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 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; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. 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.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Argument

CWRU employs sufficient numbers of qualified faculty and staff members to enable it to deliver high-value academic programs and effective student-support services.

1. The university currently has more than 3,200 full-time faculty members appointed through its Board of Trustees process. Thus, CWRU has a sufficient number of faculty members to conduct the classroom and non-classroom responsibilities expected of the faculty. The number of Board-appointed faculty members has increased consistently since 2007, commensurate with the increase in undergraduate enrollment and the focus on increasing research activity at the university. (See the historical trends in these appointments.) Some details about the qualifications and the longevity of these faculty members at CWRU are presented in the faculty roster.

The student-to-faculty ratio at Case Western Reserve University is 9.8:1 (see the report drawn from IPEDS data). According to data drawn from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, this ratio is lower than at many other research universities with high research activity.

With respect to continuity of the faculty, Chapter 2 of the Faculty Handbook requires that at least a majority of the voting University Faculty within a constituent faculty be tenure or tenure-track. Under special circumstances, a constituent faculty may request an exception to this requirement, but the exception must be approved by the Faculty Senate and the Provost.

Faculty members are involved at the school and university level with the oversight of curriculum and expectations for student performance. The membership of school curriculum committees includes members of the faculty, staff, and students. See example requirements specified in the bylaws of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences. The Faculty Senate and its standing committees include the broad participation of faculty members serving in advisory roles on issues such as personnel, undergraduate and graduate curriculum, academic
standing, and student affairs among others.

Students' responses to various surveys demonstrate that there are adequate faculty and staff members at CWRU to take part in both classroom and non-classroom activities. Sample results from recent administrations of the National Survey of Student Engagement, the College Senior Survey, and the Your First College Year survey indicate that most students perceive that faculty members empower students to learn and that they are interested in student academic progress as well as overall development.

Faculty members serve on the university-wide Outcome Assessment Coordinating committee as well as school-level committees that oversee assessment plans and practices within the schools. The university-level committee discusses ongoing assessment activities and planning and shares ideas and best practices. However, as per CWRU's statement of philosophy about outcome assessment, the faculty members within the individual degree programs are responsible for performing the assessments and making appropriate changes to ensure student learning and that program outcomes are met.

2. The Faculty Handbook (Ch. 3, 1.F) describes the general qualifications and standards for appointment, reappointment, promotion and tenure for CWRU faculty. This section of the Faculty Handbook spells out qualification criteria that apply to all faculty members (tenure, tenure-track, non-tenure track and special faculty). A constituent faculty may further refine these criteria as appropriate for their individual disciplines, but they are subject to approval of the provost. All such criteria are to be described in the bylaws of the constituent faculty. See examples of these criteria from the College of Arts and Sciences, the Case School of Engineering, and the Weatherhead School of Management. Each school has a committee on appointments (or similar name) that is responsible for upholding the established standards for faculty appointments and for assessing the credentials of all faculty candidates being considered for promotion and tenure. See examples of these committees from the School of Dental Medicine, the School of Medicine, the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, the School of Law, and the School of Nursing.

The university does not engage in dual credit, consortia, or contractual programs for the delivery of any of its degree programs.

3. The Faculty Handbook (see paragraph 5) requires that the constituent faculties or departments within the constituent faculties create and promulgate procedures for review of all members of the University Faculty. In the case of tenure, tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty members, reviews are to be provided annually. The Handbook also details the process by which tenure-track faculty members are considered for tenure.

Performance expectations for non-tenure track and special faculty members are detailed in the schools’ bylaws. See, for example, the bylaws from the Case School of Engineering and the Weatherhead School of Management.

The performance of each tenured or tenure-track faculty member is reviewed annually through a process that starts with the faculty member completing an activity report. In some of the schools, the faculty activity report is a document that follows a standard template (see the example from the College of Arts and Sciences) while in others an online tool is used to gather information (see the example for the Case School of Engineering). Information on teaching, research, and service is collected. Department chairs and/or school deans review this information and provide feedback to the individual faculty members about their performance, and expectations for future growth.
Students are asked to complete evaluations of their courses and instructors each semester. Statistical summaries of course-evaluation results are posted and are searchable online. Details (e.g., students' written comments) are provided directly to the instructor and department chair (or academic program director) in accordance with university policy. Course evaluation results are used primarily for the improvement of teaching, but may also be used in the promotion and tenure process (see CWRU's statement of purpose for course evaluations). Because of the importance that the university places on the SAGES program, course evaluations specific to the SAGES seminars are administered in addition to the regular university evaluations.

4. The University Center for Innovation in Teaching and Education (UCITE) is the teaching and learning center for the faculty at CWRU. UCITE provides resources and opportunities for faculty members to develop and enhance their teaching skills through, among other things, workshops, private consultations on specific teaching issues, resources on time management, grants for innovative teaching ideas, and help with general issues related to teaching methods. Professional development opportunities are provided in several forms. New faculty members are eligible to apply for the Glennan Fellows program, which is intended to aid new faculty members to be efficient and effective in launching their teaching careers. All faculty members can apply through UCITE to become Learning Fellows, which provides the opportunity to meet with other faculty members from across the university to explore ideas on how people learn and how those ideas can be applied in the classroom to improve teaching. The Learning Fellowship program began in 2003 and to date over 230 CWRU faculty members have participated. In addition, all faculty members can apply for Nord Grants which are intended to provide modest resources to aid faculty members in their teaching.

Instructors in the SAGES program are offered additional faculty-development opportunities to ensure they are current in the SAGES pedagogy. See the sample schedule of faculty-development events offered through SAGES and held during the Fall 2014 semester.

The university has created an Office of Faculty Development whose mission is to provide key resources to strengthen the recruitment, advancement, retention, and quality of life for all faculty members at CWRU. The office provides resources to faculty members to aid in career advancement, leadership development, and learning how to negotiate the tenure process. CWRU has also recently become an institutional member of the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD). The NCFDD is a professional development center that focuses on external mentoring designed to help participants (faculty members, graduate students and postdoctoral researchers) increase their research and writing productivity, and improve their work-life balance. In addition, faculty-development officers or offices have been established within each of CWRU's constituent schools.

Additional support for faculty development comes through CWRU's Information Technology Services division, which offers an Active Learning Fellows Program for faculty members that offers funding and assistance with implementing active learning strategies and technologies in the classroom. Active learning involving participant collaboration in enhanced technology classrooms is believed to improve student learning.

Another example comes through CWRU's libraries, which houses the Freedman Center for Digital Scholarship. The Freedman Fellows Program assists faculty members in using digital tools and processes to enhance scholarship, teaching and learning. In April of 2014 CWRU hosted the first national Personal Librarian and First Year Experience Library Conference, which provided additional faculty-development opportunities. The conference focused on library initiatives that provide services to support first-year students and that have a direct effect on student success and retention.
The Center for International Affairs provides additional faculty-development opportunities that have an international theme.

5. Faculty professional responsibilities are articulated in the Faculty Handbook. Standards of conduct pertain to interactions with and responsibilities to students. These include, but are not limited to teaching of regular courses, supervision of independent and collaborative study, research, scholarship and creative endeavors, individual and group mentorship and academic advising. The Undergraduate Instructor’s Manual includes a section on day-to-day interactions with students. It encourages faculty members to make themselves available through office hours or other means. Syllabi are to include the instructor’s hours of availability to students as well as his/her contact information.

Upon their arrival at CWRU, first-year undergraduate students are provided a faculty mentor in the SAGES program. The class size in SAGES seminars is kept small to maximize interactions between students and their faculty. Completion of a SAGES capstone, which involves extensive interaction between the student and the faculty project mentor, is an undergraduate degree requirement at CWRU.

CWRU undergraduate student responses to the National Survey of Student Engagement indicate that students communicate frequently with instructors to discuss grades, assignments, and career plans. Students also report satisfaction with the written or oral feedback received on their academic performance.

Faculty sponsors make themselves available to mentor undergraduate students in research or creative endeavors. A significant fraction of undergraduate students have reported taking part in optional undergraduate research or creative endeavors. (See results summary from the 2014 First Destination Survey). CWRU supports undergraduate research on several levels. SOURCE (Support of Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors) is the central office that serves as facilitator and matchmaker between undergraduates wishing to take part in research and faculty members (including those in the professional schools) who are looking for undergraduate researchers. SOURCE also provides some financial support that enables students to pursue faculty-mentored research during the summer, travel grants for students (e.g., to present their research at conferences), and some funding to assist students with their SAGES capstone projects.

Graduate students have a faculty advisor or advisory committee assigned by their department or professional school to assist them in planning their program of study, as described in the Graduate Student Handbook.

Students in clinical and practice-oriented disciplines have the opportunity to work closely with faculty mentors. For instance, in the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, graduate students participate in field education where they work in community social service agencies. During field education they receive instruction and advising from field instructors as well as field faculty advisors at CWRU. In the School of Dental Medicine, students have the opportunity to work with faculty members through the Preceptor Groups. Each group is comprised of two faculty members, a patient care coordinator, and first- through fourth-year dental students. The School of Medicine’s curriculum includes a student-centered group learning method known as Case Inquiry. This method is the cornerstone of the learning at the School of Medicine. Nine students meet with one faculty facilitator three times a week to discuss cases that promote inquiry and motivation for learning.

The University Center for Innovation in Education and Teaching (UCITE) makes available multiple resources to promote and recognize good faculty mentoring practices, including the Mentor Fellows Program.
6. For undergraduates, CWRU generally uses a faculty-centric advising system. (The Weatherhead School of Management uses professional staff members to augment faculty mentoring of students). Students are assigned a faculty advisor upon declaring a major. Students who declare a minor are also assigned to a faculty member from the minor discipline. For the first year, the student's SAGES First Seminar instructor provides general academic advising. General academic advising is also available to undergraduate students in the Office of Undergraduate Studies. The educational backgrounds of the deans in Undergraduate Studies who provide academic advising are posted on the website. All who advise students have appropriate educational backgrounds.

Each support-staff position requires a detailed job description that includes responsibilities, expectations and qualifications. Qualifications differ depending on the type of work performed and the level of responsibility. Care is taken with each position description to require the appropriate level of education and experience for the job.

Many staff members who interact with CWRU students oversee offices that provide support for CWRU students, or oversee the development of non-academic programs for students have significant leadership training and experience at the national level. See the sample of activities provided for staff members within the Division of Student Affairs. Many staff members who provide student support services are active in professional associations such as AACRAO (American Association of Collegiate Registrars), CUR (Council on Undergraduate Research), NACAC (National Association for College Admission Counseling); NASPA (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators), NCDA (National Career Development Association) and NAFSA (National Association of International Educators).

University staff members have opportunities for training in leadership and essential skills. The Staff Advisory Council (SAC) has established a Staff Educational Enhancement Program that provide stipends for professional development related expenses that are not funded under regular university benefits, such as textbooks and conference registrations or a scholarship for leadership training courses through the Weatherhead School of Management’s Executive Education program. The university’s strategic plan, Think Beyond the Possible, commits to increasing the number and extent of opportunities for staff growth and development.

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