



# HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

## Wayne State University Assurance Argument

### Talking Points

---

*Higher Learning Commission peer reviewers will be on campus on March 6 and 7 to conduct an in-depth review of Wayne State University Programs. You can help by studying these talking points, which reflect the main points of our Assurance Argument.*

[Review the full Assurance Argument](#)

## Wayne State University Mission

We will create and advance knowledge, prepare a diverse student body to thrive, and positively impact local and global communities.

---

## Introduction

Wayne State University is a premier university in the heart of Detroit and for nearly 150 years has served as a place of opportunity, support, and innovation for students, faculty, alumni, community members and partners looking to improve the quality of life. We are a university of access and opportunity, providing quality learning and research with a highly diverse student body. Since our last Higher Learning Commission review in 2007, the university has made remarkable progress – despite a challenging economic environment.

### ***Talking Points:***

- Wayne State University, founded in 1868 and accredited for a century, is envisioned as a pre-eminent urban, public research university known for academic and research excellence, success across a diverse student body, and meaningful engagement in its urban community.
- The present thirteen schools and colleges have evolved in many ways since the university's infancy, but two principles have remained constant: **access** and **academic excellence**.
- The university has long been an anchor in the City of Detroit; most recently, it has been a force in Detroit's resurgence as an iconic American city. The spirit and resilience that made Detroit great have re-emerged in full with new vision, new leadership, willing

participation, growing investment, and collaboration – within the City of Detroit and within Wayne State University.

- We have the enthusiastic support of our Board of Governors, President, and Provost. Our mission is enabled by an accomplished faculty crossing all disciplines and a passionate staff – all engaged to ensure the success of our students. “[Distinctively Wayne State University](#),” our Strategic Plan for 2016-2021, guides us; “[Pivotal Moments: Our Campaign for Wayne State University](#)” enables our growth. Together, we bring an abiding commitment to institutional transformation and renewal leading to a learner-centered university.

## Criterion One.

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

---

### *Talking Points:*

- The “**Distinctively Wayne State University**” mission, vision, and values are the foundation for the university's Strategic Plan for 2016-21, and emphasize not only academic excellence, but also opportunity and inclusion for students diverse in ethnicity, national origin, economic means, family college experience and preparation, and community engagement.
- The strategic plan drives the university's mission-centered strategic initiatives and investments and frames frequent, campus-wide communications. The university's enrollment profile, degree and scholarship programs, research activities, and student support services are consistent with the mission.
- Student success is fostered by core enrollment services; advising for undecided students, advising for pre-professional students, and advising centered in schools and colleges; and academic support resources targeted to disadvantaged students and students who need extra help, such as APEX and the Academic Success Center. Dean of Students Office programs enrich student life and community involvement and extend to students' families. Student health and wellness is supported by the Campus Health Center and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).
- Our university's mission and vision support a multicultural society perspective through global teaching and learning experiences, through special programs targeted to under-represented minorities, and through cultivation of a diverse campus culture. Launched in 2014 by the university's first Chief Diversity Officer, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion leads initiatives that support university strategic goals; through the Office of Multicultural Student Engagement, it fosters a diverse campus culture and facilitates grass-roots student activities. The Office of International Student Programs facilitates academic and student life for nearly 2,500 students from 79 countries.
- The university's mission and activities demonstrate a commitment to the public good. We are guided by an underlying belief that aligning academic and service programs with community-based resources produces mutual benefits achievable only by collaboration.

## Criterion Two.

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

---

### *Talking Points:*

- The Wayne State University Board of Governors (BOG) is the university's primary governing body, as established in 1963 by the Constitution of Michigan. The BOG consists of eight members elected by statewide popular vote who are independent of the university's administration.
- Shared governance is assured through many governing and advisory groups. Among these groups are the Academic Senate and the Student Senate; the American Association of University Professors/American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Local 6075, the Union of Part-time Faculty-AFT Local 477, and the Graduate Employees Organizing Committee-AFT Local 6123; the Graduate Council; the President's Cabinet and Council of Deans; and nine bargaining units representing non-academic employees.
- University statutes, policies, and procedures promote ethical behavior and responsible conduct and apply to all members of the university community. Regulatory compliance systems in place at all levels of the university are monitored by the Office of Internal Audit; examples include finance and business operations, equal opportunity, research, student financial aid, and athletics.
- Our university safeguards academic honesty and integrity. Guiding principles include the AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics (faculty) and the university statute on student rights and responsibilities. Examples of policies and declarations that provide detail include the responsible conduct of research, obligations of faculty and student to the instruction process, acceptable use of information technology resources, and the Student Code of Conduct.
- Our university values transparency and full disclosure of information to students and the public regarding program requirements, faculty and staff, and other resources; costs and benefits to students; and accreditation relationships. The [wayne.edu](http://wayne.edu) website is the primary source of information to internal and external constituencies.
- Freedom of expression is affirmed by university statutes on Academic Freedom and Student Rights and Responsibilities. Free exchange of ideas occurs through faculty academic activities, student organizations, and the student-run newspaper and radio station. Our university welcomes to campus speakers who openly express diverse views on wide-ranging issues.

## Criterion Three.

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

---

### *Talking Points:*

- Undergraduate programs provide a rigorous learning experience that combines the foundation of the General Education program with more focused learning in the majors. Students engage in a variety of experiential learning opportunities such as undergraduate research, community engaged learning, creative projects, and learning communities.
- The General Education program is currently undergoing reform to better cultivate intellectual skills and knowledge as a foundation for lifelong learning, to better reflect the unique characteristics of a diverse urban research institution, to be simpler, more flexible, and internally coherent, and to be designed around learning outcomes. The revision process has been a collaborative, inclusive, and transparent campus conversation.
- Graduate education requires the acquisition and generation of new knowledge and, depending on the degree, the application of this knowledge. Professional education is focused on direct career preparation. Student success is achieved through advanced coursework, research, scholarly creativity, high quality mentoring, professional development, and innovative programs.
- Faculty are highly qualified and are evaluated to ensure high-level performance and student learning. A wide array of supports are available to enhance learning, teaching, research, and community engagement, such as the Office for Teaching and Learning, Computing & Information Technology, the Division of Research, and the University Libraries.
- Multiple processes, such as academic program review and accreditation, ensure that Wayne State University's courses and programs remain relevant, rigorous, current, differentiated according to the degree or certificate awarded, and consistent across contexts and delivery modes.
- Students are supported by accessible faculty and advisors, academic services (e.g., Academic Success Center, Student Disability Services, APEX), enrollment management services (e.g., financial literacy education, new student orientation), and programs addressing particular needs (e.g., Counseling & Psychological Services, Office of International Students and Scholars, Office of Military and Veterans' Academic Excellence).

## Criterion Four.

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.

---

### *Talking Points:*

- Academic Program Review (APR) is a long-established, multi-phase process critical to curricular quality, currency, and innovation. It involves internal and external reviewers and participation at the program, departmental, college, and provost's levels. Disciplinary accreditation complements APR.
- Transfer credit and new or revised course and program proposals undergo review at multiple levels to ensure their quality.
- Assessment is an ongoing, faculty-driven process central to student learning and success. General Education and degree programs articulate learning outcomes, measure how well outcomes are achieved, and use that information to improve program quality. Assessment efforts are supported through university, school/college, and department assessment committees, the Office of Assessment, the Office for Teaching and Learning, and web-based tools.
- Student retention, persistence, and completion have been prominent emphases of the university's current and immediate past strategic plans. Since 2011, Wayne State University has boosted its six-year graduation rate from 26% to 39%, a rate of improvement that ranks among the top 20 public universities nationally; improvement to 42% is expected in 2017. The university's HLC **Quality Initiative** outlines efforts enacted to achieve this improvement.

## Criterion Five.

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

---

### *Talking Points:*

- Over the past decade, Wayne State University has successfully navigated economic challenges related to the recession of 2008, the Detroit bankruptcy, and State of Michigan disinvestment. While declining state support has resulted in increased tuition, Wayne State University tuition remains below the average of Michigan public universities; as well as below the national average, whereas student earnings after graduation exceed the national average.
- To honor its mission of access and opportunity, the university has increased annual needs-based scholarships by 250% since 2006 – to a total of \$72.35 million in 2017 – to help reconcile tuition increases for disadvantaged students.
- The 2016-2021 stakeholder-engaged strategic plan, “**Distinctively Wayne State University,**” features seven interdependent emphases that link financial and operational performance with university mission and priorities: student success, teaching excellence, research, diversity and inclusion, financial and operational excellence, entrepreneurship, and community engagement.
- Increasing enrollment and philanthropy, diversifying and enhancing revenue sources, and achieving operational excellence are key to maintaining and building quality programs and student success.
- The university is committed to continuous quality improvement in operations and relies on internal and external review processes at multiple levels within the organization to sustain quality programs and operations. Continuous quality improvement in faculty and staff performance is supported by professional development activities.

## Questions?

[Click here to email the Wayne State University 2017 HLC Accreditation Team](#)