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

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

Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

This section provides information pertaining to course and program currency and academic performance expectations for courses and degrees and certificates awarded by Ball State University.

Subcomponent 3.A.1.

Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

Ball State's academic programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded. All programs at Ball State undergo periodic external reviews either through an accrediting organization in their discipline or through the university's own academic unit review system. Details of these two processes and the results of our examination follow.

Review Process

The 48 academic departments at Ball State offer a total of six associate, 183 bachelor's, 107 master's, two specialist, and 17 doctoral degree programs. Of these, three associate, 38 bachelor's, 33 master's, both specialist, and 10 doctoral programs have disciplinary accreditation that demonstrates external expectations for course and program rigor. The rest of the programs are subject to a cyclical academic unit review process coordinated by the university.

- **Administration—**Program accreditations are orchestrated by the respective academic units with assistance from their college dean's offices, while Ball State's academic unit review process is overseen by the Office of the Provost and the academic colleges of the reviewed programs. The frequency of accreditation review cycles is determined by the accrediting bodies, whereas the 10-year cycle of academic unit reviews is determined by the Office of the Provost.
- **Self-Study—**Both processes begin with the unit or program preparing a self-study document. For accredited programs, the contents of this document are determined by the accrediting body. The self-study document for academic unit reviews contains uniform elements. Both processes involve an examination of the program's curriculum as well as a self-examination of assessment methods used for courses and the desired program outcomes. All reviews involve a campus visit by outside evaluators and the submission of a subsequent report.
- **Outcomes—**Ultimately, the outcomes of either kind of review are reported to the university administration. Normally, the results of accreditation reviews are reported to the unit and the Office of the President, while the outcomes of academic unit reviews are reported to the unit and the appropriate academic dean. In either case, reviews of academic programs are discussed in the annual reports from department chairs to their deans and in the deans' annual reports to the Office of the Provost. While the accreditation reviews and the academic unit reviews

examine many facets of a program, one important element of both reviews pertains to the quality of the degree and/or certificate programs offered. Among other types of critique, both types of review offer a critical examination of the curriculum and suggestions for improvement where appropriate.

- **Deficiencies—**For programs in the academic unit review process, cited deficiencies are addressed by the appropriate academic dean in consultation with the unit, and suitable changes are made when the deficiencies are deemed reasonable and appropriate by the unit. In the case of accreditation reviews, programs or units do not receive full accreditation until evidence providing remedies for cited deficiencies is supplied to the accrediting body.

Review Results

Since Ball State's last Higher Learning Commission (HLC) review in 2004, numerous programs have undergone the academic unit review process, and those programs with disciplinary accreditation have been accredited, reaccredited, or monitored through annual unit reports to disciplinary bodies. Of these, and since the last university accreditation, if programs reviewed through the academic unit review process were cited for curriculum deficiencies, those were taken under advisement by the reviewed unit in consultation with the unit's academic dean, and an appropriate action plan was developed and implemented when possible. If programs reviewed for accreditation were cited for such deficiencies, those were resolved in order to achieve accreditation.

Based on our examination of documents from across the campus resulting from the academic unit review and accreditation review processes, the academic and certificate programs examined for this self-study report appear to be current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded. Two examples illustrate curriculum currency and appropriateness as determined by the academic unit review and accreditation processes:

Nursing Accreditation—Ball State's School of Nursing within the College of Applied Sciences and Technology recently earned accreditation for its baccalaureate and master's degree programs. The school completed a self-study report for the November 2010 on-site evaluation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The commission submitted a final report to the program in February 2011. The school's currency and levels of student performances are reported in Section III Program Quality: Teaching-Learning Practices of the final report. This section evaluates the school's mission, goals, and student outcomes as they "reflect professional nursing standards and guidelines." The school successfully met all seven CCNE standards with no compliance concerns. For instance, Section III-B concluded that the baccalaureate program "prepares nurse generalists, and the self-study document indicates that the baccalaureate program curriculum and expected student outcomes, both aggregate and individual, are consistent with and reflective of the *Baccalaureate Essentials, ANA Code of Ethics, ANA Scope and Standards of Nursing Practice* and the Indiana State Board of Nursing's *A Compilation of the Code and Indiana Administrative Code (2009–2010).*" As further evidence of the school's currency and level of appropriateness, passing rates for first-time test takers of the NCLEX-RN were near or exceeded the national average. Both degree programs officially received continuing accreditation in May 2011.

Criminal Justice and Criminology Unit Review—For its academic unit review, the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology in the College of Sciences and Humanities assembled a self-study in

2009. Incorporating the university's template for self-study reports, the department described its degree programs and how they relate to the department's mission, goals, and program objectives. The report included an alumni survey measuring employment in the fields of criminal justice and criminology and the graduates' satisfaction with the department. Two peers from other universities reviewed the self-study report and the department, and reports were submitted by each reviewer in December 2009. Regarding program currency and appropriate levels of student performance, external reviewer Jonathan White's report explained that the department "should be complimented for its efforts to provide comprehensive preparation of its students" and that the curriculum is "comprehensive and clear" and is "consistent with the university strategic plan, addressing state, local, and other needs." External reviewer Kevin Minor further explained that the curriculum reflected the "voluntary certification standards promulgated by the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences" and that it is "in line with the requirements of criminal justice and criminology programs nationally."

Additional examples of program accreditation and program self-study documents indexed by college are available for review.

Subcomponent 3.A.2.

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

Learning goals for Ball State's undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, and certificate programs are clearly distinguished, and the requirements and goals for these programs are clearly articulated. Ball State offers 11 types of master's degrees:

- master of architecture (MArch)
- master of arts (MA)
- master of arts in education (MAE)
- master of business administration (MBA)
- master of fine arts (MFA)
- master of landscape architecture (MLA)
- master of music (MM)
- master of public administration (MPA)
- master of science (MS)
- master of urban and regional planning (MURP)
- master of urban design (MUD)

A minimum of 30 hours is required for all master's degrees as well as a thesis, research paper, creative project, or graduate research methodology course.

The specialist in education degree requires students to complete a thesis and at least 30 hours of graduate work beyond the master's degree.

Ball State also offers programs leading to the following doctoral degrees:

- doctor of philosophy (PhD)
- doctor of education (EdD)
- doctor of arts (DA)
- doctor of audiology (AuD)
- doctor of nursing practice (DNP)

Doctoral students must complete at least 90 hours of graduate work, including a dissertation, beyond their bachelor's degree. At least 40 of these graduate hours, excluding dissertation hours, must be in the major. For all doctoral programs except the AuD, students must complete a rigorous research component. Students are expected to demonstrate competency with research tools applicable to their major areas, including additional languages, statistical methods, computer science, and research techniques. The required research tools are determined by the student's doctoral committee and included on the student's program of study.

Graduate courses are distinguished between those designed for doctoral students only (700 level), those restricted to graduate students (600 level), and those that can be "taught with" undergraduate courses. The number of "taught with" courses is limited, and none of the required courses for most graduate programs fall into this category, although students may take them as electives. Moreover, as shown within course master syllabi maintained at the departmental level, graduate students in "taught with" courses must complete additional assignments, along with differentiated learning outcomes, beyond those required for undergraduate students, thus assuring a rigorous graduate-level experience.

Program Differentiation

Ball State is largely in compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's standards for articulating and differentiating the learning goals of academic programs at all levels, but there is still work to be done. A review of university data follows.

Of Ball State's 123 doctoral degree, master's degree, and post-baccalaureate certificate programs, 76.4 percent have articulated specific and multiple learning goals. Differentiation between graduate and undergraduate learning goals is strong where it is relevant. Since 54 programs do not have equivalent undergraduate degrees, differentiation of graduate and undergraduate learning goals is not an applicable measure. This leaves 69 graduate programs that have relevant undergraduate equivalents, and of those, 81.2 percent have learning goals that are clearly differentiated at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

A closer examination of the statistics for all post-baccalaureate certificates, master's, and doctoral degrees yields useful insight into the strengths and challenges in each area. In terms of articulation of learning goals, master's and doctoral programs are very strong. Nearly 85 percent of master's degree programs have clearly stated learning goals, and of the programs with an equivalent undergraduate degree, 81.3 percent demonstrate clear differentiation between graduate- and undergraduate-level learning goals. These numbers are 83.3 percent and 85.7 percent, respectively, for the doctoral programs.

While graduate degrees meet the criterion at a high rate, only 48.2 percent of the 27 certificate programs articulate learning goals. Of these certificate programs, only four have relevant undergraduate equivalents, and all four of those have clearly differentiated graduate and undergraduate goals. This low number may be related to the number of certificate programs that just started in the past three years.

Among Ball State's seven academic colleges, learning goals are articulated and differentiated for programs at a varying but generally strong level.

- **College of Fine Arts:** 100 percent of programs have articulated and differentiated learning goals
- **College of Communication, Information, and Media:** 100 percent of programs have articulated and differentiated learning goals
- **College of Architecture and Planning:** 87.5 percent of programs have articulated learning goals, and those are differentiated from undergraduate programs where applicable
- **College of Sciences and Humanities:** 81.1 percent of programs have articulated learning goals, and 96 percent have applicable differentiation
- **Teachers College:** 83.3 percent of programs have articulated learning goals, but 62.5 percent have differentiated graduate and undergraduate goals
- **College of Applied Sciences and Technology:** 56 percent of programs have articulated goals, and 40 percent of applicable programs have graduate/undergraduate differentiation
- **Miller College of Business:** 33.3 percent of programs have articulated goals, though all of its graduate programs are differentiated from applicable undergraduate programs

Subcomponent 3.A.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).

Ball State ensures consistent quality and learning goals wherever and however its academic programs are delivered, from classroom instruction on the Muncie campus to distance education programs in the Greater Indianapolis area and online courses across the country. In addition to our associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs, the university also offers the dual-credit College Transition Program, which conforms to the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partners (NACEP) standards to ensure academic integrity.

Indianapolis Programs—Ball State's Greater Indianapolis credit course offerings and degree programs come directly from the Muncie campus. The classes are all at the graduate level and are taught by Ball State faculty based in their respective units on campus. Full programs of study that allow students to start and complete a degree include the master of urban design, master of arts in mathematics education, and doctor of education in educational administration and leadership. Other graduate classes can be applied toward master of arts degrees in political science, adult and community education, executive development for public service, and special education.

Distance Education—The School of Extended Education (SEE) extends Ball State's services and resources to students whose needs cannot be met through traditional classes on campus. The university offers courses, degree programs, and certificate programs through a variety of delivery options, including

online, independent learning, web conferencing, and on-site (live) instruction at selected locations around Indiana. Students can also blend online and on-site instruction. All credit earned is residence credit, and continuing education units (CEUs) are available to record individual participation in certain noncredit programs. The online programs and courses are prepared and taught by Ball State faculty with assistance from instructional designers through the Integrated Learning Institute (iLearn), which was established in spring 2011 to ensure the quality of the university's online programs. iLearn assists with faculty development (pedagogical and technological) and online course creation.

"Taught With" Classes—Some of Ball State's 500-level courses are considered "taught with," where graduate students learn alongside undergraduates. In these situations, the graduate students have additional requirements. The University Senate's Executive Committee recommended that departments keep on file information explaining the distinction between the requirements for graduate students and undergraduate students for each "taught-with" course.

Dual-Credit Program—The university also builds partnerships with high schools through the College Transition Program (CTP). This dual-credit initiative focuses on college preparation for high school juniors and seniors by assuring quality instruction and offering students an educational experience that is otherwise unattainable. All high school instructors participating in the program must have the same credentials as Ball State adjunct faculty.