



REPORT OF THE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

Statement Regarding the Report

The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is responsible for making the final determination on reaffirmation of accreditation based on the findings contained in this committee report, the institution's response to issues contained in the report, other assessments relevant to the review, and application of SACSCOC policies and procedures. Final interpretation of the Principles of Accreditation and final action on the accreditation status of the institution rest with SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

Name of the Institution: Texas A&M University-Commerce

Date of the Review: March 25 – 28, 2024

SACSCOC Staff Member: Dr. Denise Y. Young

Chair of the Committee: Dr. Tanjula M. Petty
Vice President for Institutional
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Part I. Overview and Introduction to the Institution

The Report of the Reaffirmation Committee is the final committee analysis and report that includes the findings of the Off- and On-Site Reaffirmation Committees. It will be forwarded to the institution for a formal response. The report and the institution's response are forwarded to SACSCOC's Board of Trustees for action on reaffirmation of accreditation.

Texas A&M University-Commerce (A&M-Commerce) was founded in 1889 as East Texas Normal College. Texas A&M University-Commerce is a 135-year-old institution, and the third largest institution in the Texas A&M system.

As of the 2022-23 academic year, A&M-Commerce is the fifth oldest public university in the state, offering more than 130-degree programs, and housing six academic colleges: Education & Human Services; Business; Humanities, Social Sciences & Arts; Innovation & Design; Science & Engineering; and Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources. A&M-Commerce is recognized as an innovator and leader in program development and distance education by offering programs such as an AACSB-accredited MBA, an AVMA/CVTEA accredited Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Biomedical Technology program, and five online competency-based baccalaureates: Criminal Justice (shared administration with the College of Humanities, Social Sciences and Arts), General Studies, Health Services Administration, Safety and Health, and Organizational Leadership, which are the first competency-based bachelor's degree offered at an accredited public university in the state.

A&M-Commerce is one of the largest members in the Texas A&M University System and is home to 10,636 according to the IPEDS 2022 Fall Enrollment data. The institution embodies a diverse student body (19% Black or African American, 23% Hispanic undergraduate enrollment). Led by a mission to Educate. Discover. Achieve. Including a vision to Transform Lives by providing an excellent, relevant and personalized education to diverse learners; Advance Knowledge and pursue impactful research; Serve an Inclusive Community where all are valued; and Foster Collaboration to solve contemporary problems, A&M-Commerce serves an undergraduate population comprised of 23% first-generation undergraduate college students. More than 90% of A&M-Commerce's attendees are Texas residents, with a majority of those students from within a 50 mile or less radius. With a main campus located only sixty miles northeast of Dallas, the university increasingly reaches out to meet the needs of a growing and diverse Metroplex population. In addition, A&M-Commerce provides education to students from many other states and typically enrolls more than 600 international students, bringing the university's mission to prepare students for an ever-changing world to life.

Part II. Assessment of Compliance

Section 1: The Principle of Integrity

- 1.1 **The institution operates with integrity in all matters.**
(Integrity) [CR; Off-Site/On-Site Review]

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found no evidence of a lack of integrity.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee found no evidence of lack of integrity in the narratives and documentation provided by the institution or in the interviews conducted during the site visit.

Section 2: Mission

- 2.1 **The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service.**
(Institutional mission) [CR]

The mission for the institution is “Educate. Discover. Achieve.” This mission statement was updated and approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in 2019. The mission is published on the institutional website and other official documents. This three-word mission is very broad, can be interpreted in many ways, and does not appear to be specific to this institution. The brief mission statement is supplemented by a brief Vision statement comprising four bullet points. The narrative in the Compliance Certification states that “Effective teaching and learning results in education, discovery invokes research, and the educational experience transforms lives and engenders a sense of achievement.” Also, one of the bullets in the Vision statement refers to serving the community. It is not clear to the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee that the mission statement captures the scope and distinctiveness of the educational programs, research, and service offered by the institution.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the Focused Report and interviewed the institution’s President, Provost, and Senior Vice Provost. The leadership team discussed with the Committee that the mission was inclusive of the mission statement (“Educate. Discover. Achieve.”) and the vision (“Transform Lives by providing an excellent, relevant and personalized education to diverse learners; Advance Knowledge and pursue impactful research; Serve an Inclusive Community where all are valued; and Foster Collaboration to solve contemporary problems.”) Based on the interviews conducted and the documents reviewed, the Committee determined that the institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission statement specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education.

Section 3: Basic Eligibility Standard

3.1 **An institution seeking to gain or maintain accredited status**

3.1.a **has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies.**

(Degree-granting authority) [CR]

The institution was initially established in 1917 as East Texas State University by Section 87.551 of the Texas Education Code. Subsequently in 1996 the institution was renamed as Texas A&M University-Commerce, and it became a member of the Texas A&M System. As such, it is part of the 11-university Texas A&M System, which is governed by this system's Board of Regents, whose powers and duties are authorized by Texas Education Code Title 3 Chapter 85.

Additionally, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), as authorized by Texas Education Code Title 3 Subtitle B, Chapter 11, coordinates the entire Texas public higher education system, with oversight for all degree granting coordination. Degree programs offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce must be approved by the THECB. Evidence of this approval was provided.

In addition to this authorization to offer credit and degrees by state statutes, the institution also is a participant in the National Council of State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (NC-SARA), for the authorization to offer distance education courses and programs to students across state lines (e.g., residents of other SARA participating states).

3.1.b **offers all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees.** (For exceptions, see SACSCOC policy "Documenting an Alternative Approach.")

(Course work for degrees) [CR]

The institution provided one degree audit for one program at each level at which it awards degrees, along with course offerings for two semesters. However, none of the three degree audits provided reflect students who had completed 100 percent of requirements, and the course offerings for the two semesters provided did not include all courses needed to complete the degrees for the sample students in each of the three programs. For example, the degree audit for the MS in Accounting shows ACCT 501 still needed to complete the program, yet ACCT 501 is not listed as being offered in the two semesters of course offerings provided. Without degree audits showing all coursework completed for the degree without transfer or alternative credit (or without documentations of when all courses for a specific degree were offered), the Off-Site Reaffirmation could not verify that the institution offers all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees.

The institution provided evidence for three-degree programs to support compliance in offering degrees. The Bachelor of Science in Paralegal Studies with a minor in Criminal Justice, a Master of Music in Music, and a Doctor of Education in Educational Administration. For each of these programs, the institution furnished detailed degree requirements alongside a transcript of a

graduate, confirming that the entirety of the program's coursework was undertaken and satisfactorily completed within the institution. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee interviewed the Provost and Senior Vice Provost, who articulated that all program curriculums are available to students through the academic catalog and the institutional degree audit system, Degree Works. The documentation provided demonstrates the institution's adherence to offering all course work for at least one of its degree programs at each level at which it confers degrees.

3.1.c is in operation and has students enrolled in degree programs.
(Continuous operation) [CR]

The institution currently holds SACSCOC accreditation, is in operation, and had a fall 2022 enrollment of over 10,000 students.

Section 4: Governing Board

- 4.1 The institution has a governing board of at least five members that:**
- (a) is the legal body with specific authority over the institution.**
 - (b) exercises fiduciary oversight of the institution.**
 - (c) ensures that both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting members of the board are free of any contractual, employment, personal, or familial financial interest in the institution.**
 - (d) is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or institutions separate from it.**
 - (e) is not presided over by the chief executive officer of the institution.**
- (Governing board characteristics) [CR]*

Texas A&M University-Commerce is a member institution within the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) and is governed by the TAMUS Board of Regents per the Texas Education Code, Section 87.551, East Texas State University. In accordance, the institution provided sufficient evidence of the legal authority that establishes the Board, its respective fiduciary oversight of the institution, the composition of members, and submissions of governing board ethical compliance and independence.

More specifically, the Board of Regents is an active policy-making body for the institution and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources are adequate to provide sound educational programs that support the overall mission of the university. In compliance with Texas Education Code (TEC) Section 85.11, Board of Regents and TEC Section 85.12, Qualifications; Terms, the Texas A&M System (TAMUS) Board of Regents is comprised of nine members from different areas of the state who are appointed by the governor to serve staggered six-year terms. In addition to the nine appointed voting members, the Board also includes a nonvoting student regent in accordance with TEC Section 51.355 Non-Voting Student Regent: University System Board of Regents.

The Board's authority is detailed in its bylaws, which were created under the authority of TEC Section 85.21 General Powers and Duties and updated in 2018. Therein, the responsibility of the governing board as per Policy 02.01 defines the role and authority in managing the TAMUS member universities, including Texas A&M University-Commerce.

These roles are inclusive of the establishment of goals consistent with the mission of each member institution, the setting of campus admission standards, the development and review of policies, and the appointment and evaluation of the campus CEO, to name a few.

As such, the board's legal authority over its member institutions, including A&M-Commerce is clearly stated and acted upon as evidenced by the institution that provided an array of documentation to demonstrate the functionality of the Board and the facilitation of its powers and duties.

(b) Fiduciary Oversight

Evidence provided by the institution demonstrates that the TAMUS Board of Regents exercises fiduciary oversight over the institution. Such that the institution advances the functional authority of the Board of Regents as required and documented in TEC Section 51.352 Responsibility of Governing Boards and echoed in TAMUS Policy 02.01, Board of Regents.

Board members are introduced to their fiduciary responsibilities during annual Board training and exercise this oversight through the review and approval of key financial decisions of its member universities. To name a few, Board actions include System rules for awarding scholarships, approval of depository banks, actions related to debt management program, approval of tuition and fees (annually), approval of annual operating budgets, approval of guidelines for annual operating budgets, approval of certain contracts of \$500,000 or more or more than 3 or 5 years, naming of buildings and authorization for revolving fund bank accounts. By requiring Board approval based on accurate information for the primary financial activities including budgeting and auditing, the Board maintains appropriate fiduciary oversight of its member universities, including A&M-Commerce. Meeting minutes and artifacts were provided by the institution that document the assumption of these fiduciary responsibilities by members of the TAMUS Board of Regents.

(c) Contractual, Employment, Personal & Family

The institution provided evidence that assists in ensuring that TAMUS Board members are free from contractual, employment, personal, or familial financial conflicts of interest. As stipulated in TAMUS Policy 07.03 Conflicts of Interest, Dual Office Holding and Political Activities, Board members are required by state law to file a financial statement with the Texas Ethics Commission annually. Further, the policy defines the requirements members of the Board and employees of the System must follow to ensure no conflicts of interest exist while they carry out their public duties. The institution provided documentation of actions and filings advanced by current Board members (summer 2023) and meeting minutes that affirm Board members are free from contractual, employment, personal, or familial financial conflicts of interest.

(d) Board Control

The institution affirmed that the TAMUS Board of Regents operates as a collective entity to create policy, manage its member universities, and approve items via voting in accordance with TAMUS Policy 09.01, Power to Bind the System of its Bylaws. Additionally, the Board of Regents Bylaws state, in Section 9 that a majority of any standing or special committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The Chairman, an ex-officio member of each committee serves to ensure a quorum of a committee and prevents the governing board from being controlled by a minority of

board members. The institution presented documentation that demonstrates conformity with procedural rules and pertaining to the establishment of quorums and voting powers.

(e) Presiding Officer of the Board

The institution affirmed that the presiding officer of the TAMUS Board of Regents is not, and has never been, the President and chief executive officer of Texas A&M University-Commerce. TAMUS Policy 02.05, Presidents of System Member Universities, establishes that the President's primary responsibilities are to the university and states that the Board of the A&M System "appoints the Presidents of the member universities who serve under the direction of the chancellor." As such, serving on the Board of Regents is not included in these responsibilities.

An organizational chart and meeting minutes document the prevailing roles of the presiding officer of the Board and the chief executive officer of the institution. It further demonstrates that the university Presidents (including A&M-Commerce) report to the TAMUS Chancellor, who reports to the System Board of Regents.

4.2 The governing board

- 4.2.a ensures the regular review of the institution's mission.
(Mission review)

Texas A&M University-Commerce is a member institution within the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) and is governed by the TAMUS Board of Regents per the Texas Education Code, Section 87.551, East Texas State University.

The institution affirmed its review of the mission. The review of the mission aligns with Texas A&M University System policy 3.02. Each academic institution reviews the academic institution's mission statement no less frequently than the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges reaffirmation schedule. Each academic institution prepares a request to the system Board for approval of a new or revised mission statement or reaffirmation of the mission statement if no changes are required.

The mission was last reviewed and revised in 2019. The next scheduled review is 2024 since the institution is in the SACSCOC Reaffirmation Class of 2024.

- 4.2.b ensures a clear and appropriate distinction between the policy-making function of the board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy.
(Board/administrative distinction)

Texas A&M University-Commerce is a member institution within the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) and is governed by the TAMUS Board of Regents per the Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 87.551, East Texas State University. In accordance with Texas Education Code (TEC) Section 51.352, Responsibility of Governing Boards, the Board "shall provide the policy direction for each institution of higher education under its management and control". Therein, the institution presented policy statements as evidence of the distinction between the Board's active policy making function and the administration and faculty's role of administration and implementation of policy. These policies

include the Board's role in making and distributing TAMUS policies and regulations to member universities, outlining the Chancellor's responsibilities relative to policy development, and assuming its responsibility to appoint the CEO on each of its member institutions. As evidenced by this governing documentation, the implementation of these policies is managed at the institutional level in accordance with the right afforded the institution to manage their own affairs through its chosen administrators and employees.

Further, rules, regulations and samples provided by the institution reveal that the institution's administrators are exercising their responsibility to administer and implement policy. These procedures and artifacts include rules and institutional policy tracking documents, documented approval for routing of policy for review, proposed rule revision submissions to TAMUS Policy Office for review and approval, email notifications of TAMUS approval and posting to web, and System email notifications of approved new and revised System policies. Evidence was also offered reflecting upon faculty engagement as exemplified by meeting minutes offering detailed ongoing conversation relative to promotion and tenure and further the implementation of a promotion and tenure policy. The institution provided clear evidence of the appropriate distinction that exists between the Board of Regents' role in making policy and A&M-Commerce's responsibility to implement and administer the policies.

- 4.2.c selects and regularly evaluates the institution's chief executive officer.
(*CEO evaluation/selection*)

In keeping with policies of Texas A&M University System (TAMUS), to include provisions for the appointment, selection, and periodic evaluation of the university President, Presidents of component universities are appointed by the TAMUS Board of Regents on the recommendation of the Texas A&M University System Chancellor as prescribed in System Policy 01.03, 2.2. In accordance, the institution provided evidence of the selection of the current President, who, as a result of a selection process, was formally appointed to the role of President by the TAMUS Board of Regents (August 2018).

Further, the institution outlined an evaluation process established by the TAMUS Board of Regents, designed to provide the President feedback and the opportunity for professional development. The performance review of the President includes an annual review by the Chancellor and Board of Regents based on an assessment of goals and accomplishments. To be specific and in this case, in preparation for the annual review, the Chancellor requested from the current President a self-evaluation in which both he and the President reviewed on May 24, 2023. The final stage of the CEO evaluation concluded with the Chancellor writing a narrative evaluation of the President for submission to the Regents. In addition to the written submission to the Regents, the Chancellor reviewed the CEO's performance with the Regents in an executive session. The institution provided evidence of the completed evaluations for the current President for the past three cycles to include: 2021, 2022, and 2023.

- 4.2.d defines and addresses potential conflict of interest for its members.
(*Conflict of interest*)

The TAMUS Board of Regents defines and addresses potential conflicts of interest as guided by the Texas Government Code (TGC) Section 572.051 Standards of Conduct; State Agency Ethics Policy, that not only address training for Board members, but include extensive information with regard to ethics and conflicts of interest. In addition, state law requires Board members to annually file a financial statement and other relative personal *disclosure* with the Texas Ethics Commission. Such that, if a Board member has a substantial interest in a contract or other transaction under consideration by the Board, the Board member must disclose the interest at a Board meeting held in compliance with the Open Meetings Act and refrain from voting on the matter. In accordance, the institution offered evidence confirming that the Board of Regents addresses potential conflict of interest for its members.

Specifically, members of the Board of Regents are notified of all requirements and policies related to conflicts of interest during a new member orientation provided by the Office of General Counsel and other A&M System staff. These include guidelines on Ethics; Benefits, Gifts and Honoraria; Fair Lending Practices, and Nepotism. The institution further provided minutes of Board of Regents meetings and examples related to the recusal of members whose actions are predicated on ensuring transparency and protecting the integrity of the institution.

- 4.2.e has appropriate and fair processes for the dismissal of a board member.
(*Board dismissal*)

Evidence was provided by the institution that confirms the appropriateness and fairness of processes that may dictate the impeachment or dismissal of a Board member. The nine-members of the TAMUS Board of Regents can be removed for failure to properly disclose a conflict of interest while in service or by the Governor with the advice and consent of two-thirds of the members of the senate present.

In the narrative the institution documented the due process procedures available to Board members subject to Article 15, Section 1 of the Texas Constitution, Impeachment by House of Representatives and Texas Government Code (TGC) Chapter 665, Impeachment and Removal (TGC 665). Documentation further offered insight of Board members rights as processes may be advanced at the level of a preliminary inquiry through to a jury trial. The institution noted that there has not been a cause to dismiss a Board or Regents member over the course of the last ten years and hence has not had the occasion to apply any of the policies or procedures pertaining to Board dismissal.

- 4.2.f protects the institution from undue influence by external persons or bodies.
(*External influence*)

The Texas Government Code (TGC) Section 572.051 Standards of Conduct; State Agency Ethics Policy, has established general provisions that provide guidance to Board members (state officers) in ensuring that public officials are independent and are responsible in protecting the institution from undue influence by external persons or bodies. Further, the institution clarifies in TAMUS Policy 07.01, Ethics, restrictions placed on Board members, to further

affirm that the institution is protected from undue influence by external persons or bodies.

Moreover, the TAMUS Board of Regents participate in training through the TAMUS Office of General Counsel and other TAMUS offices. This training includes ethics and conflicts of interest, along with information regarding other duties and responsibilities of the office. In addition, in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 61.084, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board provides an online course and assessment which must be completed before the governing board member can vote on a budgetary or personnel matter. A review of artifacts and governing documents confirmed that both the TAMUS Board and the institution are insulated from undue influence by external persons or bodies.

- 4.2.g defines and regularly evaluates its responsibilities and expectations.
(Board self-evaluation)

Texas A&M University-Commerce is a member institution within the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) and is governed by the TAMUS Board of Regents per the Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 87.551, East Texas State University.

Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) Board of Regents Article 1.6 states that every two years the Board conducts a self-evaluation of its responsibilities and expectations (evidence #11). This policy states that the Board will determine the method and scope of its assessment. While the Board has implemented multiple measures for self-evaluation since the institution's last reaffirmation, it does not appear that the Board has engaged in self-evaluation since 2018. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not find evidence of the biennial self-evaluation referenced in evidence #11.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed information provided by the institution and interviewed two members of the Board of Regents of the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS). Documentation demonstrates that the Board of Regents adopted a new self-evaluation policy in February 2020 that requires a self-evaluation of the Board be conducted every two (2) years. Additional documentation provided by the institution demonstrated completion of a self-evaluation by the Board of Regents in August 2020. In conjunction with the information provided by the institution in the Focused Report regarding the completion of the results of a second self-evaluation by the Board of Regents in August 2022, evidence of regular self-evaluation was clear. Based on the interview conducted and, on the documents, reviewed, the Committee determined that the TAMUS Board of Regents defines and regularly evaluates its responsibilities and expectations.

- 4.3 If an institution's governing board does not retain sole legal authority and operating control in a multiple-level governance system, then the institution clearly defines that authority and control for the following areas within its governance structure: (a) institution's mission, (b) fiscal stability of the institution, and (c) institutional policy.
(Multi-level governance)

The institution is not part of a multi-level governance system.

Section 5: Administration and Organization

- 5.1 **The institution has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution.**
(*Chief executive officer*) [CR]

The institution affirmed that the President is the chief executive officer of Texas A&M University-Commerce and is ultimately responsible for carrying out the duties of the office as is established by the TAMUS Board of Regents. Specifically, the President has the authority for and is responsible for the administration of the institution. The President of the institution holds no other positions or offices that compete with his responsibilities to the institution.

The current President joined the institution as its 13th President on August 2018 and has served as CEO since that time. Documentation provided evidence of the selection of the current President and the experience and qualifications that warranted the appointment.

- 5.2 The chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate control over, the following:

- 5.2.a The institution's educational, administrative, and fiscal programs and services.
(*CEO control*)

The institution affirmed that the President is the chief executive officer of Texas A&M University-Commerce, whereas he is responsible for exercising ultimate control over the institution's educational, administrative, and fiscal programs and services.

As evidenced by the institution's organizational chart, all key academic and administrative personnel at the institution report to the President. Further, meeting materials and minutes submitted by the institution reflect the diligence of the Leadership team, therein clearly demonstrating the role of the President in advancing the mission of the university. Examples provided by the institution offered evidence of the President's overall management and control over the institution's educational, administrative and fiscal programs and included matters pertaining to the adoption of new academic programs and curricular changes, revision of the organizational structure, appointment of personnel requiring Board of Regents approval, and general supervision of student programs and services. Further, documentation evidenced the development of legislative budget requests, annual budgets for operation and construction, financial management and preparation and submittal of financial and audit reports.

In all, documentation confirmed that the President approves all proposals for academic programs, recommends the operating budget and supervises university expenditures and is responsible for all plans and policies impacting the operation of the institution.

- 5.2.b The institution's intercollegiate athletics program.

(Control of intercollegiate athletics)

The institution affirmed that the President has the ultimate administrative and fiscal responsibility for the control over the institution's intercollegiate athletics program. Further, authority is established by Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) Policy 18.01 Intercollegiate Athletics that notes the President's responsibility for the establishment and supervision of intercollegiate athletes and the ultimate responsibility for control of the athletics program to the President.

As demonstrated by the institution's organizational chart, the daily oversight of the program and operations of Lions Athletics is delegated to the Director of Athletics who reports directly to the President. The Director of Athletics regularly advises the President and other senior administration on all aspects of the intercollegiate athletic program and meets with the President as needed to ensure program alignment and athletic initiatives. The institution documented the annual budget submittal from the Director of Athletics that provides information from the previous year and priorities related to funding for the coming year. Further, evidence was provided that documents the President's review of the athletic budget and the submittal of a budget allocation to the TAMUS Board of Regents.

On July 1, 2022, the institution left the Lone Star Conference to become a member of the Southland Conference becoming a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division. In doing so, the Presidential control of athletics also met expectations of the NCAA Constitution, Article 1.E and Article 6.A, regarding institutional control as documented by the institution. The institution presented a strong case that the chief executive officer exercises ultimate control over all intercollegiate athletic programs at the institution.

5.2.c The institution's fund-raising activities.
(Control of fund-raising activities)

The institution affirms that the President is the chief executive officer of Texas A&M University-Commerce and as established by TAMUS Policy 21.05, Gifts, Donations, Grants, and Endowments, is ultimately responsible for fundraising for the institution as stipulated in the President's position description.

Therein and as demonstrated on the institution's organizational chart, the President delegates to the Vice President of Philanthropy and Engagement (VPPE) the responsibility for assisting in the development, organization and administration of programs and activities related to fundraising. The VPPE serves as a member of the President's Executive Team, so is in regular communication with the President and other members of the upper administration. In addition to this regular interaction, the VPPE meets with the President as needed to discuss strategic planning alignment of the Office of Philanthropy and Engagement and plans for fundraisers and other related events. The institution provided evidence of the President's active role with donors, the oversight and acceptance of gifts to the institution and diligence in advancing naming gift agreements from donors on behalf of the institution.

- 5.3 For any entity organized separately from the institution and formed primarily for the purpose of supporting the institution or its programs:
- (a) The legal authority and operating control of the institution is clearly defined with respect to that entity.
 - (b) The relationship of that entity to the institution and the extent of any liability arising from that relationship are clearly described in a formal, written manner.
 - (c) The institution demonstrates that (1) the chief executive officer controls any fund-raising activities of that entity or (2) the fund-raising activities of that entity are defined in a formal, written manner that assures those activities further the mission of the institution.

(Institution-related entities)

The institution has two affiliated entities — (1) The Texas A&M University-Commerce Foundation and (2) The Texas A&M University-Commerce Alumni Association.

The institution demonstrated that it has legal authority and operating control of both entities. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed policies and procedures that provide authority and guidance to the institution's members that engage in relationships with affiliated organizations.

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed affiliation agreements executed with both external entities. The agreements defined the relationship of the entity to the institution. The agreements also provide clear guidance on the control of fundraising activities by the institution and that the activities further the mission of the institution.

An organizational chart was provided and reviewed that showed the institution's President/CEO has oversight over fund-raising activities at affiliated entities.

- 5.4 The institution employs and regularly evaluates administrative and academic officers with appropriate experience and qualifications to lead the institution.
(Qualified administrative/academic officers) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

The evidence provided shows the institution evaluates administrative and academic officers. The organizational charts and narratives are aligned with the job descriptions, resumes/CVs, and sample evaluations for administrative and academic leaders. Of the 87 artifacts reviewed by the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee, neither the resume for the Vice President of Inclusion was found nor was a job description for the Chief Operating Officer of the Dallas site.

The institution provided appropriate information about the experience and qualifications, including resumes and job descriptions, for its administrative and academic officers, except for the Vice President for Inclusion, for whom the resume is missing, and the Chief Operating Officer for the Dallas site, for whom the job description is missing. The institution provided evidence of the regular evaluation of its administrators.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed additional evidence provided by the institution. The university's organizational charts and narratives were supported by job descriptions, resumes/CVs demonstrating appropriate experience and qualifications, and sample evaluations for all administrative and academic officers. The Director of Human Resources was interviewed. Based on the interview conducted and the documentation

provided, the Committee determined that the institution employs and regularly evaluates administrative and academic officers.

- 5.5 The institution publishes and implements policies regarding the appointment, employment, and regular evaluation of non-faculty personnel.
(Personnel appointment and evaluation)

The institution, as part of a state-wide system, has overarching regulations and policies for the appointment, employment, and evaluation of non-faculty personnel. Documentation shows that these policies are regularly reviewed and updated. The institution also has a published Hiring Procedures and Guidelines manual that is published online (which can also be downloaded and printed) on the Human Resources website. The institution utilizes an online system for applicant tracking and personnel hiring. This same system is utilized for annual evaluation workflow. Documentation shows the institution follows its own policies regarding appointment, employment, and evaluations for non-faculty positions.

Section 6: Faculty

- 6.1 **The institution employs an adequate number of full-time faculty members to support the mission and goals of the institution.**
(Full-time faculty) [CR; Off-Site/On-Site Review]

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found that the institution employs an adequate number of full-time faculty members to support the mission and goals of the institution. In fall 2022, the institution employed 777 faculty, of which 356 (46%) were full-time and 421 (54%) were part-time. Faculty FTE was 496. While part-time faculty outnumber full-time faculty, full-time faculty accounted for approximately 66% of undergraduate student semester credit hour (SCH) production, and approximately 86% of graduate SCH production from fall 2019 through fall 2022, supporting full-time faculty sufficiency. The student to faculty ratio is 20:1, which aligns to peer comparators in the institution's geographic region. The Committee did note the marked (10%) drop in total full-time faculty from 394 in 2019 to 356 in 2022.

The institution documented definitions for appointments, including both full-time, part-time, and temporary appointments, and evidence was provided defining the role of faculty within the organization. The institution's definition of academic workload includes a combination of teaching, research and professional engagement, and service, and documentation shows that there are a variety of different faculty appointment types to allow this institution to customize a faculty member's workload to fulfill the institutional mission. The institution's workload guidelines detail the expectations of faculty and provide procedures for workload allocation and tracking. Workload is tracked and monitored both at the institutional level and at the state-system level.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents including the Faculty Workload, Implementing Faculty Tenure and Promotion, Faculty Academic Workload and Reporting Requirements, and Report of Institutional and Academic Duties. Additionally, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee conducted interviews with the Provost, Senior Vice Provost, and Human Resources Director in support of the

institution's case for compliance and affirmed the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

6.2 For each of its educational programs, the institution

6.2.a Justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty members.
(*Faculty qualifications*)

The institution's credentialing guidelines are patterned after the SACSCOC Faculty Credentialing Guidelines. Essentially, faculty teaching undergraduate courses are expected to have a master's degree in the teaching or related discipline, while faculty teaching graduate courses are expected to have a terminal degree in the teaching or related discipline. The institution states in its narrative that it places primary emphasis on the highest earned degree in the discipline, but also recognizes other qualifications and experiences as sufficient justification for credentials. The institution has a procedure that outlines required qualifications for professional track faculty and clinical track faculty. To support the faculty credentialing process, the institution developed the Faculty Credential Inventory, a digital form that is completed at the time of a new hire and when teaching assignments change.

The faculty rosters for fall 2022 and spring 2023 semesters were available for review, along with some faculty CVs, transcripts, and course descriptions. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee noted that the institution appeared to use "UN" rather than "UT" on the faculty rosters to denote undergraduate transferable courses. After reviewing the available information, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to definitively confirm the qualifications, either through academic credentials or experience, of the faculty members listed on the attached "Request for Justifying and Documenting Qualifications of Faculty."

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed institutional responses in the Focused Report and additional information provided by the institution to determine the qualifications of faculty identified by the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee in the "Request for Justifying and Documenting Qualifications of Faculty." The Committee reviewed materials and interviewed the Senior Vice Provost and Provost and found evidence of adequate qualifications for most faculty. The Committee identified three faculty with insufficient justification; these faculty are listed in the attached Request for Justifying and Documenting Qualifications of Faculty.

Recommendation 1: The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution justifies and documents the qualifications of the faculty members listed on the attached "Request for Justifying and Documenting Qualifications of Faculty."

6.2.b Employs a sufficient number of full-time faculty members to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review.
(*Program faculty*) [Off-Site/On-Site Review]

The institution defines its various faculty appointments appropriately and maintains an administrative structure that establishes appropriate academic and

administrative oversight of programs and allocation of teaching personnel to programs both residential and distance. Faculty appointments include descriptions of workload, including teaching responsibilities, and the institution has recently revised its workload policy reflecting differentiated load for faculty involved in research and or service, and it provides review and oversight of administrative and non-instructional assignments of teaching faculty.

The documentation in the Compliance Certification does not include staffing data by program, only by department. The documentation provided includes a summary of the percentage of SCHs taught by full-time and part-time faculty for each Department as well as the total number of faculty per Department. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Program Inventory documentation provided by the institution lists multiple degree-granting programs for most departments. For example, the Department of Literature and Language contains seven degree programs across undergraduate and graduate levels in disparate CIP fields such as Communication Studies, Linguistics, Hispanic Studies, and English, all of which would require full-time faculty with different credentialing, yet no disaggregated data was provided per degree program.

Without clear documentation of number of full-time faculty per program, employment of "a sufficient number of full-time faculty members" cannot be determined. Data provided did not include a breakdown of number of full-time faculty per program vs number of part-time faculty per program, nor was there data reflecting number of students in the programs (which would allow for a full-time faculty to student ratio), nor how many courses/SCHs related to the program (major) were taught by full-time faculty as opposed to service, elective, or general education SCHs/courses.

Furthermore, Table 6.2.b.1. summarizing "Number and Percent of Undergraduate Semester Credit Hour Generation by Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty" appears to be incorrect, since the first row for spring 2023 contains data rather than column titles, and Chemistry is listed as generating no SCHs for spring 2023. Table 6.2.b.1 shows percentages of generated SCHs taught by full-time faculty for degree-granting programs were lowest in Languages and Literatures UG (23%), Higher Ed Learning and Tech UG (30%), and the institution provided clear narratives explaining lower-percentage, but those explanations relied upon information by degree program whereas only aggregated departmental data was provided (for example, focusing upon the doctoral program in English for the explanation while data was only provided for Literature and Languages as a whole).

In its response in the Focused Report and by request of the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee, the institution provided additional information including disaggregated full time/part time faculty by degree program based on courses taught Fall 2021 through Fall 2023. In defining sufficiency, the institution chose to establish a threshold and states that it "aims for 60% of SCH at both the undergraduate and graduate levels be taught by full-time faculty." However, it did not provide rationale for this threshold to meet the standard of sufficient number of full-time faculty members to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review. Interviews were conducted with the Senior Vice Provost and Provost

regarding the role of full-time faculty in curriculum and faculty quality, but no additional justification or explanation about the establishment of the 60% threshold was provided.

In the disaggregated tables, the institution identified multiple degree programs where the percentage of full-time faculty teaching courses was less than 60% and the institution referred to justifications for those programs provided in the Compliance Certification and the Focused Report, which were on a department but not program level. Justifications were only provided for programs with less than 60% full time faculty teaching if they were not included in the earlier materials.

Recommendation 2: The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution demonstrates it employs a sufficient number of full-time faculty members to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review for each of its educational programs.

- 6.2.c Assigns appropriate responsibility for program coordination.
(*Program coordination*) [**Off-Site/On-Site Review**]

The institution has a procedure entitled “Academic Department Head and Program Coordinator Appointment and Responsibilities” that sets forth the process governing the selection of academic Department Heads and Program Coordinators. This procedure also outlines the administrative roles and responsibilities of these positions. The Department Head may appoint a faculty member to serve as a Program Coordinator. If there is no designated Program Coordinator, the Department Head serves as the Program Coordinator.

The general responsibilities of a department head include various duties related to academic program planning and coordination, curriculum development and review and program maintenance and evaluation. Program coordinators, as described in the procedure, have major responsibilities that include providing direction of academic programs; serving as the public spokesperson and representative for the program; leading the program in setting goals and conducting assessment; promoting the attainment of program, college and university goals, etc. The institution demonstrated it assigns appropriate responsibility for program coordination.

Based on the review of educational qualifications and curriculum vitae, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee determined that the department heads and program coordinators listed on the roster are academically qualified, with the exception of the program coordinator for the MS in Agricultural Sciences. This individual holds a Ph.D. in Family & Consumer Science with a minor in Educational Leadership, an MS. in Agriculture, and a BS in Agricultural Education. That is, this program coordinator’s terminal degree, professional experience, and publications are primarily focused on secondary and undergraduate education in Agricultural Science rather than on the disciplinary area itself.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents provided in the Focused Report, including the M.S. in Agricultural Sciences courses and curriculum provided in the catalog in support of the institution's case for compliance. The educational and professional qualifications of the program coordinator for the M.S. in Agricultural Sciences aligns with the scope of the courses and curriculum for the degree and provides evidence to support compliance. In addition, the Committee interviewed the Provost, Senior Vice Provost, and Human Resources Director who confirmed the process for selection of program coordinators for all degree programs. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee found sufficient evidence that the institution assigns appropriate responsibility for coordination of each of its educational programs.

- 6.3 The institution publishes and implements policies regarding the appointment, employment, and regular evaluation of faculty members, regardless of contract or tenure status.
(Faculty appointment and evaluation)

The institution publishes its appointment, employment and evaluation policies and procedures for all faculty members through clearly articulated university policies which are implemented and overseen by its Human Resources department and appropriate programmatic personnel. Documentation shows regular evaluation of teaching faculty at all contract levels, from tenure/tenure-track to lecturers to adjuncts. Evaluations are conducted annually using criteria differentiated by employment type and weighted requirements are clearly presented in annual evaluation documentation.

While multiple hiring documents were provided to reflect the hiring process, from development of position description to appointment letter, all of the documents provided reflect tenure-track hires. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not determine whether the institution followed its published hiring procedures for non-tenure-track faculty lines.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documentation provided by the institution, including examples of the hiring process for a Clinical Instructor of Social Work and an Assistant Librarian. This documentation effectively illustrated the institution's commitment to systematic implementation of its employment practices for non-tenure track positions. Documents provided for each non-tenure track position included a position description, position posting, hiring matrix, initial interview assessment, finalist interview assessment, and appointment letter.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee requested and reviewed additional documentation (Appointment, Employment, and Regular Evaluation evidence) for the following types of faculty: adjunct faculty, ad interim faculty, and "ad interim (exceptional hire)" faculty. The Committee conducted interviews with a departmental hiring supervisor, a Human Resources employee involved in hiring, and other individuals who were able to discuss process flow from the institution's Hiring Procedures and Guidelines. Based on the interview conducted and the documentation reviewed, the Committee found sufficient evidence that the institution publishes and implements policies regarding the appointment, employment, and regular evaluation of faculty members, regardless of contract or tenure status.

- 6.4 The institution publishes and implements appropriate policies and procedures for preserving and protecting academic freedom.
(Academic freedom)

The institutional policy Rule 12.01.99.R1, Academic Freedom and Responsibility is available online via the Faculty Handbook on the Office of the Provost's resource web page. The rule outlines the conditions of academic freedom for faculty and staff who teach or perform research. The rule states the right and responsibility related to Academic Freedom clearly. In terms of procedure, Rule 12.01.99.R1 has detailed information regarding the governing bodies of the Advisory Committee and the Hearing Committee. Rule 12.01.99.R1, provides step-by-step grievance procedures for those committees.

Regarding implementation of these policies, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not find evidence related to the disposition of any instances in which issues involving academic freedom have emerged, nor did the institution indicate that no such cases have arisen during the review period. In addition, the Compliance Certification states that Rule 12.01.99.R1, Academic Freedom and Responsibility "...supplants the state-wide university system policy, Policy 12.01 Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Tenure..." but does not address explicitly the ways in which it does so, or how the two policies work in tandem. Further, there was no evidence of how Rule 12.01.99.R1, Academic Freedom and Responsibility was approved.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee found that the institution addressed the concern regarding the implementation of the relevant policies by stating that there have been no instances or concerns related to academic freedom under Rule 12.02.99.R1 since the 2014 reaffirmation of accreditation. With respect to the concern that Rule 12.02.99.R1 supplants TAMUS Policy 12.01, Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Tenure, the institution clarified that their rule supports and complements the system-wide policy, rather than supplanting it. The institution also explained that Rule 12.02.99.R1, Academic Freedom and Responsibility, was approved by relevant internal and external bodies in accordance with the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) Policy 01.01, System Policies and Regulations, and Member Rules and Procedures. Furthermore, the institution provided a routing slip that documents the recommended actions and approvals by the Faculty Senate, Dean's Council, Provost, and the Presidential Advisory Committee (now known as the Executive Leadership Team). The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee found sufficient evidence that the institution publishes and implements appropriate policies and procedures for preserving and protecting academic freedom.

- 6.5 The institution provides ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty members as teachers, scholars, and practitioners, consistent with the institutional mission.
(Faculty development)

The institution provides significant and appropriate professional development and continual learning opportunities for all faculty regardless of rank or contract status. In alignment with its mission, these professional development opportunities focus primarily upon supporting faculty with teaching and research. Opportunities include regular courses on pedagogy and micro credentialing, training, funding, course design, and research leave. These programs are offered and overseen by multiple units across campus, including the Provost's Office, the Office of Training and Development, the Office of Sponsored Programs, and the Office of Academic Technology. Furthermore,

the institution partners with external organizations such as the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) and the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity to offer professional development opportunities to faculty.

Section 7: Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

- 7.1 **The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission.**

(Institutional planning) [CR]

The Texas A&M University System and the institution have a policy (03.01.00.R0.02) that affirms the institution's commitment to ongoing, integrated, comprehensive and research-based planning and evaluation process. The institution's evaluation and planning process is guided by its strategic priorities and goals. The strategic plan is comprised of five priorities with three goals each. Macro and micro units participate in strategic plan outcome mapping. Units on all levels align their goals to the strategic plan goals. The Compliance Certification stated the existence of a Strategic Planning Task Force and Assessment Committee. The Task Force provides feedback on goal attainment and implications for continuous improvement. The Compliance Certification also provided evidence of budget allocation to support improvement of student success and student experience initiatives that support the strategic priorities.

The Compliance Certification states, "Through the Nuventive assessment reporting system, more than 200 reporting units from both academic and service areas have developed numerous of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and service Goals to be aligned with their divisional Strategic Plans. These reporting units continue assessment exercise throughout the year and are required to evaluate and enter the assessment plans and results on a yearly basis. Therefore, the current Strategic Plan was drafted and operated through a top-down, bottom-up planning model, incorporates and prioritizes goals and initiatives that has engaged all the institutional aspects at all university levels."

The Compliance Certification provided evidence of mapping the 2022-23 strategic plan to outcomes and budget allocation according to strategic priorities. For example, the reports for the units (VPFA, Athletics, VPAA, Honors College) provide goal alignment.

Whereas the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee had concerns about some reports being incomplete, on balance the Committee found the institution to engage in ongoing, comprehensive, research-based planning and evaluation that is focused on quality and effectiveness.

- 7.2 **The institution has a QEP that (a) has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes; (b) has broad-based support of institutional constituencies; (c) focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success; (d) commits resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP; and (e) includes a plan to assess achievement.**

(Quality Enhancement Plan)

The institution did not satisfactorily address components (c), (d), and (e) of this standard.

Recommendation 3: The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution revise its QEP to focus on improving specific measurable student learning outcomes and/or student success.

Recommendation 4: The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution commits sufficient fiscal and human resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP.

Recommendation 5: The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution develops an appropriate plan to assess achievement of student learning outcomes and/or student success outcomes for the QEP.

See Part III for additional information.

- 7.3 The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved.
(Administrative effectiveness)

The institution reported that it has assessment reports for approximately 40 administrative units. A sampling of these reports was provided.

While there were some concerns, such as the fact that the assessment of the institutional Budget Office is not yet completed and approved, on balance the institution provided sufficient evidence that it assesses administrative effectiveness.

Section 8: Student Achievement

- 8.1 **The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success.**
(Student achievement) [CR; Off-Site/On-Site Review]

The institution has identified four key indicators to track the institution's student achievement: 1) retention and graduation, 2) completions for economically disadvantaged students, 3) student success in the job market or post-baccalaureate study, and 4) the institution's ability to maintain affordability of educational opportunity, which it believes are in alignment with its mission and vision. Data on these metrics are published on the institution's Student Achievement web page. The institution identified stretch goals and thresholds of acceptability. For these metrics, the institution evaluates itself against a threshold of acceptability set at the prior five years' average rate for the eight similar System regional universities Texas A&M System additionally monitors performance in comparison to "stretch goals" established by each institution for institutional performance on each metric. The "stretch goals" represent target levels of performance for attainment by 2022. The eight similar institutions are not clearly identified in the narrative or supporting evidence, though it is surmised that these peer institutions are others in the TAMU System. The threshold for acceptability may not be appropriate for all student achievement outcomes identified.

The institution addressed their SACSCOC Key Student Completion Indicator, which is the six-year IPED graduation rate. Data disaggregated by gender and ethnicity were presented. Efforts to improve completion rates include the creation of the Office of Student Transition and Support, which houses the Academic Success Center tutoring office and College Life Coaches.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed materials in the Compliance Certification demonstrating that the institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes multiple measures, goals, and outcomes for student success. The Committee also interviewed the Senior Vice Provost, Executive Director for Institutional Effectiveness and Research, the Associate Director of Institutional Research, and the Assistant Director of Institutional Effectiveness regarding the appropriateness of the outcomes with respect to the institution's mission, the types of programs it offers, and the nature of the students it serves. Based on the interviews conducted and the documents reviewed, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee, concluding that the institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement, using multiple measures of student success. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee also concluded that the institution's goals are appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students served by the institution, and the kinds of program offered by the institution, further affirming the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

8.2 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

8.2.a Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs.
(*Student outcomes: educational programs*) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

The institution presented a sample of assessment reports for twenty-eight educational programs representing different delivery modalities of face-to-face, online, off-site and competency-based education. The data presented represents reports from 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-23.

Educational programs have stated student learning outcomes, assessment methods and standards of success.

It was not clear to the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee whether the sample provided is adequately representative of all educational programs or whether appropriate assessment methods are being used for certain student learning outcomes. For example, for the educational programs in the College of Business a singular outcome is being measured for different programs. Additional concerns include the lack of access to assessment data even though links were provided, inconsistent follow-up from the previous plan that is indicated on the reports, and lack of faculty collaboration for the continuous improvement of the educational program.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the materials provided in the institution's Focused Report. The institution provided numerous reports and items documenting widespread assessment of academic programs. Documents

provided by the institution also included assessment reports and learning outcomes for programs within the College of Business. The Committee also interviewed the Senior Vice Provost, the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research, the Assistant Director of Institutional Effectiveness, representatives from the Institutional Effectiveness Leadership Team, the Chair of the Department of Mathematics, and the Graduate Program Director for the Department of Mathematics. The Committee assessed the institution's evaluation of student learning outcomes related to academic programs and the institution's commitment to using results of assessments to seek improvement. Based on the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee also reviewed additional documentation provided by the institution regarding sampling methodology and, during the interview clarified the collaboration of faculty in assessment matters and discussed institutional sampling requirements. The Committee found that the institution utilizes appropriate assessment and sampling methods and determined that faculty collaboration during the continuous improvement process was evident and appropriate. The Committee found that the institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement in its academic programs.

- 8.2.b Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs.
(*Student outcomes: general education*)

The institution's General Education Curriculum is predicated on state-wide regulations and governed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. At the university level, the core curriculum is administered via policy and managed by a standing committee, the University Studies Council.

The general education curriculum of the institution identifies and articulates student learning outcomes in the following areas: critical thinking, communication skills, empirical and quantitative skills, teamwork, personal responsibility and social responsibility. Each course in the curriculum is required to include at least three core student learning outcomes. Documentation provided demonstrates a system and schedule of regular assessment for each of the student learning outcomes.

The Compliance Certification provided evidence that student learning outcomes have been assessed following the assessment plan. Data were presented for 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 to illustrate that the student learning outcomes in general education have been assessed regularly.

However, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee had questions regarding some apparent inconsistencies with the assessment schedule provided and the data reported. For example, in assessing "teamwork," in 2021-2022, PLS, ANS, ASTR, PHYS, and IS were to be assessed, but only a portion of these courses appear to have been assessed and reported. In assessing "critical thinking," the schedule indicates that in 2022-2023, that courses in Math, PSCI, and LPC were to be assessed, but data reported is for GDRS, HIST, and AFAM. Further, reports for GDRS show that for GDRS the standard of success was not met,

however, the institution did not identify an action plan for seeking improvement based on results of assessment. Finally, it is unclear, based on the Nuventive reports provided, if the standard sampling of 25 percent per course is consistently attained as per the assessment plan.

Regarding the practice of "seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the student learning outcomes," while there are examples of how curricula have evolved over time to better address student learning outcomes, the evidence that specific improvements based on results of assessment is unclear. Further, while the Nuventive reports include recommended actions, most of these involve changing the process of assessment, such as the frequency of measurement or the measurement score itself, rather than improvements toward student learning outcomes.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed some documents including Critical Thinking and Communication Core Curriculum Assessment Review Forms and conducted interviews with Assistant Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Program Coordinator of Core Curriculum. Documents demonstrated assessment as core curriculum skills in courses as well as feedback to course instructors and plans for improvement. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee found that the institution identified expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement in general education.

8.2.c Academic and student services that support student success.
(*Student outcomes: academic and student services*)

The institution has identified expected outcomes and has used multiple methods of assessment for academic and student support services. The institution identified a sample of eight academic and student support services. Data presented were for a four-year period, 2019-2023. The evidence suggests that data are reviewed for continuous improvement and additional strategies are implemented if the standard of success is not met. An organizational chart would have been helpful to provide the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee with the structure of academic and student support services at the institution.

The institution provided a detailed narrative of its process which included an overview of student support unit assessment, the assessment management system that was used to enter and house its data and samples of the IE Assessment. Six divisions were listed as a part of the organizational structure of the institution. A table found in the conclusion portion of the narrative highlighted three divisions, with samples from eight support units, providing goals, assessment methods, results and action/use of results. An example of the IE report from Residential Living, Satisfaction Surveys revealed five categories that fell below the 2019-2020 reporting threshold. Safety and Security was identified as one of the categories. The data collected led staff members to revisit programming for residents. The institution provided an example of creating an assessment committee to assist with support unit assessment and academic program which will be a part of its continuous improvement plan. A hyperlink to the actual strategic plan document and organizational chart showing the six

divisions would have provided a clearer picture of the academic and student support structure.

Section 9: Educational Program Structure and Content

- 9.1 **Educational programs (a) embody a coherent course of study, (b) are compatible with the stated mission and goals of the institution, and (c) are based on fields of study appropriate to higher education.**
(Program content) [CR; Off-Site/On-Site Review]

The institution offers more than 135 bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, a specialist degree, and doctoral degrees through its six academic colleges. Academic approval processes at the institution are governed by published procedures, including the Academic Approval Procedure for Programs, the Programmatic and Administrative Substantive Changes Approval Process (SACSCOC), and the Academic Approval Procedures for Courses. Additionally, the creation of new degree programs requires approvals from both the state coordinating body and the System Board. Evidence provided supports the implementation of prescribed processes and procedures. A periodic peer review process is in place, occurring on a ten-year schedule, for all academic programs at the institution. Furthermore, numerous programs are accredited by specialized accrediting bodies. Regular processes for the approval and review of academic programs and curricular changes as conducted by institution faculty and under the oversight of applicable external agencies ensure the continued quality and alignment of program content.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents including 03.02.99.R0.01 Academic Approval Procedure for Programs and 03.02.99.R0.04 Academic Approval Procedures for Courses; and conducted interviews with the Program Coordinator of the Core Curriculum, the Provost, and the Chair of the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

- 9.2 **The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. The institution provides an explanation of equivalencies when using units other than semester credit hours. The institution provides an appropriate justification for all degree programs and combined degree programs that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit.**
(Program Length) [CR; Off-Site/On-Site Review]

The institution states that all credit is based on "the semester credit hour." Degree requirements for all programs are available in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs. The undergraduate catalog states that students in a baccalaureate program must complete a minimum of 120 credit hours, including 42 credit hours of general education curriculum. The graduate catalog states that, all masters' degrees "...require completion of at least 30 graduate hours." Further, "Specialist degrees require completion of at least 66 graduate hours." And, "A minimum of 90 semester hours beyond the baccalaureate degree or 60 semester hours beyond the master's degree is required for the doctoral

degree." The institution does not offer an associate's degree. A random review of the programs in the catalogs did not find any exceptions.

The institution's seniors in their last semester of coursework (under 12 credit hours remaining) may enroll for 3 to 6 hours of graduate credit, with a qualifying grade point average. However, it appears that all programs have unduplicated credit hours.

The Compliance Certification reports one special case:

- The institution offers one program, the BS-MS Kinesiology and Sports Studies-Human performance concentration that combines undergraduate work with graduate work for an accelerated degree program. The degrees alone are for 120 semester credit hours at the undergraduate level and 30 semester credit hours at the graduate level, with unduplicated credit hours. A maximum of 12 graduate hours can be taken as an undergraduate, and students cannot be admitted to the MS program until all undergraduate courses are complete. Only students who meet a certain standard in GPA are qualified to join.

For students pursuing two degrees at the same level, institutional guidance is provided in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs. To receive two bachelor's degrees, students must have a minimum of 30 new credit hours in residence for the second degree. The second master's degree allows for varying credit depending on degree type, with the remaining hours in residence.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents including the undergraduate and graduate catalogs; and conducted interviews with the Registrar, and the Program Coordinator of the Core Curriculum, and the Chair of the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

9.3 The institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the undergraduate level that:

- (a) **is based on a coherent rationale.**
- (b) **is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree program. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent.**
- (c) **ensures breadth of knowledge. These credit hours include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. These courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.**

(General education requirements [CR; Off-Site/On-Site Review])

The institution requires undergraduate students to complete a 42-hour general education program which reflects a breadth of knowledge, and which includes the following: Communication; Mathematics; Life and Physical Science; Language, Philosophy, and Culture; Creative Arts; American History; Government/Political Science; and Social and Behavioral Science. These component areas are tied to skills-based outcomes: Critical Thinking; Communication Skills; Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork; Social Responsibility; and Personal Responsibility. This program, reflecting the Texas Core

Curriculum (TCC), is developed and overseen by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, but course-level integration into the program is allowed at the local level (by institution) and overseen by a standing committee: the Core Curriculum Committee. Transfer credit into the program is overseen by admissions staff, advisors, and academic representatives and compliance is built into the institution's degree auditing software.

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found that the institution has a general education program that is based on a coherent rationale, is a substantial component of the undergraduate degree programs, and ensures breadth of knowledge.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents including the undergraduate catalog, conducted interviews with the Registrar, the Program Coordinator of the Core Curriculum, and the Chair of the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee in support of the institution's case for compliance, and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

- 9.4 At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for an undergraduate degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree.
(Institutional credits for an undergraduate degree)

The institution requires that all students complete at least 25% of the coursework towards an undergraduate degree in coursework taken at the institution. It publishes this requirement in the undergraduate catalog, and it ensures compliance through its degree audit system, DegreeWorks. Documentation verifies both the public dissemination of this policy (in the catalog and online) and application of this policy (through degree audits).

- 9.5 At least one-third of the credit hours required for a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree.
(Institutional credits for a graduate/professional degree)

The institution requires at least two thirds of coursework to be completed at the institution for all masters, specialist, and doctoral graduate programs, and all coursework must be completed at the institution for graduate certificate programs. This policy is published in its catalog. Documentation verified that graduate transfer requests begin at the departmental level and that administrative review by the departmental advisor or department head and the Graduate School ensures compliance with this policy.

- 9.6 Post-baccalaureate professional degree programs and graduate degree programs are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs, and are structured (a) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (b) to ensure engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training.
(Post-baccalaureate rigor and curriculum)

The institution's professional degree programs and graduate programs are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs. Graduate and professional coursework at the institution is distinguished from undergraduate coursework by course numbering at 500, 600, 700, 5000, and 6000 levels. Graduate level coursework and programs offer complexity and specialization that extends students' knowledge and intellectual maturity. Cross-listing an undergraduate course

with a graduate course requires a separate syllabus for each course. The graduate syllabus clearly demonstrates substantially higher expectations and student learning outcomes, emphasizing higher-order thinking for graduate students.

The institution has a procedure "Master and Specialist Degree Research Component", which requires one of two departmental research course options to ensure that all master's candidates understand their discipline's research methods and means of evaluation and application. All degree programs require the satisfactory completion of either a thesis or a research literature and techniques course.

Additionally, the institution's procedure "Course Requirements for the Doctoral Degree" requires that candidates for the doctoral degree must demonstrate proficiency in the research skills necessary to successfully complete their doctoral dissertation. For all doctoral programs except English, this proficiency is demonstrated by the completion of 12 to 15 credit hours of research tools courses, which includes the required Research Methodology course. The research tools requirement for the Ph.D. in English can be fulfilled through one of four options. For instance, candidates can meet the requirement by completing 12 credit hours of college-level courses in one foreign language.

The institution's procedures have prescribed that its graduate curricula are structured to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and appropriate professional practice and training experiences. However, no transcripts were provided to demonstrate that graduate students have completed the coursework as outlined in the procedures. Additionally, it is not clear whether the college-level foreign language courses that students in the Ph.D. in English program take are graduate-level courses or not, nor how foreign language proficiency meets the institution's stated policy regarding required research literature and techniques course.

- 9.7 The institution publishes requirements for its undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate professional programs, as applicable. The requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.
(Program requirements)

Institutional procedure 03.02.99.R0.01 New Program and Curriculum Approval Process outlines the process for developing new and changing existing programs, to ensure curriculum conforms to commonly accepted standards. Documentation verifies these procedures are regularly reviewed. Further, the university operates under state legislative mandate that "...the program is appropriate for the mission of the institution...and have a curriculum that is up-to-date and consistent with current educational theory." State mandates provide additional guidance for the development of post-baccalaureate programs, and these state codes are publicly available.

The institution publishes admission criteria, degree requirements, and required courses for each undergraduate and graduate program in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, respectively. A review of documentation of the requirement of the programs in the catalogs concludes that the requirements are published clearly and properly. Both (current and previous) catalogs are available online. Additional admission, degree, and program information is available throughout the searchable university (public) website. Documentation confirms the availability of this information. Finally, program requirements are available to current students, faculty and staff in the degree audit system, DegreeWorks.

A review of the requirements found that the requirements follow the commonly accepted standards and practices in higher education.

Section 10: Educational Policies, Procedures, and Practices

- 10.1 The institution publishes, implements, and disseminates academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice and that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution.
(Academic policies)

The institution publishes and implements academic policies that are consistent with good educational practice. According to university policy, 01.01.01.R0.02, “The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the Faculty Senate and the Deans Council, coordinate the development, review and routing for approval of rules and procedures affecting faculty.” Evidence from meeting minutes show that the Faculty Senate is actively engaged in discussion of academic policies. Procedures and practices comply with the policies and rules of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Texas A&M University System regulations. Evidence shows that policies are regularly reviewed and updated.

Documented evidence showed that institutional policies are available on the state system Policy and Regulation Library webpage and on the university’s Rule and Procedures webpage. Additional information related to general academic policies, such as admission, withdraw, completion requirements, etc. is readily available in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, as well as on departmental program and student resource websites.

While sufficient documentation was provided and/or available publicly, to verify compliance, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee notes that several evidential artifacts cited in the Compliance Certification were not available for review (i.e., broken links and attachments), including the Faculty Handbook, the Student Guidebook, Procedure 01.01.01.R0.02, etc.

- 10.2 The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, cost of attendance, and refund policies.
(Public information) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

The institution provided information on how they developed and maintained their rules and procedures related to Standard 10.2. Basic standards for assigning and computing a grade point average were also provided. There was no clear presentation in the Compliance Certification of an actual grading policy. However, in screenshots of academic procedures and grades, their meanings were listed on the screenshots from the graduate and undergraduate catalogs. Screenshots were provided by the institution as evidence of availability of the current calendar to students and the public. For example, a screenshot of the institution’s main web page was shared. However, no listing of the academic calendar was visible on the screenshot submitted. Some of the screenshots did have the academic calendar listed. However, there was no hyperlink made available to determine if students and the public could actually view the current academic calendars.

With the absence of direct screenshots of the institution's calendar, tuition page, etc., the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee viewed the institution's live webpage to find such evidence. In doing so, the Committee was able to confirm that the institution makes available to students and the public on its webpage the current academic calendar, cost of attendance (including a tuition calculator), and refund policies.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents, including copies of the institution's academic calendars as posted to the Registrar's website. The Committee also conducted interviews with the Vice President of Enrollment Management, Registrar, and Assistant Director of Institutional Effectiveness in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

- 10.3 The institution ensures the availability of archived official catalogs (digital or print) with relevant information for course and degree requirements sufficient to serve former and returning students.
(Archived information)

The institution provided evidence that it ensures the availability of official catalogs containing relevant information serving current, former, and returning students as well as the public. The institution provides digital access to catalogs going back to fall 2008 and provides print access to catalog for years prior. The institution publishes their online catalog using CourseLeaf. The institution employs processes and policies to both update and archive catalogs. The institution also provides means to notify current students of changes in degree requirements via DegreeWorks.

- 10.4 The institution (a) publishes and implements policies on the authority of faculty in academic and governance matters, (b) demonstrates that educational programs for which academic credit is awarded are approved consistent with institutional policy, and (c) places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty.
(Academic governance)

The institution publishes and implements policies on the authority of faculty in academic and governance matters. Documentation verified that these policies are published online and are available on the state system Policy and Regulation Library webpage and on the university's Rule and Procedures webpage. The Faculty Senate provides for academic governance, participating in university and policy processes through committee membership and serving as the primary faculty representation in advising the university's executive leadership and the President. Meeting minutes demonstrate the appropriately implemented role of faculty in academic governance.

The institutional procedure 03.02.99.R0.01 New Program and Curriculum Approval Process as well as the state system policy, 11.10 Academic Program Requests, outlines the process for developing new, and changing existing, programs, to ensure curriculum conforms to quality standards, common academy standards, and the institutional mission. Faculty are principally involved at all levels of academic program development and modification. Documentation of compliance with these procedures was evidenced through examples of program workflow in the university's curriculum inventory management program management system, CourseLeaf.

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found that the institution a) publishes and implements academic policies, b) demonstrates that its programs and credits are approved through these policies, and c) places primary academic authority over its curricula in the hands of faculty.

- 10.5 The institution publishes admissions policies consistent with its mission. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the practices, policies, and accreditation status of the institution. The institution also ensures that independent contractors or agents used for recruiting purposes and for admission activities are governed by the same principles and policies as institutional employees.
(Admissions policies and practices) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

Recruitment materials and presentations appear to accurately represent the institution's admission practices; these admission policies and academic programs are consistent with the institution's mission. The admissions process and policies for both undergraduate and graduate students are published in the catalogs. The institution further provides admissions instructions for prospective students, transfer students, graduate students who may have unique circumstances. For example, the institution has an Academic Fresh Start program, a process that allows coursework taken ten or more years prior to be considered or ignored when being considered for admissions.

The institution provided a statement describing its relationship with an independent contractor for recruiting and admissions purposes and activities. However, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not find evidence that independent contractors are governed by the same principles and policies as institutional employees.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the Focused Report and additional institutional documents, including an updated agreement with StatWax, the marketing firm contracted by the institution, and documentation that describes and directs Admissions, the Office of Marketing & Communication, and Institutional Effectiveness in ensuring the accuracy of third-party produced communications. The Committee also conducted interviews with the Vice President of Enrollment Management and the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, and the Assistant Director of Institutional Effectiveness in support of the institution's case for compliance. The newly provided documentation and the subsequent interviews support the institution's case for compliance.

- 10.6 An institution that offers distance or correspondence education:
- (a) ensures that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit.
 - (b) has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs.
 - (c) ensures that students are notified, in writing at the time of registration or enrollment, of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity.

(Distance and correspondence education) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

The Compliance Certification states that the institution has processes for ensuring the identity of each student enrolled in distance education courses and programs. Students

are provided a unique ID and password, with multi-factor authentication to verify student identity. Students are allowed access to the learning management system, D2L, via the institution's single sign-on system. This verification aligns to all access of all institution systems via institutional members. The Compliance Certification also states that the institution has policies and procedures to develop, document, and implement systems to protect the privacy of students, which are administered by the institution's Information Technology office. However, evidential artifacts were not available for review due to broken links and attachments; therefore, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was not able to verify this evidence.

The Compliance Certification states no student fees are charged for verification of student identity in distance education and that the institution provides notification of any associated charges for proctoring within the registration process. However, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was not able to locate evidence of such notification.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents submitted in response to the Focused Report including the undergraduate catalog, graduate catalog, and the schedule of classes for MATH 1325 and conducted interviews with multiple distance education students in support of the institution's case for compliance. The institution provided evidence that students are notified in writing at the time of registration or enrollment of additional student charges associated with verification of student identity. Through interviews with students enrolled in online programs, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee confirmed these practices to ensure student identity are followed.

- 10.7 The institution publishes and implements policies for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for its courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. These policies require oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments. In educational programs not based on credit hours (e.g., direct assessment programs), the institution has a sound means for determining credit equivalencies.
(Policies for awarding credit) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

The institution's policies for determining and awarding credit reflect those of the TAMU System, and those policies are published in policy manuals and in both the undergraduate and graduate catalogs. Course numbering follows standard conventions (100-4999 as undergraduate level and 500-799 as graduate level) and aligns with the Texas Common Course Numbering System which streamlines transfer credit. Documentation provided reflects that course credit hour assignment, for traditional face-to-face semester courses as well as for alternative, shortened, and online courses, is overseen by academically qualified programmatic representatives and follows published procedural guidelines for proposal, development, and approval. Determination of credit equivalencies in competency-based educational programs is similarly overseen by programmatic faculty, competencies in such programs are mapped to course outcomes, and grades/credits are awarded like any other course at the institution.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents including the undergraduate and graduate catalogs and conducted interviews with the Assistant Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Provost, and Registrar in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

- 10.8 The institution publishes policies for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit not originating from the institution. The institution ensures (a) the academic quality of any

credit or coursework recorded on its transcript, (b) an approval process with oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments, and (c) the credit awarded is comparable to a designated credit experience and is consistent with the institution's mission.

(Evaluating and awarding academic credit)

Transfer credit policies at the institution are widely published in both the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, online, and on required forms and systems used to process transfer credits from other institutions. At the undergraduate level, transfer credit is processed via a transfer equivalency portal and the Transferology system, managed by the Office of Admissions. Policies for Core Curriculum course transfers are instituted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. And the institution accepts appropriate Credit by Examination credit, such as CLEOP and AP. The institution requires international transfer credit to be verified by an independent credentialing agency, and graduate transfer credit requires review and approval by the program of study and the dean of Graduate Studies.

While documentation provided reflects widespread publication of appropriate policies developed and overseen by academically qualified personnel and units, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was not able to locate examples (e.g., redacted transcripts showing accepted/denied transfer credit, completed approval/denial of transfer credit forms/communications, international credentialing agency credit assessment and application of such credit, etc.) of the implementation of these policies.

The institution responded to the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee's concerns by providing detailed documentation and examples of how transfer credits are processed, assessed, and either accepted or rejected. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed examples of undergraduate credit transfer, the institution provided specific examples from various programs, including Organizational Leadership, Nursing, and Electrical Engineering, showing how transfer credits are evaluated. A detailed explanation of why certain credits were not accepted for the BS in Electrical Engineering—due to inadequate grades or the nature of the coursework (workforce credit vs. academic credit). The institution also provided examples of how international transfer credits are evaluated, including the agreement with Konkuk University for credit equivalency. This demonstrates the institution's process for ensuring that international transfer credits meet its academic standards.

In addition, the institution provided examples of how transfer credits are processed at the graduate level, including instances where credits were not accepted, were provided. A detailed explanation for the MS in Business Analytics, where specific coursework was accepted and others were not, along with the documentation process, underscores the review and approval process overseen by academically qualified individuals.

- 10.9 The institution ensures the quality and integrity of the work recorded when an institution transcripts courses or credits as its own when offered through a cooperative academic arrangement. The institution maintains formal agreements between the parties involved, and the institution regularly evaluates such agreements.
(Cooperative academic arrangements)

The institution has no cooperative academic arrangements.

Section 11: Library and Learning/Information Resources

- 11.1 **The institution provides adequate and appropriate library and learning/information resources, services, and support for its mission.**
(Library and learning/information resources) [CR]

The institution provides adequate and appropriate library and learning/information resources, services, and supports for its mission supporting research, learning, and innovation. The institution provides students, faculty, and staff access to a wide variety of print and digital materials: Monographs, journals, media, databases, archives, and government documents, etc. The institution has over 240,000 print and 1.1 million electronic books in their collections. Additional electronic collections include over 280,000 journals, over 330 databases, and over 150,000 items of streaming media. Electronic collections are available 24/7, on- and off- campus. The institution uses a publicly available collections development policy to inform and manages their collections-building. The institution provides appropriate access to both print and electronic collections as interlibrary services and consortia borrowing.

To support the collections adequacy, the institution uses a variety of internal and external methods. Internally, subject librarians and data/evidence driven acquisitions plans assure collections meet the campus needs. Students and faculty may also suggest purchases. Externally, annual library surveys of campus users note very high satisfaction ratings for collections, rating consistently above 4 out of 5 every year. The Graduate Exit Survey rates collections even higher. The institution also provides specialized collections and resources for archives, digital collection, teacher education, and government information.

The institution also provides adequate and appropriate research assistance and instructional services. Librarians provide services in-person and online. This includes off-campus sites. Faculty can request instructional sessions, and all can schedule research appointments. The institution also provides appropriate self-service support with online FAQs, research guides, instructional videos, and LMS modules.

Available work and study spaces and technologies are adequate and appropriate. These include study rooms, computer labs with printing and scanning, and technology students can borrow. The institution provides adequate spaces and technology at their off-campus and branch sites. Evidence of adequacy is provided by results from the annual library user survey where over 95% of students are satisfied or very satisfied with library facilities.

Beyond libraries, the institution provides adequate and appropriate learning support services for their LMS, D2L. These supports include training and technical support. The institution also provides computer labs and support in-person and online. The institution also provides in-person and online support in their Academic Success Center (tutoring) and the Writing Center.

- 11.2 The institution ensures an adequate number of professional and other staff with appropriate education or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources to accomplish the mission of the institution.

(Library and learning/information staff)

The institution provided evidence of an adequate number of professional and other staff with appropriate education or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources to accomplish the mission of the institution. For librarian professionals, the institution follows the ALA/ACRL recommendations regarding the MLS or equivalent as the appropriate terminal degree for librarians. All librarians meet this qualification. All positions (faculty and staff) are filled following the institution's human resource guidelines and policies. All faculty and staff meet or exceed minimum requirements for education. Appropriate skills are maintained via professional development. Annual library and student-exit surveys demonstrate high levels of faculty and student satisfaction with the library and therefore the work of both faculty and staff is presented as both adequate and appropriate.

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found no discussion of non-library staff in this section but did find evidence of adequate and appropriate learning resources staff in Standard 12.2.

- 11.3 The institution provides (a) student and faculty access and user privileges to its library services and (b) access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources.

(Library and learning/information access)

The institution provided evidence and support for both student and faculty access and user privileges to its library services and access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources.

For access and user privileges, the institution creates and manages user accounts supporting both in-person and online access to library services and collections. Students receive access to library collections and services on the first day of enrolled coursework. Faculty and staff receive their access and privileges upon employment.

Electronic resources are accessed via the library website and authentication is managed to support both on-campus and off-campus/around-the-globe access to library resources and services. Specialized services support integrated course-level access to e-journals content, course reserves, distance access, and interlibrary loan/document delivery. All students have access to online chat, collections, tutorials, and research guides. Faculty and students may also access collections in other Texas libraries via a consortium borrowers' program.

The institution maintains a central library open over 100 hours a week. This library houses many study spaces, services, technologies, accessibility services, and collections used by students and faculty. Off-campus and distance faculty and students receive equitable access to these collections and services via online access, document delivery, and distance services.

Off-campus sites provide study spaces, technologies, and service support for those not on the main campus.

For timely access to instruction, librarians provide in-person and online research consultations and other online services such as chat, FAQs, tutorials, and research guides. Faculty may request special library instruction sessions for their courses. The library also builds information literacy informed instruction using Credo and ACRL Framework tools. Instruction sessions may be tailored per the learning outcomes of each course requested.

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found no discussion of non-library learning resources in this section but did find evidence of adequate and appropriate learning resources in Core Requirement 12.1.

Section 12: Academic and Student Support Services

12.1 The institution provides appropriate academic and student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission. (Student support services) [CR Off-Site/On-Site Review]

The institution described an array of services to meet the needs of its student population in support of its mission. An undergraduate and graduate student profile gave the reader a clear picture of who would be benefitting from the programs and services offered by the institution. The needs of the undergraduate and graduate students appear to be met whether they are on the campus of the institution, online, or at an off-site institutional location. These services are provided by the Division for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, the Division of Enrollment Management and the Division of Academic Affairs. The Office of the President and Business Administration provide services that complement the other three Divisions. Online, off-campus, and dual enrollment students are all presented with services that are consistent with the mission of the institution.

Several surveys and assessments were embedded in the narrative. The institution was able to show a systematic process for collecting data and the use of outcomes for continuous improvement. For example, an IE Assessment for the Library goal was to assess visitors' satisfaction with collections, services, and technology. A survey was distributed, data were collected, and results were shared. The conclusion revealed that standards of success were met. In an effort to address the feedback that was provided the library would be working on repurposing an area to provide modern learning space with comfortable furniture, improving WiFi access, and ensuring visitors can easily find information.

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee noted some incidences for which the linked evidence was either broken (e.g., [45] under Tutoring Services and Library Resources), linked to what appears to be an incorrect pdf (e.g., [70], which shows an IE procedure statement, rather than an email communication), or needs clarification (e.g., [63] is to a photograph of a computer station, rather than evidence that an institution representative regularly visits a dual enrollment campus).

While noting the latter minor issues, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found that the institution has presented adequate and appropriate evidence regarding its academic and student support services.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee conducted interviews with the Vice President for Student Affairs & Dean of Students, the Vice President of Enrollment Management, the Chief Operating Officer for the A&M-Commerce at Dallas, and the Senior Vice Provost in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirmed the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

- 12.2 The institution ensures an adequate number of academic and student support services staff with appropriate education or experience in student support service areas to accomplish the mission of the institution.
(Student support services staff)

The institution organizes its student support and academic support services in three major areas, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Enrollment Management. A review of the qualifications of the leadership personnel in each of the various offices shows that these staff members are appropriately qualified. Direct evidence for the adequacy of the number of staff members is not provided, but the institution explains that the adequacy of staff positions is part of their assessment and budget process. Also, a review of the numbers provided in table 12.2.2 shows a reasonable staff size for various offices.

- 12.3 The institution publishes clear and appropriate statement(s) of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement(s) to the campus community.
(Student rights)

The institution has an office of the Dean of Students and Student Rights and Responsibilities and has policies that reflect the system wide Policy 13.02, Student Rights and Obligations. The various policies regarding student rights are published in a Student Guidebook. Students are able to submit concerns via an online reporting system. The published undergraduate and graduate catalogs also have sections about student rights and responsibilities. In addition, the institution publishes information about Title IX and Civil Rights (University Ethics and Compliance Office) and crime/safety information as required by the Clery Act (Annual Safety Report by the University Police Department).

- 12.4 The institution (a) publishes appropriate and clear procedures for addressing written student complaints, (b) demonstrates that it follows the procedures when resolving them, and (c) maintains a record of student complaints that can be accessed upon request by SACSCOC.
(Student complaints) [Off-Site/On-Site Review]

The institution publishes and explains its student complaint policies and procedures via a combination of a Student Rights and Responsibilities webpage, a Student Complaint, Appeal and Concern Matrix, a Complaints Reporting Form, and various individual policies (e.g., policies for Civil Rights, Hazing, grade appeals, academic discipline, and student non-academic conduct). These are all published in appropriate ways and the above-mentioned Matrix webpage helps steer students through various appeals channels.

The institution gave two redacted examples of student appeals records, to demonstrate the application of these procedures.

The institution states its definition of written student complaints and has a web-based form for entry of such complaints, including the appropriate components of a complaint. The institution states that the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities is responsible for maintaining the record of complaints and resolutions. Perusal of some of the individual policies (e.g., grade appeal, academic discipline) do not clearly state that this office is the final unit that maintains records, instead, in one case, saying that it is the Provost's Office. However, an interpretation of the institution's definition of a written complaint is that a complaint would only be considered "written" if it is not resolved by the application of other policies and is entered into the Complaints Reporting Form.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents, including the complaint log and protocols that direct the handling and necessary timeliness of submitted complaints. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee also conducted interviews with Vice President of Student Affairs & Dean of Students and the Director of Student Rights & Responsibilities, in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

- 12.5 The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records and maintains security measures to protect and back up data.
(*Student records*)

The institution adheres to state and system-wide regulations for the maintenance of student records and states that it adheres to FERPA in protecting private information about students. All students are assigned an 8-digit ID. Student information system, email and learning management system access by students is subject to multi-factor authentication.

All new employees who handle student records are required to complete FERPA Compliance training, with updated training every two years. All institutional personnel who use information technology are required to complete an information security awareness training. Student information is stored within Banner, along with a document management system. In addition, Counseling Center records are stored, electronically and on paper, with the electronic counseling/medical records stored using a HIPAA compliant encryption and paper records stored in locked files.

Regarding data security measures, the institution employs an electronic tool for simulating phishing, vishing, and smishing attacks, for the purpose of learning about such data security threats and becoming more resilient. Regarding backup and remote data storage procedures, the narrative for Standard 12.5 provides limited or less useful information; however, the narrative for Standard 13.7 explains that SDS databases are hosted in an Oracle Cloud Infrastructure environment.

With the adoption of revised *Principles of Accreditation* by the College Delegate Assembly in December 2023, this standard was revised to include the following sentence: "The institution also ensures that independent contractors or agents that have access to or maintain student records are governed by the same principles and policies as institutional employees." Below is a review of the institution's compliance related to this change.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents, including the Center for IT Excellence Policies and Legal Requirements webpage, Non-Disclosure Agreement, and

Standard 12.5 addendum signed by the University President. In addition, the Committee interviewed the Chief Information Officer and the Registrar who confirmed the practice of data security measures. The institution also provided additional documentation, including the service agreement between the institution and MarComm-Statwax, and a second agreement with SaavyBI North America, that further demonstrates independent contractors or agents with access to or maintain student records are governed by the same principles and policies as institutional employees in support of the institution's case for compliance.

- 12.6 The institution provides information and guidance to help student borrowers understand how to manage their debt and repay their loans.
(*Student debt*)

The institution provides a variety of resources (print, workshops, presentations) designed to help students understand how to manage their debt and repay their loans. Information is provided throughout a student's interaction with the institution—admissions, as a student (e.g., orientation, informational sessions throughout the semester and open to all, and exit counseling letters), and as a graduate.

Section 13: Financial and Physical Resources

- 13.1 **The institution has sound financial resources and a demonstrated, stable financial base to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services.**
(*Financial resources*) [CR]

The institution has sound financial resources and a stable financial base to support its mission. The institution has sufficient enrollment to support its mission. Despite two consecutive years of enrollment decline from fall 2020 to fall 2022, the institution recovered in fall 2023 with a substantial enrollment increase. Enrollment increased from 10,754 in fall 2022 to 12,185 in fall 2023, representing an increase of 1,431 students or 13.3% increase over the prior year.

The institution provided a financial audit for the year ending August 31, 2022. The institution received an unqualified audit opinion (i.e., a clean audit), reported a cash and cash equivalent balance of \$17.79 million and reported unrestricted net assets of 177.13 million.

The institution monitors its financial health with the Composite Financial Index. Although the index dipped slightly below the recommended 3.0 level, the Off-Site Committee determined that the institution has a solid financial base.

- 13.2 **The member institution provides the following financial statements:**
(a) **an institutional audit (or Standard Review Report issued in accordance with *Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services* issued by the AICPA for those institutions audited as part of a system-wide or statewide audit) for the most recent fiscal year prepared by an independent**

- certified public accountant and/or an appropriate governmental auditing agency employing the appropriate audit (or Standard Review Report) guide.**
- (b) **a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, which represents the change in unrestricted net assets attributable to operations for the most recent year.**
 - (c) **an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal procedures, and is approved by the governing board.**

(Financial documents) [CR]

(a) The institution provided a financial statement audit for the year ending August 31, 2022, as prepared by an independent certified public accountant. The institution received an unqualified financial audit opinion (i.e. a clean audit) for the period under review. A similar audit for the year 2023 was not available at the time of this review.

(b) The institution provided a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt.

(c) The institution provided evidence of a budget planning process that is preceded by sound planning. Additionally, the institution provided a budget for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2023.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended August 31, 2023 and the unmodified opinion letter of the auditor and determined the institution meets the requirements of the standard.

- 13.3 The institution manages its financial resources in a responsible manner.
(Financial responsibility)

The institution manages its financial resources in a responsible manner. The institution maintains an internal audit department that reports directly to the Board of Regents. The institution is conservative in its budgeting practices. The institution experienced a slight enrollment decline from fall 2020 to fall 2022 primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but it has increased fall 2023 enrollment by 1,431 students or 13.3% over the prior year.

- 13.4 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its financial resources.
(Control of finances)

The institution exercises appropriate controls over its financial resources. The institution's finances are managed by a qualified financial professional with over 20 years of relevant experience. Key finance roles are filled with qualified personnel. The institution is conservative in its budgeting practices. The budget is prepared annually and is preceded by sound planning. The institution has an internal audit function to assist in providing adequate controls over its finances. The Internal Audit Department completed a review of financial management services at the institution in September 2021.

- 13.5 The institution maintains financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs.
(Control of sponsored research/external funds)

The institution maintains financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs. The institution maintains adequate guidelines over pre-award and post-award activities by the Office of Sponsored Programs. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed sponsored programs policies and procedures and determined the institution maintains adequate guidelines over pre-award and post-award activities by the Office of Sponsored Programs. The institution received an internal audit in FY2018 of its research administration. The internal auditor recommended improvements which were adequately addressed by the institution.

- 13.6 The institution (a) is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended and (b) audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations. In reviewing the institution's compliance with these program responsibilities under Title IV, SACSCOC relies on documentation forwarded to it by the U. S. Department of Education.
(Federal and state responsibilities) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

The institution did not provide the most recent A-133 audit (FY 2022) of its financial aid programs; however, it provided a letter from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board that no federal or state findings were noted in the completion of the state-wide A-133 audit.

The institution supplemented this state-wide review with agreed-upon procedures by an independent auditor in September 2023. The auditors reviewed processes and controls, eligibility, packaging, disbursement, return of Title IV and Satisfactory Academic Progress. The report contained two areas of non-compliance. Specifically, the institution needs to show documentation to (1) verify that disbursed funds were reported to the COD (Common Origination and Disbursement system) within 15 days of disbursement and (2) confirm that award notifications were sent to students indicating the amount awarded and cost of attendance.

Additionally, the institution performed an internal audit in September 2019 of its student financial aid programs. The institution stated that it implemented recommendations in May 2020, but the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not find evidence that the following recommendations have been addressed:

1. Award limits not consistently adjusted
2. Return of Title IV funds are done timely
3. Errors in Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate are eliminated
4. Cost of attendance is documented
5. Loan disclosure statements comply with Department of Education guidelines

Evidence is needed that demonstrates the institution has addressed (1) findings in the September 2023 agreed-upon procedures report by an independent auditor and (2) findings in the 2019 financial aid internal audit report. Additionally, the institution needs to include a most recent state-wide A-133 audit and ensure no findings in the report relate to the institution.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee interviewed both the Vice President for Finance and Administration and the Director of Financial Aid and reviewed the Federal Financial Aid audit dated March 2024 for the financial aid year ended August 31, 2023. This engagement reviewed the institution's compliance with specific federal financial aid

requirements related to Processes and Controls, Eligibility, Packaging, Disbursement, Return of Title IV funds and Satisfactory Academic Progress. There were no material findings from this audit. Additionally, the institution committed additional resources to automate disbursements via the common origination and disbursement system and created a new position dedicated to the timely return of Title IV funds.

- 13.7 The institution ensures adequate physical facilities and resources, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.
(Physical resources) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

The description of the physical resources on the Commerce campus is adequate, including the discussion of maintenance, capital improvement, deferred maintenance, the master plan, insurance, and the IT infrastructure and support.

The facilities department provides day-to-day responses to campus needs through a work order request system. Additionally, the institution has engaged with Gordian to identify and prioritize campus deferred maintenance needs. A survey was concluded in July 2023 to allow the campus community to rate the campus facilities.

The institution maintains multiple instructional sites across northeast Texas. The Compliance Certification did not provide adequate evidence or documentation that the institution maintains adequate physical facilities and resources at the sites to serve the needs of its educational programs, support service and other mission-related activities. Nor were up-to-date MOUs provided for agreements with the hosting entities. The report states only that the classrooms at various off-campus sites are managed by the building and property owners. This statement does not address whether such off-campus sites have adequate facilities for the education programs being delivered by the institution.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee members toured four off-campus instructional sites and the main campus and found the facilities to be adequate. The Committee interviewed students who expressed concerns regarding the main campus about adequate lighting and certain buildings being non-compliant with ADA. The Committee interviewed the CFO and Comptroller who indicated that surveys were completed to identify lighting problems. The institution has already replaced non-working lights and is budgeting continued resources to continue to improve campus lighting. Additionally, regarding ADA, Ferguson Social Sciences, the oldest building on campus, is being renovated to achieve ADA compliance. Other ADA issues are being addressed on a case-by-case basis.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee interviewed the Vice President for Finance and Administration and reviewed all up-to-date MOUs and articulated services provided by the property owner/management teams. The Committee also interviewed the Vice President for Student Affairs to review the student support programs and services available at the off-campus sites and found them to be adequate.

- 13.8 The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community.
(Institutional environment)

The institution maintains a police department containing 34 authorized positions that include 23 state certified police officers, 3 security officers, 6 communications officers and 3 administrative support personnel. The department maintains an Alert Warning system in the event it needs to notify the campus of an emergency. The department also oversees the Clery Act compliance and publishes a comprehensive annual security report. The police department also maintains adequate oversight and engagement at off-campus instructional sites.

The institution also maintains critical services for students such as Student Health Services, a Counseling Center, a Critical Incident Response Team, Campus Recreation and Residential Living and Learning Centers. The institution also supplies accommodations for Americans with Disabilities Act.

The institution's Department of Emergency Management and Safety offers several services such as risk management, emergency management, routine inspections, campus transportation, employee training, hazardous waste training, laboratory safety training and a number of other programs.

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee finds the institution has taken reasonable steps to ensure a healthy, safe and secure environment for its academic community. However, the institution did not address whether there have been any investigations related to sexual violence, open or closed within the past 10 years by the U.S. Department, Office of Civil Rights.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the institutional attestation that the institution has not had any investigations by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, related to sexual violence, in the last 10 years.

Section 14: Transparency and Institutional Representation

- 14.1 The institution (a) accurately represents its accreditation status and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of SACSCOC in accordance with SACSCOC's requirements and federal policy; and (b) ensures all its branch campuses include the name of that institution and make it clear that their accreditation depends on the continued accreditation of the parent campus.

(Publication of accreditation status) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

The institution provided evidence that it accurately presents its regional accreditation status in publications and web sites. The institution does not have a branch campus.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee interviewed the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Assistant Director of Institutional Effectiveness. The Committee reviewed the evidence (undergraduate and graduate catalogs, and institutional web pages) provided by the institution, and found that the institution accurately represents its accreditation status. The institution complies with the SACSCOC Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure policy.

- 14.2 The institution has a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported in accordance with SACSCOC's policy.
- (Substantive change)*

The institution presented evidence that it has an appropriate policy for identifying and reporting potential substantive changes to SACSCOC, and the institution has presented evidence that it has applied this policy and procedure.

Part II of the Compliance Certification lists numerous instances of notifications by the institution to SACSCOC.

- 14.3 The institution applies all appropriate standards and policies to its distance learning programs, branch campuses, and off-campus instructional sites.
(*Comprehensive institutional reviews*) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

The institution currently maintains seven off-campus instructional sites, including one pending closure, and does not have any branch campus. The institution also offers numerous (70+) programs where 50% or more of the credit hours are earned through online instruction.

Faculty: The institution has a sufficient number of qualified, full-time faculty to ensure the quality and integrity of the programs, regardless of instructional location or delivery mode. It has processes in place for annual and periodic program and course reviews to ensure ongoing quality and adequacy. Ongoing professional development opportunities and resources for faculty members are available across all locations and delivery modes.

Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness: The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated data-based planning and evaluation. The process encompasses the entire institution and includes representation from all instructional sites as well as a breadth of external constituents.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes: Student learning and success are fundamental to the institution's mission, regardless of the instructional location or delivery mode. Data from off-campus sites are tracked through the institution's Student Achievement Webpage. The institution uses well-designed, program-based academic assessment to gather direct and indirect measures of student learning and achievement in order to build and implement data-informed action plans for student learning improvement in all educational programs. Assessment/evaluation of academic programs and student learning outcomes for off-campus instruction sites' offerings is the responsibility of the academic units and spans all program locations and delivery modes. This continuous assessment is conducted regardless of class modality or location.

Educational Program Structure and Content: Regardless of instructional site or delivery mode, all institution degrees embody a coherent course of study aligned with the institutional mission, meeting the institutional degree requirements and representing appropriate fields for higher education.

Educational Policies, Procedures, and Practices: The institutional committees and departments are responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring educational policies that span the instructional sites and delivery modes as appropriate. Off-campus and distance learning programs are managed within the departmental unit, thus ensuring representation and input from faculty across all locations in matters such as academic governance. This departmental management also ensures that requirements related to

admissions policies, distance education, and credit policies are applied uniformly to all students.

Library and Information Resources: The library supports the education and research needs of campus-based, distance education, and off-campus instructional site students, faculty, and staff by providing access to library and learning resources available via the library website 24/7. Students and faculty on main campus, as well as those at the off-campus instructional sites and distance learners, may access these services and resources. Additionally, a travelling librarian serves the distance education sites, facilitating services and support for students receiving instruction at the off-campus instructional sites.

Academic and Student Support Services: The institution provides a breadth of student support programs, services, and activities intended to promote student learning and engagement as well as enhancement of student success in the classroom. These services are accessible to students at all instructional sites and distance learners through face-to-face and online modalities as appropriate. These efforts are coordinated within and across various divisions at the institution.

Financial and Physical Resources, Institutional Environment: Day-to-day maintenance services for off-campus instructional sites vary depending on locations; some are outsourced to private companies, while others are administered by state systems or educational organizations. The Center for Information Technology Excellence (CITE) manages the information technology (IT) network infrastructure for the main campus and off-campus instructional sites. A safe institutional environment is maintained for all students regardless of location or program modality.

In conclusion, the institution has demonstrated that it applies all appropriate standards and policies, regardless of delivery mode or instructional site location.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee toured off-campus instructional sites in Dallas, Corsicana, Mesquite, and Bryan and conducted interviews with Site Directors, faculty, staff, and students attending programs at off-site locations and exclusively online programs in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

- 14.4 The institution (a) represents itself accurately to all U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting agencies with which it holds accreditation and (b) informs those agencies of any change of accreditation status, including the imposition of public sanctions. (See SACSCOC policy "Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies.")
(Representation to other agencies) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

The institution has three academic programs (Arts and Design, last reviewed in 2019, Music, last reviewed in 2015; and Nursing Education, initial accreditation in 2014 and 2019 for the BSN and MSN programs) that are accredited by agencies recognized by the US Department of Education. The institution provided adequate evidence to show that it presented itself accurately to these agencies. There has been no need for the institution to inform these professional accrediting agencies of a change in its standing with SACSCOC.

The On-Site Reaffirmation committee interviewed the Senior Vice Provost and the Assistant Director of Institutional Effectiveness. The Committee found sufficient evidence that the institution adequately and accurately represents itself to the U.S. Department of Education-recognized agencies which accredit its programs to include the Arts and Design, Nursing, and Music.

- 14.5 The institution complies with SACSCOC’s policy statements that pertain to new or additional institutional obligations that may arise that are not part of the standards in the current *Principles of Accreditation*.

(Policy compliance)

(Note: For applicable policies, institutions should refer to the SACSCOC website [http://www.sacscoc.org])

14.5.a **“Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports”**

Applicable Policy Statement. If an institution is part of a system or corporate structure, a description of the system operation (or corporate structure) is submitted as part of the Compliance Certification for the decennial review. The description should be designed to help members of the peer review committees understand the mission, governance, and operating procedures of the system and the individual institution’s role within that system.

Documentation: The institution should provide a description of the system operation and structure or the corporate structure if this applies.

(Policy compliance: “Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports”)

14.5.b **“Separate Accreditation for Units of a Member Institution”**

Applicable Policy Statement. If the Commission on Colleges determines that an extended unit is autonomous to the extent that the control over that unit by the parent or its board is significantly impaired, the Commission may direct that the extended unit seek to become a separately accredited institution. A unit which seeks separate accreditation should bear a different name from that of the parent. If the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges determines the unit should be separately accredited or the institution requests to be separately accredited, the unit may apply for separate accreditation from any institutional accrediting association that accredits colleges in that state or country

Implementation: If, during its review of the institution, SACSCOC determines that an extended unit is sufficiently autonomous to the extent that the parent campus has little or no control, SACSCOC will use this policy to recommend separate accreditation of the extended unit. No response is required by the institution.

(Policy compliance: “Separate Accreditation for Units of a Member Institution”)

The institution is part of the Texas A&M University System, which comprises 11 universities and 8 state agencies. The institution has provided a clear description of the operation and governance of this system. In addition, the institution has no extended units.

Additional observations regarding strengths and weaknesses of the institution.

(optional)

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee did not write additional observations.

Part III. Assessment of the Quality Enhancement Plan

Brief description of the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan

The Quality Enhancement Plan *Foundations for Your Future* focuses on career management by preparing students to develop skills that will aid in their decisions about career options. The QEP contains three phases: foundation, framework, and the capstone experience. The QEP aligns with the university's strategic plan and mission: "Educate. Discover. Achieve." Specifically, the QEP aligns with the strategic plan's first priority: to ensure students are prepared for the workforce (goal 1); to align initiatives to support unique rural-urban identity (goal 3); and to enhance recruiting efforts (goal 5). Furthermore, the QEP permits a targeted outreach to the institution's first-generation students, a subset of students who are likely to arrive at college without the skills needed to make appropriate career choices, manage their options, or adapt to the always changing requirements of the workforce.

Foundation for Your Future differentiates between career development and career management in that the latter refers to the "active decisions and behaviors and individual will undertake to build their career trajectory." The QEP Committee will leverage the programs and initiatives established in Student Affairs and the Career Preparedness Center to ensure students encounter QEP activities at both the curricular and non-curricular levels. In addition to the opportunities students must engage with the QEP activities on campus and in the classroom, the institution will also offer a career-ready micro-credential. This non-academic micro-credential is available to all students, and those who complete the credential will earn a certificate and graduation cord.

The institution outlines an implementation plan and the proposal provides student learning outcomes for each of the three phases and for the micro-credential. The proposal also includes an assessment plan for each significant part of the QEP.

Analysis of the Quality Enhancement Plan

- A. **Topic Identification**. *The institution has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes.*

Foundation for Your Future was identified as a topic most connected to the institution's comprehensive planning and evaluation process through university research initiated more than five years ago. This research collated insights from students, faculty, staff, alumni, and local business leaders about career preparedness and the skills most in need students at the institution. The IER survey of over 4,000 alumni showed a need to strengthen the skills of career management, digital technology, and oral communication. In subsequent surveys and working sessions, the committee prioritized career management and elevated this topic over the topics of digital technology and oral communication.

The career management topic gained momentum as the QEP committee saw how it aligned with the institution's established mission to increase retention and graduation success rates for first-generation students. The QEP also directly aligns with three goals in the institution's strategic plan (goals 1, 3, and 5). The committee also identified this topic as one that connects with the national trends on career readiness as well as emerging research on durable vs. perishable skills. Career management is a durable skill that will help students navigate the evolving work ecosystem.

Finally, the topic aims to help students identify alternative options to initial career choices. The QEP committee highlights a concern often spoken about in academia and echoed in their own faculty, family, and employer groups: students choose a major by their sophomore year, but they often have an inadequate understanding of their skills and how those skills support their interests at this early juncture. The QEP committee hopes this plan will help students identify alternative, and often more appropriate, options, which will increase students' likelihood to persist in college and find successful employment after graduation. College persistence, retention rates, and post-graduation success are a fundamental part of the institution's QEP.

B. **Broad-based Support.** *The plan has the broad-based support of institutional constituencies.*

The institution established a working group that included faculty and staff representatives from academic and student service units including Campus Life, Student Development, College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, College of Business, College of Education and Human Services, College of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Arts, College of Innovation and Design, Extended University sites, Honors College, Library, VP for Financial Affairs, and representatives from the institution's office of Institutional Effectiveness & Research (IER). The working committee presented two ideas to the President and Provost. The QEP chair was selected to continue the work established by the QEP working group and in January of 2023, the formal QEP committee was formed and included many members from the initial working group.

The institution's IER office conducted a series of surveys starting in 2018 and continuing through the initial efforts of the working group that helped to direct the topic. Faculty and staff had opportunities to respond to QEP topic selection during department chair meetings. Students provided feedback to the QEP Committee during SGA meetings. In addition to the more public meetings, the QEP Director met with the department heads across campuses to identify courses and activities that fit into each of the three phases.

The institution appears well prepared to facilitate the participation of distance education and OCIS-located students. Notably, the Office of Career Preparedness offers career fairs and other career activities at off-campus instructional sites, which indicates the committee has surveyed needs of students at all campuses.

C. **Focus of the Plan.** *The institution identifies a significant issue that focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success.*

Career readiness is a topic many institutions have explored as a QEP topic. Post-pandemic students across the nation are vocal about their desire to see a direct

connection between the work they conduct in the classroom and how this work will help them to secure career-appropriate employment post-graduation. *Foundation for Your Future*, addresses this student concern and has developed student learning outcomes that are directly linked to meaningful curricular and co-curricular activities spanning the life cycle of an undergraduate degree.

The QEP lists three goals: 1. To set the stage for the future with a strong foundation, 2. To construct a framework that paves the way for success, and 3. To elevate the career journey through meaningful capstone experiences. Each of these goals contains two student learning outcomes, which are intended to measure student engagement, completion, and success in developing career management skills. Importantly, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee is concerned that the three goals of the QEP are stated in very general terms and do not appear to be measurable. The Committee is also concerned that some of the student learning outcomes do not align well with the QEP goals that the learning outcomes are intended to measure.

In addition to the primary QEP goals above, the planned implementation initiatives include a mentoring program and a non-academic micro-credential. These two additional programs each contain goals and student learning outcomes. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee members are concerned this additional initiative creates an unnecessary tracking, assessment, and reporting processes. Finally, there is a First-Gen student learning outcome that highlights how the institution looks to focus on more closely monitored and curated experiences for these students. While this initiative fits in with the institutional strategic plan, and with the work of another grant, the connection to the QEP confuses the direct measures that are assessed in an implementation plan.

Recommendation 3: The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution revise its QEP to focus on improving specific measurable student learning outcomes and/or student success.

- D. **Institutional Capability for the Initiation, Implementation, and Completion of the Plan.** *The institution provides evidence that it has committed sufficient resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP.*

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the proposed institutional resource commitment, both in terms of financial (budgeted) resources and personnel, and feels the commitments are not adequate. The institution has roll-over funds from the previous QEP (\$120,000.00) and has allocated \$37,934.00 a year to support the activities of the QEP.

The QEP Director, graduate assistant, and reporting coordinator will receive funding for overload or a percentage of their FTE. The QEP committee leverages existing and planned expansion of staff roles across campus units including the professionals in the Career Preparedness Center and in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research. The planned QEP activities depend on the volunteer hours of roughly 85-100 faculty members who will serve as mentors. Additionally, the activities in all three phases require faculty to adjust their curriculum and provide QEP-specific assessments. Faculty members are not compensated or trained for this additional work.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee concludes that the mentoring program cannot be effective without proper funding and training of faculty. The Committee is concerned that a 30-minute session per year is not enough time to build an appropriate mentoring relationship specifically for first generation students. If the mentoring program continues as part of the QEP, mentors must be properly trained and supported, and mentor-specific outcomes should be developed to measure effectiveness in relation to the QEP's goals.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee is concerned that the director's position as a faculty member and a department head leaves little space for the work of the QEP even with overload compensation. The Committee questions the sufficiency of resources for leadership of the QEP. Program development and coordination of cross-unit activities in addition to faculty training, assessment, and reporting is an effort-intensive job.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee concludes that the amount allocated to student professional development is well below the amount needed to support this activity. It was indicated that student service fees might be available in the future for travel funding, but this is not clearly established in the budget. Since professional development ties into the mentoring program, the micro-credential and phase three of the QEP, this activity should be better supported.

Recommendation 4: The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution commits sufficient fiscal and human resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP.

- E. **Assessment of the Plan.** *The institution has developed an appropriate plan to assess achievement.*

The institution's plan for assessment identifies two assessment methods/standards of success for each of the QEP's three phases. The assessment methods chosen by the institution rely on (1) students achieving a "meets expectations" threshold in either completing a career reflection Essay (Phase 1) or in key assessments/capstones within the major (Phases 2 and 3), and (2) students pursuing/persisting/completing a Career Ready Micro-Credential. Other assessment methods identified by the institution require students to "meet expectations."

While the QEP provides an outline for the assessment process, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee is very concerned that there are no mechanisms or rubrics in place to provide guidance for faculty and that would help to ensure consistency across the disciplines as to what constitutes achieving a "meets expectations" outcome level. The Committee notes that a plan to permit each faculty member to create individual rubrics to assess the QEP's student outcomes does not provide a valid data source for use in assessment reports and for analysis by the QEP director. Furthermore, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee does not agree that an academic grade earned on an assignment can accurately reflect the fulfillment of the associated student learning outcomes. During interviews, members of the institution's QEP Development Committee noted that they have just begun to have conversations related to establishing generalized rubrics that would allow for the proper assessment (across disciplines) of the skills the institution seeks for the QEP to impart.

Another area of concern for the assessment procedure mapped out by the QEP Development Committee is that there are too many initiatives, components, and milestones for each initiative to track, especially as the QEP extends into years two through five. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee suggests that the institution develop a more streamlined version of the QEP where each phase has a student success goal or student learning outcome that can be connected to and measured by a universal rubric.

Recommendation 5: The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution develops an appropriate plan to assess achievement of student learning outcomes and/or student success outcomes for the QEP.

Analysis and Comments for Strengthening the QEP

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee commends the work on the QEP engaged by the faculty and staff. The QEP proposal represents a meaningful effort to provide students with appropriate ways to encounter, practice, and refine their career management skills. The Committee believes the following suggestions will strengthen the focus of the plan as well as streamline the implementation and bolster the assessment processes.

1. Create pre and post student assessment process
 - The distinction between Career Management and Career Readiness is not clear throughout the plan.
 - Start with a pre-development survey of students in the CID 1300 and 2300 courses. This survey should ask students to respond to their confidence in demonstrating the nine behaviors listed under NACE's Career Management competency (which is now called Career and Self Development (2024)).
 - Students should answer the same questions in a post-development survey during their capstone courses. The pre- and post-assessments will provide the QEP with growth data that is directly tied to the QEP's focus on Career Management and the skills linked to this competency.
2. Revise the CID 1300 and 2300 courses
 - Standardize the curriculum in the CID 1300 and 2300 courses to stage student career readiness learning.
 - Invite the university career professionals to help with this curriculum development.
 - Include the assessments in the D2L shells.
 - Resume and cover letter assignments should start here for student initial feedback from mentor/instructor.
 - Use the faculty in CID 1300 and 2300 as first-year mentors.
 - Fold the mentoring requirements for the first year into the CID 1300 and 2300 coursework.
 - Embed checklist for the microcredentials in CID 1300, *The Student and University* and CID 2301, *The Human Experience*.
3. Re-develop and fund Mentoring Program
 - Provide training and funding for mentors in each major for students in the sophomore and junior years.

- Stipulate the mentor to student ratio to ensure there is enough time for faculty and staff to develop meaningful professional relationships with students.
 - Fold mentoring requirements for the senior year into the capstone courses. Capstone faculty can serve as mentors.
 - Pay faculty stipends for serving in this capacity.
4. Provide enough career professionals at the Career Preparedness Center to review resumes and cover letters.
 5. Ensure faculty have access to adequate training on platforms and tools offered to students at the Career Preparedness Center.
 6. Create standardized rubrics for each of the three phases of the QEP.
 - Faculty courses can include associated (in the LMS) rubrics for existing assignments.
 - Rubrics allow faculty to quickly assess a student's level of engagement/participation with the QEP activities.
 - Focus each of the three rubrics: list the Career Management sample behaviors in column one, allow for faculty to define the activity for each behavior in column two, and then provide a score for each behavior in column three.
 - Contact IT to change access restrictions in the back end of the LMS so QEP administrators can review and download data faculty have posted in standardized rubrics.
 - Provide professional development opportunities for faculty who will be assessing the behavior development of students. These opportunities should also include grade norming sessions for the standardized rubrics.
 7. Consider increasing QEP visibility
 - Update the QEP website with the curriculum map published and outline the steps for the non-academic micro-credential posted to it.
 - Provide a session on the QEP in the campus orientation to inform students about the QEP initiatives and how they connect to career readiness.
 - Develop a logo for use in syllabi for courses identified as key courses in the major to help students easily recognize such courses.

Part IV. Third-Party Comments

If an institution receives Third-Party Comments, the institution has an opportunity to respond to those comments and the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviews the response as part of its comprehensive evaluation of the institution.

The Committee should check one of the following:

No Third-Party Comments submitted.

Third-Party Comments submitted. (**Address the items below.**)

1. Describe the nature of the Comments and any allegations of non-compliance that may have been part of the formal Third-Party Comments;

2. Indicate whether the Committee found evidence in support of any allegations of non-compliance.

If found to be out of compliance, the Committee should write a recommendation and include it in Part II under the standard cited with a full narrative that describes why the institution was found to be out of compliance and the documentation that supports that determination. In this space, reference the number of the Core Requirement, Comprehensive Standard, or Federal Requirement and the recommendation number cited in Part II.

If determined to be in compliance, explain in this space the reasons and refer to the documentation in support of this finding.

APPENDIX B

Off-Campus Sites or Distance Learning Programs Reviewed

A&M-Commerce at Dallas, 8750 North Central Expressway, Dallas, TX 75203

The A&M-Commerce at Dallas site is a facility under the oversight of a dedicated Operations Manager and Chief Operating Officer. The site provides both undergraduate and graduate degrees in programs, including graphic design, business, and social work. This report aims to provide an overview of the organizational structure, physical facilities, academic and student support services, as well as institutional effectiveness.

Faculty emphasized connections with the main campus, leading to alignment with the university's standards. Additionally, key personnel, such as the program manager for Animal Science are on site full-time. Other full-time staff include (but are not limited to) the Associate Director of University Admissions, Senior Academic Advisor, Title IX Coordinator, and Associate Financial Aid Director.

The facilities at the A&M-Commerce Dallas site are outstanding and well-suited for the programming offered. They provide sufficient space for student collaboration and studying. Shared offices are available for faculty and staff, including those who spend limited time on-site. Security measures are in place at the main entrance and throughout the floors occupied by the institution. Specialized equipment, such as that for graphic design and art-focused majors, as well as a hydroponics lab, contribute to the unique learning environment. Plans are underway to acquire additional space for events and collaboration areas.

The site hosts primary academic and student support services with clearly marked office spaces. While there is no library on-site, students have internet access to online databases through the institution's library and can request physical collection items via mail. Faculty take it upon themselves to teach students to use library resources but may schedule librarians to present services to classes. On-site staff are available to resolve technology issues as they arise. Feedback from students suggests a need for an on-site financial aid officer, although one is already present full-time. Students are aware of the option to connect with main campus services for additional support, such as counseling.

Connections to academic institutional effectiveness (IE) at the university level are evident, particularly through program coordinators and faculty involvement. General education courses taught on-site are incorporated into IE assessments through the university's Core Curriculum Committee. While administrative services such as admissions and academic advising conduct assessments, connections to university-level IE are less clear. The operations manager conducts a site satisfaction survey, revealing student desires for additional dining options and more student activities.

Mesquite Metroplex Center, 3819 Towne Crossing Blvd., Suite 201, Mesquite, TX 75150

The Mesquite Metroplex Center is a facility under the oversight of a dedicated Director of Operations. The site primarily serves graduate-level students seeking higher education degrees. Undergraduate students enrolled at this site are completing student-teaching internship requirements. This report overviews the organizational structure, physical facilities, academic and student support services, and institutional effectiveness at the Mesquite location.

At the Mesquite site, organizational operations are managed by one full-time non-faculty staff member who serves as the director. This individual fulfills multiple roles, including IT support for classrooms, faculty, and students, classroom scheduling, and acts as the primary point of contact for students needing services from the Commerce campus. Additionally, some faculty members are based full-time at the Mesquite location, particularly those involved with teaching graduate-level programs. However, unlike the Dallas site, additional student success resources on site are limited.

Students enrolled in courses associated with the Mesquite location have access to main-campus services through various online channels. Local services include a computer lab and a small library. While efforts for outreach from the main campus have been noted (e.g., student services fairs/tabling efforts), students demonstrated a lack of awareness regarding on-site services during interviews. The site director initiates communication with new students via welcome emails, outlining available services and support. Additionally, the site director serves as the primary contact for in-person services and facilitates connections with resources on the main campus as needed. Both students and faculty expressed a sense of security at the location, with security personnel present during morning, afternoon, and evening hours and effective lighting of the parking lot.

Faculty members at the Mesquite site demonstrate a clear understanding of the alignment between academic programming and program-level assessments, actively contributing to Institutional Effectiveness (IE) reports for their respective programs. While student services are predominantly available online, efforts are made to gather feedback through semesterly surveys aimed at assessing the effectiveness of on-location services.

Texas A&M System RELLIS, 3100 Texas Highway 47, Bryan, TX 77807

The RELLIS site is an alliance of all Texas A&M institutions with academic program representation and partnership with Blinn College District. Students are admitted through the main campus but complete general education and preparatory courses through Blinn prior to major courses in BS Computer Science and Cybersecurity and BSCIS Computer Information Systems programs.

The Associate Vice Chancellor and Director of RELLIS provided a tour of the facility which opened in 2020 is shared by 8 System institutions and provides state-of-the art classrooms, laboratories, and flex spaces for student and faculty use. Multiple flexible classrooms, specialized laboratories, and offices were toured including SCADA Lab, Learning Resource Center, and Student Organization Support. The Learning Resource Center houses the Writing Center, study space for students, and limited library resources. Students can access additional academic support and library resources from the main campus through remote access and delivery services. Information Technology is provided at the RELLIS site for facility support and through the main campus for faculty computers.

Students enrolled in the B.S. Computer Science program were interviewed. The majority of students entered the program through Blinn with one transfer student. They indicated that they were satisfied with the facility, including classrooms and academic student support services, but expressed concern about access to advising, financial aid information, career services, access to networking lab, and number of program faculty. They indicated that they receive significant communication from the main campus about events and services but do not participate because of the distance from RELLIS.

A group interview was conducted with the Associate Vice Chancellor and Provost of RELLIS Academic Alliance, Assistant Provost of RELLIS, Academic Advisor, VP for Research and Economic Development for TAMUC, Library and Writing Center Coordinator for RELLIS, and Dean of the College of Science and Engineering for TAMUC. The coordination of services and facilities at the RELLIS campus was discussed extensively including the combined commencement ceremony, advising services, library resources, and student activities.

Several faculty members were also interviewed including part time, tenure track, and full-time instructors. They indicated that they are integrated into their academic departments, follow the same promotion and tenure guidelines, and have access to main campus and system faculty development resources. Additional opportunities for faculty development, research integration, and collaboration are provided through RELLIS for faculty from all campuses. Faculty indicated that they are well supported for student academic issues and concerns. The institution's QEP was briefly discussed, and faculty indicated that the career management initiatives are well integrated into the degree programs offered at RELLIS by Texas A&M University-Commerce.

Navarro College Partnership-Corsicana, 3200 West 7th Avenue, Corsicana, TX 75110

This off-campus instructional site offers programs in Criminal Justice and Education at the undergraduate level in partnership with Navarro College. The site visit included a tour of the administrative offices, distance learning classroom, and computer laboratory used by A&M-Commerce students while on campus. Most on campus courses are taught in rooms shared with Navarro. Navarro College provides information technology, campus Security, maintenance, etc. for the facility.

Education faculty interviewed discussed faculty development opportunities through their academic departments to assist teaching both in person and online students. Because of student demographics, most courses are now offered online in the evenings. For students in education programs, advising for student teaching and capstone projects is provided by the Education Center Director.

The A&M-Commerce central office is staffed by the Site Director, Administrative Assistant, and part-time academic advisor who all facilitate access to student services and resources for students to the main campus. This central office reports to the Special Assistant to the Provost. Additional staffing is provided on a part time basis by a recruiter shared with the RELLIS campus. Campus services are provided virtually including video conferencing for financial aid, career services, etc. from Commerce site. A student services fair is held annually at Navarro with service providers from Commerce to introduce students to available services. An interview was conducted with one student enrolled in the Navarro partnership program nearing commencement in Spring 2024. The student indicated that the faculty and staff were very accommodating in services, advising, course scheduling, and any other issues. The student indicated that communication from Commerce campus was provided on a regular basis with good responsiveness. Overall, there was evidence of adequate support for students in this small, targeted program at the off-site location.

Distance Learning Programs

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee interviewed students enrolled in online programs including BS General Studies, MBA, MS in Business Analytics, EdD in Higher Education, BA in Visual Communication, MS in Higher Education, MSW, and BS in Criminal Justice. Students described faculty as being very responsive to questions and communications and student

support services (including online tutoring, library access, and Veteran's services) as being readily accessible and responsive. Students confirmed that there are multiple requirements for identity verification for assessments and course material access. In addition, students were complimentary of the flexibility of programs, courses, faculty and modality for their personal responsibilities and lifestyle.

APPENDIX C

List of Recommendations Cited in the Report of the Reaffirmation Committee

Standard 6.2.a (*Faculty qualifications*), Recommendation 1:

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution justifies and documents the qualifications of the faculty members listed on the attached "Request for Justifying and Documenting Qualifications of Faculty."

Standard 6.2.b (*Program faculty*), Recommendation 2:

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution demonstrate it employs a sufficient number of full-time faculty members to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review for each of its educational programs.

Standard 7.2 (*Quality Enhancement Plan*), Recommendation 3:

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution revise its QEP to focus on improving specific measurable student learning outcomes and/or student success.

Standard 7.2 (*Quality Enhancement Plan*), Recommendation 4:

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution commits sufficient fiscal and human resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP.

Standard 7.2 (*Quality Enhancement Plan*), Recommendation 5:

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution develops an appropriate plan to assess achievement of student learning outcomes and/or student success outcomes for the QEP.