



Institutional Response Form

Complete this form to indicate whether the institution does or does not concur with the recommendations from the peer review team or panel. Each HLC decision-making body considers the institutional response as part of the full record of the case. For more information about the decision-making process, see hlcommission.org/decision-making.

Written Response

The institution may choose to include an additional written response on page 2 of this form. If a written response is included, it should be in the form of a letter to the Institutional Actions Council and should not exceed five pages in length.

Submission Instructions

The institutional response is due within two weeks of the date listed below. Submit the completed form and, if applicable, written response as a PDF file at hlcommission.org/upload. Select "Institutional Responses" from the list of submission options to ensure the form is sent to the correct staff person.

Please note: If the form is not received within two weeks, HLC will conclude that the institution concurs with the recommendation of the peer review team or panel.

Date: 08/19/2020

Institution: Wright State University **Institutional ID:** 1611

Evaluation Type: Open Pathway, Assurance Review

Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Susan L Edwards

Phone: (937) 775-2312 **Email:** susan.edwards@wright.edu

Select one of the following options:

- The institution concurs with the accreditation recommendations.
- The institution does not concur with the accreditation recommendations.

Is the institution providing a written response?

- Yes (*Please enter the response on page 2.*)
- No, the institution chooses not to submit a further response.

Chief Executive Officer's signature:

Written Response

Please enter the institution's response below. It should be written in the form of a letter to the Institutional Actions Council and should not exceed five pages in length.

Dear Higher Learning Commission Institutional Actions Council,

Thank you to the thorough Mid-Cycle Review Team and their review of Wright State University's assurance argument, acknowledgement of the areas where we meet the HLC standards, and suggestions for improvement. The team concluded that all criteria were met, except criteria 5c – the institution engages in systematic and integrated planning – which was “met with concerns” due to Wright State operating under a strategic plan that expired in 2018. We concur with the team's findings and agree to submit a monitoring report by August 31, 2021 updating our efforts to implement a new strategic plan for the 2021-2022 academic year.

As we described in Criteria 1A, Wright State embarked on a comprehensive Strategic Planning process with over 1000 stakeholders from April-October 2018. The plan was presented to the Faculty Senate for approval in October, 2018, but was tabled due to faculty concerns about the final plan and stalled negotiations between administration and the faculty union that eventually led to a three-week strike in January 2019. The Faculty Senate president sent correspondence to President Schrader in August, 2019 encouraging her to restart the strategic plan approval process. Dr. Schrader resigned as President before restarting the strategic planning process, and I officially began my duties as President on January 1, 2020.

As Provost and now as President, I have emphasized the three pillars of Recruitment, Retention, and Relationships which also support the values, principles, and strategies of “The Wright Path to 2025” plan that was tabled in 2018. Unfortunately, our efforts to return to the strategic plan were halted by the COVID pandemic and the need to convert all Spring and Summer 2020 courses to remote teaching and to prepare for student and faculty return to a safe campus for Fall 2020. I, the Provost, and the Faculty Senate will engage the Wright State community in completing the strategic planning process during this academic year. As Wright State approves and implements a new strategic plan, we will work with departments on both campuses to ensure that the mission is incorporated into university web sites and documents.

As noted in the review of Criteria 1C, a diversity consultant spent several weeks on our campus and provided a lengthy report of ways we can reach inclusive excellence. In July, 2020, I worked with 15 discussion facilitators, that included the Dean of the School of Professional Psychology, and the Vice President for Student Affairs, to facilitate two different online forums on inclusive excellence. Together, the forums were attended by 96 faculty, staff, and students. There will be follow-up and recurring forums throughout the year and a search for a director of inclusive excellence during Fall 2020.

Under Criteria 2A, it was noted that “the Ohio Inspector General investigation of the relationship between WSU and Double Bowler Property Corporation was not disclosed. Neither the existence of this investigation or the findings of the July 2, 2019 report of the Inspector General were disclosed in the assurance argument or reported to the HLC. This information should have been disclosed.” This was an unintentional oversight. The findings and the institutional response are summarized below.

The State of Ohio Office of Inspector General initiated an investigation on January 5, 2017 related to Double Bowler Properties Corp., an affiliate of Wright State University. A report issued by the OIG on July 2, 2019 found two instances where there was reasonable cause to believe a wrongful act or omission occurred. The first related to a contract for lobbying services that investigators concluded should have been a “time and materials” contract based on an hourly rate. The second was that Double Bowler was able to acquire property without obtaining either Controlling Board approval or the approval of the chancellor of Ohio Department of Higher Education, as required by ORC §3333.071 and OAC §3333-1-03(E). The OIG made the following recommendations:

- 1) Implement policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the various purchasing and capital project rules and regulations as issued by the Ohio Controlling Board, and those contained in the Ohio Revised Code and Administrative Code.
- 2) Develop and implement a training program to ensure all employees involved in the purchasing of real property, especially employees who also serve as officers of affiliated entities, are educated in the requirements of real estate purchasing as required by the Ohio Controlling Board, and contained in the Ohio Revised Code and Administrative Code.

Wright State University responded to the investigative report on November 1, 2019.

Additionally, while investigating consultant contracts at the Wright State Research Institute and Wright State Applied Research Corporation (WSARC), an affiliate of Wright State University, the OIG issued a Report of Investigation on December 12, 2017 which determined the work performed by Ron Wine Consulting Group was not reasonably connected to the restricted use of the Workforce Development Fund, and the payment from the fund was improper. The State of Ohio Office of Inspector General initiated a concurrent investigation on May 26, 2017 to determine if the improper spending of restricted use funds was a systematic issue that involved more than one contractor. A report issued by the OIG on June 11, 2019 determined that there was reasonable cause to believe a wrongful act or omission occurred related to the ten (10) Workforce Development Fund contracts selected for review as the projects were substantially unrelated to efforts to provide new training opportunities for unemployed or underemployed individuals, as was the intention of the Ohio legislature in earmarking funds for workforce development. The OIG determined that no recommendations were warranted for the report of investigation.

We intend to implement other suggestions made for Criteria 2 – Ethics and Integrity. Those include providing more examples of faculty web pages, a link to the library archives that contains faculty senate minutes from all years, examples of assessing training for faculty and students on ethical research practices, and data on how often violations of student academic integrity occur.

Many helpful suggestions made in Criteria 3 – Curriculum, Resources, and Support – will also be implemented between now and the 2026-2027 site visit. We will provide more examples of new program proposals, ways that faculty ensure their programs are staying current, and syllabi from courses in dual degree programs. We will update the online catalog to assure that student learning outcomes are included and distinguish between learning outcomes for undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs. All new program proposals and all modifications to programs are vetted by the Undergraduate and Graduate faculty committees and must include program learning outcomes. The Center for Teaching and Learning implemented multiple trainings and question and answer sessions on remote instruction for students and faculty in response to the COVID 19 pandemic. We will work with CTL to measure the impact of the different delivery modes: face-to-face, flexible hybrid, and totally online.

We did not make it clear enough in our assurance argument the extent of faculty involvement in the General Education program called Core. Every proposal to modify a current Core course or recommend a new Core course goes before the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, which consists of one faculty member for each College and representatives from the Provost and Registrar's offices. Successful Core proposals must demonstrate how the course will measure the specific learning outcomes for the relevant Element, such as Social Sciences or Natural Sciences. Over the last two years, a Core policy was implemented to encourage service learning by allowing service learning courses to meet a Multi-cultural competency requirement for Core.

We will follow suggestions to evaluate faculty continuity, faculty's role in setting expectations and standards for student performance, impact of faculty training on pedagogy and delivery modes, and the impact of training of staff in student support programs.

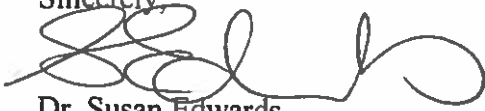
We did not make it clear enough that faculty are very involved in program assessment, including assessment of Core. Faculty must submit an annual program assessment report, and all faculty were expected to be involved in this past year's program review. Core assessment is overseen by the Core Oversight Committee, which has representation from all colleges.

In the reviewer's report, there are many suggestions we will incorporate into assessment of student learning outcomes. We will better connect the assessment of co-curricular programs to the university mission and student learning outcomes and include the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results in our assessments. We will demonstrate how the results from the 2019-2020 and future program reviews were utilized to make planning and resource decisions. We will also provide more examples of how individual programs used annual assessment and program review to make continuous curricular and student support improvements. The annual Core assessment reports provided summaries of the departments that participated in the assessment. The actual data for each Core course learning outcome and the aggregate data for the Element assessed will also be included in future reports. All of these assessment processes will be discussed and implemented through the Assurance of Learning Committee, which will include more faculty representation and leaders of the co-curricular programs.

We at Wright State know that a strong university begins with a strong mission statement and strategic plan to guide our resource decisions, all of which create an environment that supports student learning. Though our strategic planning process was stalled, our programs and units supported the values of the "Path to 2025" strategic plan: pride in our university even under tough times, the goal to transform the lives of our students and the communities we serve, and the potential to be the best university we can be. As noted in the sixth paragraph of Criteria 3c in the reviewer's report, we have taken many steps to improve student learning that arose from the same strategic plan even though "the plan was not officially enacted". Those actions included redesigning the transfer student experience; proactively identifying students in need of assistance; strengthening and elevating the research experience; increasing engagement between students, faculty and the business community; establishing a President's Council on Inclusive Excellence; expanding online offerings; creating an integrated health-focused college; and implementing a sustainable, multi-year fiscal plan.

We look forward to the continued support of the HLC in our efforts to build strong relationships to recruit and retain students on their paths to successful careers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Edwards', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Susan Edwards
President
Wright State University