5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

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

Argument

Financial Sustainability and Operational Excellence is one of seven interdependent institutional priorities of "Distinctively Wayne State University," its Strategic Plan for 2016-21. WSU commits to growing revenue and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of business processes in order to provide adequate resources to support the university's mission while maintaining a value-based tuition structure. Goal 4 of this priority is to achieve operational excellence in all processes.

- WSU's continuous improvement program includes internal and external evaluations. Academic Program Review processes are presented in Section 4.A. and Program Assessment in Section 4.B.
- The Student Success Initiative, reported in Section 4.C., is rooted in data, documentation and analysis of performance, and developing responsive strategies.
- As described in Section 5.A., Computing & Information Technology engages five levels of committees to ensure quality and continuous improvement of IT systems on strategic and operational levels.

Wayne State University has used the Ellucian/Banner Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System since 1997, when it implemented the student, finance and human resources modules. Implementation of the advancement module followed, which was upgraded to Advance. These integrated modules provide WSU academic and business units with the capability to interact seamlessly across campus.

WSU remains invested in Ellucian/Banner ERP. The administrative computing environment is updated regularly and is current at the latest release level. In September 2016, WSU engaged the Strata Information Group to lead the Banner Effectiveness Project – a major continuous improvement initiative. The project will:

- Provide WSU with a full description of functionality that exists in the current system version, and identify functions that are not utilized (identify what percentage of system functionality is used)
- Document eeds of departments that utilize each of the Banner mModules and identify potential gaps that should be addressed

- Review academic and business processes in relation to customer needs and use of Banner, industry best practices and market demands to identify potential areas for improvement (re-engineering, modeling)
- Recommend specific ways to optimize system capabilities
- Recommend tools (existing or new) to enable WSU to make more data-driven decisions
- Recommend new technologies related to the Banner Student that support WSU's goal of improving student success

Past Successes

Since the last HLC review, WSU has partnered effectively with several consulting groups to improve business processes. Successes with the Huron Consulting Group include:

An engagement from 2011-2013, which delivered the following results:

- $5.5M annual savings (detailed in the final report)
- Customer service improvements and enhancements
- More efficient processes and a greater use of technology
- Use of key performance indicators to promote continuous improvement
- Campus appearance
- Employee empowerment and accountability
- Culture of positive change

A parallel engagement to improve the research administration infrastructure resulted in:

- Additional trained research administrators at central and departmental levels to relieve faculty from performing routine grants management functions
- Improved communications from the research office to faculty investigators
- New and improved training in grants management that has improved service quality and increased professionalism
- Development and implementation of improved policies and procedures has streamlined operations

Recent projects and/or outcomes summarized in this report include:

- Hyperion Reporting and Implementation
- Hyperion Tuition Revenue Modeling
- Law School Enrollment and Financial Aid
- School of Medicine Enrollment Management
- College of Nursing Enrollment Management
- Data Analytics Evaluation
- Student Services Center/One-Stop Shop
- Financial Aid Strategy
- Graduate School

Energy conservation is a high-value priority; accordingly, WSU has taken action to improve energy efficiency and operations. A project is underway to convert fluorescent lighting to LED lighting campus wide. In addition, other improvements include a steam trap testing program, installation of Variable Frequency Drives and motors for pumps, air handling unit, and cooling towers, and dedicated domestic water heater installations to eliminate running boilers in the summer. WSU is currently working with DTE Energy to convert former Detroit Public Lighting Department (PLD) buildings to DTE standards and infrastructure. The aging PLD infrastructure has caused an unacceptable number of outages and disruptions over the past five years, which, in turn, have caused class cancellations and compromised research activities. The project is in year three of a five-year time frame which, once completed, will ensure reliability of electric systems in all buildings.

Sources

- Distinctively Wayne State University - Strategic Plan - 2016-2012
- Distinctively Wayne State University - Strategic Plan - 2016-2012 (page number 23)
- Distinctively Wayne State University - Strategic Plan - 2016-2012 (page number 24)
- Huron Consulting Group - July 2013 - Final Assessment
- Huron Consulting Group - July 2013 - Final Assessment (page number 22)
- Huron Consulting Group Projects - 2016