Northern Arizona University - AZ

HLC ID 1010

OPEN PATHWAY: Mid-Cycle Review   Review Date: 6/6/2022

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Context and Nature of Review

Review Date

6/6/2022

Review Type:
Mid-Cycle Review

Scope of Review

- Mid-Cycle Review

- 2021–22 COVID-19 Response Form

Institutional Context

Northern Arizona University (NAU) was founded in 1899 in Flagstaff, Arizona as the final public university established in the Arizona Territory, 13 years before Arizona was admitted as the 48th state. NAU is one of three universities governed by the Arizona Board of Regents. 28,718 students were enrolled in fall 2021 in 93 bachelor's, 69 master's, 1 specialist and 20 doctoral programs. NAU has one branch campus in Yuma, Arizona, over 20 additional locations in the U.S. and abroad, and more than 125 online and competency based programs. Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education rated NAU in the top three nationally for excellence in delivering virtual student services. The university is classified as "R2: Doctoral Universities – High Research Activity".

NAU has undergone a number of significant changes since the 2017 comprehensive review including navigating the covid pandemic, hiring a new president, and developing a comprehensive strategic plan with updated mission and vision statements.

Interactions with Constituencies

N/A

Additional Documents

2018 and 2019 minute meeting of the Strategic Planning and Budget Committe

Summary Materials for President's Leadership Retreat 2019

Handouts from President's Leadership Retreat, February 6, 2017

2017 Macro Budget Materials

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Beginning in Fall 2021, under the leadership of a new president, NAU went through a lengthy and inclusive process to establish a new vision, mission, commitment, and strategic roadmap for "Elevating Excellence." The entire process was documented on the NAU Strategic Roadmap portal and NAU website. Campus-wide involvement was evident throughout the planning process. The process was directed by the Strategic Roadmap Steering Committee, a group of university leaders and seven working groups each composed of a lead facilitator, a student, a staff member, a faculty member and a subject matter expert. This team hosted Zoom listening sessions for the members of the NAU community to provide feedback on each goal. During the Strategic Roadmap process NAU was publicly transparent. Drafts of the Strategic Roadmap as well as communication with constituents was made available to the public on the NAU website.

NAU chose a Strategic Roadmap instead of a strategic planning process so the institution could move forward quickly and establish measurable outcomes. However, benchmarks have not yet been developed for the plan. Moving forward, the establishment and communication of these benchmarks will be important to the overall success of the Strategic Roadmap. The goals of the Strategic Roadmap are built around Academic Excellence, Student Success, Commitment to Indigenous Peoples, Impactful Scholarship, Mission-Driven and Diverse Faculty and Staff, Community Engagement, and Sustainable Stewardship of Resources, all of which align well with the mission.

The NAU mission is: NAU transforms lives and enriches communities through high-quality academics and impactful scholarship, creative endeavors and public service. The revised mission was adopted by ABOR on June 8-9, 2022.

Since the last HLC review, NAU has added a number of programs to support institutional and workforce needs including allied health and nursing, informatics, and applied sciences. A new College of Engineering, Informatics, and Applied Sciences was also created.

NAU is committed to access, affordability and serving the needs of its students. In Fall 2021, grant and scholarship aid was given to 22,874 students. Review of the enrollment data confirmed that NAU's student profile is consistent with its mission with a total enrollment of 28,718, primarily on the Flagstaff/Phoenix Biomedical campus. Other statewide locations serve 1,444 students and the Yuma campus serves 399 students. Online/Personalized learning is provided to 5,627 students. Fall 2021 graduate enrollment was 4,388. That year, 18,304 students were Arizona residents and 9,950 were non-residents. Student enrollments and staff numbers from ethnic minorities continues to increase. To better serve the diverse population of Arizona, NAU and NAU-Yuma are recognized as Hispanic-Serving institutions. On the NAU website under the President's tab, the NAU 2020 Diversity Strategic Plan including key strategic priorities and objectives is posted. However, no benchmarks are included.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NAU publicly discloses its vision, mission, commitment and the new Elevating Excellence Strategic Roadmap to broad and targeted audiences through electronic media and print document. These documents are prominently displayed on the NAU website and demonstrate NAU's educational role in serving the public.

NAU has received over $69M in grants to engage with external constituencies. A number of centers provide opportunities for students, faculty and staff to engage in scholarly research. ABOR approved a Technology and Research Initiative which provides access and workforce development funding for targeted areas of research excellence and a competitive process for research funding. NAU also serves the greater public by using external funds for community involvement in areas such as the Native American Culture Center and the Center for Health Equity Research.The University describes its actions in the Northern Arizona University State and Local Operating Budgets document prepared by the University Budget office.

In keeping with the Strategic Roadmap commitment to Indigenous Peoples, there is a Center for American Indian Resilience, an Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals and a Center for American Indian Economic Development that provide research and services to the Indigenous people.

Beginning January 2022, NAU instituted a new policy to allow administrators, classified staff, and service professionals up to 16 hours of paid leave per calendar year to participate in community engagement. The Center for Service and Volunteerism works with partner agencies and networks to provide support and education to the citizens of Arizona. Last year, 284,000 volunteer hours were documented. NAU's Dental Hygiene Program hosts a Kiddie Clinic to provide exams, cleanings, x-rays, sealants and fluoride treatments.Other examples of external partnerships include a business accelerator, a sustainable alternative transportation system and the promotion of economic development in the region.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NAU demonstrates an understanding, as evidenced in the Strategic Roadmap process, of the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society. The institution offers a plethora of curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to develop diverse perspectives. According to the NAU website, students may choose from over 400 inclusive student organizations. The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves. The university offers service opportunities through the Center for Service and Volunteerism including the AmeriCorps program. Undergraduate and graduate students serve on university governance and advisory groups offering opportunities to develop leadership skills and giving them a voice in campus planning processes. In 2022 the Family Access, Communication, Transition and Support (FACTS) program was developed for first generation families to increase college understanding and attendance.

To foster a climate of respect, the Office of Inclusion, Multicultural and LGBTQIA Student Services provides a safe and supportive environment. In the Fall of 2020, 1,611 Native students from over 96 tribes attended NAU and were offered services through the Native Cultural Center. According to Diverse Issues in Higher Education, NAU ranks 9th in the nation for awarding bachelor's degrees, 4th for awarding master's degrees and 6th for awarding doctoral degrees to Native Americans. In the fall of 2021, the first Diversity Strategic Plan was approved "to create a framework of action for the university to enhance Diversity and Inclusion throughout the fabric of NAU." The plan has five strategic priorities with corresponding objectives. The planning committee worked closely with many campus entities and institutions across the country to learn about best practices in Diversity Strategic Planning. Although the new Strategic Planning process and the Diversity Strategic Plan have been approved, it will be important for the institution to benchmark and communicate progress to all of its constituencies on a regular basis.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Rationale

In AY2021-2022, under the leadership of NAU's 17th president, NAU engaged in a comprehensive and inclusive process to update its' vision, mission, and strategic plan. On June 9, 2022, the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) received NAU 2025 - Elevating Excellence, NAU's revised strategic plan, and adopted NAU's revised mission. The institution provided evidence of the many ways it engages with external constituents and is committed to serving the public within the framework of its mission. The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse and globally connected world and provides service opportunities for students, faculty and staff. The first Diversity Strategic Plan was approved in Fall 2021 and NAU will launch a national search for a Vice President for Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer in Fall 2022. The Office of Inclusion, Multicultural and LGBTQIA Student Services provides a safe and supportive environment for the NAU community.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The assurance argument described a thorough planning process during AY2021-2022 which led to the development of NAU 2025 - Elevating Excellence. The plan includes revised mission and vision statements, and seven strategic priorities with 29 associated objectives. NAU's previous mission statement was adopted by the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) in 2018. The new mission statement, as part of NAU 2025 - Elevating Excellence was developed by the campus community under the leadership of the President and was adopted by ABOR on June 9, 2022.

The argument provided evidence of policies and processes to ensure that faculty, staff and students operate with integrity. The University Policy Library is easily accessed from the A-Z Index on the NAU homepage. Policies are divided into general categories (Academic and Faculty Affairs, Campus Operations, Equal Opportunity and Access, Financial Management, General Administration, Human Resources, Information Technology, Athletics, Marketing and Communications, Research, and Student Affairs). Lists of policies recently revised and those under consideration are provided, and for each policy the responsible office, a contact person, and the date of the most recent revision is given. The argument also provides information about ABOR policies, such as conflict of interest, which guide ABOR and its member institutions.

Expectations of ethical conduct are also presented in the Faculty Handbook and the Student Handbook. NAU employees participate in annual Conduct, Ethics, Reporting and Transparency (CERT) training, and Preventing Harassment and Discrimination, Clery Act, Title IX, and Accommodating Disabilities training.

Complaint processes for students are easily located on the Division of Student Affairs website. The Faculty Senate oversees the Faculty Grievance Process, while the Human Resources Office oversees nondiscriminatory grievances for employees. Discrimination and harassment complaint processes for

employees can be found on the Equity and Access Office website. These processes and forms can also be accessed from the Consumer Information site (accessed from NAU home page).

The ABOR Website provides the May 13, 2022 Audit of NAU's CERT: Conduct, Ethics, Reporting and Transparency Program. The audit indicated some opportunities for improvement, particularly related to oversight and monitoring of the CERT system. A plan for correcting has been developed by NAU and was available on the website.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The Consumer Information website is easily accessed from the NAU Homepage. The information provided is extensive and well-organized. For example, the information on institutional accreditation (HLC) as well as specialized accreditations and licensures is easy to locate and, for specialized accreditations and licensures, is organized by college and program. For each specialized accreditation, the name of the accreditor, program, and date of last review and next review is given. Also included is a link to the accrediting agency's website and a copy of the most recent letter/document sent to the institution. Licensure rates are provided including the pass rate for each NAU program compared to the national pass rate. For example, in the College of Health and Human Services, pass rates for ten licensure exams are given, including the 2020 NCLEX pass rate for the Nursing program (95.7% versus national average of 86.6%). Cost to students is readily available to the public.

The Office of Institutional Research and Analysis (IRA) provides Fact Books for the previous three years on its website allowing for public access of current and historical data about NAU students, faculty and staff. Much of this data is also available on the Consumer Information site. IRA also provides over twenty years of Common Data Set reports on its website. For information and data presented to the University community and the public, the institutional office and senior administrator responsible for the accuracy of each data set are clearly identified.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NAU is governed by the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) which oversees the three public universities in Arizona. ABOR's Strategic Plan outlines four key goals (Educate, Achieve, Discover, and Impact) which guide each institution to achieve its own goals through its mission and vision and strategic planning processes. The unique characteristics of each public institution is acknowledged in all policies and practices available for review on the ABOR website.

No information was available in the argument or on the ABOR website about training of board members, however, a large support staff, including legal counsel, is available to provide guidance and onboarding to Board members.

All ABOR meetings comply with Arizona's open meeting law. The ABOR website provides extensive information about Board members, meetings, programs and reports. The NAU President attends all ABOR meetings, other members of NAU senior leadership participate in ABOR Committee meetings, and NAU faculty are represented through the Arizona Faculties Council with a standing item on each Board Agenda. The two student ABOR members meet regularly with various student groups from the campuses. The Assurance Argument affirms that ABOR delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The NAU Faculty Handbook, the ABOR Student Code of Conduct, and ABOR Policy 6-202 provide evidence that the issues of academic freedom and pursuit of truth are formally addressed by the institution and its governing body. Governance responsibilities for freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning are vested in the Faculty Senate. In May 2022, NAU, with the Faculty Senate's support, endorsed the Chicago Principles (University of Chicago's Report on the Committee of Freedom of Expression). The institution's commitment to freedom of speech is also evidenced by the Green Light Speech Code Rating it received from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (F.I.R.E.).

NAU's general counsel regularly offers a First Amendment Seminar to address relevant policies and laws and review best practices. NAU also provides training to support faculty with classroom management and the handling of controversial topics.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) provides leadership and support for research, creative activity and scholarship. OVPR has established formal programs for research safety and compliance which can be found on the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) website. The OSP website is extensive and indicates there are a number of training opportunities for principal investigators and unit administrators, however, the sessions listed were all for 2019-2020 so the information needs to be updated or removed. The Uniform Guidance References (Principal Investigator Reference Guide and Comprehensive Reference Guide) also appear to be somewhat dated.

Students are provided guidance on integrity of research and scholarly practice in freshman orientation. The Academic Standards Committee has also developed an online workshop for students to help them understand academic integrity. Cline Library provides support to faculty and students regarding plagiarism. The University provides the technology needed to help faculty and students proactively identify potential plagiarism. The Academic Integrity Policy is current and available via the University Policy Library and the Student Handbook. The Student Disciplinary Regulations process is clear and fair, and information about the process is readily available to faculty and students.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Rationale

A new mission statement was developed by the campus community in AY2021-2022 and adopted by the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) on June 9, 2022. The argument and associated web pages provided evidence of policies and processes to assure that faculty, staff and students operate with integrity. Extensive and well-organized information is provided to the public from the NAU homepage on the Consumer Information site. The person responsible for ensuring accuracy is clearly identified on each data set.

NAU is governed by the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) which oversees the three public universities in Arizona. The unique characteristics of each of the public institutions is acknowledged in all policies and practices available for review on the ABOR website.The Assurance Argument affirms that ABOR delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration.The NAU Faculty Handbook, the ABOR Student Code of Conduct, and ABOR Policy 6-202 provide evidence that the issues of academic freedom and pursuit of truth are formally addressed by the institution and its governing body.

The Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) provides leadership and support for research, creative activity and scholarship. OVPR has established formal programs for research safety and compliance which can be found on the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) website.The OSP website is extensive and indicates there are a number of training opportunities for principal investigators and unit administrators, however, the sessions listed were all for 2019-2020 so the information needs to be updated or removed. The Uniform Guidance References (Principal Investigator Reference Guide and Comprehensive Reference Guide) also appear to be somewhat dated.Students are provided guidance on integrity of research and scholarly practice via a number of programs as outlined in the assurance argument.

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).

Rating

Met

Rationale

All programs across degree levels, locations, and modalities including online and competency based learning must adhere to NAU's Degree Program Expectations (DPEs), which have been in place since AY 2014-2015, and were affirmed by the faculty. This ensures that that all courses and programs meet the minimum required levels of performance for the student degree level being served. NAU has noted a positive cultural shift since this implementation. For example, it was noted that learning outcomes are more deliberately used to design assignments, courses, and programs and guide assessment efforts, which facilitates faculty's use of assessment findings to alter or redesign the curriculum for continual improvement and to identify and build on students' learning strengths.

Further, there are two separate complementary processes that the DPEs are subjected to - Curriculum Review and Academic Program Review; the purpose is to ensure that the programs and courses are current, relevant, and apply appropriate assessment measures to the degree programs. Recently, in AY2021-2022, the Curriculum Review Process was updated with a new Essential Course Design Requirements document that is submitted as an instructor guide along with a syllabus for courses proposing to be part of the revised Liberal Studies Program. The purpose of this additional document is to clarify the course the outcomes and assignments that must be incorporated each time the course is taught and helps instructional peers understand how the course fulfills the purpose of the revised Liberal Studies Program.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NAU is in the process of transitioning from the Liberal Studies general education program to the General Studies program, which is slated to begin AY 2023-2024. The current Liberal Studies program was designed to ensure students acquire broad knowledge, intellectual concepts, and skills that align with NAU's mission as a public institution. The new General Studies program emerged from an iterative and collaborative process reflecting shared governance at NAU. This process began in August 2019, when a taskforce was formed to address Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) General Education Requirements and recommendations from the Liberal Studies Self-Study conducted in 2018, as well as the External Reviewers' report. The resulting General Studies proposal was recommended by the Liberal Studies Committee, Diversity Curriculum Committee, and the University Undergraduate Committee to the Faculty Senate for their consideration and approval. Both the Faculty Senate and ABOR approved this plan in 2021, paving the way for implementation in AY 2023-2024. Currently, Academic Affairs leaders are collaborating with faculty curriculum leaders and the Faculty Senate to ensure a smooth transition.

NAU's new General Studies Program is designed to more explicitly incorporate the overarching set of values referred to as "Habits of Mind" (Curiosity, Intellectual Integrity, Persistence, Self-Awareness). The program will also retain components from the existing Liberal Studies Program including aspects of the AAC&U framework for general education - High Impact Practices such as writing intensive coursework, capstone projects, diversity perspectives, and the best practice of structuring educational opportunities for breadth and depth of disciplinary knowledge and intellectual

concepts in conjunction with skill development.

Further, the new General Studies Program has been designed to expand the Diversity Perspectives requirement with the purpose of ensuring that students develop a range of intercultural competencies to serve them in the workforce and as active and engaged citizens of their local, national, and global communities. This includes coursework related to Global Diversity, US Ethnic Diversity, Indigenous Peoples, and Intersectional Identities. Beyond the General Studies program, students can earn degrees, minors, or certificates in a range of areas related to diversity, global engagement, underrepresented populations, and social justice given the variety of diversity-related coursework available at NAU. The Global Learning Initiative is also in place to ensure that students are prepared for global competence upon graduation. Finally, to demonstrate that commitment to diversity is a strategic priority at NAU, in curricular and co-curricular offerings there are course requirements, diversity-related curricula, and initiatives devoted to human and cultural diversity.

NAU ensures faculty members contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge through the annual review and promotion/tenure processes; the Faculty Activity and Achievement Reporting (FARR) system serves to help track accomplishments including the allocation of student-related responsibilities; scholarship, research, and/or creative activities; and service by faculty member and across academic units and colleges. In 2021, President Cruz Rivera emphasized the commitment to institutionalizing strong scholarship, research, and creative activities across disciplines by charging the Interim Executive Vice President and University Provost and Vice President for Research to re-invigorate the teacher-scholar model at NAU. One immediate result of this included re-instating workload allocation for scholarly pursuits for interested teaching-focused (non-tenure-track) faculty. Finally, NAU's 2021 3-year proposal to ABOR detailed plans to invest directly in opportunities for students to participate in research and to enroll in research-training programs to increase participation for first-generation and students from historically underserved groups.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

In NAU's first Diversity Strategic Plan released in 2020, the third priority is specifically focused on increasing efforts to support, retain and advance underrepresented faculty, staff and administrators. Within this priority are two objectives: (1) Recruit underrepresented faculty, staff, and administrators and (2) Support, retain and advance underrepresented faculty, staff, and administrators. Further, NAU also intends to engage in more concentrated efforts related to diversity in the workforce to reflect the student population. This is detailed in the 2022-2025 Strategic Roadmap.

Tenured and tenure-track faculty made up 49% of full-time instructional faculty (in 2016 and 2021). NAU noted that since the last re-affirmation review, there has been a 9% decline in the number of full-time faculty from Fall 2016 to Fall 2021 (there was a 5% enrollment decline during this same period). The assurance argument indicates that NAU has a goal of ensuring that the number of full-time faculty is in line with enrollment. However, it is not clear if the phrase "full time faculty" means tenured/tenure track or simply any full-time individual with some instructional responsibilities. Thus, there is some concern regarding NAU's commitment to reducing reliance on NTT and adjunct faculty members. In AY2021-2022, 109 faculty were hired and there are an additional 175 faculty searches approved for AY 2022-2023; 65 are tenure-track positions. To support the importance of multi-year appointments for recruiting and retaining highly qualified non-tenure eligible faculty, in fall 2021 the

institution received approval from ABOR to award more multi-year appointments. A policy establishing criteria and consistent protocols for award of multi-year appointments to ensure equity and transparency is currently being developed. This is positive, though more progress is needed. For example, are there limits to the number of years for multi-year contracts? Is there a limit to the number of renewals for multi-year contracts? What is NAU's goal in regards to percentages of full time faculty in tenure-track positions versus other multi-year positions (e.g., teaching stream, lecturer, clinical, etc.)?

In Spring 2022 NAU's president and provost supported the recommendations of the Teaching Track Taskforce to establish a new title ladder for teaching-focused faculty, develop timelines to ensure the feasibility of making conversions to positions (and associated reappointments of incumbent faculty), and provide guidelines that balance broad applicability with promoting equity and consistency. As a result, the university has transferred 191 faculty to the teaching professor track for AY2022-2023.

To ensure faculty and instructors are appropriately qualified, in AY2021-2022 a Task Force on Faculty Searches created a set of guiding principles for hiring faculty; since Spring 2017, those credentialed with a doctoral or terminal master's degree increased from 75.7% of full-time faculty members to 79.7% in Fall 2021. To address quality performance and development, all faculty members (tenured, tenure-track, non-tenure-eligible) are evaluated annually using established institutional policies and procedures, whereas part-time faculty are evaluated according to procedures established within the academic unit. NAU provides faculty with opportunities to engage in research, scholarship, or creative works to ensure they remain current in their disciplines. Further, professional development and support for faculty are provided by the faculty professional development program and the Office of Curriculum and Assessment.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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).

Rating

Met

Rationale

Since NAU's review, the institution has made multiple changes in support for student learning and resources for effective teaching. Evidence related to student support included data from the 2018 NSSE Campus Environment Engagement Indicators for first year students and seniors. This demonstrated that NAU was performing comparably to peers for every indicator of supportive environment for first-year students, including the provision of learning support services, social involvement, recreation, health care, and counseling. Some examples of new offerings include the cohort-based professional learning program focused on advancing equity for low-income, first-generation, and students of color launched in Fall 2020. It includes an Equitable & Inclusive Teaching Seminar, a recursive process of professional development, data-driven inquiries, pedagogy and course design evolution, and assessment of those evolutions all with a clear, intentional focus on advancing equity. Another example is the 2022 launching of a transfer/transition center at NAU's location in Phoenix, Arizona, with a focus on providing support outreach, retention, and graduation for adult learners. The Office of Student Support (SSS) reported data from Fall 2022 showing that retention to the second semester was 9.3 percentage points higher than matched non-participants calculated retention to the second semester, and participants' retention to the second year was 15.5 percentage points higher than the matched non-participants' calculated retention to the second year.

The prior review team noted concerns about advising and students having regular access to advisors when needed. To address this, NAU has attempted to centralize and redesign academic advising services. This began in 2018, and various improvements have been made including: 1) equitable allocation of resources and balanced advising loads to support holistic advising and meaningful relationships with students; 2) enhanced systems, data, and technology support to maximize advisor time spent directly with students; and 3) teams organized by academic program to build expertise and depth while identifying and reinforcing standard operating procedures and best practices. These modifications should help NAU students have positive and supportive experiences from their

advisors. To ensure that needs are being met for all students, a recent (Spring 2022) survey was designed by the Graduate Student Government. The survey assesses the experience of current and recent graduate students regarding their mentors to guide the design of a resource for faculty who supervise graduate students. NAU engages in a collaborative effort between the Graduate College, Graduate Student Government, University Graduate Committee, FPDP, and local expert mentors to ensure graduate students' mentoring needs are being met, including how needs may be changing.

Regarding infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning, evidence provided shows that NAU has professional learning opportunities designed to motivate and inspire staff to ensure that student services are offered by experienced/skilled professionals. A new addition (Spring 2022) is a Sustainable Smart Campus Master Planning Process. Academic units' infrastructure and resources are also evaluated as part of the Academic Program Review/Specialized Accreditation. This will help NAU ensure that technological infrastructure, libraries, collections and archives, performance arts facilities, scientific laboratories, and clinical practice sites are provided to support NAU's teaching, research, and scholarly and creative goals.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Rationale

Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded. All programs across degree levels, locations, and modalities including online and competency based learning must adhere to NAU's Degree Program Expectations (DPEs), which have been in place since AY2014-2015, and were affirmed by the faculty. NAU is in the process of transitioning from the Liberal Studies general education program to the General Studies program, which is slated to begin AY2023-2024. NAU's new General Studies Program is designed to more explicitly incorporate the overarching set of values referred to as "Habits of Mind" (Curiosity, Intellectual Integrity, Persistence, Self-Awareness). Further, the new General Studies Program has been designed to expand the Diversity Perspectives requirement with the purpose of ensuring that students develop a range of intercultural competencies to serve them in the workforce and as active and engaged citizens of their local, national, and global communities.

Tenured and tenure-track faculty made up 49% of the full-time instructional faculty (in 2016 and 2021). NAU noted that since the last re-affirmation review, there was a 9% decline in the number of full-time faculty (with an associated 5% enrollment decline during the same period. The assurance argument indicates that NAU has a goal of ensuring that the number of full-time faculty is in line with enrollment. However, it is not clear if the phrase "full time faculty" means tenured/tenure track or simply any full-time individual with some instructional responsibilities. Thus, there is some concern regarding the NAU's commitment to reducing reliance on NTT and adjunct faculty members.

Since 2018, NAU has worked diligently to centralize and redesign academic advising services and with strategic investments a number of significant improvements have been made. Evidence indicates the institution provides the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Northern Arizona University has established a robust system of academic program review. In 2021, NAU hired an Associate Vice Provost for Curriculum and Assessment to coordinate the seven year review cycle for all academic programs.The institution provides direct guidance on the timelines and preparation of program review documents and activities and uses a clearly laid out template for academic departments to follow in documenting the extent to which they have met Degree Program Expectations. The posted schedule suggests that most programs are in varying phases of ongoing review. Program review is coupled with mid-point progress reporting, annual reporting, and action plan reporting. Documents from the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice as well as the Department of Psychology indicate active attentiveness to the features, expectations, and actions resulting from the program review process. Programs with Specialized Accreditation are clearly identified along with the current accreditation status of each. For example, the NAU Department of

Theatre was recently accredited (2020) and the Master of Public Administration has begun the process of accreditation (2022). Programs with Specialized Accreditation use those processes to satisfy program review requirements when appropriate.

Northern Arizona University follows well established and clearly articulated policies regarding the transfer of credit from community colleges and other forms of prior learning. Included are credits transferred from CHEA accredited institutions, prior learning assessment, military, credit by exam, and ACE Alternative Credit. Courses are evaluated by academic units for equivalency and are published in a course equivalency guide which assists students across Arizona in the transfer process. The institution follows ABOR policy regarding Articulation Agreements for the application of credits from two year and international institutions toward NAU degree completion programs. A block transfer policy adopted by the state applies to the completion of NAU's liberal studies program.

Academic rigor, standards for learning, and appropriateness of prerequisites is assured through faculty driven review of, and authority over, the curriculum through the previously described academic review process and adherence to establish Degree Program Expectations. Faculty qualifications are assured through adherence to policy regarding Required Qualifications for Instructional Faculty.

Northern Arizona University extensively evaluates the success of its graduates to determine the efficacy of its degree programs and various licensure programs. The institution uses multiple measures (surveys) and produces reports on the success of its students, post graduation. In 2022, the institution will have data on its students who have completed Bachelors and Graduate degrees nationwide through it participation the U.S. Census Bureau sponsored Post Secondary Employment Outcomes project.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Northern Arizona University engages in clearly defined processes for the assessment of student learning. In response to a self study suggesting significant differences between assessment outcomes associated with departments with strong assessment cultures and those with a weaker assessment culture, the institution began a process of establishing more common approaches to assessment. This approach is based in the faculty generated Degree Programs Expectations document which guides most curricular activity at the university. Though part of the Program Review process, Assessment is clearly differentiated. An annual dashboard report documents programs' assessment activities. The dashboard clearly articulates expectations and provides clear and appropriate rubrics to determine program/department assessment progress. It should be noted that this dashboard indicates program activity that falls outside the seven year program review cycle. Nonetheless, the institution has a robust system to ensure regular assessment of student learning. An example of curricular renovation resulting from assessment data in the online MBA program is provided. Other examples of less extensive continuous improvement in curricula, based on assessment, would be helpful. Additionally, the institution assesses competency based learning programs at the same level as traditional academic programs. NAU carefully compares Competency Based learning outcomes to course based learning to assure equivalent outcomes.

The institution extensively assesses its Liberal Studies program. Reports on Scientific Inquiry and Quantitative Reasoning demonstrate a strong commitment to Liberal Studies assessment. Currently, the institution is engaged in a three-institution project with Arizona State University and the University of Arizona to assess writing outcomes with plans to follow up with assessments of Civic Learning, Qualitative Reasoning, and others. The institution intends to apply the findings from that pilot internally to further enhance its assessment activity.

Assessment in the co-curriculum is clearly detailed in its purpose and process. Relying on self reported survey data from students engaged in student affairs activities, the reports are informative if not actual assessments of student learning. Outcomes in the co-curriculum tend to be focused on student objectives and goals as prompted by the surveys. The assessment data in this area does

suggest that students who are more involved achieve the objectives at a higher percentage rate.

NAU consistently evaluates it assessment methods and responds to faculty suggestions and observations. The Assessment as Conversation reports for Written English and Oral Communication, for example, indicate both strengths and weaknesses, as reported by faculty, of the assessment models and rubrics. Working with the Faculty Senate Curriculum and Assessment Coordinating Committee, the Office of Curriculum and Assessment provides Assessment Fairs, workshops, and online training to increase faculty expertise and engagement in assessment activities.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.)

Rating

Met

Rationale

NAU has clearly defined goals for retention and graduation through 2025. Starting with ABOR targets for these metrics, NAU adapts targets to institution specific goals. The goals, as stated, are reasonable for the institution as the retention and graduation rates have been steadily climbing over the last several years. Processes and methods for the collection and analysis of data are sound and are consistent with good practice and with ABOR practices.

The institution collects substantial data regarding student success and provides extensive analysis of that data at both the curricular and co-curricular levels. Particular attention is given to data analysis for first generation students, low income students and students of color. NAU established an Equity Academy employing data to advance professional development, pedagogy, and course design. The annual student success initiative reports coupled with the dynamic undergraduate cohort graduation analysis report makes the institutional efforts to present and explain student success activities evident and transparent.

NAU has participated in numerous local, regional, and national projects and programs specifically intended to improve student success outcomes. Namely, the national Frontier Set initiative, gateway course redesign, the Student Support Services initiative and an anticipated (June 2022) inventory of student success programming and efficacy in the areas of Wellness, Community/Inclusion, and Academic/Career Purpose.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rationale

NAU has established a robust system of academic program review. The institution provides direct guidance on the timelines and preparation of program review documents and activities and uses a clearly laid out template for academic departments to follow in documenting the extent to which they have met Degree Program Expectations. NAU follows well established and clearly articulated policies regarding the transfer of credit from community colleges and other forms of prior learning. Academic rigor, standards for learning, and appropriateness of prerequisites is assured through faculty driven review of, and authority over, the curriculum through the academic review process and adherence to establish Degree Program Expectations. Faculty qualifications are assured through adherence to policy regarding Required Qualifications for Instructional Faculty. NAU engages in clearly defined processes for the assessment of student learning. The institution assesses competency based learning programs at the same level as traditional academic programs, carefully comparing competency based learning outcomes to course based learning to assure equivalent outcomes. NAU has clearly defined goals for retention and graduation through 2025. Processes and methods for the collection and analysis of data are sound and are consistent with good practice and with ABOR practices.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The institution's assurance argument provides ample evidence that its governance and administrative structures are sufficient to fulfill its mission. The Interim Report submitted May 31, 2019 consisting of 356 pages of evidence, notes, and materials clearly underscore NAU's recognition that the need to enhance efforts to more effectively communicate (including two-way communication) with its constituents is essential to strategic success. At the time of the report, it was acknowledged the Faculty Senate continued to voice concerns regarding the communication process with the primary complaint being the enhanced communication efforts were unidirectional and did not adequately include Senate input in decision making.

In the past year, the new NAU President has demonstrated he highly values transparency and inclusiveness and has implemented a number of initiatives to affirm his actions are in alignment with his words. A new faculty constitution was recently approved by the faculty which clearly delineates faculty purview in all matters of curriculum as well as having input in other institutional policy and operations.

The embedded monitoring report included with this assurance argument provided evidence that under the leadership of its new President, NAU has effectively addressed concerns of the 2017 Comprehensive Review Team which assigned monitoring of Core Component 5B (now 5A) and the HLC Staff Liaison who assigned continued monitoring in 2019. NAU has made substantial and

measurable improvement in communication between senior administration and faculty, staff and students, and has developed a system of shared governance in which areas of authority and responsibility are clearly delineated.

Data-evidenced decision making is demonstrated by a number of examples offered in the assurance argument. Evidence provided by NAU demonstrated that admission standards, transfer policies, advising practices, coarse and program content, work schedules, etc. were altered or revised as a result of feedback and data analysis. In January of this year, the vice president for university strategy position was created to further develop a culture of data-informed decision-making.

Faculty primacy for curriculum and academic policies and procedures as well as student and staff input where appropriate is evidenced by the committee structure and governance processes of the university.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The assurance argument provides evidence that NAU has a sufficient resource base to support its educational offerings now and into the future. The institution follows typical human resource recruitment and selection practices to ensure faculty and staff are appropriately qualified, credentialed and trained. The NAU Conditions of Faculty Service is a comprehensive document which informs the institution in all matters of recruitment and retention for faculty positions. The physical and technological resources appear sufficient. Capital expenditures in FY21 are reported to be $13.9M. The majority ($9.4M) of capital expenditures were directed at renewal of academic/support space, infrastructure and life safety enhancements. A Capital Improvement Plan requesting $29.2M for 2023-2025 was submitted to the ABOR.

The supporting documentation provided in Criterion 1 outlines the path the university followed this past academic year to develop its strategic roadmap: NAU 2025 - Elevating Excellence. The plan was endorsed by the University Advisory Board and was to be submitted to the ABOR at its June 2022 meeting. On February 15, 2022, President Cruz Rivera announced $81 million in public (Technology and Research Initiative Fund [TRIF]) and private funding to support initiatives to include: research excellence, access and workforce development, competitive intramural process for seed funding, broadening participation (access) for Arizona residents, improving retention and completion, and better aligning curriculum with workforce needs.

The assurance argument suggests a well-developed budget process is in place. The one document offered as evidence outlines the budget development process and offers no specific evidence demonstrating implementation of the process. The budget process in place at the time the reports was prepared is ostensibly the same as in the last comprehensive review described in the Final Report dated 11/28/2017. A review of the State and Local Operating Budget FY22 makes it evident the university develops, compiles and produces an operating budget on an annual basis.

A communication from the President's Office dated April 6, 2022 provides an overview of the

university's financial outlook and references the University Budget Advisory Board (UBAB). It is imperative that NAU document the meetings and chronicle its work for the team to evaluate at the comprehensive visit.

The 2021 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report shows an increase in the university's Net Position of $56.5M (22.5%) from the previous year. This positive news follows a reported decrease in Net Position of $8.6M (-3.3%) for FY20. FY19 saw an improvement in Net Position of $5.4M (6.9%). A review of the CFIs since the last team report shows a steady decline for the period 2018 through 2020 (1.96, 2018; 1.72, 2019; 1.30, 2020). At the team's request, NAU provided its most recent Institutional Update dated 3-16-2022. The most recent CFI is a robust 3.75. NAU maintains an institutional bond rating of A1 from Moody's and an A+ from Standard and Poor's. The snapshot of NAU's financial position suggests the institution is relatively stable and is able to meet its educational objectives. It is not clear to what extent the influx of Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) revenues (in excess of $72M from CARES, CRRSA and ARP) may have provided a temporary boost to the financial position. The financial realities facing NAU are consistent with the vast majority of institutions of higher education across the U.S.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The assurance argument provides evidence in support of the institution's planning and improvement processes. The newly formed University Budget Advisory Board appears to be a strong improvement in the effort to assure alignment of financial resources with the mission and goals of the university. The information provided to the UBAB is sufficient to allow this body to understand the university's financial capacity. This process is in its infancy and offers much promise. The university should complete several business cycles for evaluation at the time of the next comprehensive HLC review.

There is evidence that assessment of student learning takes place. The evidence provided does not clearly link assessment to resource allocation in every instance. The Annual Assessment Fair offers promise; however, the evidence does not clearly demonstrate that assessment findings are incorporated into institutional resource allocation decisions. There is evidence that several external advisory bodies exist and each of these bodies are capable of providing feedback which would be extremely beneficial to the university. The strongest evidence NAU considers both external and internal constituent input is demonstrated by its expansive admissions effort (Access2Excellence) to make higher educational opportunities available to a larger number of Arizona residents and its New Economy Initiative (NEI) which is directly responsive to the state and local economy. Reinitiating the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP) which has not been fully implemented since its formation should further strengthen the linkages between constituent input and resource allocation.

Information Technology Service's strategic technology plan provides evidence for the existence of a systematic process linking technology assessment and investment to both macro and micro environmental conditions.

While many bodies and processes are in place, in some cases, the linkage between said entities and processes do not appear to be as well documented and/or articulated in the assurance argument as preferred. Numerous communication pieces and practices put in place under President Jose` Luis Cruz Rivera provide the team with confidence that systematic planning and improvement will continue to take place at an accelerated pace and that improvement in documentation has begun under his leadership.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

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.

Rationale

The assurance argument provided evidence that under the leadership of its new President, NAU has effectively addressed concerns of the 2017 Comprehensive Review Team which assigned monitoring of Core Component 5B (now 5A) and the HLC Staff Liaison who assigned continued monitoring in 2019. NAU has made substantial and measurable improvement in communication between senior administration and faculty, staff and students, and has developed a system of shared governance in which areas of authority and responsibility are clearly delineated.

The assurance argument provides evidence that NAU has a sufficient resource base to support its educational offerings now and into the future. The assurance argument suggests a well-developed budget process is in place. The institution is encouraged to keep minutes of budget meetings, especially specific meetings where budgets are discussed and approved. The snapshot of NAU's financial position suggests the institution is relatively stable and is able to meet its educational objectives. It is not clear to what extent the influx of Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) revenues may have provided a temporary boost to the financial position.

Numerous communication pieces and recent practices put in place under the new president provide the team with confidence that systematic planning and improvement will continue to take place at an accelerated pace and that improvement in documentation has begun under his leadership.

Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	
5	Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	

Review Summary

Conclusion

From June 6 - July 5, 2022, a five-member team conducted an open pathway year 4 assurance review of Northern Arizona University. This was a virtual review with no site visit or federal compliance review needed. As part of this review, the team evaluated an embedded monitoring report on communication and shared governance which was assigned by the Comprehensive Evaluation Team in 2017. NAU submitted a well-written and thorough assurance argument with ample evidentiary files on June 3, 2022. The Review Team met virtually five times and requested 22 items of additional written evidence which were provided through the addendum in a timely manner.

After careful deliberation, the review team recommends that NAU meets the criteria for accreditation. NAU is to be commended for providing an excellent assurance argument with ample evidence to support each of the core components. The establishment of NAU 2025 - Elevating Excellence this past year is evidence of strong new leadership and a commitment to inclusive planning processes. NAU prioritizes its educational mission and has a sufficient resource base to support its mission, vision and strategic plan. The institution is encouraged to continue its commitment to reducing reliance on NTT and adjunct faculty members.

The embedded monitoring report included with this assurance argument provided evidence that under the leadership of its new President, NAU has effectively addressed concerns of the 2017 Comprehensive Review Team which assigned monitoring of Core Component 5B (now 5A) and the HLC Staff Liaison who, in 2019, assigned continued monitoring. NAU has made substantial and measurable improvement in communication between senior administration and faculty, staff and students, and has developed a system of shared governance in which areas of authority and responsibility are clearly delineated.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation
Met

Sanctions Recommendation
No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation
Eligible to choose

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.