



Self-Study Evaluation Team Report

**Delaware State University
Self-Study Evaluation Team Visit: *March 21-23, 2022***

Section A: Institutional Representatives

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/President

Dr. Tony Allen, President

Chief Academic Officer

Dr. Saundra DeLauder, Chief Academic Officer and Provost

Chief Financial Officer

Anas Ben Addi, Chief Financial Officer and Vice President for Finance

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Dr. DeVona E. Williams, Board Chair

Section B: Institutional Context

Delaware State University (DSU) is a public, comprehensive, 1890 land-grant institution established in 1891 as the State College for Colored Students. As a historically Black, land-grant institution, DSU's mission is to offer access and opportunity to diverse populations from Delaware, the nation, and the world, particularly to those who are underserved. The curriculum evolved from a preparatory focus in 1894 to a full four-year baccalaureate degree curriculum by 1932. The college was first accredited by Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) in 1945 and after losing accreditation in 1949 was reaccredited in 1957 and has maintained that status through the present. The institution's name changed to Delaware State College in 1947 and to Delaware State University in 1993 as a result of continuous growth and expansion.

Currently, the University serves over 5500 students with more than 200 faculty members. About 800 of the current students are enrolled in graduate programs, a number that has nearly doubled since the

last visit. Enrollment at DSU has grown about 18% overall since 2016. The student population is diverse with 62% being African American/Black. Forty-two percent are Pell eligible and 31% are first-generation. The main campus is situated on about 360 acres with more than 50 academic and administrative buildings and seven residence halls and apartments for students. DSU recently acquired Wesley College which is 2-miles from the main campus. The new site adds another 50 acres and an additional 20 plus buildings to DSU assets. The University also has farmland and it maintains a fleet of planes at the Delaware Air Park. DSU has additional locations in Wilmington, Georgetown and Dover, Delaware as well as sites in Changchun and Ningbo, China, Smyrna and Lake Forest High Schools, Dover Air Force Base and the former Capital One building in Wilmington. The institution recently opened a diagnostic laboratory at the Kirkwood Wilmington location, and they will soon move their graduate and adult studies programs to a site also in Wilmington that was donated by Capital One.

The university's academic programs are organized into four (4) colleges that include agriculture, science, and technology; education, humanities, and social sciences; business; and health and behavioral sciences; along with the school of graduate/adult studies. The institution offers a span of degrees from the Associate through the Doctorate. The largest focus is at the baccalaureate level including an Honors Program. The faculty-student ratio averages 1:16. DSU offers a range of on-line degrees as well as several global programs. Nine of DSU's programs are accredited or approved by outside agencies. DSU also has an Early College High School where students can earn up to 60 college credits. Approximately 60% of the students transfer to DSU upon graduation. DSU has grown as a research institution showing a 34% increase in sponsored program support since 2012.

At the time of the site visit, DSU had recently completed its strategic plan 'PRIDE 2020.' The plan had six objectives: create exceptional learning environments; focus on student success; focus on research; strengthen outreach; environmental stewardship; and diversify resources. The self-study steering committee and working groups used the goals and accomplishments of the six objectives as a basis for examining the institution's compliance with the standards of accreditation. The self-study design also included town hall meetings that allowed faculty, staff, students and other stakeholders the opportunity to weigh in on the process and priorities and challenges uncovered by the self-study.

The self-study process was also used as an opportunity to identify the next set of strategic goals. Towards this end, a survey on institutional priorities was completed by DSU constituents asking them to identify the top five priorities from a list of 10. The five to emerge were academic excellence, student success, operational effectiveness, financial planning and infrastructure. It was noted that there was a great deal of congruence between the priorities identified in the survey and the goals of the PRIDE 2020 plan. This signaled the need to basically extend and refine the previous goals towards building upon prior success. The new plan entitled REACH 2026 focuses on improving retention and graduation rates, investing in teaching and experiential learning opportunities. There is also a focus on garnering the resources and improving the processes and infrastructure needed to support the teaching and learning goals. Many of the goals of the new plan desire bolder outcomes for objectives identified in the previous plan. For example, going from the goal of doing more research to aspiring to become a R1 institution. The new goals match well to the MSCHE standards for accreditation as well as map to the university's mission and vision.

COVID-19 presented some challenges to the self-study process, most of which were overcome by efficiencies identified as a result of the pandemic. For example, virtual meetings created more efficient meeting schedules and assisted with sharing documents. Of special note is how DSU managed through the COVID-19 pandemic. The university faculty transitioned 1,447 courses to a virtual platform in just five days. This effort was supported by a previous initiative to supply faculty and all incoming students with iPads and Macbooks and to begin faculty training in expanding the use of technology for instruction. DSU also raised funds to help students deal with financial emergencies that arose due to COVID-19 and through grant funding opened their own COVID-19 testing laboratory to support COVID-19 testing on their own campus as well as other agencies.

In the midst of COVID-19, DSU acquired Wesley College. The acquisition strengthened and expanded some of DSU's most attractive programs, especially those in the behavioral and health sciences. The University managed all approvals and documentation needed to complete the acquisition including MSCHE Substantive Change documentation and teach-out plans all while conducting a self-study and managing COVID-19. This was indeed a major accomplishment that should be noted in this process.

Section C: Requirements of Affiliation

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet all of the requirements of affiliation.

This judgment is based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with institutional constituencies to clarify information and verify compliance during the self-study evaluation team visit.

Evidence of compliance with each Requirement of Affiliation was verified through (1) evidence provided for each requirement, evidence provided for each Standard where applicable and documentation offered in the self-study. When needed, further verification was sought through interviews during the virtual visit. Below is a brief summary of each Requirement:

- Requirement 1 Evidence of compliance with this requirement was presented through the Charter and other official operating statutes from the State of Delaware Code.
- Requirement 2: Evidence of current enrollment data was provided for the beginning of the Spring 2022 semester
- Requirement 3: Not Applicable
- Requirement 4: All of the documents provided were written in English and all of the virtual meetings were conducted in English
- Requirement 5: Evidence of compliance with federal and state agencies was provided in the evidence library and DSU has a web-page dedicated to links to applicable government agencies and compliance documents.
- Requirement 6: Compliance with MSCHE was clearly documented through correspondence provided in the evidence library

- Requirement 7: Evidence of the Mission Statement was documented in several sources provided for Standard I.
- Requirement 8: More than 800 pages of assessment data was provided in the evidence library and was systematically reviewed through evidence and interviews related to Standards: III, IV, V, and VI.
- Requirement 9: Evidence of rigor and assessment of learning programs and student achievement was found in reviews of documents presented for Standards III and V and in interviews conducted during the virtual visit.
- Requirement 10: Evidence of the integration of assessment and plan was found in the evaluation of Standards: I, III, VI, V and VI.
- Requirement 11: Several documents related to financial planning, budgets and audits were provided and more thoroughly assessed in the context of reviewing Standard VI.
- Requirement 12: Evidence of the roles and functioning of the governing body was clearly presented and fully reviewed in the context of Standard VII.
- Requirement 13: Evidence of a conflict of interest policy was presented and discussed during interviews related to Standard VII.
- Requirement 14: Fact Books and Consumer information is easily found on the website and reviewed in the context of Standard I.
- Requirement 15: Faculty numbers and roles were reviewed through documents and conversations in the context of Standard III.

Section D: Standards for Accreditation

Standard I: Mission and Goals

The institution’s mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution’s stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

In the team’s judgment, the institution *appears* to meet this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the virtual evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Summary of Findings:

The institution has a mission, vision, goals, and core values that are aligned and relevant to its purpose and reflective of its commitment to provide a high-quality learning experience for students to meet the complex needs of the global society. Its purpose is defined within the context of higher education, the students it serves and what it intends to accomplish.

The mission and vision are publicized across the institution and well-known by its internal stakeholders as evidenced by conversations in meetings and publications across the facilities, in many printed materials, and on the institution's website. DSU lives its mission through the dedicated service of its faculty, staff, and administration who demonstrate active commitment to its tenets through excellence in teaching, research, and service across its programs.

The institution conducts periodic assessment of the relevancy and effectiveness of its mission and goals and has a process to ensure that they are approved and supported by the Board of Trustees. The mission and vision have been revised to reflect the evolving role of the University across the state, and the strategic institutional goals are linked to the mission and supported by continuous reporting of key performance indicators.

A collaborative and engaging university-wide process was used to develop the mission and goals of the institution. Working groups were established and input sought about the purpose and intent of the university to ensure relevance to the ever-evolving needs of the state, nation, and the world. Consultants assisted the institution in defining a clear path of transition from strategic plans PRIDE 2020 to REACH 2026 within a framework of a bankable plan reflective of the mission and goals of the university.

Collegial Advice:

- The Team suggests that the institution consider strategically and consistently posting its mission statement, vision statement, and core values on all electronic and print documents, as applicable, and in a manner that are easily identified.
- The Team suggests that the institution review all media in which its mission, vision, and values are presented to assure consistency in wording and the coherence of one voice transmission of its mission and goals especially in light of its desire to expand its impact around the world.
- The Team suggests that the University increase reliance on its mission to guide, link and clearly map planning, resource allocation, assessment, and use of results in the interest of institutional stakeholders.

Team Recommendation(s):

- None

Requirement(s):

None

Recognition of Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

- DSU is to be commended for actively promoting a mission that defines and is consistent with its purpose for access to higher education, what it intends to accomplish, and how it responds to the needs of the students it serves within the local, regional, and global contexts.
- DSU is to be commended for living its mission through the active role it played in serving its students, employees, and the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- DSU is to be commended for the strategic steps taken to expand the impact of its mission through the acquisition of Wesley College and extension of its reach in the context of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- DSU is to be commended for the active practice of its mission through teaching and learning, innovative research, collegial interaction, and community engagement.

Requirements of Affiliation:

In the Team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation 7, 10, 14.

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

In the team’s judgment, the institution appears to have met this standard.

This judgment is based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with institutional constituencies to clarify information and verify compliance during the self-study evaluation team visit with Delaware State University (“University”).

Summary of Findings:

The University supports academic freedom and intellectual property rights through the application of the Intellectual Property Policy, the inclusion of language requiring faculty to facilitate academic and intellectual freedom of expression in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (“CBA”), and the Title IX and Equal Opportunity Policies. Although the policies are ripe for review the foundational elements of the policies properly encourage respect for intellectual property rights, and the rights of individuals.

The University displays a strong commitment to fostering respect and collegiality within its community. The Civility Policy documents the expectations of the University regarding employee interactivity. The Center for Disability Resources makes provisions to allow for those who are differently abled to receive proper accommodations. The Climate Survey provided a systematic review of diversity and inclusion in the University community.

The University has shown its commitment to avoiding conflicts of interest. The University has shown that this commitment is expected at all levels from staff to the Board of Trustees (“BOT”). The University has provided evidence of a Conflicts of Interest policy, the inclusion of the ways to address conflicts of interest in the Employee Handbooks, and Conflicts of Interest disclosure statements from the BOT.

The University is dedicated to fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline and separation of employees. The Employee Handbook provides excellent guidance on the expectations the University has of its employees and the Promotion and Tenure Guidelines Handbook gives structure and consistency encouraging fair and impartial practices. The Equal Opportunity, Harassment and Nondiscrimination policy shows the University has “zero tolerance” and discourages “bad acts” from employees. Further, the policy discusses disciplinary action to be taken as a result of said “bad acts”. The University provides necessary resources to differently abled individuals through the Center for Disability Resources and encourages faculty and staff alike to take full advantage of said resources.

The University has shown a commitment to honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, as well as in internal communications. The University ensures public access on many platforms including but not limited to websites, social media, news publications, and a magazine. The University maintains compliance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) by making the proper disclosure on the website and Factbook pursuant to the reporting requirements for higher education institutions.

The Financial Aid website provides a host of user-friendly links allowing individuals accessing the information to locate information about a diversity of financial resources available to students. Further, in 2021 the University was ranked #10 nationally among other HBCUs and #3 among all public HBCUs. This information gives validation to the value of the educational pedigree of graduating students.

The University has shown its compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements through the 2022 Institutional Federal Compliance Report. The Report provided detailed information showing the University in compliance with applicable federal, state and local requirements. Further the Report described areas where corrective action could be taken for improvement and areas of strength.

The University has provided artifacts that demonstrate the practice of ongoing periodic assessment regarding Information Technology, Enterprise Risk Management, Athletics, Internal Policies, Student Affairs, and Operational Management. These artifacts show a commitment to observing and responding to trends that affect the campus communities. Further, during the interview process, the staff were able to articulate the processes that and systems that are utilized to perform periodic assessments.

Delaware State University has experienced a number of impactful changes that influenced the ethics and integrity of the holistic operations of the University. Nonetheless, these changes did not prevent the University from appearing to meet the foundational requirements of this standard.

Collegial Advice:

- It is suggested that language supporting academic and intellectual freedom be included in the Code of Conduct in the Student Handbook.
- It is suggested that all policies be properly dated and reviewed pursuant to an established and documented schedule.
- It is suggested that a Faculty Handbook be developed and implemented.
- It is suggested that the University develops a campus-wide documented schedule and plan that promotes consistent periodical assessments.
- It is suggested that the University publish a campus-wide document that details the dynamics of the grievance process as it pertains to staff not subject to the CBA, students, and those who decide to remain anonymous.
- It is suggested that the University consider developing a more robust Exit Interview process to allow for a better understanding as to improvements in employment practices, thus encouraging employment retention.
- It is suggested that the University prioritize the strategic goals regarding infrastructure enhancement for Information Technology.

Team Recommendation(s):

None

Requirement(s):

None

Recognition of Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

- The Delaware Chapter of the Society for Human Resources Management (Del-SHRM) presented a Gold Award to Delaware State University in 2017 recognizing their commitment to diversity.
- US News & World Report announced in 2021 that Delaware State University rose to #10 nationally among all other Historically Black Colleges and Universities remains the #3 public HBCU in America.

Requirements of Affiliation:

In the team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliation 14.

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence of all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality.

All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

In the team’s judgment, the institution appears to have met this standard.

This judgment is based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and virtual interviews with institutional constituencies to clarify information and verify compliance during the self-study evaluation team visit.

Summary of Findings:

DSU demonstrates strong evidence of providing the students with a comprehensive learning experience consistent with the expectation of higher education institutions. Furthermore, DSU offers various certificate, undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs that lead to four associate's, 47 baccalaureates, 21 master's, and six doctoral degrees offered through 17 academic departments. In addition, over the last six (6) years, DSU has established undergraduate online degrees programs in Accounting, General Management, Human Resource Management, Liberal Studies, Psychology, Public Health, and Social Work, with several graduate online degree programs including Business Administration, Nursing, Public Administration, Social Work, and Sports Administration. Furthermore, DSU has developed several global health collaborations to improve and facilitate student exchanges, research, and conference collaborations with institutions worldwide.

There are four colleges and one school:

- College of Agriculture, Science, and Technology (CAST),
- College of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences (CHESS),
- College of Business (COB),
- Wesley College of Health and Behavioral Sciences (WCHBS),

- School of Graduate, Adult and Extended Studies (SGAES).

Delaware State University presents sound evidence of an educational modality that is Student-centered and Faculty-driven to meet the demand of practical learning experiences. For example, enrollment in both undergraduate and graduate programs have increased significantly over the past several years, with over 5500 students in the fall of 2022. Enrollment is continuously growing, admitting students from diverse backgrounds. Central to the mission of DSU, improving student retention and graduation rates is critical to the program. Furthermore, the University has implemented and developed several degreed programs to continue building their program as part of the REACH 2026. For example, the self-study reported that the programs were reviewed in enrollment, retention, degree production, instructional productivity, and costs to ensure that available resources are appropriately utilized to meet the students' faculty's needs and demands and meet the University's mission.

DSU is working with the academic programs and departments within the four (4) colleges and the graduate school to develop a research program to strengthen professional growth while providing additional tools for innovative teaching and engaging students to become scholars. Furthermore, over nineteen-degree programs were identified as high priority and recommended for growth and investment, including Aviation, Nursing, Psychology, and a doctorate in Educational Leadership. As the institution aspires to become an R1 entity, the University's new strategic plan, REACH 2026, endeavors to implement several programs to enhance the research productivity for the students and faculty.

Collegial Advice:

- None

Team Recommendation(s):

- Publish and enforce an assessment schedule towards supporting the design, rigor, and coherence of the academic programs.

Requirement(s):

None

Recognition of Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

Requirements of Affiliation:

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation 8,9,10 and15.

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution

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recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

In the team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with university constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the on-site evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Summary of Findings:

DSU has clearly defined objectives in the *PRIDE 2020 Strategic Plan* outlining the learning environment, student success, and outreach to enhance the student experience. For example, the second goal focuses on increasing retention and graduation rates, growing enrollment to 5,000 students, expanding support programs, and emphasizes graduate school and job placement.

DSU is committed to the mission through empowering a diverse population of students to reach their potential and by providing innovative academic programs and transformational experiences. There is effective communication and collaboration among Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, Student Affairs, Institutional Advancement, and Athletics enabling DSU to provide students with a 360-degree experience. Students referred to leadership’s commitment to a “culture of care” through being adaptive and flexible.

The university has an organizational infrastructure and clearly stated ethical policies and processes in place to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students. Admissions reorganized to provide students and their respective families with personalized experiences. Individual counselors have been assigned to support the enrollment of transfer, international and graduate populations.

DSU provides accurate and comprehensive information relative to admissions policies, criteria, and processes published on the University Admissions website. Additionally, Admissions and Institutional Research, Planning and Analytics update HEOA information annually and display it on the website.

DSU has established a means for Admissions to be more effective and efficient in fostering a favorable student experience. “Transformation Wednesdays” are held virtually each week for students to have an opportunity to speak one-on-one with an admissions coordinator, financial aid representative, and have their transcripts evaluated to determine which credits will transfer.

The university has processes designed to enhance successful achievement of students’ educational goals, including certificate and degree completion. The certificate and degree program requirements for international students include completing the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and scoring a minimum of 550.

DSU leadership makes a concerted effort to ensure tuition is affordable for students and competitive with other Delaware institutions. For the Wesley Legacy students, tuition was decreased 37% for out-of-state and 74% for in-state. Tuition has remained relatively static for the past 10 years. Additionally, the DSU Board of Trustees approved the Wesley College/DSU Teach-out Policy giving consideration to students transitioning from Wesley.

DSU demonstrates innovation in reflecting positive impact on retention and graduation rates. The Financial Aid Office and Institutional Advancement combined efforts to provide multiple scholarships to students. For example, in Fall 2021 42% of undergraduates qualified for PELL grants, the Inspire Scholarship provides Delaware High School graduates with a 2.75 or higher GPA are provided four years of full tuition. In Academic Year 2021-2022, 788 students received the Inspire Scholarship.

To ensure students can persist and complete, DSU Foundation supports scholarships for current and returning students. For example, the Alumni Legacy scholarship provides support to students whose parents and grandparents attended DSU. Also, the Osher Reentry Endowed Scholarship (ORES) and Crankstart Reentry Scholarship (CRS) are for nontraditional students who have experienced a five-year gap since completing high school and interested in completing their baccalaureate degree.

DSU establishes the minimum transfer admissions requirements for students. Transfer students must earn their last 30 credit hours at DSU. Additionally, they must submit transcripts from every college attended and should be prepared to submit descriptions of the courses. The Faculty senate is developing an application approval process for prior learning credits. Additionally, the Prior Learning Taskforce is exploring a standard military evaluation process, classifying the Community College of the Air Force as a standard associates degree and working with deans to assess feasibility to accept standard PLEs.

DSU was awarded \$2,782,960 in dedicated student funding through CARES Act I. Over \$1.5 million was spent to clear balances for 96 graduating seniors, and an additional \$750K in student debt to the University was forgiven in 2021. Additionally, DSU established a COVID-19 Student Emergency Relief Fund and surpassed its goal of \$1M in two months. By February 2021 the University exceeded its Relief fundraising goal by 60% and had supported over 1,500 students in housing, food, medical, mental health counseling, scholarships, and technology.

DSU has articulation agreements in place with the Delaware Technical and Community College and over 130 institutions, published on the website, to facilitate the student admissions process into bachelor degree completion.

DSU conforms with University Academic Progress Policy and federal regulations Sections 668.16(e), 668.32(f) and 668.34 and state regulations governing financial aid programming and recipients. Support systems are in place to accommodate students who face academic challenges. For example, students who are placed on academic probation are enrolled in the Academic Recovery Program the following semester which consists of a three-credit Learning Strategies for Academic Success course. Additionally, Athletics have academic progress and an alert reporting system in place.

The university has policies and procedures for the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records. To protect the privacy and protection of student records in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), DSU policies on student privacy rights comply with FERPA requirements and are managed by Records and Registration. Both Delaware State University and Wesley College Registrars jointly communicated with all of the then currently enrolled Wesley College students via Townhall Sessions, Forums, Direct Mailers and Emails, to migrate their records to Delaware State University prior to the acquisition's completion. Students taking advantage of these services; completed and signed the FERPA release document, which not only granted Delaware State University access to their records but also allowed each student the opportunity to register at Delaware State University and process their financial aid for the 2021-2022 academic year. This process had a direct and positive impact on the retention of Wesley College students by Delaware State University. The final transfer of all Wesley College student records took place in December 2021.

DSU offers and assesses the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience through Career Services over the student life cycle through Freshman Forums, Career and Graduate School Fairs, STEM and Business fairs, and Career development workshops. A host of businesses partner with Career Services, including, but not limited to, Deloitte, Citibank Amazon, graduate schools, military, and police. Career Services works with Office of Assessments and the Registrar to evaluate student next steps through the First Destination Survey. Students indicated "Some of us have internships in the Governor's Office, Department of Justice, and PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) to name a few."

DSU launched a Student Climate Survey in December 2021 which explains the 5% response rate. Library Resources, IDP, and pre-registration, services used by all student populations were highly satisfied using those services. This is a reflection of how well the advisors support students.

The University continues to demonstrate a commitment to service excellence and fosters student success by promoting opportunities for student development for the entire student population. DSU combined Undergraduate Research, Experiential Learning and Honors in Fall 2019 to maximize opportunities and resources to provide more professional development and leadership activities to students in the Honors Program. Additionally, DSU has instituted a premiere professional development opportunity "Deep Day" which has expanded across all majors, resulting in a 100% corporate engagement rate.

DSU's Strategic Enrollment Management has a documented planning process in place through 2025. The focus of the plan is growth projections for online, international, and graduate programs, and non-degree seeking students. With the Wesley acquisition, DSU can now expand recruiting/enrollment efforts to military personnel, veterans, and their families through Dover Air Force Base. Additionally, to understand the success of recruitment, admission yields, scholarships, and student migration patterns in the enrollment planning process, DSU develops an enrollment debriefing document annually.

DSU provides a number of services to ensure a favorable student experience and enhance student life. These services include Campus Ministries, Wellness and Recreation, Opportunity Scholars

program, Student Leadership and Activities, Greek organizations, and clubs. The University restructured and centralized the Office of Student Success to provide more robust advising and student personalization. The new office includes Advising, Academic Services for Student Athletes, Library Services, Integrated Academic Support Services, Opportunity Scholars Program, Undergraduate Research, Experiential Learning and Honors (URELAH), Supplemental Instruction, The Writing Center, and a variety of tutorial services, and is staffed by over 50 professionals. Student Accessibility Services was also realigned and renamed Center for Disability Resources reporting to General Counsel and Risk Management to support the broader DSU community.

DSU devised and restructured its academic advising through a centralized campus-wide plan to create consistency in processes, accountability, and policies and procedures. DSU received a grant from the Gates Foundation to develop the plan which has a focus on developing holistic Individual Development Plans (IDP) with students beginning their first year.

The university made changes to English Composition and Speech courses as part of the Gen Ed program. In Fall 2020, the program redesign was implemented as a pilot. The data showed enhanced performance using the new curriculum and identified a need for additional data sources and further evaluation after program implementation.

DSU continues to focus on continuous improvement and innovation through launching new initiatives to build on its strength, create new opportunities for students, increase enrollment, streamline admissions procedures, increase financial aid, broaden scope of teaching and learning, research, outreach and mental health and advising.

The university assesses student experience by soliciting feedback, through surveys and evaluations from students over the student lifecycle. A survey was completed in Spring 2020 to solicit feedback from students relative to the consolidation of student support services in the Office of Student Success to improve communication. Students noted the transition went smoothly. Also, 85.52% of students indicated (strongly agree/agree) “they are confident in their ability to comprehend their major’s curriculum guide and accurately plan their schedule.”

Collegial Advice:

- To expand service and support of active-duty military students, DSU may consider establishing a DoD MOU and participate in the DoD Tuition Assistance Program to accept tuition assistance from DoD.
- To provide more transfer of credit opportunities, DSU may consider expanding the partnership beyond the Community College of the Air Force and also partner with the U.S. Naval Community College

- To further adopt best practices in adjudicating academic integrity and conduct cases, DSU may consider an institutional membership with the International Center for Academic Integrity.

Team Recommendation(s):

None

Requirement(s):

None

Recognition of Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

- DSU is in the process of updating policies and procedures relative to credits awarded through experiential learning, prior non-academic learning, competency-based assessment, and other alternative learning approaches through a Prior Learning Taskforce.
- Currently DSU does not provide housing to graduate students. However, due to the realignment of Student Affairs and Housing to the VP for Strategic Enrollment Management, additional dormitories from the Wesley acquisition may provide an opportunity to grow housing opportunities for graduate students.
- In 2018, several issues were identified contributing to the Honors Program lack of growth. DSU put many changes in place which resulted in significant increase in student growth and expansion in course options for Honors students. In 2019, the Honors program was embedded in the Office of URELAH and sixteen Wesley Honor students were inducted into the DSU Honors program in 2021.
- DSU recognized the problem with student progress in mathematics during the use of the Accuplacer placement test which showed that students were not prepared for college-level math. The problem was addressed by changing to ALEKS which uses adaptive learning permitting students to retake exams with an emphasis on the weak indicators allowing for stronger placement results. As a result, DSU won a “Realizing Transformation Award” “Architecture in Practice: Developing a Cross Sector Blueprint for Eliminating Non-Credit Developmental Courses.”

REQUIREMENT OF AFFILIATION:

In the team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation 8 and 10.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their programs of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

This judgment is based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with institutional constituencies to clarify information and verify compliance during the self-study evaluation team visit.

Summary of Findings:

The institution demonstrates strong evidence of assessment practices as well as an evolving culture of assessment. This endorsement is supported by the Delaware State University's mission of integrating the "highest of standards of excellence in teaching, research, and service within its academic programs." An assessment infrastructure exists to support the university's mission and ensure that students are the recipients of a high quality successful educational experience.

Currently, the university uses an internal platform called the Assessment Data Collection System (ADCS) to facilitate analyses, sharing and reporting of student learning outcomes. The system has been instrumental in leading to curricular changes such as those highlighted within the institution's General Education Program. Other systems in use to facilitate assessment include the Institutional Research, Planning, and Analytics portal (IRPA) used by the respective offices including Assessment to provide technical assistance to units and departments conducting assessment; Decision Support Analytics (DSA), which are dashboards aimed at providing daily information for administrative units; and Anthology (formally Campus Labs), which is used as the software to support academic assessment of student learning outcomes.

There is an apparent culture of assessment, DSU continues to build by engaging its campus stakeholders in the process of assessment. The rationale for acquiring or developing assessment platforms was in response to a 2017 Middle States Periodic Review Report, which helped to realize that greater efficiencies could be achieved by exploring more robust systems to meet the needs of the campus. The stakeholders, including some off-campus community partners, participated in a shared process to review the needs of the campus and select new software packages to address data needed to fulfill reporting requirements of Middle States and help to better inform student learning. Faculty and staff also participate in annual assessment events and activities such as Data Day, which is a part of the University's Assessment Summit. Clearly, an assessment journey has been realized and well-documented by the campus. The campus has several assessment tools that capture an appropriate mix of direct and indirect measures as well as support staff in Institutional Research, Assessment, and a host of professional development activities to promulgate a culture of assessment.

Faculty members within the departments work closely with the Institutional Research staff, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), and the Director of Assessment to receive guidance on goals, learning outcomes, and reporting and sharing of their special initiatives and assessment stories. There is collaboration among the various offices to provide data and assist faculty in making meaningful use of the data. The CTL and the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Analytics support academic units with program and institutional level data and data from the Decision Support Analytics Dashboard.

Assessment is further supported by the multitude of tools, strategies, and instruments that enable individuals to conduct assessments. Just recently, the university developed a new course evaluation tool to address different modalities of teaching. This was especially important since the University, like so many others, had to pivot to a virtual environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the assistance of faculty, the CTL conducted student focus groups to address the low response rates and make the tool of better use to faculty. Since implementation of these changes, the response rate for the Data Days/Assessment Summits has increased from 21% in 2013 to 67% in 2021.

The university's acquisition of Wesley College provided an opportunity for two additional specialized accrediting bodies to be added to the institution's list of seven specialized accreditations bringing the total up to nine. Assessment within the specialty areas is prescriptive by their accrediting bodies. As a result, they also receive support from the Director of Assessment as well as the CTL and Institutional Research. Prior to full acquisition of Wesley College, staff on both campuses collaborated to combine the curriculum and evaluate the students within each of the specialized programs ensuring that they met the admissions standards of DSU and the standards of the specialized accrediting agencies. This meant that assessment of learning had to be coordinated with systematic monitoring for each of the agencies. While assessment of programs that hold specialized accreditation is prescriptive and required to be systematic and sustained over time, results are used to impact curricular changes as well as programmatic changes within each of the college's programs. However, the sharing and receipt of assessment results and use of data from the specialized accredited programs by the administrative units (non-academic) is not well-documented although it is evident through interviews and appears to be occurring.

The university demonstrates that assessment of the administrative units, those commonly referred to as "non-academic," including co-curricular activities is a routine occurrence. However, the University needs to improve on inventorying and documenting the activities of those units. Documentation may be improved by the development of a campus-wide schedule or inventory that shows assessments that are occurring throughout the academic year. The schedule may include a list of assessments, general dates assessments are being conducted, and timelines for communicating and sharing results. This will allow campus constituents to have a greater awareness of assessments across the campus and facilitate conversation and actions that contribute to the existing culture of assessment and help to "close the loop." The administrative units are being provided a template by the Assessment Office to assist with structuring assessment reports and alignment to university strategic goals, and where possible, student learning outcomes.

Offices of Student Success, Enrollment Management, Career Services, and University (Freshman)

seminar are examples of administrative units that conduct routine and sustained assessment. The units make use of monitoring data and results from the DSU Advising Pipeline and Matriculation Pathway, a host of survey instruments such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) for student engagement, the Academic Advisement Satisfaction Survey to improve advisement services, and the Decision Support Analytics Dashboard to support decisions aimed at improving retention and graduation rates.

Collegial Advice:

None

Team Recommendation(s):

- DSU has a strong culture of assessment and a variety of tools and resources for academic and administrative units to assess using multiple direct and indirect measures. A broadened approach of sharing of results to impact student success will continue to build an assessment infrastructure that supports assessment of administrative units (non-academic) across the campus. This will continue the “closing the loop” process and strengthen the culture of assessment. It is clear that assessment is a regular occurrence within the units. However, the process may be better if it were more systematic and sustained by the publishing of a schedule for assessment.

Requirement(s):

None

Recognition of Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

- The university has a well-documented journey of assessment which demonstrates constituency involvement at many levels within the institution. The continuation of routine business functions and assessment associated with those functions during the acquisition of another institution should be considered a model for others to follow.

Requirements of Affiliation:

In the Team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation 8, 9 and 10.

STANDARD VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Delaware State's institutional objectives, both institution-wide and for individual units, are clearly stated, assessed appropriately, linked to mission and goal achievement, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, and are used for planning and resource allocation. The ability to fulfill its mission is heavily influenced by its financial health, which is driven primarily by student tuition and fees and to a lesser degree by appropriations from the State of Delaware. According to the self-study and other documentation provided, the University has taken steps to ensure financial stability, as evidenced by consecutive years of balanced budgets.

Delaware State University uses its universal campus master plan to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of its physical resources (buildings and information technology). The master plan provides an inventory of the buildings and their physical conditions, assesses classrooms, technology, and housing needs based on projected enrollment growth. In addition, the plan provides a foundation from which the University assesses and invests in deferred maintenance. According to the self-study and interviews conducted, a new campus master planning process is currently underway with the goal of identifying the next set of requests for capital funding.

Delaware State University employs a robust and inclusive planning process. The original chairs of the Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement Working Group represented Finance, Athletics, and Administrative Council with members from Facilities, Capital Planning, Budgeting, Human Resources, Operations, IT, Advancement, and other faculty and staff from across the University provide ample opportunity for inclusive participation in the planning process.

The changes in the Board of Trustees, Administrative Council, College groupings, and reporting structure of administrative units all seek to increase cross-communication and improve efficiencies. The committees of the BOT were re-aligned to clearly link to the leadership members of the Administrative Council.

Delaware State's planning and improvement process is clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that provide for constituent participation and incorporate the use of assessment results. The University has the Academic Restructuring Task Force (ARTF) that offers an excellent overview of the functionality of strategic planning leading to thoughtful implementation. The ARTF included a diverse mix of twenty trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, and students, charged to make recommendations for operational efficiencies within

Academic Affairs and its directly supporting divisions. In January of 2017, the ARTF made a series of recommendations which were approved by the President and the BOT and have since been implemented. They include relocations of programs, realigning and consolidating academic colleges, restructuring department chairs responsibilities, and consolidating academic advising.

Delaware State's planning and budgeting alignment with the mission and has financial planning and budgeting process that is aligned with the institution's mission and goals, evidence-based, and clearly linked to the institution's and units' strategic plans/objectives. With the implementation of Banner Human Resources, Budget Development, and Business Document Management modules this allowed Finance to use Banner budget development processes. DSU Banner Self-Service Budget Training began in April 2019. The Banner Budget Development module and Salary Planning process is still used by departments to input their budget requests based on needs which are tied to the institution's and units' strategic plans/objectives.

Delaware State's infrastructure supports operations and goals. Fiscal and human resources as well as the physical and technical infrastructure were adequate to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered. Delaware uses its universal campus master plan to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of its physical resources (buildings and information technology). The master plan provides an inventory of the buildings and their physical conditions, assesses classrooms, technology, and housing needs based on projected enrollment growth. In addition, the plan provides a foundation from which the University assesses and invests in deferred maintenance.

The University saw growth in its infrastructure; such as; to address some of the research space needs, the construction of the research building (OSCAR) was completed on June 1, 2015; the Wesley acquisition added buildings in the following categories: academic spaces, dormitories, student support areas, institutional support offices, and athletic facilities; expand data capacity for the Dover and Wilmington campuses, and increase bandwidth for students; the summer of 2019 also saw the completion of the Tubman-Laws P3 residence hall project to address residential space needs and IT is currently outfitting the classrooms as comprehensive smart learning spaces in consultation with the Provost and Deans. They had a hiring freeze due until 2021 but during this six-and-a-half-year period a Hiring Freeze Exception Request had to be approved by the respective Vice President and sent to the Hiring Freeze Committee for consideration. The committee reviewed the request to determine if the positions were mission critical to the University. The hiring freeze did not prevent new hires, but rather required administrators to find funds within their existing budgets to support the approved exceptions. This established process was especially important during the Pandemic.

Delaware State's responsibility and accountability is well-defined decision-making processes and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability. They restructured the Administrative Council to reflect the president's vision and leadership style. The Administrative Council is the primary decision-making body and consists of the senior vice presidents and leaders of other major divisions. The Board reorganized its committees to align more closely with the PRIDE 2020 strategic goals.

Delaware State's comprehensive facilities, infrastructure, and technology planning has a comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that includes consideration of sustainability and deferred maintenance and is linked to the institution's strategic and financial planning processes.

Delaware State's annual independent audits confirm financial viability with evidence of follow-up on any concerns cited in the audit's accompanying management letter. Corrective measures to address the audit findings include monthly closings, implementing year-end procedures, leveraging Banner, documentation and staff training, purchase and travel card restrictions, and hiring additional personnel. The University received a clean audit for Fiscal Year Ended (FYE) June 30, 2020.

Delaware State has strategies to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals. According to the self-study, during spring 2022, they are working on an IT Action Plan to address information technology and creating an IT Governance Committee to identify several areas where the University is falling short of the technology needed to support teaching and learning.

Delaware State's has shown evidence of periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources. In 2018 the Provost also established the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) to provide coordinated oversight of the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Analytics (IRPA), the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), and the Assessment Office. The OIE supports data-driven strategic planning through a comprehensive system for assessing institutional effectiveness in academic programs, administrative units, and service areas while promoting faculty/staff professional development.

Collegial advice

- The team suggests that the implementation plans include a strategy to cost out the strategic plan, that measures the impact of the resource used and the buildout of a tracking system for the strategic plan.

Team recommendation(s)

None

Requirement(s)

None

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

- The University has had remarkable transformative accomplishments considering the relatively constant changes in top leadership. Their great transformational changes in the last 12 years are as follows:
 - increased enrollment by 40%

- established a new location and later opened a new testing facility in New Castle County
- pioneered multiple international agreements
- renewed seven institutional and/or program accreditations and added two additional program accreditations with the Wesley acquisition
- chartered the Early College High School
- increased the institution’s annual research portfolio from \$17-23 million
- increased annual fundraising to \$40 million in 2020,
- acquired Wesley College, and
- received the donation of the Capital One building at the Riverfront in Wilmington.

REQUIREMENTS OF AFFILIATION

In the team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet the Requirement of Affiliation for 8, 10, and 11.

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituents it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

In the team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

This judgment is based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies to clarify information and verify compliance during the self-study evaluation team visit.

Summary of Findings:

Delaware State University has undergone numerous changes in leadership and organizational restructuring over the last five years, which included “three presidents, three provosts, three Board of Trustees chairs and vice chairs, changes to the Board’s committees” and numerous changes in the make-up of the Administrative Council. They have weathered these changes and disruptions and have maintained a clear organizational structure as seen in their organizational chart. DSU recently acquired Wesley College which is now a new location for the University, DSU Downtown that includes the Wesley College of Health and Behavioral Sciences (WCHBS). This was another major change in the midst of much change, including the pandemic. This new unit now falls under the leadership of the Chief Administrator of DSU Downtown Campus and Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, who reports to the president. There are clearly articulated roles for the VP and the academic dean of WCHBS. The two work productively together to manage the logistical/administrative and academic needs of the Downtown Campus.

The Board of Trustees is the main governing body, legally constituted by The State of Delaware. Board meeting and retreat minutes reflect board actions to review the university's goals and approve relevant policies. It exercises its responsibilities in financial affairs and approves the institution's annual operating budget and appoints and evaluates the President. One of the board's standing committees is Audit & Enterprise Risk Management and there is evidence of policy-making in financial management. Furthermore, there is a written conflict of interest policy and board code of conduct policy.

The Board appoints and evaluates the Chief Executive Officer, President Tony Allen, as directed in the bylaws. Dr. Allen does not hail from the traditional academic background in higher education but has had leadership and management experiences in the financial sector and has led Delaware's K-12 public education reform. He also served as special assistant and speechwriter to then US Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr. He is an accomplished and experienced leader who has led the institution through many changes and improvements.

The president has acted with authority and autonomy to develop and implement the strategic plans and to staff the organization, as evidenced in the strategic plan documents. He recently brought in a \$20 million donation from MacKenzie Scott, among other gifts, which reflects his ability to identify and secure external resources. PRIDE 2020 includes an action strategy of establishing a two-year budget allocation for strategic priorities. Budget documents provided in evidence for Standard VI shows a budget update, including past and future allocation of resources by each division. A key goal for the REACH 2026 strategic plan is financial health, including an objective to create "a more transparent, fiscally responsible and sustainable budget model/process that aligns with strategic goals."

The administrative positions are clearly documented in the organizational chart. Members of the Administrative Council are accomplished and experienced leaders. At the current time, the administrative staff appears to be of appropriate size and have the skills, time, assistance, and access to technology and information systems they need.

Despite the many changes and the impact of the pandemic, the university's administration and faculty worked together on behalf of the students. While faculty have expressed some uncertainty about lines of communication with the upper administration, there are many examples of cooperation and collaboration. They also expressed interest in a process to communicate feedback to the administrative and academic support/service offices.

The role of faculty and students in shared governance is evident in the work of the Faculty Senate, the AAUP, as well as the participation and input of undergraduate and graduate students represented by the SGA and GSA, respectively, in advancing the institutions' goals and objectives in the strategic plans. A specific example is the work of the research committee of the Faculty Senate which is providing input into the development of the research infrastructure as the institution implements the new strategic plan. The Senate is in discussions with the Provost on development of a faculty handbook to articulate policies and procedures to complement the workplace policies in the CBA. The faculty played an important role in the integration of Wesley College programs and faculty.

The evidence library includes documentation of the key performance indicators (KPI) used to track PRIDE 2020 strategic plan goals. The Board of Trustees is using these KPIs to track and direct the work of its committees. The Board undergoes an annual self-evaluation of its governance. The Board also evaluates the president of the university twice annually (July and December).

Collegial Advice:

- Staff, faculty, and administrators report that staffing and resources at current levels are adequate. As the institution continues to grow, it is suggested that the administration continue to monitor faculty, staff, and administration size and resources necessary to accomplish its tasks.

Team Recommendation(s):

- The Board of Trustees engage AGB in a review of the committee structures and functions towards ensuring governance responsibilities are at the appropriate level.
- The Board of Trustees rectify immediately the conflict of interest presented by having the Board of Trustees chair also serving as chair of the Foundation Board.

Requirement(s)

- None

Recognition of Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

- Delaware State University was a leader and a model for managing the pandemic. They partnered with Apple to provide every student with an iPad, which made the transition to virtual instruction and services in March 2020 easier. Their instructive reopening plan document is a model for communicating a clear plan. As part of that thoughtful plan, the university became a site for Testing for America to ensure the safety of the students, faculty, and staff.
- The growth and expansion of DSU into downtown Dover, through acquiring Wesley College, was a strategic move that will allow the university to have more impact and serve the Dover community. The university successfully underwent quite a complex and ongoing process of managing the acquisition and the resulting changes in staffing and student body, not to mention compliance measures through Middle States.
- In an extension of the many accolades of President Allen, we applaud his leadership. Staff and faculty described him as an agile and nimble leader. We also recognize his appointment to the Biden Administration as chair of the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Requirements of Affiliation:

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation 12 and 13.

Section E: Applicable Federal Regulatory Requirements

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet all applicable federal regulatory requirements.

This judgment is based on a review of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report, evidence, and interviews with institutional constituencies to clarify information and verify compliance during the team visit.

Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations

The team affirms the institution meets all accreditation-relevant federal regulations, which is based upon review of the self-study report, accompanying materials, Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations and the evaluation visit. Access to this data is found on the website.

Section F: Review of Student Achievement and Verification of Institutional Data

I. Student Achievement Goals

In the team's judgment, the institution's approach to realizing its student achievement goals appears to be effective, consonant with higher education expectations, and consistent with the institution's mission.

This judgment is based on a review of the institution's student achievement information provided in the self-study report, evidence, interviews with institutional constituencies, and the student achievement URL available on its website.

In addition, in the team's judgment, the institution's student achievement information data that it discloses to the public appear to be reasonably valid and accurate in light of other data and information reviewed by the team.

Achievement goals and progress are clearly documented in the evidence library under standards III and IV.

II. Verification of Institutional Data

In the team's opinion, the institution's processes and procedures that it uses to verify institutional data and the data provided in the self-study report appear to be reasonably valid and effective.

Addressed in Standard VI—Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

Section G: Review of Third-Party Comments

Not Applicable

Section H: List of Additional Evidence

All additional documents requested can be found under the Additional Documents tab in the self-study library.

Section I: Self-Study Report and Process Comments

We commend Delaware State University for the significant progress made since the last accreditation visit. The institution has grown in enrollment, assets and programs. Over the last few years, DSU has managed to move its budget from deficit to surplus and has done so while expanding its reach on many fronts. Much of this success is owed to the leadership of President Allen who has assembled a stellar administrative team. Together they have established processes and procedures designed to manage spending while growing the institution. Moreover, all appear to be laser focused on student success. The commitment to students as defined in the mission was felt throughout the visit. Also important is the level of enthusiasm shown by all constituents. People at the University are excited about where they are going while being mindful of the work needed to get there. We applaud the institution for their success.