 2019 AACSB accreditation of the Beacom School of Business (BSB) concluded that “The BSB faculty are invested in student success through strong interactions within and outside of the classroom. In addition, faculty members are very proud of their teaching focus and many of their activities are innovative.” The Expectations of the Faculty (p.5) document outlines the expectations for faculty in terms of their teaching and plays an important role in the promotion and tenure process. Tenure-track faculty are eligible for a sabbatical as per section SDBOR Policy 4.15. Faculty and staff who wish to further their education may do so and receive a 50% tuition reduction and 3 hours per week of paid educational leave. The annual evaluation process referenced in 3.C.4 is linked to faculty professional development plans.

The Sanford School of Medicine provides its own faculty development programming and many of the departments, schools and colleges provide their own professional development to meet their unique programmatic needs. The CTL oversees professional development for most of the university (including online and the Community College for Sioux Falls). The CTL develops and supports a community dedicated to excellent teaching and learning, regardless of location, formality, or modality. Their Annual Report documents their activities and measures impact through outcomes-based assessment. For example, in AY19, 92.9% of faculty reported that they use technology to enhance their face-to-face classroom, 86.3% of students in courses redesigned through the CTL Course Design Fellowship indicated that the use of technology in their class
enhanced their learning experience, and 83.8% indicated that they engaged in course activities that helped them think in new ways.

The CTL provides approximately $27,000 in grants specifically designed to enhance teaching and learning initiatives, and offers numerous workshops related to teaching technology and office productivity, as well as accessibility and online teaching. They also partner with many areas across campus to bring enhanced professional development opportunities to faculty and staff. Online faculty are welcome to attend most workshops through our conferencing software, and the Online Program Manager sends out monthly newsletters to online faculty reminding them of opportunities that they might find particularly valuable. Data from NSSE indicates that the majority of students believe that their instructors engage in effective teaching practices (p. 6). Nationally normed course evaluations indicate that students rate our instructors and courses more highly than national averages (see SU18, FA18, and SP19 for example).

3.C.6. **Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.**

All instructors are required by the faculty handbook (p. 17) to “maintain regular office hours for students and post the availability in the syllabus.” The Online QA rubric requires instructors to clearly define how, when, and where the instructor will interact with students in an online course. Our Student Satisfaction Dashboard indicates that students rated the statement “Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours” as high both in importance and in satisfaction (significant at the .05 level). Faculty also interact with students in a wide variety of ways outside of the classroom, including the Honors first-year reading project, the Honors Thesis, undergraduate research and creative scholarship, faculty-led programs abroad, student organization faculty advisors (p. 15-16) and much more.

3.C.7. **Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.**

USD values and supports professional development for its staff members, and ensures that they are appropriately trained, qualified, and evaluated. Professional staff (non-faculty, overtime exempt) are evaluated on a series of goals that are established with their supervisors, and these evaluations include training and development plans. Career Staff are evaluated through the Accountability and Competency Evaluation System (ACES) process. HR provides training for supervisors and new faculty and staff. Examples of how our staff are qualified and trained within specific areas follows.

**Student Services:**

Student Services directors hold a master's degree in Higher Education or a related field to ensure they have the knowledge to educate and work with students to promote a sense of community and success. Each year staff members are given the opportunity to participate in a state, regional, or national conference since the Vice President of Student Affairs maintains a targeted budget line to fund and support staff professional development. Additionally, professional
development is provided during Senior Staff meetings and other staff meetings for within student service areas.

Graduate Assistants (GAs) are an important component of student services staff. Student services provides onboarding experiences for GAs that includes a full week of training for most departments including housing, the Wellness Center, counseling center, student programming, Student Rights and Responsibilities, Native Student Services, the Center for Diversity and Community, Disability Services and Fraternity and Sorority life. Since it is important for GA’s to have goals, be given valuable work experiences, and receive effective feedback, they are evaluated via a formalized evaluation tool in February of each year.

Honors Program:

NFE staff within the Honors Program hold a master’s degree or higher to ensure that they have the knowledge to work with and advise our most academically advanced students. Each year Honors staff are encouraged to participate in a national conference associated with their field (typically either the National Collegiate Honors Council, National Association of Fellowships Advisors, or National Academic Advising Association). Honors maintains a budget line devoted to professional staff development. Additionally, professional development occurs during staff meetings and bi-yearly staff retreats; staff are also encouraged to participate in USD sponsored professional development programs.

Academic and Career Planning Center:

The Academic & Career Planning Center (ACPC) is the home of USD’s First-Year Experience program, and the ACPC also provides an educational experiences to help students explore and navigate a path to degree completion and a plan for the future. All advisors have a Master’s degree or higher, and new advisors and GAs are trained for 2-3 weeks before meeting one-on-one with students. Training is shared among the advising staff but is overseen by the director. In the ACPC, senior advisors’ offices are intentionally located near newer advisors’ offices, so they can help with onboarding. ACPC advisors are encouraged to attend regional or national NACADA conferences and to share what they learned upon their return. All professional advisors around campus meet weekly to discuss advising issues and to share experiences that can aid in professional development.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

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

Argument

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

USD’s commitment to student success is illustrated by results from the most recent National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) where 86% of freshman and seniors rated their entire educational experience at USD as “excellent” or “good.” The range of student support activities offered by the University is diverse and extensive and is congruent with the USD mission. Student Services supports the university mission by promoting student engagement to develop skills through educational and social opportunities to contribute within a diverse global society.

The Student Handbook provides information on services for students, activities and organizations, policies and procedures, the student code of conduct, and consumer disclosures.

USD provides effective support for student learning and effective teaching, regardless of location, formality, or modality. Nationally normed course evaluations indicate that students rate our instructors and courses more highly than national averages (see SU18, FA18, and SP19 for example), and pass rates on national tests indicate that USD students are successful by national professional standards (SDBOR Fact Book p. 27).

USD recognizes that student engagement is critical to the success of our students. USD has incorporated a number of technological support services to keep students informed and to track their participation. In 2019 the Coyote One Stop was established to have one central place for students to request assistance and find answers to their questions regarding academic advising, the business office, financial aid, housing and meal plans, bookstore processes, technology, and the registrar’s office. Another avenue for students to get information and navigate USD is thorough the USDgo app where students can find important news and events, course schedules,
grades, event tickets, and important numbers and contact information. USD Involved is a software system which provides information on the 150+ student organizations, events happening on campus, and tracks their involvement.

The nine residence halls are home for up to 2226 students and provide a safe space where students can meet new people, create lasting relationships, and participate in educational programming. Students residing in Greek housing are also engaged on campus through fraternity and sorority life. Approximately 1000 students are members in one of our four sororities and eight fraternities where they develop leadership skills, organize and lead community service programming, and develop friends that last a lifetime.

Support for students’ health and wellness is provided through intramural and club sports, group fitness classes, and other activities at our state of the art Wellness Center. The Counseling Center provides a wide range of confidential services including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, education, and prevention. The staff is available 24/7 in the event of a crisis, and they provide resources on their website. Additionally, the Student Counseling Center is accredited through the South Dakota Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse for chemical dependency treatment services. USD established a Certified Peer Educator Training Program which is an educational tool designed to prepare students to educate, advocate for their peers’ well-being, and save lives.

USD is committed to providing a safe environment for all students. USD has a Safe Ride program, which is a free late-night service on Friday and Saturday evenings. USD has adopted a safety app that serves as a virtual escort to students and provides real-time location information to emergency contacts and the University Police Department. The ICARE program is designed to prevent campus sexual assault through advocacy and education.

Students from underrepresented populations are served through several programs. These include the TRIO Student Support Services, the Center for Diversity and Community, the Native Student Services, the Veterans Service Center, and Disability Services. In total, these services document the dedication USD to students and their education.

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

Assistance to USD students begins before they even arrive to campus. During the process of recruitment admissions staff provide information for freshmen, transfers, re-admits, international students, student veterans, graduate students, medical students, law students, online students, and dual credit students. Admission requirements and other important information are clearly presented (see undergraduate and Medical School admissions for example) as appropriate for the type of student. Math, English, and foreign language placement for undergraduates is based on clearly defined standards. Our student satisfaction dashboard indicates an 85% favorable rating for “Major requirements are clear and reasonable.”
Once admitted, students generally attend one of the Fast Track registration sessions. There they have an opportunity to meet with a faculty or professional advisor who helps them plan their degree program and understand individual requirements and prerequisites for courses. Admitted students are also required to meet Math and English placement standards so advisors can appropriately place them for initial success. A&S 100 is a first year seminar specifically designed to engage students in their college experience, both academically and personally.

New students have access to a number of important academic support resources, including the Academic and Career Planning Center, Learning Specialists, Supplemental Instruction, Tutoring, the Beacom Student Services Center, the Writing Center, the Math Emporium, Information Literacy instruction, Disability Services, the Student Athlete Success Center, and more. In addition to the student support services mentioned above in 3.D.1, USD also provides additional support and tutoring to students through Native Student Services, the Student Veterans Resource Center, TRIO programs, and the Center for Diversity and Community.

These units serve students effectively, as evidenced by student responses recorded within the student satisfaction dashboard, including 80% favorable rating for “Tutoring services are readily available;” 83% favorable rating for “Academic support services adequately meet the needs of students;” and 85% favorable rating for “My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major.”

Graduate students are also supported through the admissions process. All graduate students are provided an orientation and those that receive teaching assistantships are provided additional training during the onboarding process. Several departments also offer their own subject-specific orientation for graduate students.

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

The university currently employs around 40 professional advisors, who serve students on the main campus, as well as students in Sioux Falls, Rapid City, and online. Career services has been incorporated with academic advising for the university and in most of its schools and colleges. In 2017, USD began using the Education Advisory Board’s Navigate (called Coyote Connections on campus) to help professional and faculty advisors connect with students more easily. Professional advisors across the campus meet weekly to discuss issues that may be affecting students in and out of classroom. These meetings maintain a consistent advising experience for our students, and provide information for staff and administration, who can then quickly address issues that may be raised in these meetings. Although it varies by major, students are typically assigned a faculty advisor after completing 45 hours of course work.

Advising for the Sanford School of Medicine is fully described in their Student Advisor Handbook. The Office of Career Services within the Knudson School of Law helps students and graduates connect with meaningful law career and professional development opportunities through individual career counseling and other resources. Advising within the Community College for Sioux Falls occurs through the Center for Advising and Student Engagement, which offers academic advising in one-on-one and group sessions, career and internship connections,
and tutoring and mentoring. Honors students are assigned an Honors advisor who serves in that capacity until they graduate. After a student has earned 45 credits, they are also assigned an advisor in their major.

Results from the National Survey of Student Engagement and Student Satisfaction Inventory illustrate that academic advising is a strength for USD. In all categories pertaining to academic advising and registration, USD students report significantly higher engagement and satisfaction than comparison institutions and institutions nationally.

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

USD provides a great variety of resources to support teaching and learning. One of the greatest areas of support comes from the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), which was described in more detail in 3.C.5.

USD has a strong technological infrastructure. Web and video conferencing are available to all faculty and staff, and several rooms can be reserved for video conferencing. Most general classrooms have been converted to Smart Classrooms, and two classrooms have been converted into Active Learning Classrooms. Several of the large lecture halls have been sourced with Panopto lecture capture systems. Six of our computer labs (ranging from 12 to 27 computers) are available for general teaching use. ITS maintains an inventory of equipment available for short-term educational use to students, faculty, and staff. The CTL manages the Student Technology Fellowship program, which matches students with faculty projects to enhance the use of technology in the classroom. The Testing Center at USD provides a variety of testing services for on-campus, off-campus, and distance students, including proctors, accommodated testing, and specialized testing.

USD provides resources for its faculty, staff, and students to access high performance computing to support multidisciplinary research in areas such as bioinformatics, computational biology, quantum chemistry, particle physics, and mathematics. These resources include supercomputing systems, advanced data platforms, and high-speed research networks. USD operates two such supercomputer systems. The USD Research Computing Group (USDRCG) manages advanced digital resources that accelerate computational and data-driven research and scholarship and an NSF research grant enhanced computer infrastructure (CC* Storage: The South Dakota Store, a Modular, Affordable Platform to Enable Data-Intensive Research and Education).

USD has a full spectrum of scientific laboratories. Clinical sites are found throughout the region for programs in the Health Sciences, School of Medicine, and the School of Education. We also have many specialized learning spaces that support effective teaching and learning. Examples include the Biomechanics Laboratory, the Ellis Finance & Analytics Lab, the GEAR Center, the Graphic Design Computer Lab, the Herbarium, KYOT-TV and Coyote Radio 91.1, Psychological Services Center, the Reading Recovery Training Center, and the Black Hills Playhouse.
The University Libraries system is comprised of the I.D. Weeks Library on the Vermillion campus and the Wegner Health Sciences Library on the USD Sanford School of Medicine campus in Sioux Falls. In addition, library support is provided to students and faculty at the USD Community College for Sioux Falls through the Center for Advising and Student Engagement. The McKusick Law Library, the largest law library in South Dakota, supports the research, publication and service activities of Knudson School of Law faculty, students and staff. The University Libraries’ collections include over 991,000 print and digital books, 741,000 microforms, 573,000 government documents, 20,650 audiovisual items, and archives and oral history collections. Over 98% of the journal subscriptions are available online.

USD has a number of dedicated performance spaces and art galleries. We are the home of a number of prominent centers, institutes and museums, which are listed in the catalog. These include nationally recognized resources such as the Disaster Mental Health Institute and the National Music Museum.

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- Student Counseling Center
- Student Satisfaction Dashboard
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- Technology Fellows Overview
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- Transfer Admission
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- University Art Galleries Home
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- USD Law School Career Services Department _ Legal Career Guidance
- USD Online and Off-Campus Admission
- USDStudentHandbook
- Veteran and Military Admissions
- Writing Center
3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

USD is the public, liberal arts, flagship institution of the state of South Dakota. The general education program is grounded in the liberal arts tradition and is reflective of the academic programming provided at the institution. Rigor and currency of programmatic offerings are maintained through curriculum, program review, and assessment processes that have the faculty at the core. Numbers and quality of faculty are maintained to ensure academic and research excellence in accordance with the institutional mission and strategic initiatives.

Student success also requires an appropriate level of co-curricular offerings and qualified staff to support those offerings. The student services provided by USD are typical of a state flagship university. USD also recognizes that students need to be provided opportunities to refine skills for working in a multicultural society and has committed to provided students an education that embraces human and cultural diversity so that we can embody the diversity the state will become.

Sources

There are no sources.
4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Argument

The University of South Dakota values the rigor of its educational programs and has processes in place which allow the institution to evaluate credit, programs, and graduates. These evaluations allow USD to monitor its quality and to act upon evidence that suggests improvement is needed.

4.A.1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.

Academic Program Review is regulated by SDBOR Policy 2:11.5, which mandates a 7-year review cycle. Guidelines for this review are provided in SDBOR AAC Guidelines 4.2. The USD Program Review Handbook outlines the processes and procedures used for academic program review at USD and provides the schedule of programs to be reviewed in given years. Accredited programs use their specialized accreditation reports for program review. Programs that do not have a specialized accreditor use a specialized template developed
by USD for their self-study. At the end of the process all programs must submit an Action Plan to define strategies and initiatives moving forward. Also, departments submit an SDBOR Summary Report which is included on an SDBOR meeting agenda. Programs that are not externally accredited are reviewed by a minimum of two external reviewers.

Academic program reviews from the past year demonstrate programmatic commitment to the quality of their education. For example, the program review for Modern Languages and Linguistics reports (p. 10) a series of changes based on continual assessment of the programs and the faculty who teach in them. Departments also conduct internal program reviews to gather data whenever they deem necessary to enact change. The English department’s internal review of their graduate programs is an example of this.

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

Transfer of credit is governed by SDBOR Policy 2.5. The general guidelines for transferring credit are available to students through our admission webpage, while the registrar hosts the specific process guidelines. Special processes evaluate credit from international systems of education or from non-accredited institutions. Students are aided in understanding this process through our transfer equivalency calculator.

Other means of awarding credit are evaluated per established SDBOR policy as stated in the academic catalog and in SDBOR policies and guidelines. These include Prior Learning Assessment, Credit by Verification, Study Abroad Credits, and Credit through Alternative Assessment (CLEP, AP, DANTES, International Baccalaureate).

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

When a student transfers coursework from another college or university to USD, the course is evaluated to determine one of the following: 1) the course transfers as a direct equivalent to a specific USD course; 2) the course transfers as a discipline-specific course and may count as an elective toward graduation requirements; or 3) the course is not accepted toward a USD degree. Students may petition to have courses initially evaluated as discipline specific be reevaluated as a specific USD course. This is done through the transfer equivalency request form.

USD purchased access to the Transfer Evaluation System (TES) from College Source to facilitate the analysis of transfer credit. TES allows advisors to suggest equivalencies to department chairs, who investigate the quality of the equivalency request and then make recommendations to Academic Affairs. Academic Affairs reviews the recommendation and makes a final decision to the Registrar’s office. Often chairs will request syllabi or other documentation to ensure the academic quality of the equivalencies.

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

The Faculty Constitution (Article V, Section 1) stipulates that faculty shall have the power to “exercise control over educational matters concerning the university as a whole, including the establishment of minimum requirements for a liberal education for all students.” This includes control over course prerequisites, rigor, expectations for student learning and other issues related to curriculum. Course prerequisites for courses that are common across the South Dakota regental system are guided by AAC Guidelines 1.11. The Curriculum and Instruction Committee is a committee of the university senate, and exercises authority over all undergraduate curricular proposals and those that rise out of the medical and law school. The Graduate Council, whose only voting members are graduate faculty, exercises authority over all graduate curriculum (excluding the medical and law schools). A detailed description of the curriculum process is found in 3.A.1.

Dual Credit students are enrolled in courses (Fall19, Spring20) which are primarily taught online or on USD’s campuses (including the USD Community College for Sioux Falls). These courses are USD courses and are taught by USD faculty. Sample syllabi include BIOL 151, ENGL 101, HIST 121, MATH 114 (In District), MATH 114 (Online), MATH 114 (Sioux Falls), MUS 100, POLS 250, and SPCM 101. Faculty who are not teaching one of the few in-district courses are not even aware if dual-credit students are in the course unless the students identify themselves as such.

The university exercises authority over faculty qualifications within the HLC guidelines. For more information on faculty qualifications, including those teaching dual credit courses, please see 3.C.3.

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

USD has many programs that have earned specialized accreditation. SDBOR processes allow programs to seek specialized accreditation where appropriate, and USD is committed to acquiring specialized accreditation for its programs as they develop. Currently at USD, the Biomedical Engineering program is working to gain ABET accreditation for the BS in Biomedical Engineering. Also, the School of Health Sciences is seeking CEPH (Council of Education for Public Health) accreditation for the MS in Public Health program. Recently, the School of Education was placed on probation with its new accreditor CAEP (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation) for not meeting Standard 5 (Provider Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement). The ABA (American Bar Association) recently announced a negative finding for Standard 316 (Bar pass rates) for the Knudson School of Law. These schools have been working diligently this summer to develop plans to mitigate these negative findings. All other accredited programs at USD are currently approved and compliant with full accreditation.
4.A.6. *The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.*

The University evaluates the success of its graduates in a number of ways. For example, the SDBOR Graduate Placement dashboard is searchable by institution and indicates that over the past five years 57.2% of USD graduates have been placed in jobs within the state. It is important to note that the “placement rates” cited here do not account for degree completers who are hired out-of-state, are self-employed, or are employed by the federal government (including armed services). USD has its own graduate outcomes dashboard, which indicates that 74.2% of responding students are employed, seeking further education, or placed in some other way.

Departments often use program reviews or the self-study process to evaluate the success of their graduates. Two examples are the Beacom School of Business, praised in their AACSB accreditation report for the “very high student placement rate for both graduate and undergraduate students,” and the Knudson School of Law.

Pass rates on national tests, program assessment, and evaluation of graduates indicate that USD programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded. For example, 100% of USD students passed licensure and certification exams in Audiology, Dental Hygiene, Occupational Therapy and Speech/Language Pathology (SDBOR Factbook p. 27). Programs scoring at or better than national average include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program (Degree)</th>
<th>USD Percent Passed</th>
<th>National Percent Passed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicine (MD-1)</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine (MD-2)</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing (AS)</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing (BSN)</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Therapy (DPT)</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician Assistant (MSPAS)</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work (BA/BS)</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work (MSW)</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work-Clinical Exam (MSW)</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from graduates indicate that our programs provide an effective education. The Graduate Outcomes Dashboard shows that 95.0% of responding students are satisfied with their post-graduation plans, and 95.5% reported satisfaction with their education at USD. Focused reports from colleges and schools also indicate that graduates have received an effective education. For example, the 2018 Beacom School of Business Dean’s report indicates that 97.25% of the graduates are placed within three months of graduation with an average undergraduate starting salary of $43,279.
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The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

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

Argument

4.B.1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and co-curricular offerings.

The University of South Dakota has layered assessment processes to ensure that student learning is assessed both broadly and deeply. The goal of this assessment is ongoing improvement, and data from assessment are used to inform decisions ranging from curricula to budget allocation.

Improved assessment processes have been an emphasis for USD over the last decade. Not only have we worked to improve processes for student learning assessment in academic areas, but we have intentionally moved toward creating a holistic process that integrates both academic and co-curricular assessment. With the introduction of the Nuventive system, we have been able to increase the awareness of assessment, allow for reflection of current and former processes, and provide opportunities for professional development in the area of assessment of student learning. The Nuventive system has given faculty and staff across campus the ability to access data that were formerly provided only on an ad hoc basis. This allows faculty and administrators to easily view multiple years of learning data to effectively make decisions and close the assessment loop.

Co-curricular Assessment

The institution is committed to assessing co-curricular learning outcomes. Student Services has been fully engaged in moving to holistic assessment practices and getting data for student learning outcomes within the software system (implemented in 2017). Student learning outcomes are tied to each functional area within Student Services, and results from before software implementation were documented and submitted in annual reports provided to the Vice President and Dean of Students. Currently, directors upload the results of their learning outcomes assessment into Nuventive each June.

To meet a robust assessment standard, support for assessment in student affairs is provided by the Student Services Assessment Committee which coordinates assessment in the Division of
Student Services. The committee reviews and presents yearly assessment expectations at the summer retreat, ensures CAS Standard evaluations are in the Nuventive by the deadline, verifies assessment rubrics, and provides presentations and professional development on assessment tools during the year (ie. NSSE/SSI, HLC and university benchmarks). Assessment support materials are provided to new and continuing professionals through the Student Services Sharepoint drive, and new professionals are provided training in assessment as part of their onboarding through the Student Services Onboarding Committee.

Academic Assessment

SDBOR Policy 2:11 requires all state institutions to have an academic program assessment strategy that suits their mission and faculty needs. USD has created an Assessment Plan for academic affairs units which describes the intended assessment process for programs across campus. The plan outlines expectations at the Department and Program levels and describes expectations for data submission to Nuventive.

The USD Assessment Plan lays out the overarching framework for all academic assessment activities. The plan describes how the university’s efforts are integrated into a single, comprehensive system, and underscores the evidence-based, collaborative, and continuous nature of the university’s assessment system. University academic departments are responsible for the development and evaluation of department strategic goals and program student learning outcomes. These efforts are vital elements of well-functioning academic units and are featured prominently in the university’s assessment management platform (Nuventive). This process is facilitated through the USD Program Assessment Plan Rubric and USD Department Goals Rubric. Sample assessment reports are provided for review.

SDBOR institutions share a common curriculum for general education and therefore share learning outcomes for the six general education goals required of all SDBOR students. The goals and student learning outcomes for general education are stated in SDBOR Policy 2:7.C3. System learning outcomes for the Associates degree are found in SDBOR Policy 2:26.C3. Rubrics for assessing these goals were developed by state-wide discipline councils comprised of faculty from all six BOR institutions. USD uses these rubrics to assess student work in SDBOR approved general education courses on a three-year cycle. The process itself is under continuous review, and changes are being made as this argument is being crafted (Spring, 2020). General education assessment processes at USD are more specifically described in the assessment handbook which will be modified as necessary as processes improve.

4.B.2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

USD is committed to meaningful assessment that results in improved student learning in both curricular and co-curricular programs. Recent examples, provided below, demonstrate how USD uses information from assessment to improve student learning.

Developmental Math. The success of students who are placed in developmental math classes is key to overall retention and graduation rates and has been the subject of significant assessment and analysis. As a result of this analysis, the Math department implemented a Math Emporium
model which has significantly increased the success of these students. Analysis of data and tweaks to the model continue to be implemented.

*English Department graduate program internal review:* The English department conducted a review of its Ph.D. graduate program in AY19. The review considered language requirements, progress toward degree, the clarity of new resource documents, and streamlining the MA-to-Ph.D. program option. The assessment rubrics for the internal review were also critically examined for effectiveness. As a result of this review, the following changes were made: 1) the GRE score requirement was eliminated for application packet; 2) the foreign language requirement was modified; 3) literary theory courses requirements were adjusted; 4) the format of the qualifying exams was modified, and 5) an approval form for the Ph.D. qualifying exam reading list was created.

*Honors Program curriculum revision.* The number of students who entered the Honors Program with credits from multiple sources, most of which fulfilled general education requirements that were also fulfilled by UHON courses, necessitated a need to “radically rethink the nature of the curriculum” (p. 3-4). The new curricular model, implemented Fall 2019, shifts the focus from a set of prescribed courses to a more flexible combination of honors coursework and Enriched Honors Experiences (EHEs). These experiences, based on guidelines from the National Collegiate Honors Council, will require students to take 18 credits of honors coursework and engage in 5 EHEs. The EHEs are divided into five core domains: Leadership Development, Civic Engagement, Personal Development, Diversity, and Coursework. These revisions were put in place Fall 2019.

*Disability Services 1:1 student training:* Disability services had a student learning outcome based on their ability to articulate their awareness and its impact on their learning. The Director of Disability Services, upon meeting new students, realized that some students were unable to articulate their disability and its impact on their learning. The staff implemented one-on-one sessions with students to help them effectively understand and communicate the effects of their disability. Students were provided a post intervention survey to determine the extent of the success of the strategy. All students either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

- I know my disability and understand its impact on my life
- I know what my disability is and understand its impact on my relationship with others
- I know what my disability is and understand its impact on my learning
- I know and am able to knowledgeability discuss my disability with medical professionals, counselors, and educators.

The process of one-on-one discussions with new registered disability students is now standard procedure.

4.B.3. *The institution’s processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.*
Assessment at USD is a process that is used to measure and enhance academic quality in order to advance the university’s mission: to be the best small, public flagship university in the nation built upon a liberal arts foundation. The university’s assessment approach strives to conform to Hutchings, Ewell, & Banta’s (1992) *Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning*: Assessment is used to improve learning; assessment strategies incorporate both formative and summative methods, and assessment is an ongoing process; learning outcomes are clearly expressed and made available to students and other appropriate stakeholders; assessment is both curricular and co-curricular; and assessment of student learning is linked to budgeting and strategic planning. These principles have been widely used and critically reviewed by assessment professionals.

The assessment strategy at USD is designed to encourage the concept of assessment for learning. Faculty members shape and conduct much of the assessment activity at USD, as they are the most qualified to select outcomes, develop measurement strategies, and create plans for improving student learning. The USD Assessment Plan outlines the standards and expectations for assessment at the institution, there is not a requirement for a standardization of the means, measures, and success criteria across programs. Assessment at USD is holistic and multifaceted; it occurs at the course, program, department, college, and institutional levels. As can be seen in the descriptions below, these activities are not isolated, but rather are utilized across multiple institutional levels in a deeply interconnected way.

**Course Level**: Faculty assess student learning at the course level by developing individual course-level outcomes and assessment strategies. General education outcomes are assessed at the course level in courses approved and selected through a system-level process. Cross-curricular skills, which are specific components of the university’s general education framework discussed in 3B1, also are assessed at the course level. Course-level assessments may also contribute to program-level assessment strategies as outlined in individual program assessment plans.

**Program Level**: Each academic program maintains an assessment plan designed to address program-specific student learning needs. These assessment plans also outline any course-level assessments that are used to meet program-level learning outcomes, including cross-curricular skills (undergraduate programs only). Programs also may utilize institutional assessment survey data (IDEA, graduate surveys, etc.) as indirect measures of student learning.

**College/Department Level**: All academic departments at USD must conduct systematic program reviews on a seven-year cycle, as outlined in the USD Program Review Handbook. The program review process produces a number of assessment documents – including a department self-study, a site visit report, an SDBOR summary report, a department action plan, and (for accredited units) an accreditation letter. All program review documents are available to department faculty and staff for utilization in annual planning and budgeting activities. This documentation also is available to college-level personnel for use in programmatic and budgetary decision making.

**Institutional Level**: Course-, program- and department-level assessments are used to inform decision making at the institutional level. Institutional assessment data gathered from various university-wide sources (e.g., surveys, management system data, special data analyses, etc.) are
also available to stakeholders across the university. These institutional data are used to directly inform university leadership at the executive level, as well as stakeholders in the university’s colleges and departments (Deans, Chairs, Directors, Advisors, etc.).

There are many individuals and groups across the institution that participate in the university’s assessment program. These entities include:

**Faculty:** Faculty are the foundational level of student learning assessment for the university. Faculty define learning outcomes for courses, programs, and general education goals (including cross-curricular skills), and develop assessment protocols for the measurement of those outcomes. Faculty interpret the results of course- and program-level assessments, and develop curricular changes as a result of assessment findings. Faculty also may serve on (where applicable) department- or college-level assessment or curriculum committees, which aim to coordinate and systematize the development, execution, monitoring, and revision of local assessment plans.

**University Assessment Committee:** The University Assessment Committee is a standing committee of the University Senate and is charged with the promotion of academic improvement through assessment. University Senate by-laws (p.6) outline the full charge and responsibilities of the committee.

**Department Chairs:** Department chairs are responsible for directly managing the program review process and the development and tracking of strategic goals for their departments. Department chairs are also responsible for assuring that program assessment plans with appropriate student learning outcomes are developed and implemented for programs within their departments.

**College Deans:** In university assessment efforts, Deans serve primarily in an oversight capacity within the college or school. Aspects of this oversight role include review of department-level assessment practices (e.g., department goals, program assessment plan), participating in the program review process, and linking department-level assessment activities to college-level strategic planning and budgeting decisions.

**Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment (IRPA):** IRPA staff assist in managing institutional assessment activities by coordinating testing and institutional surveys, providing and analyzing institutional data, and coordinating activities associated with academic and co-curricular assessment. The office also assists academic programs in maintaining compliance with academic standards established by external entities (e.g., SDBOR, accreditors).

**Office of Academic Affairs:** The Office of Academic Affairs oversees the development and implementation of all institutional policies and procedures related to assessment and accreditation. The Office of Academic Affairs also directs the program review process for the institution and guides the institution’s strategic planning efforts. The Provost also serves on the system Academic Affairs Council, which advises the Board of Regents on matters related to academic assessment and general education.
Sources

- Assessments Materials _ USD
- DevelopmentalMathImprovement
- EnglishAssessmentReport
- General Education Assessment Handbook
- Honors SenateReport2019
- Sample Assessment Reports
- SDBOR Gen Ed Rubrics
- SDBOR Policy 2.11 Assessment
- SDBOR Policy 2.26
- SDBOR Policy 2.7 Baccalaureate General Education Curriculum
- StudentServicesAssessmentReportsBeforeNuventive
- StudentServicesNuventiveAssessmentReports
- Surveys and Reports Website
- UNIVERSITY SENATE BYLAWS Revision Approved 11 Jan 2017
- USD English - PhD Program Review Changes
- USDAssessmentPlan
- USDAssessmentRubric
- USDG0alsRubricdocx
- USDProgramReviewHandbook
4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

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

Argument

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

The University of South Dakota has a history of pursuing educational excellence. We have found that increasing the recruitment, retention, and success of students is not a goal that can be solved by a single practice or artifact. It is an institutional effort and relies on collaboration and cooperation between many different units across campus. It has also relied on funding from a variety of areas, clear support from the highest levels of campus administration, intentional use of data, and the dedication of key faculty and staff.

The university has clearly defined goals for student success. This includes both general goals (see below) and more direct initiatives to improve the success of specific segments of the student population. The Quality Initiative, for example, focused on increasing the recruitment, retention, and success of students of color, and achieved some remarkable results (p. 4). Most significantly, the 4-year graduation rate for students of color went from 10.5% in Fall 2013 to 30.6% in Fall 2018 and to 21.9% in Fall 2019. We are pleased with the result but want to improve even further and this will be a continued focus given the mission and the demographics of our state and region.

The current strategic plan contains 10 goals related to student retention, persistence and completion. USD will continue to emphasize success for undergraduate students. The 2018 Fall update on strategic plan metrics shows improvement in retention rates, four-year graduation
rates, six-year graduation rates, and the number of graduate and professional degrees and certifications awarded. There are areas, however, that have not shown growth, such as the number of undergraduate degrees and certificates awarded. The university tracks these data and uses them to drive decision making related to new strategies and the allocation of human and financial resources (see 4.C.3 below).

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

Institutional Research at USD spends much of its effort tracking retention, persistence, and completion. These data are presented through public-facing dashboards that are customizable and searchable for a number of variables. Faculty and staff can use Nuventive to derive greater detail about department and course level data within the dashboards. IR also provides specialized dashboards to key administrators to track data related to student persistence, such as the General Studies Cohort Tracker and the Grade Distribution Dashboard. During the buildup for Fall semester, IR provides the executive council, deans, and academic affairs staff with weekly Retention Snapshots that are differentiated by both division and department. That report is updated every Friday from mid-spring through the fall term census. Deans and chairs have access to a variety of reports generated out of Student Banner. The South Dakota Board of Regents also provides a series of dashboards to track student data. These dashboards can be used to compare USD to its counterparts within the BOR system. The data provided by these reports are analyzed from the department level all the way through the President’s Office. This analysis is used to monitor the success of various initiatives and funding decisions, as described in the next section.

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

USD has made significant gains in retention and graduation rates over the last ten years. The 2018 first-year cohort retained at a record high rate of over 77.9%. Graduation rates have also been increasing over the past decade. The 2009 first year cohort had a 4-year graduation rate of 32.9% while the 2014 cohort’s 4-year graduation rate was 42.9%, and the 2015 cohort’s 4-year graduation rate was 42.7%. The university’s commitment to student success on a number of fronts has contributed to these improvements. Within both Student Services and Academic Affairs, the focus on student success has been unwavering. Most major initiatives in both areas have been designed to help our students reach their goals of graduating and finding a meaningful path after graduation. The university’s student success efforts have derived from a variety of sources:

**Academic Advising:** Since 2007, the university has invested steadily in adding professional academic advisors. In our NSSE and SSI results, there appears to be a strong relationship to expanded professional academic advising (and improved satisfaction with advising) to the gains in retention and graduation outcomes. Additionally, Academic Affairs invested in the Education Advisor Board’s Navigate system, which has improved communication among advisors, faculty, and students throughout campus.
Native American Academic Advisor. In 2018, USD reinstated the role of Native American Academic Advisor in the Academic and Career Planning Center (ACPC). The position had been eliminated when it was vacated in the fall of 2015 with the goal that all academic advisors would be trained to serve our Native American population. However, data from IRPA showed a marked decline in Native American retention rates that may have been attributed to this vacated position, leading to the reinstatement of the position in the fall of 2018. This academic advisor is charged with working specifically with Native American undergraduate students, providing support that begins with the registration process for incoming students and concludes at graduation. Additionally, Native Student Services has changed their programming model to intentionally focus on support services for student growth and academic support and development.

Re-Recruitment Initiative. The Provost’s Office created a student success team composed of faculty, advisors, and students to create and execute a re-recruitment marketing plan. This initiative, launched Fall 2019, created focused messages to students at four critical times during the semester to remind them that they have made the right choice in USD and have people who care about their success all around them. The campaign will be modified based on the data gathered and reflections of the committee members. The Director of Assessment will become the central point of contact for retention and persistence efforts this fall, and lessons learned from this initiative will be incorporated into continuing strategies to improve student success moving forward.

Developmental Mathematics: Through a variety of task forces and committees that included an investigation by the Student Government Association, the university has spent much time over the last five years trying to resolve low success rates in developmental mathematics courses. That inquiry led to the creation of a new math co-requisite course that allows students to complete developmental and general education math requirements in the same semester. The 2018-19 pass rates for that course improved 20 percentage points, compared to its stand-alone predecessor.

Coyote One-Stop: USD launched a virtual One-Stop Shop in 2019 to provide a place where students can submit questions about just about any university process, and receive swift (automated) assistance. This system allows USD to evaluate which types of student questions are prevalent and focus information and resources in areas where there is the greatest need.

USD has used our analysis of data to implement programs, technologies, and resource decisions to improve retention, persistence, and completion. As noted above, our efforts in these areas span various administrative offices and stretch from departmental initiatives up to Presidential priorities. Some initiatives have been broadly aimed to impact all students, while some initiatives are geared toward very specific student populations.

4.C.4. The institution’s processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)
All data on retention, persistence, and completion rates are reported by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment in a manner consistent with IPEDS definitions.

Sources

- Banner Reports-Student
- BOR_Math_Pathways_EOY_Report_2020
- Coyote One Stop _ USD
- DevelopmentalMathImprovement
- General Studies Cohort Tracker
- Grade Distribution Dashboard
- IRPA Data Tools
- QI University of South Dakota SD
- ReRecruitmentYearEndSummary
- Retention Snapshot - Week 0
- SD Board of Regents Dashboards
- StrategicPlanMetricsUpdate
- USD 2013-2020 Strategic Plan
4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

Commitment to a public, liberal arts, flagship necessitates that USD is dedicated to a continuous improvement philosophy for its educational programs, learning environments, and its support services. Examples of this philosophy have been demonstrated in this criterion and include some of following: 1) curricula and program learning outcomes have been modified based on assessment data; 2) a position eliminated to attrition was renewed based on retention data; 3) retention, persistence, and graduation data tools have been created to assist leadership with decision making; 4) the Director of Assessment and Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs have worked to incorporate co-curricular assessment into institutional processes for a holistic view of student learning; and 5) the Quality Initiative was used to improve retention, persistence, and graduation rates for students of color. Use of data to drive decisions will continue to be a priority as new strategic planning processes are implemented.

Sources

There are no sources.
5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Argument

5.A.1: Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.

Shared governance at USD is reflected in the committee structure and composition. Committees can be senate level (Assessment and C&I), campus level (Digital Accessibility and Budget), from academic affairs or student affairs, or a part of college or department level structures. For example, the Digital Accessibility Committee, initiated in Fall 19, is responsible for the processes and procedures related to ensuring digital accessibility across campus. The committee includes students, representatives from the faculty, academic affairs, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), disability services, marketing, and IT. A second example is the University Budget Committee; it plays a role in the budget approval process and includes the academic deans, VP of Finance and Administration, a non-faculty exempt administrator, two faculty members, a civil service employee, and the president of the Student Government Association (SGA).

To ensure the student voice is represented across the institution, within the shared governance process, they serve on institutional committees and lead through the SGA which serves as a liaison between the students and the administration. The SGA has four of its own committees to support the work of the organization. A sub-committee, consisting of a student majority plus
faculty and staff, works to determine the distribution of funds from the General Activity Fee (GAF).

The Civil Service Advisory Council (CSAC) is a campus committee group that provides support and shared governance for employees classified by the state of South Dakota as Civil Service Employees. The group has representation on various institutional committees such as the university budget, IT advisory, scholarship, parking, president’s council for diversity and inclusiveness, and the regental civil Service Advisory Council.

USD is part of a regental system as described in 2.C.1. The system has a shared governance structure that ensures representation across institutions and across campus roles within the institutions. For example, SDBOR Policy 1:3 requires that one of the board’s nine members be a currently enrolled regental student. Student regents serve two-year terms and are full voting members of the board. Though the student regent may be drawn from any regental university, three of the last five student regents have been USD students. Other committees of the SDBOR that have representation from faculty or staff at USD include: Academic Affairs Council (AAC), Student Affairs Council (SAC), Business Affairs Council (BAC), Research Affairs Council (RAC), University Relations Council (UAC), and the Technical Affairs Council (TAC) (SDBOR Policy 1:7).

Senior level administrative positions are also selected via a shared governance process. The recent Presidential search is an example. SDBOR Policy 1:6 requires a national search for the president of any of the regental institutions. When the President of USD retired, the national search was conducted utilizing a collaborative committee process. Membership of the search committee included members of the Board of Regents, external stakeholders, and USD faculty, staff, and students. Membership was selected from nominations from constituent groups.

Finally, the strategic planning process serves as an example of the commitment of the institution to the shared governance process. The current strategic plan sunsets in 2020 and a Strategic Plan Task Force (SPTF) was created in May 2019. The SPTF is composed of members with representation from across campus including 18 faculty members, five administrators, and 18 staff members. During the summer and fall of 2019, task force members met with internal and external constituents in more than 70 stakeholder group sessions.

5.A.2: The institution’s administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.

USD is committed to using data to make informed decisions across all areas of campus. Below are examples from the areas of institutional services, facilities and space allocation, and academic programs.

Data Used for Improvements in Institutional Services:

In March 2018 a committee consisting of three students (two undergraduates and one graduate student), two faculty, and seven staff across various departments (Student Services, Marketing, Athletics, Finance, Auxiliary Services, and Enrollment) reviewed the current contract for USD’s
bookstore operations since the contract with Barnes & Noble was set to expire in June 2019. Surveys were used to gather feedback regarding the bookstore provider and any future additional needs. Survey feedback of students, faculty, and staff was used to prepare a request for proposal to solicit contract proposals from potential vendors. Submitted proposals were rated with a rubric on a set of criteria including: classroom services, financial considerations, customer service, sales and promotions, and unique benefits. The top four vendors were brought to campus for presentations to the Bookstore RFP committee with open forums held for faculty, staff, and students. Feedback from the open sessions and the committee were collated, and the top two rated vendors were presented to the Executive Committee for discussion of their strengths and weaknesses. The Executive Committee contracted with Akademos, Inc. to serve as USD’s online bookstore, and USD's Marketing department operates Charlie’s Bookstore and Fanshop in the on-campus location.

**Data Used for Improvements in Facilities and or Space Allocations:**

Recently, a review of parking permit data reflected that there were more B parking passes (those issued to resident students) than there were B parking spots located on campus. As a result, the President requested a review of parking expansion. Parking Lot 5, which was in need of renovation and had room for expansion, was selected. A Solicitation for Services and for Construction was issued through the Office of the State Engineer of South Dakota, and construction led to expanding the existing lot from approximately 82 spaces to 199 spaces. The project was completed in August 2019 in time for the new Fall semester providing the needed additional parking spaces to accommodate student parking based on permit sales.

Data have also been used to determine space needs and requirements across campus. In Fall 2013, JBA Incorporated, released the final report for a campus space analysis which evaluated both the type and quality of the space available. The consultants held over 70 meetings and met with at least 152 employees before providing administration with the report and final recommendations. The space plan included a series of short-term and long-term projects consisting of razing, renovations, and new construction to address the various needs across campus. Subsequently, USD has made some modifications to the original recommendations based on new information since the submission of the final report. The following projects have been completed and/or are in the planning process as a result of the space analysis:

**Completed Projects:**

- Renovation of ID Weeks (additional renovations are planned in the future)
- Relocation of Testing Center and Math Emporium into the new North Commons Space
- Relocation of Disability Services, University Housing, TRIO, and Student Veteran’s Resource Center into the new North Commons Space
- Renovation of Continuing Education building to house CTL department (relocated from McKusick), IT Services, Postal, U Copy, Photography, and ROTC within the new spaces
- Service Center to house Facilities Management
- Corridor and classroom updates in the Arts & Sciences building
- Corridor and exterior entrances in the Warren M Lee Center for Fine Arts
- Roofing, windows, flooring, and HVAC upgrades in the Native American Student Center
Projects in Planning Stages:

- Renovate Noteboom Hall into office for swing space for departments
- Renovate Knutson and Colton Halls located in the Warren M Lee Center for Fine Arts
- Interior renovations in the Law School building
- Renovate East Hall
- A Health Science building addition onto Lee Medical building to house several departments that are currently located in East Hall, Julian Hall, Beacom, and Lee Med (Julian Hall and Julian Addition will be demolished once this building is completed)
- Renovation of McKusick to house Communication Sciences and Disorders from Noteboom Hall

Data Used for Improvements in Academic Programs:

USD recently increased the class size of graduate professional health degrees. In 2012, Governor Dennis Daugaard appointed a statewide Primary Care Task Force which was charged with “expanding the educational capacity to train more primary health care providers for rural areas of South Dakota.” The task force recommended continued expansion of the Sanford School of Medicine and Physician Assistant Program at USD to further meet the needs of the state of South Dakota. In addition, USD elected to increase the cohort size for Occupational and Physical Therapy programs through the provision of additional space to allow growth of each cohort accepted (from 28 to 32 students). USD made this change based on an analysis of workforce needs, the availability of faculty resources, and the physical space required for growth in the respective programs.

At USD, the addition of any new academic program is also data informed. Academic departments requesting a new academic program must complete and submit an Intent to Plan form which, among other factors, includes the estimated enrollment numbers and resource allocation for the program. The document moves through the curricular process outlined in 3.A.1, and if approved, it moves through the board approval process. If approved at the SDBOR level, the academic program must complete a new program request which requires additional data in the form of workforce demand and budgetary information. The new program request moves through the same process as the intent to plan. Examples of recent new program requests include Neuroscience and PhD in Health Sciences.

Finally, as mentioned in 1.B.3, based on an internal data analysis, the shared Sioux Falls location shifted administrative structure to USD and was rebranded as the USD Community College for Sioux Falls (CCSF). The location is now moving toward a concerted effort to develop an increased focus on general education, associate’s degrees (the Associate of Arts in General Studies and the Associate of Science in Integrated Science), and certificates that USD currently provides. Additional programmatic offerings provided at the CCSF will be designed and targeted to meet higher education access needs and workforce needs of the Sioux Falls community.
5.A.3: The institution’s administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

USD has established effective collaborative structures to ensure appropriate involvement of faculty, staff, and students in academic processes. For example, all curriculum and instruction requests are routed through a series of approval committees that are comprised of faculty (majority), staff, and students. The curriculum and instruction processes is outlined in 3.A.1.

Changes to the graduate catalog are made annually via a collaborative process. Each year graduate faculty, academic deans, Academic Affairs personnel, and the staff in the Graduate School review changes and modifications to graduate policies and procedures. After input from stakeholders, Graduate School policies for admissions standards (excepting J.D. and M.D.) are approved by the Graduate Council, a committee which includes a faculty majority, graduate students, and staff. Policies are then updated and documented in the Graduate Catalog.

Faculty perspectives are integrated into the SDBOR policy-making process through a mix of discipline-specific (e.g., mathematics, English) or general advisory bodies. For instance, as established in SDBOR Policy 1.7.8, the board office coordinates the work of numerous “discipline councils.” These councils, composed of at least two faculty members from each of the regental institutions, assist the system office in developing policies, guidelines, and operating procedures with respect to discipline-specific topics such as curriculum standardization, remedial placement practices, assessment, and articulation guidelines. As of Fall 2019, eleven such discipline councils were active in the university system. Other standing bodies are more cross-disciplinary in nature. For instance, the SDBOR System General Education Committee, which includes one faculty representative from each campus, holds significant responsibility in shaping and overseeing the implementation of general education learning outcomes and course approvals across the university system (SDBOR Policy 2.11).

Sources

- Bookstore RFP 100118
- CCSF MOU and SDBOR Approval
- Committee Summary
- CSACouncilInformation
- Intent2PlanDocumentation
- New program - BS in Neuroscience
- New Program - PhD in Health Sciences motion to approve (no appendix)
- PresidentialSearchCommitteeEmail
- PrimaryCareTaskForceReport
- RFP Scoring Rubric 11-8-18
- SDBOR Policy 1-3
- SDBOR Policy 1-6
- SDBOR Policy 1-7
- SDBOR Policy 1-7-8
• SDBOR Policy 2-11
• SDBOR Policy 2-23
• SGA Standing Committees _ USD
• University Center Future
• USD CandI Process
• USD Space Analysis Final Report
5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Argument

5.B.1: The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Qualifications:

USD ensures that faculty and staff are appropriately credentialed and trained at the time of hire, and resources are provided to support faculty and staff in maintaining their professional development. USD has the infrastructure (both physical and technological) to support student success in face-to-face and online programming.

It is USD's policy (Recruitment) to “encourage all qualified candidates to apply for employment and to hire the individual who can best fulfill the requirements of the job.” Qualifications for a job at USD can include degrees, experience, licenses, and specific skills as required for the particular position. The USD Hiring Guidelines Handbook outlines the proper procedure for administrators to follow, and the Best Hiring Practices guidebook assists USD employees with adherence with proper and legal hiring and recruitment activities. Examples of appropriate qualifications of faculty and staff are described in section 3.C.7.

Training:

The Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) provides faculty and staff the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skill sets through programs and workshops. The stated vision is to “be the best Center for Teaching & Learning in the world at developing and supporting a community dedicated to excellent teaching and learning, regardless of location, formality, and modality.” They achieve this vision by providing open lab hours, synchronous workshops, asynchronous online tutorials, book clubs, and fellowships. Some of their signature workshops and fellowships include the Digital Accessibility Training for faculty who teach online, the Entering Mentoring Series for faculty who desire to gain skills in mentoring students at all levels in academia, the Open Textbook Fellowship for faculty integrating open educational resources into their courses,
and the Course Design Fellowship for faculty designing a new course or redesigning an existing course. The newest of these programs is the Digital Accessibility Training developed out of the need to be in compliance with Section 504 of the American with Disabilities Act and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. All faculty who teach online are required to complete the training and undergo a digital accessibility review.

Human Resources (HR) at USD provides periodic orientation sessions to allow for new employees to be aware of USD and SDBOR policies. A series of structured, well-planned sessions typically starts with an introduction to policies and benefits and is followed by sessions on time and leave reporting and the Accountability and Competency Evaluation System (ACES), a performance management system for Civil Service Act (CSA) employees and supervisors. The training ends with a session on anti-harassment, anti-discrimination, and Title IX. These sessions are typically conducted each Wednesday of each month to accommodate training for employees onboarded throughout the year. HR also provides individualized training for units on campus as necessary. For example, the Graduate School utilizes HR resources to provide information about Graduate Assistantship regulations to all new graduate students by e-mail prior to joining USD. Information about HR policies are posted for faculty, staff, and students in the USD portal and are reviewed and updated periodically.

In addition to its human resources ERP system (Ellucian Banner) which stores, tracks, and reports official employment data for USD, the university also operates a Digital Measures Activity Insight platform as a means for faculty self-reporting and tracking of professional activities such as educational background, scholarly activities, and professional achievements. Digital Measures is used as a key data source for several important university processes including program accreditation reports, program review documentation, faculty annual evaluations, faculty promotion and tenure evaluations, and faculty information shown on department websites.

The Office of the President encourages staff to access professional development opportunities and has implemented two new programs to provide training opportunities to faculty and staff across campus. The Presidential Lunch & Learn Series is designed to bring greater awareness about the operations of various academic and support units around campus. Sessions are held over the noon hour to provide both lunch and a specific training topic where staff are able to learn and have an opportunity to ask questions. The President’s Executive Leadership Institute is a unique professional development opportunity for campus-based administrations and leaders. Members of this program learn about issues facing higher education, foster interdisciplinary collaborations, and cultivate a strong connection to the campus community. This program enhances members’ leadership, management, and decision-making skills, as well as provides for new networking opportunities to achieve organizational goals.

**Infrastructure:**

The University of South Dakota campus has 72 buildings containing 2,550,852 gross square feet located on 274 acres of land. There are nine Residence Halls located on campus with a total of 2,226 beds and a fall 2019 and 2018 utilization of 91.1% and 100.27%, respectively. The net assignable space by category includes:
- Classroom space – 99,792 square feet
- Class lab – 176,288 square feet
- Research lab – 29,830 square feet
- Office – 278,649 square feet
- Study – 91,439 square feet
- Residential – 348,550 square feet
- General use, Special Use, Support, unclassified and non-assignable – 1,223,419 square feet

Since 2009, there have been significant construction projects completed on campus, including Beacom Hall, Muenster University Center, Coyote Village, the Wellness Center, the Sanford Coyote Sports Center, and the Track and Soccer Complex. Current major construction projects in process include the DakotaDome Renovation and the National Music Museum Expansion.

USD’s funding for physical buildings is regulated by SDBOR Policy 6:6 which describes Maintenance and Repair (M&R) and outlines the process used to document and approve projects. Specifically at USD, the M&R process is directed by Facilities Management (USDFM) along with the VP of Finance and Administration (VPFA) and is administered at least one year in advance of the project. Annually, planning and construction requests are sent to each department via a Project Information Request, and USDFM and the VPFA review other maintenance and repair projects utilizing the campus 10-year project list, the deferred maintenance list, and input from other facilities management departments. Once a project list is identified, USDFM provides estimates for each project for review, prioritization, and approval by the Executive Committee. The final approved list is submitted to the SDBOR so funding can be allocated appropriately. USDFM plans the design and construction schedules for projects to start after funding is received.

As mentioned previously in relation to the Medical School and the Physical and Occupational Therapy programs, clinical programs at USD have caps on enrollment as a result of the ability to place students in field experiences. This cap is determined in part by the number of clinical placements and site availability to ensure students are able to move through their program of study in a timely manner. Furthermore, many of the academic programs with clinical placements have accreditation standards that require sufficient scope and number of placements to allow students to complete the program in a designated time frame. The clinical site supervisors are either paid faculty of USD or are vetted as meeting required guidelines to provide clinical student education.

The university regularly collects survey data related to student impressions of facility and service quality. For instance, the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), which is administered every other spring semester to all on-campus students, solicits student ratings of various campus operations, including residence halls, student dining, parking, and other campus services. The Student Satisfaction Dashboard provides a detailed breakdown of these results. SSI data offer a basis for national comparison, allowing USD to evaluate the relative performance of its services. Other more targeted survey efforts, including the annual Aramark survey of student dining services, offer deeper insights into demand for specific student service
options. Per discussion in 5.A.2, service usage data collected by the university are used to inform operational and/or infrastructure decisions.

5.B.2: The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution’s organization, resources and opportunities.

The mission and goals of USD are realistic in light of the institution’s role within the state of South Dakota as evidenced by our recently completed and newly formed strategic plans. Originally developed in 2011-2012 and then revised and renewed in 2015, the USD 2013-2020 Strategic Plan was intended to serve as a guiding light during a time of great transition for the university. At the time of the plan’s release, the university’s Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) budget model was just coming online, the university foundation’s largest capital campaign in history was getting underway, and the institution’s transition to Division I athletics had just been completed. In light of these significant new initiatives, the strategic plan aimed to provide institutional stakeholders with a common set of aspirations and goals. The plan included twenty performance indicators, each with its own goal. Progress toward these goals is reported annually. To date, USD has shown substantial improvement across nearly all of the plan’s performance indicators and is on pace to eclipse a good number of the plan’s goals by the planned closeout date. As an example, the university’s four-year graduation rate has climbed a full ten percentage points (from 32.9% to 42.9%) over the life of the plan, and now is higher than that of any other public university in South Dakota.

The university’s new strategic plan currently is in development and is expected to be released sometime in fall 2020. Forty-two USD faculty and staff, informed by a wide community of internal and external stakeholders, serve on the Strategic Planning Task Force, which is charged with formulating a systematic, continuous-improvement plan that will drive university decision-making through 2025. At the time of submission of this assurance argument, the SPTF has drafted the 2025 Vision Statement and the Concept Papers for the six identified strategic themes: Academic Excellence, StudentAffordability, Communications, Diversity, Facilities and Infrastructure, and Serving South Dakota.

5.B.3: The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.

As a public institution which is part of a regental system, USD’s budget allocation process is closely tied to the legislative budget allocation process and SDBOR policy. SDBOR Policy 5:19 briefly articulates system funding and SDBOR Policy 5:20 articulates cash management. Bond compliance guidelines are articulated in SDBOR Policy 5:26. The legislative budget is summarized as follows. Each year, during the June SDBOR meeting, each regental campus and the two special schools are asked to present their budget priorities at the Informal Budget Hearings. Discussed are funding priorities to be requested during the upcoming legislative session. Then, in August of each fiscal year, the SDBOR has a retreat meeting during which the priorities for each of the schools are discussed; the highest priorities are determined, and those priorities are then submitted to the Bureau of Finance & Management for consideration of funding by the Governor. In December, the Governor submits the budget priorities for the upcoming legislative session in a public address which provides estimated revenue projections
and a recommended expenditure budget as a starting point for the legislature to work from during their upcoming session. After each legislative session occurs, the SDBOR presents an item at the March/April meeting summarizing any legislation that has passed during the session. If USD budget requests are approved, allocations become available in the following fiscal year. The new health sciences building at USD has recently moved through this process.

At the campus-level, USD follows the Responsibility Center Management (RCM) budget model. The RCM manual includes details which outline the vision, goals, and principles of the model, the allocation methodologies, and the policies associated with the process. The Support Center Review Council (SCRC) forwards its recommendations to the University Budget Committee (UBC), which participates in the decision-making process by moving budget priorities forward to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee reviews the recommendations and provides the final decision in this process. USD also has a fully staffed budget office to provide support and monitoring of the financial functions of the institution and to assist faculty and staff with the RCM and budget process.

Throughout the year, the budget office assists colleges and schools with monitoring their finances by providing pro forma financial statements, internally referenced as "Road Maps", which summarize their projected revenue, base operating budget, one-time budget savings and one-time expenses, in order to provide an estimated net projected financial. The road maps are a tool to aid decision making, and the files are working documents updated throughout the year. Revenues are adjusted based on actual and projected credit hour generation. Expenses are updated by incorporating both historical information and current known facts that may shift total expense projections up or down. The road maps factor in the current cash position and projected ending cash balances for each of the fund sources that relate to the RCM budget model. The Budget Resource Manual provides a summary of the budget process in which information is gathered and budgets are developed. In addition to coordinating the budget development processes on campus, the budget office serves as a liaison between the SDBOR office and the institution when various budget and finance matters require support.

As noted in the 2019 Financial Report, USD operations are fiscally sound. The net position of the university at the end of FY 2019 was $299M. The university has total assets of $426M, with total liabilities of $126M. Operating revenues were $143M, an increase of $3.32M from 2018, and operating expenses of $211M. Adding in state and other appropriations, which include the non-operating revenues such as state and other appropriations, the university increased its net position by $10.0M. The major revenue sources for the university were tuition and fees (30.4%), state appropriations (26.9%), and grants and contracts (15.1%). The financial operations of USD are audited as a part of the State of South Dakota, therefore, an audit opinion is not issued on the individual statements of the university, but rather on the audited Comprehensive Annual Financial Report of The State of South Dakota.

USD’s Policy 2.019, the Statement on Auditing Standards (SAS) No 115, outlines internal controls and reviews that take place within departments as all departments have the responsibility to ensure controls are in place to reduce the likelihood of a material misstatement. As a part of the departmental controls, general ledger revenue and expenses are reviewed monthly for reasonableness and accuracy. Direct pay invoices are also reviewed and
approved by the department's supervisor prior to them being submitted to the accounting department for payment approval.

The University of South Dakota Foundation (USDF) also provides funds for supporting university functions. Funds are allocated for scholarships, building projects, and various donor directed initiatives. USDF currently manages approximately 1,250 individual endowed funds in support of the University. The payout on these funds, reviewed annually by the USDF’s Board of Directors, is calculated based on the December 31 market value of each fund (4.0% of a 36-month rolling average of the ending market value at the time of writing this document). USDF Current Funds are provided by gifts received for the benefit of the university which may be spent immediately. The use of these gifted funds is donor directed and are used to support students’ needs (scholarships, travel, etc.), general departmental operating needs, capital projects, and faculty support. Monthly gift reports notify each university department of gifts available to their respective department. Monthly fund reports provide information regarding new gifts, expenditures, and fund balance. USD may request funds from the USDF by using a Current Funds Voucher following a Payment Request Guide.

5.B.4: The institution’s fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

SDBOR Policy generally states the degrees and programs that are approved to be offered by the university. The current offerings of programs at USD reflect SDBOR policy, are consistent with the mission, and are typical of a public liberal arts institution of its size. SDBOR policies and the RCM process described above ensure that USD has the fiscal resources to ensure that its educational mission is achieved. SDBOR Policies 5:5:1, 5:5:2, 5:5:3, and 5:5:4 outline how tuition and fee revenues are apportioned to the institution and SDBOR Policy 5:19 places further structure on allocations.

Sources

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- USD Strategic Plan
- USDFCurrentFundsVoucher
- USDFinancialReportFY18
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- USD-Hiring-Handbook
5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution’s sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

5.C.1: The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.

USD has three mechanisms at its disposal for allocating resources to its priorities: legislatively, the RCM process, and through Foundation funding. The University of South Dakota’s budget process begins in September each year, culminating in June shortly before the beginning of the new fiscal year. Historically, the operating budget process incorporates all general funds appropriated by the Legislature, tuition, and the various fees approved by the SDBOR. Beginning FY09 the budget process now includes budget authority for all local funds. The principal objectives of the budget process are to achieve the long-range goals of the University’s strategic plan and to ensure compliance with SDBOR, executive and legislative branch mandates, and federal government laws and regulations.

The increase in budget to allow for improvements in the USD Knudson School of Law provides an example of the process and reflects how USD uses its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities. As the only law school in the state, in 2017, USD was facing some important fiscal challenges in meeting the needs of the students. USD sought fiscal allocations from the legislature and the SDBOR. Subsequently, the allocation for the Law School was included as part of the general fund appropriations in HB1320. Item 7-D of the March 27-29, 2018 SDBOR meeting outlines the $300,000 appropriated to the Law School with a match of an existing $300,000 from USD proper, for a total of $600,000 to support the Law School.
USD recently revised funding for University Libraries to account for journal inflation costs. The process utilized to allocate these funds provides another example of how the university reallocates resources to align with mission and priorities.

Finally, funds can also be allocated to USD via the USD Foundation. The USD Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization and is the primary fundraising arm for the institution. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), reviewed annually, defines the relationship between the institution and the foundation. The President of USD is an ex-officio member of the Foundation’s governing board of directors and attends the board meetings which occur three times per year. The Foundation’s board of directors approves the annual endowment payout to the university.

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

The Office of Institutional Research Planning and Assessment (IRPA) conducts a number of surveys to assess learning and perceptions of USD constituents. Every other spring semester, USD administers the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) to all on-campus students. This survey aims to gather information about student’s perceptions of institutional effectiveness, particularly with regard to on-campus student services. Data from the SSI are reported back to campus stakeholders through the university’s Student Satisfaction Dashboard, which is used by campus offices, notably the Office of Student Life, to adjust services to better meet the needs of students. The NSSE and FSSE also provide valuable feedback from campus constituents related to institutional effectiveness. Two measures from these surveys (i.e., the NSSE “Higher-Order Learning” engagement indicator and the NSSE “Service Learning” high-impact practice) serve as key metrics for the university’s strategic plan.

Every fall and spring semester IRPA assembles a comprehensive array of department-level operational data (e.g., enrollment, retention rates, graduation rates, credit hour delivery, degree conferrals, research productivity) into a printed “Department Profile” data compendium for each department. These reports are delivered to each department chair (as well as to the provost and to the respective college dean), and serve as an important component of each department’s program review process. The Department Profiles may also be incorporated into each department’s strategic goals and planning reports captured annually within Nuventive. These annual reports are used to develop future goals or modifications to current program operations.

Several of the institution’s offices and support centers utilize surveys to better understand their constituents’ priorities and satisfaction with available services. The responses help guide departments toward setting priorities and identifying areas for improvement, as well as providing an opportunity to gauge USD’s performance relative to other universities or the aggregate of all participating institutions.

USD has a program review process (see 4.A.1) which engages departments and programs in an in-depth review of department strategic initiatives and program learning outcomes. Upon completion of the program review, department chairs submit an action plan describing strategic initiatives for the next cycle. These are then captured within the Nuventive software platform for tracking progress.
In 2017, after review of completion and retention data, USD instituted a Finish in Four campaign. The campaign was developed to increase the completion rate of undergraduate students and educate students about the cost savings of completing their degree in 4 years. The Finish in Four campaign focused on increased advising meeting requirements and development of 4-year program guides for all undergraduate degrees. There is a Finish in Four profile in Nuventive to provide data to show the impact of this program.

Another example of using data in academics is the conversion to the emporium model for math instruction. Math faculty recognized a problem with the success rate of students in developmental math and made a move to the emporium model of learning for mastery. The department began the emporium with two courses in 2010 and a third in 2011. In the fall of 2012 another course was created and both the College Algebra (Math 114) and Pre-College Algebra (Math 095) courses were modified to require an hour of mandatory class with the instructor and an additional two hours of time at the emporium each week for students to work on homework and receive tutoring as needed. Success rates were better than the pre-emporium model but data reflected that many students weren’t completing the required two hours of emporium time and attendance violations were resulting from too much flexibility for the students. As a result, emporium time was scheduled as a lab so students had dedicated times allocated in their course schedule, and class was required five days per week with the instructor for continuity. Success rates have plateaued for the last several years, and department faculty have decided to make the shift to using ALEKS as the learning platform rather than My Math Lab. Also, in 2019, the emporium moved to a location in a large suite of student services offices including Disabilities Services and the Testing Center.

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

With the completion of the Strategic Plan in 2020, the institution is currently engaged in a collaborative strategic planning process to develop its new strategic plan. The SPTF (mentioned in 5.A.1) is shepherding the five-phase strategic planning process, expected to be finished in Fall 2020. The collaborative process utilized data gathering and engagement including face-to-face interaction, dialogue, and discussion with stakeholders. The SPTF identified six major strategic themes in the stakeholder data (Academic Excellence, Student Affordability, Communication, Diversity, Facilities and Infrastructure, and Service to South Dakota). Concept papers on each theme (provided in 5.B.1) have been developed. The SPTF will discuss the papers, create a “preferred future”, and work with key stakeholders to create a set of goals for each theme to serve as the base for an action plan and a detailed implementation plan.

As the current strategic plan sunsets in 2020, it is important to recognize that constituent groups were integral to its success. For example, community engagement was integrated into the plan. Specifically, “Community and University Relations” serves as one of the five central “strategic themes” highlighted in the plan. This area of emphasis includes fostering an ongoing, constructive dialogue with community leaders, pursuing collaborations that contribute to the economic vitality of the Vermillion community, and establishing stronger partnerships with local K12 school districts for the purpose of enhancing the educational experiences of local K12 students.
Also, USD is a member of the Integrated Community Action Planning (ICAP) group which includes community leaders from the City of Vermillion, the Vermillion Public School District, Clay County, and the Vermillion Area Chamber & Development Company (VCDC). The purpose of the group is to continue community growth and make large strides in making Vermillion an even greater place to live. Topics that have been discussed/addressed include the Welcome to Vermillion signs on the edge of the community, feasibility study related to a community center, support of census complete count for the 2020 official census, and collaboration as well as communication related to each of these constituent groups that impact the community.

5.C.4: The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution’s sources of revenue and enrollment.

Institutional planning is based on data that helps USD understand its current capacity, including revenue and enrollment. Data dashboards provided by IRPA help faculty and administration make informed decisions. IRPA maintains the USD Enrollment Dashboard, which provides interactive term-by-term enrollment data for USD. These data allow administrators to better understand long-term enrollment trends at the university, including trends within specific demographic subgroups. IRPA also collaborates with the university’s Information Technology Services (ITS) team to produce an Enrollment Comparison Report (ECR), which is presented to the university’s Executive Committee on a weekly basis during the weeks leading up to each fall and spring term start date. The ECR provides real-time enrollment figures for the current term in comparison with analogous point-in-time data for previous terms. These reports are useful both for short-term and long-term fiscal planning purposes.

As described in 5.A.2, data are also used whenever a new academic program is requested. The Intent to Plan document required when a new academic program is proposed, utilizes a market analysis, a reflection on the connection to the mission of the institution, and an analysis of the program in relation to our regional competitors. A few of the most recent programs to be approved include the graduate programs in Sustainability, the Ph.D. in Health Sciences, and the BS in Public Health.

Students Services also utilizes planning data to respond to revenue and enrollment fluctuations. Recently, university housing responded to an enrollment decline by temporarily decreasing the budget for housing by $300,000 to meet revenue goals in the fall of 2019. Budgetary allocations for the next fiscal year will be determined based on projected enrollment trends.

5.C.5: Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology, advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.

External factors play an important role in our planning processes. At the SDBOR December 2017 meeting, a motion was passed to allow in-state tuition to first-time freshman and new transfers from Nebraska at all schools except Black Hills State University (BHST), first-time freshman and new transfers from Colorado and Montana at BHSU, first-time freshman and new transfers from Colorado who have a minimum 27 ACT and a 3.5 GPA at South Dakota School of
Mines & Technology, and for non-resident law school students at USD Knudson School of Law School with an LST of 155 or higher. These changes took effect AY18-19. This proposal was made in an effort to increase recruitment, grow revenue resources, and add diversity to campuses. In December 2018, the SDBOR passed a motion to further expand the in-state tuition program, citing the success of the program in prior years. The new program, called the South Dakota Advantage, provides in-state tuition rates to freshman students and new transfers from Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, and Colorado. SDBOR President Schieffer was cited as saying “Our goal is to grow enrollments, meet South Dakota’s workforce needs, and bring additional financial resources to our universities and the state.” Furthermore, President Schieffer stated that “our data show 30 percent of non-resident students stay in South Dakota to pursue a career after graduation. This is an important demographic for us to engage.”

Increasing globalization and the resultant recruiting and success of international students has been an important external factor for USD. Recruitment and support of these students at the undergraduate and graduate levels have been streamlined by creation of an International Office. This has increased operational efficiencies and provides consistent and high quality advising to international students regarding admissions, policies, and compliance practices. USD has approved cooperative agreements with international schools to support students and faculty in research and educational initiatives.

Finally, as referenced in 1.B.3 and 5.A.2, the change in administrative structure and subsequent rebranding of the Community College for Sioux Falls is an excellent example of the ability of USD to adjust its planning and resource processes to address demographic and enrollment shifts. CCSF is now positioned to address future workforce and instructional needs of the Sioux Falls area.

5.C.6: The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

USD has a strong history of implementing its plans, assessing impact, and systematically improving its operations. For example, Academic Affairs recently reorganized the process for distance education. Previously, everything associated with distance education (advising, course scheduling, faculty processes, etc.) was organized through Continuing and Distance Education (CDE) with separate student and faculty handbooks for distance education. Currently, USD operates under the philosophy that a student is a student regardless of modality. All functions have shifted to the individual colleges and schools with CDE serving as a support function within academic affairs. This has led to efficiencies in scheduling and faculty support.

IRPA maintains two suites of web-based tools that provide interactive, on-demand data related to university operations: The university’s public data tools website provides summary data for a variety of high-level operational indicators, including enrollments, persistence, and completions, while the university’s Nuventive Department Profiles site (authentication required) provides comparable information but allows for queried data to be displayed for individual colleges and departments. In addition, IRPA publishes an annual update of progress toward the university’s strategic plan metrics. This report displays trend data for all twenty of the university’s strategic plan indicators, along with goal statements for each indicator.
In 2018, USD participated in the Delaware Cost Study. This study, which is administered by researchers at the University of Delaware, provides discipline-level, nationally comparative data related to instruction and instructional cost. These data are particularly important given the SDBOR’s system-level efforts to identify and pursue new operational efficiencies.

In response to a suggestion originating in the Arts and Sciences Diversity Committee, the University Senate developed a task force to make recommendations for a faculty exit interview process. The task force was charged with defining a purpose and scope of the exit interviews, procedures for implementation, and submit recommendations to the University Senate. This task force was approved and created at the April 3, 2019 meeting. A survey was developed in collaboration with Human Resources which was approved in the November 2019 meeting. The task force expects to implement the survey in Spring of 2020 with anonymized survey results reported to the office of the President, the Provost, and to the University Senate.

Finally, diversity has been noted as an issue for the previous two comprehensive evaluations. USD chose to use a diversity and inclusive excellence project to satisfy the Quality Initiative phase of the accreditation process. As mentioned in the proposal and the final report, student outcomes, coordination of efforts, and institutional structure were targeted areas. Since the establishment of the project, there have been changes to institutional structure and student outcomes have improved. This has been described in sections 1.C.2 and 3.B.3 as well as the QI final report itself.

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

USD has been very strategic in managing, enhancing, and developing its fiscal, physical, human, and IT resources. To better leverage resources and create opportunities in the Sioux Falls area, USD obtained control of and rebranded the Community College of Sioux Falls. In the new strategic planning process, care was taken to incorporate voices from a large number of external and internal stakeholders to ensure success of the institution moving forward. Finally, USD has a sound fiscal position and budgeting process to ensure its ability to continue its mission as the state’s public, liberal arts, flagship university.

Sources

There are no sources.