4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

Through a comprehensive system of policies, reviews, specialized accreditations and outcome tracking, CWRU demonstrates responsibility for establishing, evaluating, and maintaining high quality educational programs. Degree programs are reviewed internally on a regular basis and new programs must proceed through a formal approval process involving both faculty governance processes (starting in the schools, and through the Faculty Senate) and the Board of Trustees. The efficacy of the educational programs is also interpreted in terms of the success of CWRU graduates as recipients of scholarships or fellowships, in finding employment in their fields, or gaining admission to advanced degree programs. In addition, CWRU routinely engages external groups (multiple visiting committees, the Ohio Board of Regents, specialized accrediting agencies) to assess the quality of the university’s academic programs. The university also follows clear policies regarding acceptance of academic credit earned at other institutions to ensure the integrity of a CWRU degree.

CWRU has effective processes in place that reflect good practice for the assessment and improvement of student learning within the various contexts in which it occurs. Structures (e.g. assessment committees and assessment officers in the schools) are in place that ensure continued faculty participation and leadership in the assessment related to the academic programs. Learning activities that occur outside of the classroom are also assessed by various units on campus, such as the Division of Student Affairs. Other support units (such as the University Libraries and the Center for International Affairs) routinely perform assessments in order to enhance the services they provide to the campus community. The university has invested resources to promote a culture of assessment across campus, and anticipates even further growth in this culture as the benefits resulting from assessment of CWRU’s academic and nonacademic programs become evident.

Improving student retention has had a prominent position in CWRU’s strategic plans. Retention goals have been established for each of CWRU's degree programs. Data and reports on retention, persistence, and degree completion are routinely analyzed, posted, and disseminated to the schools that offer the programs or the offices and individuals across campus who are included in retention discussions and efforts. The university seeks to improve its overall undergraduate retention rates, and is actively pursuing retention initiatives through a broad Retention Task Force. These initiatives include improved identification of the characteristics of students that make them at risk for non-retention, early alerts about students experiencing academic or social difficulties, and better overall academic advising. Completion rates and time-to-degree data for PhD students are regularly used to benchmark CWRU's graduate programs relative to peer schools. Retention efforts for graduate and professional students reflect the individual characteristics of the degree programs in which the students are enrolled.

As recipients of scholarships and fellowships, finding employment, or being admitted to advanced degree programs.
Sources

There are no sources.