

HLC Update

January, 2015

Criterion 1—Mission

Core Component: 1.A. The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1.A.1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.

NDUS strategic Plan—During the latter part of the fall 2014 semester the NDUS published its newly adopted Five-Year Plan: [Daring to be Great](#). System campuses have been charged to engage a process of aligning with the NDUS Plan. Dr. Coston is leading this effort, working from the foundation laid during the Self-Study process during which DSU's Criterion Teams engaged a process of evaluating the progress and continued relevance of DSU's 2015 strategic plan and goals. The DSU-NDUS strategic plan alignment process will move forward as per the directive of the University System. Work is being initiated this spring 2015 semester and will continue into the fall 2015. The present DSU 2015 Future Focused plan expires December 2015.

Having evaluated our progress and noted work yet to do during the Self-Study process, we are poised to look forward.

Criterion 2—Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

Core Component: 2.A. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

Dickinson State University Foundation—The Dickinson State University Foundation, a separate entity from the University, went into receivership in December, 2014. Foundation scholarships for DSU students will be financially supported by the University through the 2014-2015 year if Foundation funds are not available. A DSU Foundation information file is being maintained with news articles and a timeline for review by the HLC visiting team in the HLC Resource Room during the accreditation visit. Because of the timeliness of this action and gap in information at this time, it is premature to determine implications for the University itself.

Policy and procedure development-Each of the four university divisions (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Business Affairs and Enrollment Services) have been and continue to engage processes of reviewing, updating and creating a centralized, real-time resource of ongoing policy and procedure development that is online. The policies and procedures are aligned to the ND University System policies and procedures in content and numbering system so as to demonstrate the continuity of fulfillment of

the University System policies and procedures and to acknowledge the further detailed application for Dickinson State.

Criterion 3—Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

4.B.1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

4.B.3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

Integrative Learning—A team of four faculty members and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences attended the AACU Integrative Learning conference and created a professional development opportunity for all DSU faculty and staff to explore the possibilities of an enhanced focus on Integrative Learning across the university. The first phase of this opportunity included the creation of three Faculty Learning Communities which met to discuss the principles and possible applications of Integrative Learning. Members of the Learning communities were encouraged to create a proposal for an Integrative Learning project to be implemented during the spring 2015 semester. After a peer review process, nine proposals were accepted. These faculty are eligible to receive a stipend from the Provost once their projects have been implemented and assessed.

Flipping the Classroom—Dickinson State University’s annual spring semester faculty in-service featured presentations and training led by [Dr. Mark Taylor](#) on inverting, or flipping the classroom. This concept emphasizes moving the introduction to content and skills out of class to free class time for students to be active in solidifying knowledge, practicing skills and reaching higher level learning outcomes through planned in-class activities. Techniques to improve students’ capacity to take responsibility for their own learning and learning outcomes. Additional topics discussed during the professional development opportunity included: Teaching the Underprepared Student, Innovating the College Classroom, and a reflection on Generation NeXt as they come to college.

3.B.2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. 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.

General Education review and development-The DSU General Education Committee has established a [website](#) on which they now post their committee meetings and work. This website opens the invitation to all faculty to not only be apprised of the work being done to reconsider and revise DSU’s General

Education program, but also to voice their thoughts, concerns, and input as the committee is doing its work. In addition, links are maintained to provide best practice resources for faculty. The committee spent the fall 2014 semester taking the time to step back and reflect on the underlying philosophy and core values associated with general education in a liberal arts curriculum. The committee considered best practices, the ND University System General Education guidelines, and examples of programming around the country. They also chose to start their conversations by establishing a shared philosophical understanding of the value of general education within a liberal arts. Thus, by starting with a shared understanding, the committee felt that their future decision-making would result in a more clearly and uniformly understood and valued General Education program, aligned with the NDUS guidelines, and through which students could and would achieve the institutional outcomes. This comprehensive consideration of the General Education program is in line with DSU's Mission, Vision and Values.

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

First Year Experience—DSU's First Year Experience committee implemented a common syllabus model, along with a common read. The committee has been and continues to work to move beyond a curricular focus on the "to do's" of navigating the college experience toward a more comprehensive and wholistic goals of academic success and ultimately degree attainment. Changes in the program were initiated by this faculty-driven committee interested in revamping the First Year Experience and course curriculum. This work is ongoing.

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

Web-based advising support materials (i.e., Online Academic Catalog-linked Degree/Program information, Degree Audit guides [aka programs –of–study/road maps], and course rotation information) were developed and collated by departments, strengthening curricular scaffolding efforts across the University. These web-accessible materials are largely in place and will facilitate a more information-rich degree pursuit path for all students (face-to-face, online, distance delivery, etc.).

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

Evolution of Technology Resources and Education Center (TREC)—The reconfiguring of technology support services continues to evolve and blossom, supporting faculty, staff, and face-to-face learners. TREC set its new direction with the creation of the base-camp flipped classroom lab setting, departments and units conduct meetings, engage learning groups and instruction using the lab and enlisting the assistance of the TREC team.

A spring-board event was realized as a faculty member, new to teaching online, decided to organize coffee and conversation sessions in the TREC base-camp room wherein faculty were invited to come together to share ideas about how to strengthen online instruction. Those with years of experience and those new to teaching online collegially share insight, experience and best practice information weekly. Through this organically emergent faculty-driven initiative a fluid learning community dedicated to sharing insight and expertise to enhance instruction has been created.

Criterion 4—Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

4.B.3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

Writing Across the Curriculum--The DSU Writing Committee began the Writing ROAD MAPs project: Recording Our Actual Discipline-specific writing practices to Move Ahead Purposefully and Make Assessment Possible. DSU engaged a process of revitalizing its Writing across the Curriculum program during the 2013-2014 academic year. That work culminated in revisions to the DSU Academic Catalog and department identification of designated Writing Intensive Courses, along with specified prerequisites for writing intensive courses (i.e., English 110 and English 120). Moving forward from that foundational work, a faculty member agreed to lead efforts over the course of the 2014-2015 academic year to more fully define and delimit a campus-wide, cross-discipline understanding of what writing intensive courses are and mean. DSU faculty and staff were invited to participate in what came to be called the DSU Writing Committee. Formed at the beginning of fall 2014 semester to review DSU's Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) program, the Committee's preliminary review of writing courses and writing practices conceived ROAD MAPs and Writing in the Disciplines (WID) statements. These statements will document writing practices on a discipline-by-discipline or program-by-program basis; identify writing-intensive practices appropriate for each discipline; recognize writing requirements in programs and courses that should be recognized as achieving writing outcomes; and develop writing curricula and support. Work drafting statements for select programs and disciplines has begun and will continue into the spring term. In support of its charge, the Writing Committee and DSU's Writing Center co-sponsored a writing workshop in early spring 2015. The workshop: "Minimal Marking and Making the Most of Writing in the Disciplines," was designed based on feedback gathered from the Writing Committee's initial departmental surveys and featured DSU writing instructors and tutors who discussed strategies for improving quality while reducing response time when responding to student writing.

4.A.1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

4.B.1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

5.B.3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Assessment work—DSU’s focus on assessment is growing into a cultural understanding, appreciation for, and reflection of measuring student achievement and improving instruction. The committee is representative of all departments with member responsibility to actively engage and assist their departments to grow in their assessment work. DSU is moving from a “check the box, we did it” mentality of assessment, to a more engaged trajectory of following a process that defines how we do our work every day.

Initiating an active web interface with collegial support within an interactive structure, assessment changes are no longer “assignments” to be completed by the departments, but are gauged as academic investments to assure that students are learning and are moving toward accomplishment of program and institutional outcomes.

Criterion 5—Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness

NDUS strategic Plan—During the latter part of the fall 2014 semester the NDUS published its newly adopted Five-Year Plan: [Daring to be Great](#). System campuses have been charged to engage a process of aligning with the NDUS Plan. Dr. Coston is leading this effort, working from the foundation laid during the Self-Study process during which DSU’s Criterion Teams engaged a process of evaluating the progress and continued relevance of DSU’s 2015 strategic plan and goals. The DSU-NDUS strategic plan alignment process will move forward as per the directive of the University System. Work is being initiated this spring 2015 semester and will continue into the fall 2015. The present DSU 2015 Future Focused plan expires December 2015.

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