<u>Day 6</u>: **Did you know how CMU documents performance improvements?**

[HLC Criterion 5.D.1, 2] Documented evidence of operations performance results in learning and improvements in institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability at all organizational levels.

CMU does not lack for examples of how it learns from its operational experiences and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability in all areas. Many examples were described in other sections of the Assurance Argument. Some efforts are more systematic, mature, and on-going, while others emerge from an operational concern and last until resolution is reached. As an example of the latter, the University provides opportunities beyond formal surveys for contributing suggestions for improvement, such as that through an electronic student suggestion box on the University's web portal (MAVzone). Students who submit a message are sent a response if contact information is provided, and improvements are made when appropriate.

The following illustrates the degree to which Colorado Mesa University is a community that applies what it learns from a close monitoring of its operations:

Academic Affairs
- Program-level data are compiled annually for each academic program. These reports are distributed to each academic department head by the President and Vice President for Academic Affairs and are the basis for discussions about the need for more faculty, courses that might need to be reviewed for low enrollment, or other program concerns.
- Class capacity reports enable section enrollments, credit hours, faculty workloads, offerings by location and format to be monitored and adjusted throughout the registration period each term.
- Faculty salaries by academic rank are reviewed in alternating years, compared with both regional and national peers, and adjusted as appropriate. This process has kept CMU more competitive in both the recruitment and retention of faculty.

Academic Support
- Non-academic departments also develop and document performance evidence. Bi-weekly admissions and marketing reports compare current and prior year enrollments, financial aid awards and acceptances, and residence hall occupancy. These reports inform admissions recruitment, marketing strategies, and budget planning. Annually, staff from various offices present data that informs the Board of Trustees, measuring performance of indicators, such as two-year and four-year student success, enrollment patterns, diversity and inclusion of the student body, financial aid and finance indicators, as well as several other measures.
- Staff in Tomlinson Library offer instruction to students on library resources and their appropriate use throughout the academic year. At the conclusion of the sessions, students and faculty members are asked to evaluate the usefulness of the session to

their assignment, with the feedback used to improve sessions scheduled the following term.

Student Services

- In response to several student tragedies in Spring 2014, the Vice Presidents for Student Services and Academic Affairs co-chaired a Working Group on Student Well-being to review current practices and recommend improvements to better support students in the areas of healthy relationships, mental and emotional health, and substance abuse prevention. Comprised of faculty, staff, and students, the group made recommendations that included integrating the Student Health Clinic with behavioral health, thereby creating a more holistic Student Wellness Center (SWC) to treat "the whole person." Beginning in Academic Year 2015-16, the University was awarded a $102,000 grant for each of three years from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, matched by CMU, to support the institution's efforts in this area. Implementation of the clinic began in Fall 2016, with nearly 8,000 student visits (a total of health visits with individual and group behavioral health sessions) logged in AY 2016-17.
- Because CMU is sensitive to student expenses, Residence Life staff annually analyze comparative data for Colorado peer institutions that includes tuition, fees, and charges for on-campus room and board. CMU ranks third lowest among all Colorado 4 year-institutions for tuition and fees, while hovering in the middle of the grouping for room and board. Recognizing that students are price sensitive, the University lowered the rates for several residence halls (400 beds) for AY 2017-18.

Information Technology

- CMU continues to enhance student access to online information and services. Last Spring, input from student focus groups was solicited and will be used to enhance the functionality of the University's web portal, MAVzone. At present, the University is researching web portal options to improve navigation of information and applications launched from the portal and the website, add search capabilities of MAVzone content, and enhance access from mobile devices to address student comments provided.
- In FY 2016-17, CMU implemented Ellucian (Banner) Operational Data Store (ODS) and Cognos Business Intelligence tool set to improve operational efficiency and business decision-making, supporting the University's *Strategic Plan 2020*. With ODS and Cognos, administrators have the means to develop and run up-to-date reports against Banner and DegreeWorks data for operational and analytical purposes, and, in most cases, eliminate the need for IT staff support.
- CMU has continually expanded its wireless network through the addition of access points for more than a decade. In FY 2016, CMU began a multi-year project to upgrade its core wireless infrastructure—controllers, network equipment, and management software—to improve the performance of Wi-Fi across campus to meet the increasing bandwidth demands of online services and as new technologies are introduced into the market. CMU has improved wireless performance by more than doubling network speeds through these upgrades.

Facilities Services

- To maintain an attractive and functional campus, Facilities Services compiles a [facilities audit](#) annually from campus administrators. The list summarizes small-scale projects in need of repair or replacement which then are prioritized and budgeted.
- CMU monitors energy usage on an on-going basis as part of its [Energy Initiative](#). As part of the broader campus' [sustainability](#) efforts, Facilities Services staff promotes efforts to conserve energy and collects baseline data for use in projecting future demand and identifying buildings that are operating above or below their energy baseline.
- After observing the efficiency of its [geothermal exchange](#) systems, CMU has expanded its use from an original system that included one drill field serving one building to a system comprised of six separate drill fields, over one mile of 18" diameter high density polyethylene connecting pipe, numerous roof top cooling towers, boilers, and one 800,000-gallon heat sink (El Pomar Natatorium). All the aforementioned resources combine to heat and cool over 1,000,000 square feet of campus buildings, while saving CMU an average of $600,000 per year in energy costs. The success of these systems has led CMU to look for other alternative energy sources.

Finance and Administration

- To aid administrators in managing budgets throughout the fiscal year, the Budget Office distributes [quarterly reports](#) that summarize expenditures and encumbrances to date in addition to the proportion of the budget that has been spent compared to the previous year.
- CMU conducts an annual food service survey that provides valuable feedback on the contractor's performance that includes student comments about dining services at the University. The institution shares the [survey](#) results with the contractor which generally leads to adjustments to menu, customer service, food quality, prices, hours of operations, dietary needs, and staffing. Recent changes include the addition of food services as part of the renovation and expansion of Tomlinson Library and changes in vendors in the University Center.

Financial Aid

- Retention is a goal in both the prior and current strategic plans, contributing to operational effectiveness and financial viability. CMU has been successful in recruiting students who are highly academically prepared by awarding them a merit scholarship through the [MavScholars Program](#). From 2010 to 2015, acceptance of this award has risen to 60.2%. Three out of every four MavScholars have returned for their second year and now represent 10% of the total undergraduate enrollment, demonstrating the effectiveness of the scholarship program in promoting retention. [MavWorks](#), an institutional work-study program, has also been shown to increase retention. Awarded to students with a 3.0 or higher grade point average, MavWorks' students are retained at over 70%. This is a [higher retention rate](#) than that for students receiving either federal or state work study funds. In the long term, graduation rates have been positively affected through these programs.

Intercollegiate Athletics

- To improve student success and the quality of sports programs and facilities, Institutional Research staff conduct an [exit survey](#) with student-athletes on behalf of Intercollegiate Athletics just prior to graduation, with the results shared with coaches, administrative staff, and the University President. Results contributed to the decision to add the Assistant Athletic Director for Student Success position at the same time that the Office of Student Success was implemented, as well as the addition of Wifi connectivity to CMU buses so students can do homework while traveling.

To learn more, log into MAVzone and click on the document link found in the CMU Assurance Argument for HLC channel (top left on the Home tab) for the full text of CMU's Assurance Argument. Links to supporting evidence are identified by underlined words but are not available through the PDF version.

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