Focused Visit Report

Institution: Lake Superior State University

City, State: Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan

Visit Date: 03/25-26/2019

Names of Peer Reviewers (List the names, titles and affiliations of each peer reviewer. The team chair should note that designation in parenthesis.)

Joyce Phillips Hardy, Professor, Chadron State College

Mary Ann Millikin, Assistant Vice President for Accountability and Academics, Rogers State University

Part A: Context and Nature of Visit

1. **Purpose of the Visit**

   The team conducted a focused visit to Lake Superior State University (LSSU) as a follow-up to the comprehensive visit that took place November 11, 2016, with the focused visit concentrating on program review and assessment of curricular and co-curricular activities.

2. **Accreditation Status**

   Accredited: Higher Learning Commission, Standard Pathway

   - Interim Report: Enrollment and Budget (due December, 2020)

     - The institution states that this report is due to be embedded within their four year visit; the Lake Superior State University Institutional Status and Requirements Report

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articulates that this report is due 02 December 2020. Given the timing of these two evaluations, combining them would be logical.

- Four Year Comprehensive Evaluation (2020-2021)

- Ten Year Comprehensive Evaluation (2026-2027)

3. Organizational Context

Lake Superior State University (LSSU) is a comprehensive, public, regional university located in Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan. LSSU is on the HLC Standard Pathway of Accreditation and hosted its comprehensive reaffirmation review visit in November 2016. Three areas for interim monitoring/evaluation were recommended at that time, as follows:

(1) Federal Compliance Credit Hour Expectations should cover all delivery modalities. *Report submitted and accepted in March, 2018.*

(2) Focused Visit for 4A and 4B. *Report submitted; this document details analysis of report, additional materials, and focus visit evidence.*

(3) Enrollment patterns and analysis, operating budget, and status of repayment of the general fund debt. *Due in December 2020 or after fall enrollment 2020 is known. [A report was submitted and accepted in November 2018 to HLC]*

LSSU hosted their HLC Comprehensive Visit in 2016. From that time, LSSU has had the following noteworthy events in their leadership team:

1. <u>a significant turn-over in senior and upper administration leadership</u>, as follows:

    a. President Pleger's sudden death in May 2017 led to the appointment of a one-year president for 2017-2018, followed by the hiring of President Hanley who began his term in June 2018.

    b. The Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs position served two years, from 2016-2018, following by the hiring of the current Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs in July 2018.

    c. A new Vice President for Finance and Operations was appointed in January 2016.

    d. The Vice President of Enrollment Management position had new leadership in July 2017 and again in July 2018.

    e. An interim Dean of Student Life and Retention was appointed in 2018.

    f. Two new academic Deans were appointed in 2018 (see 2. Below)

    g. A new Director of Human Resources was appointed in July 2017

    h. A new Director of Athletics was hired in September 2017

    (as noted on the LSSU Webpage, President's Office Senior Management Team, a search of LSSU's Campus News/Events, and information obtained from LSSU).

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2. <u>a substantive reorganization of academic units</u>, which changed reporting structures from two broad schools (College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Professional Schools) to five colleges, (College of Innovation and Solutions, College of Science and the Environment, College of Health and Behavior, College of Criminal Justice and Emergency Responders, and College of Education and Liberal Arts; Academic Strategic Direction for Lake Superior State University; Approved December 15, 2017 by the Board of Trustees).

4. **Unique Aspects of Visit**

No unique aspects of the visit are noted.

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5. **Areas of Focus (**Complete the following A and B sections for each area of focus.)

A1. Statement of Focus:

LSSU's Standard Pathway Reaffirmation Review Report from November 2016 states the following:

LSSU should provide: 1) a list of all completed program reviews in keeping with the approved-upon schedule…." which contain evidence that the institution has developed assessment methodologies and practices that include the following:

1. All course outcomes must focus on student learning rather than on teaching or on programmatic goals
2. All academic programs must state not only program-level student learning outcomes, but also measure of those outcomes findings, and actions taken to engage on continued improvement of student learning
3. The general education program must engage in the assessment of student learning beyond the identification of course outcomes
4. The University must identify institutional learning outcomes, measures of learning, findings, and actions to improve learning
5. The University must identify mechanisms to demonstrate that students are meeting those outcomes; if an external instrument is not used, alternate methods or instruments to measure those outcomes must be identified (e.g., rubrics)
6. Student support services and co-curricular programs should develop student learning outcomes and assessment plans in their respective areas; this process is parallel to the setting and evaluation of goals that is being reported in TracDat.

Note relevant Criterion, Core Component(s) or Assumed Practice(s):

4A The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

4.B The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs

3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

B1. Statements of Evidence (check one below):

☐ Evidence demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.

☒ Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.

☐ Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention and HLC follow-up are required.

☐ Evidence is insufficient and demonstrates that HLC sanction is warranted.

Evidence:

LSSU should provide a list of all completed program reviews in keeping with the approved-upon schedule: [MOSTLY MET] LSSU's Interim report indicates that all areas undertook and completed program/unit assessment this past fall. Substantial work leading up to this action included the General Education Committee identifying Institutional Learning Outcomes for LSSU in September 2017 (Interim Report Appendix E), a common vocabulary of terms approved in December 2017 (Interim Report Appendix D), and a new Strategic Plan approved in December 2017 (Interim Report Appendix C). An "Academic Strategic Direction" for LSSU, approved by the Board of Trustees on December 15, 2017, lays out a new organizational structure of Colleges and Schools while providing a realistic analysis of the institution's challenges and opportunities. Spring 2018 saw the piloting of institutionally-developed rubrics in the General Studies program. June and July 2018 saw a new President and Provost, respectively, joining the institution following a one-year appointed President. In Fall 2018 program and co-curricular program review templates were approved, and by the end of the Fall semester all programs had submitted program reviews that aligned with the four-column model of those templates. The interim report states that all Schools will go through program review every five years, with assessment reports being submitted and reviewed annually. This schedule was verified in conversation with the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. The process was verified with conversations with the Curriculum Committee, the General Education Committee, faculty, chairs, and deans while the visiting team was on campus.

The College Catalog (web version, 2018-2019) lists 46 baccalaureate degrees, 24 associate degrees, and 4 certificates. A review of the provided School Program Reviews, which contains the program reviews for academic units, reveals that most academic programs were identified and recognized in those reviews. Three certificate programs (all but paramedic training) did not

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have separate four-column templates that identified learning goals, assessments and outcomes; the MCOLES certificate was addressed within the School Assessment report, but the International Studies Certificate and the Manufacturing Technology Certificate were not addressed with a program review. LSSU states that the certificates are embedded within degree programs, and thus no assessment reports for the certificates are completed. The visit team suggests that if they have not already done so, the institution perhaps should evaluate if all students who complete the certificates continue to complete their degree; if not, they may want to reconsider this practice. Twenty-six associate, baccalaureate, and master programs were arbitrarily selected for program review analysis. The master program is currently not accepting enrollees, due to a change in the State of Michigan requirements and the need to revise that program. One associate degree program (Geographic Information Technology) did not have a separate four-column assessment report – the institution reports that this is a new program in Fall 2019, with no time yet for data collection. Comparing the number of received reports versus the number listed in the catalog suggests that all baccalaureate programs were assessed, 20 of the 24 associate programs were assessed, and one of the 4 certificate programs was assessed with four-column reports being generated. No indication of Honors Program Assessment was seen. (Note: The facilities master plan listed 51 baccalaureate degree programs plus a transfer program and a non-degree program in the 2019-2023 document; 52 baccalaureate degree programs plus the transfer program and non-degree program were listed in the 2020-2024 document. A comparison of the facilities master plan and the catalog (with the master plan being more current), indicate different numbers of program offerings. LSSU states that the difference in these numbers is due to the continual updating of curriculum – for example, the Health Studies program is being phased out and is scheduled for deletion from the catalog; the Health/Fitness Specialist degree is listed as Kinesiology (AS); the Geospatial Technologies AS program is new for fall 2018; and the Internet Network Specialist degree was not presented in the degree-level chart for the department but does have a report. Source: Correction of Facts Document).

LSSU has shown attentive effort to address the area of focus regarding academic program reviews, as seen through minutes of the General Education Committee and the provision of the academic school program reviews from Fall 2018. Each degree program has an assigned program assessment champion who pulled the program constituents together, organized discussions, and facilitated the completion of the program reviews, according to the Deans and the Chairs discussions.

LSSU is encouraged to review their academic programs to ensure that the academic units conduct assessments of all academic programs. The campus also offers various concentrations within baccalaureate degrees, such as the pre-medicine and pre-veterinary tracks in biology, and criminal justice tracts in conservation officer, public safety, homeland security, criminalistics, etc. As the campus matures in its assessment practices, the faculty should determine how to evaluate these sub-programs for program effectiveness in learning and meeting the needs of students to reach their career goals, within their annual program assessment/program improvement documents.

All course outcomes must focus on student learning rather than on teaching or on programmatic goals: [NOT YET MET] The interim report indicates that the Deans and School

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Chairs initiated a review of course and program outcomes, ensuring that each course had "relevant, measurable, and student-focused student learning outcomes" (Interim Report, pg 15). A review of the courses listed within the "Course Student Learning Outcome Review" indicates that approximately 2/3 of the nearly 800 courses have consistently measurable learning outcomes (analysis excluded those courses recommended for discontinuation). Approximately 1/3 of the courses have at least one outcome that does not clearly reflect an expectation of specific and measurable student performance or demonstration of learning at a specified level (e.g., language such as 'understand,' 'review,' 'maintain,' 'acquire,' or 'become familiar' does not direct specific and clear assessments of student performance). The review team looked for the use of measurable verbs that reflected student learning at the remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and synthesis cognitive levels (e.g., verbs commonly associate with Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Learning which include recall, interpret, construct, distinguish, assess, create, etc.) or other specific, measurable language that clearly articulated learning, skills, dispositions, and thought processes in a way that direct meaningful assessment and convey expected cognitive capabilities, rather than teaching or programmatic goals. In a few cases the learning outcomes appear to reflect the catalog description of topics that are going to be 'covered' rather than learning the students should be able to demonstrate upon successful completion of the course (see Engineering and Computer Science courses, for example, and SOWK 110 and 344). While most courses had consistently measurable learning outcomes, many courses had a combination of measurable and non-measurable student learning expectations while other courses (and disciplines) were not aligned with good practice. These programs should revisit their learning outcomes to ensure clear articulation of expected cognitive-level demonstrations appropriate for the discipline. Disciplines that mostly or consistently utilized student learning outcomes which identify mechanisms for measuring learning at specific cognate levels include ACCT, COMM, CHLD, EDSE, EDUC, ENGL, Language studies, HLTH, NUR, CHEM, and others.

LSSU is commended for progress they have achieved in this area. The institution is encouraged to reflect and improve on course learning outcomes to ensure that the outcomes are measurable and that these course learning outcomes stratify within a program to the program learning outcomes (as evidenced through curriculum mapping).

All academic programs must state not only program-level student learning outcomes, but also measure of those outcomes findings, and actions taken to engage on continued improvement of student learning: [NOT YET MET] Program-level learning outcomes were searched through the online college catalog (2018-2019), which revealed that most program learning outcomes were not presented or were presented as program learning objectives. This was not unexpected as the college catalog is approved through the curriculum committee prior to the academic year in which it takes effect (during 2017-2018 for the 2018-2019 catalog), and the program learning outcomes were not yet developed or approved at that time. A review of the program web pages indicated that the current website reflects the old administrative school structure (2017-18), and the department webpages do not list program learning outcomes (although learning objectives were present for some units). In their Correction of Fact Document, LSSU states that the official location of the program learning outcomes is on their assessment page. The visit team understands the difficulty of managing complex websites, but forwards that students and potential employers of those students who are looking to see what graduates from

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your program know and can do, as compared with similar programs at another institution, will be seeking that information from your department webpages and/or college catalogs.

Academic programs reviewed their learning outcomes through an auditing process, reviewed these at the school level to ensure that they were measurable, and entered them into the Nuventive Tracdat ™ (Interim report, pp. 4-5). Academic discipline reviews were completed by the individual units and then consolidated into School reviews by the Academic Deans. All schools presented a comprehensive review. Twenty-six academic degrees were arbitrarily selected to analyze the expectation that academic programs have identified student learning outcomes, documented measure of student learning, and ascertained actions that should continually improve the student learning within the program. The selected programs (and the degree level) for the analysis of meeting this directive were as follows:

Associate-level programs:
- Early Childhood Education
- General Studies
- Geographic Information Technology – Program review not found. (LSSU states that this is a new program for fall 2019, and thus no assessment has been completed; new courses offered fall 2018; program approved in mid-fall 2018. Corrections of Facts document)
- Internet Network Specialist
- Liberal Arts
- Manufacturing Engineering Technology
- Paramedic Technology
- Small Business Administration

Baccalaureate-level programs
- Accounting
- Biology
- Business Administration – International Business
- Chemistry
- Chemistry – Biochemistry Preprofessional
- Computer Networking
- Criminal Justice
- Electrical Engineering Technology
- Elementary Education Special Education
- Environmental Science
- English Language & Lit (secondary teaching)
- Fisheries & Wildlife Management
- General Studies
- Mathematics (secondary teaching)
- Nursing
- Psychology
- Teacher Education – Secondary

Master-level program:

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- Curriculum and Instruction – Program Review not found.
  - Conversation with the Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs indicated that a change in the state requirements for the Master of Curriculum and Instruction resulted in the need to re-evaluate and revise LSSU's program. No students are currently being admitted to the program. Conversation with the Associate Provost indicated that a change in state requirements for teaching has led to reduced demand for this program, although select classes are still required and thus offered.

Analysis of the Four Column Matrix for these 21 team-reviewed academic programs indicates the following:

- The first column of some four-column templates were identified as program outcomes, while others had the first column listed as student learning outcomes (see Internet/Network Specialist AS and Early Childhood Education AD, for example). The entering of learning outcomes was not consistent in the first or second column of the report (see Internet/Network Specialist AS as compared with Mathematics Secondary Ed BS, as examples). Some discussion of where these learning outcomes should be listed may be needed as the programs are not consistent where generic program objectives and measurable learning outcomes are presented.
- Most programs have appropriate program learning outcomes that focused on student learning, although some were broad or less-well defined with measurable terms (see Paramedic Technology and Psychology BA/BS, for example), and some used less appropriate mechanisms (see paragraph immediately following this bulleted list as an example).
- Most programs identified mechanisms for assessment that included appropriate measures of assessing the program learning outcomes, including senior theses, exit surveys, skills testing, portfolios, internships, and presentations.
- Many programs specified the assessment-driven findings, although several indicated a low number of completers and thus the results are based on one or a few individuals.
- Actions taken ranged from specific actions (such as Fisheries and Wildlife which had significant recommendations to change their assessment processes and thresholds, and Environmental Science which had specific changes to courses and curriculum identified) to general statements that fail to evidence the use of assessment as a mechanism for continual improvement of the program (as seen in action comments such as, "Continue to monitor," "No cause for concern," "Goal met – reassess annually," etc.)
  - The General Studies Committee minutes reveal that the use of data analysis to identify actions for improvement was a clearly articulated expectation for programs (see September 27, 2018 meeting minutes).
  - Disciplines which analyzed their results with these generic, non-specific comments are urged to adopt a reflective professional mode of operation, using assessment tools and results to improve their effectiveness in facilitating student learning.

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A specific concern of the review team is in the programs where successful completion of classes is used as evidence that students have met specific program learning goals. The Reaccreditation Report identified in Section 4B that this was a concern at the time of the reaccreditation visit; the practice is apparently continuing in some programs through Fall 2018. The LSSU Assessment website has a document titled "Grades as Assessment" that addresses the distinction between grades and assessment (dated April 25, 2015, from the Assessment Committee). Aggregated performance that results in an overall coarse grade does not provide a fine-scale analysis of student performance on specific learning outcomes. Additionally, most courses have the opportunity to assess multiple components of the program, and thus the overall course grade is not reflective of one specific program learning outcome.

- One example of concern is seen in Chemistry, for example, where 100% of graduates successfully completed all courses identified as measuring the program outcomes … but aren't these courses required to graduate from the program? Thus, the students used to collect data for program improvement are the same students who succeeded in the program as it is currently offered. No analysis was provided regarding why other students did not succeed, or why they did not succeed at the targeted level for specific learning outcomes, or how the program could increase both learning and success rates. Thus, the assessment as written does not appear to reflect the philosophy of continual improvement that exemplifies best practice in current higher education programs.

The evidence of program review reveals discrepancy in faculty understanding and application of assessment as a mechanism to continually improve the teaching and learning within a specific program, as evidenced by varying quality in program learning outcomes, inconsistent use of specific performance projects that clearly assess the identified learning outcomes, and appropriate analyses of data to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. Several programs had new goals or very small numbers, and thus their analysis could not be completed. During campus discussions one faculty member stated that at least three years of data would need to be aggregated to be able to identify areas for program improvement, which means that nearly an entire generation of students would graduate before faculty would even begin to look for areas of improvement. Eleven of the 24 reviewed programs (including General Studies, discussed below; nearly 46%) inadequately documented future actions recommended from/tied to the program assessment data, and thus lacked evidence of the application of higher education best practices of reflective analysis and continual improvement for their program.

LSSU has made substantial and laudable progress toward this directive, although the use of assessment to improve program effectiveness as measured in student learning is a mosaic of maturity and practice at this time. LSSU is encouraged to further strengthen the focus of improvement through reflective assessment of its academic programs, seeking to ensure that all programs are effectively using assessment best practices in the commitment to improve student learning, through iterative data-driven assessment processes. Campus conversations with students, faculty, chairs, and administrators revealed a theme of engaged and caring faculty who are offering current and high-quality learning experiences; the program documents need to reflect the assessment and internalized commitment to continual improvement that was evident from these discussions. Further, the programs are encouraged to evaluate their effectiveness in

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facilitating student performance on the Institutional Learning Outcomes, at the certificate, associate, and baccalaureate level, as appropriate.

The general education program must engage in the assessment of student learning beyond the identification of course outcomes: [NOT YET MET] As noted in the 2016 Final Report, the University has general education student learning outcomes, and these are clearly published on LSSU's website and in its 2018-2019 Catalog. These seven general education student learning outcomes are tied to discipline-based areas that are appropriate to the mission of LSSU, which is to "equip our graduates with the knowledge, practical skills and inner strength to craft a life of meaningful employment, personal fulfillment, and generosity of self, all while enhancing the quality of life of the Upper Great Lakes region." The general education student learning outcomes support this mission, and they align with HLC student learning guidelines for a general education.

Informed by the Association of American Colleges & Universities' LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes, the General Education Committee developed an assessment rubric for each of the seven general education outcomes, and these rubrics have been officially adopted for use in assessing outcomes related to humanities, diversity, natural science, social science, mathematics, communication, and written communication. Each rubric was developed by discipline-specific faculty; rating anchors vary by level of measurement but consist of sufficient detail to facilitate meaningful assessment of each construct.

The first assessment cycle using these rubrics occurred in spring 2018 for communication, written communication, humanities, mathematic, and natural science. However, results were not presented in a systematic way within their respective assessment reports. Although there was some discussion regarding the modification and refinement of the assessment process, evidence was not presented to reflect that available results were used to make inferences about student progress towards specific outcomes. As of spring 2018, the social science and diversity rubrics were in varying stages of intended use, and annual reports did not present integrated results.

Review of the first cycle of assessment of general education outcomes using the new rubrics indicates important progress in collaboratively developing and adopting common rubrics for each general education outcome. As a next step, training needs to occur prior to the second cycle in order to establish consistent application of the rubrics, analysis/interpretation of data, and productive discussion of results to inform faculty understanding of student progress for each outcome. Committee and faculty interviews during the Focused Visit and General Education Committee meeting minutes corroborate the need for alignment of these processes within and between disciplines (See GEC meeting minutes from 10/11/18, 10/25/18, and 11/8/19). LSSU is further encouraged to look at the general education program as it aligns with the Institutional Learning Outcomes, to gather data determining the role and effectiveness of the General Education Curriculum in facilitating student learning aligned with the overarching expectations at the certificate, associate, and baccalaureate degree levels.

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The University must identify institutional learning outcomes, measures of learning, findings, and actions to improve learning: [NOT YET MET] In fall 2017, the General Education Committee adopted use of four institutional learning outcomes (ILOs). These include: [1] Formal Communication, [2] Use of Evidence, [3] Analysis and Synthesis, and [4] Professional Responsibility. (See the ILO subcommittee proposal 2017). These ILOs have been accepted university-wide, and faculty, department heads, and deans have worked together to align program-level outcomes with ILOs. These alignments are presented in the program review reports that were conducted in November 2018; however, mapping of the ILOs to general education student learning outcomes has yet to be completed. Further, ILOs are not currently communicated in the University Bulletin, and thus current and prospective students may not have a clear understanding of the overarching knowledge, skills, proficiencies, and abilities they should acquire during their time at LSSU.

The momentum gained from development of ILOs can be used to fuel the next steps in this process. In an interview during the March 25-26, 2019 Focused Visit, LSSU's Provost communicated that department meetings will be conducted in fall 2019 to analyze aggregated findings for each ILO from the program reviews (using Nuventive Tracdat™ software). This same process should follow for general education student learning outcomes once they have been mapped to ILOs. Mechanisms to utilize broad evidence, from the academic program, general studies, and co-curricular experiences, to evaluate the ILOs is yet to be developed (see below).

The institution has blended their academic program review process with strategic planning to optimize their planning processes and better focus their efforts in a parsimonious way. Administrative support services, including Athletics, Enrollment Management, the Foundation, Business Operations, and other support functions, conducted strategic planning activities in fall 2018, developing business plans based on priorities approved by the leadership team. However, these plans have yet to identify co-curricular student learning outcomes for relevant student services, such as the Library, Student Affairs, and Academic Support (see below). Professional development will be important to inform these outcomes and to fully develop and implement a clear plan with useable results.

The University must identify mechanisms to demonstrate that students are meeting those outcomes; if an external instrument is not used, alternate methods or instruments to measure those outcomes must be identified (e.g., rubrics). [NOT YET MET] With regards to institutional assessment, LSSU discontinued use of the ETS Proficiency Profile to measure general education achievement prior to the 2016 HLC review (Institutional Focused Report, January 22, 2019, p. 20; General Education Committee interview, 3/26/19). Of particular concern among faculty was the ungeneralizable sample that was garnered from the process used with the ETS Proficiency Profile. Because the process relied on faculty to voluntarily accompany classes with freshmen and seniors to the Testing Center, the convenience sample produced results that under-predicted what faculty believed to be the true levels of achievement for these cohorts. Also, faculty were concerned that the ETS Proficiency Profile did not assess the general education outcome of Diversity.

Since that time, faculty have begun development of institutional instruments for assessing general

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education student learning outcomes. These exams can be implemented and scored in the classroom and will not require scheduling class visits at the Testing Center. Per interview with the General Education Committee during the Focused Visit, faculty are currently piloting their instruments and have plans to analyze test reliability and construct validity.

It should also be noted that while LSSU no longer implements the NSSE or other nationally normed or standardized instruments at the institutional level, this does occur on the degree program level as is relevant. For instance, Nursing students complete the NCLEX upon graduation. Emergency Medical Service majors complete the EMS certification exam, and Business majors complete the ETS Major Field test. Results are used as summative measures of degree program student learning outcomes.

Conversations with the Academic Deans indicate that the Nuventive Tracdat^{TM} reporting software will allow the aggregation of the Institutional ILO's results, to conduct institutional-wide assessment, but the campus has yet to develop processes for those discussions and to capture the conversations. The Provost/VPAA indicated that no specific group provides analysis related to the Institutional Learning Outcomes, at this time. He indicated that these discussions would occur over the summer and into the fall, with data tying student performances back to their programs to facilitate faculty conversations on integrating the general studies-academic program linkage in effecting the student learning outcomes.

LSSU has made some progress toward an overarching analysis of student learning as related to the Institutional Learning Outcomes.   As the LSSU assessment processes mature, the institution is encouraged to ensure the following: (1) Data utilized to evaluate student learning toward the Institutional Learning Outcomes is collected from both the curricular and co-curricular experiences through a process that will yield useable data; (2) The data analysis and interpretation is completed by a representative group of individuals from across the broader campus (the Assessment Committee has been disbanded, according to discussions on campus; LSSU is encouraged to utilize a committee with broad representation); (3) the analysis of student learning is completed at a fine enough scale to provide specific understanding of areas of strength and areas for potential strengthening; and (4) dissemination of data and analysis is shared at the broad campus level – within the academic programs, general studies program, and co-curricular arenas, to allow incorporation into program-specific assessments that will generate actions designed to strengthen student learning.

Student support services and co-curricular programs should develop student learning outcomes and assessment plans in their respective areas; this process is parallel to the setting and evaluation of goals that is being reported in TracDat. [<u>NOT YET MET</u>] Student support services and co-curricular programs (including library, student life, and counseling) have four-column assessments that mirror those found in the academic units.   Program goals are reflective of the services provided, including food options, tutoring support, and counseling support. Most of the programs' outcomes appear focused on satisfaction and participation (such as with influenza vaccinations) which provides valuable feedback for the units. The process of documenting program goals and assessing those goals is well developed in this area, and is now utilizing the Nuventive Tracdat^{TM} reporting software. Conversations with the leaders in these

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areas indicate an understanding of the role of student life, academic support, and library initiatives in effecting student learning aligned with the Institutional Learning Goals, although the inclusion of student learning goals within each unit that were tied with the Institution's Strategic Plan (CAFÉ) as well as the Institutional Learning Goals were not yet completed last fall.

On-campus discussions evident that The library is involved in effecting student learning, including through TEDx talks (a focus on "-isms" is scheduled for April 5), Campus Read (using The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lack this year), and other events. Student Affairs has increased academic coaching within the residential halls, for example, and has implemented just-in-time programming to address students at various stages in their academic career. For example, using "Fear in the Hat" surveying revealed that freshmen had questions regarding how to address faculty in emails, among other concerns.

While LSSU has made significant progress toward meeting this target through linkage of institutional learning goals with academic program learning goals, the visit team encourages the campus to continue the conversation of how the totality of the student undergraduate experience leads toward the institutional learning goals, including the role of the academic program, the co-curricular program, athletics, student life, etc. LSSU has many areas of the campus working strategically to improve student recruitment and success. The opportunity to tie co-curricular areas into the Institutional Learning Goals may facilitate synergy and embed the four institutional learning goals deeper into the collective campus psyche. For example, the following learning outcomes might be considered:

- The Campus Reading Program could easily be tied to any of the four ILO areas, using the current book regarding Henrietta Lack (formal communication, use of evidence, analysis and synthesis, and professional responsibility/ethics)
- Student Health's focus with the influenza vaccination could provide knowledge of how to interpret contraindications for medication (a use of evidence)
- Counseling might add a survey question that seeks understanding of whether the students are confident that they learned and can utilize stress-reduction or test-taking strategy skills in the future (an analysis and synthesis)
- Analyzing workshops on advising could be aligned with professional responsibility, perhaps (professional responsibility)
- Students employed on campus could be trained and then assessed on their professional communications and demeanor appropriate for the position they are occupying (formal communications; professional responsibility)
- Students who receive financial loan aid could receive information so they could explain why paying extra against a principal balance has greater financial benefit than paying only minimum payments (use of evidence)
- Students who compete in intercollegiate athletic programs might be asked to explain how their visibility as student athletes provides opportunity to serve as role models and mentors in our society (professional responsibility)
- Students who have campus email accounts might be asked in training to evaluate email addresses to identify fraudulent or spam messages designed to hack into our computer system (an analysis and synthesis)

- Students who attend LSSU should be able to identify actions that violate Title IX expectations for a safe and inclusive campus environment (a professional responsibility)
- Students involved in student government may be asked to know and utilize Roberts Rules of Order in parliamentary proceedings and explain how those rules ensure that all voices are considered during meeting interactions (a formal communication)

LSSU is poised to create broad campus conversations and commit to the use of the Institutional Learning Outcomes as driving mechanisms for student programming and interaction. Campus conversations reveal that the Provost/VPAA, Associate Provost, and Associate Director of Academic Services have been actively communicating regarding the need for articulating and developing a campus culture of evidentiary assessment. The institution is encouraged to articulate how the co-curricular and supportive services are engaged in facilitating a holistic environment focused on the student Institutional Learning Outcomes.

A2. Statement of Focus:

The Standard Pathway Reaffirmation Review Report from November 2016 for LSSU states the following: "LSSU should provide: ….. 2) evidence that program review is being used to inform strategic planning and budgeting decisions…"

Note relevant Criterion, Core Component(s) or Assumed Practice(s):

The 2016 Final Report from LSSU's comprehensive visit does not tie this particular statement to a specific criterion beyond Core Components 4A and 4B above. A review of the Final Report core components/assumed practices reveals that this concern may tie to the 4.S - Criterion 4 Summary, which states that recent budget decisions have resulted in larger class sizes, fewer sections, fewer student support staff, etc. "The University's assessment program must measure these impacts to allow for prioritization of future funding to support student learning."

A statement in 5A evidence states, "The University plans to improve its budgeting process to take into account assessment results. To that end, two new data analysts have been hired and are beginning to look at student retention and other data sources to identify opportunities where investments or realignments could results in additional tuition revenue."

In addition, 5C (The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning) and 5D (The institution works systematically to improve its performance) are also appropriate.

B2. Statements of Evidence (check one below):

☐ Evidence demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.

☒ Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.

☐ Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention and HLC follow-up are required.

☐ Evidence is insufficient and demonstrates that HLC sanction is warranted.

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Evidence:

Evidence that program review is being used to inform strategic planning and budgeting decisions: [<u>NOT YET MET</u>**]** LSSU's Board of Trustees adopted an Academic Strategic Direction in December, 2017, which summarized the results of focus sessions with the institution's constituents (including faculty, staff, students, tribal leaders, administration, alumni and foundation, community leaders, etc.). The results summarized common themes found in the Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Dreams of LSSU. Three main themes (increasing enrollment; continuing the hands on learning strength; and collaboration, synergy, and innovation) were highlighted as essential for future campus success.

Also approved in December 2017 was the 2018-2023 LSSU Strategic Plan (CAFÉ; appendix C). Three goals were articulated under each of four main areas: Culture, Academics, Finance, and Enrollment. These goals take the form of "We cultivate….." and address foundational core values (such as treating others with dignity and respect; cultivating continuous improvement to provide relevant academic programs and support services; utilizing open and transparent data-informed budgetary processes aligned with institutional priorities, and employing an enrollment management strategic plan).

Evidence to support the integration of the CAFÉ into the functioning of the institution is seen in School program reviews and the co-curricular and student service reviews, which contain direct alignment with the CAFÉ plan (culture, academics, finance, and enrollment). These documents often identify budget implications, such as "The School will build a prioritization list for equipment replacement and purchases" in the School of Science and Medicine. The addition of sound-proofing for accessibility testing isolation rooms and the purchase of the Involvio app to promote and track student participation in campus life are examples of budgetary decisions driven by assessment results.

During campus discussion with the President, Provost/VPAA, and the Vice President for Finance the administration detailed the budget request process to be a combination of "zero-sum" plus "historical funding," with a software package that supports budgetary unit submission of core requests plus innovative or one-time requests through "action packs" modules. These new initiative funding requests allow for incorporation of comments providing evidence in support of the requests which follow the request through the Chair-Dean-Vice President levels. The final campus decisions for what will be presented to the Board of Trustees for funding occurs through the Integrated Budget and Planning Committee (IBPC), which consists of the President, Provost/VPAA, and Chief Financial Officer. The IBPC provides oversight of the total campus budget to ensure that expenditures are appropriate, leveraged to produce quality outcomes, and aligned with the focus and direction of the institution. Team discussion with the IBPC indicates that budgetary allocations are deliberate and coupled with a clear vision for the future of LSSU and a commitment to data-driven decision making.

The administrative team at LSSU has been in place for eight months, at the time of the team visit. Substantial progress has been made in the area of linking budget to planning and assessment. The campus constituents expressed support for the President/Provost team, with comments that indicated the appreciation of transparency, fairness, and clear and precise expectations. As the administration completes their first year and moves into their second year,

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they have the opportunity to translate the CAFÉ or an expanded strategic directions document into measurable action goals that will broadly convey the support for innovative, assessment-driven initiatives. An additional opportunity is present for the IBPC to ensure that the campus can see direct alignment of budget initiatives with assessment outcomes.

A3. Statement of Focus:

Note relevant Criterion, Core Component(s) or Assumed Practice(s):

B3. Statements of Evidence (check one below):

☐ Evidence demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.

☐ Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.

☐ Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention and HLC follow-up are required.

☐ Evidence is insufficient and demonstrates that HLC sanction is warranted.

Evidence:

A4. Statement of Focus:

Note relevant Criterion, Core Component(s) or Assumed Practice(s):

B4. Statements of Evidence (check one below):

☐ Evidence demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.

☐ Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.

☐ Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention and HLC follow-up are required.

☐ Evidence is insufficient and demonstrates that HLC sanction is warranted.

Evidence:

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A5. Statement of Focus:

Note relevant Criterion, Core Component(s) or Assumed Practice(s):

B5. Statements of Evidence (check one below):

☐ Evidence demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.

☐ Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.

☐ Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention and HLC follow-up are required.

☐ Evidence is insufficient and demonstrates that HLC sanction is warranted.

Evidence:

6. **Other Accreditation Issues** (If applicable, list evidence of other accreditation issues.)

Part B: Recommendation and Rationale

Recommendation:

☐ Evidence sufficiently demonstrated. No HLC follow-up recommended.

☒ Evidence demonstrated. HLC follow-up recommended.

☐ Evidence insufficient. HLC sanction warranted.

Rationale for the Team's Recommendation

In two years, Lake Superior State University <u>has made significant progress</u> in addressing the areas of additional focus recommended within their 2016 Reaffirmation Visit, as indicated in the analysis provided above. The efforts were substantial and the progress toward institutionalizing effective strategies across the campus is evident. The visit team commends the campus for genuine effort and significant progress.

Several broad areas would benefit from additional focus, as follows:

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1. Reflective improvement of course and program learning outcomes to ensure consistent articulation of measurable outcomes; review of data-collection and interpretation processes to acquire reasonable and fine-scale data to inform program improvement; and specific identification of improvement within the curriculum and if appropriate in the assessment process will mature the culture and practice of continual improvement at LSSU.

2. Continued focus in the iterative process of the assessment–actions–assessment loop is needed to continually improve the institution in all areas of performance and as focused on student learning.

3. Focused and clear communication (and understanding) of the alignment of data-driven assessment with the strategic plan and budgeting would support the campus understanding of the importance of assessment and continual improvement.

4. Deliberate discussions of how co-curricular programming, student services, inter-collegial athletics, and administrative services align with and support the Institutional Learning Outcomes of LSSU would strengthen the campus in a focused, integrated goal toward student learning.

LSSU is encouraged to continue making progress in the area of assessment, data-driven decision making and alignment with budget, and the role of the entire campus in effecting the Institutional Learning Outcomes. While substantial work has been done, significant closure of this effort is needed for the data-driven improvement iterations to become wide-spread, consistent, and effective. An embedded report within the four-year Standard Pathway Visit is recommended to document the continued progression of LSSU in the area of assessment and continual improvement.

Stipulations or Limitations on Future Accreditation Relationships
If recommending a change in the institution's level for review of future changes (locations, programs, delivery, etc.), state both the old and new level and provide a brief rationale for the recommended change. Check the Institutional Status and Requirement (ISR) Report for the current wording. (Note: After the focused visit, the institution's stipulations should be reviewed in consultation with the institution's staff liaison.)

Monitoring
The team may call for a follow-up interim monitoring report. If the team concurs that a report is necessary, indicate the topic (including the relevant Criteria, Core Components or Assumed Practices), timeline and expectations for that report. (Note: The team should consider embedding such a report as an emphasis in an upcoming comprehensive evaluation in consultation with the institution's staff liaison.)

As an Embedded Report within the Four Year Comprehensive Evaluation (2020-2021):

Core Components 4A and 4B – LSSU should provide: 1) A list of all completed program reviews (and assessment reports) in keeping with the approved-upon schedule; and 2) evidence that program review is being used to inform strategic planning and budgeting decisions.

The institution must develop and mature assessment methodologies and practices that include the following:

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- All course outcomes must focus on student (measurable) learning rather than on teaching or on programmatic goals

- All academic programs must state not only program-level student learning outcomes, but also measures of those outcome findings, and actions taken to engage on continued improvement of student learning (reflective of an iterative loop of continual improvement)

- The general education program must engage in the assessment of student learning beyond the identification of course outcomes. (The program must have an overarching program assessment, with identified actions to improve the collective program, not just course assessment and actions.)

- As related to the Institutional Learning Outcomes,

  - The broad campus, both curricular and co-curricular units, must be engaged in the assessment and follow-up improvement of learning experiences

  - Student support services and co-curricular programs should develop student learning outcomes and assessment plans in their respective areas, to complement those utilized in the curricular programs

  - The University must identify mechanisms to demonstrate that students are meeting those Institutional Learning Outcomes, identify measures of learning outcome findings, and determine actions to improve learning as related to the Institutional Learning Outcomes.

The team may call for a follow-up visit. If the team concurs that a visit is necessary, indicate the type of visit, topic (including the relevant Criteria, Core Components or Assumed Practices), timeline and expectations for that visit. (Note: The team should consider embedding such a visit as an emphasis in an upcoming comprehensive evaluation in consultation with the institution's staff liaison.)

Interactions With Institutional Constituencies and Materials Reviewed
List the titles or positions, but not names, of individuals with whom the team interacted during the review and the principal documents, materials and web pages reviewed.

INSTITUTIONAL CONSTITUENTS:
- President Dr. Rodney Hanley
- Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Finance and Operations
- Vice President of Enrollment Management, Marketing, & Institutional Technology
- Associate Provost & Interim Dean, College of Science & the Environment
- Dean, College of Health & Behavior and Interim Dean, College of Criminal Justice & Emergency Responders
- Dean, College of Education & Liberal Arts
- Dean, College of Innovation & Solutions
- Interim Dean of Student Life & Retention
- Director of Athletics

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- Director of Institutional Research
- Director of the Library & Academic Services
- Associate Director of Academic Services
- Deputy Title IX Coordinator
- School Chairs (Faculty members):
  - School of Kinesiology & Behavioral Sciences
  - School of Nursing
  - Lukenda School of Business (faculty representative in Chair's absence)
  - Interim Chair, School of Computer Science & Mathematics
  - School of Engineering & Technology
  - School of Natural Resources & Environment
  - School of Science & Medicine
- General Education Committee (6 faculty, 1 student, and 3 administrators in attendance)
- Curriculum Committee (7 faculty and 3 administrators in attendance)
- Faculty (in addition to the Committees and Chairs above: 7, of five academic programs)
- Student Government (9 students in attendance; 2 Sr., 3 Jr., 2 So, and 2 Fr.; 6 academic programs)

MATERIALS REVIEWED (in addition to those submitted or linked within the Interim Focused Review Report):

- Lake Superior State University Final Report – Standard Pathway Reaffirmation Review, November 2016
- Lake Superior State University Website
  - Academics https://www.lssu.edu/academics/
    - Colleges, Schools & Departments
    - Academic Catalog
    - Complete List of Degrees, Certificates, Minors
  - Assessment https://www.lssu.edu/assessment/
    - LSSU Mission 2017-11-03
    - LSSU Strategic Direction and Implementation 12-2-17
    - ILO Subcommittee Proposal 2017 (approved BoT 3 November 2017)
    - Grades as Assessment?
  - Facilities https://www.lssu.edu/facilities/
    - Facilities Master Plans
      - Capital Outlay Master Plan 2019-2023
      - Capital Outlay Master Plan 2020-2024
  - President's Office https://www.lssu.edu/president/
    - LSSU Mission and Vision
    - Plans, Goals & Resources
      - Academic Strategic Direction
      - Institutional Assessment
      - Institutional Assessment: *Strategic Plan*
- Curriculum Committee Minutes
  - January 17, 2018

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- o February 28, 2018
- o March 21, 2018
- o April 04, 2018
- o April 18, 2018
- o April 25, 2018
- o July 18, 2018
- o October 04, 2018
- o October 18, 2018
- o November 01, 2018
- o November 29, 2018
- o February 07, 2019
- o February 21, 2019
- o March 07, 2019
- General Education Committee Minutes
  - o September 13, 2018
  - o September 27, 2018
  - o October 11, 2018
  - o October 25, 2018
  - o November 8, 2018
  - o December 6, 2018
  - o January 10, 2018 (2019?)
  - o February 14, 2019
- Syllabi of Senior Capstone Courses:
  - o BIOL 495 Senior Project, Fall Semester 2018
  - o COMM 490 Communication Studies, Spring 2019
  - o PSYCH 495 Senior Research/ 499 – Senior Research Practicum, Spring 2019
  - o HIST 497 Senior Seminar in History, Spring 2019
  - o POLI 492 Senior Seminar II, Spring 2019
  - o CHEM/EVRN 499 Senior Seminar, Spring 2019
  - o CSCI 419 Senior Project, Spring 2019
  - o Senior Seminar Symposium Schedules, April 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018
- Library Surveys
  - o 2018-19 Campus Read Assessment – Faculty
  - o 2018-19 Campus Read Assessment – Students
  - o Library Services Faculty/Staff Survey
  - o Library Services Students Survey – Results Summary
  - o Information Literacy Survey
- LSSU Correction of Facts Document (Dated 17 April 2019)

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HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

INSTITUTION and STATE:	Lake Superior State University, MI
TYPE OF REVIEW:	Monitoring Focused Visit
DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:	A visit focused on program review and assessment of curricular and co-curricular activities. (Focus Visit scheduled no later than 3/01/2019)
DATES OF REVIEW:	3/25/2019 - 3/26/2019

☐ No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements

Accreditation Status

Nature of Institution

Control: Public

Recommended Change: no change

Degrees Awarded: Associates, Bachelors

Recommended Change: no change

Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2016 - 2017

Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2026 - 2027

Recommended Change:no change

Accreditation Stipulations

General:

Accreditation at the Master's level is limited to the Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction.

Recommended Change: no change

Additional Location:

Prior HLC approval required.

Recommended Change: no change

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:

Approved for distance education courses and programs. The institution has not been approved for correspondence education.

Recommended Change: no change

Accreditation Events

Accreditation Pathway   Standard Pathway

Recommended Change: no change

Upcoming Events

Comprehensive Evaluation: 2026 - 2027

Recommended Change: no change

Comprehensive Evaluation: 2020 - 2021

Year 4 Comprehensive Evaluation. Will include an embedded interim report on enrollment and budget/finances. The report should include, at minimum, the following: 1) The operating budget for FY2021 (AY2020-2021) and final budget figures for FY2019 and FY2020; 2) Budget projections through FY2023; 3) Current (Fall 2020) enrollment figures for degree-seeking students, broken down by full-and part-time status with comparative numbers for Fall 2019; 4) Comprehensive student retention figures for AY2018-2019, AY2019-2020 and retention projections for AY2020-2021. Embedded monitoring is to be addressed by the institution in the applicable core components of its Assurance Argument. The review team is to ascertain whether the institution has satisfactorily addressed the monitoring issue(s) and will document its findings in the conclusion section of the team report.

Recommended Change: Please add: The comprehensive evaluation will also include an embedded interim report on program review and assessment

Monitoring

Upcoming Events

None

Recommended Change: Embedded interim report on program review and assessment

Institutional Data

Educational Programs		**Recommended Change:**
Undergraduate		
Certificate	4	_____

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Associate Degrees	24	_____
Baccalaureate Degrees	48	_____
Graduate		
Master's Degrees	0	_____
Specialist Degrees	0	_____
Doctoral Degrees	0	_____

Extended Operations

Branch Campuses

None

Recommended Change: no change

Additional Locations

Bay de Noc Community College, Iron Mountain, MI, 2801 N US2, Iron Mountain, MI, 49801 - Active

Escanaba Regional Center, 2001 N. Lincoln, Escanaba, MI, 49829 - Active

Les Cheneaux Culinary School and Restaurant, 186 S. Pickford Ave., Hessel, MI, 49745 - Active

Petoskey Regional Center, 1515 Howard St., Petosky, MI, 49770 - Active

Recommended Change: no change

Correspondence Education

None

Recommended Change: no change

Distance Delivery

43.0103 - Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement Administration, Bachelor, BS, Criminal Justice - Generalist

43.0201 - Fire Prevention and Safety Technology/Technician, Bachelor, BS, Fire Science

Contractual Arrangements

None

Recommended Change: no change

Consortial Arrangements

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

None

Recommended Change: no change