

Assurance Argument

National Louis University

Review date: 11/15/2021

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

[National Louis University](#) (NLU) is a private, not-for-profit, [Hispanic-Serving Institution \(HSI\)](#), and [Minority Serving Institution \(MSI\)](#).

NLU's mission statement was recently updated by the institutional community, and affirmed by the Board of Trustees in the development of the [2030 Strategic Plan](#). Below are the previous and updated mission statements:

Previous: *National Louis University provides access to quality higher education that nurtures opportunity for students through innovative teaching, scholarship, community engagement, and service excellence.*

Updated: *National Louis University is an inclusive, innovative community providing educational opportunities that inspire and empower all learners as they prepare for and advance in meaningful lives and productive careers.*

The updated mission statement reinforces the university's commitment to provide opportunity for all and amplifies an equity-first mindset for the institution, as well as articulating an explicit recognition and focus on connecting education to employment. The updated mission statement continues to reflect the enduring commitment to innovation in the service of students and community impact.

[NLU's mission describes the institution's purpose and values](#) and beliefs guide behavior and inform decisions. NLU continues its commitment to the values of access, innovation and excellence. The 2030 strategic plan added [equity as an additional core value](#).

[NLU's vision](#) is to become a comprehensive modern university that prepares students for sustained professional success. Accordingly, the strategic plan charts a course where the institution continues to broaden its portfolio of programs, expands on its support of students, building integrated support and development of professional competencies that yield relevant career and professional outcomes for students.

NLU has created clear structures to manage and assess progress on the strategic plan. [Each domain of work](#) is broken into a [series of strategies and outcomes](#) which are then translated into [annual work plans and goals](#) across the entire institution. [Budget investments](#) are aligned with those goals and strategies. Twice yearly, the [President's Cabinet attends a retreat](#) to review progress, and make any adjustments to the plan. In addition, twice yearly, a [plan update is reviewed with the Board of Trustees](#).

The Development of the Strategic Plan

In 2019-2020, NLU assembled a broad stakeholder group comprised of faculty, staff, students, and leadership including the Board of Trustees to create the 2030 strategic plan. In addition, external stakeholders including employers, funders, experts in higher education trends, and alumni provided input for the plan. Over an 18-month period, [numerous meetings](#) took place to gather feedback and input for the plan from all stakeholders. [The 2030 strategic plan](#) represents the culmination of these broad efforts.

During this 18-month planning process, NLU's mission and values were reviewed broadly, and updated to reflect the growth and evolution of the institution. All NLU staff, adjunct faculty, and full-time faculty were invited to review the mission statement and respond to a [survey](#) providing specific examples of how the mission was demonstrated through their work and actions. Through several working [sessions with students](#), faculty, staff, administrators, and the Board of Trustees, the mission statement was updated. The updated mission statement was [approved by the Board of Trustees along with the 2030 strategic plan during the September 2020 meeting](#), in accordance to the [NLU Bylaws](#).

The 2030 strategic plan is built in alignment with the institutional mission and advances the work from the previous strategic plan. To help organize work and highlight key areas critical for achieving future goals, the 2030 strategic plan outlines five pillars for impact or domains of work:

[Pillar 1: Preparing Our Students for the World of Work](#) - NLU is committed to preparing all of our students for successful careers and supporting them throughout their work lives. To accomplish this, we will ensure that our curricula are market aligned and that our instructional delivery approaches are continuously adapting to meet the evolving needs of our student populations.

[Pillar 2: Promoting Students' Personal Growth, Well-being, and Engagement through Service Excellence](#) - NLU will provide students with the support they need to ensure they can focus on their academic and career success. Students will receive seamless and timely services, from enrollment through employment, building a culture of service excellence. We will address the various needs of our diverse student body effectively and efficiently and provide programming that engages students fostering leadership, civic engagement, and other personal growth opportunities.

[Pillar 3: Living Our Values of Diversity and Equity: Building a Culture of Inclusion](#) - NLU will work to ensure that everyone in our community is welcomed, valued, respected, and

supported to fully realize their potential. By doing so, we will secure for NLU and its graduates the benefits of diverse views, talents and creativity. To achieve this, we will hold each other accountable for creating a culture of inclusion, engaging with and challenging our biases, and achieving specific diversity and equity goals for our students and our professional community.

Pillar 4: Advancing Leadership in Teaching and Learning - Building upon the strong foundation as a teaching institution NLU will be thought leaders in teaching and learning, modeling and disseminating scholarship on emergent practices and technologies that support learners and promote their success. Through a talented faculty and a commitment to thoughtful evaluation of new practices, we will lead the way in advancing new models of learning.

Pillar 5: Embracing the Future - NLU will maintain relevance and competitiveness by investing in new business models and creating solutions to the challenges we and our students face. Simultaneously, we will work to ensure the financial strength of our institution through prudent fiscal management, by building external financial support, and advancing our brand.

Since the last assurance argument in 2016, NLU experienced a [substantive increase in first-time, full-time undergraduate students](#) due to growth in the Undergraduate College. In addition, the [acquisition of Kendall College](#) and the [teach-out of students impacted by the closures of multiple Argosy University locations](#) contributed to enrollment increases. Throughout this enrollment growth, [NLU continues to be one of the most diverse institutions](#) in the nation serving a student body that is 79% female, and 51% students of color with non-traditional average ages of 30 for undergraduate students and 37 for graduate students. Over 50% of our students are first generation college goers and over 70% are Pell eligible.

Regardless of size, NLU maintains its focus on offering a student-centered environment that supports students from enrollment to employment. Strategies under [Pillars 1](#) and [2](#) were developed to align with existing and new student populations to support student success (see 3.D for a list of more than 20 student services offered). NLU identifies the needs of these student stakeholder groups (detailed more in 3.D) through [market research of prospective students](#), [periodic focus groups of current students](#), a [student advisory council](#) to offer input to administration, [student surveys](#), and [assessment of student learning](#) (see 4.B for assessment). NLU also captures [student service satisfaction](#), [student complaint data](#) (see student complaint process in 2.A), and [tracking of student success behaviors](#) to best offer interventions for success.

NLU's academic portfolio - comprising five colleges and over 70 academic programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels addresses the needs of NLU's diverse learners and helps meet students where they are. The program portfolio includes:

The Undergraduate College (UGC) (general education and numerous majors and minors)

The National College of Education (NCE) (teacher preparation, advanced educator preparation)

The Graduate School of Business (business and technology related programs)

The College of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences (social sciences, counseling, human services, clinical psychology)

Kendall College of Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management (culinary, baking and pastry, and hospitality)

AccelerateU (stackable credential pathways based on employer partner needs leading to rapid employment)

Sources

- 1.A - 2020-04-08 ULC Deck FINAL - Strat Plan Updates
- 1.A - 2030 Strategic Plan Narrative
- 1.A - 2030 Strategic Plan Narrative (page number 12)
- 1.A - 2030 Strategic Plan Narrative (page number 14)
- 1.A - 2030 Strategic Plan Narrative (page number 16)
- 1.A - 2030 Strategic Plan Narrative (page number 21)
- 1.A - 2030 Strategic Plan Overview
- 1.A - CEC_2015 Carnegie Letter National Louis University
- 1.A - HLC Argosy Teach Out Approval (with NLU documentation)
- 1.A - Kendall Change of Control-HLC Approval
- 1.A - March 2020 BOT minutes - Mission Values Vision discussed
- 1.A - NLU at a Glance
- 1.A - NLU Mission and Values
- 1.A - NLU Non-Financial Indicator Response for HLC 7-20-21
- 1.A - September BOT minutes - Strat plan approved
- 1.A - Student Complaint Data from 20-21
- 1.A - Two examples of Prospective Student Surveys
- 1.A and 1.C and 5.B - Pillar 3 - AY21 Action Plan
- 1.A and 2.A and 2.C - BOT NLU Bylaws - Revised December 2016 Final
- 1.A and 2.A and 4.B - Student Affairs Annual Assessment Report 2021
- 1.A and 2.C and 5.B and 5.C - BOT Meetings and Presentations AY 20-21
- 1.A and 3.C and 3.D - Student Focus Group Feedback Winter 2020 and 2021
- 1.A and 3.C and 3.D and 5.C - Examples of NLU Student Surveys
- 1.A and 3.D - FY2021 - Title III and V Eligibility Letter-HSI designation
- 1.A and 3.D and 4.C - EAB Navigate Highlights 2021-2022 Goals
- 1.A and 3.D and 5.A - Student Advisory Council
- 1.A and 4.A and 5.B - Pillar 1 - AY21 Action Plan
- 1.A and 4.B - Assessment Plan Examples
- 1.A and 5.B - Budget Finance Review FY 2021
- 1.A and 5.B - Pillar 2 - AY21 Action Plan
- 1.A and 5.B - Pillar 4 - AY21 Action Plan
- 1.A and 5.B - Pillar 5 - AY21 Action Plan
- 1.A and 5.B and 5.C - 2019-06-11 Share Your NLU Story Survey Results FINAL
- 1.A and 5.B and 5.C - 2021-22 Strategic Plan Outcomes 8-11-21 -President Retreat
- 1.A and 5.B and 5.C - Strat Plan - student_survey_analysis

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

NLU's mission is built on its commitment to the communities it serves through its educational offerings, services, and partnerships. The institutional commitment is quantified in college-level reports highlighting [community impact](#) and [return on investment](#) of educational offerings. Examples of commitment include NLU's work in creating an [affordable undergraduate pathway for marginalized students](#), [offering a program designed to meet the transitional needs](#) for young adults with multiple intellectual, learning and developmental disabilities, and [civic engagement activity](#) across the institution. Other examples also include NLU's work to drive rapid employment for displaced workers and support in work to impact intractable social issues like human trafficking, violence, and poverty.

Eighty-four percent of the university's total expenses of \$99 million in Fiscal Year 2020 (which is the year end date for the university's latest [audited financial statements](#)) were allocated to program services expenses. The program services expenses are comprised of direct instructional and academic support (46%), student services (26%) and sponsored research (10%) and auxiliary enterprises (2%).

NLU's key purpose is its educational responsibilities and it is a [not-for-profit organization](#) with no parent organization or investors. Instead, NLU is managed by a Board of Trustees, with day to day operations led by the President and Provost with a [shared governance structure](#).

NLU reviews the financial performance of academic programs annually (see academic [program margin review](#) in 4.A). Some programs may not generate as much financial return as others, but they are more important to the NLU community and are kept on the academic portfolio if they provide the quality and relevant education needed to help students succeed. This is evidenced by the fact that some programs with lower margins are maintained because of their contribution to student success and the mission.

Key stakeholder needs are continuously assessed and surveyed with an emphasis on building partnerships. Provided below are some examples of these partnerships that align to NLU's mission and enables the university to continually ensure programs, services, and actions reflect good practice:

- [NLU's External Advisory Council](#) serves the Undergraduate College and is composed of more than 25 local and regional educators, nonprofit college access organizations, funders, and researchers. They are apprised of the undergraduate mission and vision and regularly provide

input on NLU's academic and [non-academic](#) programs and services.

- [Program Advisory Boards](#) are established for specific programs across colleges. Advisory Boards help ensure market and employer-relevant curricula, contributing to 2030 Strategic Plan Pillar 1 of preparing students for the world of work.
- [National College of Education \(NCE\) Partnership Office](#) supports and develops multi-faceted, mutually beneficial collaborations and initiatives between the college and its community partners including schools, districts, nonprofit organizations, associations, and other higher education institutions. These efforts recently have included launching joint degree opportunities, building NCE's teacher residency program reach and impact with districts throughout Illinois, designing pathways for advancement for current and aspiring teachers, co-developing coaching and mentoring programs for current educators and leaders, and more. In partnership with other NLU colleges and departments, the Partnership Office supports schools and districts in addressing their biggest challenges, particularly related to educator and leadership shortages, teaching strategies during the COVID pandemic, recruitment, and retention. The office helps advance the 2030 Strategic Plan Pillar 4, advancing leadership in teaching and learning for the broader educator community.
- [NLU's Outreach Office](#) manages partnerships with external organizations, including community colleges, non-profits, and businesses to provide opportunities to students by expanding access to higher education through these outlets. They work closely with partners to track and analyze the impact the partnership has on the community and foster internal goals aligned to the 2030 Strategic Plan Pillar 2, promoting student growth, as well as Pillar 5, embracing the future.
- [NLU's Career Bridge](#) directly engages employers to participate in job fairs and networking events, establish internship and practicum opportunities, and obtain feedback from students to ensure successful employment outcomes. The work to prepare students for successful transition to employment is organized in the 2030 Strategic Plan Pillar 1 to prepare students for the world of work, as well as Pillar 2 to promote student growth.

In support of stakeholder needs and institutional mission, NLU has established strategies and processes for [opening or adding locations](#), [developing advisory boards](#), and [establishing partnerships](#). Values and mission play a key role in the strategy to pursue additional locations. Locations are selected that best serve the needs of students and position the institution to positively impact the community. Likewise, partnerships are established with organizations in which there is value alignment and mutually beneficial outcomes that lead to positive community impact.

Sources

- 1.B - Margins - Program - 2019_ 2018_ 2017
- 1.B - NCE Impact Report 2019
- 1.B - NCE Partnerships Office
- 1.B - NLU Grad ROI Results June 2019 and CPSA NLU Advanced Degree ROI Summary
- 1.B - NLU Non-profit 501(c) letter
- 1.B - Offsite Locations Resource Guide
- 1.B - Outreach Office materials-partnership list-MOA examples-sample deck
- 1.B - PACE program
- 1.B - Partnerships Resource Guide
- 1.B - UGC Pathways Program
- 1.B and 1.C - Career Bridge Event Webpage and Handshake Event Records from 2020

- 1.B and 1.C and 3.D - CEC Newsletter SEPT 2021
- 1.B and 2.B - National Louis University Final Financial Statements 2019 and 2020
- 1.B and 4.A - External Advisory Council member list _minutes _slide decks
- 1.B and 4.A - FL COUN Advisory Council Agendas
- 1.B and 4.A - Transfer Partner Advisory Council Meeting 1_April 28 2021
- 1.B and 4.A - UGC Industry Advisory Council Playbook draft
- 1.B and 5.A - Faculty Association and Faculty Senate Governance Structure

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

Part of NLU's mission is to nurture opportunity for its constituents through community engagement and a commitment to service, with values of innovation, access, excellence, and equity. NLU's 2030 strategic plan reflects these values through Pillar 2 (Promoting Students' Personal Growth, Engagement, and Well-being through Service Excellence) and Pillar 3 (Living Our Values of Diversity and Equity; Building a Culture of Inclusion).

The aforementioned 2030 Strategic Plan elements exemplify the institution's continued commitment to civic and community engagement, which was most significantly recognized in 2015 when NLU was named a [Carnegie Foundation Community Engaged Institution](#). NLU proudly embraces its status as an Engaged Campus in recognition of the deep work as partners with the larger community supporting a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources. This deliberate alignment of values, academic programs, support programming, and community needs leverages the collective strengths of the university to help support student growth to impact the community.

Moreover, the promotion of students' personal growth is reflected in both curricular and co-curricular activities. Student engagement activities are developed to foster leadership, respect for diversity and inclusion, and civic mindedness all while offering career employment with customized curriculum support to ensure professional and career readiness, and employment.

Opportunities are presented throughout the student's educational journey with a supportive structure that encourages curricular and co-curricular activities for informed citizenship and workplace success.

- [Civic Engagement Center \(CEC\)](#)

The mission of the CEC is to advance the development of students' civic-mindedness, encourage active civic engagement, and an orientation towards being life-long scholars and leaders on campus and in their community.

[The CEC promotes:](#)

- Awareness of Academic **Experiential Learning** opportunities, to increase critical analysis and discussion skills

- **Partnerships** among National Louis campus members and community members
- **Support student** development in leadership through volunteerism, experiential learning, and various civic engagement initiatives
- **Recognize student and faculty involvement** in social, [political](#) and cultural inquiry and research
- Provide **service to community** that enhances ethical awareness and civic responsiveness

The Civic Engagement Center leads an [Advisory Committee](#) that comprises members of the faculty from all colleges, and staff across the university. The role of the Advisory Committee includes providing guidance and innovation to the direction of civic engagement at NLU, engages in special projects to grow service learning and act as ambassador for civic engagement. The Civic Engagement Center focuses on the following key functional categories: events; service and experiential learning; civic action; and consultation/research.

- [Student Engagement](#)

The Office of Student Engagement is committed to student personal and professional development through student organizations, volunteer opportunities, wellness programs, leadership workshops, honor societies, and diversity programs. Student Engagement builds a community of students by helping students explore, learn and grow to make a difference on campus and in their community.

- [Career Bridge](#)

Required career development courses are a signature component of the NLU undergraduate experience. These courses draw on a strengths-based approach to career development, engage culturally relevant pedagogy, and reflect national best practices for career development. Beginning with career exploration, NLU's career courses scaffold to a senior internship requirement and ensure that NLU students develop key job artifacts, create professional networks, and engage in critical professional experiences by graduation. Students choose between the [CAR 214](#) blended career course, the online [CAR 202/203](#) career sequence, or the [Braven accelerator course](#) to build foundational career skills. Career advisors and faculty then help students identify and apply to internships through the [CAR 218](#) pre-internship workshop. Finally, students are guided to internship success and prepared for post-graduate employment through the [CAR 490](#) internship course.

[Annual Career Bridge events](#) focus on workplace success and career development that include employment fairs, launch week presentations during students' first week at the university, national career development week activities, and employer spotlights. Success coaches offer events such as a Young Black Professionals panel and Career Bridge has launched affinity events and increased access to representative professionals. Service learning has been built into the curriculum for the following career development courses; [CAR 295](#) Career Service Learning (students provide pro bono consulting services for local nonprofits) and [EDU 290](#) Professionalism and Ethical Engagement with Children, Families and the Community.

Within the career focus, it is notable that [NLU's partnership with the nonprofit Braven](#), now in its fourth year, provides students with a rigorous course experience, as well as mentoring by volunteer professionals from across industries, access to professional opportunities, and continued career support through graduation. NLU has expanded the Braven program to its Wheeling campus and will include transfer students in 2021.

As part of the 2030 strategic plan, NLU asked key student affairs areas to develop [Service Level Agreements \(SLAs\)](#) to promote transparency and establish performance metrics. These SLAs have connections to existing assessment of student learning work and combine to provide relevant data to be used for continuous improvement. The SLAs, specifically, will help ensure student service and learning needs are understood and put first when considering adjustments and enhancements to student resources and supports.

NLU's mission includes "access" as a core value. Accordingly, the university prioritizes its work to foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture. Not only does the university set [benchmarks for areas such as diverse hires, use of diverse vendors, systemic training of issues related to bias and inclusion](#), but also focuses on [equity gaps in the achievement of outcomes](#) (more details in 3.D). Moreover, the university purposefully created its DEI pillar as its central pillar in the 2030 strategic plan. This symbolically represented the commitment to this pillar as one that impacted all aspects of the plan.

To better understand the issues facing the community, in [2019 NLU administered a survey](#) to capture data at the organizational level and to gauge staff and faculty perspectives and experiences on the university's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. NLU also added [DEI questions to the Noel Levitz survey](#) to collect additional feedback. The data from these surveys has informed the work in DEI.

NLU worked with [Promise54](#) to inform its DEI work. This organization focuses on using race and ethnicity as "an important lever for addressing systemic inequities in everything from classroom curriculum and pedagogy to school discipline and culture, community engagement, and teacher and leader recruitment and retention". As a result, NLU has begun to disaggregate learning and persistence outcomes based on race and other variables. For example, when NLU saw far greater attrition rates among black males than other groups, the [Eagle Brotherhood](#) was launched as an affinity group to create a stronger sense of belonging for black students.

In addition to the broad institutional DEI Plan, NLU is part of the [Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative](#) (ILEA) through the [Partnership for College Completion](#) and created an [Equity Plan for Undergraduate Students](#). Details on the plan are provided in 3.B.

As part of NLU's core commitment to building a culture that values diversity, equity and inclusion, policies and procedures are developed, reviewed and updated to reflect this commitment. Activities across the institution also align with this commitment. Here are some examples:

- NLU's [non-discrimination policy](#), [due process for appeals](#), and [ADA accommodations](#) found in the [Catalog](#), as well as [sexual misconduct and relationship violence policy](#) in the [Student Guidebook](#) and [Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-Harassment Policy](#) in the [Employee Handbook](#).
- [Enrollment, admissions, advising](#)
- Wrap around supports (more details available in 3.D)
- To advance the 2030 Strategic Plan: [Pillar 3](#), NLU hired the [Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) in summer 2020 as a dedicated leader and resource for diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives across the institution.
- A [Social Justice Institute](#), held by the Office of Student Engagement in summer 2020, available to the entire NLU community, comprised of four workshops with the following goals:
 - o Educate and enlighten participants around racism and ally ship

- o Provide awareness around difference and how to engage with people who are different from you
 - o Identify opportunities to engage with different aspects of, self-reflection on identity and how identity has been impacted by privilege
- The university's [Golden Eagle Leaders](#) (assessment data uploaded as evidence) program assists students to develop their leadership skills, while also exploring culture, backgrounds and experiences through these leadership focused workshops: social identity; power, privilege and oppression; and microaggressions. The program is evaluated annually for achievement of learning outcomes and student feedback.
- NLU supports student engagement through student-led multicultural and [diversity focused student organizations](#): Black Student Union; Alpha Phi Alpha; Gamma Phi Omega; Sigma Gamma Rho; Built by Womxn; DREAMers United; Eagle Brotherhood, Exuberance and NLU Pride (see 3.D. for more details).
- Examples of [annual programming and diversity events](#)
- Offices and spaces dedicated to specific student populations: [PACE](#), [Veteran Affairs](#), [Centro de Excelencia](#), the [Unity Commons](#)
- [Affinity groups](#), benefits, and trainings available to staff and faculty: DEI Committee, OutFront group, Ally Safe Space group, Domestic partner and civil union benefits, flexible work options, floating holidays, [Perspectives](#), tuition waivers
- [Faculty and staff interest based groups](#)

NLU also fosters a climate of respect through communication, voice, and continuous improvement efforts based on feedback.

- Shared governance: [Faculty Association](#), [Faculty Senate](#); [Staff Council](#); [Student Assembly](#), [Student Advisory Council](#)
- [President monthly meetings](#); [Connection](#)
- [Noel Levitz surveys](#) (addition of DEI questions); Student Focus Groups
- [Professional development](#);
- [Tenure and Faculty recognition](#); Staff Awards

Sources

- 1.A and 1.C - CEC_2015 Carnegie Letter National Louis University
- 1.A and 1.C and 2.A and 4.B - Student Affairs Annual Assessment Report 2021
- 1.A and 1.C and 5.B - Pillar 3 - AY21 Action Plan
- 1.A and 3.D and 5.A - Student Advisory Council
- 1.A and 5.B and 5.C - 2019-06-11 Share Your NLU Story Survey Results FINAL
- 1.B and 1.C - Career Bridge Event Webpage and Handshake Event Records from 2020
- 1.B and 1.C - PACE program
- 1.B and 1.C and 3.D - CEC Newsletter SEPT 2021
- 1.C - Student Engagement DEI Presentation - Power and Privilege
- 1.C - Affinity Groups
- 1.C - AY 21-22 DEI Programming and Events
- 1.C - Braven Accelerator Syllabus _ Spring 2021
- 1.C - Braven at NLU

- 1.C - CAR 218 Master Syllabus 8_2021
- 1.C - CAR 295 Master Syllabus
- 1.C - CAR 490 BL Syllabus 5_25
- 1.C - CAR-202 and CAR 203-ol-master-syllabi
- 1.C - CAR-214-syllabus 2020
- 1.C - Civic Engagement Center Advisory Committee agendas and sample deck
- 1.C - DEI Campus Questions - Student Satisfaction 2021
- 1.C - Diverse Vendors-Bidding Forms
- 1.C - EAP Perspectives at NLU
- 1.C - EDU290 Syllabus
- 1.C - Faculty and Staff Interest Based Groups
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- 1.C - NLU Non-Discrimination Policies
- 1.C - NLU_ILEAEquityPlan_Final
- 1.C - Promise 54 Impact Study Reports
- 1.C - Summer Social Justice Institute flyer 2020
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- 1.C - Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Policy-Student Guidebook
- 1.C and 2.A - 2019 Employee Handbook
- 1.C and 2.A - 2019 Employee Handbook (page number 13)
- 1.C and 2.A and 5.A - Faculty Senate Handbook
- 1.C and 2.D and 5.A - Faculty Association Bylaws and Constitution
- 1.C and 3.C - Connections
- 1.C and 3.C - CTLE Faculty Professional Development Programming and Resources
- 1.C and 3.C - DEI Hiring Training Portal Screenshots
- 1.C and 3.C - Diversity and Inclusion at NLU _ National Louis University
- 1.C and 3.C - Employee Diversity Related to Benchmarks
- 1.C and 3.C - Faculty Promotion and Tenure Policy
- 1.C and 3.D - Career Bridge _ NLU
- 1.C and 3.D - Centro de Excelencia at NLU _ National Louis University
- 1.C and 3.D - Civic Engagement Center _ National Louis University
- 1.C and 3.D - DEI Student Organizations _ National Louis University
- 1.C and 3.D - ILEA
- 1.C and 3.D - Student Life
- 1.C and 3.D - Veteran and Military Programs
- 1.C and 3.D and 5.A - NLU Student Assembly _ National Louis University
- 1.C and 3.D and 5.A - Organizational Charts
- 1.C and 3.D and 5.A - Organizational Charts (page number 8)
- 1.C and 5.A - Staff Council
- 1.C and 5.B - All_School_President Meetings AY 20-21
- 1.C and 5.C - Eagle Brotherhood Data
- 1.C and 5.C - Eagle Brotherhood flyer-sample email-webpage

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

Mission and vision are publicly available and aligned through goals, services, and offerings; reaffirmed through strategic planning processes; and are current and support stakeholders throughout the National Louis University community.

Mission guides educational responsibilities and is evident via internal governance processes and external stakeholder engagement.

Nurture and provide community engagement and service opportunities for all students, with core values of equity and access inherent in policies, procedures, plans (Illinois Equity in Attainment (ILEA), and institutional climate of respect.

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

NLU has an independent Board of Trustees who are responsible for the broad financial, academic, and strategic stewardship of the university. The Board guides and approves the strategic direction of the university; provides fiscal oversight; reviews and approves all policies; and is responsible for appointing and evaluating the president. Under the general powers listed in the [NLU Bylaws](#), the Board of Trustees determines and periodically reviews the purposes and mission of the university. As outlined above in 1.A. the NLU Board of Trustees was integral to the development of the 2030 Strategic Plan, participating with the broader community and ultimately approving the plan and the updated mission statement. Board members and President's Cabinet members annually complete a [Conflict of Interest](#) document that provides assurance that Trustees and leadership make decisions for the good of the university while remaining free of external influences.

The [Board of Trustees](#) are organized into committees – Academic Affairs (which also includes Student Affairs), Institutional Advancement, Financial Affairs, the Executive Committee (which also assumes the role of the Governance Committee and Compensation Committee), and the Audit Committee. The Academic Affairs Committee oversees all aspects of the academic enterprise. The committee reviews and approves new programs, examines learning outcomes and program performance metrics. The committee also recommends tenure, promotion, and emeritus positions to the full board, as well as reviews the student experience and student satisfaction. They ensure that all academic strategies reflected in the 2030 Strategic Plan are executed with fidelity. The Institutional Advancement Committee is responsible for institutional fund raising. The Finance Committee provides oversight to NLU's investment strategy, any strategic fiscal decisions, and the overall financial health of the institution. The Executive Committee as noted above functions as the governance committee for recruitment of board members and oversees the board self-evaluation process. This committee also reviews overall institutional progress and it oversees executive evaluation and compensation. The Executive Committee also has broad oversight over all institutional matters working closely with the president. The Audit Committee works directly with the institution's auditors to ensure that there are appropriate controls at the institution to support ethical fiscal, operational, and technology practices. NLU is proud of the [successful audit results](#) the institution has had, which are demonstrated by the clean audit opinions the institution has received over multiple years. Significantly, NLU has received an unqualified audit opinion for the past 20

years, with no adjustments to its financial statements, and has not had any [audit findings from external auditors for the past five years](#). The NLU [Board of Trustees meets both openly and privately with the institution's external auditors](#) twice a year to review audit results, and this open dialogue ensures that any issues are brought to the forefront.

From time to time the board appoints ad hoc committees on strategic issues that are of high importance. As an example, this past year, the board appointed an ad hoc Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee to work with institutional leadership to support the institution-wide DEI plan. Likewise, a committee was appointed to support the development and implementation of the new short-term stackable credentialing initiative, "AccelerateU".

The university is subject to a number of customary additional reviews from external agencies such as auditors for the State and independent granting agencies, [programmatic reviews](#), and [federal reviews for Title IV funds](#). NLU has remained in good standing with all agencies for many years.

To help ensure that the university is made aware of issues in which the integrity of practices might be in question, the university has a [Whistleblower Policy](#) where individuals can anonymously report any concern without fear of retribution or retaliation. In addition, multiple forms exist for students and employees to report unfair or unethical situations ([Incident Reporting Form](#), [Employee Incident Form](#), [Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Form](#), [Issue Resolution Form](#)). Any reports are immediately followed up on and taken seriously.

HR works with university leadership to create policies and procedures to help ensure employees act with integrity and exhibit fair and ethical behavior in their roles. The hiring of faculty and staff is in accordance with [NLU's Recruitment and Selection Policy](#). Once hired employees must complete a [New Employee Orientation](#) that covers the [Code of Conduct Policy](#), [Employee Handbook](#), and [EEO and Harassment Policy](#). When potential conflicts of interest or code of conduct violations arise, the HR team investigates the matter and takes appropriate action as needed. Additionally, all employees who voluntarily separate from the university are encouraged to complete an [Exit Interview](#) and feedback is used to make improvements.

Personnel infractions or issues are coordinated through individual areas and are subject to a combination of HR policies and procedures and/or faculty or college-specific integrity processes. [Reports on Service Level Agreements](#) help monitor and enforce fidelity of auxiliary operations. Ethical standards in research and adherence to all requirements in human subjects research is maintained through a standing [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#), as described further under 2.E.

NLU operates through shared governance, adheres to external standards, and complies with regulatory requirements that ensure its academic integrity. All curricular changes are reviewed through multiple channels in which faculty, staff, and administration are involved, including [University Curriculum Council](#), [Faculty Senate](#), and [college curriculum committees](#). Academic strategy is discussed during [Academic Cabinet](#) meetings, where curricular initiatives are discussed and operationalized with academic leadership. Other regular review cycles such as program review and assessment contribute to the integrity of academic offerings and operations (see 4.A and 4.B, respectively).

External standards set by program or specialized accreditors provide another layer to measure academic integrity. NLU's education programs are accredited by the [Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation](#) (CAEP), business programs by the [International Accreditation Council for](#)

[Business Education](#) (IACBE), counseling through [Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs](#) (CACREP), clinical psychology ([Illinois](#) and [Florida](#)) by the American Psychological Association (APA), and culinary and baking programs by [American Culinary Federation](#) (ACF). More information about external and specialized accreditors is provided in 4.A.

NLU operates its physical sites in Illinois and Florida, and offers its programming on-campus and online. The university adheres to all relevant state and Federal requirements. NLU works closely with both the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois State Board of Education. In Florida, NLU has approval to operate through the [Commission for Independent Education](#), a division of the Florida Department of Education. Through regular reporting and seeking approvals for curricular changes these agencies provide a process in which programs are reviewed. With respect to exclusive online offerings, NLU is a member of the [National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements](#) (NC-SARA) and adheres to regular reporting and compliance and offers distance education to other member states under its standards.

As part of academic quality efforts and resources mentioned more in 3.A, academic integrity processes are communicated in the [Faculty Handbook](#) for faculty, with communication for personnel and auxiliary functions through the [Employee Handbook](#) and discussed in more detail in 3.C. Student policies, privacy rights, and code of conduct are available in the catalog and [Student Guidebook](#).

All academic policies and details of academic programs are publicly available through the annual publication of the [academic catalog](#), managed by the Office of the Registrar. [Degree requirements for each academic program](#) are also outlined in the catalog. The catalog has a smart catalog web version and a PDF version. The PDF version of the final catalog is posted online for historical record.

NLU offers students a variety of methods to report issues or complaints including by phone, email, comment cards, in-person meetings, and online forms. As such, policies and procedures have been established to foster open communication and Student Affairs staff offer support to students and work collaboratively with faculty, staff, and administration to identify options and strategies for resolution.

- Academic Appeals and Grievances include academic issues, such as awarding transfer credit, course grades, admission to a specific program, and certification for graduation are examples of academic decisions that affect an individual student enrolled in the University.
- Non-Academic Grievances include university error related to non-academic issues. File a non-academic grievance through the [Issue Resolution Form](#).

Student Affairs has published a [Complaints and Grievances website](#) to help guide students through the process of addressing their concerns and appeals.

The university uses shared governance processes with participation from the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and HR (where appropriate) to review academic policies and academic programs on a five-year cycle. If policies need review earlier due to changing conditions, they are updated accordingly. When changes are approved for a policy or academic program, official notification is made to the broader community via email and posted online as part of archived record through the publication of an [Academic Alert](#) or [Point of Interest](#) (POI) form. Though both forms represent approved changes, the Academic Alert is reserved for more substantive programmatic or policy changes, where the POI reflects clarifications, small-scale updates, or minor changes to existing programs or policies. Both forms progress through the appropriate governance process to get all necessary approvals with final approval coming from the Office of the Provost.

Sources

- 1.A and 1.C and 2.A and 4.B - Student Affairs Annual Assessment Report 2021
- 1.A and 2.A and 2.C - BOT NLU Bylaws - Revised December 2016 Final
- 1.C and 2.A - 2019 Employee Handbook
- 1.C and 2.A - 2019 Employee Handbook (page number 13)
- 2.A - Accreditation Status
- 2.A - ACF Accreditation Letter
- 2.A - APA FSPP 10 years accreditation letter
- 2.A - APA ISPP 10 years accreditation letter
- 2.A - Board of Trustees List and Matrix
- 2.A - CACREP Illinois Program- Final Decision Letter - National Louis University
- 2.A - CAEP Accreditation Approval Notification 5-15-2020
- 2.A - Dept of Education Program Review 2015 - Audit Finding
- 2.A - Employee Incident Report Template
- 2.A - FL CIE LBMA Approval
- 2.A - HR Exit Interview 2021
- 2.A - IACBE Decision Letter-National Louis University-July 2018
- 2.A - Incident Report Form
- 2.A - Issue Resolution Form
- 2.A - NC-SARA 2021 Approval
- 2.A - Sexual Misconduct Report Form
- 2.A - Whistleblower Policy 02-2015
- 2.A and 2.B - Degree Requirements Examples by Program and Level
- 2.A and 2.B - Faculty Guidebook
- 2.A and 2.B - New Hire Orientation 2020 and Schedule
- 2.A and 2.B and 2.D and 2.E and 3.D - Institutional Research Board
- 2.A and 2.C - NLU 2020 Combined Financials-Single Audit- Borrower Defense
- 2.A and 2.C - NLU Conflict of Interest Statement 2021
- 2.A and 2.E - Faculty-Staff and Student Code of Conduct
- 2.A and 3.A and 4.A and 5.A - Examples of Curriculum Committee Minutes
- 2.A and 3.C - Staff recruitment-and-selection-policy-and-procedure-sept-2017
- 2.A and 4.A - Academic Alert Example
- 2.A and 4.A - Point of Interest Memo Example
- 2.A and 4.A and 5.A - University Curriculum Council Charge and Meeting Minutes
- 2.A and 5.A - Student Complaints and Grievances
- 2.A and 5.A and 5.B - Faculty Senate Minutes and Committee Reports
- 2.A and 5.B - Academic Cabinet overview and AY 20-21 agendas
- 2.A and 5.B - Financial Statements - Five Years - 2015-2020
- 2.A and 5.B - Materials from Audit Committee Meetings Nov2020 and May2021

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

Policies, procedures, and all information concerning program requirements, course schedules, tuition and costs, and accreditation relationships are clearly and completely available through several different channels listed below, some of which are publicly available on NLU's website.

- NLU's website: www.nlu.edu
 - [Student Guidebook](#)
 - [Catalog](#)
 - [Academic Calendar](#)
 - [Admissions Criteria](#)
 - [Consumer Information](#)
 - [Financial Aid](#)
 - [Tuition and Costs](#)
 - [Accreditation and programmatic accreditation status](#)
 - [Program requirements](#)
 - [Prior Learning Assessment offerings, processes, and fees](#)
- [University course materials](#)
- [Enrollment Specialists](#)
- [Academic Advisors](#)
- [DiscoverU](#): was piloted in Fall 2020 to provide a more inclusive sharing of information to all prospective students. The information provided in the presentation aligns with the course catalog.
- Orientation ([New Student Orientation](#) 3.D, Faculty/[Staff Orientation](#) 3.C)

The [catalog](#), program pages on the website, and [course syllabi](#) regularly reinforce program requirements, academic policies, and community expectations for students, as well as the public accessing many of the documents and sources via NLU's website. These institutional documents and resources are also referenced by faculty and staff to know and understand program and area-specific information.

There are several controls in place to ensure accuracy of marketing information. For academic and curricular-related information, an internal document called an [Academic Alert](#) is issued to signal changes to all materials and communications. With regard to student finance and other student services related content, functional department leaders and identified representatives are part of an approval process to ensure that all changes to content are approved. Since the website and online

content is crucial to student communications, internal content editors have been identified (academic as well as other departments) to own web content ensuring the highest degree of accuracy.

To further collaboration and ensure accuracy, all marketing, advertising, and press-related materials are produced or commissioned by the university's [Marketing and Enrollment unit](#), which ensures that content is consistent with information provided by the Office of Advancement, Office of the Provost, Vice President of Student Affairs, and/or Deans of the colleges. No area can create materials for prospective students without involving Marketing and Enrollment. In collaboration with [Learning & Information Technology Services](#) (LITS), Marketing oversees website content, however, as noted above, content is verified appropriate academic stakeholders. Where access is granted, LITS staff members provide training to individuals on how to create content, as well as understanding approval and feedback processes for content creation and publishing.

A more systematic review occurs annually where academic programs are asked to review their website, catalog, and marketing materials as part of the [program review reporting process](#). Assessment and accreditation team members review and submit updates to accreditation-related content across websites and in the catalog. Beyond accreditation-related content, the Office of the Registrar has three periods throughout the year where accrued content is published to update the catalog to ensure its content is accurate and current. Where changes are made to academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, or governance structure, collaboration occurs between the colleges, HR, Marketing and Enrollment, Student Finance, Faculty Senate, Student Affairs, and the Provost Office to ensure accuracy.

Given their role coordinating updates to the catalog, the Office of the Registrar has representation in various committees throughout the university that review policy and academic offerings. This includes college curriculum committees to provide input and suggestions for content, as well as faculty senate committees - like the Academic Standards Committee - to support policy review.

Contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, and economic development are primarily evidenced by assessment of student learning for academic programs and student affairs areas (see 4.B), academic program review (see 4.A), and faculty and staff records (see 3.C).

Policies and procedures related to research are found in the catalog, individual program handbooks, discussed in research courses, [Faculty Guidebook](#), and on the [IRB website](#), which the information and resources pertain to faculty, staff, and students. The university library provides [in-class presentations](#) and makes research guides to support faculty and students.

Students can access resources and information regarding articulation agreements on the Transfer Guide website, which contains interactive tools to answer specific student questions. Additionally, as students may come to NLU with prior knowledge and lived experience, information about experiential learning can be found on the [PLA website](#). Policies and procedures regarding transfer credit and PLA are also in the catalog, as well as discussed in greater detail in 4.A.

Sources

- 2.A and 2.B - Degree Requirements Examples by Program and Level
- 2.A and 2.B - Faculty Guidebook
- 2.A and 2.B - New Hire Orientation 2020 and Schedule

- 2.A and 2.B and 2.D and 2.E and 3.D - Institutional Research Board
- 2.A and 4.A - Academic Alert Example
- 2.B - Academic Advisor Degree Success Template and Examples
- 2.B - Academic Calendar
- 2.B - Consumer Information
- 2.B - Course Syllabi - sample
- 2.B - DiscoverU sample slides
- 2.B - Enrollment Training Manual-printout from smartsheet
- 2.B - Library In-Class Presentation Example and Resources
- 2.B - Marketing - Identity Guidelines
- 2.B - Tuition and Fees
- 2.B and 3.A - CIS and PCS Templates
- 2.B and 3.A and 3.B - Accreditation Status
- 2.B and 3.A and 4.A and 5.A - Program Review Annual Report Examples
- 2.B and 3.D - Enrollment and Admissions
- 2.B and 3.D - New Student Orientation _ National Louis University
- 2.B and 3.D - Office of Student Finance
- 2.B and 3.D and 4.A - Prior Learning Assessment Website and Policies
- 2.B and 3.D and 5.B - LITS _ National Louis University

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

The affairs of the university are managed by its Board of Trustees, whose primary functions are policy approval, and responsibility for sound resource management. As noted in the [Bylaws of NLU](#), the Board of Trustees appoints and delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the President, who in turn delegates authority to the vice presidents to manage key areas of the university.

[Board Members go through an orientation process](#) to familiarize them with the institution, the academic portfolio, their role and responsibilities as a board member, and critical functions of the board including fiduciary oversight and strategy, evaluation of the president, and the conflict of interest policy. Each member of the Board of Trustees receives a copy of the bylaws and signs a Conflict of Interest Policy form annually.

Service as a Trustee carries with it a requirement of loyalty and fidelity to the university, and it is the responsibility of Trustees to govern the university's affairs honestly and economically, exercising best care, skill and judgment for the benefit of the university.

Powers of the Board of Trustees include, but are not limited to:

- Periodic review of the mission, vision and values
- Evaluation and advancement of the academic portfolio and operations of the institution
- Approval and oversight of the strategic plan and its progress
- Preserve and protect the institution's autonomy, academic integrity and civic responsibility.

The Board of Trustees also approve any changes to university governance policies, academic policies, and student policies, new programs, promotion, tenure, and emeritus decisions for faculty, and the appointment and evaluation of the President.

The NLU Bylaws and the [Conflict of Interest](#) policy together ensure the governing board is acting in the best interest of the institution and preserving its independence from undue influence on the part

of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties.

The Board of Trustees meets quarterly with financial advisors to assess the performance of the NLU endowment. These meetings provide information that allows the board to effectively guide the investment strategy. In addition, twice per year the board meets with external auditors to address any concerns about controls that may need to be addressed. As noted earlier, [NLU has enjoyed many years of clean audits](#).

Board members have numerous opportunities to engage more broadly with the NLU community and its students. Whether at the annual Connection convening for the whole university, a student panel at a board meeting, numerous events that take place throughout the year, or donor meetings, the trustees have ample opportunity to engage with internal and external stakeholders to garner a better understanding of their interests, and how well NLU is meeting those interests.

The Board of Trustees embodies NLU's data informed culture, as they review a [Board of Trustees Dashboard](#) to oversee progress toward goals. This dashboard provides a visualization of key strategic metrics – enrollment, financial results, student outcomes and satisfaction data, persistence data, and grants and gifts amounts – that can be used by the Board of Trustees for evidence-based decision making. Other dashboards are used for quick data visualization of trends and a great resource for sharing the health of the university during cross-departmental and institution-wide meetings. [More extensive and detailed analyses](#) on operational and academic initiatives as they align with the strategic plan are discussed and provided during quarterly Board meetings.

Sources

- 1.A and 2.A and 2.C - BOT NLU Bylaws - Revised December 2016 Final
- 1.A and 2.C and 5.B and 5.C - BOT Meetings and Presentations AY 20-21
- 2.A and 2.C - NLU Conflict of Interest Statement 2021
- 2.A and 2.C and 5.B - Financial Statements - Five Years - 2015-2020
- 2.A and 5.B - Financial Statements - Five Years - 2015-2020
- 2.C - BOT orientation update November 2018 FINAL
- 2.C and 5.B - Board_Dashboard - June 16 2021

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

Academic freedom is a fundamental value of NLU and a university expectation for faculty and students for teaching and studying. NLU's [Constitution and Bylaws of the Faculty Association](#), [Intellectual Property Policy](#), and the [Faculty Promotion, Tenure and Scholarship Policy](#) address NLU's commitment to academic freedom, supported by the Faculty Senate, institutional leadership, and the Board of Trustees. To further privilege the importance of Academic Freedom, this past year, the university approved a [separate policy on Academic Freedom](#) so that it did not exist solely embedded in other policies.

Faculty are responsible for curriculum at NLU. Working together, program faculty define shared learning outcomes, the art of learning across a program, and build a program and its content collaboratively. Faculty develop and modify curriculum using multiple sources of information including industry trends, relevant literature, research, employer/industry perspectives, student needs, and perspectives from instructional designers.

The university encourages intellectual debate and multiple perspectives. Freedom of expression is embedded in curriculum and operations at NLU. Inside and outside of the classroom, the exchange and embodiment of ideas between and among faculty, staff, and students in the variety of learning experiences and environments is encouraged and viewed as a central component of learning. Complementing freedom of expression, the [Intellectual Property and Confidential Information Policy](#) promotes academic freedom and ensures clarity in matters of ownership,

Additionally, the Deans Offices, the [Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence](#) (CTLE), [University Library](#), and the [Institutional Research Board](#) (IRB) provide resources that support faculty and students in pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. More information on student learning support can be found in 3.D. and details on the IRB are provided in 2.E.

Sources

- 1.C and 2.D and 3.C - Faculty Promotion and Tenure Policy
- 2.A and 2.B and 2.D and 2.E and 3.D - Institutional Research Board
- 2.D - FPSCC_Academic_Freedom_Policy_Clean_Copy 060421
- 2.D and 2.E - Intellectual Property Policy
- 2.D and 3.C - CTLE _ National Louis University
- 2.D and 3.D - Library Website_Resources_and Summary Reports
- 2.D and 5.A - Faculty Association Bylaws and Constitution

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

The central institutional structure for ensuring the ethical research practices of NLU faculty, staff, and student researchers is the [Institutional Research Board](#) (IRB). IRB is responsible for overseeing and ensuring compliance with NLU's policies and procedures for conducting ethical research involving human participants.

Every research investigator involved in any aspect of human subject research at NLU must submit a protocol to IRB that includes [appropriate application forms](#), and [informed consent documents](#). This applies to faculty (including adjuncts), staff, and students conducting thesis research or large action-research projects, but not for students conducting research as part of a single class or faculty and staff collecting institutional data for self-assessment, continuous internal improvement, or accreditation purposes.

The institution's educational program in the Protection of Human Subjects in Research is provided by the [Collaborative IRB Training Initiative](#) (CITI). The NLU IRB provides the CITI training site as a resource to all faculty and staff researchers and enrolled students in support of ethical and rigorous research.

An IRB coordinator and two co-chairs implement and oversee the processing of applications. The IRB coordinator does an initial screen of all applications for completeness including evidence of current human subjects training. The IRB reviewers are faculty and staff with high levels of research experience; reviews are carried out by the number of reviewers appropriate to the application level. Full board review is applied in the case of research involving highly vulnerable populations. IRB members use a [shared set of criteria](#) to review and are in regular contact with each other to ensure consistency across reviews. Applicants benefit from the wealth of experience and consistently from IRB reviewers in receiving feedback and guidance in relation to submissions, as well as answering questions and providing support in navigating the full process.

NLU provides faculty, staff, and students clear expectations with Codes of Conduct that guide ethical behavior. Guidelines on [Intellectual Property and Confidential Information, as well as the Code of Conduct](#) can be found in the [Faculty Guidebook](#) and [Faculty Resource website, Employee Handbook](#), and [Student Guidebook](#).

Listed below are additional policies that ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice and the support services available.

Policies:

- [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)
- [Acceptable use of Information Systems](#)
- [Academic Honesty](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Faculty Code of Conduct](#)
- [Employee Code of Conduct](#)

Support Services - The university provides numerous services and resources to help ensure that students understand standards of research and practice. These include:

- [University Library](#)
 - [Guide to the Research Process](#)
 - [Understanding Citing & Plagiarism](#)
 - [Student research appointments](#)
 - [Online workshops](#) (include academic integrity)
- Turnitin is a third party plagiarism tool available to all students and faculty to submit their papers and see the extent content matches other works, as well as detect citation issues.

As mentioned in 2.A, there are a number of ways to monitor and enforce policies for faculty, staff, and students. Academic honesty and integrity issues may be addressed directly, for example, between a faculty and student, or may be elevated resulting in a formal and coordinated response between a number of departments including Student Affairs, HR, and the college or program.

Sources

- 1.C and 2.A and 2.E - 2019 Employee Handbook
- 2.A and 2.B - Faculty Guidebook
- 2.A and 2.B and 2.D and 2.E and 3.D - Institutional Research Board
- 2.A and 2.E - Faculty-Staff and Student Code of Conduct
- 2.A and 2.E - Faculty-Staff and Student Code of Conduct (page number 1)
- 2.A and 2.E - Faculty-Staff and Student Code of Conduct (page number 9)
- 2.A and 2.E - Faculty-Staff and Student Code of Conduct (page number 10)
- 2.E - Student Rights and Responsibilities
- 2.E - Academic Honesty Policy
- 2.E - Acceptable Use Policy
- 2.E - CITI Training Materials
- 2.E - Faculty Resources website
- 2.E - Guide to Research Process
- 2.E - IRB informed-consent-documents
- 2.E - IRB-application and checklist-2018 (with shared criteria info)
- 2.E - Library - Events and Workshops
- 2.E - LibraryAnnualReportFY20Final
- 2.E - Library-Request an Appointment

- 2.E - Understanding Citing and Plagiarism

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

NLU has policies and procedures in place to ensure fair and ethical behavior of its Board of Trustees (BOT), employees, and students including shared governance, external audits, compliance with regulatory bodies, and clear expectations communicated through bylaws, employee, faculty, and student handbooks.

NLU has processes in place to ensure accuracy of information presented to the community (annual reviews; marketing approved content; university wide engagement) and are communicated via multiple channels.

NLU's BOT is data informed and is held responsible by Bylaws and Conflict of Interest policies.

NLU has policies in place to address academic freedom and is supported by Faculty Senate, leadership, Deans Office, University Library, and Institutional Research Board (IRB).

IRB is responsible for overseeing ethical research and practice and support services are available to ensure academic honesty and integrity.

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

NLU ensures its courses and programs are appropriate to higher education through specialized programmatic accreditation, curriculum development, program review, and assessment of student learning. Learning goals are differentiated by degree level through these processes and are consistent across all modalities. Programs develop [curriculum maps](#) that illustrate scope and sequence of learning outcomes, as well as Bloom's level demonstrated, across the program and points in the program when key assessment data is collected, reviewed, and used for program review and continuous program/course improvement.

With specifics provided in 4.A, [numerous programs](#) across NLU actively participate in specialty or unit accreditation processes. Successful completion and maintenance of these accreditation processes ensure that these programs and units meet the quality standards of their accrediting bodies.

NLU has an [academic portfolio management cycle](#) to facilitate the development of new programming that is responsive to stakeholder needs and ensures appropriate levels of performance are required. There are three stages in this process: Ideation and academic portfolio analysis (market research, industry and alumni feedback, advisory councils and faculty are all engaged), Program design (design work with faculty, course design and development, credit hour compliance), and Program evaluation (regular monitoring for quality, relevance and effectiveness). Each of these levels involve faculty input and collaboration with administrative staff via academic work streams and governance structures (e.g., college and university level committee review). The lifecycle of any course and program is a maximum of five years, which is tracked by the Provost's Office. This ensures regular updates for curriculum to maintain currency and market relevancy.

As detailed in 4.A and 4.B, courses and programs are further assessed through the last stage of the academic portfolio management cycle, program evaluation, with [annual assessment reports](#) of program learning outcomes, program review reports ([annual](#) and [comprehensive](#)), and [annual faculty performance evaluations](#). Colleges leverage data from these regular reports and [end of course](#)

[evaluations](#) to adjust and improve curriculum, programming, and operations so as to better meet student needs and foster student success.

To ensure quality and learning goals are consistent across modalities, NLU stores [master course documents](#) listing the common learning outcomes consistent across course sections and modalities. At the course and program-level, learning outcomes are differentiated by faculty using Bloom's Taxonomy; the [university learning outcomes](#), adopted from [Lumina's Degree Qualifications Profile](#), have clearly differentiated outcomes across degree levels and have [distinct curriculum alignment](#) with program learning outcomes. An excellent example of consistency in learning outcomes across modalities and locations is demonstrated by creation and presence of [common rubrics](#) based on and aligned to university learning outcomes, which are used within all of the general education courses at NLU. Other examples include the [IL MS Counseling program's](#) robust report of student learning across multiple locations and the [BA in Communications program](#) identifying retention differences across online and in-person offerings.

Master course documents are [approved by college curriculum committees](#) for rigor and mission-alignment as put forward by faculty subject matter experts and instructional designers with a final review and approval by the Provost's Office. Course-based student analytics and rubric reports are available to faculty to inform on assessment of student achievement across modalities. Incorporating these data, program assessment provides opportunities to ensure appropriateness of articulated outcomes, as well as outcome attainment. These efforts hold true for dual credit opportunities, as well, with the addition of [orienting the partner institution](#) and students to course-level information for which they are engaged to demonstrate equivalence of course experience regardless of location or modality.

Speaking specifically to distance learning, NLU uses several mechanisms to ensure online program quality with the use of Brightspace and Quality Matters. D2L's Brightspace is the university's learning management system which provides an online platform to facilitate an engaging and robust learning experience for students and faculty across all programs, locations, and delivery modalities. [Course development](#) at NLU is [a collaborative and learner-focused process](#) to design a new (or redevelop or revise an existing) learning experience that is inclusive, engaging, innovative, and compatible with how people learn. The course management process is informed by a Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching (establishing inclusion, developing positive attitudes towards learning, enhancing meaning, and engendering competence), Universal Design for Learning (giving all students the opportunity to succeed in a course) and Communities of Inquiry (engaging in purposeful critical discourse and reflection to construct personal meaning and confirm mutual understanding). The end result meets [Quality Matters \(QM\) Standards](#) such that content is easy to navigate and learning outcomes can be met effectively. It can be maintained with minimal short- and long-term impact on limited resources, replicated [course mapping](#) for multiple sections, and delivered consistently by multiple instructors.

Sources

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- 2.B and 3.A and 3.B - Accreditation Status
- 2.B and 3.A and 4.A - AY20 UGC Annual Program Review for Communications 2020-12-16
- 2.B and 3.A and 4.A - AY20 UGC Annual Program Review for Communications 2020-12-16

(page number 7)

- 3.A - Dual Credit Example of Communication Information
- 3.A - IL Counseling Executive Summary Report 2021
- 3.A - IL Counseling Executive Summary Report 2021 (page number 7)
- 3.A - NLU Academic Portfolio Management Cycle
- 3.A - NLU-LXD Course Map
- 3.A - NLU-LXD Course Master Management Strategy
- 3.A - NLU-LXD Quality Design Guidelines
- 3.A - NLU-LXD Shared Stewardship Model
- 3.A and 3.B - Common Rubric Guidelines and Examples
- 3.A and 3.B and 4.B - Degree Qualifications Profile
- 3.A and 3.B and 4.B - Learning Outcomes _ National Louis University
- 3.A and 3.C - Faculty Performance Evaluation Process _Self-Eval_ and Reviewer Forms
- 3.A and 3.C and 3.D - Student Course Evaluations
- 3.A and 4.A - Dual credit proposal template
- 3.A and 4.A and 5.A - Program Review Annual Report Examples
- 3.A and 4.A and 5.A - Program Review Comprehensive Report Examples
- 3.A and 4.B - Assessment Report Examples
- 3.A and 4.B - Outcome Map Examples
- 3.A and 4.B - ULO Mapping by Areas

3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

Consistent with the university mission, the general education core provides the foundation to develop the breadth of knowledge, intellectual understanding, and skills that NLU graduates will demonstrate. Analytical skills, information literacy, ethics, and respect for human diversity are infused throughout the general education core areas, of which students can choose from a variety of courses to best suit their academic journey.

NLU [requires](#) all undergraduate students to have a minimum of 60 quarter hours of coursework (or the equivalent) in general education credit. These requirements are shared by all undergraduate students and provide an opportunity for the institution to create shared knowledge within its undergraduate student population and for each student to have a well-rounded bachelor's degree education.

All undergraduate students - whether they are enrolled in on-campus or online programs - are expected to develop and strengthen all core skills, knowledge, and abilities to demonstrate a level of achievement that is appropriate for their program area. The general education program at NLU is based on the [University Learning Outcomes \(ULOs\)](#), which were adopted from the [Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile \(DQP\)](#), an outcome framework used by over 900 higher education institutions. NLU adopted the five outcome domains of the DQP and added a sixth domain to represent the growth opportunities for job-ready, college-educated students:

- ULO 1: Specialized Knowledge
- ULO 2: Broad and Integrative Knowledge
- ULO 3: Intellectual Skills
- ULO 4: Applied and Collaborative Learning
- ULO 5: Civic and Global Learning
- ULO 6: Professional Skills

Even though the general education program is represented by the associate's level content of the ULOs, the university has applied the ULOs to all degree programs and have differentiated content by degree level. In this way, students gain core, transferable skills via the general education program before advancing their knowledge to field-specific, bachelor-level competencies.

The General Education program ensures students are at the center of the assessment model by utilizing [common rubrics](#). This extends the culturally-relevant approach to infuse equity in the assessment approach to undergraduate education at NLU. The General Education program affords students multiple opportunities to reflect and engage in the learning process with self-assessment, peer-to-peer assessment, and faculty feedback which mirrors best practice in equitable assessment. Through the use of common rubrics with student-friendly learning outcome language, students are able to articulate the skills they are building across courses, in addition to the content they are mastering. At the end of the General Education program, students will be able to articulate what they have learned and what they are able to do as a result of that learning. [Annual reporting for general education](#) helps the institution check its expectations against reality of student learning.

NLU takes pride in its diversity and in making learning accessible to its students. Regardless of program, modality, or student status (e.g., first-time or transfer, full-time or part-time), undergraduate students are served by faculty and staff embracing the general education requirements for consistency across programs, while providing flexibility for individual student pathways and course combinations. Moreover, high-impact practices - [internships](#), [field experiences](#), [practica](#) - are cross-disciplinary opportunities afforded to undergraduate and graduate students to learn and apply their knowledge and professional skills outside the classroom.

NLU recognizes the human and cultural diversity of its student body and addresses these through culturally relevant pedagogy inclusive of content, instruction, assignments and learning resources. Differentiated instruction is emphasized to meet learners where they are at, with [ongoing professional development](#) offered to students and instructors in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion. These topics are embedded into class discussions and coursework to prepare students for the real world and to thrive in a multicultural society. For example, NCE's Dean for Impact Initiative resulted in a [college-level strategic plan item and feature guide](#) to support restructuring curricula to prepare graduate students to teach in diverse classrooms.

At NLU, research is integral to *how and why* faculty teach and *what* they teach. Research, experimentation, and scholarship on teaching and learning practices advance the university's culture of teaching and learning excellence in tune with NLU's historic progressive education tradition. NLU has long-standing approaches that support this scholarship, including the [NCE Faculty Research Residencies](#), the [NLU Seed Grant program](#), and [NLU's Fellowship for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education](#). Additionally, [Institutional Advancement staff](#) assist in the process of seeking private and public funding to expand and enhance NLU academic programs and offerings.

Research further allows faculty to continually grow their expertise, take part in internal and external knowledge networks, and stay at the innovative edge of their fields so that NLU students receive the up-to-date knowledge that will let them build career trajectories. Research that informs how and what faculty teach can build towards cohesive topics of thought leadership at NLU. This approach enacts NLU's commitment to [engaged research](#), which is collaborative research that improves the quality of life and benefits the public good by generating and applying research-based knowledge to well-defined problems.

All students have access to resources (see 3.D) and are supported in their efforts to create and

contribute to scholarship. Per the nature of programs, some students are asked to demonstrate these skills more than others. However, given NLU's mission to nurture inquiry and engagement, it is important that all students have access and opportunity.

Sources

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- 3.B - Dean Impact Initiative Shared-Vision_Shared-Commitment_IL-Impact-Network
- 3.B - DEI in the Classroom PD Series
- 3.B - Engaged Research at NLU
- 3.B - General Education Requirements from Catalog
- 3.B - Institutional Advancement Grant Support
- 3.B - Internship_Field Experience_and Practica Guidelines
- 3.B - NCE Dean Initiative Strat Plan Influence and Feature Guide
- 3.B - NCE Faculty Research Residencies
- 3.B - NLU Seed Grant Website and Activity Summary
- 3.B and 3.C - General Education Competency and Departmental Reporting FA2020
- 3.D - Fellowship for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

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

NLU strives to build a diverse workforce that reflects the rich diverse community of learners. Accordingly, [staff and faculty diversity](#) far [exceeds national benchmarks](#). To advance the hiring of diverse faculty, NLU requires search committees include diverse representation of identities. Moreover, [training to reduce bias in interviewing](#) has become integral to the search process. Searches are not complete until diverse candidates are included in the pool of potential candidates.

NLU employs, evaluates, and supports faculty and staff to ensure effective, high-quality education and student support services are provided. Employee credentialing, performance evaluations, and professional development help maintain a work environment in which faculty and staff are valued and appropriately qualified to provide high quality education and support.

Faculty qualifications are determined through the [credentialing process](#) involving HR, the Provost Office, and faculty leadership for all faculty, including adjuncts and dual-credit instructors. Course content, competencies, program standards, and qualification requirements set by accreditors are considered by program faculty and college Deans to draft program-specific [credentialing matrices](#). The credentialing process occurs when faculty are initially hired, when applying for a new role, or when their credentials change. Credentials are reviewed by Program Chairs for appropriateness, then specific course approval determined by Program Chairs and secondary approval provided by an Associate Dean or School Director. The University Scheduling Center uses a [faculty load and staffing dashboard](#) that shows who is credentialed to teach a course which serves a checkpoint, where reports are sent to Program Directors showing who is not credentialed to teach a course to resolve before term start.

Aside from teaching credentials, NLU's [Faculty Policy for Awarding of Promotion and Tenure](#) describes the eligibility standards and minimum criteria for full-time faculty advancement.

[Annual performance reviews](#) help academic leaders assure faculty are current in their field, while also informing professional development opportunities for individual and area-specific needs. Full-time faculty performance evaluations occur annually and cover faculty roles of teaching, service to the profession, service to the institution, and scholarship through a formative and summative evaluation process. Faculty are expected to be available to students for inquiry - required to include office hours and contact information in syllabi - and which can be checked by mining student feedback in course evaluations data. Professional expectations of all full-time and adjunct faculty include responding to students between 24-48 hours after inquiry, as outlined in the [10 Principles of Teaching @ NLU](#).

Beyond the annual performance review process, there are other processes in place to ensure all instructors are current in their discipline and delivering quality instruction. These measures include:

- [Student end-of-course evaluations](#) - administered every course in every term, whose data are reviewed by faculty and administrators
- [Faculty observations](#) - new instructors in their first term, continuing faculty on an annual basis - using a standard rubric which results in feedback and coaching opportunities
- Data analysis of student performance at the [course level](#)
- Student feedback obtained through [ongoing surveys](#) and [focus groups](#)

Professional development opportunities to support the continued growth in teaching and learning practices are listed later in this criteria's narrative. To support faculty in maintaining current knowledge in their discipline, professional development funds are made available by the colleges to fund courses, workshops, conferences, and association memberships. Moreover, the NLU Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence provides many opportunities for [professional development in areas of need](#) (see more details later in this section).

Described in more detail in 4.A, NLU's [program review process](#) includes consideration of faculty staffing for programs, and 5.B provides how staffing needs are addressed as part of the budgeting process. Consideration of program revenue, margin, staffing, and class ratios all help in determining sufficient numbers to meet program needs. Additionally, institutional leadership can reflect on diversity of faculty and staff in relation to diversity of their students with respect to appropriate representation in course scheduling for sections and at specific locations. A [summative analysis of key indicators of teaching and learning](#) is provided and reviewed by Academic Cabinet and faculty leadership to help inform employee scheduling and performance decisions for programs and colleges.

For staff, HR leads work with supervisors to identify the [job specific credentials and competencies](#) necessary to provide high quality student support services. These competencies are used to inform the [selection and recruitment process](#) as well as the [annual performance review process](#). HR works with the hiring managers and the colleges on an ongoing basis to ensure positions are appropriately aligned with the institutional mission and student needs, and to recommend appropriate changes if necessary. In accordance with the [staff onboarding roadmap](#), staff are also sent surveys for their first 30, 60, and 90 days of employment to provide feedback to HR about their experience so that NLU may intervene if necessary and provide appropriate support. With student-facing services, departments determine necessary ratios required to ensure student support. This guides the hiring process across departments. For example, first-year success coaches carry a load of 100-125 students whereas online advisors are able to carry a load of 250-350 graduate students. These ratios are

determined by the scope of support required to ensure student success.

Staff development occurs through multiple channels (several detailed below). In addition to institutional training on various topics from IT security to active shooter training, [human resources offers training](#) in areas such as use of different IT systems, advancing management and leadership development, meditation and relaxation training, among many others.

Both faculty and staff benefit from several professional development opportunities made available to support their responsibilities. Beyond specific sessions, the institution has the following institution-wide professional development opportunities:

- [Connection events](#): the Office of the President has a committee planning quarterly, multi-day events offering professional development, meetings, and opportunities for networking for all faculty and staff.
- [Learning Design Consultations](#): Faculty are able to schedule time to meet one-on-one with a learning (or instructional) design specialist on how to create/plan learning experiences to enable students to achieve desired learning outcomes, use high-impact instructional strategies, accommodate for diverse learning needs, and use technology to enhance teaching and learning. Learning Design Consultants also partner with program chairs and faculty to review and improve courses based on student and instructor data.
- [Benefits webinars](#): HR partners with institutional committees and external organizations to offer monthly webinars and resources related to employee benefits and personal success skills (e.g., responsible investing, health and wellness, managing change).
- [Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence](#): coordinates and delivers teaching and learning programming for [professional development](#) and [scholarship](#) for the NLU community
- [Diversity and Inclusion](#): the Office of Student Engagement offers professional development series and opportunities designed to engage students, staff, and faculty in developing skills and knowledge around diversity and inclusivity, civic engagement, and wellness via their Social Justice Institute, Thrive Ambassador Program, and Wellness Warriors Program.
- [eNuggets](#): virtual development modules available to all faculty, with some required before a faculty member is approved to teach a course.

NLU recognizes that diversity defines and strengthens the community. All members of the NLU community are encouraged to actively engage and contribute their experiences and perspectives thereby creating a strong robust community of learners. Diversity, inclusion and equity are key commitments aligned with the university's mission of access. More details on how this is enacted throughout the institution are provided in 1.C.

Sources

- 1.A and 3.C - eNuggets Faculty Orientation
- 1.A and 3.C and 3.D - Student Focus Group Feedback Winter 2020 and 2021
- 1.A and 3.C and 3.D and 5.C - Examples of NLU Student Surveys
- 1.C and 3.C - CTLE Faculty Professional Development Programming and Resources
- 1.C and 3.C - DEI Hiring Training Portal Screenshots
- 1.C and 3.C - Diversity and Inclusion at NLU _ National Louis University
- 1.C and 3.C - Faculty Promotion and Tenure Policy
- 1.C and 3.C - Staff Professional Development Topics

- 2.A and 3.C - Staff recruitment-and-selection-policy-and-procedure-sept-2017
- 2.D and 3.C - CTLE _ National Louis University
- 2.D and 3.C - CTLE Research Month
- 3.A and 3.C - Faculty Performance Evaluation Process_Self-Eval_and Reviewer Forms
- 3.A and 3.C - Student Course Evaluations
- 3.B and 3.C - General Education Competency and Departmental Reporting FA2020
- 3.C - 10 Principles of Online Teaching at NLU 2.0
- 3.C - 2020-2021 Term Planning Based on Student Feedback
- 3.C - AY20 FPE Analysis
- 3.C - Connections
- 3.C - Current and Proposed Credentialing Process Flow Charts
- 3.C - Employee Diversity Related to Benchmarks
- 3.C - Faculty Credentialing Matrices
- 3.C - Faculty Observation Protocol and Observation Forms
- 3.C - FY 2021 Employee Demographic Metrics
- 3.C - HR Professional Development Example
- 3.C - Staff New Hire Roadmap and Checklist for Employee and Managers
- 3.C - Staff-performance-appraisal-policy-and-procedure-june-2017
- 3.C - Teaching and Learning Consultants Team
- 3.C and 4.A - 2019 UCC Program Review Handbook
- 3.C and 4.A - Job-Specific Competencies_NLU-wide Competencies_and Blank Job Description
- 3.C and 5.A - Faculty Load-Staffing Dashboard Overview and Screenshots

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

As described in 1.A, NLU provides student support services aligned to the mission, responsive to student needs, and made available throughout students' educational journey. Notably, the design and delivery of student services has evolved with both the changes and scale of student enrollment at NLU. A decade ago, when NLU largely served undergraduate degree completers (mainly adult learners) and graduate students, student support was delivered mainly through a student services framework. With the establishment and growth of a full-time, daytime undergraduate population precipitating the launch of the Undergraduate College in 2018, as well as the acquisition of Kendall College in 2018 increasing both residential and international student populations, NLU transitioned to a more holistic student development model through the establishment of a [Student Affairs](#) division. NLU provides relevant support services for academic and non-academic needs for its diverse student body. The following are just a few examples of student population-specific resources and initiatives:

- **Latinx students** benefit from programs and services of [Centro de Excelencia](#), academic pathways and partnerships for specific programs like the BS in Computer Sciences and Information Systems, as well as funding and resources associated with NLU's designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Centro de Excelencia is adjacent to the [Unity Commons](#), a dedicated space promoting community building, allowing space for speakers and events related to diversity and inclusion, exhibiting art, and encouraging courageous dialogues among NLU community members.
- **Black or African American students** have the Black Student Union, historically-black fraternity and sorority organizations, and an initiative to increase persistence among Black males, the Eagle Brotherhood, which expanded to serve all male students of color.
- **Veteran or military-connected students** benefit from the [Veteran and Military Programs services and resources](#), common space for gathering, as well as many military-related and connected recognition opportunities for prior learning.
- **Adult learners**, in addition to flexibility with modality and program options to meet their schedules, benefit from a plethora of [credit for prior learning opportunities](#) for general education, elective, and major credit across undergraduate and graduate degree programs.
- **Transfer students** are provided [clear and robust transfer guides](#) and tools that articulate how

academic credits can carry over to NLU (further described in 4.A.). Enrollment specialists also work with students to help navigate this transition. A strategic initiative to optimize transfer support led to the summer 2021 launch of the [Direct to Success program](#) to provide support as early as possible for transfer students, including a scholarship opportunity for students coming from community colleges.

NLU is among the top 25 most diverse national universities, and in 2016 earned its federal [designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution \(HSI\)](#) by the U.S. Department of Education. NLU is proud of this designation and its contribution to living the institution's values of diversity and equity, and to building a culture of inclusion. Currently, 47% of undergraduate students identify as Latinx, and as NLU's Latinx enrollment has grown, so has the commitment to address the needs of both undergraduate and graduate Latinx students through distinctive and innovative programs and resources.

To advance NLU's work as an HSI, the [Centro de Excelencia](#) at NLU implements the HSI STEM grant initiative and CLAVE Graduate Student Institute, which awards CLAVE Doctoral Fellows and sponsors CLAVE Post-doctoral fellows in research and community-based projects. In addition, the Center also contributes to institutional diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives such as its participation with the [Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative](#) with its commitment to eliminating equity gaps by 2025.

To best promote the support services NLU offers to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students, NLU makes it a point to communicate and promote these programs to students through multiple channels (e.g., enrollment process, orientation, listed in the [student guidebook](#), promoted by academic advisors and student success coaches, physical and digital fliers, [social media posts](#)), as well as make them accessible through multiple means (e.g., in-person, synchronous online appointments, asynchronous communication). In addition to messaging, information about all services and resources are listed online for students to learn more via [NLU's main website](#), [NLU's student portal](#), and listed in the [Brightspace learning management system](#) for student courses.

The following are academic-related services and resources available to all students regardless of program, modality, or location:

- **[Academic Advising/Student Success Coaching](#):** Academic advising is handled through program-specific, assigned Student Success Coaches for undergraduate students and Academic Advisors for graduate students. Students at all levels and across all modalities have an advisor or coach available to support them through their studies.
- **[Career Coaches/Advisors \(career development services\)](#):** The Career Bridge office partners with faculty to incorporate a career-focused curriculum for students as early as their first year with NLU. Additionally they work with Advisors and Success Coaches to monitor a student's journey through key career milestones such as resume, professional profiles, internship or field work applications, and employment applications. All students are assigned a Career Advisor who works to help students achieve employment upon graduation. Employee Relations Managers work to identify employers who will work to match students with internship and employment opportunities.
- **[Disability and Access Services](#):** helps ensure that all aspects of the student experience are accessible by providing reasonable accommodations such as exam accommodations, audio recording in classroom, note taking assistance, and alternative textbook formats. These services are available across all program options.

- **[International Student & Scholar Services](#)**: the office provides guidance for international students during the visa interview process, pre-departure information, orientations, on-campus, internship, and post-graduate employment, health insurance, and acclimating to life in the U.S.
- **[Learning and Information Technology Services \(LITS\)](#)**: provides improved effectiveness and efficiency in the university's administrative processes including recruiting, admissions, registration, financial aid, student accounts, finance, human resources and alumni development offices; facilitates the use of technology by faculty in the teaching, learning and advising processes; improves the administrative decision-making process with accurate, timely and easily accessed data; provides students, faculty and staff with global access to computing resources and Internet access and services; builds upon the University's strategic plan, develops and executes an institution-wide IT plan, and participates in Technology Governance and implementation of technology policies and procedures.
- **[Learning Support](#)**: Learning Support is provided to all students, regardless of level, campus or modality. Learning Support primarily provides academic support in writing, reading, math, science, accounting and finance. In addition to NLU tutors and learning support staff experience and availability, the institution offers free access for students to Grammarly (an online grammar checking tool) and Tutor.com (online tutoring service that provides live chat with a tutor and essay review). Students do not take placement tests upon entrance to NLU but are registered for the courses needed for their degree based on any transfer coursework for undergraduate students and prerequisites. Learning Support specialists are embedded in undergraduate general education courses and gateway courses to provide additional support, workshops and tutoring. Faculty can submit an EAB alert for "Referral to Learning Support" to connect students at all levels for additional support based on course performance.
- **[Institutional Research Board \(IRB\)](#)**: ensures compliance with NLU's policies and procedures for conducting ethical research involving human participants. Every research investigator involved in any aspect of human subject research at NLU must submit a protocol to IRB that includes appropriate application forms, and informed consent documents.
- **[Prior Learning Assessment](#)**: The Prior Learning Office offers alternative options for students to receive college credit for prior personal or professional experience or through examinations. This allows students to demonstrate the breadth of knowledge they bring to the university, and have that translate into official university credit, helping to decrease the overall cost of their degree, and potentially accelerating their graduation.
- **[Student Success Seminar](#)**: This course is offered to all new students at NLU. It focuses on key skills to success, focusing on helping students access resources as well as build up behaviors such as time management and goal setting that will be useful to their success.
- **[University Store](#)**: In addition to providing the NLU community with apparel and accessories, the NLU Store offers current students the opportunity to work in the store and behind the scenes. From retail management to inventory control, students are given the chance to develop customer service skills, leadership abilities and lessons for team work.
- **[University Library](#)**: The Library serves all students, staff, and faculty by providing research support and information literacy skills instruction including evaluating, integrating, and ethically using information. The Library also provides access to high quality resources and contributes to the critical and intellectual inquiry of students, educators, and researchers through engaged teaching and scholarship. The Library partners with Learning Design and the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence to embed quality learning materials into new and revised curriculum and provides faculty workshops on effectively integrating research skills and academic integrity into courses. Faculty can submit an EAB referral for research support with a librarian.

It is worth noting that NLU works to proactively support academically at-risk students via co-requisite [Developmental Education](#), which is offered to first-time, full-time undergraduates in order to accelerate English and Math skills development in their freshman and sophomore years. Risk identification is simplified by placing all students in co-requisite English and Math courses by default to ensure consistent foundational skills across the population – because the vast majority of students arrive with GPAs and test scores below traditional measures of college readiness – with students having the opportunity to waive out of participation based on high school GPA or upfront demonstration of skill mastery. For undergraduate adult transfer students, GPA and time away from collegiate coursework is considered in terms of support and potential for risk. Some undergraduate and graduate programs [offer minimally-qualifying students provisional admissions status](#), prompting additional advisor outreach and review of academic progress in their second and fourth courses.

[EAB Navigate](#) is also used to identify at-risk students, enabling NLU to offer a best-in-class student experience by providing faculty and staff access to record, manage, track and resolve student issues, as well as communicate praise and affirmation. Students can be flagged by advisors or faculty for behaviors inside or outside of the classroom, prompting specific protocols for follow up, service referrals, or just centralized communication between faculty and staff about students, which often provides material for review between faculty and advising teams. In addition to students receiving communication from EAB Navigate, faculty, and staff members, the student portal and every course syllabus offers information to students about how to access services they may need, including special needs accommodations. Moreover, faculty members and academic advisors/success coaches convene bi-weekly in Student Success Collaboration (SSC) meetings to discuss and align on early interventions they can execute immediately to support student success.

Complementing the aforementioned academic support areas, NLU has an abundance of non-academic student services and resources:

- **[THRIVE Campus and Community Resources](#):** In order for students to be successful academically, NLU needs to ensure student's holistic needs are met. The THRIVE Center was launched in 2020 as a central hub for the variety of social-emotional wellness and financial needs resources offered (e.g., emergency funds, food assistance, legal support) to meet [basic needs insecurity](#).
- **[Centro de Excelencia](#):** serves as the hub for programs and initiatives that advance NLU's work as a community and career focused Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).
- **[Civic Engagement Center](#):** established in 2004, the CEC serves as the university's resource center providing opportunities for students to learn and serve and is a key part of NLU's broader mission. In 2015, NLU earned Carnegie Foundation's elective classification for Community Engagement, which provides a special-purpose classification for higher education institutions with commitments in the area of community engagement.
- **[The Den](#):** In addition to several student lounge spaces available for students, The Den is a dedicated space for student organization meetings and events, access to recreational games, and community building among students.
- **[Enrollment and Admissions](#):** recruits, enrolls and retains its students with a commitment to provide high quality customer service—using a student-centered approach along with data driven support to guide each student through the enrollment process.
- **[Office of Student Engagement](#)** (including [orientation](#), [student organizations](#), volunteer opportunities, [wellness programs](#), leadership workshops, honor societies, behavioral intervention team, [diversity/inclusivity programming](#), and [residence life](#))
- **[Peer Mentors](#):** as a part of the first-year experience and orientation efforts of the institution,

peer mentors are upper-class students who volunteer to support first-year students in their academic, personal, and professional transition to NLU.

- **Student Finance:** provides staff to help students navigate tuition, fees, loans, and financial literacy. In addition to meetings with students, online and virtual workshops are available, as well as student finance educational modules.
- The **Unity Commons** provides a dedicated space promoting community building, allowing space for speakers and events related to diversity and inclusion, exhibiting art, and encouraging courageous dialogues among NLU community members.

As student needs change, the resources available evolve and adjust to best meet those needs. NLU utilizes information from a variety of sources to ensure services are meeting student needs:

- **Student Advisory Council:** undergraduate student body providing input to administration to enhance the student experience. This group is selected annually since 2017, and meets monthly with the Dean and Vice President of the Undergraduate College, as well as other key University leaders.
- **Student Assembly:** representative delegation of the student body that provides advice and guidance on policies that improve the student experience. The NLU Student Assembly is composed of undergraduate and graduate students, as each student brings a unique voice and perspective to the table.
- **Assessment and evaluation:** methods with which academic programs and the aforementioned student services measure learning outcomes and interventions to support retention and persistence. Data from these efforts are interpreted for potential action to enhance student experience in or outside of the classroom (see 4.B)
- **Institutional priorities and trends:** NLU is responsive to changing demographics and trends given current students, graduate outcomes, and in preparation for incoming student populations.
- **Direct student feedback:** NLU invites student feedback for all students regarding their classroom experiences via [course evaluations](#) for every course, a [degree finalization and graduation survey](#) to capture next destination and employment data, [Noel-Levitz satisfaction and priority surveys](#) administered every other year, and [a number of surveys](#) (including [service level satisfaction data](#)) and [focus groups](#) conducted at the college, department, or office level.

The combination and availability of these data streams afford a number of opportunities for NLU to improve, expand, retire, or otherwise adjust content and services to best meet student needs.

Sources

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- 3.D - Student Organizations
- 3.D - Student Peer Mentors
- 3.D - Student Services _ National Louis University
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- 3.D - Unity Commons
- 3.D - University Housing
- 3.D - Veteran and Military Programs
- 3.D and 4.A - Degree Finalization Form_Graduation Next Destination and Employment Survey
- 3.D and 4.A - Transfer Guide and Transfer Articulation Tool Screenshot
- 3.D and 4.B - Assessment Approach _ National Louis University
- 3.D and 5.A - NLU Student Assembly _ National Louis University
- 3.D and 5.B - LITS _ National Louis University

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

NLU's program development process, program review, and collective assessment efforts help ensure academic programs are appropriate to higher education, relevant to student needs, and have consistent quality and rigor across courses and modalities.

General Education courses, as well as the University Learning Outcomes, help ensure a broad and essential foundation of skills and knowledge for students which are reinforced and built upon in academic programs. Lifelong inquiry and learning by faculty and students are encouraged through their contributions to scholarship and creative work.

NLU ensures the faculty and staff delivering education in support of student learning and development have the appropriate qualifications through our hiring process, as well as annual performances evaluations. Program review, assessment, and strategic planning efforts afford the institution the opportunity to reflect on program performance and align staffing needs. Employees also engage in professional development opportunities to ensure qualifications and knowledge in their work remains current and they have resources to continue their personal and professional growth.

The institution provides relevant support services to meet academic and non-academic needs to serve a diverse student body. Coupled with assessment efforts, NLU is not only providing purposeful interventions, but also collecting, analyzing, and using data to inform continuous quality improvement efforts intended to bolster the student experience and enhance student learning.

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

NLU demonstrates responsibility for the quality of educational offerings through the following processes.

As curricula are created or redesigned, NLU has a systematic and sequential process to ensure quality and authority. Revisions or additions to existing curricula are put forward by faculty to college curriculum committees for review and approval, where materials (e.g. course outlines, syllabi, catalog descriptions) are reviewed by diverse subject matter perspectives to determine the rigor and equivalence of courses to existing curricula. New or redesigned courses are accompanied by a [credit hour compliance form](#), an internal worksheet which tracks direct and indirect course-related instructional activity to determine allocation of credit hours. New credit-bearing credentials (e.g., degrees, concentrations, prior learning offerings) are accompanied by [Academic Alerts](#) and [Point of Interest memos](#), formal NLU academic memoranda detailing the curricula and requiring approval at the program, college, and institutional level. The Provost Office has a Portfolio Management Group, composed of academic leadership, marketing staff, and enrollment staff to offer support and guidance for people navigating the institutional approval processes.

Quality and authority with curricula is supported by qualified faculty and staff. As described in 3.C, faculty credentials and [staff competencies](#) are not only articulated but also used for regular performance evaluations. Such processes help ensure appropriate expertise of those overseeing and maintaining curricular and co-curricular offerings regardless of modality or location. All instructors who provide [dual credit opportunities](#) are required to meet NLU faculty credential requirements, thus ensuring partner instructors from high schools provide students with equivalent learning experiences.

NLU's [academic program review process](#) allows program faculty to evaluate and reflect on academic program quality regularly and holistically. Program faculty review many program variables including:

- health metrics provided annually (e.g., multi-year enrollment trends, graduation rates, employment outcomes, student satisfaction, persistence),
- assessment of student learning,
- curricular connections and sequencing,
- faculty achievements and staffing considerations,
- overall programmatic strengths and areas to improve,
- reflection on past goals and setting new goals.

NLU employs a multi-year, comprehensive program review cycle with established triggers to determine frequency by program. The [program review process](#) is managed through faculty governance processes operating in collaboration with institutional administration and academic leadership. The comprehensive process is punctuated by [annual data snapshots](#) and [annual program update reports](#) designed to ensure continuity and create a transparent and manageable process for continuous improvement, while also providing guideposts for review as the program eventually submits a [multi-year report at the end of their comprehensive cycle](#), which is reviewed by the [University Curriculum Council](#). Results from this process contribute and can inform program continuation/discontinuation, curriculum development, program admission standards, course prerequisites, and faculty qualifications. Program review is also an official mechanism to communicate needs and aids in decision making for resource allocation in the institution's budgeting process. Programs receive feedback from Dean's Offices and either present results to the college or participate in mid-year check-in meetings to discuss highlights and action plans based on report results going forward.

In addition to internal program responsibility, specific programs maintain specialized accreditation, adhering to standards and earning recognition from said organizations. Below is a list of accreditation information by college or program area:

- [The Undergraduate College \(UGC\)](#) has education, business and technology, and social and behavioral science programs, which makes programs from this college active participants in accreditation-related efforts for CAEP and IACBE. In addition, the General Education program ensures all credits are transferable through the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI). The recent addition of the Bachelor of Social Work program means UGC is also actively engaged in the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE's) accreditation process.
- [The National College of Education \(NCE\)](#) has programs which are recognized through national Specialty Professional Associations (e.g., American Council on the Teaching of a Foreign Language [ACTFL], Association for Middle Level Education [AMLE], Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], Education Leadership Constituent Council [ELCC], International Literacy Association [ILA], National Association for the Education of Young Children

[NAEYC], National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], National Council of Teachers of English [NACTE], National Science Teachers Association [NSTA]). The college is also reviewed on a regular cycle by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), and also adheres to standards and reports program results to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

- [The School of Business and Information Technology](#) has business and health programs accredited by the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE).
- [The College of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences](#) has counseling programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP), and clinical psychology adheres to accreditation standards of the American Psychological Association (APA).
- [Kendall College](#) has culinary programs accredited by the American Culinary Federation (ACF).

In all instances, the colleges coordinate with faculty leadership to collect data, author reports, and adhere to any other elements necessary to maintain their college, program, or national accreditation and recognition.

Beyond the formal classroom, NLU affords credit-bearing opportunities by means of [prior learning assessment](#) for students. NLU defines Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) as an umbrella term that includes all internal and external paths through which students can evidence achievement or competency for undergraduate and graduate credit. These processes include credit by portfolio, credit by examination, and credit by credentials. Credit awards for portfolios and credentials are evaluated and determined by faculty, with both opportunity processes reviewed for updates every three years. Credit by examination (CLEP and DSST) are determined by the evaluation of a third party (ACE), and NYU Language Proficiency exam credits are determined by the NLU Registrar's office based on the award recommendation of NYU administrators. NLU was one of the founding institutions of the American Council for Education's (ACE) Alternative Credit Project™ (ACP). All processes and assessment methods strictly adhere to the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) standards and methodology. Efforts at NLU are proving to be successful and noteworthy based on [CAEL and Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education's \(WICHE\) 2020 reporting](#), as NLU has a considerably higher PLA use rate (21%) compared to peer institutions (7%) or the national average (11%), not to mention credential completion rate for PLA-taking students (84% at NLU, 79% at peer schools, 49% nationally).

In ascribing achievement to demonstrated student learning, NLU has specific policies and procedures in place to evaluate and award credit. NLU has both [a website and an internet-based articulation guide](#) to help answer questions and ease the process for credit transfer, as well as the [CPL opportunities](#) available for elective or major credit. Credit earned outside of the United States is evaluated by approved [Foreign Evaluation Services](#). [Policies](#) exist with limitations or maximums surrounding transfer credit and credits awarded for prior learning assessment. From a process perspective, Enrollment specialists and CPL staff help direct students among various options, faculty and subject matter experts review materials (transcripts, licenses, certifications), and credits are awarded and communicated by the Registrar and the Office of Admissions and Records. To further ensure adherence, [transfer policies](#) are enforced within the degree audit system and transfer articulation component of the NLU Student Information System (Banner) and are updated to reflect program or policy revisions (published through the Academic Alert or POI process).

To serve a broader transfer student population, beyond institutions and/or programs for which the

institution has [articulation agreements](#), NLU includes additional top transfer institutions, as well as Credit for Prior Learning options in Transfer Articulation Guides. NLU also offers Course Articulation/Equivalency Guides and General Education Guides for all undergraduate programs offered by the institution.

In addition, NLU participates in two of Illinois' statewide initiatives to ease and promote credit transfer: the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) and MyCreditsTransfer, the latter of which utilizes the nationally available Transferology System to promote student transfer and inform prospective students about transferability of their coursework. NLU is proud to be part of the state-level transfer organizations and shares this information on the [NLU Transfer Website](#).

The [Office of the Registrar](#) ensures that all prerequisite course requirements are published in the academic catalog and the course catalog section of the Banner SIS. Whether a student or academic advisor on behalf of a student attempts to register for a course for which the student does not meet the prerequisite, the request will not be processed. An academic advisor may only override the missing prerequisite with approval of the faculty or program.

As an example of exercising authority and maintaining course rigor and expectations of learning, NLU leveraged an [external evaluator to benchmark the rigor of its General Education curriculum and assessments](#). In 2018, NLU hired an independent consulting firm, DIA, to evaluate General Education curriculum rigor relative to Illinois institutions certified by IAI. The consultant found NLU's General Education course rigor to be greater than or equal to other institutions' level of rigor.

With the natural progression of incoming and current students, appropriate attention and resources are dedicated to evaluating the success of NLU's graduates. In the last year of their program, each student submits a request for a degree or certificate, using the [Degree Finalization Form](#), to the Office of Admissions and Records, which is audited for compliance with degree requirements. The degree finalization form contains questions regarding employment status and post-graduation plans. When students indicate that they are not employed or are employed but still looking for employment in their field, NLU continues to track the outcomes of these students for at least six months post-graduation and offers job search assistance through the Career Bridge. Career Bridge coordinates with the colleges to reach out to alumni via phone and email, as well as comb social media platforms, to make updates and maintain employment data.

The university internally publishes six-month, post-graduation outcomes employment data. This data is included in program review data provided to each academic program to enable tracking employment outcomes and ensure the program outcomes are meeting the needs of graduates. Related to employment status, programs with licensure (e.g., counseling, teacher preparation) [track licensing rates](#) of students and alumni.

The institution also utilizes data from university-level and program assessment (further explained in 4.B), program review, alumni surveys, and employer surveys to inform about graduate outcome attainment. In addition, many programs have an advisory board that offers an external and market-relevant perspective on industry needs for employment-ready skills and knowledge in order to keep the curriculum current. As various advisory boards were alluded to in 1.B.3, here is a [collection of advisory board examples](#) for academic programs and some institutional areas.

NLU demonstrated successful employment outcomes for 88% of its graduates across the institution in the 2016-2017 academic year. These results were recognized by [College Factual](#) who ranked NLU as 12 of 992 colleges nationally for best serving non-traditional students, where one of the metrics was

demonstrable student success after graduation. Additionally, [College Factual](#) has ranked NLU as a top-ranked veteran serving institution for the past three years (2019-2021). Most recent employment outcome data for 2020-2021 students yields an employment rate of 79% for undergraduates and 83% for graduate students, where the overall institutional employment rate is 81%. [Pillar 1 \(Preparing our students for the world of work\)](#) of the 2030 strategic plan demonstrates the institution's continued efforts toward graduate outcomes by best preparing students to succeed in their chosen industry.

Sources

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- 1.B and 4.A - UGC Industry Advisory Council Playbook draft
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- 4.A - College Factual Recognition
- 4.A - College Factual Recognition (page number 1)
- 4.A - College Factual Recognition (page number 2)
- 4.A - CPBS Accreditations
- 4.A - Credit Hour Compliance forms at BA_MS_and EDD levels
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- 4.A - UGC Accreditations
- 4.A and 4.C and 5.C - Program Annual Update Report Examples AY 2021-22

4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

For academic affairs (courses, programs) and student affairs (services, resources, departments), assessment of student learning at NLU follows a [general cycle](#) and [process](#). Annually, [outcome maps](#) and [assessment plans](#) are created or confirmed for accuracy early fall. Assessment planning includes setting or reviewing success criteria or targets for learning outcome achievement in relation to measures and resulting data. Once set, the assessment plan is executed to collect data fall through summer. Late summer, reports are created and action items in relation to use of results are created and shared. [Templates and resources](#) exist and support nuanced, customized application of cycle and process across the university.

Assessment of student learning efforts revolve around academic program plans to assess Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) with key assessments, either course-embedded artifacts (e.g., papers, capstones, portfolios) as direct measures and rubrics aligned to outcomes or externally administered (e.g., state, license agency) exams and tests. Additionally, self-reported student learning data is provided by students via specific student learning outcome questions contained in course evaluation instruments administered in every course. NLU utilizes [IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction](#) course evaluations due to their research-informed instrument, as well as the ability to benchmark institutional results against national data.

By means of [outcome or curriculum maps](#) and [alignment to an institutional outcome framework](#), PLOs have articulated connections to courses, Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), and University Level Outcomes (ULOs). The [ULOs are listed on the Assessment and Accreditation public website](#). As mentioned in 3.A, the ULOs are modeled after [Lumina's Degree Qualifications Profile \(DQP\)](#), an external outcomes framework utilized by over 900 institutions. Alignment of PLOs, CLOs, and connections to NLU's ULOs are listed in undergraduate and graduate curriculum maps and university course documents, with PLOs, and CLOs communicated to students via course syllabi. For programs with applicable external standards, mapping and alignment exists and program-specific assessment efforts can be utilized for any required reporting.

Given PLOs are a common denominator in relationships across levels of [NLU's outcome framework](#), programmatic assessment is an excellent lever offering the ability to achieve course, program, and university level outcomes-based assessment through one systematic approach. Program faculty and the Program Director collaborate with college leadership and the Executive Director of Assessment and Accreditation in data collection and analysis, where program faculty interpret data and author

[annual assessment reports](#). Along with the [ULO assessment report](#), programmatic assessment results are reported annually, including actions for improvement, which are shared throughout colleges and included in program review reports. Academic assessment is executed by program faculty leaders, supported by Assessment and Accreditation, plus faculty and staff across the colleges.

All of this information informs programmatic change to improve student learning outcomes. The following are examples of improvements at various institutional levels:

- From spring 2017 to spring 2019, the [ULOs were revised](#) to the DQP after past reports surfaced alignment and coverage issues for programs, which translated to measurement complications and inaccurate reporting on student learning. After an outcome revision process and all programs mapping to the new ULOs, more curricular connections are logical and visible across the institution and student learning for ULOs is more accurately measured.
- In 2019-2020, the [Early Childhood Education program](#) found that the two program learning outcomes with the lowest rates of mastery on end-of-program measures were both related to teacher candidates' ability to implement appropriate assessments. In response, the program is revising three pre-service courses in the curriculum where assessment strategies are taught.
- Reporting from 2019-2020 also saw [course owners in PHI 107](#) identify students scoring lower on “Written Communication”, a competency under ULO 1 - Specialized Knowledge, than on forming evidence based arguments. This finding underscored the need to continually emphasize writing support for students, even beyond English or Communication courses.

Because learning doesn't only happen in the classroom, student affairs and co-curricular areas also have student learning outcomes, articulated in consideration of Council for Academic Standards in Higher Education (CAS) content and professional organizations for respective functional areas (e.g., NACA, NODA). These student learning outcomes are also aligned to the ULOs, with connections noted in [assessment plans](#). In addition to the ULO alignment, the 2020-2021 academic year saw the creation of [Student Affairs Outcomes](#) to divisionally focus on the student learning experience, with an [annual report](#) detailing the alignment and assessment results across student affairs areas. Beginning in the 2021-2022 academic year, select student affairs areas will rotate annually to participate in the [University Benchmark Project](#) to compare internal results with other institutions and national trends.

Given the different nature and services of each student affairs area, assessment methods vary. With articulated targets, [assessment reports](#) indicate achievement of student learning and include action plans to make improvements for student learning. Assessment work is carried out and led by core staff members in each area, supported by the Executive Director of Assessment and Accreditation.

To support continuous improvement of student learning, a number of entities provide content and resources to help assessment-related capacity development for faculty and staff:

- [Assessment and Accreditation](#)
- [University Assessment Council](#)
- [Student Affairs Assessment Committee](#)
- [NCE Assessment Committee](#)
- [Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence](#)

Sources

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- 3.A and 3.B and 4.B - Learning Outcomes _ National Louis University
- 3.A and 4.B - Assessment Report Examples
- 3.A and 4.B - Outcome Map Examples
- 3.A and 4.B - ULO Mapping by Areas
- 3.B and 4.B - Degree Qualifications Profile
- 3.D and 4.B - Assessment Approach _ National Louis University
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- 4.B - Humanities and Fine Arts Assessment Reflection
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- 4.B - Overview of Assessment at NLU
- 4.B - Student Affairs Assessment Committee _ National Louis University
- 4.B - Student Affairs Assessment Outcomes _ National Louis University
- 4.B - Student Affairs Assessment Plan and Report Examples
- 4.B - Student Course Evaluation Example_IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction
- 4.B - ULO Update Process 2017-2019
- 4.B - University Benchmark Project
- 4.B and 5.A - Assessment and Accreditation Website
- 4.B and 5.A - University Assessment Council

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

NLU is committed to educational improvement through attention to annual persistence, term-to-term persistence (retention), and completion. Each is listed below with definitions and description for calculation at NLU:

- **Annual persistence** data is calculated based on fall enrollment. A student is counted as persistent if they are still enrolled at NLU or have completed their NLU program by the subsequent fall or winter term. The university has established an 80% target for undergraduate programs and 88% for graduate programs.
- **Term to term persistence (retention)** is calculated each term when enrollment and completion numbers are finalized. A student is counted if they are still enrolled at NLU from one term to the next term or completed their NLU program.
- **Completion** rates are calculated annually. They consist of the percentage of a new student cohort starting in an academic year that have a degree conferred within a particular time period. According to the strategic plan, 4-year rates for undergraduate programs (6-year for first-time freshman), 3-year rates for graduate programs, and 6-year rates for doctoral programs are utilized as performance indicators. The university targets for these rates are: 55% 4-year rate for undergraduate programs, 70% 3-year rate for Masters programs, and 60% 7-year rate for doctoral programs.

In addition to these overall targets above, [2030 strategic plan outcomes](#) call for persistence and completion rates to be further disaggregated by student populations with specific benchmarks and goals.

All information used to calculate annual persistence, term to term persistence (retention), and completion rates comes from the Banner student information system. Disaggregated by population, [these data are provided to program faculty across the university annually for program review reports](#) (as mentioned in 4.A). Both this data and the program review reports include

comparative benchmarks and institutional goals as key indicators for success in relation to persistence, retention, and completion. Individual programs track target and goal attainment in program review reports. Colleges and staff departments provide quarterly updates and strategic goal progress. Institutionally, there are [annual presentations on persistence, retention, and completion](#), as well as [deep dives into the results and identifying opportunities for improvement as part of a bi-annual President's Office retreat](#).

Areas utilize results to make data-informed decisions for action to improve educational quality and student success (e.g. student intervention and support, changes to curriculum or resources). As mentioned in 3.D., the institution uses [EAB Navigate](#) for faculty and staff to coordinate efforts around gathering feedback, tracking, and intervening for student success. Maxient software is used for Student Experience and Student Affairs staff to track and support students in relation to academic or behavioral issues or disputes. Of 17,602 EAB cases, we had 95% progress report completion rate (5% increase since last year). Efforts this year saw 83% of students with the EAB app cleared their account holds, which is a barrier to their progression. The combination of EAB-related efforts from faculty, staff, and students have helped increase NLU-wide annual persistence by 2.2%.

Sources

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- 4.A and 4.C and 5.C - Program Annual Update Report Examples AY 2021-22
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- 4.C and 5.C - Annual Persistence and Completion Presentations for 2020-2021 and 2019-2020

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

NLU demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs via the program and course development process, credit hour compliance procedure, and program review efforts. These efforts are aided by the hiring and use of qualified faculty and SMEs, specialized accreditation processes, and processes and policies for evaluating and awarding credit for all students.

NLU has a systematic and comprehensive approach to assess student learning in academic programs and student affairs services and offerings. Assessment efforts reflect good practice and encourage use of results (including sharing) for continuous improvement efforts.

Student success outcomes - (graduation, persistence, retention, and completion) are tracked across multiple processes, systems, and technologies to then be used in strategic and data-informed decision making for student intervention and support, as well as adjustments to programs.

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

NLU utilizes shared governance structures within its [organization](#) to ensure participation and broad input from the community relative to policy decisions, planning and procedures. Stakeholders include the Board of Trustees, leadership, faculty, staff, and students such that informed decisions are made that are in the best interests of the institution. The university also benefits from its [shared governance committee structure](#), which provides for effective leadership, and broad faculty input in academic and student matters. Faculty committees frame and recommend policies and procedures to improve institutional efficacy.

Building on the 1.C reference to faculty representation and voice in institutional governance, the NLU Faculty Governance structure is composed of the [Faculty Association](#), the principal agent of faculty governance, and the [Faculty Senate](#), which has the legislative charge of the Faculty Association. The Faculty Senate supports setting and maintaining academic standards through their charge to formulate policy governing the facilitation of teaching and research (2.A, 2.B, & 2.E); faculty standards (3.C); faculty appointments, retention, ranking, tenure, sabbaticals and promotion (3.C); freedom of expression and academic freedom (2.D); student life as it relates directly to academic affairs (3.D); academic services (3.D); and curriculum and program review (4.A). The Senate, in cooperation with the Provost, reviews and provides recommendations on student standards including admission, graduation, honors, and academic appeals (2.A). The [Faculty Senate functions with representative committees](#) to conduct the work with standing charges, [charges in direct support of NLU strategic plan Pillars, and specific charges assigned by the Senate Executive Committee and Provost each year](#).

Outside the governance structure, other standing committees exist with interdisciplinary faculty and staff from across the institution participating for a common purpose, such as the [University](#)

[Assessment Council](#) and [University Leadership Council](#). [Staff Council](#) exists as the formal entity representing staff voice in [policy and processes](#). Faculty and staff efforts to ensure academic quality (see 4.A) and program rigor (see 3.A), including program review reports ([annual](#) and [comprehensive](#)), ensure each program's effectiveness and efficiency. These platforms and processes afford institutional collaboration (at the [university level](#) and through parallel [college-level committees](#)), opportunities for input, and maintenance of academic standards.

In researching and reaching decisions on matters, the university's college, staff, and administrative leadership use data reports and dashboards which are collaboratively created and maintained by [Institutional Research](#), [Business Intelligence](#), and [Assessment and Accreditation](#). Examples of these reports and dashboards include:

- [Enrollment, persistence, and completion reports](#)
- [Assessment of student learning reports](#)
- Academic program review ([annual](#) and [comprehensive](#) reports) and [student affairs operational metrics](#)
- [Faculty load dashboard](#)

Utilized for multiple purposes, these data are referenced and shared with individuals, groups, committees, and relevant audiences to support data-informed decision making throughout the institution in order to best meet stakeholder needs and strategic goals.

Sources

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- 4.B and 5.A - University Assessment Council
- 4.C and 5.A - Annual Persistence and Completion Presentations for 2020-2021 and 2019-2020
- 5.A - Institutional Research Overview

- 5.A - Organizational Charts
- 5.A - Senate Charges proposed for 2021-2022
- 5.A - Student Affairs Operational Metric Dashboard Examples
- 5.A - University Leadership Council Charter
- 5.A and 5.C - Business Intelligence Role_BI Group Purpose_and BI Group Agenda Example

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

Since 2017, NLU has seen [an increase in revenue](#) as a reflection of organic and strategic growth through new and expanded programs and initiatives, providing a strong resource base to support existing operations and planning for the future. A significant growth in revenue has been a result of the acquisition of Kendall College which added approximately \$11 million in incremental revenues to the university. Another contributor to the increase has been the launch of the Pathways first time freshman program, which began in 2016 with \$0.8 million in revenues and has grown to \$15 million in 2021.

A measurement of the strength of the university's financial position is its Liquidity Ratio, which is the only financial measurement in the university's debt covenants. Liquidity Ratio is defined as Unrestricted Cash and Investments as a percentage of Debt Outstanding. At June 30, 2021, the university's Liquidity Ratio was at 1.7 which is about double the level required under the university's debt covenants of 0.85. This overage translates into about \$20 million of excess cash and investments held by the university over and above what is required by the university's debt covenants. Another measure of financial health is evidenced by NLU's [Composite Financial Index of 2.83 for FY2020](#). These statistics illustrate how the university is very diligent in its management of cash and investments to provide monies for future educational investment, as may be required.

The Office of Institutional Advancement (OIA) also [supports the institution's mission and goals](#) by raising funds to enhance and grow current programs and develop and implement new programs in support of student academic success and career advancement. OIA secures funding from foundations/corporations, government (federal/state/local), and individuals (alumni giving and individual/major donors). NLU has made significant progress in fundraising, with \$12 million raised in each of the last two fiscal years, meeting or exceeding the budget goal. OIA also recently completed a major gift initiative, meeting the goal of \$20 million from individual donors and private foundations. Additionally, the number of gifts and donors increased in 2021 by 4.5% and 3%, respectively. The institution also secured several new grants, including:

- A Better Chicago (\$145,000) – UGC/Pathways and COVID emergency Fund.
- Bank of America (\$25,000) - Pathways COVID Emergency Student Support Fund.
- Crown Family Philanthropies (\$650,000) – UGC
- Foundation for Child Development (\$203,000) – McCormick Center

- Hearst Foundations (\$125,000) – Career Bridge
- NEH – Humanities Initiatives at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (\$100,000)
- USDOE Promoting Post Baccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans Program (\$2,300,000)

In its resource allocations and [budget reviews](#), NLU takes into account the needs of the university, including talent, physical facilities, and technological infrastructure such that each provide a strong base for its educational offerings and future growth. In addition, the quality and adequacy of each are assessed and evaluated on an annual basis.

As mentioned in 3.C, the university has mechanisms in place to ensure employees are appropriately qualified and trained with hiring based on job specific competencies, annual performance evaluations, and allocated resources for professional development opportunities. These standards and processes are expected of staff at all NLU locations and regardless of program modality. As of August 2021, NLU employed 174 full-time faculty, 452 part-time/adjunct faculty, 473 full-time staff, and 18 part-time staff. NLU has maintained a low student to faculty ratio throughout the years, with the most recent 20-21 academic year ratio reported at 16:1.

NLU's main campus and annex building is located in downtown Chicago, with two locations in surrounding suburbs (Wheeling and Lisle), and a location in Tampa, FL.

- NLU's Chicago main campus has been located in the historic Peoples Gas Building at 122 S. Michigan Avenue since 1999. In addition, the university recently purchased 128,000 square feet of space less than one block from the current location at 18 S. Michigan Avenue. The Chicago campus houses 70 classrooms, 7 computer labs, and 350 offices and work stations. The spaces are conveniently located by many forms of public transportation, across the street from the Art Institute, and within a vibrant corridor of Chicago on Michigan Avenue. These locations house ample instructional spaces and all student support offices.
- The NLU location in Wheeling, IL, at 1000 Capitol Drive, occupies 89,460 square footage of space and contains 13 classrooms, 2 computer labs, the University Library's main print collection and 140 offices. All of the classrooms at this campus were renovated with new furniture, flat screen TV's and whiteboards over the past three years.
- NLU has been at the Lisle, IL location since 2005 after moving from a nearby location in Wheaton, IL. NLU has had a presence in the west and southwest suburbs since 1988. The Lisle location occupies 57,350 square feet with 70 designated office areas, 1 public forum room, 2 lounges, 23 classrooms, and 2 computer labs. The lease for this location expires in 2026. The [NLU Reading Recovery Center](#), renowned for its education in the area, is located in this building.
- NLU has been in the Tampa, FL area since 1988, with a location consisting of 15,341 square feet of space with 20 office areas, 4 interview/observation rooms, 2 lounges, 1 computer lab, and 9 classrooms.

NLU's physical footprint increased in both Chicago, IL and Tampa, FL with the acquisition of Kendall and the closing of Argosy University locations. With the acquisition of Kendall College, [NLU built state of the art kitchens and classrooms](#) a block away from the main campus, at 18 S. Michigan Ave. This building with approximately 128,000 square feet, helped to provide for the expansion needs that resulted from enrollment growth and also provided approximately 23,981 square feet of space that is dedicated solely to the instruction of the culinary vertical of Kendall. Similarly, with the increase in transfer students from Argosy University, NLU's location in Tampa, FL increased its footprint from 6,162 square feet to 15,341 square feet and incurred about \$400,000

in renovation costs.

NLU's [Learning and Information Technology Services \(LITS\) team](#) manages technological resources to support operations. A regular replacement cycle is in place for faculty and staff machines, networking equipment, data center equipment, and applications, in order to make sure the technology available to the institution is current and up to date. Software is tracked by system administrators and updated or replaced as needed. NLU also contracts with Ellucian, a third party [central helpdesk](#) (CHD), specializing in higher education, who provides support to students, faculty, and staff, 24x7x365. The CHD handles 10,000 to 12,000 calls a year, and resolves between 80% - 90% of those calls on the first call. The [CHD generates a monthly report](#), which is reviewed by NLU in order to make sure the institution is meeting customer service goals. LITS ensures safe technological operations through Heartland, a third party who provides systems availability, vulnerability, and automated patching for critical systems. Vulnerability testing is done once a month and any issues identified are resolved as recommended. Vulnerability testing results are [presented by Heartland as a dashboard](#).

LITS is also charged with leading the university's innovation initiatives. LITS serves as one of the primary Research & Development units for the institution led by the Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives and Innovation. The division develops ways to improve efficiency and student services by conducting business process assessment and change. This work is included in the [university's strategic plan under Pillar 2](#). Examples of this work include, the conversion of face-to-face courses to online offerings, encouraging and supporting quality matters, [automation of student services](#) to better a student's academic journey and build capacity, and supporting the institution to become a multidisciplinary institution (e.g., development of the undergraduate Pathways program and AccelerateU).

[NLU's strategic plan outlines goals and outcomes that align with the mission, future opportunities, and emerging needs identified by market research and data analysis](#). The goals set in the strategic plan are realistic yet ambitious and are analyzed on a quarterly basis. The 2030 strategic plan leveraged several external industry resources to inform the strategies and areas of focus. In July 2019, NLU invited the [Educational Advisory Board \(EAB\) to present "The State of Higher Education"](#) to the institutional community. The presentation highlighted factors impacting higher education as an industry, but also included information specific to NLU. During the initial development of the 2030 plan, [student focus groups](#) and [employer interviews](#) were conducted. This information was used to provide additional perspective on priority opportunities from key stakeholders both internally and externally. Information was analyzed against NLU's internal strengths and weaknesses. This analysis allowed us to create strategies that were specific to the current state of NLU, yet reflective of institutional aspirations to move over the next decade. Accordingly, [the 2030 strategic plan](#) articulates the work NLU currently believes to be necessary over the next decade. Staff, faculty, and administration prioritized the work most critical in the first one to three years of the plan. This prioritization allows the institution to translate strategies into actionable, accountable, and realistic work plans without losing sight of the overall ambitious goals. The structure of the plan is also flexible enough to respond to unforeseen external factors that would necessitate plan adjustments and reprioritization. [As an example, with the global COVID19 pandemic](#), NLU was able to effectively pivot its strategic focus training and support on working virtually, delivering education remotely, and addressing economic needs of students.

As previously noted, the university monitors progress on the implementation of each strategy. The [Board of Trustees twice yearly reviews progress on each pillar of the Strategic Plan](#). This review

provides an opportunity for trustees to provide feedback and input on any changes that should be contemplated. The university also produces an [annual dashboard](#) to quantify progress across each pillar of the strategic plan. The dashboard is published and shared internally with academic leadership, as well as the Board of Trustees. In addition, the [Academic Cabinet](#), chaired by the Provost, conducts quarterly progress reviews of strategies. [President's Cabinet holds two retreats each year](#) to review progress on the plan and build plans for the upcoming year. Finally, assigned strategy owners manage and monitor individual strategies. Strategy owners participate in and lead a range of meetings and working sessions to closely monitor progress and escalate issues as needed. Through these various levels of oversight and reporting the university can track advancement and make adjustments as needed. The [President shares updates on the strategic plan with the university during monthly all-school meetings](#).

On an annual basis, operational initiatives and the budget process are prioritized in alignment with the strategic plan's strategies. During monthly [NLU-wide meetings](#) at different campuses and [Faculty Senate Meetings](#), leadership shares progress on key indicators, including enrollment, financial performance, and other activities that advance the university and its strategic plan. The university also posts [copies of its monthly financial statements](#) on the Community Website for transparency. This information is available to all faculty and staff to review as desired. With this type of constant analysis, the university is able to respond to any significant market changes in a timely manner.

The university has a well-developed budget process that includes a priority to make sure that adequate resource allocation exists to provide for the [educational needs and support services of the university](#). This process is more fully described in 5.C.

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- 5.B - Central Help Desk report
- 5.B - College Budget Reviews_CPSA_NCE_and UGC_FY 2021

- 5.B - Connection 2021 Address
- 5.B - Connection 2021 Address (page number 38)
- 5.B - Copies of Financial Statements on Community Website and Two Statement Examples
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- 5.B - Help Desk
- 5.B - HLC Institutional Update
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- 5.B - LITS Degree Works Project Dashboard
- 5.B - LITS Pillar 2 AY2022 Action Plan and AY2021 Outcomes
- 5.B - Reading Recovery Center
- 5.B - The State of Higher Education - Education Advisory Board Presentation - July 2019
- 5.B and 5.C - Strat Plan - employer interviews_summary

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

NLU operates using data informed decision-making, and is deliberate in aligning investments with its priorities. The institution is also committed to continuous improvement and uses data systematically to improve outcomes for students and institutional operations. With an advanced [Business Intelligence function](#), NLU monitors and evaluates information on student learning and persistence, graduation and employment, financial performance, enrollment trends, student engagement and satisfaction, among others (see 4.A, 4.B, and 4.C). Accordingly, institutional performance on a number of factors guides resource allocation in alignment with mission priorities. As an example, as the Undergraduate College grew, resources were allocated to accommodate the growing needs of the college, such as additional faculty, staff, and analytics support. Likewise, investment and program development is informed by data. As alluded in 1.C, the Undergraduate College launched the [Eagle Brotherhood](#) after identifying higher rates of attrition for black males than any other group. As a support group to address the needs of men of color, [initial results of Eagle Brotherhood](#) were very promising with increased retention rates. Another example of using data to guide institutional decision-making is the use of student ratings of their service experience for various student supports and services. When areas for improvement were identified, [service level agreements](#) were put in place to enhance service experience for students.

Institutional planning occurs through many channels. First, the strategic planning process itself incorporates [input and perspectives from stakeholders](#) across the institution and externally. On an annual basis, [leadership across the university review results of action plans](#) and together determine the upcoming priorities and action plans. On each of these planning opportunities, the university reviews external trends, market shifts, environmental and other factors that impact the university, and adjusts plans and priorities accordingly.

When annual priorities are determined, an initiative owner is assigned and a cross-functional team is developed to execute on the initiative. The development of cross-functional teams fosters cross-departmental collaboration and greater diversity of thought and interests. The initiative owner, with

input from the cross-functional team, develops an action plan with milestones and accountabilities. Progress on each initiative is reviewed by the [Board of Trustees biannually](#) and [the President's Cabinet at semi-annual retreats](#). Progress updates are also shared with the NLU community at monthly, campus-wide meetings. These venues provide opportunities for many institutional stakeholders to engage and formatively contribute to the institutional planning process.

The planning process and [investments](#) are aligned with institutional priorities. Information learned from the strategic plan reviews and other financial and enrollment data gathered throughout the year informs the annual budgeting process. Through the budgeting process, the university ensures resources are sufficient to provide for the educational needs of its students and are allocated in accordance with the university's mission and values. Budget heads have the opportunity to make sure the key needs of their areas are also considered during this process. The budget process is managed by the Office of Finance and starts in November with the publishing of [a calendar](#) that defines the timing of all of the steps associated with the completion of the budget for the upcoming year, which include the following:

- Tuition Price Setting
- Enrollment Projections for the Upcoming Year
- Continuing Student Information
- Revenue Projections
- Expense Projections and Submissions
- Departmental Budget Reviews
- Investment prioritization
- Budget Balancing
- Board Review
- Dissemination of Budget

A key monitoring tool the university uses is the weekly University Operations Group (UOG) report and meeting. On a weekly basis, NLU's Finance department creates a [slide deck for UOG](#) that details various university metrics related to enrollment, marketing, and financial performance. This information helps the university monitor its performance, identify trends and areas for potential improvement and/or resource re-allocation, and to help identify areas for which future attention may be required. UOG focuses on enrollment and marketing goals. Additional data is reviewed regularly to monitor student retention, graduation, employment, program trends and student satisfaction, as well as equity gaps in performance.

The [Academic Cabinet](#) also addresses data and information needs to monitor the health of academic programs. This group helps strategize findings and evaluate overall effectiveness of program design and program quality elements as described in 4.A. Enrollment trends and the success of tactics are reviewed as well, such that the university can react and place improvements into place where necessary. Additionally, the Vice President of Finance and President report the results of the weekly UOG meetings during the weekly President's Cabinet meetings and provide a summary of the results to the broader community at [Faculty Senate](#) and [President's Monthly meetings](#). Enrollment (lead, application and registration) information is reviewed with the President's Cabinet, as well as trends and issues that might need to be discussed. Annually, the President's Cabinet reviews [retention data](#), [student](#) and [employee satisfaction](#), and [program trends](#) as part of strategic planning.

Through all of the described efforts, NLU works to solicit engagement and input using formative and summative processes to advance institutional goals. Through regular, periodic, and annual meetings and processes across multiple stakeholder populations, the institutional community is aware and can

offer feedback on NLU's direction and progress in relation to goals and strategies to best meet needs for student success and operational excellence. Regular and systematic review of data and progress reporting helps evidence improvements, while collaborative engagement from constituents supports institutional betterment.

Sources

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- 5.C - 2021 Budget Calendar
- 5.C - Employee Satisfaction Survey Results 2019 - Faculty Senate Presentation
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- 5.C - NLU Ratios
- 5.C - Strat Plan - Deck for Input Groups
- 5.C - Strat Plan - employer interviews_summary
- 5.C - Student Affairs Area Service Level Agreement Examples
- 5.C - UOG sample deck

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

Shared governance structures ensure participation of faculty, staff and students to make key decisions/changes with the support of data and/or stakeholder feedback.

Resource allocation, as part of budgeting and strategic planning processes, considers program and service needs, student needs, and infrastructure requirements (human resources, technology, facilities) given current priorities and future growth strategies.

NLU has a strategic planning process which is aligned to its budgeting process, which engages stakeholders and makes changes based on data.

Sources

There are no sources.