



REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION

# BRIEFING DOCUMENT

# 2025



**LOYOLA**  
UNIVERSITY CHICAGO





## REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION

# BRIEFING DOCUMENT 2025

This document has been prepared in advance of the site visit by the Higher Learning Commission scheduled for March 17–18, 2025

## INSIDE

- 1** Introduction
- 2** HLC Site Visit Team
- 2** Loyola HLC Leadership Team
- 3** HLC Criteria for Accreditation
- 4** CRITERION ONE: Mission
- 6** CRITERION TWO: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct
- 9** CRITERION THREE: Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support
- 12** CRITERION FOUR: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement
- 15** CRITERION FIVE: Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning



## REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION

# INTRODUCTION

**LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO** is undergoing our ten-year reaffirmation of accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) this year, culminating in our site visit March 17-18, 2025. Our preparation for this event has been two years in the making, through the valiant efforts of our HLC Leadership Team and many other members of our Loyola community. Preparations have centered on gathering evidence for and writing the accreditation report (Assurance Argument, per HLC terminology), and on getting ready for the site visit.

The accreditation review will be focused on how we as an institution meet HLC's Criteria for Accreditation. This is an opportunity to share our unique story of what the criteria look like in our context, and we have much to be proud of. Since the previous mid-cycle review in 2019 we have expanded our academic programs on all campuses, made improvements in our data processes and analysis, and achieved carbon neutrality, to name just a few accomplishments. Since our last HLC site visit in 2015, the campus looks very different indeed.

The purpose of this briefing document is to get you ready to participate in the site visit. We introduce you to our HLC Leadership Team who have prepared us so well and the Peer Review Team who will be visiting us in March. We provide an overview of the HLC Criteria for Accreditation, and brief summaries of our responses from the Assurance Argument to each of the criteria statements.

The summaries describe the evidence we are highlighting that illustrates how we meet the criteria. The evidence we have used was selected from among many excellent examples, and you are invited to share additional examples based on your own experiences during public forums that will be held on each criterion when we meet with the Peer Review Team.

We welcome this opportunity to reflect in partnership with HLC on how far we have come and where the future can take us. Thank you for your significant contribution to this effort.

**RACHEL SHEFNER, PhD**

ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR ACCREDITATION,  
ASSESSMENT AND ACADEMIC REGULATORY COMPLIANCE



**Since the previous mid-cycle review in 2019 we have expanded our academic programs on all campuses, made improvements in our data processes and analysis, and achieved carbon neutrality, to name just a few accomplishments.**

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## LOYOLA UNIVERSITY HLC LEADERSHIP TEAM

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# HLC CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

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The complete assurance argument is available on the Loyola University Chicago accreditation website: [LUC.edu/accreditation](https://www.luc.edu/accreditation). The assurance argument includes five chapters:

## **CRITERION ONE: MISSION**

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

## **CRITERION TWO: INTEGRITY – ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT**

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

## **CRITERION THREE: TEACHING AND LEARNING – QUALITY, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT**

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

## **CRITERION FOUR: TEACHING AND LEARNING – EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT**

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.

## **CRITERION FIVE: INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, RESOURCES, AND PLANNING**

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

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Each criterion chapter in the assurance argument contains evidence demonstrating the ways in which the university meets and exceeds HLC standards. Evidence is provided for three to five core components within each criterion section (18 core components across the five criteria).

These criteria are outlined by the Higher Learning Commission.

# CRITERION ONE

## MISSION

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### **1.A. THE INSTITUTION'S MISSION IS ARTICULATED PUBLICLY AND OPERATIONALIZED THROUGHOUT THE INSTITUTION.**

- The mission was developed through a strategic planning process that reflects Loyola University Chicago's Jesuit, Catholic identity and educational purpose. The Board of Trustees prioritizes the mission through structures like the Standing Committee on Mission and Culture, with further reinforcement from the Mission Priority Examen and the role of the Vice President for Mission Integration.
- The mission emphasizes education, research, justice, and public service, reflected in schools like Arrupe College and the Parkinson School of Public Health, which balance academic excellence and social responsibility. Updated every seven years, the Mission Priority Examen, with the last in 2019, guides programs like the School of Environmental Sustainability and the College of Arts & Sciences in promoting knowledge for the service of humanity.
- Loyola's student support services align with its mission of learning, justice, and faith, addressing diverse student needs. These services are offered by divisions such as the Division of Student Development, Enrollment Management, and Campus Ministry. Key programs include the Rambler Brotherhood Project, Center for Black Student Excellence, Wellness Center, Student Academic Services.
- Loyola publicly articulates its mission through a variety of means, including events, publications, and media. The establishment of the Division of Mission Integration and the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion ensures that the mission is consistently communicated and operationalized across all areas of the institution. Examples of programs offered to deepen understanding of the mission include New Student Orientation, Convocation, UNIV 101 courses, Loyola 201, New Faculty Orientation, All Things Ignatian Seminars, Ignatian Heritage Month, Certificate in Ignatian Pedagogy and the DEIB Professional Development Series.

### **1.B. THE INSTITUTION'S MISSION DEMONSTRATES COMMITMENT TO THE PUBLIC GOOD.**

- Loyola University Chicago prioritizes public service through its mission to expand knowledge in the service of humanity, focusing on social justice and addressing contemporary challenges. The university actively engages with local communities through partnerships, community-based learning, and healthcare initiatives that serve vulnerable populations. Additionally, Loyola's Climate Action Plan reflects a global responsibility to environmental sustainability, further emphasizing its role in serving the public.
- Loyola emphasizes its educational mission as evidenced by its status as a not-for-profit institution. Its primary focus is on academic and community engagement, aiming to prepare students for public service and social justice. In addition to the breadth and depth provided by the Core Curriculum, the university prioritizes students' engaged learning via community-centered learning and research. Loyola's commitment to sustainability and reducing its carbon footprint further underscores its dedication to public good.
- Loyola actively engages with external constituencies through various community-centered initiatives and partnerships. It collaborates with local organizations, offers service-learning opportunities for students, and participates in programs like the Anchor Mission Initiative, which aims to enhance community well-being and economic development. Loyola's healthcare schools serve vulnerable populations through programs addressing critical public health issues, such as climate change, disability healthcare, and correctional healthcare.



**1.C. THE INSTITUTION PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN A DIVERSE, MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY AND GLOBALLY CONNECTED WORLD, AS APPROPRIATE WITHIN ITS MISSION AND FOR THE CONSTITUENCIES IT SERVES.**

- Loyola University Chicago prepares students for informed citizenship and workplace success through both curricular and co-curricular activities. Undergraduates must take at least one engaged learning course, often partnering with nonprofits, and a third of core courses focus on diversity. Opportunities for study abroad, cultural immersion, and cross-cultural research are supported by the Offices of Community and Global Engagement and Global Initiatives. Professional schools offer hands-on learning, clinical education, and community-focused partnerships. Leadership and civic engagement are further developed through co-curricular programs that emphasize socially responsible leadership and equitable, sustainable community building.
- Loyola's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is foundational in its mission as a Jesuit, Catholic institution and operationalized through several initiatives and structures. Efforts include supporting a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff through hiring practices and fostering a respectful climate. These practices were an output of several diversity initiatives that led to the establishment of the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (OIDEI), and Center for Diversity & Inclusion (CDI), reflecting a strategic focus on creating a safe and inclusive environment for marginalized groups. The university also integrates DEI principles into its curriculum and professional development, exemplified by the Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy's resources to support anti-oppressive pedagogy and the NSF ADVANCE Grant aimed at supporting underrepresented faculty.

# CRITERION TWO

## INTEGRITY: ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

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### **2.A. THE INSTITUTION ESTABLISHES AND FOLLOWS POLICIES AND PROCESSES TO ENSURE FAIR AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOR ON THE PART OF ITS GOVERNING BOARD, ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY AND STAFF.**

- Loyola University Chicago's governance is led by the Board of Trustees (BOT), which ensures the university adheres to its mission as a Jesuit, Catholic institution through policy creation and strategic oversight, as outlined in the university's bylaws. The Office of the President, in partnership with shared governance bodies, collaborates with the BOT to support decision-making. Loyola enforces clear policies in faculty and student affairs, such as collective bargaining agreements and community standards, with ongoing training to ensure awareness of these guidelines. Ethical behavior is reinforced through the EthicsLine reporting system, while financial transparency is maintained through published annual financial statements and community updates. Loyola's leadership actively oversees compliance and risk management to ensure adherence to regulations and institutional priorities.
- Loyola operates with integrity across its financial, academic, human resources, and auxiliary functions by maintaining transparent policies and processes. Financial integrity is demonstrated through the publication of annual audited financial statements and regular town hall presentations led by the Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. Academically, the university enforces clear expectations for student conduct and integrity through the Community Standards and the Student Promise while providing support through the CURA Network. Instructor support is provided through the Office of Online Learning, Center for Engaged Learning, Teaching, and Scholarship, and the Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy. Faculty are made aware of university policies through trainings via the Enterprise Learning Hub. Moreover, Human Resources upholds fair hiring practices and inclusive policies, supported by tools like the Faculty Diversity Hiring Toolkit. Additionally, auxiliary functions such as campus safety and operations abroad adhere to rigorous standards. Across the University, the highest standards for safety and inclusivity are maintained through the Office of Equity and Compliance.

### **2.B. THE INSTITUTION ACTS WITH INTEGRITY; ITS CONDUCT IS ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE.**

- Loyola University Chicago ensures the accuracy of its representations regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs, governance structure, and accreditation through multiple channels, primarily its website. Loyola's University Marketing and Communication team collaborates with various departments and offices to develop messaging, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) serves as the official clearinghouse for university data for academic and student institutional reporting. Examples of the University's representations published on the website include 1) the Academic Catalog, updated annually, including details programs of study, degree requirements, and academic policies, 2) faculty profiles describing qualifications and courses taught, 3) the university's Consumer Information web page, which centralizes key details such as cost of attendance and student outcomes, adhering to federal disclosure requirements, 4) the data governance framework, and 5) Accreditation information and program licensure details.
- The Office of Research Services oversees compliance and scholarly integrity, supporting claims related to research and external funding. Community engagement is driven by the Center for Engaged Learning, Teaching, and Scholarship (CELTS), which publishes annual impact reports highlighting service-learning courses and high-impact learning programs. The university's religious and spiritual mission is guided by Mission Integration, ensuring alignment with Jesuit values, while the Office of Neighborhood Initiatives documents Loyola's economic development efforts in the Loyola Anchors: Community Impact Report, showcasing contributions to local communities. Additionally, Loyola's sustainability goals, including carbon neutrality by 2025, are tracked and reported publicly. The recently developed (April 2024) Campus Plan included input from internal and external stakeholders.

## **2.C. THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE INSTITUTION IS AUTONOMOUS TO MAKE DECISIONS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE INSTITUTION IN COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICIES AND TO ENSURE THE INSTITUTION'S INTEGRITY.**

- Loyola University Chicago's Board of Trustees is trained and knowledgeable, ensuring informed decision-making on financial and academic policies. In addition to bringing their experience from a wide range of areas, upon election, Trustees undergo an orientation covering essential topics such as Loyola Board Fundamentals and strategic issues. The Board's legal and fiduciary responsibilities are reinforced through its committees, including the Finance, Educational Affairs, and Audit Committees. Trustees meet quarterly to address major decisions, such as approving tuition, the annual budget, and capital projects. Loyola University Chicago's Board of Trustees prioritizes preserving and enhancing the institution through strategic initiatives, financial health, and academic excellence. Recent deliberations have focused on key issues such as the campus planning process, institutional effectiveness, and the impact of national higher education trends, ensuring Loyola's growth and sustainability.
- The Board of Trustees considers the interests of both internal and external constituencies through-out decision-making. Internally, committees like the Student Experience and Educational Affairs Committees engage faculty, staff, and students, including representatives from the Student Government Association and University Senate. Externally, the Board evaluates community reactions to initiatives such as the campus plan and responds to broader societal issues, like the impact of recent Supreme Court rulings on admissions. These efforts ensure that diverse perspectives are incorporated into the Board's deliberations, aligning decisions with stakeholder needs.
- The Board of Trustees maintains its independence from external influences through policies like its Conflict of Interest Policy. Trustees are required to complete annual disclosure statements, which are reviewed by the University's Office of General Counsel and the Tax Compliance team. These disclosures are incorporated into Loyola's IRS Form 990 filings to ensure transparency and trustee independence. This process safeguards the Board's decision-making from undue influence, prioritizing the University's mission and institutional integrity over external pressures.
- The Board of Trustees delegates day-to-day management to the university's administration, led by the President, who oversees operational functions through vice presidents and the University Leadership Council. The Board relies on faculty governance structures, including the Board of Undergraduate Studies, the Graduate Studies Coordinating Board, and the Central Curricular Authority at the Stritch School of Medicine, to review and approve academic programs and policies.

## **2.D. THE INSTITUTION IS COMMITTED TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH IN TEACHING AND LEARNING.**

- Loyola University Chicago is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression, aligning with its mission to "expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice, and faith." The Faculty Handbook and the Comprehensive Policy protects academic freedom for faculty, allowing them to teach, research, and express ideas by 1) preventing institutional interference and 2) safeguarding against retaliation, discrimination, or misconduct allegations tied to academic expression. Additionally, the Faculty Grievance and Appeals Procedures provide recourse for academic freedom violations. Faculty are also encouraged to engage with the media and disseminate their research freely. Students also enjoy freedom of expression under Community Standards, with policies updated as of 2024 to support responsible inquiry aligned with Jesuit values, ensuring the institution remains a respectful space for truth-seeking and open dialogue.

## **2.E. THE INSTITUTION'S POLICIES AND PROCEDURES CALL FOR RESPONSIBLE ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE BY ITS FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS.**

- Loyola University Chicago ensures high standards for basic and applied research through its Office of Research Services, which oversees compliance, ethical behavior, and fiscal accountability. The Office of Research Services enforces policies for research involving human and animal subjects and investigates allegations of research misconduct through the Research Integrity Officer (RIO). Mandatory online training via the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) and additional seminars for the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) are required for all researchers. Compliance and integrity are further supported by the Institutional Review Boards and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), ensuring adherence to professional standards and regulatory requirements. Adoption of a new electronic research administration system in 2025 will further streamline these processes.
- Loyola supports research integrity through its Office of Research Services, which provides training and oversight for faculty, staff, and students. The office offers the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) course and additional Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) seminars. The Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) review research involving human and animal subjects, respectively, ensuring compliance with ethical standards. Additionally, the Graduate School and academic units maintain academic integrity policies and track and manage academic misconduct, promoting a culture of responsible research and scholarship.
- Loyola provides students with guidance on research ethics and the use of information resources through its Graduate School and the Office of Research Services. Graduate students receive training in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) through seminars and online courses like the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI). The Graduate School enforces academic integrity policies, including guidelines on the ethical use of information. Additionally, the university's library services offer resources and support for proper citation practices and ethical information use.
- Loyola enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity through its Academic Affairs Office. Academic integrity policies are outlined in the Undergraduate Standards and Regulations and the Graduate School's guidelines. Updates to these policies in 2024 included new provisions for artificial intelligence use in coursework and expanded sanctions for violations. Each college/school maintains its own integrity policies, and faculty are responsible for integrating these standards into their syllabi.

# CRITERION THREE

## TEACHING AND LEARNING: QUALITY, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT

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### **3.A. THE RIGOR OF THE INSTITUTION'S ACADEMIC OFFERINGS IS APPROPRIATE TO HIGHER EDUCATION.**

- Loyola University Chicago offers 450 academic credentials across various levels, including 130 online programs. New programs undergo rigorous reviews by councils such as the Board of Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies Coordinating Board. The Office of the Provost ensures course syllabi outline appropriate rigor, differentiated learning outcomes, and compliance through tools like the Simple Syllabus repository. Programs like Law and Social Work showcase high standards through outcomes such as bar passage rates and competency benchmarks.
- Learning goals are differentiated by credential level and are posted in an online catalog. For example, Nursing distinguishes outcomes for baccalaureate (entry-level practice) and graduate (leadership roles). Initiatives like the Online Course Catalog and the Coordinated Learning and Support (CLAS) project provide guidance on developing measurable outcomes. Annual assessments and faculty reviews ensure goals are specific and actionable.
- Programs, whether on-campus, online, international, or in the Dual Credit program, maintain consistent quality. Dual Credit courses align with National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) standards. Online programs are reviewed using Quality Matters standards, with instructors completing Online Teaching Fundamentals training. Examples from courses like Marketing and Chemistry highlight the uniform rigor across delivery modes.

### **3.B. THE INSTITUTION OFFERS PROGRAMS THAT ENGAGE STUDENTS IN COLLECTING, ANALYZING AND COMMUNICATING INFORMATION; IN MASTERING MODES OF INTELLECTUAL INQUIRY OR CREATIVE WORK; AND IN DEVELOPING SKILLS ADAPTABLE TO CHANGING ENVIRONMENTS.**

- Loyola University Chicago's Core Curriculum includes 16 courses (48 credit hours) covering ten areas of knowledge such as Artistic, Scientific, and Ethical Inquiry, ensuring broad intellectual development. Writing is emphasized through the College Writing Seminar and discipline-specific Writing Intensive courses. Transfer students' requirements align with Loyola's mission through adjusted Core standards.
- Mission informs Loyola's Core Curriculum, promoting integrative growth and societal responsibility. The Center for Engaged Learning, Teaching, and Scholarship (CELTS) oversees the Engaged Learning requirement, offering courses and internships that connect education to justice-oriented citizenship. Loyola's 2024 Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement reflects its mission alignment.
- Diversity-designated courses in the Core Curriculum enhance understanding of justice, spirituality, and global issues. Programs like the Advocacy and Social Change BA and the Bilingual Pastoral Studies MA broaden perspectives, while initiatives like the Pine Ridge Reservation immersion program and CARE Pathway in nursing exemplify experiential learning. Diversity Committees across departments and student-led organizations further promote inclusivity.
- Undergraduates engage in funded research via Loyola Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (LUROP) fellowships, culminating in events like the Undergraduate Research Symposium. Graduate student work is highlighted in the Graduate School Interdisciplinary Research Symposium and the Saint Albert's Day conference for work in the bio-medical sciences.

### **3.C. THE INSTITUTION HAS THE FACULTY AND STAFF NEEDED FOR EFFECTIVE, HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAMS AND STUDENT SERVICES.**

- Loyola University Chicago prioritizes diversity in its hiring practices, connecting this to delivering a high-quality education. The strategic plan emphasizes recruiting, hiring, and retaining diverse faculty and staff to enhance teaching, learning, and research, aiming to foster an inclusive, equitable culture. HR policies promote diversity, providing professional development opportunities that adhere to equal opportunity principles, ensuring that faculty and staff are evaluated on consistent criteria.
- Loyola employs 1,006 full-time and 895 part-time faculty members, ensuring faculty-to-student ratios remain strong (13:1). Faculty are responsible for a substantial number of undergraduate courses across 124 disciplines, with 58% of full-time faculty holding tenure or being on the tenure track. The growth of faculty ranks and years-of-service awards reflect institutional continuity. Additionally, 1,772 full-time staff support various operations, contributing to the overall stability and growth of the university.
- Loyola guarantees faculty and staff qualifications through adhering to credentialing policies. All faculty, including adjuncts and dual-credit instructors, are appropriately credentialed for the courses they teach. Faculty credentials are monitored through a credentialing dashboard, and departments are responsible for documenting equivalent experience when necessary. The institution's policies ensure that all faculty members, including graduate teaching assistants, meet academic and professional standards.
- Faculty at Loyola are evaluated annually through course evaluations via the SmartEvals platform, administered by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). These evaluations assess both course and teaching effectiveness. Full-time faculty evaluations are incorporated into their annual reviews via the Interfolio Faculty 180 system, and additional observations are conducted for early-career faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). Regular evaluations also occur for unionized faculty as outlined in collective bargaining agreements. The Stritch School of Medicine uses a similar process to evaluate faculty.
- Loyola provides comprehensive support for faculty development through the Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy (FCIP), Center for Faculty Excellence (FCE), and other initiatives. These include professional development workshops, conferences, and mentoring. Faculty who teach online are supported by the Office of Online Learning (OOL), which offers resources and training. The Stritch School of Medicine offers continuing medical education programs, and all faculty also receive funding for external professional development opportunities such as conferences.
- Faculty members are expected to provide office hours, both in-person and online, to meet with students. These office hours are regularly communicated via course syllabi, and faculty are required to accommodate student schedules when conflicts arise. The Office of Faculty Affairs also offers orientation and professional development to new faculty to support student interactions.
- Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.
- Staff in student support roles, such as Career Services, undergo specialized training in areas like pre-law advising, pre-med advising, and career readiness through professional organizations like NACE. The Division of Student Development (DSD) offers ongoing professional development, including a yearlong leadership institute for staff, and all staff are required to attend regular in-services. External evaluations, such as the Baker Tilly study, inform changes to improve services, and staff in DSD also participate in regular DEIB training programs.

### **3.D. THE INSTITUTION PROVIDES SUPPORT FOR STUDENT LEARNING AND RESOURCES FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING.**

- Loyola provides a comprehensive range of student support services to meet diverse academic and personal needs. The Sullivan Center functions as a centralized hub, hosting services like advising, accessibility support, financial aid, career services, and international programs. Infrastructure enhancements are underway to sustain future demands for teaching and learning resources.
- Students are guided into courses and programs based on their preparedness through placement assessments and advising. The Office of First and Second Year Advising ensures a student-to-advisor ratio of 1:350, offering tailored support to undergraduate students, while specialized advising is available for areas like prehealth, prelaw, and honors programs. Graduate programs provide targeted support via dedicated graduate program directors.
- Courses like UNIV 101, UNIV 201, and UNIV 114 are designed to promote academic success, community engagement, and critical thinking. Programs like the Rambler Success Program and supplemental courses address specific student needs, particularly for those requiring additional support in their transition to college-level learning.
- The Tutoring Center offers services such as group tutoring, supplemental instruction, and success coaching, with a focus on STEM fields and peer-led learning. Certified training programs ensure high-quality support across all campuses, including international locations like the Rome Center.
- The Student Accessibility Center provides tailored accommodations, including note-taking, alternative formats for materials, and testing accommodations. Programs like Achieving College Excellence and Arrupe College initiatives offer intensive support for first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students.
- Loyola's advanced IT infrastructure includes extensive wireless coverage, modern learning spaces, and platforms like Sakai and Panopto for instructional support. Libraries across campuses provide access to millions of resources, research databases, and specialized collections, with ample seating and extended hours for study.
- The Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy, the Center for Engaged Learning, Teaching and Scholarship, the Office of Online Learning and the Center for Faculty Excellence offer professional development in teaching and instructional technology. Instructors have access to tools for integrating innovation into teaching, alongside personalized consultations.
- Clinical practice sites and experiential programs integrate real-world learning for disciplines like education, social work, and law. Partnerships with institutions such as Loyola University Medical Center and Chicago Public Schools provide diverse opportunities.
- Graduate students benefit from tailored advising, career services, and wellness programs. Initiatives like the Graduate Career Community and workshops address specific professional and academic needs, while the School of Continuing and Professional Studies supports adult learners.
- Through *cura personalis*, Loyola prioritizes equity, inclusion, mentorship, and well-being. Wellness Centers, campus safety, and recreational programs complement academic resources, fostering an environment where students can thrive personally and academically.

## CRITERION FOUR

### TEACHING AND LEARNING: EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

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#### 4.A. THE INSTITUTION ENSURES THE QUALITY OF ITS EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS.

- Loyola University Chicago ensures quality through comprehensive program reviews. All academic units, including 38 departments and schools, participate in Academic Program Reviews (APR) every 5-7 years. This process, revised in 2023, is managed by the Office of Academic Programs and Planning (APP), using data provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), and includes self-study, external review and reflection. Specialized accreditations also align with APR for continuous improvement.
- Loyola evaluates all transfer credits and prior learning through a detailed process. Students must seek prior approval to transfer credits, and the university uses the LOCUS system to manage and track transfer credit. The Office of the Provost oversees the process, ensuring academic rigor and consistency in credit evaluation, with specific guidelines for international students and credit for exams like AP, CLEP, and IB.
- Loyola maintains clear policies on the quality of accepted transfer credits. These policies, reviewed annually, ensure the integrity of credit earned at other institutions and are available through the course catalog and online resources. The university also has specialized procedures for evaluating study abroad credits, adult degree completion programs, and dual credit courses, with rigorous processes to guarantee academic standards across all types of transferred credits.
- Loyola maintains authority over all aspects of course prerequisites, rigor, and faculty qualifications. For dual credit programs offered at local high schools, the university ensures that the courses align in terms of learning outcomes and rigor with the equivalent university-level courses. This alignment is achieved through careful course evaluations and assessments to guarantee consistency in academic standards.
- Loyola ensures that its programs maintain specialized accreditation as appropriate to their educational purposes. Programs such as those in the School of Law, Stritch School of Medicine, and the School of Nursing adhere to accreditation standards set by their respective accrediting bodies, ensuring that the education provided meets high academic and professional standards required in those fields.
- Loyola evaluates the success of its graduates through surveys like the First Destination Survey (FDS) and the Graduating Student Experience (GSE) survey, which gather data on employment and further education. These surveys are refined annually, and the results are used to enhance academic and career services collaboration. Additionally, specialized programs, such as those in the School of Law, publish consumer information about graduate outcomes, which are also made publicly available to inform prospective students about career prospects related to their field of study.



#### **4.B. THE INSTITUTION ENGAGES IN ONGOING ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING AS PART OF ITS COMMITMENT TO THE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF ITS STUDENTS.**

- Loyola University Chicago uses aligned processes for assessing academic programs, the Core Curriculum, Engaged Learning, and co-curricular experiences. Academic program assessment reports are reviewed by a faculty scoring team and evaluated using a rubric. The Core Curriculum assessment began in 2023, with faculty using rubrics for direct embedded assessment of student artifacts. Engaged Learning courses assess outcomes through student reflections, reviewed by faculty and staff with support from the Center for Engaged Learning, Teaching, & Scholarship (CELTS). Co-curricular activities, led by the Division of Student Development (DSD) and Enrollment Management and Student Success (EMSS), include annual reporting and data-driven changes in programs like AlcoholEdu, Supplemental Instruction, and first-year seminars.
- Assessment results inform changes to curriculum, pedagogy, and processes. Academic program reports in 2023 showed 32% of units improving assessment tools (e.g., tracking concept-level results in physics) and 40% making curricular changes (e.g., adjusting course prerequisites). The Core Curriculum assessment encourages faculty reflection on student strengths and areas for improvement to enhance instruction. Engaged Learning evaluations have led to faculty development opportunities that improved alignment with learning goals. EMSS used student feedback to adjust the UNIV 101 curriculum, while the Tutoring Center's data affirmed the success of Supplemental Instruction and peer tutoring in improving academic understanding.
- Loyola promotes reflective, collaborative assessment practices through faculty participation and data integrity initiatives. Faculty teams lead academic program assessment scoring, while the Core Curriculum's assessment process involves 21 faculty developing rubrics. CELTS provides training for Engaged Learning, fostering effective pedagogical practices. The annual Focus on Teaching and Learning (FOTL) Conference supports faculty and staff professional development in assessment and teaching innovation. Additionally, the Survey Coordination Committee and Data Discernment Initiative ensures robust, well-coordinated institutional data practices, reflecting good methodologies. Faculty and staff participation across all areas embodies LUC's Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm of reflection and continuous improvement.

#### **4.C. THE INSTITUTION PURSUES EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT THROUGH GOALS AND STRATEGIES THAT IMPROVE RETENTION, PERSISTENCE AND COMPLETION RATES IN ITS DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS.**

- Loyola University Chicago has established goals for retention and graduation aligned with its mission of justice, learning, and faith. The 2015-2020 strategic plan targeted a 3% increase in retention and graduation rates. Despite pandemic-related fluctuations, retention rebounded to 84% for the Fall 2022 cohort after a drop in Fall 2021. The current goal is an incremental increase to 90% retention by 2030. Graduation rates average 67% for four years and 74.5% for six years. Graduate programs, such as the PhD in Nursing, set targets for degree milestones, reflecting national trends and accreditation standards (e.g., CEPH for Public Health and CCNE for Nursing programs).
- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) collaborates with departments to analyze and publish retention, persistence, and completion data. Improved processes for IPEDS reporting have strengthened data integrity, including initiatives like a university-wide data glossary and dashboards for enrollment and peer comparisons. OIE has conducted nine persistence studies since 2022 and evaluated PhD progression trends, identifying delays post-coursework. Program-level analyses, like those in the Graduate School, help refine policies and best practices. Institutional data is shared with leadership, deans, and trustees to guide strategic improvements.
- Data-driven initiatives include the Summer Get Back on Track (SGOT) program, which increased retention for at-risk students to 92.7%, far above the 10-year average. Programs like Achieving College Excellence and Arrupe College provide targeted support, with Arrupe achieving a 76% retention rate and outperforming regional 2-year colleges in graduation outcomes. Graduate programs have adopted milestone-specific improvements, such as dissertation seminars in the PhD Nursing program. Loyola's analysis has also influenced midterm grade reporting requirements (effective Fall 2024) and merit-based financial aid strategies to improve retention.
- Loyola employs robust methodologies, including trend analyses, regression models, and peer comparisons, to understand retention and completion patterns. OIE integrates data from student experiences, financial aid, and course enrollment to identify issues like gatekeeping courses and academic "push-out" trends. New initiatives include tracking students who transfer early and enhancing follow-up procedures. The First Destination Survey and new Exit Survey offer insights into graduate outcomes, informing career preparation and specialized accreditation. Loyola's systematic data use reflects its mission and commitment to continuous improvement in student success.

## CRITERION FIVE

### INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, RESOURCES AND PLANNING

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#### **5.A. THROUGH ITS ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES AND COLLABORATIVE PROCESSES, THE INSTITUTION'S LEADERSHIP DEMONSTRATES THAT IT IS EFFECTIVE AND ENABLES THE INSTITUTION TO FULFILL ITS MISSION.**

- Loyola University Chicago's shared governance is driven by its Jesuit mission and Catholic values, enabling decision-making among leadership and constituencies. The Board of Trustees meets quarterly and operates via ten subcommittees, inviting administration to report on key topics. Governance bodies include the University Senate, Faculty Council, University Staff Council, and the Student Government of Loyola Chicago, each with distinct roles. For example, Faculty Council represents 2,000+ faculty across campuses, while University Staff Council delivers programs like the Loyola Employee Emergency Fund. These bodies support collaboration and engage stakeholders effectively.
- Loyola's data-driven decision-making is anchored in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), which conducts research, produces enrollment forecasts, and creates reports like Power BI dashboards for tracking trends in retention and student success. The Data Discernment Initiative Champions (DDIC) facilitate institutional understanding and use of data. Enrollment planning relies on market analyses conducted by the Enrollment Systems, Research, and Reporting group (ESRR), identifying program demand and regional trends. Examples include OIE's work on tuition forecasting and the Midterm Grades dashboard to support student outcomes.
- Loyola's Board of Undergraduate Studies (BUS) and Graduate Studies Coordinating Board (GSCB) oversee academic program development, approvals, and policies, facilitating cross-campus collaboration. Examples include decisions to adopt common final exams for key courses and integrating mission-aligned admissions policies in response to legal changes. School-specific structures, like the Central Curricular Authority at the Stritch School of Medicine, manage curriculum changes. Advisory boards and committees, such as the Faculty Development Review Committee and University Rank and Tenure Committee, ensure faculty input and promote academic excellence aligned with institutional goals.

## **5.B. THE INSTITUTION'S RESOURCE BASE SUPPORTS ITS EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS AND ITS PLANS FOR MAINTAINING AND STRENGTHENING THEIR QUALITY IN THE FUTURE.**

- Loyola University operates three major campuses—Lake Shore, Water Tower, and Health Sciences—providing robust support for over 18,000 students. Each campus is equipped with full-time faculty, staff, and residence life personnel. The main campus supports the College of Arts and Sciences and other programs, while the downtown Water Tower Campus hosts professional schools, and the Health Sciences Campus offers medical and health-related education. The university also offers online programs, supported by dedicated services such as the Office of Online Learning and IT support.
- Loyola's mission, which emphasizes knowledge expansion through learning, justice, and faith, aligns with its organizational structure and resources. The university has responded to growing demand, enrolling 15,000+ full-time students in Fall 2024, and consistently maintains financial discipline, ensuring that goals are achievable within its resource base.
- Loyola employs a rolling 3-year budget planning cycle, engaging stakeholders from across the university to ensure alignment with strategic priorities. Its budget practices focus on positive financial outcomes and fiscal discipline, with regular performance evaluations against budget forecasts. The university's strong financial planning and conservative practices support its long-term sustainability and educational mission.
- Loyola's operating budget ensures the effective use of resources to achieve educational goals, including funding capital renewal and infrastructure improvements. The university also benefits from philanthropy, with a \$305 million campaign focusing on financial aid and student support. Its sound financial management has earned strong credit ratings (A1 from Moody's and A+ from S&P), underscoring its ability to fulfill its mission with financial integrity.

### **5.C. THE INSTITUTION ENGAGES IN SYSTEMATIC AND INTEGRATED PLANNING AND IMPROVEMENT.**

- Loyola University Chicago aligns resource allocation with its mission to expand knowledge through justice, learning, and faith. The Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (OIDEI) and the Institute for Racial Justice (IRJ) exemplify this, supporting DEI initiatives and racial justice research. Notable investments include \$238,938 in the READI Innovation Fund and \$48,000 for faculty affiliate projects, as well as significant financial aid commitments, including \$301MM in scholarships for FY 2024.
- Loyola integrates student learning assessments with academic planning. The Academic Program Review (APR) process ensures continuous evaluation of programs, setting strategic goals and using data to improve curricula and student outcomes. Regular reports and interim monitoring drive adjustments in planning and budgeting to enhance academic quality and support student learning.
- Loyola's campus planning efforts, led by the Office of Neighborhood Initiatives and Facilities, engage internal and external stakeholders through surveys, focus groups, and planning sessions. A needs analysis, climate action initiatives, and feasibility studies for projects like a new STEM building reflect a collaborative approach to campus development, ensuring alignment with broader institutional goals.
- Loyola's strategic resource allocation accounts for fluctuations in revenue and enrollment. The university adapts to external factors such as policy changes and financial aid challenges, like the FAFSA Simplification Act, through responsive planning. Strategic financial oversight and collaborations with government affairs ensure fiscal strength and adaptability in a changing environment.
- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) supports strategic decision-making through data collection and analysis. Data transparency initiatives such as the Midterm Grades Dashboard and first term course-taking analyses allow stakeholders to make meaningful adjustments that lead to improved student outcomes. OIE's collaborative work on data integrity, governance, and statistical modeling enhances institutional effectiveness and student success.



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