

# Self-Study Report

## State University of New York at Cortland

Prepared for the  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

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## Executive Summary

SUNY Cortland's Self-Study is an evaluation of our institution in the context of the Middle States Standards, Requirements of Affiliation, and our Strategic Plan and Objectives. Colleagues formed working groups to examine our institutional effectiveness and make evidence-based determinations on Cortland's strengths, progress, and suggestions for continued growth.

### **Standard I: Mission and Goals**

SUNY Cortland has a clearly stated mission and campus priorities that are further articulated in the Strategic Plan. The college structure, decision-making, and resource allocations support the goals of student achievement and the mission of educating engaged citizens. The institutional strategic plan, divisional plans, and updated annual reporting structures support the mission, build on our priorities, and embed the mission and priorities in the work and culture of the college. There has been a significant commitment to evidence-based decision-making and assessment grounded in our mission and strategic priorities.

#### Suggestions

1. Examine how the college mission, vision, and values could be more visible in our communications (e.g., website) and how the mission and goals of specific departments could be shared more widely.
2. Publish a semester or year schedule of the Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee (IPAC) meetings and/or communications, provide guidelines on how to share and gather feedback, and explore strategies for campus engagement to augment current efforts.
3. President's Cabinet should formalize the use of strategic plans (college and division) as a framework for campus presentations and dialogues (e.g., Administrative Conference presentations).
4. Ensure that deans, associate VPs, and VPs provide departments/offices with feedback on annual reports for those units reporting to them (supporting a culture of assessment).

### **Standard II: Ethics & Integrity**

The college has well-defined policies and procedures for personnel actions, student conduct, grievances, and appeals. There is rigorous monitoring of conflict of interest, either the appearance of or actual conflict. Communications are systematically reviewed for accuracy, truthfulness, and compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission requirements. Our campus has been strengthened by the implementation of the SUNY Cortland Diversity and Inclusion Plan and the work of the President's Council for Inclusive Excellence (PCIE) and the Gender Policies and Initiatives Council (GPIC). Efforts to increase faculty diversity are yielding positive results and enhancing a sense of representation and inclusion across the campus

### Suggestions

1. Develop a comprehensive plan for regular assessment as part of the new Diversity and Inclusion Plan to monitor progress toward our inclusive excellence goals through climate surveys, focus group interviews, and other tools.
2. Better communicate with students and employees about ongoing efforts or new initiatives to improve diversity and education.
3. Create and maintain a comprehensive system of professional development and education on diversity for all employees, with effective incentives for participation, that is woven into all aspects of campus life.

### **Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience**

Our strategic priorities of Academic Excellence and Transformational Education and our Strategic Objectives align strongly with the criteria of Standard III, creating an environment that promotes student success through thoughtfully developed and comprehensively reviewed academic programs and a multitude of transformational educational experiences. Our culture of continuous improvement is evident through the development and assessment of course and program student learning outcomes and consistent reporting of faculty activities through their individual annual reports. The Writing Center and developmental Writing Workshop initiatives are examples of effective strategic initiatives on student communication.

### Suggestion

1. Identify additional means of increasing the percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty and implement where possible.

### **Standard IV. Support of the Student Experience**

SUNY Cortland has sustained a focus on student persistence and graduation including collaborative efforts to analyze student data, examine and improve policies and processes, and implement intentional and effective outreach and programming. Response to needs and concerns of students has included the creation of Student Affairs Case Manager position, expansion of the Institutional Equity and Inclusion Office staff, expanded outreach to suspended students, and implementation of Starfish software.

### Suggestions

1. Examine the achievement of special admit students in more detail to determine if additional targeted support would be beneficial.
2. Assess the feasibility of awarding transfer credit for prior learning experiences.
3. Strengthen data collection methods on student experiences and perspectives, analysis of data, and sharing of findings. Build upon former models of annual data retreats to share practices and findings from common instruments among student services offices.
4. Institute the Administrative Assessment Council and ensure professional development on assessment of services and student learning outcomes outside of the classroom.

### **Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment**

SUNY Cortland has developed and sustained comprehensive practices for meeting ongoing assessment goals, in alignment with the College's mission. Well-qualified faculty and staff organize and conduct assessments to determine how well students are progressing in achieving our educational objectives. Assessment data are used for decision-making in all facets of operations including enhancing student success rates (e.g., retention, graduation, placement rates, etc.), academic programs and services, curriculum revision, professional development, and institutional effectiveness. All academic programs have published student learning outcomes, curriculum maps, and annual assessment plans that are reviewed and recorded in the Watermark online system. The General Education Committee manages general education assessment, including working with faculty to update rubrics, collect embedded assessment findings, and analyze and report findings. Continual improvements to the annual report structures have aligned the reports to strategic planning, outcomes assessment, and documenting of departmental changes in response to assessment data. Offices in both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs use assessment data to improve curriculum and student services. The Writing Center, Institute for College Teaching, and early alert outreach are all examples of innovations that have expanded the foundation of support for student achievement. At the institutional level, the Resource Advisory Council (RAC) and the Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee (IPAC) ensure that campus planning and budgeting are aligned to educational achievement.

#### **Suggestions**

1. Expand training and professional development on assessment in different disciplinary and professional contexts for faculty and professionals. This should include development on using assessment data to inform practice and providing structures for sharing data among offices and divisions.
2. Clarify and strengthen the institutional structure for planning and assessment to monitor and coordinate assessment processes across all the college divisions and for the institution. One way to do this is to create a position or office that will provide institutional leadership around assessment.
3. Create tools and provide resources for departments to follow up on the post-graduation educational and employment activities of their alumni.

### **Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement**

We have built a stronger and more integrated infrastructure of planning, finance, and assessment at the division and institutional level. The strategic and division plans are part of discussed on campus and embedded in decision-making. Annual reports are now outcome-based, and evidence-based discussions on the impact of work and the campus-wide use of the Watermark system will continue to strengthen our assessment culture on campus and allow for greater feedback. The new Institutional Effectiveness website is built upon an integrated model of planning, assessment, and budgeting and serves as a portal for information on all these areas. With the advent of the RAC, the ongoing link of planning and budgeting is now being documented and formalized. The divisional plans will now be

complemented by divisional budget reports from the vice presidents at a joint meeting of the RAC and IPAC to demonstrate how planning and evidence are reflected in the divisional budgets and discuss ways to strengthen or change allocations for greater institutional effectiveness.

#### Suggestions

1. Identify and implement means of campus communication on decision-making that can be more effective at reaching all members of the campus, be timelier, and acknowledge shared perspectives more clearly.
2. Develop a process for review of department budgets that includes responses to department annual report questions on budget and a brief history of allocation and utilization of funds to consider department budget adjustments.
3. Charge IPAC and RAC with researching, developing, and implementing a process and schedule for assessing the effectiveness of planning, assessment, and budgeting at the institutional level.

#### **Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration**

SUNY Cortland's strength in governance and leadership is based on being part of a highly developed state system with clearly outlined policies and processes that serve as a framework for our campus, a clearly outlined administrative structure with qualified staff, and consistent and effective collaboration among campus leadership. Campus leadership includes Faculty Senate, collective bargaining units, and student government. Different components of our structures, such as the Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, GPIC, PCIE, IPAC, and RAC, provide venues where campus community members can ask for clarification and propose changes to campus policies, procedures, and structures. GPIC and PCIE assess and lead campus initiatives to improve climate and inclusivity. This has included the creation of the President's Advisory Council and expanded Cabinet to bring greater diversity to executive discussions and the addition of the Chief Diversity Officer to the President's Cabinet.

#### Suggestions

1. Engage all governance structures in assessing their goals and identifying meaningful measures that can be worked into an assessment schedule.
2. Establish a working committee between the President's Office and the Faculty Senate to explore a collaborative and sustainable way to include more faculty perspectives in evaluating administrators. This should involve looking at models from peer institutions.

## Introduction

The State University of New York College at Cortland is one of 13 comprehensive colleges in the State University of New York (SUNY) System. Founded in 1868 as a normal school, Cortland became the Cortland State Teachers College with four-year programs in 1941. In 1948, Cortland was a founding member of the SUNY System.

The college enrolls an average of 6000 undergraduates and 670 graduate students studying in 67 major programs and 20 graduate programs offered through the three schools: Arts and Sciences, Professional Studies, and Education (*Academic Programs.pdf*). Accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), Cortland is the largest preparer of teachers in the SUNY system, with programs in physical education, childhood/early childhood education, inclusive education, and adolescence education. In addition to teacher education, we have nationally accredited programs in athletic training, chemistry, speech pathology and audiology, community health, and recreation. Our broad range of academic opportunities also include longstanding programs across liberal arts and sciences and professional studies, newer programs such as Professional Writing and Healthcare Management, and 49 minors. We host 19 national and international honor societies recognizing academic achievement overall, within specific disciplines, and for student populations including transfer and non-traditional students.

The 191-acre main campus includes 15 residence halls and an apartment complex that houses over 3000 undergraduates. Facilities investments since our last accreditation include major renovation to Bowers (science), Dowd (art and performing arts), and Moffett (health and arts and sciences); multiple residence hall and administrative upgrades; and construction of the new Dragon Hall residence and the 147,000 square foot Student Life Center. Off-campus facilities include two field stations and Camp Huntington, a national historic landmark on Raquette Lake in the Adirondacks Mountains, which are used for academic and co-curricular programs.

Students gain a broad liberal arts foundation through the mandatory general education curriculum. They also have access to extensive applied learning, elective, and co-curricular components for their education. Cortland also supports a growing emphasis on civic engagement and the incorporation of service-learning within the curriculum. Co-curricular activities have similarly expanded to serve students outside the classroom. The Division of Student Affairs offers a comprehensive residential life experience as well as programs and services that support the academic, personal, physical, and social development of all students. The Student Government Association (SGA) recognizes 70 clubs, including over 30 sports clubs, 20 multicultural clubs, 18 Greek organizations (service, cultural, and social), and academic clubs. Over 600 Division III student-athletes make up the nationally recognized teams of Red Dragon Athletics.

The current faculty and staff include 20 SUNY Distinguished Professors and 65 SUNY Chancellor's Award winners across teaching, scholarship, librarianship, internationalization, and professional, faculty, and classified service. The campus has been recognized recently by Phi

Theta Kappa for support of the transfer student experience and is currently ranked in the top 20 of the National Directors' Cup for NCAA Division III Athletics. Cortland is ranked in the Top Public Schools North, Best Colleges for Veterans, and Top Performers on Social Mobility North for *U.S. News & World Report* as well as a 2019 *Money* Best College for Your Money.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted our campus in numerous, unexpected ways. We pulled together to maintain the health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and the Cortland community while also providing the academic and support experiences and services central to our mission. Our collective efforts have allowed us to maintain a strong enrollment and persevere without the elimination of positions or services. The *SUNY Cortland COVID Experience.pdf* provides a summary of our experiences during the pandemic.

### **Campus Mission, Priorities, Institutional Objectives**

Mission Statement: SUNY Cortland is an academic community dedicated to diverse learning experiences. Students grow as engaged citizens with a strong social conscience fostered by outstanding teaching, scholarship, and service.

Four strategic priorities derive from the mission, vision, and values of the college: academic excellence, transformational education, well-being, and maximizing resources. The priorities led to the eleven institutional objectives addressed throughout this Self-Study. Alignment between the institutional objectives and the Middle States Standards are explained in Appendix C and Standard I: Mission and Goals. The institutional objectives, described in Appendix B, are focused points for measurable growth in:

1. Assessment of Student Learning
2. Student Achievement in Communication
3. Persistence and Degree Completion
4. Faculty Engagement
5. Full-Time Faculty
6. Applied Learning
7. Strengthen Community
8. Financial Support to Students
9. Non-tuition Revenue
10. Spaces and Facilities
11. Environmental Sustainability

Strategic planning is led by the President's Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee (IPAC). IPAC has established institutional outcomes and indicators, created a multi-level planning initiative to build alignment across plans, strengthened the link between planning and resource allocation, and improved planning and assessment structures and processes.

### **Self-Study Design**

Our Self-Study uses the MSCHE Standards as its framework. Over the past two years, we have studied how the Standards resonate on our campus and analyzed our strengths and opportunities for improvement. The process began with forming the Steering Committee, selecting co-chairs, and creating campus working groups around the Standards. The Self-Study design was developed and shared with the campus for feedback and revision.

The intended outcomes of the Self-Study are to:

1. Achieve reaccreditation by demonstrating compliance with the Middle States Standards, Requirements of Affiliation, and federal compliance.
2. Acknowledge and celebrate the work of campus constituents.
3. Analyze and identify areas of strength and improvement within the strategic plan based on evidence.
4. Identify opportunities for innovation and directions for the future.
5. Articulate the relationship of Middle States Standards and Requirements of Affiliation, SUNY Chancellor's Four Strategic Pillars, and the institution's mission, priorities, and objectives.
6. Increase engagement and institutional knowledge among members of the campus community through a reflective, inclusive, and transparent self-appraisal process.
7. Increase alignment between the institutional strategic plan, divisional plans, and major campus plans including the Diversity Plan and Facilities Master Plan.
8. Increase use of evidence-based decision-making and expand the culture of continuous improvement.
9. Standardize operating procedure for assessment.

In March 2020, as the Self-Study design was in the process of being approved, the campus was shut down due to COVID-19. Fortunately, working groups had already been formed, but it was difficult for them to make progress without access to offices and resources. The need to support students as they adjusted to taking classes at home and online took precedence over other typical campus operations.

By the fall of 2020, the working committees were able to resume their work and began examining the degree to which we meet the standards, criteria, and requirements of affiliation. They used the lines of inquiry to guide the process (Appendix D: Lines of Inquiry). The working groups collected and analyzed the evidence for each of their areas. They met with numerous offices and with other working groups to share information and collaborate. The Steering Committee reviewed the working group drafts throughout the process and coordinated open meetings, surveys and presentations to engage the campus. A Middle States Student Outreach Committee led efforts to inform and engage students with the Self-Study. In the summer of 2021, a writing team prepared a draft of the report, which was shared with the campus for comments and feedback. We asked eight faculty and staff to serve as "skeptics," and they conducted an in-depth review of the Self-Study. The writing team held a half-day retreat to discuss the skeptics' feedback. The Self-Study process has improved transparency, strengthened strategic planning across divisions, and enhanced evidence-based decision-making. This Self-Study reflects the contributions, expertise, and hard work of many individuals, offices, and groups across the campus.

### **Reader's Guide**

Chapters 1-7 are organized around the MSCHE Standards and are structured as follows:

1. Finding for the standard

2. Introduction including the related Requirements of Affiliation and related SUNY Cortland Institutional Objectives
3. Analysis of criteria and supporting evidence
4. Strengths and progress
5. Suggestions

Throughout the report, evidence is noted in italics with document names listed in the Evidence Inventory. MSCHE allows for five URLs in evidence. The five referenced in our Self-Study are the webpages for the SUNY Cortland College Catalog, Institutional Effectiveness, Institutional Research and Analysis, Faculty Senate, and Teacher Education Reporting Measures. Any other web-based materials have been converted into documents for the Evidence Inventory.

The Self-Study *Roadmap.pdf* provides a table summary for each chapter. This roadmap contains a crosswalk between the MSCHE standards, the Requirements of Affiliation, and Cortland's institutional objectives. The roadmap also lists each chapter's evidence.

To assist the reader, the following appendices are available at the end of this report:

- A. Campus Terminology
- B. SUNY Mission, Vision, Values, and Institutional Objectives
- C. Alignment of MSCHE Standards and Requirements of Affiliation with SUNY Cortland Priorities and Objectives

## Standard I: Mission and Goals

### Standard I

Requirement of Affiliation 7



**SUNY Cortland**

	Values	Priorities	Institutional Objectives
<p><i>The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.</i></p>	<p>Intellectual Life</p> <p>Focus on Students</p> <p>Integrity</p>	<p>Academic Excellence</p> <p>Transformational Education</p> <p>Well-being</p> <p>Maximize Resources</p>	

### Finding for MSCHE Standard I and Requirement of Affiliation 7

SUNY Cortland meets all criteria and sub-criteria for Standard I and Requirement of Affiliation 7 with four suggestions for continued growth.

#### Introduction

*SUNY Cortland is an academic community dedicated to diverse learning experiences. Students grow as engaged citizens with a strong social conscience fostered by outstanding teaching, scholarship, and service (Mission\_Vision.pdf).*

The mission of SUNY Cortland reflects our focus on students, their opportunities within and beyond the classroom, and our integrity as an intellectual community. Since revising the mission statement in 2012, we have focused on how we enact that purpose by committing to the following work:

1. developing Cortland's priorities and measurable institutional objectives
2. division and department planning, followed by assessment and alignments of plans
3. revising the annual reporting format to connect with plans
4. creating processes to ensure campus engagement and continuous improvement based on our goals.

This chapter explores achievement and areas for continued growth while demonstrating our compliance with the MSCHE Requirement of Affiliation (ROA) 7 on mission, governance, and purpose. The chapter analysis is organized in five discussion areas: mission evolution and utilization; scholarship; awareness and engagement; focus on students; and evaluation. Our suggestions center on more consistent and inclusive discussions on mission and campus priorities and providing more professional development on planning and assessment. In addition, we will assess channels and timing of communication to expand access to conversations and increase engagement in planning processes.

The Self-Study *Roadmap.pdf* provides a listing of all the evidence for this standard by individual criteria. The last page of this document provides a crosswalk for related ROAs. The *Roadmap.pdf* file is located under Standard I, Criterion 1 in the Evidence Inventory.

### **Analysis of Criteria and Supporting Evidence**

#### **Mission Evolution and Utilization (Criteria 1a, 1b, 1c, and 1d; ROA 7)**

SUNY Cortland's strategic plan is *Commitment to Community: SUNY Cortland Strategic Plan 2018-2023 (Commitment to Community Strategic Plan 2018-2023.pdf)*. The revision of the mission statement and development of the vision, values, and priorities of SUNY Cortland included participation from a range of faculty, staff, students, and boards. Starting in 2009, the Strategic Planning Committee was established to engage the campus with a review of the longstanding mission and vision statements. The committee included faculty, professional staff, CSEA staff, and student government leadership. They conducted surveys and open meetings to understand how employees and students view the college mission and shared values and how they wanted to see the campus develop. This resulted in the current mission statement, vision, and values that were endorsed by the Faculty Senate (*Faculty Senate Minutes March 2\_2010.pdf*) and the President's Cabinet and recorded in the College Catalog. Four major campus priorities were identified through this work: academic excellence, transformational education, well-being, and maximize resources. This initial work culminated with our 2012 Middle States Self-Study that was organized around the four campus priorities. This created further understanding between our campus priorities and the Middle States Standards and informed stronger descriptions of the priorities:

1. Academic Excellence: We will cultivate academic programs that provide students with the best opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills, and dispositions (including affective relationships involved with learning and development). This means ensuring that we have relevant and engaging curriculum, effective and innovative delivery methods, appropriate facilities, and a culture of continual improvement. We will foster the highest levels of student and faculty engagement and support their contributions to their disciplines, the college, and local and global communities.
2. Transformational Education: We will provide intentionally designed, highly effective, educational opportunities that challenge how students see themselves and the world in profound new ways. Transformational education involves all the opportunities that expose students to new environments, cultures, perspectives, and knowledge. It also challenges them to reflect, acknowledge their self-efficacy, and continually expand their understanding and skills to be more engaged agents in their lives and their communities.
3. Well-being: We will advocate for personal and community well-being through our academic disciplines and our campus programming and facilities. We will actively promote the physical, emotional, cultural, and social well-being of our students and employees, determine areas of greatest need, and respond with policies and programs that recognize that the well-being of each individual is critical to our strength. This will

include striving to be a campus community that enacts values of inclusivity, collaboration, respect, and care and striving to be a campus where contributions to the community will be recognized. We will hold ourselves accountable for supporting a positive campus climate.

4. **Maximize Resources:** We will sustain resources and carefully align our decision-making and allocation process with the mission-based functions of the college and our strategic vision for the campus. Maximizing resources includes being fiscally responsible, thinking about efficiency while maintaining excellence, and communicating clearly about resource allocation. It also means focusing on sustainability and ensuring that the campus maintains a dedication to responsible use of natural resources and consideration of our impact on our environment.

The College's Strategic Planning Committee was restructured into the President's Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee (IPAC) with a new charge of operationalizing the priorities into measurable objectives (*IPAC\_Charge.pdf*). IPAC membership includes the Faculty Senate Chair and representatives from the CSEA staff, United University Professions (UUP) leadership, and the Student Government Association (SGA) (*Evolution of Institutional Planning and Assessment.pdf*). Using the campus priorities as a framework and exploring a wide range of evidence, IPAC began the process of identifying gaps or concerns as well as opportunities for the campus. They reviewed data with stakeholders and campus experts and identified 11 institutional objectives with indicators and targets for improvement. These were shared with Faculty Senate and approved by the President's Cabinet. IPAC also supported the creation of divisional and department plans such as the Institutional Advancement Strategic Plan 2019-2020, Student Affairs Operational Plan Spring 2020, Academic Affairs Strategic Plan, and the SUNY Cortland Diversity and Inclusion Plan (*Division Plans.pdf*). Administrative offices have completed their assessment plans, and academic departments have program assessment plans based on student learning outcomes.

The institutional and divisional goals are central to a broad range of decisions regarding resource allocation and program development on campus. Our responses to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate how our priorities inform our decision-making. Our guiding principles were the wellness of the campus community, delivery of quality education, and fiscal viability of the institution—all of which resonate with the campus priorities. Since our largest resource allocation is always personnel, the pandemic crisis necessitated a more detailed review of requests to fill vacant lines or requests for new lines. The campus uses the *Employment and/or Salary Action Request Form.pdf*, which was updated to request greater detail about how the proposed position will address mission-based needs. These forms are reviewed by the appropriate vice president and Human Resources, and then approved or denied by the President's Cabinet. With guidance from the Resource Advisory Council (RAC), this form has recently been revised to include more specific prompts about the institutional, divisional, and department priorities and objectives and how the duties and responsibilities of that line relate to plans. Examples of new lines that speak to institutional divisional goals include the Case Manager in Student Affairs, who assists students with significant life

challenges, and the Associate Chief Diversity Officer position that will focus on our work toward a more inclusive community.

In 2020, the RAC was created to foster greater transparency in all finance processes and to strengthen the connection between resource allocation, mission, and strategic planning. This cross-divisional committee works to ensure that the mission and strategic priorities and objectives are embedded in policies. As part of its charge, the RAC is to “create a policy and procedure for requesting funding and a decision-making rubric that ensures funding aligns with campus strategic plan” (*Resource Advisory Council Alignment with Middle States.pdf*). The RAC and IPAC are designed to communicate and collaborate as part of a planning, assessment, and finance. Their focus is to stay committed to our mission, maintain effective operations, and work toward our institutional objectives (see Standard VI for more details on the RAC).

In addition to the integration of mission and strategic priorities into our finance and budgeting processes, IPAC received a funding line in 2018 to support initiatives that were linked to institutional objectives (*Middle States—Priorities aligned with Spending.pdf*). IPAC worked with campus stakeholders to identify potential investments and anticipated return on investments. Campus stakeholders stewarded these investment allocations, including providing funding to the Institute for Civic Engagement for internships, supplementing funding for new graduate student orientation events, supporting Voice Office renovations, and providing resources for the development of student learning outcomes. The stewards who received the funds then reported to IPAC about their project and the data they collected on its impact (*IPAC Funding Reports Summary 2019.pdf*). IPAC now receives a line in the budget so that this objective-based investment can continue with offices across campus.

### ***Aligning Plans, Priorities, and Decisions***

In addition to coordinating the institutional objectives and strategic investments, IPAC has worked to foster more integrated planning and assessment on campus. This includes alignment of division and other major campus plans (e.g., Facilities Master Plan, Diversity Plan) with the strategic plan (*Divisional Alignment Workbook.pdf*). The mission, priorities, and objectives have been discussed in a variety of settings to ensure shared understanding and to assess how relevant and achievable they are given our progress and the context and issues facing the college. The division plans were shared and discussed at the 2019 President’s Retreat where each vice president presented an overview of their plan and took questions and suggestions. At the 2020 President’s Retreat, the divisional plans, Facilities Master Plan, and Diversity Plan were all shared again in more detail, and stewards of those plans facilitated small group discussions on the alignment between division/campus plans to the campus strategic plan (*Alignment of Plans Overview.pdf*). The President’s Cabinet has committed to sharing updates on the institutional strategic plan, the divisional plans, and the campus plans as part of an annual meeting for the campus.

The institutional and divisional plans provide a framework for decision-making across all areas of campus. For example, the Student Affairs division is dedicated to student well-being and achievement, which aligns directly with the campus plan. Division funds are applied toward

meeting regulatory requirements associated with standards for student services and assuring that the base and critical needs for all students are met. This includes providing a safe living and learning environment that supports and celebrates diversity and multicultural life, as well as responding to physical and mental health needs through programming, services, and the counseling center (*Student Affairs Strategic Plan.pdf*). The current Capital Campaign uses campus strategic priorities and objectives as the guiding framework for the campaign and for informing potential donors. 40% of funds from the current campaign are allocated to student support and achievement, including scholarships and undergraduate research (*Campaign\_for\_Cortland-webpage.pdf*).

External constituents are key to enacting the mission of the campus and are specifically included in divisional plans. For example, the Institutional Advancement Division plan considers communication with alumni, friends of the campus, prospective student influencers, and potential local and national news outlets. The Diversity and Inclusion Plan has communication strategies and outreach programming aimed at students, staff, alumni, and the Cortland community (*Diversity Inclusion Plan 2016.pdf*). The Facilities Master Plan focuses on providing high-quality and efficient educational space and improved student services which affect not only current students but potential students as well as external users of campus facilities (*Facilities Master Plan.pdf*).

The Academic Affairs plan directly aligns with the campus priorities and several objectives, especially related to student learning. This includes expanded assessment (see Chapter 5 for assessment details) guided by the Student Learning Outcomes Committee and the new Institute for College Teaching. We have enhanced monitoring of student success through the adoption of Starfish and addressed the need for enhanced writing resources through the creation of the Writing Center (*Writing-Center-webpage.pdf*) and other innovations detailed in Chapter 4. With support from the deans, some of the most significant curricular innovations have been the development of online graduate programs including a certificate in Therapeutic Recreation, a Master's in Therapeutic Recreation, and a Master's in Literacy that increased enrollment from 37 to 83 students in two years (*Enrollment\_History\_20Year-2020.pdf*).

### **Scholarly Inquiry (Criterion 1e)**

SUNY Cortland falls within the Carnegie Classification category of Master's Colleges and Universities—Larger Programs and with a large undergraduate enrollment profile. It is one of SUNY's comprehensive colleges with a strong focus on undergraduate education that also offers master's degrees and certificates of advanced study. Accordingly, faculty responsibility is defined by teaching (including advising), scholarship/creative activity, and service. As part of our mission and operations, expectations regarding scholarship and creative activity evidenced by tenure-line faculty are outlined in the department personnel policies (*Academic Department Personnel Policies.pdf*) and the SUNY Cortland Handbook (*College\_Handbook\_2020-Faculty Responsibilities.pdf*). Individual faculty annual reports and department annual reports document scholarly activity and are archived in the Watermark system (*Academic Annual Report Format 2020-2021; Faculty Annual Report Examples.pdf; Academic Annual Report Examples.pdf*).

Scholarly and creative activity are reflected in SUNY Cortland's mission, our value of Intellectual Life, and the institutional priority of Academic Excellence. We are committed to inquiry, creativity, and supporting faculty and students as they engage and contribute to their disciplines. Scholarly work, such as publications, presentations, and grants, are reflected in these institutional objectives:

4. Promote faculty engagement including in their disciplines and recognition of work with updated annual report templates
6. Expanding impact of applied learning experiences (e.g., undergraduate research)
9. Increase non-tuition revenue including increased sponsored research

Academic Affairs Division Plan Priority 3, Focus on Faculty Success, Diversity and Engagement looks to increase the number of faculty publishing and presenting their work. Initiatives include research start-up funds, research workshops, and support through the Faculty Development Center (FDC) and Sponsored Programs Office. The Provost, Deans, and FDC provide faculty portfolio workshops on research agendas and scholarly expectations.

#### **Awareness and Engagement (Criterion 1f)**

The campus mission and priorities were developed with campus input and are shared on the President's website and the Institutional Effectiveness website. As the objectives have been refined and assessed, we will continually engage campus stakeholders with updated information. Campus communications as well as discussions at the President's Cabinet, President's Retreat, President's Opening Meeting allow for dissemination of information and discussion necessary for the work of planning (*Cabinet Strategic Planning Feedback 2018.pdf*; *IPAC Update for 2019 Pres Retreat.pdf*; *president letter to campus 2018 spring.pdf*).

Student, faculty, and staff turnover requires continual orientation to, and dialogue about, institutional planning and assessment.

The Standard I Working Group conducted an online survey for faculty and staff about their perceptions of the mission and priorities. Students were not included due to perceptions of survey burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic. 355 respondents indicated they were very aware, aware, or somewhat aware of the mission (84%), vision (81%), values (82%), and priorities (81%). Nineteen percent indicated they were not aware or knew they existed but did not know more. When asked about how supportive they were of the mission, vision, values, and priorities, respondents were very supportive or supportive at a minimum rate of 89% for all four elements (*Mission and Priorities Survey Results.pdf*).

The strategic plan has been discussed at different venues, but these do not always include all stakeholders. For example, the President's Retreat regularly includes discussions about the strategic plan, but participants are generally limited to directors, chairs, and executive leadership. Representatives are expected to share the information they receive with constituents, but that is not always done consistently. In addition, only a few students are on committees such as IPAC or Faculty Senate, so there is opportunity for greater communication

among students about the campus strategic plan. Similarly, there is room for divisional plans to be more widely shared and discussed within and across divisions.

The SUNY Cortland Institutional Effectiveness website is a repository for planning and assessment information for the campus. It provides information on all elements of our strategic plan as well as accreditation and consumer information. IPAC and RAC committee information including committee membership and a link to the IPAC email ([planning@cortland.edu](mailto:planning@cortland.edu)). We are working to present information using more manageable pieces and different formats like videos (e.g., *Cortland's Strategic Plan Introduction mp4 found at Institutional Effectiveness website*), which can help make complex processes more accessible and engaging.

The Institutional Effectiveness website will be an important resource for the campus, but we recognize that we need multiple means to reach all our constituents. We recently established a new Middle States Student Outreach committee to identify methods for engaging students in our strategic conversations. In addition, Human Resources and a new employee experience committee is embedding a discussion of the college mission and values into onboarding programs—particularly related to how these values translate to workplace values (*Onboarding and First Year Experience 2021.pdf*). In addition to these efforts, we suggest that IPAC create a semester or yearly schedule of open meetings and communications so that all members of the community know when to look for updates as well as how they can take part in conversations. Another suggestion is that we clearly articulate who is responsible for sharing information, gathering feedback, and facilitating dialogue so that the workload of communication is distributed. Building stronger, multidirectional streams of communication will strengthen campus engagement and demonstrate that all feedback is heard and considered.

The strategic plan is scheduled to run until 2023, and part of the evaluation and renewal of that plan should include the consideration of the relevance of priorities to the current context and the realities of our campus and higher education. The importance of stakeholders is clear in helping identify relevant campus issues and understanding the climate of the campus and ensuring that our planning is relevant to higher education research, trends, and best practices. For example, targets for persistence must challenge us to address gaps in achievement but also be realistic so that they are meaningful and authentic. In this way, the national data, SUNY data, and best practices inform our targets.

### **Campus Priorities and Focus on Students (Criteria 2 and 3)**

Students are central in the first three campus priorities (Academic Excellence, Transformational Education, Well-being) and six of the eleven institutional objectives speak directly to student achievement and well-being such as improving communication skills, strengthening community and inclusion, enhancing applied learning, and improving assessment of student learning.

The Academic Excellence priority speaks to programs, engagement, facilities, and effective and innovative delivery. It also includes building a culture of continuous improvement, which we have committed to through the work of departments under the guidance of the Student Learning Outcomes Committee. Transformational Education calls for educational opportunities

in and out of the classroom that challenge students to see themselves and the world in new ways. This includes becoming more engaged in their community through applied learning, expanding global understanding through study abroad, and gaining greater intercultural competency through our General Education offerings and campus programming.

The Well-Being priority builds on that theme of community by promoting physical, emotional, cultural, and social wellness for our students and employees and by promoting an inclusive, respectful, and positive campus climate. It involves increasing participation in the life of the campus and advocating for diversity, equity, and social justice. The Student Affairs Strategic Plan objectives are both measurable and directly aligned with academic excellence, transformational education, and well-being for students and staff (*Student Affairs Strategic Plan.pdf*). The Academic Affairs strategic plan is focused on the same three priorities with a particular focus on student achievement (*Academic Affairs Division Operational Plan 2017.pdf*).

All four of these priorities rely on our commitment to institutional improvement and effectiveness through processes and alignment of our administrative, educational, and student support programs with the mission and strategic plans. The creation of divisional plans and specialized plans for the campus around diversity and facilities helped communicate the work of different areas and how they contribute to our work as a whole. These plans have been aligned with the institutional strategic plan and discussed at the President's Retreat with campus members to strengthen that understanding and alignment (*Divisional Alignment Workbooks.pdf*).

The campus has invested in extensive education and support programs focusing on student development and success. Many of these are discussed later in Standards III, IV, and V. Examples of these initiatives include Student Learning Outcomes Committee's collaboration with academic departments to ensure that all programs have student learning outcomes and assessment plans; tutoring programs including the Night Owl program for evening support, the new Writing Center, and Peer2Peer mentoring for students from diverse backgrounds; and the SUNY Promoting Recruiting Opportunity, Diversity, Inclusion and Growth (PRODiG) program, which provides additional resources to recruit faculty from diverse backgrounds (*Stmt PRODiG Progress(1).pdf*).

#### **Evaluating the Mission and Priorities (Criteria 1g and 4)**

The structures we have in place assure a process of periodic assessment of our mission and goals. IPAC has been charged with monitoring the strategic plan and objectives and evaluating "the strategic process and effectiveness of campus planning and assessment" (*IPAC\_Charge.pdf*). A mid-process review of the strategic plan was scheduled for 2020, but the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic postponed the work of the committee by a year and a review of the progress on the objectives was started in the spring of 2021. The committee created an *IPAC Indicators Tracking Sheet-2021.pdf*, which shows the progress on each indicator and the *Summary of Strategic Plan Progress Spring 2021-0603.pdf* to document associated activities. These updates were shared at a President's Middle States Retreat in July 2021, an event that included President's Cabinet, Faculty Senate, SGA, directors, department

chairs, and all members of IPAC. The updates are also available via the *Institutional Effectiveness webpage*. IPAC will ask for feedback on the status of objectives and make recommendations on that feedback along with their own analysis in the spring 2022 semester. This may include revision of indicators, actions, or the objectives themselves based on the evaluation findings.

The annual report process requires divisions and offices to report on certain priorities and outcomes based on their respective assessment schedules. In 2018, academic departments began submitting annual reports using Watermark software. In 2021, all administrative offices will submit their annual reports and strategic plans in the system as well (*2021 Administrative Annual Report Call.pdf*; *Administrative Annual Report Examples.pdf*). The expansion of the use of Watermark to document goals and progress will be critical to ongoing evaluation and allow for findings at all levels to be integrated into a more nuanced picture of our advancement toward institutional goals. The *SUNY Cortland Planning and Assessment Guide.pdf* for Administrative Offices is one of the resources developed to support administrative professionals in this work.

With the Institutional Effectiveness website now serving as the portal for all information on the strategic plan, we plan to add more resources, including timelines of the IPAC work to expand access, increase transparency, and facilitate campus engagement. A timeline of all critical planning processes, including evaluation, should be added to the IPAC information on the website.

The work of IPAC and the dialogues on campus are critical in helping us measure progress, evaluate how realistic and relevant these goals are for our institution, and examine the feasibility and clarity of measures for challenging constructs (e.g., faculty involvement). The committee is also looking at our timeframes and goals to consider how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted initiatives and the student experience. Evidence on student, faculty, staff experiences, and campus operations during the pandemic may be added to the Strategic Plan update and be important for adding context to benchmark trends. These findings will be shared with the campus to solicit feedback and suggestions on our progress as well as suggested revisions of objectives. This review will include reflection on the processes themselves to improve communication and engagement as well as integrate new ideas and innovations to foster meaningful planning and assessment.

### **Strengths and Progress**

SUNY Cortland has a long tradition of student-centered mission and operations. Our structure, decisions, and resource allocations all align with the goals of student achievement and our mission of educating engaged citizens. Our work over the past ten years has been characterized by an organized and consistent effort to build a strategic plan that honors the foundation of our mission, builds on the strengths and aspirations of our priorities, and articulates the work into measurable strategic goals that involve campus discussion. This work is now integrated into the structure, culture, and decision-making of the campus. The creation of IPAC and the RAC, work

on the strategic plan, and work on division plans ensure alignment with the strategic plan and mission. Further, these commitments illustrate our progress and create a sustainable structure for the enactment and evaluation of our mission and goals as we move forward. This core strategic work has been a catalyst for other structures and initiatives that serve our goals and ensure that our work, no matter where it is located on campus, is coalescing into a shared institutional effort. This includes the work academic departments and the Student Learning Outcomes Committee have done in articulating and publishing program student learning outcomes for all academic programs, the evolution of annual reports and creation of administrative annual reports based on assessment, and the use of the Watermark system to document feedback on these reports. Overall, SUNY Cortland has made a significant shift toward a culture of evidence-based decision-making and improvement that is built on the foundation of our mission and our strategic priorities.

### **Suggestions**

SUNY Cortland meets all criteria, sub-criteria, and related requirements of affiliation for Standard I. The following suggestions will complement the work done and strengthen the shared understanding and communication that is critical to achieving our goals:

1. Examine how the college mission, vision, and values could be more visible in our communications (e.g., website) and how the mission and goals of specific departments could be shared more widely.
2. Publish a semester or year schedule of IPAC meetings and/or communications, provide guidelines on how to share and gather feedback, and explore strategies for campus engagement to augment current efforts.
3. President's Cabinet should formalize the use of strategic plans (college and division) as a framework for campus presentations and dialogues (e.g., Administrative Conference presentations) and dedicate venues for discussion on plans and progress.
4. Ensure that deans, associate VPs, and VPs provide departments/offices with feedback on annual reports for those units reporting to them (supporting a culture of assessment).

# Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

**Standard II**  
*Requirements of Affiliation 14*



**SUNY Cortland**

	Values	Priorities	Institutional Objectives
<i>Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.</i>	Integrity	Academic Excellence  Well-being	

## Finding for MSCHE Standard II and Requirement of Affiliation 14

SUNY Cortland meets all criteria and sub-criteria of Standard II and Requirement of Affiliation 14 with three suggestions for continued growth.

### Introduction

SUNY Cortland meets Standard II by demonstrating integrity in executing its mission, its policies, and its commitments. Cortland policies and procedures provide a system and a culture holding individuals to high expectations for faithfully taking ethical, honorable actions in pursuit of its institutional mission. Fostering an inclusive community is integral to these efforts and is a significant area of progress for the campus. In this chapter, we outline how SUNY Cortland meets the requirements for Standard II and Requirement of Affiliation 14. We provide an analysis of policies, procedures, and initiatives that support ethical, respectful, inclusive, and accountable discourse, actions, and conduct among our campus community members. These policies are publicly available, easily accessible through our websites, and communicated regularly to campus community members, fulfilling Requirement of Affiliation (ROA) 14. In our self-evaluation under this Standard, we focused our lines of inquiry on the area of inclusive excellence. This chapter highlights how campus individuals, units, and the institution have advanced our inclusive excellence goals by making focused efforts to foster a culture of inclusion and civil discourse through reflection, personal and professional development, accountability, and action (Institutional Objective 7). In addition, the Institutional Federal Compliance Report has been completed as part of this review and is included with our Self-Study materials (*InstitutionalFederalComplianceReport\_April 2021template-SUNYCortland.pdf*).

The Self-Study *Roadmap.pdf* provides a listing of all the evidence for this standard by individual criteria. The last page of this document provides a crosswalk for related ROAs. The *Roadmap.pdf* file is located under Standard II, Criterion 1 in the Evidence Inventory.

## Analysis of Criteria and Supporting Evidence

### Commitment to Academic Freedoms and Rights (Criterion 1)

Academic and intellectual freedom, intellectual property rights, and freedom of expression are central to the mission of SUNY Cortland, and Cortland students and employees are subject to related SUNY system and Cortland policies. Cortland outlines expectations for the community through faculty and student orientations, required statements on course syllabi, and the distribution of policies published as handbooks and website resources. Below we provide examples of several of these policies to illustrate how these guiding documents establish clear expectations for academic freedom, ethical conduct, and integrity.

The SUNY Board of Trustees (BOT) policy, “Title I. Academic Freedom § 1. Academic Freedom (*SUNY\_BOT\_Policies\_August2021.pdf*), affirms that it is SUNY policy “to maintain and encourage full freedom, within the law, of inquiry, teaching and research” (Article XI, Title I, p. 32-33). This policy underscores how, with academic freedom to discuss areas of expertise in the classroom, there comes corresponding responsibility to delineate where views are individual and not institutional. The policy encourages innovation in accordance with its public service mission, establishes the need for protection and disclosures of intellectual property, and promotes cooperation with governmental agencies and private industry in support of the economic well-being of New York State and the nation.

The SUNY Cortland Handbook (2021) further reaffirms and explains the principles outlined in the SUNY Board of Trustees Policy (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter220\_22001-Academic Freedom.pdf*). Cortland’s Code of Conduct similarly introduces the rights of students to freedoms, such as freedom of expression, thought, and association, as forming an integral part of the Code and the overall learning endeavor, in the Statement of Rights and Freedoms of Students (*Code of Conduct – SUNY Cortland.pdf*).

Several additional supporting documents elaborate on the protections afforded to faculty by the SUNY Academic Freedom policy. The United University Professionals (UUP) Guide for Academics at SUNY (*Guide for Academics at SUNY – UUP.pdf*) describes members’ rights to protection of intellectual property under SUNY Board of Trustee policies. The SUNY University Faculty Senate (UFS) enacted a resolution in April 2019 specifically addressing the topic of academic freedom, shared governance, and intellectual property rights in the online teaching context as SUNY expands its online offerings and faculty develop online content (*SUNY UFS Resolution 182-07-01.pdf*). In addition, SUNY Cortland holds all students accountable for maintaining academic integrity by defining a clear set of standards and a process for review of possible violations. Faculty are required to include on their syllabi a statement setting expectations and noting resources related to academic integrity, an inclusive learning environment, disability, and Title IX (*Required Syllabus Statements.pdf*).

## **Commitment to Inclusive Excellence (Criterion 2)**

SUNY Cortland has set as one of its primary institutional priorities the strengthening of our community through a focus on inclusion, civility, and accountability (Institutional Objective 7). We have pursued this objective, with shared leadership by several offices and committees, through a broad range of initiatives, developed in response to student and employee feedback and designed to support an inclusive and mutually respectful environment (*Inclusive Excellence at SUNY Cortland.pdf*).

Undergirding these efforts is a well-established infrastructure of offices, committees, departments, and groups dedicated to supporting students and employees from a range of backgrounds and perspectives. Offices include the Institutional Equity and Inclusion, Multi-Cultural Life and Diversity, Disability Resources, Title IX, Affirmative Action, International Programs, and Advisement and Transition. The Student Conduct Office supports an inclusive, respectful community through its oversight of the student conduct process, which is designed to be educational and transformative by creating opportunities for students to develop interpersonally, ethically, and morally while building their critical thinking skills (*DEI\_Infrastructure\_Offices-webpages.pdf*). In addition, several committees act on concerns related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and include the President's Council on Inclusive Excellence (PCIE), the Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and Expression Committee (SOGIE), Gender Policies and Initiatives Council (GPIC), the Anti-Racism Task Force, and several student groups (*DEI\_Committees-webpages.pdf*; *DEI\_Student\_Groups-webpages.pdf*).

Similarly, several academic departments and programs focus on scholarship and teaching to advance understanding and inclusive practice in and across disciplines, such as Africana Studies, Foundations and Social Advocacy, Modern Languages, Latino and Latin American Studies, Asian/Middle East Studies, Inclusive Education, Adapted Physical Education, and the Center for Gender and Intercultural Studies. The Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) Initiative promotes inclusive instructional practices that are responsive to the needs of all students (*Culturally\_Responsive\_Teaching-CRT-webpage.pdf*).

An important step in fostering inclusive excellence was the adoption of Cortland's Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Plan in 2015 (*Diversity Inclusion Plan 2016 - SUNY Cortland.pdf*). The plan includes five goals: 1) improving the campus climate for all; 2) recruiting and retaining diverse faculty and staff; 3) enhancing cultural competence; 4) strengthening the campus commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and 5) increasing retention and graduation rates of underrepresented students, transfer students, and first-generation students. Each of these goals has a series of action items, many of which have already been implemented.

Over the past several years students have voiced strong concerns about inclusion and equity at Cortland and presented demands for improvement through a manifesto (*Black Student Union Presents The Forgotten Faces (final) copy.pdf*). To gauge how different constituencies perceived inclusion efforts across campus, a Climate Survey Committee was formed to create, administer, and analyze the SUNY Cortland Inclusion Survey of students, faculty, and staff. The results of

the survey revealed that the majority of all groups felt comfortable with the institutional climate; however, when the data were disaggregated by group, there was room for the campus to improve (*Inclusion-Survey-Report 2019.pdf*).

The report led to three preliminary recommendations, which are being used to improve the campus climate. These include the following: 1) conduct exit interviews for graduating students to understand the texture of experiences across the campus over time; 2) improve communication with students and employees about the efforts to improve diversity and education that are underway or being planned, and 3) create a system of training and education on diversity that is woven into all aspects of campus life. These initiatives are underway in multiple offices.

In a similar planning initiative to further our inclusive excellence goals, Cortland administered Gender Climate Surveys for three consecutive years (2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16) to better understand student and employee experience with the campus climate as it related to gender (*Gender+Climate+Review\_A+Three+Year+Analysis+FINAL.pdf*). GPIC has responded to concerns raised in the surveys through initiatives, such as offering several women's leadership programs, with strong levels of participation from faculty, professionals, and students.

In addition, over the past three years, the Disability Resources Office has changed its leadership from a part-time coordinator and assistant to a full-time director and assistant director in recognition of the need to improve the climate for students with disabilities. The campus has made progress in supplying accessible classroom furniture, shuttle buses, an ADA van, technology, and an Electronic Information and Technology Plan to meet SUNY accessibility standards.

We have also worked to foster a respectful, collaborative work environment among employees through ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty and staff (*Inclusive Excellence at SUNY Cortland.pdf*). A positive finding from the Campus Climate Survey is that a majority of student, staff, and faculty respondents overwhelmingly agreed that training efforts focused on diversity are acceptable. The PCIE is currently developing a professional development program for all employees, designed to complement a wide range of workshops on topics related to diversity and inclusion (*DEI PROPOSAL-PD PROGRAM.pdf*).

SUNY Cortland, recognizing the importance of having a diverse faculty and our shortcomings in this regard, has made concerted efforts to recruit, hire, and support faculty who identify as members of underrepresented groups. As of Spring 2021, only 16% of faculty identify as Black or African American, Hispanic or Latinx, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or Two or More Races (*Demographics 5 yr lookback (1).pdf*). Further, the Climate Survey revealed that while a majority of students and employees agreed that the campus has made efforts to diversify the faculty, staff, and student body, 55% of Black students, 25% of Latinx students, and 30% of BIPOC staff/faculty identified the efforts to diversify faculty as insignificant. 45% of BIPOC staff/faculty viewed efforts to diversify staff as insignificant.

To improve our performance in this area, Cortland is participating in SUNY's Promoting Recruitment, Opportunity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Growth (PRODiG) program focused on increasing representation of historically underrepresented faculty across all disciplines and women faculty of all ethnicities and races in STEM fields. PRODiG creates a system-wide structure for campuses to improve their faculty recruitment and retention practices. We successfully participated in the first round of proposals for PRODiG, and funding for faculty salaries was granted to support the appointment of five full-time, tenure-track faculty members and a visiting scholar in fall 2020. We continue to seek opportunities to enhance the diversity of our workforce and our campus community (*Stmt PRODiG Progress (1).pdf*).

### **Addressing Grievances (Criterion 3)**

SUNY Cortland has a set of documented, publicly available grievance policies that provide students, faculty, and staff with fair and impartial avenues to seek prompt, appropriate, and equitable resolution. The following committees or offices address complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty, or staff and provide frameworks for their resolution: Academic Grievance Tribunal (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter 340-350.pdf*, Chapter 350), Student Conduct Office, Title IX Office, Institutional Equity and Inclusion Office, and the Human Resources (HR) Office.

Our policies related to addressing grievances include the Bias Incident Reporting Process (*Bias\_Incident\_Reporting-webpage.pdf*); Academic Grievance System (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter 340-350.pdf*); Title IX Grievance Process (*Title\_IX\_Grievance\_Process-webpage.pdf*); Fair Process Policies and Procedures related to Teacher Education Dispositions (*Fair Process Policy in Teacher Education.pdf*); Code of Student Conduct (*Code of Conduct – SUNY Cortland.pdf*); Affirmative Action policies (*Discrimination+Complaint+Policy+and+Procedure.pdf*); and HR policies related to student employees. These policies are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure they are in line with changes in federal, state, and SUNY regulations. They are publicly available on Cortland's website on the Consumer Information page of the *Institutional Effectiveness website*. The student policies are shared with students via email when they register for related programs and on each course syllabus. Human Resources notifies faculty and staff of changes to policies.

In addition, we have launched the Mediation and Resolution Service initiative, which began in 2020 as a pilot program of SUNY's UFS (*Mediation and Resolution Service-webpage.pdf*). This pilot program provides academic faculty and professional staff with an informal, confidential, and independent resource to address concerns openly without fear of retaliation or judgment through individual consultation or mediation by trained committee members. It, therefore, provides another layer of process and facilitates collegiality and civility among academic and professional faculty.

### **Avoiding Conflicts of Interest (Criterion 4)**

SUNY Cortland employees are subject to New York State ethics guidelines and campus-level policies to ensure the avoidance of conflict of interest, or the appearance of such, in all

activities and among all constituents. The following is a description of policy documents and how they are shared with all employees.

All New York State employees and employees of the Research Foundation of SUNY are bound by the New York State Code of Ethics set forth in the Public Officers Law § 73 and administered by the New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) (*Public Officers Law 73 -NYS JCOPE.pdf*). This law prohibits employees from having "any interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, or engage in any business or transaction or professional activity or incur any obligation of any nature, which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his (or her) duties in the public interest." The Code includes nine standards related to impartiality, disclosing confidential information, securing privileges or favors based on one's state job, business with the State, integrity standards and financial conflicts. Cortland employees are also subject to other State laws related to conflicts of interest (*Conflicts of Interest \_ NYS JCOPE.pdf*), outside activities, gifts, financial disclosure statements (*Financial Disclosure \_ NYS JCOPE.pdf*), and other matters (*Ethics Laws and Regulations \_ NYS JCOPE.pdf*).

All New York State employees, including SUNY Cortland faculty and staff, receive the Public Officers Law Handbook during their onboarding before their start date and must sign an Oath of Office for New York State and statement that they have received, read, and will conform to the provisions of Sections 73-78 of this law. These ethics policies are shared with all employees via Cortland's website and are provided to new faculty during their orientation. Every year, HR sends out via email a policy reminder which includes the Code of Ethics reminder (*Code+of+Ethics+4.29.20; Plain Language Guide Ethics Law - NYS JCOPE.pdf*).

The SUNY Cortland Handbook includes a campus Code of Ethics that provides further interpretations of how the Public Officers Law applies in the higher education context generally and at Cortland specifically (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter220\_22011-Ethics.pdf*). The Code establishes policies related to employee ethical conduct in several areas, including intellectual honesty, students' academic freedom, respectful conduct toward colleagues, faculty governance, conflict of interest, consensual relationships, family relationships, and anti-nepotism.

As detailed in our discussion of Standard VI, SUNY Cortland abides by state, federal, and SUNY guidance and rules about business and accounting practices. The Purchasing Office provides efficient and responsive service to the campus in the procurement of goods and services reflecting the best interest and protection of the institution, gaining the highest possible value within New York State laws and regulations. The Purchasing Office is accountable for all procurement from State Operations, Dormitory Income Fund Reimbursables (DIFR), Income Fund Reimbursables (IFR), and Current Restricted Funds, which are subject to the N.Y.S. Finance Law, State Agency Regulations, Executive Branch Directives, and State University Policy (*Purchasing and Accounts Payable-webpage.pdf*).

Consistent with the mission of our comprehensive college, SUNY Cortland supports research to advance scientific knowledge, promote scholarship, and serve the public interest. Where the

scholarly work of faculty, staff, or students includes the study of humans or data collected from human subjects, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews the research proposal before data collection, and the researchers are required to take CITI courses for certification. When reviewing research proposals, the IRB is guided by the ethical principles expressed in The Belmont Report, codified in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Title 45, part 46 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Cortland's Instructional Review Board (IRB) Policies and Procedures Manual, which includes a section on Conflict of Interest (p. 32), is available for download on the SUNY Cortland Research and Sponsored Programs Office's website (*IRB Policy 030711 - SUNY Cortland.pdf*). Cortland similarly takes responsibility for the humane care and use of animals in research and, with oversight of a committee of at least five qualified members, complies with the Principles for the Use of Animals, the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, the provisions of the Animal Welfare Acts, and other applicable laws and regulations (*PHS\_Policy\_on\_Humane\_Care\_and\_Use\_of\_Laboratory\_Animals.pdf*).

Ethics and integrity are further supported on campus by several professional development workshops, including a two-day Summer Ethics Institute (*Summer Ethics Institute - SUNY Cortland.pdf*) and a three-day Diversity Institute (*Summer DEISJ Institute - SUNY Cortland.pdf*) for faculty and staff. These workshops provide opportunities for participants to learn about ethical frameworks and issues, as well as strategies and techniques for developing an antiracist and inclusive campus.

#### **Fair and Impartial Employment Practices (Criterion 5)**

SUNY Cortland is an Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity/Americans with Disabilities Act (AA/EEO/ADA) employer and employs rigorous processes to ensure that all practices are fair and impartial in all human resources-related activity, including hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation.

The hiring processes of Cortland are administered and supported by HR. The hiring of unclassified staff, which includes faculty, professional staff, and management, is overseen by the associate director of human resources and affirmative action officer (AAO). The AAO oversees all unclassified employee recruitment consistent with federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations, as well as the campus' policies and procedures. Classified staff hiring, which includes our nursing staff, police, administrative support, and operational staff, is administered and supported by the human resources manager of appointments and processing. Classified staff recruitment policies and procedures are governed by New York State Civil Service Rules and regulations, which include both competitive (tested) positions and open local labor market searches.

The evaluation and promotion processes for employees are clearly articulated in various documents, such as the collective bargaining agreements between New York State and unions (*State-Union Contracts \_ Governor's Office of Employee Relations.pdf*), SUNY Cortland Handbook Chapters 210.05 (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter210\_21005-Promotion.pdf*) and 220.05-220.08 (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter220\_22005-08.pdf*), policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees, and New York State Civil Service laws. Evaluation and promotion are

administered by two different units. HR supports the evaluation and promotion of the classified staff bargaining unit employees, professional employees, and management employees. These employees are evaluated on at least an annual basis throughout employment. Template level forms and notice of action for these employees are provided by HR to support effective performance planning, evaluation, and promotion. HR also provides performance management training to supervisory staff on a bi-annual basis and as needed. The evaluation and promotion of faculty is administered and supported by the Provost's Office and is articulated clearly in the SUNY Cortland Handbook (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter220-Academic Personnel Procedures.pdf*). Portfolio preparation is supported by various areas on campus, including portfolio development workshops led by the Provost's Office, Academic Faculty Affairs Committee (AFAC), and department personnel committees and chairs.

The process for separation is delineated and accessible to employees via HR policies and procedures webpage (*Resignation Separation Retirement Policies.pdf*). Because we are a unionized campus, each collective bargaining agreement contains specific contract articles on discipline and grievance procedures which are administered by several designees in HR (*2016-2022-nys-uup-agreement\_final.pdf*; *2016-2021-asu-contract-agreement.pdf*; *nyscopba-2016-2023-contract-final.pdf*; *pbanys-interest-arbitration-award\_2015-2019.pdf*; *2019-to-2023-state-and-pef.pdf*; *2019-2023-nys-gseu-agreement.pdf*). We apply a progressive disciplinary process, except in the case of gross misconduct. The process starts with coaching and counseling and moves to formal discipline only in more serious cases or when initial coaching and counseling have not been successful. HR staff serve as advisors to all levels of management across campus, providing guidance on appropriate employee behavior and performance. HR also works with leaders as needed to address performance deficiencies. When discipline is required, HR partners work effectively with union representatives to resolve the potential disciplinary action to the mutual benefit of SUNY Cortland and the employee. Involuntary separations typically are the result of disciplinary actions. Voluntary separation typically occurs through resignation due to retirement or to pursue other opportunities.

### **Honest and Truthful Communications (Criterion 6)**

Cortland strives for honesty and truthfulness in all public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, as well as in internal communications. The staff in these offices are trained in the ethics of journalism and bound by the Society of Professional Journalists' code of ethics, including truth-telling and accuracy in reporting (*SPJ Code of Ethics - Society of Professional Journalists.pdf*). Ethical problems are usually inadvertent mistakes and corrections are publicized to the full initial audience. The offices responsible for communications and publications conduct ongoing assessments of ethical questions and situations.

### **Promoting Affordability, Accessibility, and Financial Education (Criterion 7)**

SUNY Cortland, a *Money* "Best Colleges for Your Money 2020," has initiated many services and programs to promote affordability and accessibility and to enable students to understand funding sources and options, the value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt. The Student Accounts Office maintains and annually updates a

webpage with current academic costs for tuition, fees, room, and board that is accessible to all current and potential students (*Tuition and Costs - SUNY Cortland.pdf*). The site also includes a Net Price Calculator on the Financial Aid Office's website in accordance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (*Net Price Calculator - SUNY Cortland.pdf*).

The Financial Aid Office provides services to applicants, enrolled students, and parents regardless of FAFSA status. Prospective and current students can learn about scholarships, including the NYS Excelsior Scholarship (*Scholarships - SUNY Cortland.pdf*; *The Excelsior Scholarship - SUNY Cortland.pdf*); meet with financial aid staff to discuss financial aid packages and other issues related to the costs of attendance; and access financial literacy information through the SUNY Smart Track Financial Literacy tools. The staff also provide exit counseling to students considering withdrawal from SUNY Cortland. Students are made aware of financial services through presentations during Open House, Orientation, and COR 101.

### **Complying with Reporting Requirements (Criterion 8; ROA 14)**

Cortland complies with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements. Adherence to federal and state laws, statutes, and requirements (e.g., Clery, Title IX, NYS 129B, Research Foundation, AA/EEO) are detailed in the Institutional Federal Compliance Report, which we completed as part of this review (*InstitutionalFederalComplianceReport\_April 2021template-SUNYCortland.pdf*). Title IX, NYS 129B, Affirmative Action, and Clery compliance audits are conducted annually as required by law. Additionally, a committee reviews the Athletics Department's compliance with Title IX periodically, generally every five years. A report is issued and shared on the campus website (*Title IX Athletics Compliance Review 2017.pdf*).

Cortland fully discloses information on institution-wide assessments, graduation, retention, certification, and licensure or licensing board pass rates in a variety of locations. These include the College Catalog (e.g., *Teacher\_Certification\_Exam\_Pass\_Rates-Catalog.pdf*), the *Institutional Research and Analysis website*, and reporting venues coordinated through SUNY, New York State Education Department and the accreditation bodies relevant to certification or licensure. External accreditations are also outlined in the College Catalog and found on the campus website (*Accreditations - SUNY Cortland.pdf*).

Cortland complies with the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation, which are discussed in detail throughout the chapters of this Self-Study. We report any substantive changes to MSCHE, including distance learning and off-site location changes. The Associate Provost's Office oversees the curriculum change process as well as reporting to MSCHE, facilitating efficient monitoring and communication of substantive program or delivery changes. The SUNY curriculum review process further supports this reporting by prompting institutions to consider if a curriculum proposal requires a substantive change request.

### **Assessing Ethics and Integrity (Criterion 9)**

Cortland engages in the assessment of ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, and the way these are implemented. Periodic assessment is carried out by

governance structures, such as the Faculty Senate and the AFAC (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter150-Faculty Governance.pdf*). The Senate conducts a review of governance every five years, while the AFAC reviews policies and procedures and any changes to the Handbook every three years. The SUNY Cortland Handbook is reviewed and updated annually to include approved changes from offices and policy-related committees, such as the Education Policy Committee, the AFAC, Professional Affairs, and the Joint Committee on Student Interests. These reviews incorporate feedback from the campus community and enhance the fairness and integrity of structures, policies, and procedures. In addition, HR has two ethics officers who assess policies and procedures continually.

### **Strengths and Progress**

Throughout the self-study process, we have identified Cortland's key strengths related to ethics and integrity. One is our well-defined policies and procedures for personnel actions, student conduct, grievances, and appeals, which were developed with stakeholder input and multiple reviews, assuring constituents that processes are fair and impartial. Another strength is the rigorous monitoring of apparent or actual conflict of interest. Several campus, SUNY, and New York State policies address this issue and practices are in place across the campus to ensure ethical standards are followed. We systematically review our communications and publications for accuracy and truthfulness and follow all applicable federal, state, and Commission requirements. The SUNY Cortland Handbook is currently going through an extensive review and revision to improve access to information (*Handbook Restructuring Committee Charge and Progress.pdf*). Cortland is committed to fulfilling our mission and values, which is evidenced in the pursuit of our institutional objectives, divisional plans, and Diversity and Inclusion Plan. Our policies and procedures foster a campus climate that respects academic freedom and diversity of perspectives.

Cortland has made substantial progress in enhancing ethics and integrity across campus by pursuing Institutional Objective 7 of the Strategic Plan, which seeks to "strengthen our community through a focus on inclusion, civility, and accountability." As described above, we have completed several action items for this objective. We have also made progress in implementing some of the key recommendations of GPIC, and we have expanded the staffing and services of the Disabilities Resources Office. Although we have made progress on many of our indicators for Institutional Objective 7, we have not always achieved our target indicators. In the area of faculty diversity, the goal was to have 20% of faculty identifying as Black or African American, Hispanic or Latinx, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Asian, International, or Two or More Races, from a baseline of 14% in 2017. The most recent data (2020) show an improvement to 16% (*IPAC Indicators Tracking Sheet-2021.pdf*). Retention of diverse faculty and staff remained static at 89%, but this is already at a high level. Our established goal for the Gender Climate Survey results for "positive gender climate" improved from 76% in 2014 to 78% in 2020.

In 2016, we administered the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey, and the baseline results for the item *If I had to do it all over, I would again choose to work at this institution*, were below expectations (3.51) in comparison to our peer cohort. We set a target of reaching at least a rating of 3.74 on the next administration of the survey in 2017, and we surpassed that target with a 4.03 rating. Items on the Student Opinion Survey (SOS), such as *level of satisfaction with acceptance of individual differences*, *campus openness to opinions of others*, and *sense of belonging*, all exceeded our targets in 2018. Related results were found for National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) diversity-related items (*IPAC Indicators Tracking Sheet-2021.pdf*).

An important step in fostering inclusive excellence was the adoption of Cortland's Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Plan in 2015 (*Diversity Inclusion Plan 2016 - SUNY Cortland.pdf*). Over the past five years, Cortland has made good progress in fulfilling the five goals and commitments laid out in this plan. Examples include the Inclusive Spaces Initiative, search committee training on unconscious bias, Anti-Racism Action Planning by most departments and offices, the appointment of a Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer in 2017, and the inclusion of this position in the President's Cabinet in 2020.

The next Campus Climate Survey and Gender Climate Survey will provide insight into the effects of the efforts the institution has made to become more inclusive and provide a foundation for continuous improvement. The annual reporting process requires departments to update their progress in areas related to the strategic institutional objectives and will also yield data on progress toward our inclusivity goals. In addition, we will continue to review policies and procedures to ensure they are in alignment with state ethics laws and review Cortland publications on an ongoing basis to ensure that information is accurate and updated.

### **Suggestions**

As outlined above, SUNY Cortland integrates into all aspects of its teaching, service, research, and administrative functions a robust set of State, SUNY, and campus policies and initiatives related to ethics, integrity, and inclusion. While we are proud of our progress toward our inclusive excellence goals, to keep the momentum going, we must continue as an institution, as units, and as individuals to self-reflect on our biases and strive to improve our policies and practices to foster a culture of inclusion. In support of this continuous improvement, we, therefore, make the following suggestions:

1. Develop a comprehensive plan for regular assessment as part of the new Diversity and Inclusion Plan to monitor progress toward our inclusive excellence goals through climate surveys, focus group interviews, and other tools.
2. Better communicate with students and employees about ongoing efforts or new initiatives to improve diversity and education.
3. Create and maintain a comprehensive system of professional development and education on diversity for all employees, with effective incentives for participation, that is woven into all aspects of campus life.

## Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

### Standard III

Requirements of Affiliation 9 and 15



SUNY Cortland

	Values	Priorities	Institutional Objectives
<p><i>An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.</i></p>	Intellectual Life	Academic Excellence	Assessment of Student Learning (2)
	Focus on Students	Well-being	Faculty Engagement (4)
			Full-Time Faculty (5)
			Applied Learning (6)
			Spaces and Facilities (10)

### Finding for MSCHE Standard III and Requirements of Affiliation 9 and 15

SUNY Cortland meets all MSCHE criteria and sub-criteria for Standard III and Requirements of Affiliation 9 and 15, with one suggestion for continued growth.

### Introduction

Cortland meets Standard III through its pursuit of two primary institutional priorities: Academic Excellence and Transformational Education and associated institutional objectives. SUNY Cortland’s mission statement establishes the institution as “an academic community dedicated to diverse learning experiences. Students grow as engaged citizens with a strong social conscience fostered by outstanding teaching, scholarship, and service.” Central to achieving this mission are academic programs of study designed, delivered, and assessed by qualified faculty and professionals to foster a coherent, rigorous, and effective student learning experience. The College offers clearly articulated pathways to undergraduate and graduate degree completion, with sufficient curricular and co-curricular offerings to meet Standard III criteria. These learning opportunities are scaffolded with a general education program, opportunities for applied learning and research, and academic services to support student learning and academic success.

This chapter describes how Cortland meets the criteria for Standard III, illustrating through examples how the design and delivery of the student learning experience foster Academic Excellence, Transformational Education, and the related institutional objectives outlined in our strategic plan. These institutional objectives include: (2) Improve student achievement in written and oral communication; (4) Promote faculty engagement in the life of the college and in their respective disciplines; (5) Increase the percent of courses taught by full-time faculty; (#6) Expand the impact of applied learning by increasing opportunities and increasing the quality of experiences; and (10) Enhance the quality of spaces and facilities for academic programs and the overall student experience. Our lines of inquiry were focused on student learning outcomes and how they are used and applied to practice. In meeting the criteria and

supporting the institution's strategic plan, the College meets two of the Requirements of Affiliation (ROA) related to Standard III, which include 9 (rigorous, coherent, and appropriate assessment of student achievement) and 15 (maintaining a core of faculty and professionals who assure continuity and coherence of the institution's educational programs).

Our analysis is organized in five main sections: Coherent Student Learning Experiences; Effective Faculty and Professional Staff; Opportunities and Resources; Assessing the Effectiveness of Programs and Student Learning; and Strengths and Progress. We have also identified a suggestion for continued growth related to this standard.

The Self-Study *Roadmap.pdf* provides a listing of all the evidence for this standard by individual criteria. The last page of this document provides a crosswalk for related ROAs. The *Roadmap.pdf* file is located under Standard III, Criterion 1 in the Evidence Inventory.

### **Analysis of Criteria and Supporting Evidence**

#### **Coherent Student Learning Experiences (Criteria 1, 3, and 5; ROA 9)**

Cortland offers 67 undergraduate majors and more than 20 graduate degrees through the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Education, and the School of Professional Studies. In addition, the College offers four programs that lead to post-graduate certificates and two programs that provide students with opportunities to earn advanced certificates. Students also have opportunities for specialized advising paths in the areas of pre-chiropractic, pre-dentistry, pre-forestry, pre-law, pre-medicine, pre-physical therapy, pre-veterinary science, ROTC Air Force and ROTC Army (*Academic Programs.pdf*).

The College also offers nearly 50 minors, comprised of at least 15 credits, that provide undergraduate students with opportunities to explore areas of study outside of their majors. In addition, concentrations are also offered as opportunities for students to develop a deeper area of study within their majors (*Undergraduate\_Minors.pdf*).

All undergraduate programs are designed to be completed in four years, and the College Catalog provides sample four-year plans as a guide for all students (*Degree Planner-3 Programs.pdf*). Graduate programs provide sample course progressions to show how programs are designed to be completed. Transfer planning resources provide transfer students a clear set of courses to complete before transfer to achieve the bachelor's degree within four years (*Transfer Planning Sheets website.pdf*).

#### **Meeting the Needs and Interests of Our Students**

The College publishes clear, accurate, easy-to-follow information about programs, degree requirements, and expected time to completion through the Undergraduate and Graduate College Catalogs and department websites. The catalogs, updated and published annually online, outline all requirements and provide sample four-year plans of study for every undergraduate major. In addition, all academic departments have websites outlining their major and minor degree programs and highlighting their faculty and distinctive features, and

some individual departments supplement campus-wide publications with advising guides or manuals with additional specific information. In programs with higher grade point average requirements, such as teacher education, the specific expectation is clearly articulated in program materials.

All undergraduate and graduate students have access to Degree Works as a degree audit tool to understand their degree requirements and track their progress to degree completion electronically (*Degree\_Works-webpage.pdf*; *Degree Works student examples.pdf*). Students have additional opportunities to review their progress toward their degrees with their faculty advisor at any time, but at minimum, they must meet with their faculty advisor before the start of the course registration period. Advisors can use the “note” feature in Degree Works to keep a record of what was discussed in their advisement meetings, providing a valuable reference for future use.

Cortland has been responsive to changes in disciplines and requirements in fields through revisions in academic programs. The Athletic Training B.S. degree, for example, has been phased out and transitioned to the M.S. Athletic Training, beginning in 2020, and the Geology program is being registered to lead to licensure qualifying for the new NYS profession of Professional Geology. The College also develops new programs by changing or drawing upon existing majors or concentrations to better meet student interest and demand. Recent examples include Bachelor of Science degrees in Healthcare Management, Environmental Geoscience, Public Administration and Public Policy, Human Service Studies, and Media Production, as well as a B.F.A. in Musical Theater and a B.A. in Graphic Design and Digital Media.

To meet student interest in pathways from undergraduate to graduate studies, Cortland has created a new 4+1 program for students in the B.A. English or Professional Writing programs to pursue an M.A. in English with one year of additional study. Additional programs are exploring the 4+1 model to create a path to graduate study and increase enrollment in graduate programs. In addition, starting in 2012 a new B.S. in Selected Studies has helped many students find a path to a degree through creating an individualized program under the guidance of an associate dean (*Curriculog\_New\_Programs.pdf*).

All curricular changes to programs, either by new offerings or by alterations of existing offerings, are required to go through an extensive approval process to ensure rigor and coherence, which supports the expectations of ROA 9. The SUNY Cortland Curriculum Change Guide provides guidelines for program change or development, including majors, minors, or concentrations (*Curriculum Change Guide.pdf*, pp. 13-14). The same set of processes are applied throughout the institution and to every level of the program, including undergraduate majors, minors, and concentrations, and graduate programs. Each degree program has approved student learning outcomes, which are assessed periodically on a rotating basis according to an established process. All course syllabi must include student learning outcomes and specify how student work will be evaluated and assessed in the course. All proposals must

include program student learning outcomes and a curriculum map showing how outcomes align with program requirements and where major assessments occur.

### ***The General Education Program***

The coherence, synthesis, and rigor found in programs and majors also underpin Cortland's general education (GE) program. As part of the SUNY system, Cortland participates in the SUNY-wide general education program that all undergraduate students complete. Cortland requires two additional categories of general education in (1) Prejudice and Discrimination and (2) Science, Technology, Values and Society. The purpose of Cortland's program is to "provide students with an intellectual and cultural basis for their development as informed individuals in our society. This requires that they understand the ideas that have formed our own civilization, that they appreciate other cultures and that they have knowledge of the fundamental principles that govern the physical universe" (*General\_Education-catalog.pdf*).

The GE curriculum is designed in such a way that students develop essential skills, including oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. Scientific and quantitative reasoning are addressed through the quantitative skills and the natural sciences requirements. The breadth of GE requirements ensures that students are prepared for critical analysis and reasoning both outside and within their disciplines (*General Education Alignment Crosswalk Jan\_2022.pdf*). Writing is infused throughout the curriculum, starting with two semesters of composition. Students must complete two additional writing intensive (WRIT) courses, with at least one being in their discipline. The College Writing Committee approves all WRIT courses and ensures the writing process is central to courses. Oral communication is also infused throughout the curriculum, and the Presentation Skills Committee approves all courses with this attribute. Critical Thinking and Information Management are competencies of the SUNY GE program (*General\_Education-SUNY.pdf*) and are infused throughout the Cortland GE program. GE assessment results measure achievement of student learning outcomes (SLO) in each category of the general education program (*General Education Assessment Results 2021-0421.pdf*).

Students also study values, ethics, and diverse perspectives through the GE program. Values and ethics are addressed by the category of Science, Technology, Values and Society, in which the intended student learning outcome is for students will demonstrate an understanding of the way value judgments are justified and how interpretation of technical information can lead to different conclusions (*General\_Education-catalog.pdf*). Diverse perspectives are addressed through two categories, Contrasting Cultures and Prejudice and Discrimination. Under Contrasting Cultures, students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of cultural differences in world views, traditions, cultural institutions, values, social systems, languages and means of communication. Under Prejudice & Discrimination, students demonstrate an understanding of how power, bias, prejudice, and discrimination can affect society's values, attitudes, and institutions.

These GE requirements are supplemented by a broad range of curricular and co-curricular programs designed to expand students' cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity. These include over 50 study abroad courses and programs integrated with curricula, cultural presentations, dialogues, and workshops related to intercultural communications and issues in both international and domestic contexts, frequent seminars by faculty and invited speakers on global issues, an international film catalog, and courses on global topics. Faculty and the International Programs Office (IPO) are developing and offering an increasing number of virtual intercultural exchange opportunities, including virtual internships, global peer dialogues, and faculty-taught collaborative online international learning (COIL) courses.

Students concur that coursework is rigorous. In responding to the item “This course has effectively challenged me to think” on the Course Teacher Evaluation (CTE), the adjusted mean scores for the last four semesters have been 4.55, 4.56, 4.61, and 4.54 on a scale of 1 to 5. Items related to rigor from the most recent National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) report (*NSSE20+Multi-Year+Report-2020.pdf*), such as Course Challenge (mean of 5.5 on a 1 to 7 scale) and Academic Emphasis (mean of 3.0 on a scale of 1 to 4), provide further evidence of rigor.

### **Effective Faculty and Professional Staff (Criterion 2; ROA 15)**

In keeping with the high priority Cortland places on academic excellence, student learning experiences are designed, delivered, and assessed by qualified faculty and/or other professionals, in sufficient numbers, who take advantage of a wide range of professional development opportunities and who are reviewed regularly and equitably. The faculty-student ratio has been approximately 1:15 or 1:16 for the last four years with a median class size of 20-29 students (*CommonDataSet-2016-2021\_SectionI.pdf*; *Faculty\_Workload\_Summary-Fall2020.pdf*). In addition, there are 311 full-time and 35 part-time professional staff to support the design and delivery of academic programs and student learning opportunities. These faculty and staff are well-qualified for their positions and responsibilities. For example, of the full-time academic faculty at Cortland, 82% hold the terminal degree in their field. The College Catalog lists all faculty and staff credentials, including the institutions where they earned their degrees (*Catalog-202122-Faculty List.pdf*).

In alignment with MSCHE ROA 15, Cortland has a core of full-and part-time faculty and/or other appropriate professionals with sufficient responsibility to the institution to assure continuity and coherence of the institution's educational programs. According to the latest Faculty Workload Summary (*Faculty\_Workload\_Summary-Fall2020.pdf*), the College has 257 tenured or tenure-track faculty, 73 full-time lecturers or visiting faculty, and 321 part-time faculty. Full-time (tenured, tenure-track, full-time lecturer, or visiting) faculty taught 67,992 “student credit hours” compared to 30,367 for part-time faculty.

### **Faculty Engagement**

Faculty and professional staff are highly engaged in service activities that foster continuity and coherence of the academic mission. They serve as leaders and members of committees that oversee curriculum changes, graduate study, faculty affairs, professional affairs, educational

policy, and much more. Faculty who are ranked professor, associate professor, and assistant professor make up 19%, 46%, and 31% of Faculty Senate Committees, respectively, with instructors and lecturers making up the remaining 4% (*IPAC Indicators Tracking Sheet-2021.pdf*).

Cortland supports faculty professional growth and innovation in several ways. Faculty are provided with funds to support travel to professional conferences if they are giving presentations. The cost of membership in professional organizations is also offset by Academic Affairs. In addition, the Research and Sponsored Programs Office provides support to faculty seeking grants that facilitate innovation in teaching and scholarship, as does the International Programs Office for faculty who develop international courses and programs or wish to host international scholars. Cortland similarly supports professionals through funding for attending professional development workshops and conferences. Faculty and professional staff can also apply for additional funding for professional growth and research through a small grants program on campus or the Labor-Management grant program.

While funding is an important support for professional development, there are other resources that faculty can access to improve their professional and pedagogical skills. Cortland's Institute for College Teaching (ICT) advances effective teaching through workshops, webinars, podcasts, individual consultations, and promotion of teaching-related events taking place throughout the state and the country (*ICT-webpage.pdf*). The Faculty Development Center complements the ICT by offering formal mentoring, portfolio workshops, small grants, and teaching awards to support faculty in their work (*Faculty\_Development\_Center-webpage.pdf*). The campus also has strong technology support for faculty and staff. There are numerous workshops and tutorials for Blackboard and all other supported technologies. Each department has an assigned library liaison to support research as well as an instructional designer to support online teaching and learning.

According to the NSSE data from 2020, students indicate that the quality of their interactions with faculty is a strength, rating Cortland faculty significantly higher than students rate faculty at our SUNY peer institutions. Of the NSSE responses, 85% reported perceived gains in thinking critically and analytically, 76% in writing clearly and effectively, and 75% in speaking clearly and effectively (*NSSE20 Snapshot SUNY Cortland.pdf*). The data from the 2018 Student Opinion Survey (SOS) similarly indicate student satisfaction with faculty, with the average student rating of the quality of instruction being 3.93 on a five-point scale and of the availability of faculty/instructors outside of class to be 4.08 (*SOS+Summary+Report\_Cortland-2018.pdf*).

### ***Hiring and Evaluation for Effectiveness***

The process for hiring full-time faculty and staff is well developed and rigorous. All successful candidates must meet established minimum position requirements. These include minimum degree requirements, which Human Resources verifies through the National Student Clearinghouse; disciplinary expertise; and teaching or professional experience.

All professional staff, including those responsible for the design and delivery of student learning opportunities, undergo an annual performance program evaluation based on the effectiveness of performance, professional ability, and effectiveness in college service and continuing growth. Evaluative feedback from secondary sources, who include faculty and staff colleagues and others who have a functional relationship with the professional staff member, supplements and informs supervisor evaluations.

Once faculty members are hired, their credentials continue to be systematically reviewed through the annual report, reappointment, tenure, and promotion processes. The criteria for each of these processes are delineated in the SUNY Cortland Handbook (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter220\_22005-08.pdf*, pages 2 – 20) and individual department personnel policies, which are accessible to all faculty through written and online materials (examples in *Academic Department Personnel Policies.pdf*). The Academic Faculty Affairs Committee (AFAC), a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, plays a role in the process, which is to ensure consistency and fairness in expectations for faculty review across departments while also recognizing differences in disciplines.

All full-time, tenure-track faculty are evaluated following their first year of employment using a standardized, multi-level system of review by department personnel committee, department chair, school personnel committee, School Dean, Provost, and President. Review criteria include three overarching areas of performance: teaching effectiveness, scholarship, and service. All criteria are qualitatively and quantitatively assessed based on materials self-selected and submitted by faculty. All decisions on faculty promotion, retention, tenure, or merit must include evidence of an instructor's teaching ability in the forms of either Course Teacher Evaluations (CTE) or Course Dossier Evaluations (CDE), which are completed by students. Faculty are also expected to include peer observations of their teaching (*Teacher\_Evaluation\_Guide-2017.pdf*)

As outlined in the Handbook, reviewers at each level of the multi-level system of review evaluate faculty effectiveness and provide ratings that represent employment reappointment renewal (i.e., one- or two-year renewal) for the first five years, leading to a culminating review, typically in the sixth year, for continuing appointment. Faculty use a similar review process for promotion to determine effectiveness and contributions to students, the institution, and the field of study. Criteria are incrementally more rigorous to achieve each promotion. Details about the process and criteria are outlined in the SUNY Cortland Handbook (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter220\_22005.08.pdf*).

### **Opportunities and Resources (Criteria 4 and 6)**

Cortland offers myriad learning opportunities and resources to support both its programs of study and students' academic progress. Learning opportunities are offered year-round with two 15-week semesters in fall and spring and additional summer and winter sessions that offer more condensed learning experiences. Through the Extended Learning Office, credit-bearing courses and non-credit learning opportunities are offered during summer and winter sessions

and are open to Cortland students as well as visitors (*Extended\_Learning-Summer.pdf*; *Extended\_Learning-Winter.pdf*).

Since the creation of the Extended Learning Office, there has been tremendous growth in enrollment in summer and winter sessions and these higher enrollments have continued during the pandemic. The office provides students with additional opportunities to make progress toward their degrees, enroll in culminating fieldwork/internships, and catch up after difficulties beyond their control. Cortland also has clearly articulated course re-take policies and tools such as GPA Calculator (*GPA\_Calculation\_Repair\_Kits.pdf*) to help students get back on track if they are struggling.

### ***Transformational Experiences***

Undergraduate and graduate students have many opportunities to participate in transformational education experiences because they are woven throughout our academic and international programs, offering students with many options to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions as they deeply and critically reflect on experiential learning. Often referred to as Applied Learning Opportunities (*Applied Learning Courses\_Fall 2020.pdf*), students participate in programs that have been designed to offer multidisciplinary coursework, internships, fieldwork, and experience-based learning opportunities. The Institute for Civic Engagement, for example, strives to increase the number of undergraduate students who are engaged in meaningful civic actions, including a wide range of activities by which they are engaged in the lives of the community, such as community service, participation in the political process, and involvement in advocacy groups (*Institute for Civic Engagement Year in Review.pdf*). Many courses and internships integrate a service-learning component within the course and are designated as such in the course schedule so students can register for them. Another example of service-learning is Cortland's Urban Recruitment of Educators (CURE). The CURE program provides scholarships to support students who have a strong commitment to teaching in urban settings and/or who are members of a group that is underrepresented in teaching.

Cortland also has unique outdoor facilities which provide opportunities for transformational learning. Since 1948, our Outdoor Education facility at Raquette Lake, NY has offered opportunities for students to experience a natural, outdoor environment to promote awareness and appreciation for wildlife and the natural world. Other transformational education opportunities include our many short and longer-term study abroad programs to provide students with a variety of opportunities to develop a greater understanding of other cultures and an appreciation and understanding of diversity around the world (*Study\_Abroad\_Viewbook\_2020.pdf*; *International Programs at SUNY Cortland.pdf*; *Transformational\_Learning-CURE-webpage.pdf*; *Transformational\_Learning-ICE-webpage.pdf*; *Transformational\_Learning-Outdoor\_Ed-webpage.pdf*).

Undergraduate research is both an opportunity and a resource for students at Cortland. Students have opportunities to be mentored by faculty to understand how knowledge is derived and developed. Students enhance their knowledge of study by engaging in hands-on learning as they develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. One recent example is a

student working with a professor of biological sciences to study the central nervous system using zebrafish. Another student worked with a professor to conduct an in-depth study of a Chinese global infrastructure plan, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The Undergraduate Research Council (URC), offers annual, competitive fellowships and grants to promote undergraduate formal academic inquiry, discovery, and dissemination of new knowledge. An important aspect of undergraduate research is the dissemination of findings; the URC's travel grant incentives support many undergraduate student-researchers to present their findings at SUNY-wide conferences each year (*Undergraduate\_Research-webpage.pdf*). On the graduate student level, the Graduate Faculty Executive Council offers small grants to support graduate student research each semester (*Graduate Student Research Grants.pdf*).

Faculty across campus report they feel that it is important (40%) or very important (26%) that students work with a faculty member on a research project (*FSSE\_Frequency-2016.pdf*) and 35% of faculty report working with students weekly on a research project throughout the academic year. Overall, faculty perceive that they have support from Cortland for engaging undergraduates in research (*COACHE\_2017\_Nature-of-Work\_means-2017.pdf*, Q80E). Undergraduate research is noted as a "High Impact Practice" in the NSSE and 21% of Cortland seniors report they had experience conducting research with faculty (*NSSE20+Multi+Year+Report-2020.pdf*).

*Transformations* is a campus-wide annual event dedicated to supporting undergraduate students to present research findings and creative activities to their peers and faculty. Since 1997, *Transformations*, formerly called Scholars Day, provides students with opportunities to represent their academic fields of study and share their scholarship with peers and faculty members. Undergraduate students who are awarded Summer Research Fellowships and who are selected as Outstanding Writing Awards recipients are expected to present their work during *Transformations Day* as well. In 2018, more than 100 students participated in *Transformations Day* (*Transformations-2018.pdf*).

### ***Scaffolding for Success***

Cortland also provides many resources that offer support to promote students' academic progress. These include the Honors Program, the Writing Center, the Learning Center, the Library, Advisement and Transition, Career Services, the Educational Opportunity Program, and International Programs. These services are described in greater detail in the Standard IV chapter and *Academic Success Resources.pdf*.

Facilities are another important resource for student academic progress and success. In recognition of this, the Instructional Space Committee was formed to evaluate classroom space and enhance the teaching/learning experience. The committee developed a formal process for upgrading classrooms, leading to more flexible classroom set-ups as well as improvements in technology. In addition, departments can indicate facility and space needs in their annual reports. The Facilities Master Plan (*Facilities Master Plan.pdf*) provides long-term guidance on the enhancement and addition of academic spaces. There have been substantial improvements

in many instructional spaces in recent years, and more information on these changes can be found in *Instructional Spaces & Campus Improvements.pdf*. The most recent SOS provides evidence that 82% of students are satisfied/very satisfied with classroom facilities (*SOS+Summary+Report\_Cortland-2018.pdf*). Facility-related items also appear on the COACHE Survey, allowing faculty and staff to evaluate the quality of academic spaces and offices. The mean score of 3.56 (5-point scale) slightly exceeded the College's goal of 3.54 (*COACHE-2017-Facilities-items.pdf*).

### ***The Graduate and Professional Student Experience***

Cortland's graduate and professional programs offer rich opportunities for the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking. All master's degrees and certificates of advanced study programs require a culminating experience such as a master's thesis, project, comprehensive exam, seminar, or internship. These capstone experiences provide opportunities for students to engage in scholarship, integrate current research, and apply critical thinking skills in career-related settings. Some examples include projects such as a business plan for an indoor softball facility (Sports Management Department); "Durgee Junior High School Needs Assessment Project," which examined e-cigarette use (Health Department); "Effects of Universal Design for Learning on Academic Outcomes" (Childhood/Early Childhood Department) and "#MeToo: Exploring Sexual Violence in Fantasy Literature" (English Department).

The Graduate Faculty Executive Committee provides opportunities for Cortland graduate students for their independent research and creative projects, and for travel to present their original research and project findings at regional, national, and international conferences (*Graduate Student Research Grants.pdf*). In a typical year, about five awards are given, ranging from \$200 - \$1200. Graduate students can also present their research at Transformations Day.

In addition, graduate students have opportunities for the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking through graduate assistantships with responsibilities in research, teaching, athletics, and different offices across campus (*Graduate\_Assistants-webpage.pdf*). Graduate students are also eligible to participate in Cortland study abroad programs. When they join undergraduate programs, their course requirements and assignments are adjusted by faculty to align with the academic rigor expected at the graduate level.

Faculty who provide graduate program instruction hold credentials appropriate to graduate-level curricula. Among the graduate faculty, 84 of 117 hold doctoral or professional degrees (71.8%) (*Graduate Faculty-Fall 2019.pdf*). Membership on the graduate faculty is based on five criteria outlined in the SUNY Cortland Handbook, including at least three years of graduate-level teaching or library service; an earned doctorate, highest terminal degree, or special training and experience in the particular faculty member's field; demonstrated scholarly ability, the rank of assistant professor or above, assistant librarian or above, or administrative position

of school dean or above; and involvement in graduate programs (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter15004-Graduate Faculty.pdf*).

### **Assessing the Effectiveness of Programs and Student Learning (Criterion 8)**

Since 2017, Cortland has made substantial progress in its periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs that provide student learning opportunities. The General Education Committee, a committee established by and reporting to the Faculty Senate, recommends courses included in the GE program. The committee's responsibility is to ensure that proposed courses meet the intent and outcomes of the GE categories and will fulfill the established category goals, objectives, and learning outcomes. Courses are submitted to the General Education Committee after having been approved by the college curriculum process as outlined in the Curriculum Change Guide, except in the case of special topics courses (*Curriculum Change Guide 2021.pdf*, p. 24).

GE student learning outcomes are listed in the College Catalog (*General\_Education-Catalog.pdf*). For a course to be approved for a SUNY GE category, the General Education Committee must determine that it meets the established student learning outcomes. These guidelines are subject to review, refinements, and correction on an ongoing basis to account for shifts in disciplinary boundaries and feedback from campuses on a range of relevant issues (*General\_Ed\_Course\_Guidelines-2017.pdf*).

All GE courses are assessed on a regular cycle and results are available on the Institutional Research and Analysis website (*General Education Assessment Results 2021.pdf*). The General Education Committee and the departments that house the requirements review the data and discuss potential improvements. A few GE assessments have been revised in recent years, such as the writing intensive and oral communication assessments. These revisions account for some gaps in the data but are now being used to gather new baseline data.

Many of Cortland's academic programs also undergo review by external accreditation agencies related to their fields. Cortland's teacher education programs, for example, are regularly assessed through the CAEP annual accreditation assessment against eight reporting measures. Data are publicly available on Cortland's *Teacher Education Reporting Measures webpage*. Other academic programs go through external accreditation bodies or SUNY program review and are listed on the College's Accreditations website (*Accreditations – SUNY Cortland.pdf*). The student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessment process is another way in which the College assesses the effectiveness of student learning opportunities. By creating a process for identifying and assessing SLOs across all courses and programs, the College has embedded a clear and consistent assessment mechanism into the design and review of all curricular offerings. The SLO assessment plan is described in greater detail under the next section of this chapter, *Strengths and Progress*.

While this process has been an area of meaningful progress, departments' reporting and integration of their assessment findings into course and program improvement planning has been less consistent than expected and has been identified as an area for improvement. Based

on this finding, the guidance for the annual report was changed (2020-2021) to require departments to systematically collect and report their data on SLOs and discuss how those data inform decision-making about the student learning experience.

The only student learning opportunities designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers involve international programs, such as study abroad or dual diploma partnerships with universities and educational institutes abroad. Cortland has a process in place for vetting and reviewing these opportunities. Credit-bearing opportunities are reviewed by the department, associate dean, and the office administering the opportunity. Further, some opportunities, such as study abroad programs or dual degree programs offered in collaboration with partner universities, other third-party providers, or other SUNY campuses are reviewed at the provost, president, and SUNY levels. Partners are approved based on criteria such as having accreditation from a recognized accreditation organization. Course syllabi are regularly reviewed to assess course equivalencies, and student surveys for study abroad programs provide student feedback on their experience working with the partner or provider (*International Program Proposal Process 2021-22.pdf*).

## **Strengths and Progress**

### **Areas of Strength**

The self-study process has allowed us to identify areas of strength related to the student learning experience, as well as areas for continued progress and improvement. One of our strengths is the alignment of our strategic priorities, academic excellence, and transformational education, with the intent of Standard III. Our focus on these institutional priorities fosters a climate that enhances the design and delivery of student learning experiences. Classes are rigorous and challenging, but faculty advisors, numerous support offices, and campus resources provide an environment that promotes student success. A multitude of transformational educational experiences, such as international study, applied learning, and research opportunities are available to both graduate and undergraduate students. All academic programs are carefully developed with comprehensive reviews at multiple levels on campus, as well as SUNY system-level review. In the case of teacher education programs, an additional review is completed by the New York State Education Department (NYSED), and many of our academic programs have additional approvals from external accreditors. These rigorous reviews enhance academic excellence in the College's programs.

A second area of strength is the availability and clarity of academic information available to students and families. Academic offerings are described in detail on Cortland's webpages and catalogs, providing accurate information about requirements and options. Students can access Degree Works to track their progress toward graduation and explore potential changes to their program, such as adding a minor or a concentration. Faculty and staff can use Starfish to communicate with students about their academic performance throughout the semester, offering encouragement or support as needed. When students have questions or seek academic or career advice, they can go to their advisor, Advisement and Transition, and Career Services for assistance.

Cortland’s faculty and staff are the third area of strength. They are highly qualified for their teaching assignments and their other responsibilities. Faculty performance in teaching effectiveness, scholarship, and service is thoroughly evaluated during the reappointment and the promotion process. Professional staff are also regularly reviewed based on their performance plans. The evidence provided by annual reports indicates that faculty and staff are actively engaged as scholars and leaders, serving both the campus and their disciplines in a variety of ways (*Faculty Annual Report Examples.pdf*).

**Status of Student Learning Outcomes**

Since the 2017 Periodic Review Report (PRR), the College has made substantial progress in enhancing a culture of continuous improvement through its development and assessment of SLOs. This process was led by the Student Learning Outcomes Committee, which was formed in 2015 – 2016 to address recommendations from the last MSCHE review. Over four years, the committee oversaw the establishment of unit-level (GE), program level, and course level SLOs. Completed SLOs are now published in the college catalog and course syllabi. Three years ago, the department annual reports were changed to include a section that focused on departments’ use of student learning outcomes. Departments were asked to report which SLOs were assessed, the findings from the outcomes, how the findings were discussed and analyzed in the department, and what changes (if any) were considered (*Academic Annual Report Examples.pdf*).

The Student Learning Outcomes Committee continues to monitor the assessment of SLOs. The committee analyzed the SLO section of the annual reports for the last three years to determine how successful the departments were in collecting, analyzing, and utilizing their data (*SLO Review Survey.pdf*). As can be seen in the table below, after an improvement from year 1 to year 2, there was a decline in the percentage of programs that reported assessing SLOs. Several departments indicated that the pandemic had prevented them from carrying out planned assessments and/or from holding meetings where findings would have been discussed.

Indicator	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
<b>Programs that reported assessing SLOs</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>57.1%</b>
<b>Item Response from Programs that Reported</b>			
<b>“Discussing strengths and areas for improvement”</b>	<b>78.3%</b>	<b>82.6%</b>	<b>75%</b>

\* percentages reflect data from both highly developed and developed ratings

Even still, many departments were able to use their SLO data to advance and improve their programs. Of the 16 programs that reported their SLO findings in 2019 - 2020, 75%\* of them reported discussing assessment results and/or findings to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. In addition, 50% of the reporting programs included recommendations for improvements that were actionable and specific. For example, the Literacy Department held a data retreat where they reviewed student performance on SLOs. The faculty determined that students needed more instruction on the advocacy component of one of their SLOs (SLO 6), which would fit well into an existing course, LIT 690. The Modern Languages Department

determined that students in the Adolescence Education and TESOL programs needed to be better prepared to differentiate instruction and to include technology in their lessons. Students are now required to include at least one activity in each lesson for differentiated learning.

In the course of our Self-Study, we realized that not all departments submitted their SLO data and supporting evidence for their analyses. Beginning with the 2020 – 2021 report, this information is now required of all departments. Departments will also be required to discuss how the data were used to improve learning/performance. The deans of each school are charged with reviewing all the requested information and data with the expectation that they will provide feedback on where improvements are needed.

### **Progress on Institutional Objectives**

Another area of continuing progress is to increase the percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty (Institutional Objective 5). Full-time faculty workload is consistently between 200 and 220 credit hours per semester, while the part-time faculty FTE workload is consistently higher (between 260 and 280). Increasing the percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty will help balance the full-time/part-time workload. It will also potentially provide additional benefits to the institution, such as more faculty with the responsibility to engage in service, scholarship, and advising. While the target of 70% of courses taught by full-time faculty has not yet been reached, there has been progress with an increase from 61% in 2016 to 67% in 2020 (*IPAC Indicators Tracking Sheet-2021.pdf*).

Institutional Objective 4 is “promote faculty engagement in the life of the College and in their respective disciplines.” One initiative in this area was to have consistent reporting of faculty activities through their individual annual reports. Funding (\$50,000) was allocated to transition the reports to Watermark, which allows for fuller understanding of the breadth and depth of faculty activity. Watermark’s reporting tools also allow the campus to benchmark the composition of committee membership. The College has set targets for more diverse committee membership by gender, rank, and faculty/professional classification. While the target for gender (53% women, currently 59%) was not met, targets for some of the ranks (assistant and associate professors) were exceeded (*IPAC Indicators Tracking Sheet-2021.pdf*). These data will continue to be monitored as Cortland seeks to better balance the distribution of committee work among different constituencies across campus.

As noted earlier, one of the strengths of Cortland is the breadth of its transformational learning experiences. Given the importance of these experiences for our students, we set a goal to “expand the impact of applied learning by increasing opportunities and increasing the quality of experiences” (Institutional Objective 6). Although some progress has been made in increasing the number of applied learning student credit hours earned per year (5980 in 2018 to 6227 in 2020), the number of students in applied learning sections has not increased as expected (*IPAC Indicators Tracking Sheet-2021.pdf*). Another indicator is the NSSE Report on high-impact practices (HIP), which shows that we have made progress in increasing the percentage of first-year students in HIPs (55% in 2017 to 59% in 2020), but we did not make our target of 70%.

Unfortunately, we had a small decline in the number of seniors participating in HIPs in the same time period (88% to 85%).

One of the realities of the pandemic (*SUNY Cortland COVID Experience.pdf*) was the cancellation or modification of many service-learning opportunities and HIPs, which may partly explain the lack of progress in some of the indicators. We need to continue to track the data to determine if the 2020 changes were outliers or the start of a trend. It is clear, however, that we should support departments in developing culminating experiences for their students where they do not already exist. This would improve overall participation in HIPs while facilitating more opportunities for students to complete two or more during their time at Cortland.

A final institutional objective related to academic excellence is to improve student achievement in written and oral communication. Based on student performance data in composition classes, Cortland created the Writing Center, allocating \$50,000 for the space. The Writing Center provides support to students seeking to improve their writing skills and offers resources for faculty who are teaching writing intensive courses. Students can schedule appointments with consultants, who are composition instructors or graduate students (*Writing\_Center- webpage.pdf*). To enhance student achievement in oral communication, the College created a One Button Studio to provide students with a space to practice their presentation skills. Funding (\$14,000) was allocated to purchase the necessary software and hardware and a position was created to coordinate programming to improve oral communication (*IPAC Indicators Tracking Sheet-2021.pdf*).

We established several indicators to measure progress toward this institutional objective. Baseline data were collected in 2018 on both written (composition and writing intensive courses) and oral communication with the expectation that the assessments would be administered again as part of the regular assessment cycle (2021). However, during that time, a new assessment was developed for achievement in writing intensive courses that will integrate critical thinking. A new assessment was also developed for oral presentation skills by the Presentation Skills Committee. Both assessments were slated to be administered in the spring of 2021 (*IPAC Indicators Tracking Sheet-2021.pdf*). The improved assessments should provide more robust data in tracking progress in this area.

Student perceptions of their written and oral communication skills are also valuable to tracking progress. The goal was to increase students' self-assessment of their written and oral skills as reflected in the results of the NSSE and the SOS. Initially, there was an improvement among students responding to the NSSE and SOS surveys for both written and oral communication (see table below). However, there was a decrease in the percentages in the most recent administration of the surveys.

<b>NSSE</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2020</b>
"college contributed to writing clearly and effectively"	74%	78%	76%
"college contributed to speaking clearly and effectively"	74%	78%	75%
<b>SOS</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2020</b>
"college contributed to writing clearly and effectively"	51%	65%	60%
"college contributed to speaking clearly and effectively"	51%	63%	51%

Cortland needs to continue to monitor these data to determine if the results collected during the pandemic are an aberration or if a downward trend is developing and intervention is needed.

**Suggestion**

Based on the evidence, SUNY Cortland meets all criteria, sub-criteria, and related Requirements of Affiliation for Standard III. We have no recommendations for Standard III, however, we do have the following suggestion for continued growth:

1. Identify the percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty and implement where possible.



The Self-Study *Roadmap.pdf* provides a listing of all the evidence for this standard by individual criteria. The last page of this document provides a crosswalk for related ROAs. The *Roadmap.pdf* file is located under Standard IV, Criterion 1 in the Evidence Inventory. The last page of this document provides a crosswalk for related ROAs.

### **Analysis of Criteria and Supporting Evidence**

#### **Admissions (Criterion 1)**

SUNY Cortland's recruitment and enrollment of students is based upon clear communication of the policies related to admission, academic expectations, and the responsibilities for cost. Applicants are reviewed individually, and decisions are based on transparent criteria such as academic performance, class rank, activities, personal statements, and recommendations as reported on the Common Application, SUNY Application, official transcript, General Equivalency Diploma, and/or SUNY Supplemental Form (*Admission Policies 2020.pdf*). Extensive work with Simpson and Scarborough Marketing (*Simpson Scarborough report.pdf*), and extensive on-campus, virtual, and off-site recruitment help students and families understand the programs, mission, and culture of SUNY Cortland. In addition, strategic use of out-of-state recruiters, a dedicated New York City recruiter, the creation of the Future New Yorker Grant, and hosting out-of-state guidance counselor groups have established additional points of contact with potential students. These efforts have resulted in highly successful application and yield rates for the college, often leading comprehensive colleges in the SUNY system (*SUNY Application Data Fall 2021.pdf; Deposit Survey.pdf*).

#### **Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Alumni Admits, and Special Talent Admits**

There are three programs of admission review through which students with lower academic qualifications can be admitted: Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Alumni Admits, and Special Talent Admits. These students show additional characteristics and have additional support materials to attest to their potential success at SUNY Cortland. EOP enrolls approximately 35 first-year students each year. EOP students begin their career with an intensive summer institute on campus during which they take four courses, work on academic skills, and have a chance to build a strong connection as a cohort, with the EOP staff, and with campus staff and faculty (*EOP Summary.pdf; EOP Qs for Middle States.pdf*). Among SUNY comprehensive colleges with an Educational Opportunity Program, Cortland has the highest retention rate—90.3%, well over the 77.8% average for SUNY comprehensive colleges (*EOP Retention All Campuses 2017.pdf*).

Students admitted through the Alumni Admit Program generally number fewer than 10 students per year. Student applicants in the Alumni Admit Program (who are recommended by an alumnus) are first reviewed by Admissions to determine whether they present evidence of academic rigor that supports their ability to succeed. The Alumni Admit Committee then selects the students from the pool to admit using information gathered through the alumni recommendation and the interview process. The graduation rate for the Alumni Admit students tracks closely to the graduation rate of the entire student body. For the 2011 cohort, the graduation rate was 71.4% (overall graduation rate was 71.1%), for the 2012 cohort the

graduation rate was 100% (overall graduation rate was 71.4%), and for the 2013 cohort, it was 66.7% (overall graduation rate was 70.8%) (*CohortAdmitTypeSummary.pdf*).

Special talent admits have the opportunity to showcase a specific talent as a supplement to the evaluation of their application to SUNY Cortland. Approximately 8% of SUNY Cortland students are special talent and nearly all the special talent students are admitted through recommendations by Athletics, although they may also be in the arts. The academic profile for special talent students does show less preparedness, and their six-year degree completion is at 59% compared to a SUNY Cortland overall rate of 71% (*CohortAdmitTypeSummary.pdf*).

Attention to student-athletes academics occurs, in part, through student-athlete support services as well as the other offices on campus that deliver academic support services. The Associate Director of Athletics enters Starfish once a week to identify any student-athlete who has raised flags (i.e., a notice from faculty in the Starfish system).

The successful model for EOP students should be explored for special talent admit students in addressing gaps in academic preparedness. While special talent admit students enroll in degree programs across the university and have access to campus-wide academic support, currently there is no coordinated or centralized system of support as there is for EOP students. The Banner student information system, in concert with the Starfish system, could allow faculty advisors and others in support roles to identify and monitor student progress based on special admit status. In addition, more specific research can be done to understand their specific enrollment, persistence, and degree completion patterns and factors that support or inhibit their success. A better understanding of the data on these students' experiences would help inform more formalized support plans.

### **Financial Aid (Criterion 1)**

To understand the entire cost of attending SUNY Cortland, the Financial Aid Office provides an online Net Price Calculator which calculates the net price for prospective undergraduate and graduate students based on several factors and after financial aid is taken into consideration (*Net Price Calculator – SUNY Cortland.pdf*). In addition, Student Accounts provides a concise breakdown and description of all fees and rates (*Tuition and Costs.pdf*) as well as access to Cortland's refund policy (*Refunds Policy 2020.pdf*) giving students clear information to assess whether SUNY Cortland is a good financial fit. To ensure that each student can navigate the cost and understand the short and long-term financial commitments of college, each student is assigned a financial aid advisor who is also accessible via an online chat feature. Additionally, the Financial Aid Office maintains a Financial Wellness and Literacy Tools website (*Financial Wellness and Literacy Tools SUNY.pdf*) that is designed for both prospective and current students and provides access to information about grants, loans, and scholarships (*Types of Aid SUNY Cortland.pdf*; *Fin Aid Scholarship Info from Catalog.pdf*).

### **Orientation (Criteria 1 and 6)**

Orientation at Cortland is a cross-campus collaboration with clearly articulated goals and learning outcomes that are informed by our campus values and priorities (*Orientation Goals and Learning Outcomes.pdf*). On average, 94% of first-year students and 83% of transfer students attend summer orientation and students indicate strong agreement that orientation

was effective. At orientation, students are given an assessment that examines their understanding of campus resources. This assessment indicates first-year students had a relatively strong understanding of resources (perhaps due to two-day programming) compared to transfer students whose understanding varied by resource areas (*Orientation Survey Results.pdf*).

Orientation also serves as an introduction to Cortland’s faculty-based advising model as students are grouped by academic majors and faculty members from those majors provide departmental highlights, connection, and assistance in confirming a suitable first-semester schedule (*Proactive Advising Model final.pdf*). Transfer students attend an orientation and advisement program designed specifically to focus on transfer credit and transition between colleges, and graduate students are invited to attend a welcome event each semester hosted by the Graduate Support Coordinator. In addition, strategic planning funds were directed to graduate departments to host program-specific welcome events for new graduate students in support of our strategic objective around strengthening community.

**The Cortland Experience for First-Year and Transfer Students (Criteria 1 and 6)**

All first-year students enroll in COR 101: The Cortland Experience, a one-credit, graded course that further expands upon—and deepens—students’ transition into the Cortland academic community and experience. Each fall, 50 – 60 major specific sections are led by staff and faculty, and each section has an upper-class teaching assistant. COR instructors develop their syllabi around five key themes: orientation to Cortland; transitions; academic success; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and personal wellness (*COR 101 Goals and Objectives.pdf*). Course evaluations show an increase in student satisfaction with the course in comparison to 2010 (*COR 101 CTE Yearly Comparison data.pdf*).

Course Evaluation Item	% Students Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing	
	2010	2020
This course will be of practical benefit to me as a student.	77%	94%
The relationship of this course to my education is apparent.	73%	90%
Overall, this course has been worthwhile.	73%	91%
The CSI (College Student Inventory) helped me to have a better understanding of myself.	63%	81%
I am more aware of campus activities because of this class.	87%	94%
This class has helped ease my transition to Cortland.	81%	92%

All pre-major (undeclared) students are enrolled in a Pre-Major Learning Community for their first semester which includes a dedicated section of COR 101 for undecided students paired with at least one liberal arts course that will help them explore a discipline. For those students who need further guidance to decide on a major, ADV 200: Major and Career Exploration, is a 1-

credit, graded course created and delivered through the collaborative efforts of Advisement and Transition and Career Services.

COR 201: Enhancing the Transfer Experience is an analogous course for transfer students and is specifically structured to meet the transitional needs of transfer students. The Advisement office has shared the curriculum with academic departments allowing them to create department-specific versions of the COR 201 courses. Students in COR 201 also fill out the CTE; however, response rates have been decreasing since the academic year 2016/17 as have students' sense that the course has been worthwhile (*COR 201 CTE data.pdf*).

### **Faculty-based Advising (Criteria 1 and 6; ROA 8)**

All students with declared majors are assigned a faculty advisor from their department and undeclared students are assigned an advisor in the Advisement and Transition Office (*Proactive Advising Model final.pdf*). All undergraduate students, regardless of year, are required to meet with their advisor at least once each semester to receive a registration code. Advising encompasses discussions of academic and career goals and planning, graduate school, and problem-solving that relate directly to student success and persistence. Underscoring the importance of this model, academic advisement is listed as part of the evidence for continuing appointment in the Criteria for the Continuing Appointment and Promotion of Academic Faculty in the Handbook (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter220\_22005-08.pdf*).

Cortland offers several platforms and tools for students to understand their academic curriculum, manage challenges, and make informed decisions with their advisors throughout their time at Cortland. Student Registration and Records Services (SRRS) works closely with Information Resources and Advisement and Transition to implement technology and help the campus best utilize Banner online services, Degree Works audit (*Degree Works student examples.pdf*), Starfish, Schedule Builder, and all the tools of myRedDragon. These tools ensure that service to the students and the faculty advisors are central and further ensures effective communication and documentation processes that support everyone involved.

A campus committee on Academic Advising meets regularly to review advising best practices and to assess and support advising. This committee is developing an Academic Advising assessment cycle that includes data points from NSSE/FSSE, SOS/SSS, and campus-wide advising surveys. The review of existing data shows that the majority of faculty feel confident in their roles as academic advisors (*Faculty Advising Survey results 2018.pdf*), but 17% of students (*Student Advising Survey results 2018.pdf*) report that they are unsatisfied with academic advising in their major (64% satisfied; 20% neutral). Our results from the National Survey of Student Engagement survey in (NSSE) 2020 indicated that approximately 50% of first-year and senior students rated interaction with academic advisors highly—on average with SUNY peers, but slightly below peer colleges (*NSSE20+Frequencies+and+Statistical+Comparisons.pdf*). Informed by these findings, Advisement and Transition has increased resources and support to both students and academic advisors. Faculty are supported in their roles as academic advisors through a Cortland Advisor Resource Packet, weekly Wiser Advisor tips, workshops, and training sessions delivered on the department or individual level.

### **Faculty Senate Educational Policy Committee**

Further faculty involvement in student support comes in the form of the college's Faculty Senate Educational Policy Committee (EPC) which examines existing undergraduate academic policy to ensure the policies maintain the rigor of our programs and the integrity of our college. The Graduate Faculty Executive Council does the same for graduate students and programs. The EPC also advocates for the creation of new policies such as a reduction of the residency requirement to 30 credit hours at SUNY Cortland allowing for greater opportunity for transfer students to earn their degree in a timely manner and without duplicative credit. The EPC has created and modified several major policies over the last ten years to support students including a new Academic Course Reset policy (*Academic Course Reset Policy 2021 Handbook.pdf*) to assist students who have demonstrated potential for success and been readmitted after academic suspension. Faculty Senate has asked that the Academic Course Reset be expanded to address a larger number of potential issues and give more students opportunities for a reasonable second chance at success.

### **Transfer Student Success (Criteria 1, 2, and 6; ROA 8)**

Each year, SUNY Cortland receives over 800 transfer students, evaluates credit for at least 600 of our 1200 incoming first-year students, and processes over 700 requests for permission to transfer credit in from currently enrolled students (*Transfer Credit Data.pdf*; *Transfer Credit Policies and Evaluation College Catalog.pdf*). We have built a transfer credit evaluation team that includes the Associate Director for Transfer Credit and Degree Completion and two additional full-time staff. In addition to the work of transfer evaluation for all incoming and current students, the team maintains easily accessible equivalency tables online, coordinates the Transfer Advisory Committee, and serves on education policy and curriculum committees to provide transfer perspectives (e.g., adding a transfer student impact question to curriculum change forms). Current and potential transfer students have access to Transfer Planning Sheets (*Transfer Planning Sheets website.pdf*) and Transfer Equivalency Charts (*Transfer Equivalency Charts website.pdf*), two frequently updated online tools that assist students in mapping a path into and through SUNY Cortland. In January 2017, the Transfer Mobility Advisor was created to increase success rates for students transferring between Cortland SUNY Broome or Tompkins Cortland Community College, which are both near Cortland (*Completion Path Grant Final Report and Data.pdf*). We have worked to create more equitable policies for the acceptance of transfer credit including:

1. accepting D grade coursework for students with an AAS degree
2. evaluating credit for courses from institutions with accreditation other than regional accreditation on a case-by-case basis
3. expanding transfer credit to include oral proficiency interview competency-based assessment on prior foreign language knowledge,

Cortland awards prior learning credit from College Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams and Joint Services Transcripts (JST) for military experiences. Additionally, SUNY Cortland observes the recommendations of the American Council on Education (ACE) College Credit Recommendation Service and the National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS) in the evaluation of education experiences sponsored by non-collegiate organizations and the

military when the content is considered appropriate as transfer credit. Advisement and Transition has explored resources from the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning and policies at other SUNY campuses to inform potential expansion of our credit policies to include prior learning assessment. The Associate Director for Transfer Credit and Degree Completion is the past President of the New York State Transfer and Articulation Association, the Executive Director of SRRS is on part-time assignment at SUNY as the Cross Registration and Educational Pathways Project Lead and the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs serves on SUNY's Transfer Mobility Committee. Cortland's approaches to supporting transfer students earned its recognition by Phi Theta Kappa for their Transfer Honor Roll. Cortland was the first SUNY school to achieve this recognition in 2018, has kept this distinction since 2018, and is among only three other SUNY institutions that received this honor in 2021.

Transfer students have access to all the services available to first-year students and, in recognition of the special experiences and perspectives of transfer students, additional support services and programs are provided. This includes transfer orientations as described above, the Transfer Network Team (a transfer peer mentoring program), specialized advising workshops, and outreach from the Transfer Program staff. In addition, there is support for non-traditional (e.g., a dedicated coordinator and Non-Trad Organization, lounge, and honor society) and graduate students (Graduate Student Support Coordinator).

The role of the Assistant Director for Transfer Credit Services was expanded to Associate Director for Transfer Credit and Degree Completion. They collaborate closely with the Associate Registrar for Degree Completion and work with a campus committee to assess outreach and support to suspended students and those on leave of absence. A new website was developed, and communications were rewritten to emphasize that the students are still a part of the SUNY Cortland community even while away and that we are here to help throughout their leave (*Readmission Policy and Checklist on web.pdf*).

The SRRS Office coordinates cross-registration helping students across SUNY institutions access coursework at institutions seamlessly and the SUNY reverse transfer process which encourages transfer students at 4-year colleges to send credits back to their community college and complete their associate degree (*Cross Registration web information.pdf*).

### **Campus Offices and Units Supporting Student Well-Being and Academic Success (Criteria 1, 4, and 6; ROA 8)**

Several offices and units on campus are dedicated to the work of ushering students toward timely degree completion and for scaffolding students' experiences so that they can achieve their educational goals. These offices and units create innovative programming that is directly responsive to the institution's objectives and priorities and many offer students transformational experiences that complement and extend their academic experiences in the curriculum.

Cortland's Counseling Services, which is accredited by the International Accreditation for Counseling Services, along with Wellness Services supports the campus priority of well-being and maximizing resources, allowing our students to achieve academic excellence and to more fully participate in transformational educational opportunities. This link between well-being

and academic performance is tracked through the Counseling and Wellness Services student questionnaire on which 96.0% of clients reported that counseling helped their academic performance somewhat to strongly. Further, 88.3% noted that counseling at least somewhat to strongly helped them remain a student at Cortland (*Counseling and Wellness Services Annual Report.pdf*). To better address student well-being—especially as impacted by the challenges introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic—as well as to reach students who may want other options in how they interface with counselors, Counseling Services is increasing the number of group offerings that focus on resilience: Mindfulness Meditation, a grief group, a group on developing and strengthening resilience, and a group on positive body image and healthy eating through the pandemic.

The Disability Resources Office was split from the Counseling Center based on data showing an increase in student use (and projections for future increases) as well as a change from a medical model to a sociocultural model of engaging students who affiliate with the office (*Disability Resources Office - SUNY Cortland.pdf*). In addition, the half-time Coordinator position was elevated to a full-time Director position and the Testing Coordinator became an Assistant Director. The Disability Resources Office has begun a comprehensive review of Cortland’s learning and living spaces partly in response to a survey in which students with disabilities reported a lower comfort level than students who did not identify as having a disability, especially in relation to housing (*Disability Climate Presentation 4 20.pdf*). This review of campus spaces also reflects a larger shift in the Disability Resources Office in recognizing the need to make changes to structures and systems to increase accessibility and inclusion.

In terms of academic support, both The Learning Center and the Writing Center take holistic approaches when working with students and focus their efforts on having students reflect on their learning processes and academic labor. The Learning Center offers academic and study skills support to students across the university and has added to their offerings a Peer-Led Team Learning Program in Spring 2013 specifically for General Chemistry (*Learning Center info for Standard V.pdf*). Opened in Fall 2018, the Writing Center offers students support for writing projects across the curriculum. The Writing Center works in concert with the College Writing Programs which also includes the Composition Program and the Writing-Intensive Course Program.

Career Services begins to lay the groundwork for students’ success post-graduation throughout students’ academic careers at Cortland. Through targeted programming and maximizing technology resources, Career Services provides high-quality career development assistance to students, alumni, and community members with an emphasis on building skills that lead to successful career and educational choices (*2019+First+Destinations.pdf*). The College was first in New York and fifth in the nation on Zippia.com’s “Best Public Colleges for Getting a Job in 2020” list, the highest-ranked SUNY college in the study (*Zippia\_Best\_Public\_Colleges.pdf*). Career Services’ adoption of the Handshake online platform in 2018 allows for real-time access to Career Services resources, job postings, and has facilitated event and recruiter connections. Handshake houses students’ job search materials all of which can be workshopped in one-on-one career coaching appointments with Career Services staff (*Handshake Data.pdf*). In addition, Career Services guides students in teacher education programs through their initial and

continuing professional certifications and hosts Teacher Recruitment Days which are typically attended by over 125 school districts. The result of this support is seen in our annual survey of graduates, where 83% of undergraduates are working or studying in a field related to their major and 15% are employed in an unrelated field. For graduate students, 90% are employed or continuing education in a related field, and 9% are employed in an unrelated field (*2019+First+Destinations.pdf*).

Created in 2016, the Extended Learning Office (ELO), in part, helps students toward timely degree completion as they offer courses during calendar time outside the traditional fall and spring semesters. Most undergraduate students who sign up for these courses use them to take pre-requisites, re-take courses, and/or accumulate more general education or major degree credits toward graduation. Graduate degree programs across Cortland integrate the summer and winter sessions into the course schedules for their graduate students and graduate cohorts in addition to offering graduate student electives. In 2021, 516 graduate students enrolled in courses offered through the ELO which was a 33% increase over 2020 (*Summer Session Enrollment Trends.pdf*). In addition, ELO worked with academic departments to create and offer one-credit courses during the academic year. These were offered first to students with small credit deficits for graduation and allowed them to graduate without enrolling in additional summer/winter sessions or unneeded three-credit courses. They also allow students to explore new disciplines and expand curriculum offerings into dynamic topics such as anti-racism or innovative areas like webcomics.

Additional programming occurs within the academic departments as they provide students with mentoring opportunities regarding internships, study abroad, civic engagement, academic support, graduate study, and employment. Departments and instructors often collaborate with Alumni Affairs to bring alumni back to connect with current students through panel discussions or in classes, helping students navigate their paths through completion and beyond.

### **Assessment of Programs Supporting the Student Experience (Criterion 6; ROA 8)**

In 2019, offices were required to begin work on strategic plans and show relevant alignment with the division and with the institutional objectives and priorities in their annual reports (*2021 Administrative Annual Report Call.pdf; Administrative Annual Report Examples.pdf*). These reports include assessment plans, assessment results, as well as assessment analysis. These reports are entered using Watermark along with a budget analysis and assessment of programs and unit function. In Watermark, supervisors will be able to offer feedback on the assessment information from the annual reports and triangulate that information with campus-wide data.

In addition to the assessment of orientation and advisement noted above, all departments within Student Affairs completed a form providing their assessment practices as they relate to supporting the student experience (*SA offices report on student experience.pdf*). These assessment practices employ both direct and indirect assessments and range from assessing classroom visits to overall unit effectiveness.

Results from direct assessment measures and results of student feedback drive changes to services for offices. For example, The Learning Center implemented changes in response to student requests for specific courses which has resulted in an overall shift in their Peer Tutoring and Peer-Led Team Learning programs toward classes in the natural, applied, and social sciences. The Writing Center directly assesses tutors and their sessions with writers using a set of values and principles derived from research in the field (*Direct Assessment of WC Sessions.pdf*).

The campus efforts on meaningful assessment will continue in the upcoming years to include more effective use of evidence and findings to inform practice in student support areas. This includes modeling data retreats that have been successfully used in other areas of campus, increasing sharing of data across functional areas, and expanding professional development around student learning outcomes beyond the classroom. The Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee and the Student Learning Outcomes Committee have recommended an Administrative Assessment Committee (*Administrative Planning and Assessment Discussion.pdf*) to support this work.

### **Student Information and Records (Criterion 3)**

SUNY Cortland and The State University of New York are committed to securing and protecting the information within its possession including student information and records. The SUNY Cortland Student Information Policy (*College Handbook, Chapter 530.pdf*) outlines the appropriate use of student information to support the protection of student privacy in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 USC §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). SUNY Cortland complies with federal and state confidentiality and information safeguarding laws, as well as meets data protection requirements imposed by its accrediting agency, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education as noted in our data classification policies (*IR\_Data\_Classification\_Policy.pdf*; *Library\_PrivacyPolicy.pdf*). SUNY Cortland's core academic mission and strategic goals require policies, procedures, controls, monitoring, and verifications to protect the information it possesses or transmits through the normal course of operations (*IR\_Banner\_Web\_Privacy\_Policy.pdf*; *IR\_Confidentiality\_Policy.pdf*; *SRRS\_Student\_Data\_Security.pdf*; *CollegeHandbook\_Chapter460\_PublicInformation.pdf*). Information Security Policies have been developed by the College, and in performing its functions, and Student Registration and Record Services must adhere to all information security policies (*Record\_Management\_Principles-webpage.pdf*).

### **Co-Curricular Programs (Criterion 4)**

SUNY Cortland students engage in a broad assortment of co-curricular activities that provide a complement to academic experiences and contribute to their intellectual, social, and personal growth. Student Life includes opportunities to participate in activities, connect with other students, and become an advocate on campus, in the Cortland community, or beyond. The array of activities includes intercollegiate athletics, recreational sports and activity, student government, and clubs and organizations including Greek Life. All of these have documented goals, academic standards, and fiscal and administrative principles and procedures that they are accountable for thorough reporting and oversight by their governance and the college administration.

### ***Intercollegiate Athletics***

SUNY Cortland has twenty NCAA Division III Intercollegiate Athletics Teams and is highly competitive among its peers. The Athletics department holds a focus on the student-athlete through a comprehensive approach that enables student-athletes to continually develop a successful balance of academics, athletics, cultural, social, and personal excellence (*Athletics Policies and Procedures Manual.pdf*). The Athletics' budget is supported by the student Athletics Fee and thus is under the regulation of all student fees oversight set by SUNY and the management of all fee-based accounts as discussed in Standard VI. The athletic budget is constructed with a five-year plan that is reviewed by the Provost and the Executive Director of Finance and is approved each year by the Cortland Intercollegiate Athletic Board. Teams also engage in fundraising to assist with costs that would otherwise go directly to the athletes. We follow academic and administrative principles set by the NCAA Division III guidelines as well as the State University of New York Athletic Conference (SUNYAC) (*StudentAthleteHandbook.pdf*).

Academic probation, suspension, team GPA averages, and dismissal rates are tracked each semester and are compared to previous years' rates. Every five years, Athletics undergoes a Title IX Athletics Comprehensive Review wherein a task force is put together at the direction of the SUNY Cortland President to assure the SUNY Cortland athletics program follows Title IX regulations (*Title IX Athletics Compliance Review 2017.pdf*). The task force develops specific recommendations for additional advancement of the College's compliance status.

### ***Recreational Sports and Activities***

Recreational activities include club teams, intramural sports, and a Student Life Center with a fitness center, pool, courts, meditation room, rock climbing wall, and gaming room (*Rec\_Sports-webpage.pdf*). Recreational sports are funded through student fees and state-side funding. The Student Government Association allocates funds collected through the Student Activity Fee to the Recreational Sports Department who then allocates a portion of that to the Club Sports Program (*Club\_Sports-webpage.pdf*). Individual clubs then petition for a share of those monies to operate their club. Cortland students also have access to Club Sports, a program that offers Cortland students the opportunity to further their common interest, knowledge, and skill in an activity through participation and/or competition. Club Sports also requires students to take responsibility for managing their club as well as ensuring compliance with any academic standards they have that go beyond those outlined in the SUNY Cortland Undergraduate Catalog. In addition to providing the campus with programs that enhance well-being, Recreational Sports also provides over 200 student employee opportunities, which include both graduate and undergraduate students. These opportunities are assessed through a survey of Recreational Sports student employees, last conducted in the spring 2021 semester, which found that 93% of Recreational Sports student employees were retained as SUNY Cortland students (*Rec\_Sports\_Retention\_Analysis.pdf*).

Funded by a student-approved fee, the \$56 million Student Life Center (SLC) opened in 2015 providing 148,000 square feet of recreational space for all students and employees. Upwards of 2,800 people may use the facility on a given day and it has been recognized in *Athletic Business* Architectural Showcase (June 2017) and *Campus Rec* (April 2017) (*Athletic\_Business-2017June.pdf*; *Campus\_Rec-2017April.pdf*). The importance of the SLC was clear when the

COVID-19 pandemic forced us to shut down the facility at various times, and student feedback on surveys and through unsolicited feedback was consistent and clear—the SLC was one of the things they missed most because of the pandemic.

#### **Student Government Association and Student Clubs (Criterion 4)**

The Student Government Association (SGA) advocates for all student interests, liaises with the college administration, and coordinates the policies and finances of clubs and organizations. The Student Government Association acts as the voice of the student body with SGA officers occupying liaison roles to address student concerns with the administration. SGA funding comes from the Student Activity Fee (SAF) and is distributed to fund over 70 clubs and organizations, scholarships, Recreational Sports, New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), The Learning Center tutors, Cortland Connect, and student advocacy efforts. SGA guidelines lay out operating principles for recognized clubs and monitors clubs for compliance. Every year the SGA Executive Board also sponsors several events that are open to all students, faculty, staff, and community members. Over the past 10 years, the clubs and organizations on campus show our increased commitment to diversity and student well-being as more diverse clubs like Curly Kinky Coily emerged in 2017 and a SUNY Cortland NAACP chapter was chartered (*Student\_Clubs.pdf*).

Extracurricular activities are regulated by campus, and sometimes external bodies, policies and procedures; these policies may be academic, administrative, and fiscal in nature depending on the extracurricular activity. Student fees fund many of the student life activities (e.g., Intercollegiate Athletics Fee, Student Activities Fee) and as such are subject to all fee-based oversight by the college and the SUNY system. Changes in broad-based fees must be endorsed/approved by SGA, the President’s Cabinet, and then the SUNY Chancellor. Once collected, these fees are kept in revenue-based accounts and are accountable under all spending and reporting as detailed in our discussions in Standard VI.

#### **Strengths and Progress**

Our most substantial progress is the collaborative efforts to understand and meet the needs of an increasingly diverse group of students by building on our strong foundational programs while innovating new support strategies. This is captured in two major themes: 1) earlier and more intensive outreach to students for greater persistence for all students and 2) working toward inclusive excellence for all students.

#### **Outreach to Students**

SUNY Cortland’s focus on retention and improving graduation rates capitalizes on the strength of our campus’s collaborative efforts and represents a multi-pronged approach that addresses programs, processes, and practices. Cortland’s retention and graduation rates exceed national averages and are comparable to other SUNY institutions (*Graduation\_Rates\_6yr-201920\_final.pdf*; *Graduation\_Rates\_6yr-Transfer-201920\_final.pdf*). There are multiple points during students’ educational paths where those in need of support are identified and where programming and resource allocation serves to improve retention, student success, and graduation rates. We share our progress in this area because it touches on many high-impact

programs and practices that support Cortland students' experiences and because it also helps us identify areas where our efforts can be made more effective.

In studying our student persistence, we have identified gaps in achievement that mirror national trends including lower persistence and time to degree completion. We put that data in conversation with our data from the College Student Inventory (CSI) (*2019 President's Opening on Retention Study.pdf*), and the resulting findings have ushered on best practices for student achievement including earlier academic outreach, referral to resources, and more frequent communication with faculty outside of the classroom.

SUNY Cortland's implementation of Starfish in Fall 2019 provides faculty/staff and students with a centralized platform that tracks students' academic progress, gives students access to their support network, and creates flags for those who are underperforming or experiencing academic challenges. Across all courses, faculty complete Progress Surveys through Starfish each semester to provide timely feedback to students on their academic progress so that sound academic and support decisions can be made; however, not all faculty are using the platform. In Fall 2020, 60% of faculty filled out the Progress Surveys which dropped from 76% in Fall 2019 (*Starfish Usage Report.pdf*). This drop occurred even though there were an additional 190 unique, active faculty/staff users in Fall 2020. Use of Starfish seems to have some impact on student retention as those students who had no activity in Starfish were retained at a lower rate (68%) than those who had some number of either kudos or flags (88%) (*Starfish Retention Summary-draft.pdf*). Flags raised are received and followed up by the relevant office/unit and Advisement and Transition staff, along with associate deans, provide additional outreach based on the type of flag raised. In reviewing our probation status students, the Early Alert Committee noticed that students with a poor semester GPA could go unnoticed and not receive outreach, so the SRRS and Advisement and Transition offices worked with Information Resources to create a new standing, Academic Warning, which alerts faculty advisors to a potential challenge.

The CSI is completed by all first-year students in their COR 101 class thus ensuring a 94% completion rate. CSI reports inform decision-making for individual students and inform decisions involving campus-wide factors related to retention. Students receive individual outreach emails based on their responses to connect them to support services; these reports are also made available through Starfish to the student's academic advisor. From 2015 to 2020, the following trends have been identified: decrease in dropout proneness, decrease in educational stress, and decrease in receptivity to institutional help (*CSI Cohort Data 2015-2020.pdf*). CSI report summaries are used to drive programming and decisions about resource allocation.

Cortland also aims to prepare students for academic excellence through coursework that coheres students around a community of learning and sustained attention to their needs. In fall 2018, Cortland secured a grant to create a developmental writing program resulting in a co-requisite 3-credit writing workshop that is paired with the first course in Cortland's composition sequence. Students are placed in the course based on having an English Regents Score below 78 and a high school GPA less than 81, or both. In the second year of the program, the retention of

students involved increased from 66.7% (2018) to 82.1% (2019) (*DevelopmentalEnglish\_Summary.pdf*).

All these efforts have allowed Cortland to increase its retention percentages and to make progress on almost all the retention goals in the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. The overall retention rate for 2019 was 85%, a 5% increase over 2018 and 2017. In 2019, students identifying as Black/African American had a retention rate of 78% which did not meet our target of 80% while students identifying as Hispanic/Latino had a retention rate of 84% (*Retention by Racethnicity New-Transfer.pdf*). Also, students identifying as male had a retention rate of 81% which was 6 percentage points lower than the rate at which students identifying as female are retained (87%). The retention numbers of male-identifying students have been consistently lower than female-identifying students each year since 2015 with a gap that sometimes approached 9 percentage points (*BI-retention-by sex-2015-2020.pdf*). Additional analysis of why this gap between genders exists is needed as well as its implications for student and academic support in meeting the needs of this student population.

### Percentage of Students Retained

Category		Baseline 2017 Cohort	Strategic Plan Target for 2023	2019 Cohort	SUNY Comprehensive Colleges 2019 Cohort	National Four-Year Public 2017 Cohort
First time	Overall Retention	80%	82%	85%	79%	71%
	Black/African American	77%	80%	78%	74%	64%
	Latinx/Hispanic	77%	80%	84%	77%	68%
	Female	82%	84%	87%	80%	No Data
	Male	76%	80%	81%	77%	No Data
Transfer	Overall	84%	85%	83%	79%	No Data

### Percentage of Students Graduating in 6 Years

Category		Baseline 2017	Strategic Plan Target for 2023	2014 Cohort	SUNY Comprehensive Colleges 2014 Cohort	National Four-Year Public 2013 Cohort
First time	Overall Graduation Rate	71%	71%	67%	62%	62%
	Black/African American	55%	55%	69%	51%	45%
	Latinx/Hispanic	61%	61%	57%	55%	57%

SUNY Cortland’s adoption of Starfish has integrated offices and faculty around shared and centralized information about students, drawing them into a network of support while the use

of annual reports has shaped priorities around a shared sense of institutional priorities. Despite this cohesion, offices on campus do not, where applicable, use shared assessment measures or instruments and do not have mechanisms to share data to improve programs. In 2015, a two-day student success Think Tank was held that involved 30 faculty and staff from all divisions in a review of student achievement data and discussions of strategies moving forward (*Think Tank 2015.pdf*) which led to the design of our first early alert program, PASS—the precursor to the Starfish program. This type of collaboration also happens in advisory committees/councils for some initiatives, but broad-based annual discussions should be consistent. Professional development on assessment should be enacted to help professionals understand student learning outcomes design, measures, analysis, and to ensure that assessment efforts are reasonable and meaningful.

### **Stronger Community and Inclusive Excellence**

In our strategic plan, we aim to strengthen our community through a focus on inclusion, civility, and accountability by striving for inclusive excellence. Since our last accreditation, we have worked to better identify and respond to the various lived experiences of our students. The students have led discussions and advocacy through publications and town hall meetings to bring forth issues related to diversity and equity (*Black Student Union Presents\_ The Forgotten Faces (final) copy.pdf*; *BSU List of Demands Update.pdf*). The response to these efforts has included the SUNY Cortland Inclusion Survey 2019; a second position added to the Institutional, Equity, and Inclusion Office; a second position approved for the Multicultural Life and Diversity Office (on hold due to COVID-19); and the Chief Diversity Office being made a voting member of the President’s Cabinet. The Voice Office is the campus home to many diverse clubs, and it was renovated to create an updated, collaborative space that could hold two more student club offices (*Multicultural\_Life\_Diversity\_FINAL.pdf*). Additionally, the Multicultural Life and Diversity Office coordinates a Peer2Peer mentoring program wherein first-year students from underrepresented groups are mentored by junior and senior mentors. Students can indicate preferred names in the Banner student information system started four years ago and continue to make the preferred name more accessible on course and advising rosters. The college’s first annual Rainbow Reception was held in May 2021 celebrating the successes and contributions of LGBTQ+ students and allies as they graduate.

A full-time Student Affairs Case Manager position was established in 2018 in response to the growing number of students with significant challenges that called for coordination with resources on and beyond campus (e.g., homelessness). The responsibilities of the position are to support the Behavioral Assessment Team and direct ongoing case management work with students. The Cortland Cupboard, an open food pantry coordinated by a Board of Directors (composed of SUNY Cortland staff and students) with financial support from donations, is a response to food insecurities documented on campus and highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic (*Fall2020 Student Survey Summary Findings.pdf*). Since its inception, the Cupboard has added card access to expand hours and availability for student use.

We have been encouraged to reflect on the disproportionate ways some of our systems may have an inherent bias. We are looking more critically at how we support students through the academic suspension process with the President’s Council on Inclusive Excellence piloting a

faculty mentoring model for students appealing academic suspension. Similarly, the Student Conduct Office assesses their cases to look for trends in findings. We have shifted our perspective to helping academically suspended students stay connected to the college and see their pathway back to a successful restart with new communications and policies.

### **Suggestions**

SUNY Cortland meets all criteria and sub-criteria for Standard IV and the related ROA. We do have the following suggestions for continued growth in support of the student experience:

1. Examine the achievement of special admit students in more detail to determine if additional targeted support would be beneficial.
2. Assess the feasibility of awarding transfer credit for prior learning experiences.
3. Strengthen data collection methods on student experiences and perspectives, analysis of data, and sharing of findings. Build upon former models of annual data retreats to share practices and findings from common instruments among student services offices.
4. Institute the Administrative Assessment Council and ensure professional development on assessment of services and student learning outcomes outside of the classroom.

## Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

### Standard V

*Requirements of Affiliation 8 and 9*



**SUNY Cortland**

	Values	Priorities	Institutional Objectives
<i>Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.</i>	Intellectual Life  Focus on Students	Academic Excellence	Assessment of Student Learning (1)

### Finding on MSCHE Standard V and Requirements of Affiliation 8 and 9

SUNY Cortland meets all criteria and sub-criteria of Standard V and Requirements of Affiliation 8 and 9 with three suggestions for continued growth.

#### Introduction

SUNY Cortland meets Standard V through its commitment to its institutional priority of Academic Excellence. SUNY Cortland's academic programs are built on rigorous student learning outcomes that reflect current research, theories, and practices across disciplines. Our faculty and staff systematically evaluate these programs, and these assessment results are made public and used to refine and improve the educational outcomes of our students.

Our first institutional objective, "Enhance the assessment of student learning and development and utilize evidence to strengthen programs," demonstrates our commitment to creating a more robust culture of assessment on our campus. Our lines of inquiry focused on how assessment is used in decision-making, innovation, and resource allocation as well as how to ensure continuous expansion of the use of assessment findings. In this chapter, we highlight how our campus is meeting this objective, including the assessment work within our General Education program, our program review processes, our analysis and use of key student performance metrics, and the campus-wide initiative to create, use, and publish student learning outcomes (SLOs) for all our academic programs. These initiatives demonstrate how we use evidence to improve our programs and determine the extent of student learning and achievement in our programs.

This chapter shows how SUNY Cortland meets the criteria for Standard V and Requirements of Affiliation (ROA) 8 and 9 by examining how Cortland sets appropriate and consistent learning goals for our students and assesses the effectiveness of our educational programs. This chapter also describes the work the institution has done to ensure continuous improvement on Standard V criteria and discusses the suggestions the campus identified through the self-study process. These suggestions focus on strengthening the culture of assessment across campus.

Cortland should develop structures to coordinate and communicate assessment processes across divisions, invest in professional development about assessment for faculty and staff, and better track graduate outcomes.

The Self-Study *Roadmap.pdf* provides a listing of all the evidence for this standard by individual criteria. The last page of this document provides a crosswalk for related ROAs. The *Roadmap.pdf* file is located under Standard V, Criterion 1 in the Evidence Inventory.

### **Analysis of Criteria and Supporting Evidence**

#### **Clear Learning Goals and Assessment Processes (Criteria 1 and 2; ROA 8 and 9)**

SUNY Cortland has clearly stated educational goals at all levels (institutional, program, course) that interrelate with each other and support the institution's mission. The first of our four institutional priorities, Academic Excellence, states that Cortland is committed to "cultivating programs of academic excellence that are recognized for the integrity of curriculum, outstanding learning outcomes and contributions to the discipline." This institutional priority, which directly aligns with Cortland's mission statement, establishes an overarching guiding principle that influences and shapes all program-level goals and priorities. All programs assess, revise, and further develop their student learning outcomes and curriculum through multiple avenues. At every level (institutional, program, course), Cortland has developed organized and systematic assessments that evaluate student achievement in relation to our established institutional and programmatic goals. Faculty and staff in academic departments and administrative offices design, lead, support, and sustain the multiple assessment processes in place to evaluate student achievement.

#### **Program Review Process (Criteria 1, 2a, 2b, and 2c)**

All academic programs at Cortland undergo regular external programmatic assessment. Programs that are not accredited by external professional organizations are reviewed every five to six years in the established SUNY program review process. As part of this process, programs must demonstrate their program and course goals are consistent with disciplinary norms and expectations (*External\_Program\_Review\_English-2019.pdf*; *History External Review Report.pdf*; *SUNY Cortland Africana Studies reviewers report s2019.pdf*; *Arts and Sciences Program Reviews 2017-2020.pdf*). For those programs that are externally accredited, their published student learning outcomes align with the standards of their accreditors, such as the bachelor's program in Community Health and the master's programs in Athletic Training, Communication Sciences and Disorders, and Sport Management (*SUNY Cortland CEPH SelfStudy Final Draft 03\_07\_16\_Merged.pdf*; *Program Review 2013-19 Kinesiology.pdf*; *Program review CDS2014.pdf*; *2014 SPMG Program Review Self Study- 2-6.pdf*). Many of our externally accredited programs are in teacher education: 61% of SUNY Cortland graduate students and 37% of our undergraduate students are enrolled in teacher preparation programs. All higher education teacher education programs in New York State must be nationally accredited. All teacher education programs at Cortland are currently accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP), as well as by the specialized professional

associations (SPAs) governing their disciplines (*CAEP Accreditation Letter.pdf*; *Accreditations - SUNY Cortland.pdf*).

The curricular goals of our programs align with our institutional priorities, disciplinary standards, and SUNY-wide curricular expectations. Both the process of external accreditation and the SUNY program review process ensures that curricular goals set by departments are aligned with disciplinary standards and that these goals can be assessed as to their compliance with these standards.

### **Student Learning Outcomes at the Program and Course Level (Criteria 1, 2a, 2b, and 2c)**

Every academic program at Cortland has student learning outcomes (SLOs), and these are published in the SUNY Cortland Catalog under every program (*SUNY Cortland SLO Combined Document (002).pdf*; *Catalog Chemistry BS Program.pdf*). These outcomes are the result of a multi-year, campus-wide effort to establish programmatic learning goals, a process explained in more detail in Standard III. The SLOs were developed by faculty and staff, and they frame the assessments, curriculum development, staffing, and decisions for every program. As part of the SLOs process, every program was required to create and submit a curriculum map that shows how a program's curriculum meets its stated SLOs (*SUNY Cortland Program Assessment Guide.pdf*).

This initiative to establish and publish SLOs for every program began in 2016 and required coordination among each academic department and program, the Provost and Associate Provost's office, the Student Learning Outcomes Committee, and the Institutional Research and Analysis Office. Some departments, especially those with rigorous external accreditation requirements, already had well-defined student learning outcomes and established assessment processes, such as the annual Data Retreat organized by the School of Education. Other departments required more support to develop meaningful and measurable outcomes.

The SLOs Committee designed schemas, rubrics, and worksheets that departments used to compose student learning outcomes, curriculum maps, and annual assessment plans for each program (*Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Resources.pdf*; *SLO Program Level Worksheet.pdf*; *Student Learning Outcomes Guide.pdf*). The campus' progress in developing and using program and course-level SLOs to improve student learning is routinely discussed and analyzed among the campus leadership team and across the institution at events such as the President's Opening Meetings and the President's Retreat.

The SLOs Committee, comprised of both faculty and staff, examined every program's student learning outcome to determine how clear, measurable, meaningful, student-centered, useful, feasible, and reasonable the outcomes are (*SLO+Rubric+Review.pdf*). The committee also reviewed each program's curriculum map and assessment plan (*2018-19 responses.pdf*). The committee's feedback was used by academic departments to revise the SLOs, curriculum maps, and assessment plans. The final approved SLOs are published in the College Catalog. Departments are required to report on their assessment of their student learning outcomes in their annual report (*2019-20 responses.pdf*). The new annual report structure and process ask departments to explain their annual assessment process, analyze their assessment data, and

describe how they will use that data to inform their curriculum and pedagogy (*Academic Annual Report Format 2020-2021.pdf*; *Academic Annual Report Examples.pdf*). The new annual report structure has engaged departments in developing ongoing assessment processes that align with their programmatic goals and disciplinary standards.

The next stage in the SLOs process is to establish appropriate, meaningful, and measurable student learning outcomes for every course offered at Cortland. Currently, 82% of Cortland courses have published student learning outcomes in the College Catalog, and the campus administration is working with departments to provide resources to complete this work (*SUNY Cortland College Catalog; Guide for Course SLOs.pdf*).

To better support the ongoing assessment and improvement initiated through the SLOs process, Cortland should coordinate assessment resources across campus. For example, Cortland could sponsor college-wide initiatives, such as yearly data retreats or assessment weeks, where all campus constituents engage with assessment data and report on areas of growth and areas in need of attention. The campus should also look at more systematic ways for departments to share outcomes with stakeholders, especially programs that do not have external accreditors. Cortland should continue to support department work to revisit SLOs and other program-related goals regularly.

#### **General Education Assessment (Criteria 1, 2a, and 2c)**

In addition to the clearly stated goals evident in Cortland's institutional priorities and programmatic outcomes, SUNY Cortland also has clearly defined and published educational goals for other campus-wide educational programs, including the General Education (GE) program, the Composition Program, and the Writing Intensive courses (WRIT). The GE program is part of every undergraduate program at Cortland, and the learning outcomes are published in the catalog and on the GE website (*SUNY Cortland College Catalog website; GE\_General\_Education-webpage.pdf; Composition Program Website 2021.pdf*). More information about the GE program can be found in Standard III.

The SUNY Cortland GE program follows a regular assessment cycle. There are twelve GE categories and two GE competencies that are integrated into every student's academic program (*General\_Education-catalog.pdf*). The GE committee oversees the assessment of the GE program, and it is comprised of elected representation from faculty from the School of Arts and Sciences (representing the sub-school committees of fine arts and humanities, social and behavior sciences, and math and science), the School of Education, the School of Professional Studies, professional staff, and the Memorial Library. Each GE category is assessed on a three- or four-year cycle (*Revised GE Assessment Schedule 2021.pdf*). The Institutional Research and Analysis Office selects a representational sample of courses within a GE category for each assessment cycle. The GE committee then reviews the syllabus for every course included in the representational sample to determine the clarity of connection between course content and category outcomes and to ensure that the syllabus reflects the GE category, learning outcomes, and minimum writing requirements. Depending on the nature of the assessment for each GE category, student work is assessed either through in-class embedded assessments or through a standing or ad-hoc committee. Student work is then evaluated using a scoring guide. These

assessment data are analyzed by the Institutional Research and Analysis Office, and the findings are reported to the GE committee. The GE committee reviews the findings for each GE category and distributes the data to campus via email and open meetings. At the end of every assessment cycle, departments and faculty are invited to give feedback on the assessment findings and the assessment process. This feedback is used to fine-tune the process and scoring guides for each GE category assessment (*GE Assessment Plan-2021.pdf*; *GE\_General\_Education-webpage.pdf*; *General Education Assessment Results 2021-0421.pdf*).

The first ten GE categories are established by SUNY and shared across all SUNY institutions. SUNY Cortland has two additional required GE categories: GE 11 (Prejudice and Discrimination) and GE 12 (Science, Technology, Values, and Society.) The outcomes of these categories are periodically evaluated; in the 2015-2016 academic year, the GE committee established a subcommittee comprised of faculty who regularly teach in the GE 11 category to review scope, meaning, and significance of the outcomes and courses included in the GE 11 category (*GE Meeting Minutes 9.1.16.pdf*). The SUNY GE program also includes two “infused” competencies, critical thinking and information management. In 2021, Cortland formally assessed these competencies for the first time. This assessment was done through a collaboration between the GE Committee, the College Writing Programs, Memorial Library, and the Associate Provost’s Office (*GE\_General\_Education-webpage.pdf*; *WI assessment back story.pdf*).

#### **Assessment of Students’ Post-graduation Outcomes (Criteria 2b and 2c)**

Cortland assesses how well programs fulfill both Cortland’s institutional mission and their specific programmatic SLOs in several ways. One way is by analyzing graduation rates, employment rates, and post-graduation activities of our program graduates. This information is reported in each program’s external review process. For example, our teacher education unit publishes certification rates on our *Teacher Education Measures webpage*, a requirement of CAEP accreditation. Our current certification rates show that within three years, approximately 85% of our teacher education program completers have been fully certified in New York State. Our Teacher Education Alumni survey corroborates this data; in 2019, 88% of our 2019 graduates who took the survey indicated that they were employed in the education field (*Graduate Outcomes Data for Education Program Graduates 2016-2019.pdf*).

The Career Services Office also gathers information about our graduates’ post-graduation employment and education. Over the past five years, they have increased the percent of graduates for which they have reasonable and verifiable information about their post-graduation activities to 69%. From this data, Career Services publishes a “First Destinations” report, and the data on job placement and post-graduation education is disaggregated by program and used in most departments in their program review processes. The First Destination Report for the Class of 2019, the most recent data available at the time of writing this Self-Study, indicates that 53% of graduates are employed in a field related to their degree, 15% are employed in an unrelated field, and 30% are continuing their education for a total of 98% either employed or pursuing further education. These data are very similar to the data reported in the First Destinations Report for the Class of 2018 (*2019+First+Destinations.pdf*). The data from program reviews, the teacher education unit and the Career Services Office

demonstrate that our students are prepared for meaningful lives, successful careers, and further education in alignment with our institutional mission.

### **Use of Assessment Results to Improve Educational Effectiveness (Criteria 3 and 5)**

At Cortland, we use the data gathered from our interrelated assessment processes to improve student achievement across our educational programs. Assessment results inform budgeting, decision-making, and improvements in our curriculum, academic programs, and support services.

### **Using Assessment Results to Help Students Improve Their Learning (Criterion 3a)**

We attend to our students' learning and learning processes through reflective, targeted assessments that are driven, when appropriate and possible, by data. These evaluations begin in COR 101, a required one-credit course for new students, and extend into students' experiences with key campus academic support units and offices. In COR 101, students complete the College Student Inventory (CSI), which contains items about a student's study habits, learning styles, learning preferences, and other behaviors that impact learning (*CollegeStudentInventory\_CSI\_Overview2010-1.pdf*). Both COR 101 instructors and advisors review the results of this inventory with students individually to help them understand their strengths, challenges, and how they can improve their academic efforts. Students are required to evaluate how they research and evaluate sources as part of the Composition Library Instruction Program (CLIP), a collaborative partnership between the Memorial Library and the Composition Program that is integrated into all CPN 101 courses (*Composition Program Website 2021.pdf*).

The Learning Center uses similar self-assessments to evaluate a student's academic behaviors and preferred learning approaches, which are used to individualize student tutoring sessions (*Learning Center info for Standard V.pdf*). In the Writing Center, consultants work with students to develop their awareness of their writing processes. During the semester, Writing Center sessions are recorded and reviewed to determine how the consultant can better scaffold learning opportunities for the student (*Writing\_Center-webpage.pdf*). Students, faculty, and staff use the results of these assessments to help students improve their learning, writing, and research processes.

### **Using Assessment Results to Drive Curricular Innovation (Criterion 3c)**

Departments, offices, and programs consistently use assessment results to improve pedagogy and curriculum. Academic departments use the revised annual report to explain how they use assessment results to innovate, including how they are adjusting curriculum and pedagogy in response to their annual SLOs assessment (*Academic Annual Report Format 2020-2021.pdf*). Formal curricular changes (e.g., revisions of programs or courses) made in response to these assessments are tracked through Curriculog, the online platform through which all curricular changes are entered, reviewed, approved, and posted to the College Catalog. Also, as part of the external program review process, academic departments explain how they use assessment data to inform curricular changes.

Recent academic department program revisions implemented in response to program review assessment data	
Childhood/Early Childhood Education and Foundations and Social Advocacy	Both programs added ESL 406 as a required course to better prepare teacher candidates to work with English Language Learners. Both programs added an Urban Education concentration to better prepare our teacher candidates for teaching in urban areas.
Communication and Media Studies	Restructured core requirements to allow for greater depth and breadth within each concentration
English	Revised core courses for the major to include ENG 290: Introduction to Literary Studies and ENG 380: Literary and Cultural Theory.
Modern Languages	Revised SPA 320: Spanish for the Professions to focus on social service.
Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies	Revised REC 445: Administration of Recreation to emphasize budgeting in response to student data on one of their professional accreditation standards (COARPT Learning Outcome 7.03)
Sport Management	Set the credit hours for the internship, SPM 470, to 12 credit hours to standardize student workload and expectations.

Another vehicle of curricular innovation at Cortland is the annual Data Retreat sponsored by the School of Education and the Teacher Education Council (TEC). At the Data Retreat, teacher education programs from all three schools review data and report on proposed changes made in response to that data (*2018 Data Retreat Proposed Agenda Template.pdf*; *CAEP2021AnnualReportCortland.pdf*). For example, several teacher education programs noticed that their students were consistently reporting feeling under-prepared to teach English language learners. As a result, these programs added a course to their programs regarding the teaching of English language learners. Subsequent surveys of their majors showed the addition of this course improved their feelings of preparedness in this area. Another curricular change that came out of the annual Data Retreat is the Modern Language Department's decision to create an instructional technology course for its education programs as students in these programs reported on surveys that they did not feel well prepared to use technology in their teaching.

Cortland regularly reviews its academic programs and student support services and determines how to adapt them in response to changing student demographics, disciplinary research and practices, and technological advances. For example, the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) uses data they receive on student academic performance and feedback from instructors to revise their Summer Institute each year. The EOP Summer Institute, a requirement of all SUNY Cortland EOP first-year students, offers students instruction and tutoring in four courses (math, writing, college success skills, and the interdisciplinary value of education) to prepare students for ongoing academic success (*SYLLABUS EOP Summer Institute Value of Education Course.pdf*). Disability Resources reviews data gathered annually on its programs and uses assessment results to modify its services. For example, the peer notetaker program is evaluated each year, and the assessment of that program includes a full review of the work produced by

peer notetakers as well as surveys taken by peer notetakers and the recipients of peer notetakers' work (*Info from Disability Resources.pdf*). The college has a strong track record of reviewing and revising academic programs and support services in response to assessment results. Further information about how student support services (e.g., The Learning Center and Advisement and Transition) are reviewed and revised is included in Standard IV chapter.

Student feedback also drives curricular changes and revisions in our educational programs. For example, in response to student interest and the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education's (CAATE) recommendation to move athletic training programs to the graduate level, the Kinesiology Department instituted a Clinical Pathways Committee that met regularly to review admission requirements for physical therapy, occupational therapy, and athletic training graduate programs (*Program Review 2013-19 Kinesiology.pdf*). The committee identified courses and proposed new ones for three concentrations that would help students meet the required prerequisite courses for applying to these types of graduate programs. Another example of how assessment data from students inform programmatic revisions is the recent changes in SUNY Cortland's Urban Recruitment of Educators program (CURE). Founded in 1998, CURE is a scholarship and academic program which recruits and supports students from underrepresented backgrounds to enter the teaching profession. Students—called CURE Scholars—take courses and participate in activities geared toward preparing them for teaching careers in K-12 schools. In response to data and student feedback, CURE developed a mentoring program in which teachers from underrepresented backgrounds act as mentors to CURE scholars. The CURE Program coordinator has also conducted presentations and discussions with colleagues across the college to improve support for students of color on our campus (*Transformational\_Learning-CURE-webpage.pdf*).

### **Using Assessment Results to Improve Teaching and Pedagogy (Criteria 3b and 3d)**

Cortland uses assessment results to provide a wide variety of professional development activities to support a community of engaged practitioners. With dedicated offices on campus and programming priorities in departments and units, Cortland sustains a culture of reflective practices and improves pedagogy through its investment in teaching supports and shared community experiences.

Both Design Help and the Institute for College Teaching (ICT) offer ongoing instructional support responsive to the needs of faculty, as determined through surveys and needs assessments sent through these offices and the Faculty Development Center (FDC). The instructional designers in the Design Help office assist faculty in using the course management system, attend to patterns and trends related to the needs and use of technological tools for instruction, and provide both one-on-one targeted support and on-demand resources and tutorials for instructors (*Design\_Help-webpage.pdf*). ICT, established in 2019 with grant support from the SUNY system, used a needs assessment to determine the professional development needs of faculty. ICT provided a series of seminars and workshops to meet faculty needs, including workshops on engaging students, developing classroom-based assessments, using small groups in instruction, centering culturally relevant teaching practices, supporting students with disabilities, and integrating more writing in course assignments (*ICT-webpage.pdf*).

The Institutional Equity and Inclusion Office and the Multicultural Life and Diversity Office offer workshops related to inclusive pedagogy, cultural competency, and equity-mindedness (*Institutional Equity and Inclusion Office - SUNY Cortland.pdf*; *MLDO\_Workshops-webpage.pdf*). Many of these workshops were offered in response to issues that had been raised by feedback from students, faculty, and staff, as well as national events (*Inclusion-Survey-Report 2019.pdf*; *2019 President's Opening on Retention Study.pdf*). Most recently, the President's Council on Inclusion and Equity (PCIE) led campus offices in developing anti-racism action plans which detail specific and achievable outcomes for improving measures of diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus, also discussed in Standard II.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, feedback from faculty and students made it abundantly clear that the campus needed to invest resources in supporting online teaching and learning initiatives. An Online Teaching Group and an Online Learning Group were created to support both faculty and students as they shifted to virtual teaching and learning (*2020+08-14+Teaching+in+a+Socially+Distanced+Classroom+FINAL.pdf*). In addition to these groups, the campus offices that focus primarily on providing professional development to faculty – Design Help, ICT, the Provost's Office, and the FDC – provided additional support to help faculty rapidly adapt to teaching remotely and in hybrid models. (*Students and Learning during COVID-19 April 24, 2020.pdf*).

### **Using Assessment Results to Determine Budgetary and Planning Priorities for Educational Effectiveness (Criterion 3e)**

Assessment results are deliberately used to inform planning and budgeting. To make the alignment between planning and budgeting to our strategic initiatives and priorities more apparent, Cortland has established two major committees since the last program review: the Resource Allocation Committee (RAC) and the Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee (IPAC). Both committees are comprised of members representing all four divisions of the campus. RAC was established in 2019 to provide transparent budget allocation processes across the campus. This committee assesses the available funding sources faculty and staff can access to support activities related to strategic initiatives (*Resource Advisory Council.pdf*). IPAC tracks the institution's progress on its strategic priorities by gathering data from across the institution. Then, IPAC targets resources to specific initiatives that directly support further progress on its strategic priorities (*IPAC\_Charge.pdf*; *Summary of Strategic Plan Progress Spring 2021-0603.pdf*). The President's Cabinet has authorized a budget for IPAC for implementing approved initiatives as needed. One example of how the IPAC allows the campus to directly link assessment data with planning and budgeting is the creation of the Writing Center in 2018 through a \$50,000 IPAC grant. Data on student achievement in the Composition Program sequence coupled with qualitative indicators from faculty teaching Writing Intensive courses indicated that students needed additional support in writing instruction, a goal aligned with our second strategic priority, to improve students' written and oral communication. Recent data suggest that the creation of this Writing Center has helped improve student writing in terms of the learning process and disciplinary genres and has also supported faculty development in teaching writing (*IPAC Indicators Tracking Sheet-2021.pdf*). The work of RAC and IPAC is further analyzed in Standard VI.

In addition to these centralized committees, each department, program, and division uses assessment data to make planning and budgeting decisions. In their annual reports, departments, programs, and units link their budgeting changes and programmatic priorities to their SLOs and campus objectives. These annual reports are published and reviewed in Watermark (*Academic Annual Report Format 2020-2021.pdf*; *Academic Annual Report Examples.pdf*; *Administrative Annual Report Examples.pdf*). Staffing decisions are also informed by data, and these decisions are made within each of the college's four divisions. For example, in Academic Affairs, deans use data from each department to determine priorities for hiring new faculty lines. These data includes enrollment numbers, full-time faculty to student ratios, number of credit hours generated in the departments, full-time vs. part-time faculty headcount, faculty retirements and resignations, and department requests. The Provost uses input from the deans to determine how many lines Academic Affairs will bring to the President's Cabinet for approval. In the other three divisions, offices must make staffing proposals to their Vice Presidents, who will bring those to President's Cabinet for approval (*Employment and/or Salary Action Request Form.pdf*).

### **Using Assessment Results to Improve Key Indicators of Student Success (Criterion 3g)**

As discussed in Standard IV, Cortland has improved retention rates and graduation rates, made transfer students' transition to the institution more coherent, and has strengthened career preparation and placement processes for students. Cortland continues to monitor key indicators of student success in part through a student retention group. The student retention group, which consists of staff from Institutional Research and Analysis (IRA), Student Registration and Record Services (SRRS), and Advisement and Transition, tracks this data each year. In 2015, the group noted a downward trend in retention. In response, they proposed several changes to the first-year experience, including adding events to first-year students' Welcome Week, sponsoring a dinner for first-year students, faculty, and staff following convocation, and increasing programming for first-year students through Residence Life and Student Activities. In addition, IPAC provided funding for graduate programs to host welcome events for their incoming graduate students (*Retention and Graduation Trends - SUNY Cortland.pdf*; *IPAC Indicators Tracking Sheet-2021.pdf*; *Starfish Retention Summary-draft.pdf*; *2019 First Destinations Report.pdf*; *Graduation\_Rates\_6yr-Transfer-201920\_final.pdf*).

Another issue the student retention group addressed was student achievement in gateway courses, such as first-year composition, where pass rates were lower than in the previous year. In response, the campus applied for and received a grant to build a developmental writing co-requisite course to support student success in these courses. This contributed to an increase in student pass rates in these courses for students who fall within a specific test score range (*DevelopmentalEnglish\_Summary.pdf*). The Writing Center was also created and established in 2018 to further support academic excellence as well as Cortland's institutional objective 2 (*IPAC Indicators Tracking Sheet-2021.pdf*; *Writing Center End of Year Report 2019-2020.pdf*). The Learning Center also reviews student performance in gateway courses to monitor the effectiveness of their peer-led team learning and supplemental instruction programs and to decide which courses need more staff (*Learning Center info for Standard V.pdf*).

While these initiatives have contributed to student success, we know from examining disaggregated retention data that students of color have lower rates of retention than white students. Improving retention for students of color is now one of the strategic initiatives of the campus. In addition to lower rates of retention, the data from Cortland's Campus Climate on Diversity survey showed that Black and Latinx students report less comfort with the overall institutional climate compared to other groups (*Inclusion-Survey-Report 2019.pdf*). We need to do more as a campus to increase retention rates for our students of color, help them succeed academically, and make them feel welcome at Cortland. One initiative addressing these goals is to recruit more faculty and staff of color through the SUNY Promoting Recruitment, Opportunity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Growth (PRODiG) program. Another initiative is the development and implementation of anti-racist action plans in every department and office on campus, which address retention rate gaps and the climate survey findings. These plans were developed in consultation with PCIE, the Anti-Racism Action Plans (ARAP) Steering Committee, and the Anti-Racism Taskforce, who analyze key indicators of student success for students of color and regularly present the data to the campus.

### **Informing Appropriate Constituents of How Assessment is Used to Improve Educational Effectiveness (Criterion 3f)**

Cortland provides extensive information about the college, its programs, and the entire student experience on its website and its published materials. The College Catalog provides information about the college's programs, including program SLOs, curricular requirements, academic policies, information about the program's department and its faculty, course descriptions, and program highlights, accreditations, and accolades.

The college website provides access to institutional data related to trends in admissions, enrollment, retention, graduation, campus diversity, and faculty workload (*IRA\_Department\_Annual\_Report\_Data-webpage.pdf*). The IRA webpage includes data related to Cortland's reports to the federal Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and survey responses to the National Survey of Student Engagement and Student Opinion Survey (*IRA\_Surveys\_SOS-webpage.pdf*; *IRA\_Surveys\_NSSE\_FSSE-webpage.pdf*; *IRA\_IPEDS-webpage.pdf*). Assessment data related to the General Education Program and teacher education programs are also accessible through the college's website (*GE\_General\_Education-webpage.pdf*; *Teacher Education Reporting Measures webpage*). Current and admitted students have access to SUNY Cortland's portal, myRedDragon, which offers a centralized platform that branches out into all aspects of student life, connecting them to the information they need for academic, financial, or social purposes.

Assessment data is communicated to external and internal stakeholders in several ways. Departments respond to their program reviews, and these program reviews are shared with campus leadership and documented in department annual reports (*ENG Chair's response.pdf*; *MDL Response to Program Reviewers.pdf*). Departments also share their SLOs assessment work and any subsequent curricular revisions in their annual reports, which are posted on Watermark and reviewed by administrators. (*Academic Annual Report Format 2020-2021.pdf*). The GE committee publishes assessment results on the GE website (*GE\_General\_Education-*

*webpage.pdf*). Retention and graduation rates are published annually on the IRA website, and administrators and groups such as the Provost's Cabinet review the data each year to monitor trends and plan interventions as needed (*Retention and Graduation Trends - SUNY Cortland.pdf*). The TEC, which includes representatives from all 31 teacher education programs, reviews retention data for teacher education majors by demographic categories (gender, race, ethnicity.) In addition, data related to teacher education programs, including data on graduates' impact on children's learning, ability to meet certification requirements, program satisfaction rates, and employment rates, are published each year (*Teacher Education Reporting Measures webpage*).

### **Evaluating Our Assessment Processes Periodically (Criteria 3f and 5)**

Cortland has made great strides in evaluating the effectiveness of its assessment processes. One of the primary tools for periodic assessment is the academic department annual report. In the past, these reports were a collection of departmental summaries on different sets of data along with highlights of a department's accomplishments and challenges over the year. Since the reports varied from department to department, making sense of these data for cross-department comparison was very challenging. Three years ago, the academic department's annual report form was completely revised to require departments to provide updates on SLOs work as well as updates on their assessment processes in a consistent format (*Academic Annual Report Format 2020-2021.pdf*). Departments and offices outside of Academic Affairs also submit annual reports. The template for the information and data that are collected was modified for 2020-2021 to ensure consistency across programs and divisions. Every department and office reports on its planning and assessment: which programs and functions were assessed in the past year, how the findings were discussed and analyzed, and what changes were recommended based on the analysis (*2021 Administrative Annual Report Call.pdf*; *Academic Annual Report Examples.pdf*; *Administrative Annual Report Examples.pdf*).

The SLOs Committee reviews the assessment reports included in the department annual reports to evaluate and provide feedback on assessment processes and plans. The committee notes how well SLOs are aligned with a department's assessment data and its proposed curriculum changes (*Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Resources*; *SLO Program Level Worksheet*). One benefit of the SLO work is that it has engaged faculty and staff in assessment, as they have been asked to assess the effectiveness of their existing data collection and analysis processes. However, not all faculty and staff are fluent in disciplinary-specific, meaningful assessment processes to evaluate student learning. Cortland must provide more widespread training and ongoing professional development in assessment across campus to make their emerging culture of assessment shared and sustainable.

Academic programs with external accreditors are also required to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of their assessment processes. For example, CAEP Standard V: Continual Improvement, requires that our Teacher Education Unit not only assess outcomes related to our teacher education programs but also assess the effectiveness of our overall assessment process (*CAEP Self Study Standard 5.pdf*). One change made because of this CAEP assessment was altering how the Alumni Survey is administered, as response rates were very low. The decision

to adjust the design and frequency of this survey, as previously discussed, has allowed Cortland to better evaluate longitudinal trends in a cohort's perceptions about their academic program.

The GE Committee also has a process to review its assessment processes. It has adjusted its assessment cycles and its assessment measures to better capture student learning in GE courses. The GE Committee makes GE assessment data available to the campus promptly and engages the campus community in discussions about GE assessment findings (*GE Assessment Plan-2021.pdf*).

### **Strengths and Progress**

Cortland has many strengths in assessing educational effectiveness. Our goals are clearly stated, easily accessible to all constituencies, and aligned with Cortland's institutional mission. Well-qualified faculty and staff organize and conduct the assessments to determine how well students are progressing in achieving our educational objectives. Assessment data are used for decision-making in all facets of operations, including improving student success rates (retention, graduation, placement rates, etc.), revising academic programs and services, determining professional development needs for faculty and staff, and making planning and budgeting decisions.

Since our last review, Cortland has made significant strides in establishing a culture of assessment by integrating purposeful assessment processes at every level of the institution. The SLOs initiative has been extremely successful: every academic program now has published SLOs in the College Catalog, and departments are well on their way to establishing SLOs for every course in the College Catalog. Furthermore, the campus-wide SLOs initiative was instrumental in prompting every department to take ownership of assessment by asking each program to establish appropriate goals and create meaningful, faculty-led assessment processes to evaluate these goals annually. The curriculum maps and annual reports collected in Watermark document this work and make it visible to key internal stakeholders who can use it to make budget, curricular, and strategic decisions. The assessment processes Cortland has instituted since our last review have encouraged greater collaboration across divisions and departments. This can be seen in the TEC's annual Data Retreat, which brings together teacher education faculty from all three schools, and the work to establish an integrated GE assessment of critical thinking and information management in the Writing Intensive courses. This coordination across divisions and departments is essential for creating a sustainable and robust culture of assessment.

Cortland has also demonstrated other areas of progress in meeting Standard V criteria:

1. Revised annual report structure and process. Departments use the new annual report to record, track, and share curricular changes made in response to assessment data.
2. Creation of the Writing Center and developmental Writing Workshops. These programs were created in response to assessment data, including student retention rates, pass rates in first-year writing, and faculty feedback. The developmental Writing Workshops

were funded initially through an external grant; the Writing Center was established with IPAC funding. Both collect and use assessment data to improve programs.

3. Establishment of the ICT. Created in 2019 through an external grant, the ICT uses data to determine professional development that best fit the needs of students and faculty.
4. Creation of RAC and IPAC. The RAC and IPAC help Cortland ensure that resource allocation and spending are tied to assessment data, campus needs, and strategic priorities. The campus can improve communication about their work to stakeholders.
5. Improved system for monitoring key indicators of student success. Student retention and graduation rates are monitored regularly, and the new system has led to improving overall retention rates. The campus should be prepared to invest resources as necessary to maintain high rates of retention and degree completion for all students.

### **Suggestions**

SUNY Cortland should continue fostering a robust, integrated institutional culture of assessment, building off the success of the student retention group, the SLOs initiative, and the GE assessment process. Over the past several years, Cortland has established the infrastructure that is necessary to link planning, budgeting, and assessment. This infrastructure includes committees, such as the IPAC, RAC, SLOs Committee, and PCIE, and new processes such as the annual report template. Yet more is needed. A strong institutional culture of assessment requires that departments and divisions share a common language around assessment. Faculty, staff, and administrators must understand the kinds of evidence needed to make claims about student performance. Cortland must help departments and divisions coordinate their assessment practices so that stakeholders can have ongoing conversations to identify significant patterns, trends, and gaps in the assessment data. Creating an institutional culture of assessment requires resources to support widespread training and ongoing professional development that is tied to how assessment is practiced in different disciplinary and professional contexts.

The campus leadership can also demonstrate its commitment to transparent and coherent assessment by funding institution-wide data retreats such as the annual Data Retreat already sponsored through TEC. At these retreats or workshops, campus constituents can engage with assessment data to report on areas of growth and areas in need of attention. Leaders in each division should continue to present their budget and strategic plans demonstrating how these plans are in close conversation with their assessment processes and results. Finally, the campus leadership should work with departments, programs, and divisions to create processes that make sharing and using assessment data across campus simple and routine. This could happen through a central, easily searchable database for assessment findings across the campus. A central database will facilitate sharing outcomes with stakeholders, especially for programs that do not have external accreditors.

With this goal in mind, we make these suggestions for continued growth:

1. Expand training and professional development on assessment in different disciplinary and professional contexts for faculty and professionals. This should include

development on using assessment data to inform practice and providing structures for sharing data among offices and divisions.

2. Clarify and strengthen the institutional structure for planning and assessment to monitor and coordinate assessment processes across all the college divisions and for the institution. One way to do this is to create a position or office that will provide institutional leadership around assessment.
3. Create tools and provide resources for departments to follow up on the post-graduation educational and employment activities of their alumni.

# Standard VI: Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement

## Standard VI

*Requirements of Affiliation 10 and 11*



**SUNY Cortland**

	Values	Priorities	Institutional Objectives
<p><i>The institution’s planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.</i></p>	<p>Intellectual Life</p> <p>Focus on Students</p>	<p>Maximize Resources</p>	<p>Financial Support to Students (8)</p> <p>Non-tuition Revenue (9)</p> <p>Spaces and Facilities (10)</p> <p>Environmental Sustainability (11)</p>

### Finding on Standard VI and Requirements of Affiliation 10 and 11

SUNY Cortland meets all criteria and sub-criteria for Standard VI and Requirements of Affiliation 10 and 11 with three suggestions for continued growth.

### Introduction

SUNY Cortland has shown continuous development of structures and processes that formalize and strengthen planning, resources, and institutional effectiveness. There has been a concerted effort to evaluate current practices and build an integrative model of planning, budgeting, and assessment. Integrated with our evaluation of the nine criteria for Standard VI is a review of the relevant Requirements of Affiliation (ROA) 10 and 11 and validation of relevant SUNY Cortland priorities and objectives from our strategic plan. There is a strong connection between the standard and our fourth Strategic Priority, Maximizing Resources, that calls for alignment of processes with the mission and strategic planning, communicating clearly about allocations, and a focus on environmental sustainability. At the most tangible level, four of our institutional objectives speak to resources and planning making them relevant to the Standard VI discussion: Financial Support to Students (Objective 8); Non-tuition Revenue (Objective 9); Spaces and Facilities (Objective 10); and Environmental Sustainability (Objective 11). Our lines of inquiry focused on strategies that contribute to the fiscal health of the college as well as how student development and achievement factors into resource allocation.

This chapter gives evidence for how we comply with Standard VI criteria and our strategic plan. We highlight key areas of progress and identify suggestions for improvement in this standard. The Self-Study *Roadmap.pdf* provides a listing of all the evidence for this standard by individual criteria. The last page of this document provides a crosswalk for related ROAs. The *Roadmap.pdf* file is located under Standard VI, Criterion 1 in the Evidence Inventory.

## Analysis of Criteria and Supporting Evidence

### **Institutional Planning and Assessment for Improvement (Criteria 1 and 2; ROA 10)**

The President's Cabinet and the Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee (IPAC) act as stewards for the SUNY Cortland Strategic Plan (*Commitment to Community Strategic Plan 2018-2023.pdf*). IPAC developed a template for administrative strategic plans which include priorities, objectives, and targets (*Administrative Planning and Assessment Template-2018.pdf*). Each vice president has a divisional plan (*Divisional Plans.pdf*) that is aligned to the institutional plan as well as the mission-based operations of the campus. In addition, there are institutional-level plans that address campus-wide issues including the Diversity Plan (*Diversity Inclusion Plan 2016 - SUNY Cortland.pdf*) and the Facilities Master Plan (*Facilities Master Plan.pdf*). Strategic plans at the institutional and division level can be found on the Institutional Effectiveness webpage (*Institutional Effectiveness Website*).

Departments use the annual report process to communicate their planning and improvements as well as highlight their accomplishments. The President's Cabinet approved a revised annual report format that shifted the focus of the reports from mainly a summary of department activity to a greater focus on assessment and impact. The changes made the submission of annual reports more standardized and easier to complete for academic and administrative offices (*Academic Annual Report Examples.pdf*; *Administrative Annual Report Examples.pdf*).

The use of the Watermark assessment system has further streamlined the annual report for academic departments (*Academic Annual Report Format 2020-2021.pdf*). In addition to faculty accomplishments, their reports include both the assessment of student learning outcomes as well as the assessment of budget allocations. Administrative offices assess their programs and functions and analyze their budget in relation to their department mission and goals (*2021 Administrative Annual Report Call.pdf*). This analysis is a new addition to the annual reports, and it allows department leaders to evaluate their resources in connection with their mission, operations, and goals. Supervisors are required to provide feedback on these reports. Vice presidents have used these annual reports in their area to inform their divisional annual reports, which evaluate progress toward divisional goals.

The campus makes decisions directly related to institutional and divisional priorities and objectives (*Middle States—Priorities Aligned with Spending.pdf*). Some examples include:

1. Strategic planning funds allocated through IPAC supported the creation of the Writing Center (*Writing\_Center-webpage.pdf*), the renovation and expansion of the Voice Office as an office space for underrepresented student groups (*Multicultural\_Life\_Diversity\_FINAL.pdf*), and establishment of a scholarship to support applied learning (Institutional Objective 6).
2. The Academic Affairs strategic plan called for a review of graduate program enrollment with the objective of increasing enrollment. The deans have worked to establish new online programs—most notably the successful online MEd in Literacy. Graduate enrollments are monitored by Enrollment Management, deans, and department chairs.

This review led to suspending admissions in under-enrolled programs while they are revised to be more viable and meaningful for graduate students. For example, the MA in History is now a fully online program. Likewise, our MEd in TESOL is in the process of approval to also be moved to online delivery.

3. In response to the increasing number of students who have critical needs or exhibit elevated risk behaviors (only 7 students in 2012-2013 to 80 students in 2019-2020), the Student Affairs division established the Student Affairs Case Manager position to help handle the increasing numbers of students referred to the Behavioral Assessment Team and to liaise with agencies that can support students (*Student Affairs Case Manager.pdf*).

The chairs of academic departments regularly meet with their departments and bi-weekly with their school dean at the Chairs' Council to discuss policies and issues and provide feedback. Every semester, the department chairs of all schools gather with the Provost and Associate Vice Provost at the Joint Chairs' Meeting to discuss issues and work on academic strategic priorities (*Summary of Strategic Plan Progress Spring 2021-060.pdf*). Similarly, non-academic departments regularly meet with their supervisors and division heads (*Vice President Cabinet Meeting Minutes.pdf*). Divisional plans are shared and discussed with campus constituents at the annual President's Retreat. The discussion is facilitated by appropriate leaders, such as the Chief Diversity Officer for the Diversity Plan and the Associate Vice President for Facilities for the Facilities Master Plan. Updates on progress on the strategic plan are also shared as data becomes available.

Other forums Cortland uses to engage with constituents and share information about institutional effectiveness include:

1. The President's Opening Meeting includes programming that informs the campus about specific institutional objectives (*spring 2017 revised president's opening meeting011817.pdf; 2016-2021 President's Retreat Agendas.pdf*).
2. Faculty Senate is a platform for campus discussion of the implications of policies both locally and SUNY-wide. The minutes, reports, and agendas for the upcoming meeting are disseminated to the campus through email. Additionally, all are archived on the Faculty Senate webpage (*Faculty Senate website*), which also includes the Faculty Senate by-laws and a link to the SUNY University Faculty Senate (UFS).
3. Open meetings and surveys gather campus-wide feedback to vet policies and institutional objectives. The surveys include the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey, and the Student Opinion Survey (SOS) (*IPAC Indicators Tracking Sheet-2021.pdf*). This feedback is integral to setting the IPAC benchmarks to track our progress in meeting our institutional objectives.
4. A newly designed institutional effectiveness website (*Institutional Effectiveness Website*) makes information accessible to everyone on campus. The website includes the mission, vision, and planning for the institution. The institution's priorities and goals are further delineated in divisional and area plans, such as the campus diversity plan, enrollment

plan, and the Facilities Master Plan. This website shows how the institution uses assessment to align its planning and budgeting.

5. IPAC monitors the [planning@cortland.edu](mailto:planning@cortland.edu) account that all campus members can use to provide feedback or to submit questions. It is checked by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs office.

By the end of 2022, IPAC will complete its review of progress on the current Strategic Plan at which time evidence and progress will be shared, discussed, and feedback will be solicited from campus. In 2023, we will begin the progress of creating the next iteration of our Strategic Plan. Because several new allocation processes will have been in place for two years and we will have completed our Self-Study, we will have more information to use to help us look at planning, assessment, and budgeting more holistically and critically.

### **Budget Planning, Processes and Assessment (Criteria 3, 7, 8 and 9; ROA 11)**

Cortland has been effective at financial planning and maintaining the operations of the campus to meet our mission. We review how resources are aligned with the institutional goals. Budgeting processes are guided by New York State, SUNY, and campus principles, and these processes are focused on our primary mission of education and ensuring the well-being of students and staff. Even with multiple changes in the Vice President for Finance and Management (*Vice President for Finance and Management History—KB.pdf*) over the past several years, we have created structures and processes that have increased the emphasis on assessment and evidence-based decisions around resource allocation.

#### ***Budget Process***

Our financial planning process is built upon a set of policies and expectations from SUNY and specific processes determined by our campus (*2020-Annual-Financial-Report.pdf*). An overview of the budgeting process and how we operate within the SUNY system is provided in the SUNY Cortland All Funds Budgeting Overview (*SUNY Cortland All Funds Budgeting Questionnaire.pdf*). Each year, we reference the previous year's data to create that year's fiscal plan, which predicts major expenses such as payroll and utilities. SUNY System Administration conducts audits in coordination with the Business Office to confirm financial viability of the institution. SUNY Cortland sends quarterly reports and an annual internal control certification to SUNY System Administration (*2020-21 Internal Control Certification Signed 043021.pdf*). Additionally, SUNY System Administration requires an Advisory 28 audit, which examines accounts payable, travel, and p-cards (*SUNY Cortland 2020-21 Advisory 28 Annual Certification Signed 040121.pdf*). If concerns arise, the Business Office responds with documented evidence. If a weakness is identified, a revised policy and procedure is sent indicating how the situation will be rectified.

#### ***Revenue***

Tuition is a key component of budget revenue. Thus, student enrollment projections are critical in the development of the overall budget. Every semester, Enrollment Management and our college accountant develop an estimated revenue projection report based on five-year enrollment trends (*1920 Initial Projection Submission.pdf*). In addition, three student enrollment reports are produced each semester: 1) preliminary projection; 2) early projection; and 3) final

enrollment estimates. The final revenue projection report with the official enrollment data is submitted to System Administration. These enrollment trends and budget projections are shared with the President's Cabinet. To ensure the institution meets its enrollment targets, Enrollment Management has developed a multifaceted recruitment approach, one that is adjusted annually based on past year trends and considers upcoming enrollment challenges stemming. Enrollment Management's recruitment plan includes campus recruitment events, recruitment travel, strategic partnerships with vendors that promote Cortland to prospective students, and communication efforts to highlight Cortland in electronic media as well as direct messaging via email and text. A highly effective strategy implemented by Enrollment Management was the development of our non-resident recruitment effort to mitigate the decline in high school graduates in New York State. Additionally, the creation of campus-based events to host high school counselors from New York and other states has established relationships and informed counselors of all that Cortland has to offer allowing them to assist in the recruitment of prospective students from their school districts or regions.

Another source of budget revenue is the broad-based fees paid by students. All students pay individual fees for athletics, student health, technology, transportation, the Student Life Center, and academic transcripts. These broad-based fees are assessed on an annual basis by the Budget Office and SUNY. Account managers must submit their budgets with five-year projections. These projections are aligned with their strategic priorities for spending within the parameters of their fee. The Budget Office reviews these budgets, provides feedback if improvements are necessary, and then submits them to SUNY for approval. The RAC examined these broad-based fees, as well as other Income Fund Reimbursable (IFR), accounts at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to help replenish the reserves. Additionally, their assessment led to more equitable overhead charges on these accounts and the creation of an appeal process (*SUNY Cortland IFR Guidelines and Policies.pdf*).

An additional source of revenue is our summer and winter sessions. In summer 2016, the administration created the Extended Learning Office with a focus on expanding our summer and winter enrollments. With a concerted effort on marketing, our enrollment has grown 34 percent, and the net gain (net tuition revenue minus compensation) has increased by over \$1.1 million (*ELO 2020.2021 Annual Report.pdf*; *ELO Summary for Middle States.pdf*). Given that tuition charges have remained flat since winter 2020, the increases in the revenue in winter 2021 and 2022 and summer 2020 and 2021 are due only to increases in enrollment. To further maximize revenue, a tiered salary structure for instructors has been developed to encourage faculty to permit higher enrollments while reducing payment for lower enrolled courses (*Summer Winter Compensation.pdf*).

### **Expenses**

The largest component of the institution's expenditures is personnel. When considering all state revenue sources, approximately 74 percent is allocated to funding Personal Service-Regular (PSR), which is full-time and part-time staff positions (*20-21 All Funds Cash Report Final.pdf*). Temporary Service (TS) allocations cover all temporary faculty and staff positions (including adjuncts and visiting) and extra service for continuing employees. For 2020-2021, PSR

was 74% of all expenses; PSR and TS combined was 82% of our total expenses. We have developed processes that determine how requests for replacements and new lines are related to mission-based operations and the institutional and divisional objectives. For example, a new process developed during the COVID-19 pandemic in response to state-imposed budgetary restrictions has been adapted to ensure that positions are justified based on operational needs and their impact on service, enrollment, and finances. Requestors fill out the *Employment and/or Salary Action Request Form.pdf*, and the position must be approved by the appropriate vice president, Budget, Human Resources, and the President's Cabinet.

The deans determine the allocation of faculty lines by examining data in the Faculty Workload reports (*Faculty\_Workload\_Summary-Fall2020.pdf*), which include course enrollments, student FTEs, and average class size. This information is considered alongside their strategic plans for program development and other standards, such as professional accreditation. For example, it was projected that the online M.S.Ed. in Literacy would lead to a significant increase in program enrollment. With this evidence, the deans collaborate to create a prioritized list of vacant faculty lines across the three schools. The list is presented to the Provost, who reviews and brings it to the President's Cabinet. The Cabinet reviews the budget and determines how many lines can be filled and which lines have the highest priority for that year.

The Budget Office coordinates several strategies to measure and assess the utilization and adequacy of resources. The first is through oversight from the SUNY System Administration. The Budget Office submits the campus budget to SUNY System Administration each year for their approval. The Budget Office conducts a monthly budget review of all allocations as well as a full review of allocations at the end of the fiscal year (*Budget Office Institutional Financial Review Process.pdf*). They identify budgets with deficits and overages and consult with relevant vice presidents and offices to understand the factors leading to the deficit and adjust as needed. While the Budget Office provides the allocations to fund purchases, the Purchasing and Accounts Payable Office first reviews all purchases to ensure they comply with NYS procurement regulations (*Purchasing-Guidelines-webpage.pdf*). During the COVID-19 pandemic, New York State put in strict spending restrictions, and a subcommittee of the RAC was formed to review purchases. This subcommittee created an internal form and approval process to ensure purchases and contracts met the state purchase restrictions (*Purpose of Purchase or Contract (002).pdf*; *2020-2021 RAC Report 082421.pdf*). The Vice President for Finance and Management has communicated with campus about the state spending restrictions (*Spending Controls Communication to Campus October 2021.pdf*).

### ***Communication and Effectiveness of Planning and Resource Allocation***

We have assessed these new structures for planning and resource allocation by gathering campus feedback and hosting discussions during forums such as the President's Retreat. This Self-Study has offered yet another opportunity to evaluate our work, particularly within the areas of planning, allocation, and renewal.

Institutional and divisional budgets are shared at several points with the campus. A budget update that is given each year at the President's Retreat and each semester at both the

Administrative Conference and the President's Opening Meeting. Beginning in 2021, each vice president presents a budget overview to the RAC and IPAC to inform these groups of each division's plan. In this overview, the vice presidents explain how they use resources to further Cortland's strategic priorities and assess whether we are meeting our institutional objectives. These presentations follow a template that links budget and decisions to the division and institutional strategic plans (*VP Presentation 10.5.2021.pdf*). This annual review and shared dialogue among the vice presidents, RAC and IPAC, allows for greater focus on the critical intersection of finance and planning with the use of assessment evidence to drive overall budget decisions.

Past practices to evaluate the effectiveness of planning and resource allocation were conducted informally, often in an ad hoc fashion through the review of division annual reports. With the creation of IPAC, the institution and the divisions established plans with measurable objectives and built an annual reporting process that focuses on planning and evaluation of resources. Individual departments now review and assess their resource allocations annually. Each academic department provides an assessment of how their budget allocation meets (or does not meet) the needs of their department within their annual report. Further, each school dean reviews the OTPS allocations within their schools and adjusts among the departments in their school based on under- or overspending.

IPAC also plays a key role in implementing strategic initiatives. IPAC was allocated \$375,000 to directly invest in activities and initiatives related to the eleven institutional objectives. IPAC members worked with campus stakeholders to research potential return on investment for specific objectives. Decisions are based on this data and a determination of campus impact. For example, IPAC funds supported the creation of the Writing Center, renovation of the Voice office, academic department welcome events for both undergraduate and graduate students, and staffing for campus sustainability efforts. Those receiving funds completed summary reports on the use and impact of the funds (*IPAC Funding Reports Summary 2019.pdf*). Moving forward, each fall the President's Cabinet will review IPAC's assessment of their initiatives as well as discuss their allocation to continue funding these strategic initiatives.

The formation of the RAC in February 2020 enabled the campus to create transparency and equity in resource allocation. RAC plans to create more consistent processes for reviewing resource requests. For example, the RAC questioned what the campus does when a budget does not cover unplanned expenses. That is, how do end-users estimate the full cost and benefits of a project as well as understand funding opportunities and processes? Further, how do decision-makers articulate and enact a transparent, fair, equitable, accessible, and evidenced-based process? To answer these questions the RAC inventoried all funding sources and how the funds are accessed. They found that we currently use campus reserves to cover unplanned expenses and the process to acquire the funds is ad hoc. The RAC asked the President's Cabinet to charge the RAC with creating a policy and procedure for requesting state-funded resources that is more transparent, planning-based, and strategically uses resources (*RAC Subcommittee on Campus Funding Sources—PAC Pres June 28.pdf*). One result

of this work is that it helps stakeholders understand the sources of funding and the process for seeking funds. RAC created a request process in addition to an allocated budget that would be reviewed by the President's Advisory Council and approved by the President's Cabinet for the spending of campus funds (*Prescreening questionnaire—with coding 11.5.pdf*). At every level of review, requesters of funds must show how their request is directly related to the campus mission, operations, and strategic planning. Any justification for funding, and any consideration of approval, should speak to a return on investment grounded in mission and planning (*Request for Resources System 11 5 21.pdf*).

In response to the loss of revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the RAC analyzed the remaining cash balances on all IFRs for the 2019-20 academic year and made a recommendation to the President's Cabinet to utilize 25% of each IFRs remaining cash balance to replenish the campus reserves back to the 10% level. Account managers were informed of this decision in writing and in an open campus meeting. In further assessment of IFR accounts, the RAC noted the inconsistent application of overhead charges. The RAC proposed that all revenue-generating IFRs be charged the full overhead as a means of ensuring our reserve balance complied with SUNY suggested ratios. The RAC developed an overhead appeal process for IFRs managers who feel they cannot meet the full overhead charges. This policy was approved by the President's Cabinet and explained to IFR account managers in another open meeting (*IFR Overhead and Appeal Presentation 2021.pdf*).

### **Resource Allocation for Operations and Programming (Criteria 4 and 6; ROA 11)**

Our annual budget plans (*SUNY Cortland All Funds Budgeting Questionnaire.pdf*) ensure that we have the fiscal resources to support operations including delivery of programs. Departments, offices, and divisions manage personnel plans and decision-making with the support of Human Resources (HR). Planning in the areas of facilities and technology is well-detailed and is focused on sustainability in terms of fiscal responsibility and environmental impact. Extensive planning in these areas includes looking at the mission-based operations and the strategic initiatives of the institution.

#### ***Human Resources***

As stated previously, personnel is our largest expenditure in the budget. Our fiscal standing has been stable throughout the past ten years, allowing for replacement hiring as well as some new lines. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant strains on fiscal resources throughout SUNY and on our campus. SUNY's central budget office mandated spending restrictions beginning in spring 2020 (*Scenario Planning and Expense Control Guidance 4.14.20.pdf*). SUNY Cortland's relatively strong fiscal standing going into the pandemic and strict adherence to spending guidelines have allowed us to support operations as needed. There has been hiring and spending for delivery of programs, health, and safety, and to ensure that we still invest and plan for our future. For example, we prioritized funding for student engagement and recruitment strategies. We have postponed hiring for certain positions and limited travel as cost savings, but no positions have been eliminated due to budget constraints.

HR collaborates with offices across the campus to ensure the institution has adequate personnel. HR provides guidance on staffing levels by examining workload within performance programs. For example, HR conducts exit interviews assessing workload as a determinant for leaving the institution (*Exit Interview Process.pdf*). HR assesses staffing ratios by analyzing metrics/benchmarks of other similarly situated SUNYs and/or private institutions. HR also performs salary equity reviews that ensure we are paying comparable market wages. The institution has also committed to correcting salary compression, where wage growth has not kept up with the market, causing long-term employees to be paid wages similar or in some cases less than new hires earning market salaries. The administration has taken no fewer than 50% of funds from UUP collective bargaining agreements for discretionary salary increases to address compression (*2021 Compression Memo and Form to Campus.pdf*; *2020 Compression Memo and report form.pdf*; *2019 Salary Equity President's Memo and Report Form.pdf*).

### ***Facilities and Infrastructure***

The Facilities Master Plan which encompasses instructional space, administrative space for faculty and staff, infrastructure, and energy management/sustainability ensures that the campus can provide the physical infrastructure to support operations and programs. The Facilities Master Plan Oversight Committee (FMPOC) includes representatives from across campus and oversees the plan as well as provides guidelines and oversight on repurposing and assignment of space. Long-term planning is balanced with the assessment of critical health and safety needs that are classified as capital projects. The Facilities, Planning, Design and Construction Office (FDCO) manages facilities projects across campus, including projects in the Facilities Master Plan and required maintenance. The FDCO is the liaison to the SUNY Construction Fund. FDCO and FMPOC are responsible for the effective use of resources and for prioritizing projects so they align with Cortland's mission, operations, and objectives. The effectiveness of campus facilities planning and management is evident through recent projects (*Instructional Spaces & Campus Improvements.pdf*).

The campus provides the physical infrastructure to support its operations and programs by following the Facilities Master Plan (*Facilities Master Plan.pdf*). This plan delineates the strategic and financial planning for campus facilities and infrastructure, which includes all instructional space, administrative space for faculty and staff, and energy management. The plan is updated annually, providing a rolling 5-year projection that aligns facilities and infrastructure projects with projected expenditures from various revenue streams while considering deferred maintenance in project prioritization and strategic capital replacement.

The FMPOC provides oversight and ensures implementation of the Facilities Master Plan. The committee is chaired by the Associate Vice President for Facilities Management with representation from areas across all divisions. The state-level SUNY Project Manager provides additional oversight and guidance on projects that are charged to the SUNY Construction Fund, while the Dormitory Income Fund Reimbursable (DIFR) Committee provides oversight and guidance on projects related to the residence halls funded by the DIFR Fund. Campus reserve funding is used for any remaining projects that cannot be charged to the Construction Fund or

relate to a residence hall (e.g., signage, paving). These campus-funded projects are reviewed, prioritized, and approved in consultation with the President's Cabinet.

Cortland has kept its commitment to sustainability, one of the eleven campus objectives, across all areas of campus (*Sustainability-webpage.pdf*). The university has adopted the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) sustainability tracking, assessment, and rating system (STARS) to facilitate a comprehensive approach to the College's sustainability progress. The Sustainability Master Plan is organized to correspond with the STARS categories. In 2019, SUNY Cortland received a gold rating in our STARS sustainability assessment from AASHE (*AASHE\_STARS-2019.pdf*).

Our new construction follows Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) specification standards which ensure that green, highly efficient, cost-saving facilities are constructed. We have received LEED certification on two of our recently constructed facilities: Dragon Hall in 2014 and the Student Life Center in 2019 (*LEED\_Certification.pdf*). The Climate Finance Tracking and Coordination Committee ensures the institution's sustainability objectives are aligned with financial planning (*Climate\_Finance\_Tracking\_Committee.pdf*).

Finally, our students are also involved in promoting sustainability in the residence halls. Each semester, one student from each of the seventeen residence halls is hired as a Green Rep. The Green Reps educate their fellow residents and campus community by creating resources and programs for their hall as well as collaborating to create campus-wide events. (*Green\_Reps-webpage.pdf*).

### ***Classroom Utilization and the Instructional Space Committee***

In 2017, the Instructional Space Committee was created as a subcommittee of the FMPOC and charged with evaluating classroom needs. The members include the Registrar, Director of Facilities Planning, Design, and Construction, the AVP for Information Resources, one of the three school deans, and the AVP for Academic Affairs. This committee consults with departments, reviews classroom usage data, and researches the most efficient ways to upgrade or renovate instructional spaces. They consider repurposing space and equipment, trading utilization, and optimizing space and technology for the most effective teaching and learning. The *Instructional Space Committee 2020 Report.pdf* as well as the *Instructional Spaces & Campus Improvements.pdf* files explain how this committee's work has enhanced instructional space on campus.

### ***Technology***

SUNY Cortland's comprehensive planning for technology is presented in the Information Resources (IR) Strategic Plan (*2020 IR Strategic Plan Executive Summary.pdf*). IR creates technology replacement and maintenance plans so the campus has the necessary technical infrastructure to support programs and operations. The IR strategic plan shows how its goals are aligned with the institution's strategic and financial planning processes. This planning includes the computer replacement program for faculty and staff and the lab replacement and maintenance plan, which assesses the usage, space, and technology available of the campus

computer labs. Many of IR's operations are funded by the student technology fee. As required by SUNY, IR submits annual budget plans with five-year projections based on this fee, which includes planned replacements for software and equipment used by faculty and students.

Sustainability and deferred maintenance are also integrated into the objectives of IR's strategic and financial planning. For example, the computer replacement program has been extended from three years to five years. Also, before a computer lab is upgraded, IR first determines whether the lab is necessary for campus operations or could be replaced by a "Bring Your Own Device" lab. If a lab is considered necessary, IR explores options for scheduling upgrades. Another sustainable practice includes the WEPA printing system for students, which uses more sustainable paper than other systems. Finally, the AVP for Information Resources serves on the Instructional Space Committee to discuss technology resources and needs and will support special technology classroom projects as needed.

### ***Campus Assessment of Fiscal, Human, Physical and Technical Resources***

As part of the Self-Study process, the Standard VI working group administered a campus-wide survey (*MiddleStatesWG6Survey.pdf*). The survey asked faculty and staff to assess how well the institution's fiscal, human, physical, and technical resources support their operations at both the department/unit level and the institutional level. Respondents were also asked to explain how their department/unit decides if it has adequate resources and what evidence indicates that the institution has adequate resources (*Middle States Working Group 6 Survey Results.pdf*).

Most respondents indicated that resources were at least adequate to support their operations. At the department level, human resources (staffing) received the highest percentage of *disagree* responses, and this was reinforced by written remarks that commented on high workload due to understaffed offices and departments. This is not surprising, particularly during a soft hiring freeze. At the institutional level, there were higher percentages of *unsure* responses across all four categories. This is also not surprising since individuals are more likely to understand the needs of their own area as opposed to the institution at large.

Overall, some respondents said that their budgets were only sufficient to meet basic operating needs and that they changed little from year to year. Therefore, they had little opportunity to consider more strategic initiatives. At the department and unit level, faculty across the board discussed the need for replacing faculty lines, while staff discussed space and technology issues. If the respondent did not oversee a budget, regardless of whether they were faculty or staff, they were unsure of how their department or unit decides if it has resources to adequately support its operations. Similarly, across all categories at the institution level, respondents were unsure of what evidence indicates that the institution has the resources to adequately support its operations.

### **Decision-Making (Criterion 5)**

Cortland's decision-making and accountability is evaluated by examining the structures of our decision-making processes and analyzing how stakeholders perceive the decision-making processes on campus.

The organizational chart (*Org\_chart-20210722.pdf*) of the college outlines responsibilities and shows reporting lines. Every individual position has a performance program which lists the duties and responsibilities that are reviewed annually and form the basis for performance evaluations (*UUPEval+fillable.pdf*). These performance evaluations are an opportunity for employees and supervisors to discuss responsibilities, submit evaluations and recommendations to next-level supervisors, and document the evaluations with Human Resources. The Handbook outlines responsibilities beyond the organizational chart such as the responsibilities of the Faculty Senate (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter150-Faculty Governance.pdf*) and the policies and procedures for faculty to renew their appointment or receive continuing appointment and promotion (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter220\_22005-08.pdf*).

Final decisions rest with the President and the President's Cabinet as documented in Cabinet minutes (*Presidents Cabinet Minutes Example.pdf*). Cabinet members meet with several entities that have a strong impact on decision-making. All Cabinet members attend Faculty Senate to hear deliberations on a wide range of policy issues affecting students, staff, and faculty. Faculty decisions are then reviewed for final approval by the President. Cabinet and Human Resources confer monthly with both the UUP and CSEA unions in a labor relations meeting (*Labor Management Agenda Example.pdf*) and the President meets with the Student Government Association (SGA) president regularly.

Prior to 2020, the President's Council included over 30 members, representing a wide range of campus constituents, who were joined by Cabinet to hear updates and discuss questions about topical issues. In 2020, the Gender Policies and Initiatives Council (GPIC) and others presented a new model of a leadership group that was more focused and still provided Cabinet a broader perspective necessary for decision-making. This new group is called the President's Advisory Council (PAC). The PAC consists of the President's Cabinet, all associate vice presidents, and the three deans. This new structure has been especially helpful through the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to be a forum for strategic discussions.

A key part of the decision-making process is communication. This includes gathering input, relaying decisions, and sharing the context and evidence related to these decisions. Each year, the campus hosts various events that are used to communicate decisions:

1. The President's Retreat is held each summer and includes 60-80 campus constituents, including the Cabinet, PAC, chairs, and directors. The Cabinet sets the agenda, which highlights critical issues (e.g., antiracism plans on campus), strategic planning, and updates from different areas. The retreat is designed to be engaging and provides an excellent forum for discussion and feedback (*2016-2021 President's Retreat Agendas.pdf*).
2. The President's Opening Meeting is held at the start of the fall and spring semester and all faculty and staff are invited to attend. The meeting includes a focused update from the President followed by a topical discussion that varies by semester. Topical

presentations have included panel discussions on teaching, interactive group work on strategic planning, and discussion on student mental health (*spring 2017 president's opening meeting011817.pdf*).

3. The Administrative Conference is a meeting each semester of all directors, chairs, deans, assistant and associate vice presidents, and the Cabinet. This meeting is an update of issues and provides an opportunity for all to ask questions of the Cabinet.
4. Each vice president has standing divisional cabinet meetings with their direct reports. These often include updates on Cabinet decisions, budget, and SUNY administrative news (*Vice President Cabinet Meeting Minutes.pdf*). Directors also have standing office meetings as another forum for discussion and information sharing about decisions.
5. The Provost hosts a Joint Chairs Council each semester to discuss issues with the academic department chairs across all three schools. Additionally, the deans hold bi-weekly chairs council meetings with the department chairs within their schools.
6. Findings from the Campus Climate Survey on gender (*Gender+Climate+Review\_A+Three+Year+Analysis+FINAL.pdf*) indicated that access to decision-makers was not equitable for men and women. In response, GPIC proposed *Coffee with the Cabinet*. Campus members are invited to an informal meet-and-greet with Cabinet members to learn about initiatives and discuss campus issues (*Coffee with Cabinet-email.pdf*).

The structures listed above provide opportunities to clarify roles and responsibilities, gather and share information on initiatives, and communicate across campus.

To learn how people viewed decision-making on campus, the Standard VI working group administered two surveys. The survey on Financial Planning, Budgeting, and Decision Making (*MiddleStatesWG6Survey.pdf*) was open to all faculty and staff (80 respondents). Respondents were asked to rate the clarity of decision-making at their department level and the institutional level. The ratings indicate that there is clarity in decision-making authority and the decision-making process at the department and unit level. In contrast, at the institutional level, there is less clarity. Less than half of respondents agree that the decision-making process at the institution level is well-defined and transparent. The possible reasoning behind this lack of clarity emerged from the themes identified in the open-ended questions. Respondents indicated that while there is some communication, it may break down at certain points in the chain of communication. Suggestions include more open meetings, similar to what we have held during the COVID-19 pandemic, where greater transparency in the justification for decisions is discussed and provide more opportunities for input on decisions.

One major takeaway is that the roles and responsibilities seem clear, but how and why decisions are made could be clearer to the campus community. This was echoed by the spring 2021 SGA Manifesto that cited administrative transparency as an area for improvement and suggested ways students could have more voice in decisions through open meetings and increased communication from campus leaders (*2020-2021 SGA Manifesto.pdf*).

## Strengths and Progress

Since our last Self-Study, we have worked toward building a stronger and more integrated infrastructure of planning, finance, and assessment at the institutional, division, and department level. The campus is aware of the Strategic Plan, and there is a much stronger sense of our direction with the identification of the institutional objectives. The consistent opportunities to discuss the Strategic Plan and our progress toward its objectives in various campus venues should continue. IPAC, RAC, and the President's Cabinet should identify a schedule of communications and venues for campus discussions to formalize these opportunities. The evolution of annual reports to be outcomes- and evidence-based and the campus-wide use of the Watermark system will strengthen our assessment culture on campus and allow for more thorough and consistent feedback. The new Institutional Effectiveness website is built upon an integrated model of planning, assessment, and budgeting and serves as a portal for information on all these areas.

Decisions in allocations and budgeting demonstrate a strong commitment to our mission and students. With the advent of the RAC (*Resource Advisory Council.pdf*), this decision-making process is now documented and formalized, as seen in revisions to the permission to hire form that asks how a position upholds Cortland's mission, operations, and strategic plan (*2020-21 RAC Report 082421.pdf*). The goal of these new processes is to make the budgeting process and allocation decisions transparent to all members of the campus community. Not only will this help us stay more accountable to our mission and strategic plan, but it will also ensure that there is a greater understanding about how to navigate these processes. The divisional plans are now complemented by budget reports given by each vice president at joint meetings of the RAC and IPAC. These meetings allow the campus leadership to demonstrate how planning and evidence are reflected in the divisional budgets, allowing for broader discussions about allocation decisions.

## Suggestions

SUNY Cortland meets all criteria, sub-criteria, and related requirements of affiliation for Standard VI. We have identified the follow suggestions to sustain our progress in the areas of planning, resource allocation, and assessment:

1. Identify and implement means of campus communication on decision-making that can be more effective at reaching all members of the campus, be timelier, and acknowledge shared perspectives more clearly.
2. Develop a process for review of department budgets that includes responses to department annual report questions on budget and a brief history of allocation and utilization of funds to consider department budget adjustments.
3. Charge IPAC and RAC with researching, developing, and implementing a process and schedule for assessing the effectiveness of planning, assessment, and budgeting at the institutional level.

## Standard VII: Governance, Leadership and Administration

### Standard VII

Requirements of Affiliation 12 and 13



SUNY Cortland

	Values	Priorities	Institutional Objectives
<i>The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.</i>	Integrity	Academic Excellence  Maximize Resources	Faculty Engagement (4)

### Finding for MSCHE Standard VII and Requirements of Affiliation 12 and 13

SUNY Cortland meets all criteria and sub-criteria of Standard VII and Requirements of Affiliation 12 and 13, with two suggestions for continued growth.

#### Introduction

SUNY Cortland meets Standard VII by demonstrating a mission-centered governance structure supported by a highly developed state system and shared leadership among Faculty Senate, collective bargaining units, student government, and administration all of which focus on our students. The governance of the college is both well-defined and transparent, as dictated by the SUNY Board of Trustees' Policies and the SUNY Cortland Handbook. That transparency and clarity of responsibilities are further evident in our administrative structure, where roles and expectations, including a commitment to the institution, responsibilities, and autonomy, are clear for the Trustees, College Council, and the President.

Our lines of inquiry focused on how the campus leadership uses the strategic plan and how leaders monitor and respond to the campus climate. There is a strong administrative structure that supports the work of the President, with a focused commitment to institutional planning, assessment, and budgeting effectiveness through strategic efforts and structures such as the Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee (IPAC) and the Resource Advisory Council (RAC). A continued commitment to planning, assessment, and budgeting, as well as further exploration into the effectiveness of internal governance structures and roles, will strengthen our standing in this standard.

This chapter provides an overview of the governance structure of SUNY Cortland, including our role within the SUNY system and how the varying layers of leadership and administration work

toward fulfilling our mission. The chapter also demonstrates the compliance with Requirement of Affiliation 12 – Governance Structure and 13 – Governing Member Affiliation. Effective, shared governance, leadership, and administration are foundational to our mission and support our campus priorities for academic excellence and maximizing resources. In addition, Institutional Objective 4 – Faculty Engagement of the Strategic Plan has continued to facilitate faculty engagement in campus governance and leadership.

The Self-Study *Roadmap.pdf* provides a listing of all the evidence for this standard by individual criteria. The last page of this document provides a crosswalk for related ROAs. The *Roadmap.pdf* file is located under Standard VII, Criterion 1 in the Evidence Inventory.

### **A Clearly Defined, Transparent Governance Structure (Criterion 1; ROA 12)**

The governance of SUNY Cortland is a system of shared responsibility that includes internal campus structures, a College Council, the SUNY administration, and Board of Trustees, and ultimately the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York (USNY) (*SUNY Cortland Governance Entities.pdf*).

#### ***State-Level Governance***

USNY is the governmental licensing and standards body for pre-kindergarten through higher education, both public and private. They are overseen by a Board of Regents of USNY. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is the administrative and implementation branch of USNY, through which most campuses and systems interact with USNY. SUNY Cortland is one of the 64 post-secondary institutions comprising the State University of New York (SUNY), the State's public higher education system. SUNY and all SUNY campuses and programs are registered with NYSED.

SUNY is governed by the SUNY Board of Trustees (SUNYBOT), the independent, legally constituted body that recommends SUNY Chancellor appointments, appoints and evaluates SUNY college presidents, and has authority over a wide range of educational, fiscal, and operational policies affecting the colleges (*SUNY\_BOT-webpage.pdf*). SUNYBOT policies provide the governance framework for the administration of Cortland (*SUNY\_BOT\_Policies\_August2021.pdf*).

In addition to SUNYBOT, the University Faculty Senate (UFS), Student Assembly of SUNY, and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges are shared governance structures contributing to policy development and governance at the SUNY level. Representatives to these bodies include faculty, professional staff, administration, governing boards, students, and the Chancellor (*SUNY\_BOT\_Policies\_August2021.pdf*, Article VII, Title A, sections 1 and 2).

Being a part of the larger SUNY and New York State system provides a well-developed structure and requires accountability in processes. SUNYBOT policies provide the governance framework for Cortland's administration and establish a system of reporting—such as annual fiscal reporting (see Standard VI description), curriculum alteration reviews, and enrollment

verifications—that require evaluation of work and outcomes. Additionally, we are accountable for ensuring that policy changes on our campus align with SUNY and state-wide policy, which calls for higher levels of scrutiny in our work and allows for a broader vetting of local decisions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, we relied on SUNY for guidance on issues such as grading options and decisions involving study abroad, and the shared governance structure that includes the UFS and the Student Assembly provided the College and its faculty, professional staff, and students an opportunity to contribute to SUNY-level policy development.

### ***Shared Campus Governance***

Shared governance at SUNY Cortland consists of a network of roles and structures, including College Council, the President and administrative leadership, Faculty Senate, unions, and the Student Government Association (SGA). The College Council is responsible for supervising the operations and affairs of each state-operated campus. The duties of the Cortland College Council include advising the president, recommending presidential candidates, reviewing plans for the operation of campus properties, reviewing budget proposals, naming buildings and grounds, and approving regulations governing the conduct of (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter130.pdf*, Section 130.01). The College Council holds four meetings during the academic year, and special meetings if necessary, and the President, the President’s Cabinet, and the Faculty Senate Chair are invited to attend.

SUNY Cortland’s President is the campus’ chief executive officer, who is appointed by, evaluated by, and reports to SUNYBOT. The President is responsible for promoting “the development and effectiveness” of the college (*SUNY\_BOT\_Policies\_August2021.pdf*, Article IX). The President and the President’s Cabinet lead campus administration. In addition, the President is advised by nine committees detailed in the SUNY Cortland Handbook (*SUNY\_BOT\_Policies\_August2021.pdf*, Section 130.08).

Faculty governance is integral to our structure and is determined by the policies of Chapter 150 of the SUNY Cortland Handbook (*College\_Handbook\_2020\_Chapter150-Faculty Governance.pdf*). Under those policies, the President is the chair of the SUNY Cortland Faculty, while the presiding officer of the faculty is the chair of the Faculty Senate. The voting membership of the Faculty Senate includes all faculty and professionals of the college. Membership, duties, and roles of the Faculty Senate are detailed in CH 150.03, Article VI. Faculty Senate policies are focused on “the administrative and academic structures of the university,” in the context of promoting “academic freedom, intellectual honesty, and social justice.” The President’s Cabinet attends the Faculty Senate’s bi-weekly meetings as non-voting members. Agendas and minutes are posted on the Faculty Senate webpage (*Faculty Senate Agenda and Minutes – SUNY Cortland.pdf*; *Faculty Senate Agenda December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021.pdf*). The Faculty Senate relies on the work of multiple committees, for example, the Educational Policy Committee, Professional Affairs Committee, Academic Faculty Affairs Committee, the Joint Committee on Student Interests, and the new Ad-Hoc Committee on Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Initiatives (*Faculty+Senate+Annual+Report+2019-2020.pdf*). The

Senate periodically conducts reviews of the organizational structure and operating procedures, typically every five years, to ensure accountability to the principles of shared governance.

Student Governance is determined by the policies of CH 180 of the SUNY Cortland Handbook, which establishes the SGA (*SGA\_ConstitutionBylawsCombined2020.pdf*). The SGA is led by three student-elected officers, including the President, Executive Vice President, and Chief Financial Officer. The SGA also relies on its legislative branch, the Student Senate. Membership and duties of the legislative and executive branches are detailed in the SGA constitution. The mission of all SGA activity is to “be responsive to the students of this college community,” “protect students’ rights” and advance the general welfare of the student body. Representatives from the SGA serve on the College Council and the Faculty Senate. Over the past several years, SGA has worked to advocate for student concerns more directly with the creation of Student Manifestos in 2020 and in 2021 (*2020-2021 SGA Manifesto Final.pdf*) that outline students’ concerns and recommendations.

The majority of faculty and staff are represented by unions. Representatives of local union leadership and SUNY Cortland management meet regularly to discuss issues related to fair and supportive terms and conditions of employment and share information on policies and procedures (e.g., *LM Agendas-2020.pdf*). Faculty and most professionals are represented by United University Professions (UUP), which has a collective bargaining agreement with New York State that is articulated in a transparent and collaborative relationship with management at the SUNY Cortland campus. The Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) engages with New York State via a collective bargaining agreement. The Public Employees Federation (PEF) represents the Professional, Scientific, and Technical (PS&T) Statewide bargaining unit, which in SUNY is drawn primarily from the nursing field in the health sciences centers and other titles, including physicians in the Student Health Service. The Agency Police Services Unit (APSU) is a statewide unit representing SUNY police officers and investigators.

The efficacy of these governance structures occurs through collaboration, clarity of responsibilities, and communication among structures and with the campus. For all the structures noted above, faculty, staff, and students have opportunities to access their mission, agenda, minutes, records, and guest attendance procedures at meetings. In addition, constituents have access to the leadership contact information if they want to learn more about the governance of that area and ways to participate. Solicitation of cross-campus perspectives is built into the processes of many of these structures and any supporting committees, such as those convened by the Faculty Senate.

### **Institutional Roles and Responsibilities (Criterion 2; ROA 12 and 13)**

SUNY’s mission, according to New York State Education Law, Article VIII, Section 351, is “to provide to the people of New York educational services of the highest quality, with broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population in a complete range of academic...programs” (*BOT-education-law-article—8.pdf*). These priorities are further inflected by SUNY Cortland’s mission to be a place where “students grow as engaged citizens with a strong social conscience fostered by outstanding teaching, scholarship and service”

(*Mission\_Vision.pdf*). Throughout all levels of governance outlined above, the responsibilities of the governing boards include fulfillment of mission and goals and ensuring accountability for the quality of academics, planning, and fiscal well-being of the institution. These layers of accountability ensure that a high standard is met for the students we serve and that New York State citizens can trust that we are utilizing resources with the greatest integrity and most direct purpose of meeting our mission.

All SUNYBOT and members of councils for the state-operated campuses must comply with the Code of Ethical Conduct for Business or Professional Activities by State University of New York Officers (*BOT-code-of-conduct.pdf*). As described under Standard II, this Code addresses conflicts of interest, nepotism, and limitations on compensations to ensure that they are not compromising their role and responsibilities.

As defined in the Board of Trustees Powers and Duties (*BOT-powers-and-duties.pdf*), the scope of responsibility of SUNYBOT includes planning, general administrative and fiscal supervision of campuses, and personnel, including the appointment and periodic review of the presidents. SUNYBOT policies are implemented by the SUNY Chancellor and their staff. The SUNY staff works with campus presidents and other stakeholders to vet potential implementation details resulting in a Memorandum to Presidents from the Chancellor. SUNYBOT authority is broad and general, by definition, and the authority of Cortland administrators, defined by SUNYBOT policies and the SUNY Cortland Handbook, is sufficient to provide oversight of the routine activities necessary to advance our mission and manage the campus-specific operations autonomously. SUNYBOT policies are not prescriptive directives and can potentially be implemented by individual campuses in ways that best match their contexts.

The curriculum review process illustrates the interplay between the broad policy-level oversight of SUNYBOT and Cortland's autonomy in changing or developing curriculum within those policy guidelines to ensure the quality of teaching and learning. SUNYBOT sets higher-level academic policies and has the sole authority to approve degree programs and award degrees. Cortland has the general autonomy to shape and develop its curriculum through a well-developed curriculum review undertaken at the department, school, and campus levels, with final approval, in accordance with SUNYBOT policies, resting with SUNY and NYSED (*Curriculum Change Guide 2021.pdf*).

SUNYBOT's oversight of financial policies and Cortland's management of its financial resources provide another example of SUNYBOT's policy-level role in relation to Cortland's role in developing and implementing internal policies and procedures. SUNYBOT sets policy related to financial affairs to ensure the integrity and strong financial management across the 64 campuses, with SUNY overseeing policy implementation by establishing system-wide procedures and reviewing compliance through periodic audits. For example, SUNYBOT has the power to regulate tuition, fees, and charges across campuses. However, Cortland's president and leadership have significant autonomy in setting budget priorities, distributing resources in pursuit of campus priorities and strategic planning objectives, and developing internal systems for assessing resource use through the Finance and Management Division and the RAC.

### **Presidential Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications (Criteria 3a, 3b, and 3c)**

Cortland's president is the Chief Executive Officer, appointed by SUNYBOT with recommendations from both the SUNY Chancellor and Cortland College Council. The President serves at the pleasure of SUNYBOT and is evaluated by SUNYBOT and Chancellor every five years or at any time (*SUNY\_BOT\_Policies\_August2021.pdf*, Article IX). This evaluation is supported by a panel of college and university presidents who conduct a campus site visit, during which they consult with the Faculty Senate, faculty, staff, students, and the vice presidents (*mtp79-6.pdf*).

Erik J. Bitterbaum has been President of SUNY Cortland since 2003. Before his service at Cortland, he had a strong record of academic and institutional leadership in public higher education (*President's Cabinet CVs.pdf*). He holds a doctorate in biology from the University of Florida and remains invested in teaching and learning, even teaching a section of COR 101, the first-year transition course, dedicated to biology majors. Throughout his tenure, he has led the college to a highly stable fiscal position, even with major challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic (*SUNY Cortland COVID Experience.pdf*). Under his leadership, Cortland has continued to develop enrollment strategies that adjust to challenges, has run two successful capital campaigns (one still underway), developed new programs, supported staffing, and has committed to facilities and capital improvements necessary for short- and long-term success. He has committed to the increasing diversity of the campus community, supporting efforts that have led to a 14% increase in first-year student diversity and the establishment of our first Chief Diversity Officer position. His support for sustainability, collaboration with the Cortland community through partnerships, and involvement with higher education beyond the campus and SUNY are extensive and keep us informed and connected. For example, he is a commissioner of the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation and served on the NCAA Division III President's Council. He supports the foundations of teaching and learning while promoting innovation in applied learning such as civic engagement and entrepreneurship that help students and the curriculum move in new directions. As President, he is the steward of the planning, assessment, and finances of the college and has final authority on policy, personnel, and finance decisions. SUNYBOT policies detail the President's responsibilities, with the primary role of promoting the College's development and effectiveness (*SUNY\_BOT\_Policies\_August2021.pdf*, Article IX, Title A, Section 2).

### **Administrator Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications (Criteria 3d and 4a – 4e)**

The administrative structure is built to support the President in fulfilling his responsibilities and effectively exercise his authority through advisement and proper delegation. As described in the Organizational Chart of the College, there are four administrative divisions of the campus: Academic Affairs, Students Affairs, Finance and Management, and Institutional Advancement (*Org\_chart-20210722.pdf*). The President's Cabinet consists of the four vice presidents of those areas, the President's Chief of Staff, and the Chief Diversity Officer. Their roles and vitae are provided in the Evidence Inventory (*The President's Cabinet.pdf*).

Cortland's organization is the purview of the President and the President's Cabinet, as is the evaluation of support in terms of time, assistance, and technology. The vice presidents, for example, can advocate for support staff in terms of additional staff, promotion, or restructuring of staff roles in consultation with Human Resources. This must be aligned with strategic plans and mission-based operations and approved by the Cabinet. Similarly, the vice presidents work with Information Resources on technology including hardware requests to larger systems requests. Technical costs outside of a vice president's budget would need to then go to Cabinet for review based on mission/operations and strategic plan return on investment.

### ***President's Advisory Council***

In 2019, the Gender Policies and Initiatives Council (GPIC) completed an analysis of the Gender Climate Survey and conducted further campus discussions on campus equity (*Gender+Climate+Review\_A+Three+Year+Analysis+FINAL.pdf*). Members of GPIC and other campus leaders met with the Cabinet to discuss the continued lack of gender equity on the Cabinet and that discussion led to two changes. The first was the appointment of the Chief Diversity Officer to the Cabinet, given the importance of institutional equity and inclusion in all areas of the campus' operations and the need for cross-campus engagement in diversity initiatives. The second was the creation of the President's Advisory Council (PAC), a non-voting advisory body that includes the Cabinet, associate provosts, associate and assistant vice presidents, and deans (*President's Cabinet CVs.pdf*; *President's Advisory Council CVs.pdf*). This brings more gender equity to the leadership discussions (six women instead of two) and has proven invaluable during the COVID-19 pandemic, when we needed to pivot quickly with the most information possible.

### ***Engagement with Faculty, Staff, and Students in Advancing Goals and Objectives***

All the work of the campus involves the collaboration of faculty, staff, students, and administration, and our effectiveness is tied directly to this engagement. We have been most effective when we communicate clearly and have a shared sense of goals and objectives. Several formal mechanisms help build structural opportunities for engagement: 1) Cabinet members attend Faculty Senate meetings and Student Government Association meetings; 2) faculty and professional staff are members on the President's nine advisory committees; 3) the Faculty Senate chair is a voting member of the College Council; 4) the Student Government Association President serves on the College Council; 5) student representatives serve on many of the committees, including IPAC.

Every semester, the President hosts an Opening Meeting for all faculty and staff that includes an update from the President and presentations on special topics around student learning, development, strategic planning, and other topics germane to our institutional mission, goals, and operations (e.g., *Fall 2021 Opening of School Meeting Agenda.pdf*). In addition, the President calls a SUNYBOT-mandated meeting of the Administrative Conference, which includes all directors, chairs, and deans, for a state-of-the-college address each semester. The President's Cabinet hosts open, well-attended Coffee with the Cabinet meetings each semester (*Coffee with Cabinet-email.pdf*). Faculty and staff are invited to attend these events to meet the Cabinet and ask questions about projects or initiatives on campus. Additional communication is

provided to students, faculty, and staff through the bi-weekly campus *Bulletin* electronic newsletter (e.g., *Bulletin #1 August 31, 2021.pdf*), presidential emails, social media, and visual messaging screens on campus.

The President and Cabinet members are closely engaged with students and the SGA across different venues. The President meets monthly with the SGA president to share information, discuss student concerns, and collaborate on solutions, all of which he shares with the Cabinet, other senior leadership, and relevant campus units. In addition, he and the Cabinet members engage with SGA representatives on the Faculty Senate, and the Student Senate occasionally invites them to join meetings. They have several additional touchstones for engaging with students in less formal venues, such as when the President hosts meals with the SGA members and in their active attendance at student events.

One example that illustrates the positive impact of this high level of leadership engagement with students occurred in the wake of the killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020. Concerned with the emotional burden this event and the persistence of systemic, structural racism might have on students, the SGA president met with the President to present a series of student demands and discuss solutions. In addition, student leaders, with support from the Multicultural Life and Diversity Office, sponsored a series of Black Lives Liberation Forums through which students expressed their concerns (*Black\_Lives-webpage.pdf*). In response to these concerns, Cortland formed the Anti-Racism Task Force, created unit-level anti-racism action plans (*Anti-Racism Action Plan – Examples.pdf*), and developed a pilot employee professional development program on diversity, equity and inclusion (*DEI PROPOSAL-PD PROGRAM.pdf*).

The COVID-19 pandemic provided an exceptional number of learning opportunities for us in terms of how we communicate as a campus (*SUNY Cortland COVID Experience.pdf*). The mandates and guidance changed at a rate that was challenging to process and message coherently, and new mandates would arrive frequently. This was understandably frustrating for our faculty, staff, and students, and we found the following efforts to be helpful, if not full solutions:

1. Conducting surveys to give people a chance to provide feedback in their own time and from their perspective helped inform discussions (*Faculty-Staff Lessons Learned from COVID Survey.pdf*; *Fall 2020 Student Survey.pdf*; *UUPCortland\_COVID work highlights\_Nov3 (2).pdf*; *UUP Survey Professionals Summary of Comments Fall 2020.pdf*).
2. Open meetings showed transparency but were difficult to manage with hundreds online at once.
3. Creating group-specific dialogues (e.g., students, directors, etc.) was appreciated.
4. Creating a COVID Student Outreach Team that generated videos, contests, and mobile giveaways with over 30 people from across campus contributing to the work.
5. Changing the spring semester schedule at the request of the SGA to provide vacation days gave students a needed break.

6. A new Online Teaching Group and Online Learning Group made up of faculty and staff helped provide additional support and provide insight for decision making (*2020+08-14+Teaching+in+a+Socially+Distanced+Classroom+FINAL.pdf*).

As we continue to manage the ongoing pandemic and beyond, we will reflect further on how to incorporate what we learned about effective communication and campus community engagement into our regular operations and in our response to future crises.

### **Institutional Effectiveness (Criteria 4f and 5)**

The President uses the administrative structure, reporting lines, and communication venues to stay informed on campus operations and any issues that are affecting the daily operations. To strengthen our effectiveness, he charged IPAC to focus on strategic planning and assessment and establish division and campus plans that align with the campus strategic plan (*IPAC\_Charge.pdf*). He also established the RAC to build more transparent processes for resource allocation and budget decision-making connected to the mission and strategic priorities. Under his tenure, the campus has revised its mission and created new priorities and measurable strategic objectives that have driven us toward improvements across the campus. Additionally, assessment in the four divisions and throughout the academic programs has been supported and expanded in accordance with the strategic plan.

IPAC has established a model for identifying priorities, allocating resources in alignment with those priorities, and assessing progress at all levels to provide a more intentional, integrated, and transparent model for campus decision-making. IPAC planning has focused on developing the institutional strategic plan and plans for ongoing operations and divisional goals that are responsive and adaptive as issues arise. IPAC has identified institutional indicators and reviews progress based on broad benchmarks emerging from priorities and outcomes established in the strategic plan. At the same time, and as part of this planning, leaders of the divisions and units have identified indicators that support the ongoing work in support of our priorities (*Institutional Effectiveness website*).

To support the budgetary planning process, the RAC oversees efforts to align allocation of resources with operations, mission, and plans; clarify roles and processes; periodically review budgeting allocations to ensure operational costs are covered to meet functional needs; and manage a process for the consideration of budget requests that emerge outside of the regular budget process (*Resource Advisory Council.pdf*).

In response to recent gender climate surveys, and in support of Institutional Objective 7's focus on inclusion, the Gender Policies and Initiatives Council (GPIC) was established to review and assess issues affecting the campus climate, plan programs and activities to improve gender climate, make recommendations to the President on policies that affect gender climate, and implement activities in support of gender inclusivity. Similarly, the President's Council on Inclusive Excellence (PCIE) was formed to advance institutional and system-wide diversity goals, including, but not limited to, the planning and implementation of the College's Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Plan (*Diversity Inclusion Plan 2016 – SUNY Cortland.pdf*).

Each administrative unit is required to submit an annual report (*2021 Administrative Annual Report Call.pdf*; *Administrative Annual Report Examples.pdf*). This includes an executive summary of the activities that occurred throughout the year, an analysis of data and pertinent information, reflection on the effectiveness of how the unit supported the college mission and operation of the college, and progress toward meeting intended goals of the unit and those of the campus strategic plan. The required format includes an overview of unit highlights, accomplishments, and challenges, a summary of staff accomplishments, specific planning and assessment activities, a review of the budget, and an explanation of any changes to their most recent strategic plan. The information provided to the vice presidents in the report is the basis for the annual report that the President submits to SUNY.

Planning and assessment discussions have now become a part of the annual President's Retreat agenda and the President's Opening Meetings, with workshops and presentations consistently included on the agendas for the past seven years (*2016-2021 President's Retreat Agendas.pdf*). As noted in the Standard I discussion, there is an awareness and support of the priorities and objectives, and the IPAC committee shared a mid-point update on Strategic Plan progress in Spring 2021 (*Summary of Strategic Plan Progress Spring 2021-0603.pdf*). IPAC and the RAC will be collaborating to strengthen the conceptual and functional integration of our planning, budgeting, and assessment on campus.

As part of the institutional effectiveness, there are several mechanisms to assess the governance, leadership, and administration of the college. For the Faculty Senate, for example, there is a Review of Governance Structure mandated at least every five years (*College Handbook 2020 Chapter150-Faculty Governance.pdf*, Article XIII, Section 150.03), which includes policy committee recommendations regarding procedures. The SUNY Cortland Handbook, section 260.02 Comprehensive Teaching Evaluation System, states that the evaluation of administrators should include regular, systematic feedback from faculty and students on their administrative effectiveness, leadership ability, responsiveness, innovative programs, competency, and soundness of judgment (*College Handbook 2020 Chapter260\_26002-Evaluations.pdf*).

The current process for the evaluation of administrators involves the use of secondary sources and additional evidence as reviewed by the supervisor. We suggest that the President propose a working committee with the Faculty Senate to explore the intent, definitions, and location of this guidance in the Handbook to find a collaborative and sustainable way for there to be additional perspectives, including those of students, involved in administration evaluation. This should include looking at models from peer institutions.

As noted above, the Cabinet has used evaluations from the campus climate survey to inform changes to the administrative structure, which resulted in the creation of the new President's Advisory Council. We advise that all governance structures engage in ways to articulate what effectiveness means for their designed purpose (e.g., what are their objectives/outcomes)—be

it Cabinet, Faculty Senate, or committees—and commit to identifying meaningful measures that can be reasonably worked into an assessment schedule.

### **Strengths and Progress**

SUNY Cortland has a robust, transparent set of governance, leadership, and administrative structures, scaffolded by SUNYBOT policies and reinforced by campus-level frameworks supporting the Cortland’s autonomous pursuit of the priorities we have defined for the institution. Our strengths in these areas are centered on three factors. First, Cortland is part of a highly developed state system with clearly outlined policies and processes that serve as a framework for our campus. Second, we have a clearly outlined administrative structure with qualified staff and faculty serving in leadership and administrative roles within the governance and operational structure. And third, to accomplish our mission we rely upon consistent, effective collaboration among campus leadership, faculty, staff, and students through the Faculty Senate, collective bargaining units, student government, and committees.

To increase institutional effectiveness in advancing its mission and objectives, the campus has made considerable strides over the past years to enhance these structures further by identifying, establishing, and assessing its strategic priorities and objectives, and by creating bodies to monitor and assess progress toward these goals. Below we briefly summarize the progress we have made, as was described in this chapter.

First, Cortland’s leadership has established several committees that provide oversight in aligning policies, procedures, and operations with clearly defined institutional priorities and objectives. These include IPAC and RAC, which together have overseen the development of a more holistic, evidence-based model of planning that led to a clearer definition of priorities, appropriate allocation of resources, and assessment of progress toward these goals. In addition, the GPIC and PCIE were formed to advance our focus on equity and inclusion.

Second, in response to concerns identified by campus constituents in the gender and campus climate surveys, our governance structure has been strengthened through the reformulation of the President’s Council into the PAC and the creation of the Chief Diversity Officer position and her membership on the Cabinet. This restructuring has addressed the lack of diversity on the Cabinet and has elevated the infusion of diversity, equity, and inclusion concerns and solutions into all aspects of campus operations, policies, and initiatives.

Third, SGA and other student groups have amplified the student voices through an ongoing series of town halls, other meetings, and manifestos listing demands for change. Through these forums, they have illuminated concerns related to structural racism and have called for institutional and individual action by all community members to address diversity, equity, and inclusion concerns. In response, Cortland’s leadership, in collaboration with the PCIE, the Anti-Racism Task Force, and other groups are raising awareness and leading action planning to address student concerns.

Fourth, Cortland has made a concerted effort to make these governance and administrative structures clear, transparent, and accessible through publication in the SUNY Cortland Handbook and on dedicated web spaces. Different components of our structures, such as the Faculty Senate, SGA, GPIC, PCIE, IPAC, and RAC, provide venues where campus community members can ask for clarification and propose changes to campus policies, procedures, and structures.

### **Suggestions**

SUNY Cortland meets all criteria, sub-criteria, and related requirements of affiliation for Standard VII. We have identified two suggestions to enhance the alignment of governance structures and assessment processes to our institutional mission and priorities. These include the following:

1. Engage all governance structures in assessing their goals and identifying meaningful measures that can be worked into an assessment schedule.
2. Establish a working committee between the President's Office and the Faculty Senate to explore a collaborative and sustainable way to include more faculty perspectives in evaluating administrators. This should involve looking at models from peer institutions.

## Conclusion

This Self-Study gave our campus the opportunity to systematically explore, discuss, and analyze our effectiveness as an institution. We relied on the MSCHE standards and SUNY Cortland's strategic plan to determine our strengths and identify where we can improve. Efforts from every division on the campus have led to more focused and aligned planning and expanded use of evidence to evaluate decisions, continually improve, and fulfill our mission.

Our Self-Study Design was approved in March 2020, coinciding with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the additional workloads, restrictions, and pressures that the pandemic produced, our campus stayed committed to the Self-Study process. Our colleagues served on working groups gathering evidence, reviewed numerous drafts, and provided perspective, insight, and feedback throughout this journey.

As we reflect on this process, we have met all the intended outcomes we set at the beginning of the Self-Study. We have demonstrated compliance with the Middle States standards and related requirements of affiliation. We have articulated the alignment between Middle States requirements and our strategic plan and institutional objectives. Finally, we have clarified connections among campus institutional and divisional plans.

An extensive analysis of evidence revealed and validated campus strengths, as well as our progress since the last Middle States Self-Study. We also identified tangible strategies we will use to sustain our progress in the critical areas of planning, assessment, and budgeting. These suggestions include improving communication and campus-wide engagement, expanding access to data that can inform all aspects of our work, investing in our assessment processes, and researching the most impactful strategies to make Cortland a more diverse and equitable educational community.

The findings of the self-study demonstrate that SUNY Cortland fulfills its mission by enacting its institutional values: focus on students, integrity, and intellectual life. This Self-Study revealed the impact of initiatives across campus that uphold these values and our institutional priorities. Also, and equally important, this Self-Study let us recognize how critical the commitment and expertise of people across campus are to our collective effectiveness and vitality.

## Appendix A. Campus Terminology

### Acronyms

Acronym	Explanation
AAO	Associate Director of Human Resources and Affirmative Action
AASHE	Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
ACE	American Council on Education
AFAC	Academic Faculty Affairs Committee
APSU	Agency Police Services Unit
ARAP	Anti-Racism Action Plans
CAATE	Commission on the Accreditation of Athletic Training Education
CAEP	Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation
CITI	Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
COACHE	Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education
COIL	Collaborative Online International Learning
CDE	Course Dossier Evaluation
CLEP	College Level Examination Program
CLIP	Composition Library Instruction Program
CTE	Course Teacher Evaluation
CRT	Culturally Responsive Teaching
CSEA	Civil Service Employees Association
CSI	College Student Inventory
CURE	Cortland's Urban Recruitment of Educators Program
DIFR	Dormitory Income Fund Reimbursable
ELO	Extended Learning Office
EOP	Educational Opportunity Program
EPC	Educational Policy Committee
FDC	Faculty Development Center
FSSE	Faculty Survey of Student Engagement
FDOC	Facility Design and Construction Office
FMPOC	Facilities Master Plan Oversight Committee
GE	General Education
GPIC	Gender Policies and Initiatives Council
HIP	High Impact Practices
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Institute for College Teaching
IFR	Income Fund Reimbursable
IPAC	Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
IPO	International Programs Office
IR	Information Resources
IRAO	Institutional Research and Analysis Office
IRB	Institutional Review Board
ISC	Instructional Space Committee
JCOPE	Joint Commission of Public Ethics
JST	Joint Services Transcripts

<b>LEED</b>	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
<b>NCCRS</b>	National College Credit Recommendation Service
<b>NSSE</b>	National Survey of Student Engagement
<b>NYSED</b>	New York State Education Department
<b>PAC</b>	President's Advisory Council
<b>PCIE</b>	President's Council on Inclusive Excellence
<b>PEF</b>	Public Employee Federation
<b>PRODIG</b>	Promotion, Recruitment, Opportunity, Diversity, Inclusion and Growth
<b>PSR</b>	Personal Service-Regular
<b>PS&amp;T</b>	Professional, Scientific & Technical Services Unit
<b>RAC</b>	Resource Advisory Council
<b>SFA</b>	Student Activity Fee
<b>SGA</b>	Student Government Association
<b>SLC</b>	Student Life Center
<b>SLO</b>	Student Learning Outcomes
<b>SOGIE</b>	Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and Expression
<b>SOS</b>	Student Opinion Survey
<b>SPA</b>	Specialized Professional Association
<b>SRRS</b>	Student Registration and Record Services
<b>STARS</b>	Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment and Rating System
<b>SUNY</b>	State University of New York
<b>SUNYBOT OR BOT</b>	State University of New York System Board of Trustees
<b>TEC</b>	Teacher Education Council
<b>UFS</b>	University Faculty Senate
<b>URC</b>	Undergraduate Research Council
<b>UUP</b>	United University Professions
<b>VPFM</b>	Vice President for Finance and Management
<b>WI OR WRIT</b>	Writing Intensive Requirement

## Committee, Councils and Working Groups

Group	Primary Responsibilities
<b>Academic Faculty Affairs Committee</b>	Committee of the Faculty Senate addressing range of issues related to faculty work and policies
<b>Center for Gender and Intercultural Studies</b>	Center that promotes equity and respect within the campus and larger community.
<b>College Curriculum Review Committee</b>	Campus-wide approval of undergraduate curriculum
<b>Educational Policy Committee</b>	Faculty Senate committee facilitating new and revision to academic policies
<b>Facilities Master Plan Oversight Committee</b>	Manage the Facilities Master Plan and space utilization guidelines and decisions
<b>Faculty Senate</b>	Representational governance body for faculty and professionals
<b>Gender Policies and Initiatives Council</b>	Research, advise Cabinet, and facilitate programs to address gender equity on campus
<b>General Education Committee</b>	Faculty Senate committee that approves courses for GE program and assessment of GE program
<b>Graduate Faculty Executive Committee</b>	Approval of graduate curriculum and review of graduate related policy
<b>Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee</b>	Oversight of strategic planning, support of planning and assessment throughout campus
<b>President's Advisory Council</b>	Expanded President's Cabinet including associate/assistant vice presidents/provosts and deans
<b>President's Cabinet</b>	Executive committee of President, vice presidents, Chief of Staff and Chief Diversity Officer
<b>Student Learning Outcomes Committee</b>	Supports SLO work across campus and monitors progress on SLO work
<b>President's Council on Inclusive Excellence</b>	Lead the campus strategic plan to address racism and foster inclusion and excellence in all areas of campus.
<b>Teacher Education Council</b>	Representatives of all teacher education programs across three schools and headed by the Dean of Education to govern CAEP and other regulatory issues

## Appendix B. SUNY Cortland Mission, Vision, Values, and Priorities

### Mission

SUNY Cortland is an academic community dedicated to diverse learning experiences. Students grow as engaged citizens with a strong social conscience fostered by outstanding teaching, scholarship and service.

### Vision

SUNY Cortland will be a college of opportunity, from which students graduate with the knowledge, integrity, skills and compassion to excel as leaders, citizens, scholars, teachers and champions of excellence. Prospective students and employees will choose SUNY Cortland in response to its nationally recognized academic programs, innovation and experiential learning, and the rich intellectual, social and athletic life on the campus. SUNY Cortland will be a center for intellectual, cultural and economic growth, distinguished by successful partnerships with organizations, schools, agencies and businesses throughout the region, the nation and the world.

### Values

- Focus on the Students: All decisions, plans and actions revolve around students' academic, personal, social, and cultural development and wellness.
- Integrity: Dedication to honesty, hard work, high personal and professional standards, and respect for people, perspectives, and the environment.
- Intellectual Life: Commitment to inquiry, academic rigor, creativity, lifelong learning, and contribution to discipline, profession, and the greater good.

### Priorities

**Academic Excellence:** We will cultivate academic programs that provide students with the best opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills, and dispositions. This means ensuring that we have relevant and engaging curriculum, effective and innovative delivery methods, appropriate facilities, and a culture of continual improvement. We will foster the highest levels of student and faculty engagement and support their contributions to their disciplines, the college, and communities locally and globally.

**Transformational Education:** We will provide intentionally designed, highly effective, educational opportunities that challenge how students see themselves and the world in profound new ways. Transformational education involves all of the opportunities that expose students to new environments, cultures, perspectives, and knowledge. It also challenges them to reflect, acknowledge their self-efficacy, and continually expand their understanding and skills to be more engaged agents in their lives and their communities.

**Well-being:** We will advocate for personal and community well-being through our academic disciplines and our campus programming and facilities. We actively promote the physical, emotional, cultural and social well-being of our students and employees, determine areas of greatest need, and respond with policies and programs that recognize the well-being of each individual is critical to our strength as a whole. This includes striving to be a campus community that enacts values of inclusivity, collaboration, respect, and care where contributions to the community are recognized and we hold ourselves accountable for supporting a positive campus climate.

**Maximize Resources:** We will sustain resources and carefully align our decision-making and allocation process with the mission-based functions of the college and our strategic vision for the campus. Maximizing resources includes being fiscally responsible, thinking about efficiency while maintaining excellence, and communicating clearly about resource allocation. It also means focusing on sustainability and ensuring that the campus maintains a dedication to responsible use of natural resources and consideration of our impact on our environment.

### Institutional Strategic Objectives

The following eleven outcomes are grounded in the strategic priorities and are further detailed including indicators, benchmarks, and aspirational outcomes. They emerged from campus discussion on making the priorities more tangible, observable, and measurable.

	<b>Full Objective</b>	<b>Campus Priority Alignment</b>	<b>Abbreviated</b>
1	Enhance the assessment of student learning and development and utilize evidence to strengthen programs.	Academic Excellence	Assessment of Student Learning
2	Improve student achievement in written and oral communication.	Academic Excellence	Student Achievement in Communication
3	Increase persistence and degree completion for first-year, transfer, and underrepresented students.	Academic Excellence Well-Being	Persistence and Degree Completion
4	Promote faculty engagement in the life of the college and in their respective disciplines.	Academic Excellence Well-Being	Faculty Engagement
5	Increase the percent of courses taught by full-time faculty.	Academic Excellence Maximizing Resources	Full Time Faculty
6	Expand the impact of applied learning by increasing opportunities and increasing quality of experiences.	Transformational Education	Applied Learning
7	Strengthen our community through a focus on inclusion, civility, and accountability.	Well-Being Transformational Education	Strengthen Community
8	Increase institutional financial support to students through scholarship fundraising.	Well-Being Maximizing Resources	Financial Support to Students
9	Increase revenue to campus from nontuition sources.	Maximizing Resources	Non-tuition Revenue
10	Enhance the quality of spaces and facilities for academic programs and the overall student experience.	Academic Excellence Transformational Education Well-Being	Spaces and Facilities
11	Increase the environmental sustainability of the campus and community	Maximizing Resources	Environmental Sustainability

**Appendix C.**

**Alignment of MSCHE Standards and Requirements of Affiliation with SUNY Cortland Priorities and Objectives**

MSCHE		SUNY Cortland					
MSCHE Standards	Requirements of Affiliation	Mission, Vision, Values	Academic Excellence	Transformational Education	Well-Being	Maximize Resources	Institutional Objectives
<b>I. Mission and Goals</b>	1. License to operate 7. Mission statement and goals	Alignment of mission and strategic plans					
<b>II. Ethics and Integrity</b>	14. Accessible institutional information 15. Faculty qualifications	Value: Integrity	Academics policies and procedures		Degree that policies and procedures are applied equitably		
<b>III. Design and Delivery of Student Learning Experience</b>	9. Student learning programs rigor and assessment	Values: Focus on Students and Intellectual Life	Outcomes driven and relevant curriculum  Effective and innovative delivery for all students at different levels	Opportunities for transformation through applied learning, study abroad, and other designed experiences			2. Student achievement in communication 4. Faculty engagement 5. Full-time faculty 6. Applied learning 10. Spaces and facilities
<b>IV. Support of Student Experience</b>	8. Evaluate educational and other programs	Values: Focus on Students		Opportunities to engage with new cultures, environments, perspectives	Promote the well-being of individuals and the community through		1. Persistence and degree completion 6. Applied learning 7. Strengthen community

MSCHE		SUNY Cortland					
MSCHE Standards	Requirements of Affiliation	Mission, Vision, Values	Academic Excellence	Transformational Education	Well-Being	Maximize Resources	Institutional Objectives
				Personal development, efficacy, and engagement	programming and facilities		10. Spaces and facilities
<b>V. Educational Effectiveness Assessment</b>	8. Evaluate education and programs 9. Student learning programs rigor and assessment	Value: Focus on Students and Intellectual Life	Culture of continual improvement				1. Assessment of student learning
<b>VI. Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement</b>	10. Institutional planning 11. Resources	Values: Focus on Students and Intellectual Life			Align processes with mission, vision, and priorities  Communicating about resource allocation  Environmental sustainability		8. Financial support to students 9. Non-tuition revenue 10. Spaces and facilities 11. Environmental sustainability
<b>VII. Governance, Leadership and Administration</b>	12. Governance structure 13. Governing member affiliation	Value: Integrity	Engagement in academic development and assessment		Decision and leadership support the student experience		4. Faculty Engagement

## Appendix D. Lines of Inquiry, Self-Study Design

<b>All Working Groups</b>	<b>Common Lines of Inquiry</b>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To what degree do we meet the standard, corresponding criteria, requirements of affiliation and what evidence supports these findings?</li> <li>2. Based on evidence, what progress has been made on the institutional objectives aligned with the group standard?</li> <li>3. What will ensure continuous improvement in this area?</li> <li>4. How has the working group engaged the campus in its process/analysis?</li> </ol>
<b>Working Group Standard</b>	<b>Group Specific Lines of Inquiry Questions Answered in addition to four common questions</b>
<b>1. Mission and Goals</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. How is the mission reflected in the operations and culture of the college?</li> <li>6. How do campus constituents align their work with the campus priorities and how could that be strengthened (e.g., processes and communication)</li> <li>7. How are the priorities and objectives of the campus relevant to the current context of the institution and higher education (e.g., demographics, needs, and challenges)?</li> </ol>
<b>2. Ethics and Integrity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. What policies promote equity and inclusion and where can improvements be made for the future?</li> <li>6. What progress has been made in becoming a campus characterized by inclusive excellence?</li> <li>7. What policies ensure academic freedom and where can improvements be made for the future?</li> </ol>

<b>3. Student Learning Experience</b>	<p>5. Where are student learning outcomes evident in the design and development of general education and academic programs for different degrees, levels (graduate/undergraduate) and online programs?</p> <p>6. How are findings from student performance on SLOs discussed and applied to practice?</p>
<b>4. Support of the Student Experience</b>	<p>5. What are the factors that contribute to or serve as barriers to student persistence and how can we improve persistence?</p> <p>6. What are our accommodations for students with disabilities and how can we improve?</p> <p>7. How effectively is the campus adapting and coordinating strategies to ensure continued student achievement and development?</p> <p>8. What steps does the college take to inform students and parents of the financial aspects of college attendance?</p> <p>9. How is the campus value of <i>Focus on the Students</i> enacted on campus?</p>
<b>5. Educational Effectiveness and Assessment</b>	<p>5. How are assessment findings used in decision-making, innovation and resource allocation?</p> <p>6. How have we ensured continued and expanded engagement in assessment and use of findings to inform programs and initiatives at all program levels?</p>
<b>6. Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement</b>	<p>5. How is evidence on student achievement and development considered in planning and resource allocation?</p> <p>6. What strategies have contributed to the fiscal health of the college and what plans are in effect to advance the college?</p>
<b>7. Governance, Leadership and Administration</b>	<p>5. How does the leadership of the college utilize the campus strategic plan and align work in the divisions to the campus plan?</p> <p>6. What evidence informs campus leaders on the climate of the campus and how has leadership responded to this evidence?</p>

## **Appendix E.**

### **SUNY Cortland Self-Study Committees and Working Groups**

#### **Steering Committee**

##### **Chairs**

Lynn MacDonald, Professor, Physical Education

Carol A. Van Der Karr, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Middle States

##### **Members**

Chester Bennett, President, Student Government Association (graduated)

Genevieve Birren, Associate Professor, Sport Management and Chair, Faculty Senate

Stephen Cunningham, Director, Institutional Research and Analysis

Margaret DiVita, Health/Faculty Senate Chair

Thomas Gallagher, Chair, Cortland College Council

Andrea Lachance, Dean, School of Education

Jennifer McNamara, Art and Art History; Chair, General Education

Bruce Mattingly, Dean, School of Arts and Sciences

Peter Perkins, Vice President, Institutional Advancement

Jaclyn Pittsley, Lecturer III, English; President, SUNY Cortland United University Professions

Mark Prus, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs

Greg Sharer, Vice President, Student Affairs

Abby Thomas, Director, Advisement and Transition

Oscar Walters, Senior Grounds Worker; Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) Representative

Nance Wilson, Professor, Literacy

#### **Working Group I: Mission and Goals**

##### **Chairs**

Bonni Hodges, Distinguished Service Professor, Health

Nance Wilson, Professor, Literacy

##### **Members**

Jose Feliciano, Interim Director, Admissions

Thomas Frank, Director, Research and Sponsored Programs (retired)

Regina Grantham, Associate Professor, Communication Disorders and Sciences

Kathleen Lawrence, Professor, Communication and Media Studies

Frederic Pierce, Director, Communications

#### **Working Group II: Ethics and Integrity**

##### **Chairs**

Greg Sharer, Vice President, Student Affairs

Mark DePaull, University Police Chief

##### **Members**

Gary Evans, Associate Vice President, Human Resources

Andrew Fitz-Gibbon, Professor, Philosophy

Nanette Pasquarello, Director, Career Services

Donna Videto, Professor, Health (retired)

Susan Wilson, Associate Professor, Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies

### **Working Group III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience**

#### **Chair**

Lynn MacDonald, Professor, Physical Education

#### **Members**

Carol Costell Corbin, Associate Director, Transfer Credit and Degree

Philip Gipson, Assistant Professor, Mathematics

Christopher Ortega, Assistant Professor, Communication and Media Studies

Jennifer McNamara, Associate Professor, Art and Art History

Kimberly Rombach, Associate Professor, Childhood/Early Childhood Education

Mary Schlarb, Director, International Programs

### **Working Group IV: Support of Student Experience**

#### **Chairs**

Anne Burns Thomas, Professor, Foundations and Social Advocacy

Abby Thomas, Director, Advisement and Transition

#### **Members**

Ronnie Casella, Associate Dean, School of Education

Tom Cranfield, Senior Associate Director, Athletics

Esa Merson, Director, The Learning Center

Wendy Miller, Associate Professor, Geography

Mark Yacavone, Vice President, Finance and Management

### **Working Group V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment**

#### **Chairs**

Andrea Lachance, Dean, School of Education

Laura J. Davies, Chief of Staff

#### **Members**

Rebecca Bryan, Associate Professor, Physical Education

Vincent DeTuri, Associate Dean, School of Arts and Sciences

Eileen Gravani, Associate Dean, School of Professional Studies

Christopher Kuretich, Associate Vice President, Student Affairs

Jolie Roat, Assistant Professor, Mathematics

### **Working Group IV: Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement**

#### **Chairs**

Kathleen Burke, Professor, Economics

Carol A. Van Der Karr, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Middle States

#### **Members**

Erin Boylan, Executive Director, Alumni Engagement

Anna Maria Cirrincione, Director, Multicultural Life and Diversity

Bruce Mattingly, Dean, School of Arts and Sciences

Zachariah Newswanger, Associate Vice President, Facilities Management

Mark Prus, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs

## **Working Group VII: Governance, Leadership and Administration**

### **Chairs**

Peter Perkins, Vice President, Institutional Advancement

Thomas Gallagher, Chair, College Council

### **Members**

John Cottone, Dean, School of Professional Studies

Margaret DiVita, Associate Professor, Health

Jerome O'Callaghan, Associate Professor, Political Science

Jaclyn Pittsley, Lecturer III, English; President, SUNY Cortland United University Professions

Oscar Walters, Senior Grounds Worker; Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) Representative

## **Evidence Inventory Working Group**

### **Chairs**

Stephen Cunningham, Director, Institutional Research and Analysis

Chris Widdall, Assistant Dean for Assessment and Accreditation, School of Education

### **Members**

Tania Das, Associate Director, Institutional Research and Analysis

Casey Hickey, Web and Digital Marketing Specialist

Jennifer Kronenbitter, Director, Libraries

Joshua Peluso, Director, Systems Administration and Web Services

## **Compliance**

### **Chairs**

Bruce Mattingly, Dean, School of Arts and Sciences

Karen Gallagher, Director, Financial Aid

### **Members**

Mark Dodds, Professor, Sport Management

Thomas Hanford, Executive Director, Student Registration and Record Services

Lisa Kahle, Associate Provost for Information Resources

Michelle LoGerfo, Assistant Director, Web and Digital Marketing

Rebecca Nadzadi, Director, Student Conduct

Sebastian Purcell, Associate Professor, Philosophy

## **Writing Team**

### **Chairs**

Lynn MacDonald, Professor, Physical Education

Carol A. Van Der Karr, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Middle States

### **Members**

Kathleen Burke, Professor, Economics

Stephen Cunningham, Director, Institutional Research and Analysis

Laura J. Davies, Chief of Staff

Mary Schlarb, Director, International Programs

Michael Turner, Coordinator, Writing Center

## **Student Engagement Committee**

**Chairs**

Margaret DiVita, Associate Professor, Health

Abby Thomas, Director, Advisement and Transition

**Members**

Michael Bersani, Associate Director of Strategic Communications, Enrollment Management

Kayla DeCoste, Senior International Program Coordinator, International Programs

Casey Hickey, Senior Web and Digital Marketing Specialist, Marketing

Justin Neretich, Residence Hall Director, Residence Life and Housing

Susan Wilson, Associate Professor, Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Studies

**Skeptics: Draft Review Group**

Katherine Ahern, Associate Professor, English

Carolyn Bershada, Counseling and Student Development

Craig Foster, Professor, Psychology

Eileen Gravani, Associate Dean, School of Professional Studies

Katherine Polasek, Professor, Kinesiology

Jacob Hall, Associate Professor, Childhood/Early Childhood Education

Rebecca Nadzadi, Director, Student Conduct

Vincent DeTuri, Associate Dean, School of Arts and Sciences

**Additional Colleagues Supporting the Self-Study**

Stuart Daman, Institutional Research Analyst, Institutional Research and Analysis

Nancy Diller, Curriculum Coordinator, Academic Affairs

Katherine Gustafson, Office Assistant 2, Institutional Research and Analysis

Pam Schroeder, Administrative Assistant 2, Academic Affairs