Criterion 1: Mission

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

Core Component 1.A. The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

Subcomponent 1.A.1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.

The University of Northern Colorado (UNC) mission was developed through a process suited to its context as a public regional comprehensive university with selective admission standards. As a public university, UNC's mission is statutorily defined by the State of Colorado as a comprehensive baccalaureate and specialized graduate research university. It serves as the state's primary institution for degree programs that prepare educators, with responsibility to offer graduate programs for educators statewide. UNC was originally established in 1889 as the Colorado State Normal School in response to a critical need for teachers. The citizens of Greeley lobbied the state legislature and raised the funds needed to launch the college. Over 130 years after its launch, UNC continues its mission of meeting community needs by working to establish a College of Osteopathic Medicine. The local community supports this development, which is predicted to be a major driver of the regional economy while also helping the state address a current and growing shortage of primary care physicians. The Board of Trustees approved moving forward with the Osteopathic College in November 2021, and in 2022, Colorado Senate Bill 22-056 amended state statute to authorize UNC to offer degrees in osteopathic medicine.

UNC's Board Adopted Mission expands on the statutory mission, emphasizing UNC's commitment to providing a student-centered approach to teaching and learning; preparation of undergraduate students grounded in the liberal arts tradition; specialized preparation of graduate students; research, scholarship, and creative works; and a commitment to service. Values emphasize equal opportunity, respect for diversity, academic excellence, and intellectual freedom.

UNC's strategic plan, Rowing, Not Drifting 2030, expands on the mission through an ongoing planning and implementation process that reflects UNC's culture of transparent communication and collaboration. The President's Leadership Council, consisting of faculty, staff, administrators, and students, led the strategic planning process. Through listening sessions, budget workshops, task force meetings, planning sessions, town halls, and surveys, multiple opportunities for input and feedback were available to the campus community. Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 was presented to UNC's Board of Trustees in 2019, with regular progress updates in subsequent Board meetings. Major milestones associated with the development and implementation of Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 are publicly communicated on the university's website. An Institutional Planning Group, comprised of the university's vice presidents and other campus leaders responsible for major initiatives, is charged with coordinating and advancing work across all institutional planning efforts, including regular engagement with the campus through town halls and surveys.

Subcomponent 1.A.2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.

UNC's mission and related statements are current and emphasize its unique role and priorities. UNC's mission is further developed through the strategic plan, Rowing, Not Drifting 2030. The plan's name was inspired by the motto of UNC's Class of 1910, "Rowing, Not Drifting," connecting UNC's historical legacy, which is inscribed on the university's entry gate, with its vision for the future. Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 articulates a vision for UNC as

> The institution that Colorado looks to as the future of higher education. Our students will experience a personalized education grounded in liberal arts and infused with critical and creative inquiry; establish relationships with faculty and staff that nurture individual development; gain the skills and knowledge that provide upward mobility among alumni; and share a commitment to the values of inclusion, equity, and diversity.

UNC's commitments to student-centered teaching and learning, service, research, scholarship, and creative works remain current through their articulation in Rowing, Not Drifting 2030, which is organized around five vision elements as described below.

- *Students First – We exist to transform the lives of our students. We focus on all aspects of their success by making intentional decisions to meet their needs and the needs of our community.* Students First emphasizes career readiness, leadership development, and alignment of programs and services to student needs.
- *Empower Inclusivity – The diversity within our university and state is a distinct advantage that we celebrate and nurture. We ensure learning occurs through meaningful discussion of shared and different experiences, viewpoints, and ideas.* Empower Inclusivity includes UNC's goal of being a Hispanic Serving Institution and other priorities related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- *Enhance and Invest – The success of students relies on a healthy and strong team. We provide our faculty and staff with the support they need to succeed as professionals, educators, and in life. We foster an environment where their individual well-being and sense of belonging are vital to our collective success.* Enhance and Invest addresses issues such as employee recruitment and retention, professional development, and sense of belonging. It also includes goals related to supporting research, scholarship, and creative works.
- *Innovate and Create – Learning occurs through critical inquiry, discovery, and creation. We leverage technology and capitalize on opportunities to innovate and improve instruction. We anticipate and address societal needs by transforming the campus into a creative laboratory that asks questions, solves problems, and shapes Colorado's future.* Innovate and Create guides UNC's academic portfolio, responsiveness to local and regional needs, and approach to teaching and learning.
- *Connect and Celebrate – Strong community connections provide authentic learning experiences and reciprocal partnerships and collaborations. We set the standard for how engaged universities enrich the lives of those on campus, throughout Colorado, and beyond.* Connect and Celebrate emphasizes a quality learning experience that translates into successful and engaged alumni and donors.

Specific key actions, tactics, and performance indicators further advance these vision elements, moving the university progressively forward through five phases that began with establishing infrastructure and will conclude with completing the plan and preparing for the next planning iteration. UNC's budget aligns resources to the key actions required to support Rowing, Not Drifting 2030.

Subcomponent 1.A.3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.

UNC's mission and related statements clearly identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of its higher education offerings and services. With a broad array of programs in the arts, sciences, humanities, human sciences, business, and education, UNC fulfills its mission as a comprehensive research university. Educational goals and institutional learning outcomes describe the purpose and scope of UNC's educational programs. UNC's Liberal Arts Curriculum (general education) is designed to provide all undergraduate students the opportunity to develop foundational knowledge and skills in preparation for future careers and participation in a democratic and freedom-oriented society within an interconnected world. Undergraduate degree programs prepare students with specialized knowledge in their chosen discipline and the development of critical thinking, communication, problem solving, leadership, and technology. Graduate degree programs are designed to emphasize scholarship and research, clinical practice, pedagogy, or performance. Learning extends beyond the classroom through academic support services, cocurricular and extracurricular programs, and opportunities for community and civic engagement.

In addition to educational programs and services for students, UNC plays a vital role in benefiting the citizens of Colorado and supporting the local and state economy. For example, as described in 1.A.1, the new College of Osteopathic Medicine is expected to be a major driver of the local, regional, and state economy, generating a projected $1.4 billion in state-wide economic impact over 20 years (2022 - 2042). UNC centers, clinics, and institutes also benefit Colorado citizens by promoting scholarship and direct services focused on education, health and wellness, and business and industry. For example, the Mathematics and Science Teaching (MAST) Institute, established in 1987, provides leadership and coordination for projects and programs to improve mathematics and science education. MAST supports pre-collegiate programs designed to boost STEM aspirations, including the annual Frontiers of Science Institute, a six-week residential program for Colorado's high school juniors, the Longs Peak Science and Engineering Fair for 5th-12th grade students, and the Learning through Engaging and Authentic Practices (LEAP) program, which recruits underrepresented high school students to enroll, succeed, and graduate from UNC.

Subcomponent 1.A.4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

UNC's academic offerings, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission. From UNC's origins as the state Normal School to its current range of programs, UNC's goal is "to prepare a well-educated citizenry whose understanding of issues enables them to be contributing members of a rapidly changing, technologically advanced, diverse society" (UNC Board Mission). Consistent with UNC's mission, the university provides a comprehensive array of baccalaureate and graduate degree and certificate programs. UNC's curriculum process includes components for ensuring that all academic programs are consistent with the university's mission (additional information on UNC's curriculum process is provided in Criterion 3.A). New academic program proposals must demonstrate alignment with UNC's mission and be approved by the Board of Trustees. Ongoing alignment with the university's mission is assured through comprehensive program review, which includes evaluation criteria on program mission.

UNC fulfills its statutory mission related to the preparation of education professionals through its current academic portfolio. Twenty-four percent of undergraduate degree programs and 49% of graduate degree

programs are related to the field of education. This includes 72% of UNC's fully online programs, further expanding access to any student within Colorado and beyond. Of the 20 Colorado institutions offering state-approved traditional educator preparation programs, UNC enrolls on average 27% of all education majors and graduates about a quarter of all new teachers from traditional teacher preparation programs. To ensure statewide access to UNC educator preparation programs, UNC maintains two centers to serve high need regions within Colorado: the Center for Urban Education and the Colorado Center for Rural Education. The Center for Urban Education serves students working in a school setting while studying for a degree and teaching license. UNC is also designated by the state of Colorado as the hosting institution for the Colorado Center for Rural Education.

UNC's proposed new College of Osteopathic Medicine is philosophically aligned with UNC's mission because osteopathic medicine focuses on a unique whole-person approach to help prevent illness and injury and has an established tradition of bringing medical care to underserved communities. In addition, UNC expects that adding osteopathic medicine to its other health science programs (e.g., nursing, audiology, public health, biomedical sciences, health sciences, and behavioral sciences) will create new opportunities for research and expand the university's ability to contribute to healthy communities across the state. Currently only 35% of Colorado's need for physicians is being met, and Colorado's existing medical education programs cannot meet the demand. UNC's College of Osteopathic Medicine responds to Colorado's need for more doctors, with plans to enroll 150 students in the osteopathic medical degree program each year.

UNC provides comprehensive student support services consistent with its mission (see Criterion 3.D for more information). Student resources are published in the online undergraduate and graduate catalogs. In addition to services available to all UNC students, UNC offers specialized services and programs designed to meet the unique needs and interests of specific student populations. For example, international students are supported by the Office of Global Engagement, which provides academic and linguistic support, inclusive programming, and assistance with regulatory compliance. Students enrolled in fully online programs or those offered at UNC's additional locations are supported by Extended Campus. Survey data show that students are satisfied with services provided by UNC, with the strongest areas of satisfaction including college advising centers (80%), library services (93%), tutoring (79%), and the writing center (81%).

In fall 2023, UNC enrolled 6,035 undergraduate and 2,385 graduate students for a total enrollment of 8,420 students. The proportion of graduate students has steadily increased over the last decade, with the most significant growth occurring in fully online programs. Approximately 85% of undergraduate and 65% of graduate students are Colorado residents, demonstrating that UNC provides significant access to Colorado citizens. UNC places high value on providing an inclusive campus where all individuals feel welcomed and supported. Toward this end, Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 includes a goal for UNC to become a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) by 2025. UNC achieved HSI designation in spring 2024. Forty-two percent of UNC undergraduates are first generation college students, and 29% are Pell eligible. Campus Pride recognizes UNC as an LGBTQ welcoming campus with a rating of 5 out of 5 stars.

UNC is statutorily recognized as a selective admissions institution by the State of Colorado. Undergraduate admissions' criteria include overall high school academic performance, completion of state-required high school courses, and additional factors that could influence prior performance. For the most recent entering class of first-time, first-year students, 78% graduated in the top half, 42% in the top quarter, and 16% in the top tenth of their class. Eighty-three percent had a high school grade point

average of 3.00 or above, with 36% achieving a high school GPA of 3.75 or higher. Approximately 31% of fall 2023 new students were new transfer students.

Subcomponent 1.A.5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

UNC's mission is posted on the university's website and can be found in other campus documents such as the Board Policy Manual and undergraduate and graduate catalogs. The president's webpage provides public information about institutional strategic planning, current and past initiatives, and presidential communications. Agendas and minutes from governing bodies are publicly posted om UNC's website, including the Board of Trustees, Faculty Senate, Classified Staff Council, and Professional Administrative Staff Council. UNC also publishes *UNC Magazine* online and in print format. Stories inform the campus community, alumni, and general public about UNC's mission-related activities. Recent stories highlight faculty members' research, experiential learning opportunities, student profiles, and new degree programs. On its website, UNC publishes regular news updates on its True North page. For example, recent True North stories included information about the projected economic impact of the College of Osteopathic Medicine, a national award presented to the Center for Urban Education, UNC's achievement of designation as a Hispanic Serving University, and a story about a doctoral student's research. Collectively, the public posting of these and many other campus documents assures that UNC's mission is clearly articulated to the public.

Core Component 1.B. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

Subcomponent 1.B.1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.

UNC's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public. As described in Core Component 1.A., members of the local community advocated for and raised the necessary funds to establish a college in Greeley, Colorado, which evolved over time to become the University of Northern Colorado. UNC's mission explicitly articulates a commitment to teaching, scholarship, and service that is expected of its faculty, staff, and students. Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 "draws on our fundamental mission to empower people and communities to realize their fullest potential and positions the university over the next decade to better serve our community, region, and state" (President Feinstein. This commitment is further articulated through multiple strategic plan priorities and outcomes, especially those associated with vision elements Innovate & Create and Connect & Celebrate, which emphasize a commitment to addressing societal needs and community partnerships and collaborations. UNC is proud to be among the top 20% of four-year colleges and universities ranked by CollegeNET's Social Mobility Index. In 2023, UNC was the third highest ranked of 14 Colorado institutions, and it was the highest ranked doctoral research university in Colorado.

UNC's educational goals for students include developing a life-long commitment to scholarship and service. Institutional learning outcomes emphasize learning related to strengthening and improving communities. These are contextualized within students' programs of study through program-specific learning outcomes that are aligned to the curriculum. Sixty-eight percent of first year, 74% of seniors, and 64% of graduate students agree that UNC has helped them demonstrate the capacity to engage in civic, social, and political responsibilities.

UNC also shows its commitment to the public good through its centers and institutes. Consistent with a long history as the state's primary institution for preparing education professionals, many of these centers focus on training opportunities for students while also supporting research and service to the larger community. For example, the Bresnahan-Halstead Center, housed in the School of Special Education, partners with various Colorado, national, and international agencies to promote the advancement of knowledge and quality of services for people with disabilities and their families. The William E. Hewit Institute for History and Social Science Education funds projects that support innovative programs in teacher education, resources for teachers, and other related projects. The UNC Active Schools Institute conducts interdisciplinary research and community-engaged scholarship focused on school physical activity promotion.

UNC also supports several centers and institutes related to health and wellness, each of which is aligned with one or more of the university's academic degree programs. The UNC Cancer Rehabilitation Institute, established in 1996, is the only facility of its kind and is recognized as a leader in exercise-based cancer rehabilitation. It serves adult cancer survivors through a program that combines service learning and research opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. The Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Clinic, established in 1958, provides audiological, speech-language, and cochlear implant services delivered by graduate students under the supervision of faculty and staff members. The clinic is also one of 12 Scottish Rite Foundation funded programs, providing early speech, language, and hearing intervention services to children. Another example is the Psychological Services Clinic, which has offered free and low-cost counseling services to community members and UNC students for over 50 years. One of UNC's newest centers, the Center for Applied Contemplative Studies, is dedicated to assisting members of UNC and the larger community in cultivating mindfulness in their personal, professional, and scholarly lives.

As a public university, UNC also provides numerous concerts, performances, and art exhibits to the larger community. For example, UNC's School of Music hosts the annual UNC Greeley Jazz Festival, which brings together over 250 college, high school and middle school bands and vocal jazz groups for main stage concerts, daytime performances, and educational workshops. The annual Concerts Under the Stars free summer concert series is a longstanding Greeley tradition. UNC's commitment to inclusion and diversity is demonstrated through performances and events such as ¡CELEBREMOS! A Festival of Latinx Music & Culture, Fires in the Mirror, and ahí les mandas saludos by Kiara Machado.

UNC supports regional and state economic development through several programs, centers, and services. For example, the Monfort College of Business sponsors Innovation Talks, which bring together UNC students, regional business leaders, and the faculty to promote entrepreneurial ecosystem-building. UNC also partners with regional governments and businesses to support the East Colorado Small Business Development Center, which offers no-cost guidance and counseling in all aspects of funding and developing a business. The Sport Marketing Research Institute connects sport enterprises with graduate students to conduct field research. UNC also participates in Northern Colorado Workforce Development meetings and regularly hosts career and internship fairs that attract Colorado agencies and businesses.

Subcomponent 1.B.2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

As a public doctoral research university, educational responsibilities take primacy over all other purposes. The institutional mission and past and current planning processes drive decision-making and resource allocations at the institution and emphasize UNC's educational role in promoting student success outcomes as its primary purpose. Additional information about how UNC exercises autonomy from external interests in decision-making processes is provided in Criterion 2.C.

Subcomponent 1.B.3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

UNC engages with a wide range of external constituencies and communities of interest. Some of these include the following: students and their families; legislative and other governmental bodies; specialized accreditors; donors and funding agencies; and members of the larger community. Examples of how UNC engages with each are provided below.

UNC administers a variety of surveys to students and alumni that provide insight into their needs, experiences, and outcomes. For example, UNC is currently in the process of a complete website redesign. To help the university better align its website with student needs, UNC surveyed current and prospective students, and data from the survey were used to inform development of the new website, which will launch in 2025. Additional examples of how UNC uses survey data are discussed in Core Components 4.C, 5.A, and 5.C. In addition to surveys, UNC employs other methods of communication with students, including via its customer relationship management platform, Slate. Slate facilitates robust communication between UNC and prospective and current students on topics such as admissions, financial aid, and other critical information.

UNC regularly communicates with state legislative bodies and their affiliated agencies such as the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE). University leaders, including the president, provost, chief financial officer, and others, attend meetings with the CDHE, where there are opportunities to be informed about and contribute to the development of state-level policies and regulations. The legislatively approved student teaching stipend is an example of the result of UNC's active participation in the development of legislation to support teacher candidates. UNC regularly partners with the City of Greeley and other local organizations and higher education institutions to host a series of advocacy and policy events each year. These include legislative information sessions hosted by UNC and the Greeley Day at the Capitol, all of which provide opportunities for UNC and members of the local community to interact with Colorado state legislators.

UNC currently has 32 academic programs with specialized accreditation. Through program review, faculty members and academic administrators use information from accreditation self-studies, site team reports, and ongoing communication to shape decisions about program resources, curricular revisions, facilities, and new programs. Program review is discussed in greater detail in Criterion 4.A.

UNC regularly cultivates relationships with donors and funding agencies that support the university's mission and strategic priorities. In fiscal year 2024, 2,084 donor-supported scholarships were awarded to UNC students, with approximately 93% of these awarded to continuing students. Nearly $6 million funded through donor support was awarded in fiscal year 2024. In October 2023, UNC received the single largest donation in its history, a $25 million gift from the Weld Trust to help launch the College of Osteopathic Medicine. The Weld Trust is a regional philanthropic foundation that awards grants to nonprofit organizations, schools, and government entities toward programs and projects that support

health and education in Weld County.

In addition to donor-supported resources and programs, UNC has several externally funded programs that align with its mission and institutional priorities, including many focused on diversity and inclusion. Since 1972, UNC's Center for Human Enrichment has received funding through a TRiO Student Support Services grant. UNC's McNair Scholars Program, another TRiO program, is the longest continuously funded McNair program in Colorado. The Stryker Institute for Leadership Development is a donor-supported program that serves women from under-represented groups. The Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) is a state-funded program that serves first generation Colorado resident students by providing wrap-around support services and scholarships.

UNC's faculty are actively engaged with local, regional, national, and international communities and organizations. For example, faculty members in the College of Performing and Visual Arts hold leadership positions with national organizations such as the National Art Education Association, the Rocky Mountain Society of Music Theory, and the International Clarinet Association. The College of Natural and Health Sciences has an advisory council, whose members come from industry, government, non-governmental agencies, educational entities, and the broader community. Closer to home, the university arranges for its students to conduct invaluable internships, such as student teaching and nursing clinical placements, and offers advanced professional development, consultation, volunteer work, and other services to the community. UNC's Volunteer Administrative Leave Policy provides all employees with 16 hours of paid administrative leave each year to participate in volunteer activities.

Core Component 1.C. The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Subcomponent 1.C.1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.

UNC encourages curricular and cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success. UNC's mission and goals emphasize the importance of preparing students for responsible citizenship and meaningful careers. Outcomes articulated in the Students First vision element of the strategic plan, Rowing, Not Drifting 2030, address career readiness and leadership. Institutional Learning Outcomes include civic engagement and workplace success in the categories Strengthening Interactions with Others, Connecting Ideas and Experiences, and Developing Professional Competence.

UNC emphasizes civic engagement through curricular and cocurricular activities. Curricular and cocurricular programs sponsor multiple opportunities for students to volunteer in the community. For example, UNC students regularly volunteer with the local United Way's annual Weld Project Connect, which provides on-site health and human services to local individuals and families. All teacher education students engage in working with culturally and linguistically diverse students in school settings through curriculum requirements. UNC also provides opportunities for students to stay informed citizens through forums such as the Legislative Preview (Core Component 1.B) and the annual Know Your Rights Workshop, facilitated by the American Civil Liberties Union. UNC sponsors a Bears Vote Coalition that actively champions voter and civic engagement. UNC had the highest voter registration in its NCAA conference, winning the All In/Big Sky Votes Award in 2020.

UNC's curriculum emphasizes workplace success, with over one-third of undergraduate degree programs offering at least one career-related course and nearly 75% requiring a culminating experience relevant to the discipline. Eighty percent of UNC faculty strongly agree it is their role to prepare students for employment after college, with only 4% disagreeing. UNC's HLC Quality Improvement Initiative, which focused on improving student outcomes through their academic experience in courses and programs, included a funded project on embedding career readiness in humanities and social sciences courses. This project provided a foundation for UNC's selection as one of 54 institutions to participate in the 2022 AAC&U Curriculum-to-Career Innovations Institute. UNC's team included faculty members and staff, whose project focused on encouraging the faculty to integrate career readiness components into their courses. This team developed the Career Readiness Toolkit as a resource for the faculty. In fall 2023, UNC was one of 12 campus teams that received an AAC&U/Lumina Foundation grant, *Implementing Equitable and Inclusive Curriculum-to-Career Models*, to expand faculty members' adoption of the toolkit. With grant funding, UNC developed a Career Readiness Faculty Fellows Program that will launch in fall 2024 to support integrating career readiness into courses.

Survey data from current students and alumni suggest that UNC is achieving its intended goals related to informed citizenship and workplace success. For example, 74% of UNC seniors completing the 2023 Student Experience Survey agreed or strongly agreed that UNC has helped them to demonstrate the capacity to engage in civic, social and political responsibilities (Institutional Learning Outcome 2.4). Eighty-seven percent of seniors agreed or strongly agreed that UNC had helped them use the tools, terminology, and methods related to their program of study (ILO 4.1). UNC seniors completing the 2023 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) were more likely than those from comparison institutions to report that they often connect learning to societal problems or issues. However, UNC students reported less frequent participation in attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues. This may be related to the fact that high proportions of UNC students are employed and/or supporting dependents, which could limit their time for participating in events and activities. On items related to career readiness, both UNC first year and senior students reported frequent conversations with faculty members about their career plans (NSSE 2023). Alumni surveyed one, five, and ten years after graduation agree that their UNC undergraduate education prepared them well for their future career, with 78% agreeing one year after graduation, 87% agreeing five years after graduation, and 88% agreeing 10 years later. Graduate alumni report even higher rates of agreement that their UNC education prepared them for their careers: 89% agreeing one year following graduation, 97% agreeing five years later, and 91% agreeing 10 years after graduation.

Subcomponent 1.C.2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.

UNC's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations. Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 includes vision element Empower Inclusivity, which is the foundation for planning and operational strategies related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Phase I of Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 included a key action to create systems of accountability, effectiveness, and collaboration to prioritize DEI across the university. To accomplish UNC's priorities, a new Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, led by a cabinet-level vice president, was established. A comprehensive training program, the UNITE initiative, available to all students and employees, was launched and continues to offer sessions each semester on topics such as disability and accessibility, interfaith engagement, and race and racism. UNC took action to ensure that faculty and staff job vacancies reach a broader audience through partnership with Circa, posting all UNC positions on over 600 diversity sites

and providing a $500 per position advertising budget. Phase II of Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 focused on creating plans, structures and programs that foster an inclusive environment at UNC where all individuals feel welcomed and supported. Phase II outcomes will be described in subcomponent 1.C.3. A set of dashboards for measuring success is publicly available and provides additional information on progress towards achieving UNC's 2030 outcomes.

The UNC Foundation has several scholarship programs in which there is a preference or requirement for the awards to be given to students from traditionally marginalized or underserved populations or communities of color. UNC's commitment to supporting Hispanic-identifying students financially is underscored by the availability of more than 30 active funds designated explicitly for these students. In the 2023-24 academic year alone, over $118 thousand was available to be awarded to Hispanic-identifying students, with a total donation amount exceeding $735 thousand throughout the university's history. This philanthropic support reflects the shared commitment of UNC donors to the success and advancement of the Hispanic-identifying population within the university community. Since UNC's last comprehensive review, the university provided funding for 2,179 students through privately-funded UNC Foundation scholarships targeted toward students with financial need and/or a diverse racial/ethnic background.

UNC regularly evaluates and assesses its DEI efforts, including through DEI-related surveys and support from external experts. Campus leaders were invited to participate in the Institutional Strategy Index, developed by the Educational Advisory Board (EAB), to assist in evaluating current DEI efforts against industry best practices. As part of UNC's participation in the Association for State Colleges and Universities Student Success Equity Intensive (SSEI), a team of faculty members and administrators led by the provost is working to identify current efforts and challenges and to prioritize improvement activities. This three-year initiative includes evaluation of institutional capacity and expanding data capabilities needed to define metrics for measuring progress and success. In 2022-2023, UNC surveyed students, staff, and faculty about the UNC campus climate, using instruments developed by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). Participation in these surveys and initiatives provides invaluable information about accomplishments and progress as well as opportunities for improvement. Information from the surveys and the SSEI will be used to develop priorities for the UNC Equity Plan 2030 (Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 Phase III).

UNC's attention to human diversity is further demonstrated through its curricular and cocurricular programs. UNC's Institutional Learning Outcomes address diversity, equity, and inclusion in several ways. For example, one outcome states that students will develop the capacity to understand and interact effectively with others whose identities, beliefs, behaviors, and values differ from their own. UNC's Liberal Arts Curriculum includes requirements for coursework in U.S. Multicultural Studies and International Studies. In addition to the general education requirements, 73% of UNC's undergraduate degree programs explicitly address cultural diversity in required curriculum, and 58% of graduate degree programs have at least one required course related to DEI. To support faculty development related to inclusive teaching, UNC offers a variety of learning communities, workshops, and web-based resources, including several toolkits where equity and inclusion is infused throughout the resource materials.

UNC houses nine cultural and resource centers focused on promoting the academic and personal success of students from diverse backgrounds. These centers play an important role in educating the larger campus on issues related to equity and social justice and contribute a rich array of programs and services that increase and build intercultural knowledge and competence. UNC's Disability Resource Center offers resources, education, and direct services to students and assists the faculty in providing a welcoming and

inclusive environment. A wide variety of initiatives and events further expand knowledge about diversity, equity, and inclusion, including the annual Catalyst Social Justice Retreat, open to all members of the UNC community, and the DEI Fellows Program for faculty and staff.

Subcomponent 1.C.3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

UNC fosters a climate of respect for all members of the university community. UNC's values emphasize maintaining an environment where "diversity of thought and culture is respected, intellectual freedom is preserved, and equal opportunity is afforded" (UNC Mission and Values). Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 extends these values by recognizing that "individual well-being and sense of belonging are vital to our collective success" (Rowing, Not Drifting 2030, Enhance & Invest). Phase I focused on strengthening the university's infrastructure for achieving its goals, including creating the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, elevating its leadership to a cabinet-level vice president, developing and implementing the UNITE professional development initiative (described in 1.C.2), implementing anti-bias training for search committees, and investing in faculty development focused on inclusive teaching practices. In addition to the UNITE initiative, other signature DEI programs include Catalyst: A Social Justice Retreat, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Fellows program, and the HSI Fellows program. Phase II, which ended in summer 2024, included a key action focused on fostering an inclusive environment "where all individuals feel welcomed and supported." One of the tactics was to conduct a campus-wide climate study, which UNC completed in fall 2022.

The climate study used surveys that were developed and administered by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute, and questions varied slightly depending on the survey population (faculty, staff, students). The survey results provide insights into institutional strengths and opportunities related to the campus environment. UNC achieved the following response rates: full-time faculty – 47%; staff – 52%; students – 16%. Results show that in general, faculty, staff, and students report positive perceptions about UNC's climate. For example, 88% of faculty members agree that faculty at UNC respect each other, and 77% are satisfied with students' respect for their role in the classroom. 85% of staff agree that UNC promotes appreciation of cultural differences, and 93% agree that their supervisor demonstrates commitment to diversity and inclusion. While staff report feeling respected by other staff members, fewer staff feel respected by the faculty and senior administrators. UNC has identified this as an opportunity for improvement. Seventy-two percent of students agree that they feel a sense of belonging at UNC; however, when the data are disaggregated, there are gaps based on race and ethnicity. For example, Black students are the least likely to agree that they feel a sense of belonging (59%) and report higher frequencies of experiencing discrimination based on race/ethnicity (33% compared to 6% for all students). Additional analysis conducted as part of an assessment project, *Ubuntu/We Carry the Stories*, identified factors explaining these results, including perceptions of a lack of support, safety concerns, negative reception on campus, harmful systems, and feelings of isolation. Results of the climate study have been shared with the campus and the Board of Trustees and incorporated into planning for Phase III of Rowing, Not Drifting 2030.

Criterion 2: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct
The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Core Component 2.A. The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

Subcomponent 2.A.1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.

UNC develops and the governing board adopts the mission. UNC's purpose is statutorily defined by the State of Colorado as the state's primary institution for degree programs that prepare educators, offering graduate programs primarily in the field of education, with responsibility to offer graduate programs for educators statewide. UNC's Board Adopted Mission, approved in 2000, expands on the statutory mission, emphasizing a commitment to providing a student-centered approach to teaching and learning; preparation of undergraduate students grounded in the liberal arts tradition; specialized preparation of graduate students; research, scholarship, and creative works; and a commitment to service. Mission-related priorities are developed over time, receiving approval from the Board of Trustees when required. For example, in 2021, the Board approved establishing a College of Osteopathic Medicine, and in 2022, Colorado Senate Bill 22-056 authorized UNC to offer degrees in osteopathic medicine (as discussed in Criterion 1.A).

UNC's strategic planning processes, including the current Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 plan, further develop UNC's mission. Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 was presented to the Board in November 2020, with each new phase of the plan presented prior to implementation. Strategic planning serves to operationalize the mission through well-defined planning goals, strategies, and accountability measures that ensure the mission remains relevant and current. For example, UNC's mission emphasizes preparing students for professional careers in a dynamic, diverse, and global society. Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 expands on this mission by aiming to grow UNC's reputation "for excellence in career readiness evidenced by the professional achievements and adaptability of our alumni." Phase I of Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 included a key action to enhance and refine career readiness in the curriculum for all disciplines. Specific tactics to accomplish this were implemented, and accomplishments were described at the end of Phase I in 2022.

Subcomponent 2.A.2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

UNC operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources, and auxiliary functions. UNC's policies and procedures ensure transparency and ethical practices in all operations.

Financial Functions

UNC's financial operations demonstrate integrity and transparency. In June 2012, the Board of Trustees established fiscal rules pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 24-30-202(13)(b) to provide appropriate safeguards for the financial management of the university. These rules apply to all employees and govern all transactions involving commitment or expenditure of university resources. The UNC Fiscal Rules are one example showing that the Board of Trustees exercises appropriate oversight in its fiduciary responsibilities by providing clear guidance for the institution, establishing rules that are consistent with state and federal laws, and designating authority with the Chief Financial Officer to interpret and apply rules to university fiscal policies and procedures. Board meetings, including meetings of the Board's Finance and Audit Committee, demonstrate transparent communication between the university and the Board and ensure that Board members are knowledgeable about UNC's financial situation. The Board

also monitors the independence, authority, and performance of external auditors in examining all UNC operations. The Annual Financial Report is audited by an independent external auditing firm in accordance with Government Auditing Standards and selected for UNC by the Office of the State Auditor (FY21, FY22, FY23). The audit is reviewed and approved by the Colorado General Assembly's Legislative Audit Committee; completed audits are archived on the General Assembly's website.

Annual reporting provides fiscal transparency and accountability to students, families, and other external constituencies. For example, UNC publishes the annual budget proposal (known internally as the June Book), that describes relationships between mission, planning, and budget processes (FY23, FY24, FY25). President Feinstein hosts an annual town hall with the CFO and sends email communications to inform the campus community about UNC's finances. Vice presidents for UNC's organizational divisions (e.g., Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, etc.) work with their respective leadership teams to ensure integrity in fiscal operations. Policies concerning purchasing and contracts are in place and designate signature authority to ensure ongoing oversight of expenditures. For example, all contracts require signatures from the Associate Vice President for Administration or Chief Financial Officer (or specific designees). UNC uses a contract management system, OnBase, to manage and document all contracts. Additional information about UNC's financial operations is provided in Criterion 5.B.

Academic Functions
UNC operates with integrity in its academic programs. The faculty have authority for curriculum design, and the university has established a curriculum handbook that provides clear guidance to academic units and administrators involved in the curriculum development and improvement process. UNC uses Watermark's Curriculum Strategy workflow to manage curriculum change activities and ensure that appropriate oversight and approvals (including Board, State, and HLC approvals as needed) are in place before any curriculum changes go into effect. Additional information about UNC's curriculum process is provided in Criterion 3.A.

The registrar has authority for ensuring the accuracy and security of academic records through procedures developed in consultation with faculty members during governance processes. For example, in 2023, the registrar recommended and the Academic Policy Committee discussed and approved an amendment to UNC's grade replacement policy. Policies on awarding and evaluating credits are regularly reviewed and published in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs and on the registrar's webpage. Policies ensure that grades are assigned by the instructor of record, and the university has established rules for when and how grades may be changed.

The registrar also collaborates with the Office of Admissions, the Graduate School, and individual academic programs to maintain ethical transfer evaluation policies and practices. Upholding the integrity of transfer credit has far-reaching effects since most UNC undergraduates transfer at least some credit during their enrollment at UNC. UNC had begun building transfer libraries at the time of the 2015 HLC comprehensive review, and these are now fully established. These libraries help students search and identify transfer equivalencies for credits earned in the United States and internationally while also ensuring equitable treatment in transfer evaluations.

UNC operates with integrity in meeting state and federal requirements concerning distance education and professional licensure programs. For example, UNC is a member of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), and it employs a State Authorization specialist who collaborates with academic units and administrative offices to ensure that UNC meets federal compliance obligations, including mandatory disclosures to students seeking or enrolled in programs

leading to professional licensure. Academic units housing degree or certificate programs leading to professional licensure provide students with information on their webpages, in handbooks, and through advising. For example, UNC's Office of Professional Licensure advises students enrolled in education preparation programs about licensure requirements.

Human Resources

UNC operates with integrity in its human resources functions. The UNC Board Policy Manual includes policies related to all personnel as well as specific policies for faculty. University Regulations operationalize Board Policy and include sections that further define the rights and responsibilities specific to faculty, administrative exempt staff, and classified staff. Policies for ethical conduct established by the Board are supported by the implementation of procedures and requirements related to ethical conduct and compliance with external laws and regulations (e.g., Title IX compliance). When UNC identifies improvement opportunities, the university acts. For example, in 2020 UNC improved its processes for documenting required annual disclosures of conflict of interest. Since that time, UNC has implemented an annual conflict of interest disclosure process required for all full-time UNC employees, using the Streamlyne platform for documentation and compliance tracking. Similarly, in 2018 a working group focused on employee development needs recommended several improvements, including establishing a system for regular compliance training for new and continuing employees. This recommendation led to the development of compliance training on topics such as FERPA, HIPAA, implicit bias, workplace harassment, and cybersecurity.

The university operates with integrity in its hiring and employment practices. Vacancy announcements for all open positions are posted to the university's Human Resources webpage and in HigherEdJobs.com. To better align with the goals of Rowing, Not Drifting 2030, UNC added LinkedIn and Diversityjobs.com to its standard position advertising venues and maintains a list of additional job posting sites for attracting more diverse candidate pools. Search committees are required to complete anti-bias training, and the search process includes open forums for many positions, candidate feedback surveys, and EEO representatives and documentation. UNC regularly reviews and updates hiring practices to align with changing employment laws. For example, in 2019, the State of Colorado revised its equal pay for equal work laws, including new requirements for employers to post salary ranges for vacant positions and to conduct annual analyses of equity pay gaps and to take remediation efforts when necessary.

Additional information about UNC's employment practices, including faculty and staff qualifications, can be found in Criteria 3.C and 5.B.

Auxiliary Services

UNC's auxiliary services operate with integrity. UNC defines an auxiliary service as an entity that exists to furnish goods or services to internal and external customers. At UNC, auxiliary services are placed organizationally within units and divisions based on the purpose, operations, and mission of those units. For example, residence halls and dining services are organizationally placed within the Division of Student Affairs, while the University Center is housed in the Division of Finance and Administration. This organizational structure emphasizes the unique missions of these services and ensures that they support the university mission and are fully integrated into its operations while also maintaining the same level of financial oversight, reporting processes, and internal audit as all other university operations.

In an organization as large and complex as a public university, members of the university community occasionally may be unaware of or fail to follow designated policies. When such lapses are identified at

UNC, the university acts quickly and takes appropriate action to address the problem. For example, in 2022, local media reported allegations of financial aid misconduct made by members of UNC's football team. Immediately after the allegations surfaced, UNC contracted with an external law firm specializing in collegiate athletic compliance. Their investigation found no violations and presented these findings to the NCAA, which agreed that no violations had occurred. This example shows that the university takes allegations of misconduct seriously and pursues appropriate action.

Core Component 2.B. The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

Subcomponent 2.B.1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.

UNC ensures the accuracy of representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure, and accreditation relationships.

Academic Offerings
UNC presents clear and accurate information about its academic programs. A full list of undergraduate and graduate programs is maintained on the university's website and in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs. All academic units provide program and course descriptions in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs for their majors, minors, certificates, endorsements, and licensure areas. These are reviewed and updated annually through a process managed by the Office of the Registrar and Office of the Provost. In 2023, UNC launched a website redesign project to improve the user experience and provide a more uniform, accurate, and consistent approach for communicating information about its programs. The transition to the new design will occur in 2025.

The university provides undergraduate degree four-year advising plans that outline models for achieving timely graduation. Graduate students are assigned a program advisor at the time of admission, and doctoral students develop an individualized plan of study with their program advisors. All students and their advisors can monitor progress toward degree through Degree Works. UNC is currently implementing Degree Works Student Education Planner, an advising tool that will provide even greater clarity and accuracy about students' educational pathways and support timely completion.

Academic Requirements
Academic requirements in general and for specific academic programs are clearly articulated in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs and on the university's website (Bachelor's, Master's, Specialist, Doctoral). Catalogs are updated annually, through a process managed by the Office of the Registrar, and curriculum tracking software helps to ensure that changes approved in a prior year are reflected in catalogs. Professional advisors receive onboarding and ongoing training through the professional advisor network, whose members include all professional advisors and representatives of partner departments such as financial aid and the Office of the Registrar. Regular meetings and an active message board ensure that advisors have accurate and current information about academic requirements as they provide guidance to students. In 2022, UNC created a Canvas course for new and continuing students, Success at UNC, that provides user-friendly information about academic policies and other helpful topics to enhance students' access to and knowledge about these topics. Additional information about UNC's advising processes is presented in Criterion 3.D.

Academic requirements for graduate students are maintained by the Graduate School and clearly presented on the website. For example, the Graduate Student Handbook provides information about academic policies and resources for graduate students. In addition, a webpage provides additional information about requirements for publishing masters' theses and doctoral dissertations, further clarifying expectations. To ensure accuracy, these policies and resource documents are regularly reviewed and updated by the Graduate School and Graduate Council, with the most recent updates occurring in October 2023.

Approximately 85% of UNC undergraduate students receive some type of financial aid. To make sure these students are well informed about policies affecting their financial aid eligibility, the university maintains a comprehensive and detailed webpage with information about applying for, receiving, and maintaining financial aid. Since the last HLC comprehensive review, the university has adopted a new customer relations management platform, Slate, that has increased the financial aid office's ability to regularly communicate with students through emails, letters, notices in the student registration portal, and face-to-face meetings. UNC publishes a Student Consumer Information page, accessible from the home page, to further inform students about the university.

Faculty and Staff

UNC provides clear and accurate information about its faculty and staff. For example, a list of full-time faculty is published in the university catalog, including the name, year of hire, title, degrees earned, and graduate faculty status. In addition to the catalog information, the university maintains a public, searchable directory that provides contact information for all employees, including faculty. The university's academic units maintain webpages that include information about faculty members, with most providing brief biographical statements and/or curriculum vitas for full-time faculty. Webpages for non-academic units include contact information for staff members, with many units also providing information about job responsibilities to help students and other stakeholders identify who to contact for assistance.

Costs to Students

UNC provides clear and accurate information about costs to students through various venues.
For example, UNC posts cost of attendance information online with details about tuition and fees, links for undergraduate and graduate resident and non-resident tuition, as well as other costs of attendance. Tuition is based on the number of credit hours enrolled, with different rates for resident and non-resident and undergraduate and graduate students. Information on scholarships, grants, loans, and student employment is also readily accessed through the financial aid webpage. The Graduate School posts costs and funding information specific to graduate students on its webpage, including information about graduate assistantships. Students enrolled through UNC's Extended Campus, which supports UNC degree programs offered online and at the university's additional locations, can find complete cost of attendance information on the website. A net price calculator is published online and serves to educate students about their expected costs of attendance. UNC implemented a new process for disclosing course material costs in the schedule of classes, and many faculty provide this information, further offering clear information about costs of attendance. Many faculty members have adopted open educational resources (OER) where feasible to reduce costs for students, and courses using OER are identified in the schedule.

Governance Structure

UNC provides clear and accurate information about its governance structure. For example, the *About UNC* homepage describes UNC as a public, doctoral research and educational institution. The mission and related documents also reference UNC's status as a public university. The university maintains a webpage that provides information about the Board of Trustees, including its members, meetings and minutes, and policy documents (see Criterion 2.C for more information about the Board). The president's webpage includes information about the President's Cabinet and shared governance bodies. The university's organization chart, available on the website, provides further information about UNC's organizational structure, and University Regulations describe the organization of academic units within the colleges.

Accreditation

UNC provides clear and accurate information about its institutional and specialized accreditation status. UNC's Mark of Affiliation with the Higher Learning Commission is posted on the university's website on a page that also provides information about institutional and professional accreditation. Details about professional accrediting organizations, current accreditation status, and information about whether graduation from an accredited program is required for licensure or certification are provided and updated on an annual basis or more frequently as needed. Programs with specialized accreditation include this information on their websites. Information about accreditation and affiliations is also provided in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs.

Subcomponent 2.B.2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

UNC ensures evidence is available to support claims regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, and economic development. UNC proudly claims a tradition of research and hands-on learning that provides exceptional educational experiences for students. Undergraduate and graduate students have multiple opportunities to participate in research through curricular requirements, cocurricular programs, and independent study. For example, each fall approximately 500 undergraduate students enrolled in University 101, UNC's first year experience course, complete a research project, which they present at an annual Research Nights event. In a similar vein, UNC's Biology 110: Biology: Atoms to Cells course, included in the general education curriculum, uses course-based undergraduate research to enhance student learning. Over two-thirds of undergraduate degree programs and all graduate programs require at least one discipline-specific research methods course. Academic engagement programs such as University Honors and the McNair Scholars Program provide specialized coursework and undergraduate research support to students seeking additional enrichment opportunities. The Office of Undergraduate Research provides support for undergraduate research through grants, mentorship, and presentation opportunities. UNC hosts an annual student showcase highlighting graduate and undergraduate student artists and scholars. The Graduate School sponsors the Graduate Research Symposium each fall and the Graduate Student Research Evening each spring to provide additional opportunities for graduate students to present their research. Additional information about student research opportunities is provided in Criterion 3.B.

Students have multiple opportunities for community engagement through curricular and cocurricular experiences. Several of UNC's institutional learning outcomes are connected to community and civic engagement, and survey data provide indirect evidence that students are achieving these outcomes.

Many academic degree programs embed community engagement or service learning into required courses. For example, the Human Services Bachelor of Science program requires students to be involved in community service throughout the program. 2023 NSSE data show that over half of first year and almost two-thirds of seniors report that some, most, or all of their courses included a community-based project. In addition, results from the 2022-2023 HERI Faculty Survey show that about half of UNC faculty report that they have advised student groups involved in service or volunteer work. Students living in UNC's residence halls can participate in a Community Engagement Center that provides spaces to connect with other students and participate in community projects.

Experiential learning is a hallmark of a UNC education. UNC faculty regularly employ experiential teaching methods in their courses, with approximately two-thirds using experiential learning in at least some of the courses they teach (2022-2023 HERI Faculty Survey). For example, the Anthropology Bachelor of Arts program incorporates fieldwork in many courses, partnering with local organizations such as the Immigrant and Refugee Center of Northern Colorado and Sunrise Community Health. UNC's Business degree programs were recently commended by the AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) for an emphasis on immersive learning embedded throughout the curriculum. A project funded through UNC's HLC Quality Improvement Initiative expanded opportunities for UNC undergraduates to promote science communication and public scholarship through qualitative field techniques and podcasts. The School of Teacher Education offers a literacy practicum where students and the course instructor provide supplemental reading opportunities to first and second grade students in their schools. Students pursuing degrees in majors such as Communication Disorders, Counseling, and Sport and Exercise Science have the opportunity for hands-on learning in one of UNC's public clinics (described in more detail in Criterion 1.B).

UNC is able to support its claims regarding its economic development contributions. Economic impact studies conducted on behalf of the university provide objective analyses of UNC's contributions to the local and regional economies. For example, UNC partnered with three other higher education institutions in northern Colorado to commission an economic impact study conducted by Lightcast (formerly Emsi and Burning Glass Technologies), a labor market analytics firm. A sample of findings include a net impact of UNC operations spending adding $237.9 million to the regional economy, $4.7 million generated from research expenditures, and $63.3 million from student spending. As UNC prepares to launch its new College of Osteopathic Medicine, the university estimates the medical school will create new jobs and generate approximately $1.4 billion in total economic impact over the next 20 years, including $501 million in Weld County where UNC is located.

Core Component 2.C. The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

Subcomponent 2.C.1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

UNC's Board of Trustees is trained and knowledgeable. UNC is a member of the Colorado Trustee Network (CTN), with a member of the Board serving on the Leadership Council. The CTN provides professional development for new and continuing higher education governance board members, and UNC's members are encouraged to participate. In April 2023, six Board members attended the

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges' 2023 National Conference on Trusteeship. The university provides a day-long robust onboarding experience for new trustees, and during annual retreats, the Board participates in professional development relevant to its role and responsibilities. For example, during the September 2021 retreat, a senior staff member from EAB facilitated discussion on topics such as understanding enrollment competition, meeting student expectations, and strategic differentiation. During the annual retreat in 2022, the Board met with a consultant from AASCU who provided guidance on formalizing an annual presidential evaluation. In subsequent meetings, the Board developed and implemented the evaluation process.

UNC's Board makes informed decisions about the university's financial and academic policies and practices. Reports from university leaders, governance body representatives, faculty, and staff during regular Board meetings ensure that board members receive relevant and current information to inform their decisions. For example, at the October 2023 meeting, administrators provided an overview of the budget and enrollment landscape and led a discussion that informed the ongoing development of the university's current Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. The Board packet for each meeting includes attachments that provide context and information to inform the Board's decisions. For example, the provost presents new programs for Board approval, and the Board packet includes information such as a rationale for the new program, enrollment projections, and budget impacts (see, for example, the Curriculum Packet presented at the February 10, 2023, meeting).

The Board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities. The Board Bylaws articulate the role and responsibility of the Board and are consistent with state laws. For example, section 6 pertaining to Board meetings, is written to comply with Colorado Open Meeting Law, C.R.S. 24-6-401. Updates to the Bylaws occur as needed, with the most recent updates completed in November 2022. Another example illustrating how the Board meets its legal responsibilities is provided by its approval in November 2022 of a formal process for UNC's compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990. The Board meets its fiduciary responsibilities in several ways. The Bylaws differentiate authority for financial decisions, designating certain responsibilities to the President and clearly stating those requiring prior approval by the Board. For example, prior Board approval is required for expenditures that exceed a set cost. The annual budget process (discussed in greater detail in Criterion 5.B) is another example. A final example is found in recent Board discussion about the administration's request for authority for flexibility in setting fiscal year 2024 tuition and fee rates. Board minutes demonstrate that Board deliberations included requests for clarification prior to approving the request.

Subcomponent 2.C.2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

The preservation and enhancement of UNC are top priorities for the Board of Trustees. Similar to many public universities, student tuition, fees, and room and board now account for the largest proportion of the budgeted net operating revenue, roughly 60% at UNC, a reversal from the past, when state funding accounted for nearly 70% of the budget. As a result, the Board scrutinizes enrollment and pricing and considers detailed reports on university revenue, expenses, sustainable cost savings, liabilities, and net assets. For example, in its November 2022 meeting, the Board's Finance and Audit Committee discussed the implications arising from recent legislation authorizing higher education governing boards to increase from 10% to 100% the amount of tuition revenues pledged for issuing revenue bonds. In addition to financial matters, the Board considers other topics vital to the university. For example, in its June 2023 meeting, trustees discussed the importance of continuing work on enhancing and refining recruitment strategies, engagement with local school districts, and data used to inform decision making.

In a January 2023 special meeting of the Board, trustees discussed a draft letter to Colorado's governor expressing support for establishing a College of Osteopathic Medicine and requested several revisions to strengthen the letter. In its February 2022 meeting, a Board member presented information about UNC's contributions to the development of state-supported trustee training, identifying UNC priorities including closing the educational attainment gap, regional partnerships with businesses, and improved data systems. These priorities reflect forward thinking on the part of the Board and provide another example of how it seeks to preserve and enhance the university.

Subcomponent 2.C.3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

UNC's Board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of internal and external constituencies during its decision making deliberations. All internal and external constituents can participate in the Board's meetings and share their concerns. This right is assured through the Board Bylaws that specify rules for notifying Board members and the public of regular and special meetings in accordance with Colorado Open Meetings Law. The Bylaws state that any interested party may request to place an item on the agenda of any regular meeting and may participate in public comment as provided at all meetings. Board agendas and minutes posted on the university website show that every Board meeting provides time for reports from campus governance groups and the president as well as public comments. These reports provide information about the interests and activities of the various campus constituencies. For example, during the November 2022 meeting, the Professional Administrative Staff Council representative shared employee concerns about compensation. At the June 2022 meeting, the Student Senate Representative shared information about student advocacy activities, concerns about access to accessible teaching practices, and the impact of the decision to close one of the university's dining halls. While many of the issues shared by governance groups are part of the Board-delegated responsibilities of the president and other campus leaders, the information provided helps to inform Board deliberations on the university's budget and strategic planning priorities.

Subcomponent 2.C.4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.

UNC's Board of Trustees preserves its independence. The Board consists of nine individuals, seven of whom are appointed by the Governor of Colorado, one faculty member elected by the faculty, and one undergraduate student elected by the student body (the faculty and student representatives are non-voting members). Four of the current appointed board members are UNC alumni who have close ties to the university, and all members have a deep commitment to acting in its best interests. The Colorado Constitution grants exclusive fiduciary responsibility to the Board as the governing body of the university. The Board Bylaws include rules governing conflict of interest and provide procedures for absenting or recusal of a Trustee in a matter in which they have a conflict of interest. Based on actions taken by the Board as described in the previous sections, including adherence to state law and its own internal bylaws, it is clear that UNC's Board preserves its autonomy from external sources.

Subcomponent 2.C.5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

UNC's Board Bylaws delegate authority for the day-to-day management of the university to the president. The president and campus administrators, in turn, routinely inform the Board of processes, practices, and actions implemented by administration. During Board meetings, the president and other

campus administrators regularly report on university operations and bring forth matters requiring Board approval such as the annual budget, recommendations for changes in policies, strategic planning, and new degree programs.

The Board delegates authority for the oversight of academic matters to the faculty. Board policy stipulates that the faculty are responsible for designing and approving the curriculum at the program level. More information about UNC's curriculum process is provided in Criterion 3.A. The integrity of the university's academic programs is maintained through collaboration between the faculty and administration: faculty members are responsible for developing and delivering academic programs, and administration is responsible for ensuring the curriculum is appropriate to the disciplinary responsibility of the unit and that adequate resources are provided to deliver the curriculum. A Curriculum Handbook includes a flowchart that clearly delineates responsibilities throughout the curriculum process. In addition to curriculum, the faculty also exercise authority over other academic matters through formal governance structures and processes. For example, the Academic Policies Committee (APC), a Faculty Senate Committee, reviews matters affecting the university's academic policies, including admission and graduation requirements, the grading system, academic standards and regulations, and the academic calendar, among others. During fall 2023, the APC devoted several meetings to developing a policy for responding to the possibility of inclement weather during finals week. This process involved close collaboration between the committee and academic administrators. The Liberal Arts Council (LAC) is the faculty governance group responsible for UNC's general education program. The LAC sets requirements for inclusion in the Liberal Arts Curriculum, reviews and approves new course proposals, and oversees general education assessment. Additional information about UNC's general education program is provided in Criterion 3.B.

Core Component 2.D. The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

UNC is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. UNC's mission emphasizes promoting an environment in which diversity of thought and culture is respected and intellectual freedom is preserved. The Board, the administration, and the faculty embrace freedom of expression and the academic quest for truth and honesty through a variety of official policies. For example, the Board policy on Academic Freedom and Professional Ethics defines academic freedom as "the right to pursue and share ideas, information and knowledge without institutional or governmental interference." Faculty members have the right to academic freedom in their teaching, scholarly and creative activities, and dissemination of the results of those activities. The policy also articulates faculty responsibilities, including encouraging students' free pursuit of learning. UNC's faculty evaluation policy, discussed in greater detail in Criterion 3.C, precludes the use of collegiality as a separate dimension in making evaluation decisions in recognition that the term can be "used to foster an unhealthy uniformity of opinion that is a threat to academic freedom" (Board Policy Manuel, Title 2, Part 8). Surveys of faculty and students suggest that UNC is fulfilling its commitment to freedom of expression. For example, 77% of faculty respondents on the 2022-2023 HERI Faculty Survey reported they are satisfied or very satisfied with the autonomy and independence they have at UNC. The 2022-2023 Diverse Learning Environments Survey Classroom Climate Module included the following results:

- 79% of students report feeling comfortable sharing their own perspectives and experiences in class;

- 79% of students report that most or all of their instructors encourage students to contribute different perspectives in class; and
- 84% of students report that all or most of their instructors encourage respect for different beliefs.

Another policy that demonstrates UNC's commitment to freedom of expression can be found in the Board Policy on Peaceful Assembly. This policy acknowledges the rights and privileges of individuals and groups to gather on public property for the purpose of peaceful assembly and establishes policies to protect the rights of all persons at such gatherings. To ensure that faculty, staff, and students are informed about their rights, UNC sponsors an annual Know Your Rights Workshop presented by the American Civil Liberties Union. Information about the workshop and related resources is provided on the university's website.

In addition to policies, UNC's governance structure also demonstrates its commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth. UNC's Faculty Welfare Committee, a committee of the Faculty Senate, considers and recommends policies affecting the faculty, including academic freedom. For example, in fall 2023, the Faculty Welfare Committee devoted several meetings to discussing new policies related to responsible and ethical conduct of research. Committee members expressed concern that some aspects of the proposed policy may infringe on faculty rights, and these concerns were addressed in subsequent versions.

The commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning is also demonstrated through faculty oversight of the curriculum, allocation of resources supporting research and creative activity, and sabbatical policies. For example, faculty members are authorized to create new courses reflecting their interests and advances in their fields, and they exercise this right. The faculty regularly create new, modify existing, and retire obsolete courses. Since 2020, the faculty created or revised 585 courses and removed 489 courses from the catalog. UNC's internal research funding opportunities further support academic freedom. The Research, Dissemination, and Faculty Development Grant Program, administered by the Faculty Research and Publication Board, supports faculty scholarship and professional activity by providing funding for faculty members to pursue their scholarly and creative interests and goals. The evaluation criteria for awarding funds do not place any limits on topics or areas of interest the faculty seek to pursue. UNC's sabbatical leave policies and procedures afford faculty the opportunity to develop proposals that reflect their scholarly and teaching interests. Recently awarded sabbaticals reflect a diverse range of interests across disciplinary fields and intellectual inquiry.

Core Component 2.E. The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

Subcomponent 2.E.1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.

UNC maintains professional standards for basic and applied research. UNC's Board Policy and Regulations include requirements for copyright law compliance, Human and Animal Subjects Research, and Conflict of Interest Pertaining to Sponsored Projects. UNC's Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research Policy applies to all individuals involved in research activities, including employees, volunteers,

students, contractors, and collaborators. The policy applies to all forms of scholarship and outlines requirements for compliance with laws, regulations, and policies. Information about research integrity and compliance is posted to the university's website. UNC maintains and revises policies as necessary to remain in compliance with federal regulations, as demonstrated by recent revisions to the Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research Professional Development and Education Plan. All faculty, students, and staff conducting research involving human or animal subjects must complete training through the appropriate Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) course. Since UNC's 2019 Assurance Argument, 1,428 faculty, staff, and student researchers have completed at least one CITI training module. UNC's Data Security Policy for research projects involving human subjects was developed in response to the increasing use of technology for collecting, analyzing, and storing research data. All faculty researchers supervising students or post-doctoral fellows must complete mentor/mentorship training. Since this policy was implemented July 1, 2023, 83 graduate faculty have completed the training.

UNC provides oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior, and fiscal accountability. The university designates authority for the oversight of research to the Associate Vice President of Research and employs experienced staff responsible for research compliance, the animal research facility, pre- and post-award support, and financial management of sponsored activity. Oversight activities include but are not limited to managing the annual financial conflict of interest policy, monitoring human and animal subjects research, and investigations of research misconduct. University Regulations define academic research misconduct and identify procedures for investigating allegations and responding to verified misconduct. Working collaboratively with faculty and staff members, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs develops, maintains, and assures adherence to policies and procedures related to the legal and ethical conduct of research. For example, the Associate Vice President of Research worked with the Faculty Senate to update and revise UNC's Research Misconduct Policy in 2021.

All research conducted at UNC involving human subjects or animals must receive approval from the appropriate oversight body. UNC's Institutional Review Board (IRB) consists of faculty representatives and staff involved in human studies research and compliance related responsibilities. The IRB reviews all research involving human subjects. Since UNC's four-year Assurance Review in 2019, the IRB received 536 research applications, 96% of which were approved outright or after the researcher resubmitted with modification. These numbers demonstrate that the IRB exercises appropriate oversight of human research. In addition to reviewing all research involving human subjects, the IRB maintains a comprehensive webpage that provides information and resources to researchers.

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) serves as an advisory body to UNC's Institutional Official. The IACUC is charged with oversight to ensure the humane treatment of animal subjects. Roles and responsibilities of the IACUC are described in a policy and procedures manual. The IACUC webpage provides links to laws, regulations, and policies dealing with animal subjects, access to agencies and the national IACUC organization, and resources discussing the ethics of animal research. As specified in the IACUC policy manual, all research, teaching, or testing activities involving animals must obtain approval from the IACUC prior to commencing studies utilizing animal subjects.

Subcomponent 2.E.2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.

UNC provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students. As noted above, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs is responsible for promoting the research, scholarship, and creative works of faculty, staff, and

students and overseeing the integrity of research activity. In developing policies and support resources, the university works to ensure its research practices comply with applicable laws and university policies. For example, UNC's Safe and Inclusive Working Environments Plan for Off-Campus or Off-Site Research Policy is designed to meet National Science Foundation (NSF) requirements for safe and inclusive working environments. UNC's Human Subjects Research requirements are based on ethical standards set forth in the Belmont Report and adhere to federal regulations found at CFR Title 45, Part 46.

UNC's support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice include support for funded project administration and post award management. The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) works closely with principal investigators and project directors by providing information about responsibilities and assistance with financial monitoring and post-award revisions to program plans and budgets. UNC recognizes a critical need for enhancing support for principal investigators and project directors and has in recent years invested in additional staff to meet campus needs. Other forms of support include robust training on ethical research and policies requiring such training for all individuals conducting research in affiliation with UNC. For example, as noted above, UNC subscribes to the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), which offers online courses regarding human subjects research and related topics and documentation that training has been completed. Since the four-year Assurance Review in 2019, 1,400 UNC faculty, staff, and students completed one or more courses through the CITI platform. The ORSP webpage provides a wealth of information related to research integrity.

Subcomponent 2.E.3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.

UNC provides students with guidance in the ethics of research. All undergraduate and graduate degree programs have learning outcomes related to preparing students to use the tools, terminology, and methods related to their program of study. Approximately 71% of undergraduate programs require students to complete one or more research-focused course. For example, students enrolled in the Sociology BA degree are required to complete ten credits of sociological research methods, and undergraduate students majoring in History are required to complete seven credits of coursework related to historiography and historical methods. All graduate students are required to take an introductory course on graduate research, which includes instruction on the ethical use of information and research practice. All faculty who mentor graduate students must complete training provided by the National Research Mentoring Network and an internally developed course for graduate faculty doctoral research endorsement. Manuals for master's thesis and doctoral scholarly projects and dissertations are also published for students required to complete these research activities. Any student engaged in research requiring IRB approval must complete the CITI training, which provides additional guidance in ethical conduct of research.

The faculty arrange multiple opportunities for students to apply what they are learning. Forty percent of undergraduate programs require completion of a senior seminar or capstone course that includes completing a research, scholarly, or creative project as appropriate to the discipline. In a recent survey of the undergraduate faculty (2022-2023 HERI Faculty Survey), 92% agree it is their role to prepare students for graduate or advanced education, which, for most disciplines includes preparing students to conduct research and scholarly activity in their discipline. Towards this end, faculty members report frequently or occasionally giving assignments that require students to demonstrate skills associated with research and scholarly integrity such as writing in the specific style or format of their discipline (90%), recognizing biases that affect their thinking (83%), and looking up scientific research articles and resources (81%).

These self-reported activities are consistent with the experiences students report having at UNC. For example, 96% of graduating seniors indicate they frequently or occasionally recognize biases that affect their thinking, and 91% look up scientific research articles and resources (2022-2023 Diverse Learning Experiences Survey).

UNC provides students guidance on the ethical use of information. This guidance occurs through classroom instruction, workshops, and online resources. For example, undergraduate students are required to complete coursework in intermediate composition that includes instruction on the proper use of source material. High school students completing this coursework as part of UNC's Dual Enrollment Program receive comparable instruction. As noted above, graduate students take an introduction to graduate research course, which also includes instruction on the ethical use of information. The University Libraries play a key role in guiding the ethical use of information, offering credit-bearing courses in information literacy. Some programs (e.g., Criminology and Criminal Justice) require their majors to complete such a course. Library faculty teach on average seven credit-bearing courses each year. The library also offers course-embedded library instruction, in person and through Zoom, ensuring that students have opportunities for this instruction regardless of course modality. Topics include analyzing and evaluating information. In 2023-2024, 1,965 students enrolled in 79 undergraduate and 13 graduate courses participated in course-embedded workshops offered by library faculty. Graduate students in particular are often directed during these sessions to copyright compliance information. To supplement course-based instruction delivered by library faculty, the university has developed research guides for undergraduate and graduate students and research tutorials that can be embedded into courses using UNC's learning management system, Canvas. All undergraduate students are enrolled in a Canvas course, Success at UNC, which includes a module on research-related topics including citation guides for APA, MLA, AMA, and Chicago styles. The Graduate School and University Libraries offer workshops and guidance on research-related topics for graduate students.

Subcomponent 2.E.4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

UNC enforces its policies on academic honesty and integrity. UNC's commitment to academic integrity is the first value expressed in the university's mission documents. The Board has established policies for faculty and students that communicate expectations for academic integrity. For example, UNC's policy on academic freedom and professional ethics outlines expectations including practicing intellectual honesty and fostering honest academic conduct in students. The commitment to freedom of expression in teaching and learning requires high standards that guard against academic misconduct. UNC's research misconduct policy, discussed above, describes expectations, procedures for investigating allegations of misconduct, and sanctions. Since 2019, there has been one investigation of research misconduct, which resulted in sanctions.

University Regulations include UNC's student code of conduct, the Bear Code. Academic misconduct is defined as cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or other acts of dishonesty. Students receive information about the code of conduct during new student orientation, and it is also published on the university's website. Faculty regularly include information on academic integrity and honesty in their syllabi. UNC enforces student conduct standards through a restoratively-based learning and growth sanctioning model derived from student development theory. The model addresses the misconduct while providing a learning opportunity to the student. A website provides helpful information to students about UNC's conduct process, including an FAQ section that explains student rights during a conduct hearing and the appeals process. UNC sends a warning to students for first time reports of academic misconduct. Repeat

offenses or egregious reports (such as plagiarizing a dissertation) move directly to a conduct meeting. Since 2019, 170 incidents of academic misconduct were reported to the Dean of Students. Of these, approximately 14% of the students were found responsible for academic misconduct. Sanctions can range from writing brief reflective papers to expulsion, the most severe consequence. Students may appeal an academic misconduct sanction through a formal grievance process. Clearly UNC has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Criterion 3: Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support
The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Core Component 3.A. The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

Subcomponent 3.A.1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.

UNC employs policies and procedures to ensure that courses and programs are current. The curriculum approval process is a collaborative effort between the faculty and the administration for both existing and new courses and programs. The faculty are responsible for and highly engaged in developing, delivering, and evaluating academic courses and programs. Course learning goals, content, and assignments are examined by the faculty for congruence and appropriateness. College curriculum committees assure that curriculum changes and new proposals are appropriate to the disciplinary responsibility of the unit and the university, and academic leadership determines whether there are adequate resources available to implement the proposed curriculum. Additional review of changes may be provided by various faculty governance groups depending on the nature of the proposed curriculum. For example, the Liberal Arts Council reviews general education curriculum proposals and revisions, and the Professional Education Council reviews educator preparation curriculum. The Chief Academic Officer (provost) or designee is responsible for review and approval of all curriculum changes, and new academic credentials (degrees and certificates) are approved by the Board of Trustees.

UNC's program review criteria include a standard on curriculum, which requires program faculty to evaluate the extent to which the curriculum reflects current developments in the discipline. Programs' self-evaluation is validated by external reviewers with the appropriate disciplinary expertise. External reviewers provide detailed feedback about programs, including recommendations for maintaining and updating the curriculum. UNC's accredited programs are regularly evaluated by their respective accrediting bodies. Curricular changes are implemented as needed to maintain currency and, where applicable, meet accreditation standards. UNC's program review process is discussed in greater detail in Criterion 4.A.

UNC also incorporates currency of the curriculum into ongoing strategic planning processes, in addition to curricula related policies, procedures, and practices. For example, in Phase I of Rowing, Not Drifting 2030, UNC focused on enhancing and refining career readiness in the curriculum. UNC's career readiness definition is based on the National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE) standards. Additional information about UNC's career readiness activities is provided in Criterion 1.C. Phase I also included actions related to updating the university's general education program, the Liberal Arts Curriculum, discussed in greater detail in Criterion 3.B. A new Curriculum Handbook was developed to ensure the faculty are familiar with all curriculum related processes.

Courses and programs at UNC require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded. Learning outcomes are differentiated by degree level (see Subcomponent 3.A.2). University Regulations assign responsibilities for ensuring that curriculum changes are consistent with academic standards. UNC uses a course numbering system to define the student level at which the course is designed to be delivered: 100-200 courses are intended for first and second year students; 300-400 course are designed for juniors and seniors; and 500-700 level courses are reserved for graduate students. The Office of the Registrar maintains a list of designated university numbers and definitions that further differentiate course levels. For example, 600-level courses are intended to provide orientation to graduate study and the nature and methods of research, while 700-level courses introduce advanced research concepts and methods.

Subcomponent 3.A.2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.

UNC articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate and graduate programs. UNC's mission documents include learning goals for undergraduate and graduate students. Following the 2015 HLC comprehensive review, UNC prioritized updating its institutional learning outcomes. The provost charged the University Assessment Council, a representative body of faculty and student services administrators, to lead the university in developing new institutional learning outcomes, which were adopted in 2017. These learning outcomes complement and expand on the goals articulated in the university's mission documents and describe the qualities UNC expects to develop in all of its students. Academic degree programs map their program-level learning outcomes to institutional learning outcomes as relevant to the discipline and purpose of the degree program. In 2022, UNC conducted a program learning outcomes project, led by two faculty members and the assessment director, to collect, review, and provide feedback on program learning outcomes. All academic units participated, and the results of the project are maintained by the Office of Assessment, which also offers professional development, resources, and consultations on developing and revising program-level learning outcomes.

Curriculum and program approval processes and program review at UNC assure that appropriate learning outcomes are established for all programs. Learning outcomes are specifically included in program design and differentiated among degree levels. For example, academic units proposing new programs must describe the program learning outcomes and provide a curriculum map showing how each required course contributes to these outcomes. Updated program review guidelines, implemented in 2023-2024, include a standard for evaluating the extent to which programs have articulated, and where applicable, differentiated the learning outcomes for all degrees and certificates offered by the academic unit. Academic units that offer degrees in the same discipline at different degree levels differentiate the learning outcomes expected for each level. To illustrate this, the Chemistry B.S. degree includes the learning outcome, "Students will apply chemical knowledge and problem-solving skills to design, evaluate, and implement a strategy to answer open-ended questions," while the M.S. degree addresses research competency with the following learning outcome: "Students will apply chemical knowledge and problem-solving skills to design, evaluate, implement *and defend* a research project."

Subcomponent 3.A.3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

UNC's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations. No matter the delivery format or program location, the quality and learning outcomes for UNC classes and programs are consistent. Variation in the manner of course delivery to meet student needs is decided at the academic unit level in partnership with academic leadership. For example, early childhood education majors may pursue their studies at UNC's Greeley campus or in Denver through the Center for Urban Education (CUE). Students complete comparable programs of study with some variation based on the CUE program's unique apprenticeship model for preparing students specifically to teach in urban schools. The CUE was recently recognized by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education as a recipient of the 2024 Increasing Educator Diversity: Promising Practice Award.

Students have multiple options for pursuing their education at UNC, including studying at the Greeley campus or one of the university's additional locations, enrolling in hybrid and online courses and programs, and participating in concurrent/dual enrollment. UNC's faculty are responsible for the development, delivery, and ongoing evaluation of all degree programs, regardless of the location or delivery mode. In addition, UNC's academic units are responsible for recruiting, selecting, hiring, and evaluating all instructors teaching UNC courses based on faculty qualifications established by the academic unit (more information on faculty qualifications is included in Criterion 3.C). UNC completed an HLC Multi-Location Visit in December 2017, and the reviewer found no areas requiring attention. A multi-location review was not required in 2022-2023 because UNC has reduced its additional locations to below three sites consistent with a strategic focus on growing fully or mostly online programs.

Programs offered online and at UNC's additional locations are administratively supported by UNC's Extended Campus. UNC offers hundreds of online sections of courses, which are listed by modality and location when searching each semester's course schedule. In addition, UNC offers several programs that are completely online. To support effective teaching in UNC's online courses and programs, the Department of Instructional Design and Development provides a full range of services including online classroom templates, training and on-demand tutorials, and instructional video recording production. A review of curricular requirements and course syllabi demonstrates that programs and courses are consistent across all modes of delivery and location.

Courses offered via dual enrollment are consistent with the same courses taught by UNC faculty. Dual enrollment at UNC refers to courses taught by high school teachers at their schools for which students may receive UNC credit. UNC maintains oversight of its dual enrollment process through a partnership between Academic Affairs, which is responsible for assuring instructor qualifications and approving courses, and the Office of Enrollment Management, which develops partnerships with area high schools and manages student services. UNC's processes are designed to align with the HLC's Dual Credit Guidelines. UNC offers dual enrollment courses at area high schools in a variety of disciplines. These courses are taught by high school teachers who are also adjunct faculty at UNC and who have the same qualifications required for all adjunct faculty teaching at UNC. Dual enrollment course learning objectives and outcomes are equivalent to the same courses taught at UNC. All credit earned through dual enrollment becomes part of a student's permanent college transcript.

Core Component 3.B. The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

Subcomponent 3.B.1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.

UNC's general education program is appropriate to its mission as a public baccalaureate and specialized graduate research university. Mission documents reference a commitment to educating students in the liberal arts tradition, including an emphasis on developing competencies in critical thinking, communication, and problem solving. UNC's general education program, the Liberal Arts Curriculum, is designed to foster these competencies through a distributed model across six content categories. In keeping with UNC's commitment to developing multicultural competencies in its students, the Liberal Arts Curriculum requires students to complete at least three credits from courses that carry a multicultural studies designation and at least three credits from courses with an international studies designation. As a public higher education institution, UNC's Liberal Arts Curriculum is designed to conform to state requirements for general education. Colorado has enacted legislation (Colorado Revised Statutes § 23-1-125) granting authority to the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) for establishing general education course guidelines for all public higher education institutions in the state. The CDHE guidelines are outlined in the state's general education guaranteed transfer requirements, GT Pathways, to which all courses in UNC's program are aligned.

UNC articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The faculty governance body that oversees the Liberal Arts Curriculum, the Liberal Arts Council (LAC), began deliberations on revising the program in 2019 to streamline requirements and respond to changes in CDHE requirements. The Faculty Senate approved the current curriculum for initial inclusion in the 2020/2021 catalog. The purpose of the Liberal Arts Curriculum is to provide all undergraduate students with a foundation in the liberal arts. Students develop content knowledge in written communication, mathematics, arts and humanities, history, social and behavioral sciences, and natural and physical sciences. Multicultural studies and international studies requirements are met through courses with those designations. While the latter are not required by the CDHE, their inclusion in UNC's general education requirements reflects UNC's commitment to preparing students for participation in a diverse and global society. In addition to foundational content knowledge, the curriculum also supports the development of competencies in civic engagement, creative thinking, critical thinking, diversity and global learning, information literacy, inquiry and analysis, international learning, multicultural learning, oral/presentational communication, problem solving, quantitative literacy, and written communication. UNC's Liberal Arts Curriculum learning outcomes align with the state requirements and UNC's Institutional Learning Outcomes.

Subcomponent 3.B.2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

UNC's general education is grounded in a framework adopted from an established model. As noted above, UNC's Liberal Arts Curriculum is designed to conform to state general education requirements. In 2016, the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) convened a statewide faculty conference to revise and update the general education competencies for all GT Pathways areas. These competencies are grounded in the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) LEAP essential learning outcomes. UNC also used the LEAP outcomes in developing its institutional learning outcomes. UNC believes that the LEAP essential outcomes reflect the broad content knowledge the university intends for

its students as well as the cognitive skills and dispositions valued by employers. UNC's description of the Liberal Arts Curriculum includes references to research conducted by the AAC&U on the benefits of a liberal arts education, providing additional context for explaining to students and the public what general education at UNC is designed to provide.

UNC's Liberal Arts Curriculum is designed to impart broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develop skills and attitudes that UNC believes every college-educated person should possess. In fall 2020, the Liberal Arts Council (LAC) began work on revising and refining UNC's general education learning outcomes, beginning with a review of the state's general education competencies. In spring 2021, the LAC decided to adopt the state's general education competencies as UNC's learning outcomes to reduce redundancies and in recognition of the growing number of students transferring in at least some portion of general education credits. In addition to aligning with state requirements, the Liberal Arts Curriculum's learning outcomes also map to UNC's institutional learning outcomes, which emphasize the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad knowledge and skills that are integral to UNC's educational programs. The institutional learning outcomes reflect five core values that are applicable across disciplines: (1) mastering foundational skills; (2) strengthening interactions with others; (3) connecting ideas and experiences; (4) developing professional competence; and (5) engaging in healthy behaviors.

UNC assures that all general education courses address the learning outcomes through a rigorous curriculum process overseen by the Liberal Arts Council (LAC). To be considered for inclusion in the Liberal Arts Curriculum, a course must fulfill the learning outcomes for its designated category. Sample syllabus templates are provided for each category. These templates include a course mapping section where faculty members are asked to describe the course activities and assignments that contribute to the course learning outcomes. For example, BIO 110: Atoms to Cells is a course in the Natural and Physical Sciences category. One of the category's learning outcomes is that students will select or develop a design process to solve a problem. Two labs and one case study provide students with the opportunity to achieve this outcome. Curriculum proposals for new general education courses are reviewed by LAC Curriculum Category Committees assigned to each category, who may require revisions prior to recommending approval by the full LAC. An example of this process is found in minutes from the LAC meeting on November 15, 2022. Several new courses were approved, and one course received partial approval pending revisions necessary to meet the Multicultural Studies designation requirements.

In addition to initial course approvals, the LAC also assures that courses continue to meet the learning outcomes through periodic syllabus reviews. Reviews occur on a five-year rotating basis. Syllabi are selected through a random process for review by the LAC. In cases where a syllabus does not meet the requirements, the syllabus is returned for revision under a three-strike policy. If a course fails to meet the requirements after three revision attempts, it will be removed from the curriculum until the academic unit submits a revised course for approval. This process was launched in spring 2022. As a new process, early results have shown room for improvement toward ensuring that syllabi conform to the LAC requirements. The university expects that as the faculty and academic units become more familiar with the requirements, there will be improvements in the number of syllabi that pass the initial review.

UNC's processes for assessing its general education learning outcomes are discussed in Criterion 4.B.

Subcomponent 3.B.3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.

The education offered by UNC recognizes human and cultural diversity. Diversity is acknowledged explicitly in both the university's curriculum and in its academic culture and environment. UNC's institutional learning outcomes articulate UNC's expectations that all students will (1) develop the capacity to understand and interact effectively with others whose identities, beliefs, behaviors, and values differ from their own; (2) describe issues from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, geographic, and global perspectives; and (3) evaluate the social, economic, political, and environmental consequences of individual and group actions. UNC requires coursework in multiculturalism and international studies as part of its general education program, and the learning outcomes for these designations align with UNC's institutional learning outcomes. Results from student surveys suggest that undergraduate and graduate students are attaining these outcomes. Seniors who completed the NSSE in 2023 reported higher frequencies of UNC faculty including diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments compared with responses of students from similar institutions.

The majority of undergraduate and graduate degree programs require at least one course that is specifically focused on human and cultural diversity, including 73% of undergraduate degree programs and 58% of graduate programs. Faculty members regularly engage in teaching practices that recognize human and cultural diversity. For example, results from the 2022-2023 HERI Faculty Survey show that 82% of UNC faculty agree that it is their role to enhance students' knowledge of and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups. Eighty-five percent include assignments that ask students to describe how different perspectives would impact the interpretation of a question or issue in their discipline. Seventy percent have assigned readings on racial and ethnic issues in at least some of their classes, and 69% have assigned readings on women and gender issues. To support inclusive teaching practices, close to half of UNC faculty report taking advantage of resources provided at UNC to integrate culturally-competent practices into their classroom and/or training for promoting inclusion and facilitating difficult conversations. These resources include faculty learning communities, webinars, workshops, college-sponsored diversity professional development, and web-based resources. Student responses to the 2022-2023 HERI Diverse Learning Environments Survey suggest that these faculty efforts are effective. For example, strong majorities of students reported that most or all of their instructors:

- Value individual differences in the classroom (88%)
- Are sensitive to the ability levels of all students (80%)
- Ensure students are accommodated for disabilities or medical conditions (85%)
- Encourage students from diverse backgrounds to work together (76%)
- Encourage students to contribute different perspectives in class (79%)
- Share their own experiences and background in class (79%)
- Encourage respect for different beliefs (84%)

In addition to academic majors and courses related to culture and diversity, the university's numerous cocurricular and extracurricular programs encourage awareness of and appreciation for diversity as well as the development of culturally competent skills. For example, the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion maintains a public list of educational resources that can be used by UNC faculty or accessed independently by members of the campus community. The UNITE initiative (Understanding and Navigating Inclusion through Education) provides an ongoing series of workshops for faculty, staff, and students. Since its inception in 2022, 969 members of the UNC campus have participated in one or more workshops, which address a broad range of topics related to human and cultural diversity. For instance, in the Understanding and Fostering Welcoming Spaces for Neurodivergence workshop, participants learn

more about the range of identities under the neurodiverse umbrella as well as how to support neurodiverse individuals' needs on and around campus. Additional information about UNC programs and services that promote student understanding of their own and other cultures is provided in Criterion 1.C.

Subcomponent 3.B.4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

UNC's faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge appropriate to the university's mission as a comprehensive baccalaureate and specialized graduate research university. The university's values regarding scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge are extended through its current strategic plan, Rowing, Not Drifting 2030, which includes the vision element Innovate and Create. UNC believes that "learning occurs through critical inquiry, discovery, and creation" (Rowing, Not Drifting 2030). UNC's institutional learning outcomes articulate UNC's expectations that all students will (1) explain how knowledge is discovered or created; (2) apply critical thinking to analyze, integrate, and evaluate information; (3) express ideas through multiple media and modes of communication, and (4) use the tools, terminology, and methods related to their program of study. Academic degree programs contextualize these learning outcomes within their respective disciplines through program level learning outcomes. Examples include the following:

- Students will acquire in-depth knowledge of psychology, including an understanding of the major theoretical perspectives, the physiological foundations of behavior, and applications. (Psychology BA)
- [Students will] acquire, organize, and display appropriate data to investigate spatial relationships relevant to geographic questions. (Geography BA)
- Students will analyze data and information to identify key problems, generate and evaluate appropriate alternatives, and propose feasible alternatives. (Master of Accounting)
- Students will be able to formulate research questions and select appropriate research methods in chemical education (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research). (Chemical Education Pd.D.)
- [Students will] demonstrate a comprehensive skill set in studio-based technical skills integrated with conceptual thinking. (Art & Design: Art Studio Concentration BA)

UNC's general education program, the Liberal Arts Curriculum, prepares students for more advanced scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge through courses that emphasize creative thinking, critical thinking, diversity and global learning, information literacy, inquiry and analysis, quantitative literacy, and written communication. As described in Criterion 2.B.2, students enrolled in University 101, UNC's first year experience course, complete a research project, which they present at an annual Research Nights event. Individual degree programs build on general education foundational skills, preparing students for careers or advanced study in fields connected to the chosen discipline while also offering enhanced skills that are portable to other careers. Academic units emphasize undergraduate research in their curricular and co-curricular offerings. For example, UNC's Department of Biological Sciences uses course-based undergraduate research in its BIO 110: Atoms to Cells course. During the COVID pandemic, biology faculty used the course-based undergraduate research model to create an online laboratory experience that met the learning goals for the course. Another example can be found in the Anthropology department, which sponsors a collaborative platform, the Undergraduate Anthropology Publication, where students can share anthropology projects.

UNC faculty regularly integrate assignments and activities that involve students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments. UNC faculty's use of these types of assignments is consistent with national rates reported by the faculty at other institutions based on results from the 2022-2023 HERI Faculty Survey. In addition, UNC has developed undergraduate and graduate research tutorials, accessible through its learning management system, Canvas. Faculty members may embed these into courses, and students can also independently access them through Canvas Commons. Surveys of UNC seniors indicate that students are frequently engaging in these types of activities, suggesting that programs and individual faculty are successful in promoting these skills.

UNC faculty often involve students as partners in research, scholarship, creative works, and the discovery of knowledge. Twenty-five percent of graduating seniors report that they have worked with or plan to work with a faculty member on a research project. Based on the results of the 2022-2023 HERI Faculty Survey, 52% of UNC faculty reported working with undergraduate students on research to at least some extent, and 43% reported engaging undergraduates on their own projects. UNC faculty who teach or work with graduate students report high levels of involving graduate students in research-related activities. For example, 24% of UNC faculty reported high levels of activities such as presenting with graduate students at conferences in the prior year compared to 12% of the faculty from similar institutions. Fifteen percent of UNC faculty published with graduate students compared to 10% of the faculty from other institutions. Undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged to publish or present their capstone projects in a range of venues including the *UNC Undergraduate Research Journal*, campus-based presentation opportunities, and local and national conferences. Funding for conferences is available through the Student Government Association (SGA). Since 2020, 54 students have received support from the SGA, attending conferences such as The Society for Personality and Social Psychology Annual Conference, Shape Colorado Conference, and the Jazz Education Network. For two years during this time period (2020-2021 and 2021-2022), no SGA grants were funded due to travel restrictions related to the COVID pandemic. Graduate students can apply for funding from the Graduate Student Association, and the Office of Undergraduate Research also provides summer stipends and travel funds to undergraduate researchers.

UNC undergraduate students seeking additional scholarly and creative experiences may participate in the University Honors Program. Students who meet federal eligibility requirements may also apply to the McNair Scholars Program, a federal TRiO program focused on preparing students for graduate study. Honors students complete a capstone project through one of three options: a research project or senior thesis; an applied project; or a creative work in the humanities or the arts. McNair students complete a research project. Students participating in these programs work with faculty mentors and also complete coursework designed to prepare them for completing their projects. All UNC students may present their research at UNC's annual research day, the Student Showcase of Artists and Scholars and also have opportunities to present at national conferences such as the National Conference of Undergraduate Research.

Graduate students are introduced to graduate-level research and scholarship in a required three-credit course. Depending on the degree program requirements, students demonstrate their mastery of disciplinary modes of inquiry through master's theses, comprehensive examinations, recitals, clinical practicums, and internships. Doctoral students complete a rigorous set of research and statistics courses, as well as a comprehensive exam, dissertation proposal, and completion and defense of a dissertation or doctoral scholarly project. These culminating experiences, under close guidance from a faculty member,

ensure that those graduating with a degree from UNC have attained the broad and discipline-specific skills that reflect their ability to contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge.

Promoting research, scholarship, and creative works is among the top priorities of the university. The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) supports faculty scholarship and creative activity with several programs. Total internal funding for faculty research, scholarship, and creative works in fiscal year 2024 was approximately $250,000. Faculty members seeking external funding for research are supported by ORSP, which provides resources for grant writing and proposal review, online searchable databases of funding opportunities, and other services for grant proposals and sponsored projects. UNC faculty are productive scholars and artists, producing 601 publications, 696 presentations, 398 grants and contracts, and 666 performances and exhibits in fiscal year 2023, the most recent year for which complete data are available. Based on results from the 2022-2023 HERI Survey, 28% of UNC faculty reported that they spend nine or more hours each week on research and scholarly writing. This is a 5% increase since the last time UNC participated in the survey in 2017. The university regularly celebrates these accomplishments at recognition events such as the annual recognition of authors and artists sponsored by University Libraries and a ceremony for the A.M. and Jo Winchester Distinguished Scholar Award for continued excellence in scholarly activity.

Core Component 3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

Subcomponent 3.C.1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

UNC strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflect human diversity as appropriate to its mission and the constituencies it serves. UNC maintains data that allow it to track the composition of its faculty and staff based on gender and race/ethnicity. Based on data published in the 2023 institutional fact book, UNC employs 1,507 individuals on a full or part-time basis. Of these, 1,188 are full time employees (79%). The number of employees has declined since 2018, consistent with changing student enrollment patterns. Faculty comprise 45% of UNC's employees, with 390 full-time and 289 part-time faculty. 53% of full-time faculty identify as women, and this proportion has been consistent over the last several years. Women account for a greater percentage of the faculty across all ranks except full professor, where men comprise 57% of UNC's full professors. Faculty members who identify as racial/ethnic minorities make up 13% of all UNC faculty, a percentage that has not changed since 2018. Across faculty ranks, the largest percent of minority faculty are associate professors. Women make up 54% of UNC's staff, representing a three percent decline since 2018. Twenty-eight percent of UNC staff are from minority populations, a six percent increase since 2018.

While UNC has seen some growth in demographic diversity among staff, it has not seen similar increases among the faculty. UNC continuously strives to ensure the composition of its employees reflects human diversity; however, there is room for improvement in this area. In Phase I of the strategic plan, Rowing, Not Drifting 2030, UNC prioritized improving its search and selection processes and practices. For example, UNC developed anti-bias training required since April 2022 for all members of hiring committees. Delivered via an online course, the training addresses topics such as bias, scoring applicants, and creating an inclusive team. Since its creation, 89 UNC employees serving on search committees have completed the training. In addition to training for search committees, UNC took steps to broaden its recruitment pool by adding LinkedIn and Diversity.com to its standard placement locations and joined

Circa, which distributes job postings to over 600 diversity-related sites for attracting more inclusive candidate pools.

UNC recognizes that recruiting more diverse candidates is not sufficient. The university must also maintain an inclusive environment that supports employee retention. Towards this end, UNC periodically conducts campus climate studies, with the most recent study completed in 2023. Results are shared with campus leadership and used to prioritize planning and improvement actions. Additional discussion of the most recent campus climate study results can be found in Criterion 1.C. Professional development provided through the UNITE initiative includes multiple workshops offered each semester to faculty and staff. Beginning in 2021, UNC's President and the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion have cohosted the Faculty and Staff of Color Community Network lunch. This is an informal forum intended to provide an opportunity for faculty and staff of color to develop a sense of community and mutual support and to engage with the president on common questions and interests.

Subcomponent 3.C.2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.

UNC has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out their responsibilities. Since 2018, the number of full-time faculty decreased by approximately 24% through natural attrition, with decreases in the numbers of assistant professors, lecturers, and instructors representing the largest declines. Despite these changes, UNC has maintained a low student to faculty ratio, ranging from 14:1 to 17:1. UNC considers a number of factors in determining when to hire new faculty. New position requests provide information about why the position is mission critical, enrollment trend analysis, diversity considerations, and implications if the position is not filled. Academic administrators use data such as headcount, student credit hours, and course enrollment in determining whether to replace a vacated or authorize a new faculty position. In UNC's fiscal year 2025 staffing plan, 39 replacement or new faculty positions were requested and 32 were approved for hiring in 2024-2025.

UNC has sufficient faculty to carry out their role in curriculum oversight. Individual faculty and academic units determine when changes to the curriculum are needed, and these are advanced through UNC's curriculum process (described in Criterion 3.A). For example, in 2021-2022, faculty members in the Department of Mathematical Sciences determined that changes were needed in the Mathematics Education Ph.D. program to better align with current practice, compete with other doctoral programs, and better prepare students for professional careers. The revised curriculum was approved through UNC's standard curriculum process, and the HLC was notified as per its Substantive Change Policy. Faculty make up the majority of members of all committees dealing with curriculum development or curricular changes (e.g., academic unit curriculum committees, college curriculum committees, Graduate Council, Professional Education Council, Liberal Arts Council, Undergraduate Council, and Academic Policies Committee). Meeting minutes from faculty curriculum committees demonstrate their active engagement in overseeing the curriculum.

UNC has sufficient faculty to carry out their role in the assessment of student learning. The University Assessment Council, which includes faculty representatives from each college and the Faculty Senate, provides recommendations and guidance regarding student learning outcomes assessment, faculty and staff development, institutional processes, and recognition of best practices and effective models. For example, in 2023, the Assessment Council developed new UNC Learning Outcomes

Assessment Standards of Practice in consultation with other faculty governance groups. Assessment of UNC's general education program is the responsibility of the Liberal Arts Council, as specified in Board Policy. Additional information about faculty involvement in assessment of learning is discussed in Criterion 4.B.

UNC has sufficient faculty for establishing the academic credentials for instructional staff. Academic units determine the minimum qualifications for instructional staff, including establishing criteria for tested experience when applicable. These qualifications apply to all instructional staff, including adjuncts and dual enrollment teachers. UNC faculty teaching graduate courses and supervising graduate student research must also meet qualifications established by the Graduate Council. Graduate faculty status must be renewed every five years. In 2017, all UNC academic units interested in using tested experience for determining faculty qualifications developed criteria, which form the basis for any hiring decisions based on tested experience. In response to the HLC Faculty Qualifications Policy change adopted November 2023, UNC implemented a procedure for updating faculty qualifications for academic units wishing to add or make changes to the criteria established in 2017.

Subcomponent 3.C.3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.

All UNC instructors are appropriately qualified. UNC Board Policy articulates the minimum qualifications required for each faculty rank. Academic units have established discipline-relevant minimum qualifications for faculty, including qualification by credential and, in some units, by tested experience. All full-time faculty appointments are approved by the provost or designee, who verifies the individual meets minimum qualifications prior to approval. Deans approve adjunct faculty appointments, and academic unit leaders vet the qualifications of dual enrollment instructors prior to appointment.

In response to revisions of the HLC's faculty qualifications policy adopted in November 2023, UNC revised its Faculty Qualifications procedures and asked academic units to update their qualifications criteria as described above in 3.C.2. Prior to 2024, faculty qualifications documentation was maintained using Watermark's Faculty Success platform. UNC determined it could improve the accuracy and currency of faculty qualifications data by transitioning documentation to Banner, and the university began this process in spring 2024. Maintaining complete and current data on the Watermark platform requires regular audits, conducted by hand, and significant time spent by academic leaders making sure that all of the information is entered by each faculty member and instructor. Moving forward, qualifications for all faculty, including dual enrollment teachers, will be entered at the time of hire by human resources specialists. This should improve the accuracy and completeness of documentation and reduce the administrative time required to maintain the Watermark platform for this purpose. UNC does not currently have any consortial or contractual offerings.

Subcomponent 3.C.4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

UNC instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established policies and procedures. The university's promotion and tenure policies and procedures articulate expectations for continuing levels of performance and describe the roles and responsibilities of faculty and administrators. Each academic unit is responsible for developing evaluation criteria for pre-tenure review, tenure, post-tenure, and promotion. As part of UNC's program review process, academic units must periodically review, update, and submit their evaluation criteria for approval by the dean and provost. The faculty comprehensive

review process is used for faculty members under consideration for pre-tenure review, tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review. A post-tenure review of tenured faculty must occur at least once every six academic years. Annual/biennial/triennial review is conducted for performance evaluation and eligibility for merit pay consideration. Each college maintains its own procedures for evaluating its adjunct faculty. Contract-renewable faculty must complete an annual/biennial review at least once every two years. Tenure track faculty complete annual reviews in years one through five and six if applicable. Tenured associate professors must complete at minimum a biennial review every two years, and tenured professors must complete a triennial review every three years. UNC offers an annual Tenure and Promotion Information session to clarify the tenure and promotion process and to answer questions. A recording of the workshop is posted to the university's website to provide access for faculty members who are unable to attend.

Subcomponent 3.C.5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

UNC has processes for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles. UNC's faculty evaluation policy and procedures, discussed in the previous subcomponent, require evaluation of teaching, and academic units are responsible for determining how teaching is evaluated. In addition to UNC's evaluation processes, as per Board policy tenured faculty may take sabbatical leave for professional growth and renewal. An annual Sabbatical Information Session educates faculty about the application process. Between 2020-2021 and 2023-2024, 109 faculty have taken sabbatical leave, averaging 27 faculty per academic year. Sabbatical projects in recent years have afforded faculty members opportunities to advance their research, author grants, books, and manuscripts, and explore pedagogical innovations. For example, one sabbatical project, funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, developed and investigated the outcomes of trainings focused on implicit bias towards individuals with disabilities. A different sabbatical project resulted in developing a grant proposal to improve training for school psychologists to better serve rural and linguistically diverse populations. This project resulted in a $4 million grant from the US Department of Education.

Because UNC places a high priority on faculty development, each college is allocated funds for faculty travel to support scholarly activity and professional development. UNC faculty find this support valuable as demonstrated by their participation in these opportunities. Results from the 2022-2023 HERI Faculty Survey show that UNC faculty regularly take advantage of professional development opportunities, including 48% of full-time undergraduate faculty participating in funded external workshops focused on teaching, 66% using travel funds paid by UNC, and 39% receiving internal grants for research. UNC faculty report notably higher rates of participation in institutionally-funded travel compared to the faculty at other institutions.

UNC supports the professional development of its faculty. This commitment is reflected in Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 and operationalized through strategic planning and the university's organizational structure. For example, in Phase I of implementing the strategic plan, UNC prioritized establishing an infrastructure and setting a supportive culture of career-long professional development for faculty and staff. Toward this end, three departments supporting complementary faculty development services were reorganized into a new Office of Academic Effectiveness. Academic Effectiveness exists to promote learning through assessment and accreditation, faculty support and development, and comprehensive instructional design services. The Assessment Department provides workshops, individual and

departmental consultations, and web-based toolkits on course and program assessment. UNC's teaching and learning center, the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL), introduces new faculty to UNC through the annual New Faculty Orientation and Development program and provides ongoing professional development through annual symposia, faculty learning communities, and webinar series. CETL maintains an online library of workshops and presentations, several teaching toolkits, and individual consultations from teaching coaches. CETL regularly evaluates its services through periodic needs assessments and annual reports, using the results to inform future program planning that is responsive to faculty needs. The Instructional Design and Development department (IDD) partners with faculty members to design and develop courses and interactive resources using innovative technology to improve teaching, student engagement, and student learning. IDD maintains an on-demand searchable library of resources, supports faculty development of open education resources (in collaboration with University Libraries), and provides consultations on course and program design using technology among other services.

Subcomponent 3.C.6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

UNC instructors are accessible for student inquiry. Board Policy defines the service component of faculty workload to include advising students on their academic progress or professional development. In addition, as per Board Policy, faculty who are responsible for advising are required to be available at specified hours. All instructional staff whose responsibilities involve students are expected to schedule a reasonable number of office hours for student conferences at times that are convenient for both students and faculty. Faculty members include information about office hours and other options for scheduling meetings in the course syllabus. In the online learning environment, the faculty are expected to indicate how students may contact them and how office hours are scheduled. Distance students and those taking online courses are satisfied with their access to faculty as suggested by the fact that approximately 81% (n = 1,290) are satisfied with their communication (2023 Student Experience Survey). One positive outcome emerging from the COVID pandemic was increased comfort and skill in using virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom, which has expanded options for meeting with students. UNC maintains a Zoom enterprise account and provides online training resources and call center support for faculty and students.

To increase faculty accessibility, UNC participates in EAB's Navigate, a web-based platform that supports coordinated advising and academic support of undergraduate students. UNC's primary use of the platform is to facilitate advising, including a function that allows students to schedule their own appointments with advisors, and early alert, which allows faculty members to identify students who are at risk of not succeeding in their courses (the early alert function is discussed in greater detail in Criterion 3.D.2).

Student survey results support that UNC faculty are accessible for student inquiry. For example, NSSE engagement indicators related to interactions with faculty show that both first year and senior UNC students report frequent interactions with faculty inside and outside of class. Forty-nine percent of first year students report frequent conversations about career plans, 29% frequently discussed course topics and ideas with faculty members outside of class, and 40% frequently discussed their academic performance with a faculty member. Seniors report similar rates of interaction, including 48% frequently discussing career plans, 33% frequently discussing course topics and ideas, and 34% frequently discussing academic performance with faculty members. On a scale of 1=Poor to 7=Excellent, 50% of first year students rated their interactions with faculty a 6 or 7, and 55% of seniors selected these ratings. Results from the 2022-2023 Diverse Learning Environments Survey complement the NSSE

results. For example, 62% of students were satisfied with instructor flexibility in responding to student concerns, 69% felt that faculty members provided feedback that helped them assess their progress, and 85% agreed that at least one faculty member has taken an interest in their development. Finally, in 2023, UNC's internally developed Student Experience Survey found that almost one half of students report frequent discussions of their academic interests and course selections with professors and instructors other than their assigned advisor.

While students report positive perceptions of their access to faculty, UNC has prioritized enhancing faculty mentoring of graduate students. Toward this end, all graduate faculty are required to complete training offered by the National Research Mentoring Network when applying for initial or renewing graduate faculty status. Past surveys of graduate students show generally high levels of satisfaction with faculty advising and mentoring; however, students also indicated ways their interactions with faculty could be improved. For example, 50% would recommend increasing the ability to spend more time with their faculty mentor, 36% wanted more career/professional guidance, and 20% wanted more research guidance. UNC's next survey of graduate students is scheduled for spring 2025, and results from that survey will be used to monitor progress in enhancing graduate faculty-student interactions and identify any additional improvement areas.

Subcomponent 3.C.7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Staff members providing student support services are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development. A position description is developed and maintained for each staff position at the university. The position description includes the minimum education, experience, and other requirements necessary to qualify an individual to perform the assigned responsibilities. Departments determine qualifications based on the nature of the work performed and guidance from national organizations such as the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS). Most positions providing student support services require an earned graduate degree in a field relevant to the position or a combination of educational credentials and related work experience.

Training for staff providing student support services begins during orientation. UNC's New Hire Onboarding includes a virtual component that introduces new employees to UNC's culture, mission and strategic priorities and provides general information about the university. Employees are required to complete compliance training on topics such as FERPA, HIPAA, implicit bias, workplace harassment, and cybersecurity. UNC's annual evaluation process begins with goal planning for the next year, including identifying training and professional development to be completed during the evaluation period. UNC manages staff evaluations using a third-party platform, Cornerstone, which allows supervisors to assign specific training requirements relevant to the work performed. Specialized onboarding and ongoing professional development are also provided by individual divisions and units. For example, the Division of Student Affairs provides onboarding that addresses expectations for all employees, crisis response protocols, and other information about the division.

UNC's Human Resources department created a full-time Organizational Development Specialist position in 2020. Duties and responsibilities of this position include assessing, designing, and delivering professional development programs to support the needs of staff across campus. Other in-house professional development is available through the UNITE initiative (discussed in greater detail in Criteria 1.C and 3.B), the Professional Advisor Network (Criterion 3.D), and within individual departments. UNC

subscribes to LinkedIn Learning, which provides access to thousands of virtual courses across a broad range of topics. Employees are eligible to receive employee tuition grants to enroll in courses at UNC and two other regional educational institutions. Staff working in student services units also frequently take advantage of training provided through the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL) and the Assessment department. Finally, the university allocates professional development funding for staff, which provides, on average, $700 per employee each year that can be used for conference travel and other professional development support.

Core Component 3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

Subcomponent 3.D.1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

UNC provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations. Student services programs address student needs in areas such as academic support, health and wellness, financial support, intervention services, and transition support. These support services are intentionally designed to be responsive to student needs. For example, Tutorial Services provides free tutoring and supplemental instruction delivered by peer tutors who are certified by the College Reading and Learning Association. Since 2019, UNC has expanded access to tutoring by establishing satellite locations across campus, extended evening hours, and online appointments. In response to increasing numbers of students experiencing food insecurity, UNC offers support for student's basic needs, including (1) the Bear Pantry, which supplements the food supplies for any UNC student experiencing hunger, (2) emergency housing vouchers, (3) emergency funding, and (4) case management to help connect students to the benefits they may be eligible for such as SNAP and Medicaid. UNC recently received a $310,000 grant from the Weld Trust to expand its food pantry and build the Center for Student Wellbeing, a basic needs center. This center will open in spring 2025. To support mental health, the Counseling Center provides up to ten free counseling sessions a year to students. To keep higher education accessible and affordable for Colorado residents, UNC recently announced the UNC Tuition Promise, which covers standard tuition and mandatory fees for all eligible undergraduate students. UNC's Student Outreach and Support (SOS) office supports students experiencing difficult circumstances, including medical, mental health, personal or family crisis, and illness or injury. To assist students in their transition to UNC, the university provides New Student Orientation for first year and transfer students, graduate student orientation, and orientation for students enrolled in fully online programs or at UNC's additional locations. Beginning in 2024-2025, UNC plans to move some of its orientation programming into the learning management system, Canvas, to free time for more engagement activities during the in-person portion of the program. Beyond the initial new student orientation, the Office of Student Engagement hosts New Student Days and BIG (Belong, Involve, Gather) Bear Welcome, which is focused on building a sense of community and belonging.

In addition to the programs and services described above, UNC also designs support services responsive to the needs of specific student populations. For example, students seeking enhanced research and academic engagement can participate in the UNC Honors Program or the McNair Scholars Program. UNC maintains eight Cultural and Resource Centers that provide opportunities to explore various social identities and specialized support for students from diverse backgrounds. Externally funded programs, such as the Center for Human Enrichment (federal TRiO Student Support Services program), Reisher Scholars, and Stryker Institute for Leadership Development, support the success of first generation

students. One of UNC's externally supported programs, the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI), couples tuition assistance and student support services for eligible Colorado resident students. Through comprehensive student support services, mentoring, and success workshops, students build a connection to the campus and receive help to navigate postsecondary education. Over the past four years, UNC has received $3,332,599 from the state COSI office to support underserved, first-generation Colorado students.

To ensure that UNC's support services and programs continue to meet all student needs, the university uses institutional data, surveys, and program evaluations. Institutional data provide information about changing demographic profiles, risk factors, and student outcomes. Surveys enhance UNC's understanding of the student experience and their satisfaction with services. Program evaluations provide opportunities for support services units to critically examine their offerings and make strategic decisions about improvement efforts. UNC's use of data and program evaluation is discussed in greater detail in Criteria 4.A and 4.C.

Subcomponent 3.D.2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

UNC provides learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. Tutorial Services provides free tutoring in over 125 undergraduate courses across 28 disciplines, supplemental instruction, and skills workshops on topics ranging from time management to test taking. Courses supported by UNC's tutoring and supplemental instruction vary based on data showing where areas of high need exist and also based on faculty input. UNC's Writing Center provides writing feedback via face-to-face, virtual, and email appointments in addition to a variety of writing-focused workshops for undergraduate and graduate students. The Research Consulting Lab, staffed by graduate students in UNC's Applied Statistics and Research Methods program, provides free consultation on research and survey design, data collection and management, statistical analysis, and evaluation. Beginning in summer 2019, first-year students identified as academically at-risk became eligible for proactive support from a new program, Bears First, which focuses on supporting students entering college with a high school G.P.A. below 3.0. Students in the Bears First program are assigned a success coach who helps them create an academic success plan and meets with them regularly throughout their first one to two years at UNC. Since the program began, first year fall-to-fall retention rates for eligible participants have increased from 55% to 63%.

International students' command of English is evaluated by TOEFL, IELTS, or other English proficiency exams. When students' skills in English are insufficient, they are granted a provisional admission until they successfully demonstrate English proficiency to engage in academic studies at the undergraduate or graduate level. Students needing to improve their English language skills are encouraged to enroll in the Intensive English Program (IEP), which is accredited by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation. While in the Intensive English Program, students are allowed to take a limited number of academic courses based on their English level placement: up to one academic course or three academic credits of undergraduate coursework and up to two courses or six academic credits of graduate coursework. Full academic admission is granted to students once they satisfy the English proficiency requirement. As part of UNC's HLC Quality Improvement Initiative, the university identified support for domestic English Language Learners (ELL) as a priority. UNC enrolls domestic ELL students, many of whom are first-generation immigrants including asylees, refugees, and emigrants, with dominant languages including Spanish, Arabic, Burmese, Vietnamese, and French. The ELL program provides early

identification, referral, and support for ELL students, including custom courses offered through the IEP program.

UNC supports students experiencing academic challenges. Since 2016, UNC has used an early alert process supported by EAB Navigate to identify undergraduate students early each semester who demonstrate signs of struggling in their classes. Faculty members are asked to provide input on concerns about specific students, and this information is shared with the student's professional advisor, who works with the student to identify the issue and provide guidance and resources. Since fall 2019, 14,645 progress reports have been completed by UNC faculty members (82% average response rate per term). Analysis provided by EAB shows increased persistence for students who participate in follow-up appointments. Academic probation students receive support from professional advisors in their respective college or Soar (undecided and Bears First students). Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 2.0 are placed on academic probation and have 24 probation credits to return to good academic standing. UNC's Success at UNC Canvas course provides an on-demand Academic Success Workshop that students on academic probation must complete before they can register for the next semester.

UNC has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared. During new student orientation, entering students meet with advisors to select their courses for the first semester of enrollment. Prior to attending new student orientation, UNC requires that students complete an assessment, the ALEKS Math Placement Assessment, to determine their readiness for mathematics and statistics courses. At orientation, students meet with advisors to assist them in selecting the appropriate mathematics or statistics course. UNC offers supplemental mathematics courses for students who are identified as needing additional support in order to be successful in college algebra, calculus, or statistics. The supplemental courses are taken concurrently with the course in which the student enrolls. UNC also provides guidance on placement into appropriate written communication courses. Students are placed into the appropriate writing course based on one of three indicators: high school GPA, ACT/SAT scores, or results of a directed self-placement survey. A supplemental course is offered to students who would benefit from extra support.

Subcomponent 3.D.3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.

UNC provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students. Since the 2019 Assurance Review, UNC has fully implemented a new centralized advising structure for undergraduate students. UNC decided to change its advising structure based on recommendations from a 2018 task force initiative, which included establishing the Bears First program described above and also creating college-based advising/student success centers staffed by professional advisors. As of 2021, each college has an advising/student success center, staffed by full-time professional advisors. Undecided students and those identified as academically at risk are advised through Soar, housed in the Office of Student Academic Success. Professional advising is administratively coordinated and supported by the Assistant Vice President for Student Academic Success, with each college dean's office supervising its respective center director. The UNC Professional Advising Strategic Vision: 2021-2024 articulates goals and strategies for creating a central, standardized expectation of practice across all UNC advising centers. Advisor competencies are aligned with the NACADA Core Competencies, and ongoing advisor training and support is delivered through the Professional Advisor Network. NSSE results collected in 2019, 2021, and 2023 show that the percentage of first-year students rating the quality of their interactions with advisors as excellent improved from 57% to 63%. Data from the most recent Student Experience Survey (fall 2023) show that 75% of students receiving support from Soar and 80% of those advised by a college

advising and success center are satisfied with advising services. These results are also consistent with the HLC Student Survey Results related to advising; however, we are interpreting results from the HLC survey with caution due to the low response rate (2% or 171 out of 7,187 students).

All graduate students are assigned a graduate faculty advisor upon enrollment at UNC. Graduate student advisors are responsible for helping students navigate and understand degree program requirements and applicable UNC policies, providing professional guidance, and explaining comprehensive examination, thesis, scholarly project, or dissertation requirements, among other responsibilities. Since July 1, 2023, UNC has required all faculty seeking initial or renewed graduate faculty status to complete training on mentoring graduate students through the National Research Mentoring Network and a Canvas course developed by UNC, which includes a self-assessment of research advising.

Students enrolled in fully online programs or at one of UNC's additional locations are assigned faculty advisors from their academic program, typically the program coordinator. These advisors are responsible for helping students create a program course plan, providing program resources, explaining policies, and directing students to appropriate UNC resources. Professional staff serving as persistence specialists provide additional support, including assistance with registration, navigating billing and financial aid, and addressing student concerns.

Subcomponent 3.D.4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

UNC provides students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning. UNC's technology infrastructure is managed by Information Management and Technology (IM&T). In addition to overseeing technology services for business operations, network and connectivity, training and support, and technology resources, IM&T offers specific support services for teaching and learning. This support includes managing physical and virtual labs, such as the Apporto Virtual Lab, which allows faculty and students to remotely access UNC licensed software from any device. A technology strategic plan provides a roadmap for prioritizing technology goals and strategies in alignment with the university's strategic plan, Rowing, Not Drifting 2030. UNC maintains over 400 technology-equipped teaching and learning spaces, and IM&T works with faculty and staff to address instructional needs across campus. IM&T manages the back-end technology associated with UNC's learning management system, Canvas, and the Instructional Design and Development (IDD) department supports faculty members' use of Canvas (additional information about IDD support for Canvas can be found in Criterion 3.C). UNC maintains a 24-7 technical support center, staffed by UNC personnel during extended business hours seven days a week and through a third-party answering service after business hours.

UNC assesses student fees for programs and/or courses that are more expensive to deliver, including courses with high technology and equipment needs, to ensure that students have access to appropriate resources within their disciplines. The university publishes information about additional program and course fees on its website and also in the catalog. UNC science programs house an impressive holding of modern scientific instrumentation, and many science courses require consumable lab materials. Students in the performing and visual arts gain skills and knowledge through a state-of-the-art recording studio, pre/post production studios, and music labs. These are but a few examples of the program-specific learning technologies on campus.

The building inventory at UNC is quite diverse. The campus in Greeley has over 200 designated classroom and teaching laboratories in ten academic buildings, with additional non-classroom spaces available for learning activities. The physical condition of all buildings is reviewed and evaluated every three years and classified according to any needed maintenance and repairs required in order to meet functional needs. To further support the university's mission, UNC has several art galleries, laboratories, museum collections, and performance spaces. UNC's newest facility, the Campus Commons, houses a 600-seat performance hall that provides instructional, rehearsal, and performance space for the more than 900 undergraduate and graduate students in the performing arts.

Clinical practice sites are central to a number of programs at UNC. To illustrate, students experience hands-on learning opportunities in the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Clinic, the Psychological Services Clinic, and the Cancer Rehabilitation Institute. These facilities combine service to the local community with real-world learning in ways that benefit students and the general public, as well as supporting faculty and student community-based research and learning.

UNC houses a large selection of books, journals, and other materials in University Libraries, which includes the James A. Michener Library and the Howard M. Skinner Music Library. The libraries meet the instructional and research needs of faculty and students and carry a large number and variety of volumes and journals with collections of approximately 1.5 million items in monograph, periodical, government document, audio-visual, archives, special collections, and microform formats. The Skinner Music Library holds a collection of more than 100,000 scores, books, periodicals, and recordings. University Libraries has an extensive interlibrary loan program, and UNC repositories of Digital UNC and UNCOpen provide access to the university's records, history, and intellectual output in digital format. Along with its large collection of physical holdings, UNC subscribes to a full range of electronic collections, databases and online repositories such as JSTOR, ProQuest, and Academic Search Premier (EBSCOhost).

Criterion 4: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Core Component 4.A. The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

Subcomponent 4.A.1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.

UNC maintains a practice of regular program review. The purpose of UNC's program review is to support, develop, and maintain high quality programs in a non-punitive environment where the focus is on improvement. Administrators work with faculty and staff to identify barriers to program effectiveness and collaboratively develop action plans for overcoming these barriers. All academic degree programs (accredited and non-accredited), academic support programs, and student affairs programs participate in program review through processes suitable to the type of program. A program review schedule is maintained for all programs that participate in program review, with most programs completing

comprehensive reviews every five to six years. The program review schedule is adjusted for those programs with specialized accreditation to coincide with the accreditation cycle.

Academic Program Review
The comprehensive program review process for academic programs includes self-study, external review, and a final meeting with the provost or designee to discuss outcomes and improvement plans for the next cycle. Three examples from recent program reviews are provided in the Evidence File, including the following:

- Anthropology provides an example from UNC's previous program review process, which was in place from 2010-2023;
- Philosophy provides an example from UNC's new process for non-accredited programs, with the first reports completed in spring 2024; and
- Rehabilitation Counseling and Sciences provides an example from an accredited program.

Additional examples are available upon request.

While UNC's long-standing academic program review process was effective, over time it became clear that non-accredited programs would benefit from a more structured format. In 2022, a working group was tasked with developing recommendations for improving academic program review as part of Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 Phase I. Based on the working group's recommendations, UNC developed program review standards for non-accredited programs based on the HLC Accreditation Criteria and a self-study process adapted from the self-assessment guides created by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS Standards). Feedback from the faculty members whose programs have used the new standards has been uniformly positive.

In addition to the comprehensive program reviews that occur every five to six years, UNC has recently developed an annual health check process for all academic degree programs, regardless of accreditation status. The annual health checks were piloted in academic year 2023-2024 and will be evaluated and revised based on feedback from academic administrators and the faculty. Annual health checks include a set of indicators that encompass high-level metrics for monitoring program demand, productivity, efficiency, and student outcomes. Dashboards provide data to deans and programs for early identification of problems and timely intervention. Data can also be used to identify programs that should be considered for investment, restructuring, or closure in those rare cases where improvement efforts are not successful.

Finally, to improve UNC's internal review processes for academic program review, UNC has developed Program Learning Outcomes Standards of Practice that include an official role for the University Assessment Council in academic program review. Beginning in 2024-2025, the Assessment Council will review assessment plans and results as part of the comprehensive program review for non-accredited programs. Programs will also provide a mid-cycle report to the Assessment Council. The Council will review program assessment reports, provide feedback, and use information from their reviews to recommend process improvements and additional faculty development needs. Consistent with UNC's commitment to continuous improvement, the new academic program review processes implemented in 2023-2024 will be evaluated and modified as necessary to ensure effectiveness.

Academic Support Program Review

Academic support programs are housed in the Division of Academic Affairs and include areas such as tutoring, the honors program, and advising. Academic support programs use either the CAS Standards or standards developed by their professional associations as the framework for program review. Programs complete a self-study and contract with an external reviewer to provide an objective program evaluation. The process culminates in a meeting with the provost or designee, and the results are summarized in a memo that outlines expectations for the next review cycle. Examples of academic support program reviews since 2019 include the McNair Scholars Program and Tutorial Services.

Student Affairs Program Review
Prior to 2019, almost all academic support and student affairs programs were housed within Academic Affairs, and each of these programs participated in the process described above for academic support programs. In 2019, UNC reorganized to create a Division of Student Affairs by merging the Division of Campus Climate and Community with select student affairs units previously housed in Academic Affairs. This division was reorganized again in 2021 to create two new divisions: the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services. Enrollment Services was moved back to Academic Affairs in summer 2024. Program review was temporarily paused as new organizational structures were being implemented. Program review resumed in 2023-2024 with a new five-year program review calendar. The new student affairs program review process retains the use of the CAS Standards or other applicable professional standards. Two program reviews were initiated in 2023-2024: Advocacy Services (to be completed fall 2024) and Student Conduct and Accountability.

UNC Use of Program Review Findings
UNC acts on the findings from program review. As a result of the self-study and review process, programs identify improvement actions to be completed during the next review cycle. For programs housed in Academic Affairs, these improvement efforts are documented in a memo from the provost or designee, and the results of improvement actions are reported in the next program review report. For example, in its 2016-2020 self-study, the Human Services program reported on the outcomes of the action plan developed during the 2015 program review. Goals addressed program leadership, enrollment and retention, international and external collaborations, curriculum revisions, and faculty research. In its 2020 program review report, the program provided detailed descriptions of actions taken to achieve these goals and the status of each. The Center for Human Enrichment (CHE) provides an example from an academic support program. In its prior program review, the department identified eleven goals. In 2023, CHE reported that it had met or partially met eight of the eleven goals. For example, the department was successful in completing a curriculum review, conducting an assessment project, and improving outreach to prospective program participants.

Subcomponent 4.A.2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.

All credit transcripted at UNC is evaluated. The curriculum approval process, described in Criterion 3.A, assures that courses meet approved standards of rigor prior to being added to the catalog. UNC awards credit based on the U.S. Department of Education definition of a credit hour and regularly runs integrity reports to ensure compliance with stated policies. Policies assure that courses meet the minimum contact minutes per credit hour and course type.

Faculty members are responsible for evaluating student performance in courses, determining the criteria for grading, and assigning grades. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for assuring the integrity of all

credit the university transcripts. Towards this end, registrar staff work closely with faculty members who serve on the Academic Policies Committee and Liberal Arts Council, campus administrators, every academic unit, and the Office of the Provost. Meeting minutes demonstrate that faculty members regularly exercise oversight of policies related to the awarding of credit.

Students seeking credit for prior learning have several options. For example, students may transfer up to 30 credits for college-level courses completed at United States military service schools. Similarly, students may apply a maximum of 30 credits earned through CLEP tests. All options for prior learning credit are published on the university's website and in the catalog.

Subcomponent 4.A.3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

UNC has transfer policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts. Undergraduates may transfer up to 90 credits from an accredited institution. Graduate students must complete at least 50% of their graduate program credits at UNC. The Office of the Registrar determines which credits are transferable for undergraduate students based on criteria established and approved by the faculty. Registrar staff meet annually with each academic unit to affirm the established criteria to award transfer credit on behalf of the respective academic units. The Office of the Registrar staff subsequently build out the transfer course library into UNC's student information system, Banner, which ensures timely evaluation and consistency in the awarding of credits.

UNC only accepts transfer credit from U.S. Department of Education accredited institutions; however, the university will evaluate course work completed at a non-accredited institution upon request. Students can find information about transfer equivalencies from international institutions through a searchable portal. UNC posts its transfer policies on the registrar's webpage and also in the catalog. Students who are dissatisfied with the awarding of transfer credit may file a complaint with the Colorado Department of Higher Education, and instructions for doing so are published on the university's website.

Additional information about UNC's transfer policies can be found in Criterion 2.B.

Subcomponent 4.A.4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

UNC exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses through the university's registration process. Prerequisite courses are identified through the curriculum approval process and then entered into the university's integrated student information system, Banner. Course registration is done online, and the system automatically prevents enrolling in any course for which a designated prerequisite has not been completed. Faculty members may waive a prerequisite after consultation with a student to ensure the student is prepared to succeed in the course. Colorado limits the number of credits required for a bachelor's degree to 120 semester credits, and prerequisites must be included within the 120 limit unless the Board and the Colorado Department of Higher Education grant an exception. Waivers have been granted statewide to teacher-preparation programs, which are capped at 126 hours. As described in Criterion 3.A, course rigor and expectations for student learning are maintained through the curriculum review process. Curriculum approval occurs through processes overseen by the faculty

and academic administrators. College curriculum committees meet regularly to approve revisions to existing and new courses. Proposals for modifying or adding courses address course rigor and learning expectations in course objectives, content, requirements, evaluation methods, and required texts or readings. A recent survey of alumni found that approximately 87% of alumni reported their education was academically challenging.

Faculty qualifications, including high school instructors teaching dual enrollment courses, were discussed in Criterion 3.C. Instructors teaching in the dual enrollment program are considered adjunct faculty and must hold a master's degree or equivalent tested experience in the appropriate discipline. Dual enrollment course syllabi are reviewed and approved by the appropriate academic unit at UNC to ensure that the learning objectives and requirements are equivalent with those for the campus-based course. Courses completed through dual enrollment become a permanent part of the student's college transcript. UNC has recently developed new guidelines for dual enrollment based on state requirements and the HLC Dual Credit for Institutions and Peer Reviewers document. These new guidelines are intended to clarify roles and responsibilities and ensure that dual enrollment courses and instructors meet UNC requirements.

Subcomponent 4.A.5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

UNC maintains specialized accreditation where appropriate and/or required for licensure or certification. The decision to seek and maintain specialized accreditation is made by the program faculty, dean, and provost and is based on the value-added benefit to students and to the university. For example, in the 2023 program review for Exercise Science, UNC determined that the program should seek accreditation based on new professional requirements for students seeking certification in Exercise Science related specializations. Funds were allocated to the academic unit to support initial and ongoing costs related to accreditation by the Committee on Accreditation for the Exercise Sciences. All degree programs at UNC in fields that require accreditation for certification or licensure maintain accreditation with their professional associations. Information about UNC's accredited programs is posted to the university website and in the catalogs. Accredited programs also provide this information on their respective webpages.

Subcomponent 4.A.6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Indicators UNC uses to evaluate the success of its graduates include employment, pursuit of graduate or professional education, earnings, satisfaction with the university and their academic program, and accomplishment of the university's institutional learning outcomes. UNC administers an annual alumni survey of recent graduates to collect information about their success. Recently, UNC added alumni who graduated five and ten years prior to the alumni survey to provide information about longer term placement outcomes. Survey results are summarized and posted to a SharePoint site, and more detailed reports are available upon request.

Data from the 2023-2024 Alumni Survey show that 84% of undergraduate degree recipients report being employed and/or in graduate school within one year of graduation. This increases to 93% five years after graduation and 97% ten years later, with 85% and 87% employed full time at five and ten years, respectively. Over 90% of graduate degree recipients report being employed or in graduate school one

year (96%), five years (91%), and ten years (91%) after graduation. One year following graduation, 78% of undergraduate alumni report that their UNC education prepared them well for their career. This percentage substantially increases five and ten years following graduation, with 87% and 88% respectively reporting their UNC education prepared them well for their careers.

UNC has also developed an Alumni Employment Dashboard that is publicly available on the university's website. This dashboard can be used to help students pick a major, explore post-graduate careers, identify top industries employing UNC graduates, and other relevant information about UNC alumni outcomes.

Core Component 4.B. The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

Subcomponent 4.B.1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.

UNC has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings. UNC defines cocurricular offerings to include academic support and student affairs programs that have student learning and development as part of their program mission. Assessment processes have been developed over time as suitable to UNC's institutional mission and context and are periodically evaluated and updated to assure their effectiveness and support continuous improvement. UNC's assessment processes are informed by Guiding Principles adopted in 2015 through a campus-wide collaborative process. The University Assessment Council serves as the principal body responsible for developing and maintaining the institution's learning assessment efforts. It is charged with making formal recommendations concerning best practices in the design, development, and deployment of learning outcomes assessment.

UNC has clearly stated goals for student learning at the institution, program, and course levels. UNC's mission documents include learning goals for undergraduate and graduate students. In 2017, UNC developed institutional learning outcomes that elaborate on and complement the university's learning goals. Curricular and cocurricular programs align program-level learning outcomes to the institutional learning outcomes, which are directly assessed at the program level and indirectly assessed through student surveys. All curricular programs have articulated learning outcomes and curriculum maps, and these are centrally stored in a SharePoint site maintained by the Assessment Office.

Curricular Program Assessment
Program-level assessment is embedded in the academic program review process, discussed in Criterion 4.A. Self-study reports describe improvements based on learning outcomes assessment, and external reviewers are asked to evaluate programs' assessment processes. Programs whose assessment processes do not meet UNC's expectations are directed to work with the Assessment Office to improve assessment. New program review guidelines adopted in 2023 further clarify expectations for assessment through Standard 2: Curriculum, which includes an evaluation of the following:

1. Effectiveness of the unit's assessment process;
2. Evidence of student achievement of learning outcomes;
3. Improvement actions derived from assessment data; and
4. Evidence of any claims made about student learning outcomes and alumni success.

A 2021 evaluation of UNC's assessment practices conducted by the Assessment Council identified opportunities for improving UNC's processes. UNC has acted on the recommendations emerging from the 2021 evaluation. The Assessment Council worked with other governance groups to develop and approve new Learning Outcomes Assessment Standards of Practice. These standards clarify the purpose and expectations of assessment and provide a new reporting structure aligned with the program review timeline. The assessment standards also define a new role for the Assessment Council, which will review program assessment plans in year one of the program review cycle, mid-cycle progress reports, and the final program review self-study assessment documentation. The new standards, which go into effect in 2024-2025, were developed to address identified gaps in documenting the assessment activity of programs, expand on the documentation currently provided through program review, and provide additional opportunities for faculty oversight of assessment.

The 2021 evaluation was augmented in 2023-2024 by a college-level audit of assessment processes to better understand assessment planning, data collection, the use of data, available resources and training, and ongoing needs. While results highlight several institutional strengths, including widespread assessment of student learning across the university and the effectiveness of integrating assessment into program review, the audit also identified several structural weaknesses, including a lack of formal reporting structures and a need for additional professional development. Based on the findings from the 2023-2024 audit, UNC has identified specific improvement actions it will take beginning in 2024-2025.

The curriculum review process requires the inclusion of learning objectives for all courses, which are described in the proposed course syllabi. Assessment of learning at the course level is the responsibility of faculty members teaching the course. To support course-based assessment, UNC has developed a Course Assessment Toolkit, maintains a webinar library with several sessions related to assessment, and provides consultations for individual faculty and academic units. ID on Demand, a searchable web-based repository of resources for online course development and instruction, contains multiple resources on assessment in online courses. To support UNC's new general education assessment plan, UNC faculty and staff have developed resources for using the learning management system, Canvas, for general education assessment and have conducted multiple training sessions with academic units and individual faculty.

General Education Assessment

Prior to 2022-23, UNC's assessment of general education outcomes had relied primarily on indirect assessments conducted through institutional surveys such as the CIRP Senior Survey and the National Survey of Student Engagement. In spring 2022, the Liberal Arts Council (LAC) added the teaching syllabus review described in Criterion 3.B as an indirect assessment. Also in spring 2022, the LAC began creating a systematic and sustainable direct assessment process, which was developed and piloted in 2022-2023. The new direct assessment process is based on a proof-of-concept pilot of course-embedded assessment conducted by UNC In 2017-2018. That project demonstrated the efficacy of course-embedded assessment as a direct assessment method, and it also produced information about technical and logistical barriers to full implementation. These barriers included data collection challenges, lack of clear rubrics and guidelines, and communication with the faculty. The recently developed direct assessment process used the information from the pilot to develop and implement a second pilot that addressed some of the issues discovered in 2017-2018. For example, data collection was a significant barrier to implementing systematic direct assessment. The LAC decided to require instructors to use UNC's learning management system, Canvas, for assessing student work, and outcomes data are produced when faculty members grade assignments/exams, which can be extracted from Canvas for reporting

purposes. Rubrics have been developed for each LAC category, and training and resources have been created to support faculty. As part of UNC's HLC Quality Improvement Initiative, the university funded a project to develop additional support in course alignment with general education learning outcomes. This pilot will serve as a model for ongoing professional development. An LAC dashboard extracts assessment results from Canvas, and the Assessment Director will analyze these results and report to the Liberal Arts Council.

Cocurricular Programs

UNC's cocurricular programs are regularly engaged in assessment, employing assessment practices best suited to their program mission, purpose, and program services. Student Affairs units' assessment plans evaluate student learning outcomes and service outcomes. Many units have a schedule for participating in nationally recognized research surveys such as the National College Health Assessment. Cocurricular programs housed in Academic Affairs embed assessment into the five-year program review cycle. Cocurricular programs also periodically conduct targeted assessments to better understand program impact on student outcomes.

Subcomponent 4.B.2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

UNC uses information gained from assessment to improve student learning. UNC's Guiding Principles for Assessment reflect the university's emphasis on assessment in support of teaching and learning, with a significant focus on conducting assessments that are useful, meaningful, manageable, and sustainable. The Guiding Principles promote an environment that emphasizes assessments geared toward actionable results rather than collecting data primarily for reporting purposes.

Program review reports demonstrate the broad use of assessment to improve learning. Curricular programs' improvement actions most often include course and curriculum revisions and new pedagogical approaches. For example, Physics has embedded more opportunities for students to develop written and oral communication skills across the curriculum and made instruction interactive by incorporating more group work and projects in class and moving to a flipped classroom model in some courses. Institutional dashboards provide additional data on courses with high DFW rates and equity gaps at the course and program levels. Many programs have begun using these dashboards to identify improvement opportunities. Economics, for example, closely monitors DFW rates and equity gaps and has developed strategies such as low stakes and continuous assessments starting early in the semester to improve learning.

Cocurricular programs also use assessment data to improve program services and to understand and address barriers to student participation. For example, UNC's Office of Health Promotion used student mental health assessment data to develop the UNC Flourish campaign with support from the JED Foundation. Assessment data informed the campaign's strategic plan and programming developed to address mental health issues reported by UNC students.

Since 2013, the Assessment Council has sponsored an annual assessment mini-grant competition, awarding $150,000 over the last 10 years to support small assessment projects focused on improving student learning. These grants fund program-level assessment, course or activity level assessment, or the development/improvement of assessment methods and are open to academic and cocurricular programs. For example, faculty members in the Department of English used grant funds to develop and assess a new, standardized curriculum for its first-year composition program. Other faculty have used

grants to assess the impact of course modality on learning outcomes in lower division economics and statistics courses. Grant recipients are invited to present the results of their projects at UNC's annual Teaching and Assessment Symposium each spring.

UNC uses assessment data at the institutional level to deepen understanding of structural barriers and identify strategies and resources needed to improve learning. For example, UNC uses its equity and graduation dashboards to prioritize faculty development offerings, including the Teaching for Inclusion and Equity (TIE) Program, a syllabus toolkit that emphasizes equity-minded practice, and full-day college retreats on diversity, equity, and inclusion that feature sessions on inclusive teaching. Another example comes from a series of surveys between 2021 and 2023 that revealed inconsistent use of Canvas by individual faculty as a barrier to student learning. In response, UNC's Instructional Design and Development (IDD) department ramped up the creation of online classroom templates to provide a more consistent organizational structure for faculty and students. When the templates were first introduced in fall 2019, only 3% of courses adopted them. As of spring 2024, 35% of all courses are using the templates (this includes courses delivered fully online, partially online, and in-person). In 2023, the Faculty Senate recommended and the Board of Trustees adopted new minimum requirements for the use of Canvas in all courses regardless of modality. IDD created a new face-to-face Canvas course template that supports faculty in meeting the new Board policy.

Subcomponent 4.B.3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

UNC's processes and methodologies to assess student learning are derived from best practices informed by the work of national assessment experts and include substantial participation of faculty and staff. The University Assessment Council plays an important role in guiding the university to establish and maintain good assessment practices while also identifying and responding to challenges related to assessment. Chaired by the assessment director, the Assessment Council consists of faculty representatives from each college, the Faculty Senate, Division of Student Affairs, and academic student support services. Since its launch in 2011, the Assessment Council has led various initiatives such as the development of UNC's Guiding Principles for Assessment and institutional learning outcomes. More recently, the Assessment Council conducted an evaluation of UNC's assessment practices in 2021 that led to hiring a full-time assessment director and the development of the Learning Outcomes Assessment Standards of Practice discussed in 4.A and 4.B.1.

Assessment leaders regularly participate in external professional development, including the HLC's Facilitating Learning: Lead Campus-Wide Assessment initiative, to ensure UNC's processes align to current best practices in the field. The director is also a member of the Grand Challenges in Assessment in Higher Education project, with a focus on innovation and pedagogical improvement. Where appropriate to the university's mission and context, UNC draws from national resources and best practices as evidenced by its use of the CAS Standards, the AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes, which formed the foundation of UNC's Institutional Learning Outcomes, and the 21st Century Distance Education Guidelines 2021, which UNC used to evaluate distance education. UNC has aligned its career readiness learning outcomes and activities to the NACE Competencies. Finally, UNC participates in national benchmarking surveys such as the National Survey of Student Engagement, the HERI Faculty Survey, and the National College Health Assessment.

To support assessment at UNC, the Office of Assessment provides web-based toolkits on course and program assessment and administers annual mini-grants to support student learning outcomes assessment. Recent grant-funded projects further illustrate the variety and quality of assessment work occurring at UNC. An annual Teaching and Assessment Symposium provides additional opportunities for faculty members to share and learn about best practices in assessment. The Assessment Council conducted an evaluation of assessment practices in fall 2023 using a framework from the HLC Facilitating Learning: Lead Campus-Wide Assessment. From the evaluation, the university learned that academic units encounter challenges in documenting their assessment activities and desire additional professional development and support. UNC is using the results of this evaluation to create new professional development and resources on assessment for unit leaders and to leverage SharePoint for ongoing assessment data and report storage (to be maintained by the Office of Assessment). UNC is also working to expand the use of its learning management system, Canvas, for program assessment data collection and reporting. This is a good direction for UNC, as past experiences with using assessment management systems (e.g., Nuventive TracDat, Watermark LiveText) have shown those systems to be overly burdensome, expensive, and not a good use of faculty members' limited time. Integrating program assessment into Canvas reduces the number of platforms the faculty need to use and supports direct assessment of student learning. UNC will be able to generate program dashboards from data extracted from Canvas (similar to the general education dashboards developed in 2023), and faculty members can focus more time on identifying and implementing improvements and less time on data collection and reporting. Some academic units have started using Canvas already with promising results.

Curricular programs rely on direct assessment of student learning as well as indirect assessments such as institutional student outcomes data and surveys. Course embedded papers and written assignments are the most frequently cited direct assessment methods used for program assessment, followed by presentations or demonstrations, group projects, and exams, with most programs using multiple methods. At the course level, UNC faculty employ a broad range of methods for assessing student learning in the courses they teach, as suggested by data from the 2022-2023 HERI Faculty Survey. For example, over half of respondents report using electronic quizzes with immediate feedback in class, and 95% use rubric-based assessment at least some of the time in their courses, with over half using this method in all courses. Depending on the nature of their programs and students served, cocurricular programs tend to rely more heavily on indirect assessment methods such as surveys, participant evaluations, and participation data.

Core Component 4.C. The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

Subcomponent 4.C.1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.

UNC has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious, attainable, and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings. UNC's strategic plan, Rowing, Not Drifting 2030, includes the university's goals for retention and completion. By 2030, UNC aims to achieve an overall 80% fall-to-fall retention rate, a 45% 4-year graduation rate, and a 60% 6-year graduation rate. Acknowledging historical and persistent equity gaps in student outcomes, UNC has established additional goals for retention and graduation of students from underrepresented minority

groups. These include an 80% fall-to-fall retention rate, a 45% 4-year graduation rate, and a 50% 6-year graduation rate. UNC's student success goals are ambitious in that they represent targets that would place UNC within the top 10% of the university's peer comparison group and attainable as demonstrated by the number of peer institutions who have achieved similar outcomes. UNC is monitoring progress towards its goals through a public dashboard on the university's website. In the last two years, the university has seen the highest student retention rates in its history.

Subcomponent 4.C.2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.

UNC collects and analyzes student retention, persistence, and completion rates at the university and program levels. Since the 2015 Comprehensive HLC Evaluation, UNC prioritized improving its data capabilities. In 2019, UNC reported on its progress, which included early development of data dashboards. Since 2019, UNC has increased its capacity for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, completion, and many other important university data needs. For example, in 2020-2021 UNC reorganized its data reporting and analysis structure by creating a new Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) and restructuring the previous Institutional Reporting and Analysis Services department into the Office of Business Intelligence and Data Engineering (BIDE). Under the new structure, the OIRE team is responsible for most activities related to research and analysis, project design, and planning. Additionally, this team fulfills external surveys and compliance/accreditation mandates requiring aggregated/summarized data. The BIDE team is accountable for many tasks related to data engineering, data extraction, and data quality, including the development and maintenance of standardized data sets, data extracts/automated feeds, operational reports, and data integrity reports. Along with the reorganization, UNC invested in new staff positions, including a Director of OIRE, a data scientist, and additional analysts. The restructuring and investment in human resources has led to accelerated growth in UNC's ability to collect and analyze student data.

Building on the early dashboards, UNC maintains a robust webpage with various data resources, including public retention and graduation dashboards that can be disaggregated by degree level, college, and academic unit. Dashboards that require login credentials provide additional data that helps to inform improvement actions (additional discussion about how UNC uses its data will be provided in the next subcomponent section). These dashboards go beyond the public information and include data such as key influencers on retention rates, fall to spring retention rates, and DFW rates that can be disaggregated by a variety of factors. Graduation and Equity Action Dashboards provide additional actionable data such as course-level equity gaps, time to graduation, and overlooked equity gaps. Reports used for program review and annual program health checks (discussed in Criterion 4.A) further extend the student outcomes data UNC collects and analyzes.

In addition to dashboards and standardized reports, UNC regularly conducts institutional research studies to better understand factors that influence student success. UNC has developed a Student Experience Survey, which is administered every two to three years, a Graduate School Quality of Life Survey, and the annual Alumni Survey. UNC conducts external surveys such as the National Survey of Student Engagement and the HERI Diverse Learning Environments Survey. UNC also regularly collects data from the National Student Clearinghouse, which provides information about where students go when they leave UNC. Additional data on alumni employment outcomes are available on a public dashboard.

Subcomponent 4.C.3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

UNC is committed to ensuring that its students succeed in their academic pursuits. UNC's Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan incorporates information about student retention, persistence, and graduation to drive improvements that align with the university's student success objectives. The SEM committee analyzes a range of data, including recruitment and admissions data, student enrollment data, completion data, faculty and scholarship data, and relevant survey data. Additionally, the university regularly carries out surveys to gather feedback on student experiences, climate, and satisfaction, which are shared with the SEM teams to support decision-making. By employing these strategies and tactics, UNC works towards achieving positive outcomes such as higher retention and graduation rates. For example, analysis of data was used to determine that UNC's penetration into the Greeley school district should be expanded, particularly among the large Hispanic population in local high schools.

Another example can be found in UNC's HLC Quality Improvement Initiative, which called for establishing college student success committees. Each committee is led by an associate dean, and committees use student outcomes data and other information to identify improvement opportunities and strategies for addressing barriers to student success. For example, in year one of the project, the College of Natural and Health Sciences recommended five student success and equity dashboards to be used as a foundation for measuring student success in the college. Data from these dashboards was shared with academic units, and the college offered professional development to faculty and graduate students on supporting first-year and first-generation students. Each college committee developed goals for 2023-2024, including goals for continuing to use data provided by the university. Although UNC's Quality Initiative ended in June 2024, the university intends to maintain these committees as an ongoing strategy for improving student outcomes.

Subcomponent 4.C.4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

UNC applies standard methodologies for collecting and analyzing student data that reflect good practice. Standards and data definitions are informed by the Common Data Set, Colorado's Student Unit Records Data System (SURDS), and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). UNC uses an integrated student information system, Banner, which includes demographic data, enrollment information, grades, course information, and other data points. The registrar serves as the data steward for student data and is responsible for authorizing access to the system for entering and retrieving student data. Permission to interact with Banner is closely monitored to ensure data integrity. In 2021, UNC established a Data Governance Steering Committee and Data Strategy Committee to further enhance its data collection and analysis processes. Early efforts included creating guidelines for sharing student record-level data, survey protocols, and implementing the Faculty Load and Compensation (FLAC) function in Banner.

UNC has specific protocols and procedures for monitoring and assuring data integrity. UNC's Guidelines for Data Protection address data security and set standards for determining what data may be publicly shared. The Office of Business Intelligence and Data Engineering has developed data integrity reports

that are run on a regular basis to ensure that data are complete and accurate. The Office of the Registrar maintains an operations manual that describes the many data integrity reports used to identify data errors. The manual provides information about the reports, timelines for when the reports are run, and procedures for addressing any identified errors. Recently, data governance subcommittees have identified additional data integrity reports to help keep the data clean, and reviews of coding have also occurred to refine definitions.

Criterion 5: Institutional Effectiveness, Resources, and Planning

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

Core Component 5.A. Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

Subcomponent 5.A.1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies— including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.

Shared governance at UNC is practiced by engaging internal constituencies with planning, policies, and procedures. UNC's Board of Trustees (described in detail in Criterion 2.C.) is authorized by Colorado law with overseeing the "well-ordering and government of the university" (Colorado Revised Statute 23-40-104). The Board maintains a public webpage and provides oversight of the university's financial and academic policies as outlined in the Board Policy Manual. Board policy articulates the role and responsibilities of the president as the university's chief executive officer. The president has appointed a cabinet of university officers responsible for providing direction and oversight of specific university operations. The president and cabinet ensure that the Board is well informed about campus operations through standing and special reports provided at Board meetings. For example, during the June 9, 2023, Board meeting, the CFO presented the university's plan outlining the capital construction project for the proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine to be included in UNC's capital construction request to the state.

The university has long-standing representative bodies for each of its internal constituencies, including the Faculty Senate, the Student Government Association, the Classified Staff Council, and the Professional Administrative Staff Council. As the Board-designated representative body of the faculty, the Faculty Senate participates in developing and recommending educational policy and in the governance of the university pertaining to academic matters. The Faculty Senate exercises these responsibilities through Senate Actions. For example, in February 2023, the Faculty Senate approved recommendations from the Graduate Council to update the university catalog regarding dissertation and thesis credit requirements. Depending on the type of policy or regulation, Senate Actions may require additional approval by the president, and, for Board Policy, the Board of Trustees.

Student participation in shared governance is also described in the Board Policy Manual. Elected as a representative body of students, the Student Government Association has authority over matters such as developing and making recommendations regarding the allocation and management of student fees, enacting resolutions pertaining to student concerns, appointing student committees, and approving and sponsoring programs of interest to the student body. The Graduate Student Association represents

graduate student needs and interests by coordinating and hosting social events and professional development programs, appointing graduate students to campus committees, and distributing research and conference grant funding.

Classified staff, positions subject to the State of Colorado's Personnel System and a collective bargaining agreement, are represented by the Classified Staff Council (CSC). The Professional Administrative Staff Council (PASC) represents all other staff (those not subject to the State Personnel System). Although Board Policy does not explicitly define the authority of these bodies, representatives of both groups attend meetings of the Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, and Board of Trustees. Both representative bodies are regularly consulted in an advisory capacity in the development of policies and other university regulations relevant to the interests of classified and exempt staff. All employee governance bodies have representatives on the university's Institutional Planning Group, charged with coordinating and advancing institutional planning efforts.

UNC leaders regularly attend governance group meetings. The Faculty Senate chair sits on the president's cabinet, and the president attends Faculty Senate executive and full meetings. For example, at the September 11, 2023, Faculty Senate meeting, the president and provost provided administrative reports that included information about academic year 2023-24 Board priorities, enrollment, progress on strategic plan goals, and other topics. Campus leaders also regularly convene campus committees, host open forums, administer surveys, and employ other feedback mechanisms to foster communication and collaboration and support institutional planning. Recent notable examples include: (1) the development of UNC's strategic plan, Rowing, Not Drifting 2030, (2) a survey on UNC's readiness to become a Hispanic Serving Institution, (3) development of UNC's Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, and (4) a townhall and other open forums as part of the planning for UNC's proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Subcomponent 5.A.2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.

UNC's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the university and its constituents. The university has made substantive investments and improvements in its data structures and resources since the last HLC comprehensive evaluation. For example, in 2020-2021, UNC reorganized its institutional data functions into two units, Business Intelligence and Data Engineering (BIDE) and the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE). The BIDE team focuses on data engineering, data extraction, and data quality, including the development and maintenance of standardized data sets, data extracts/automated feeds, operational reports, and data integrity reports. The OIRE team is responsible for most activities related to research and analysis, project design, and planning, including external surveys and reports requiring institutional data. The two units regularly collaborate on issues related to data integrity and governance, internal and external reporting, and strategic data support. UNC maintains a one stop data shop webpage that organizes institutional data reports and dashboards into a convenient single location. Internal dashboards provide real-time monitoring for operational and strategic decisions in areas such as student retention and completion, admissions, academic program data, and budgeting and expense trends. UNC partnered with the California State University System to develop Graduation and Equity Action Dashboards to support student success efforts. These dashboards focus on identifying equity gaps at the institutional, program, and course levels and are used with other data as part of academic program review to support improvement actions.

In addition to these data resources, UNC maintains a calendar of institutional surveys to further increase its understanding about student, employee, and alumni experiences and perceptions. UNC uses a

combination of national surveys (NSSE, HERI Faculty and Climate Surveys, National College Health Assessment, etc.) and internally developed instruments (alumni surveys, Graduate School Quality of Life, Student Experience, etc.). Surveys to support specific planning and special initiatives are also used as necessary (e.g., Facilities Comprehensive Plan, website redesign survey, EAB's Institutional Strategy Index for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice, etc.). Survey data are incorporated into program review, external grant proposals, public presentations, and planning processes.

UNC has developed publicly available interactive dashboards for monitoring progress and success on Rowing, Not Drifting 2030. The information provided in these dashboards is regularly reviewed by the university's administration, the Institutional Planning Group, and the Board of Trustees.

Subcomponent 5.A.3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

UNC's administration regularly involves the faculty in planning and decisions regarding academic policies and practices, including staff and students where appropriate. Participation and collaboration in planning and policy development are encouraged and supported across all levels of the university. Board Policy describes the authority of the Faculty Senate and university councils including the Undergraduate Council, Liberal Arts Council, Graduate Council, and Professional Education Council. The administration—comprised of the president, cabinet, and senior leadership within each division— works closely with the Faculty Senate and other representative bodies to develop and maintain requirements, policies, and procedures that support the academic mission and goals of the university. For example, recent Faculty Senate Actions have resulted in changes in UNC's S/U grading option, retroactive degree conferral, and prior degree credit applicability.

Along with the formal employee governance groups described above, the university has several standing committees that play formal and/or advisory roles in the development of academic requirements, policies, and processes (for example, the University Assessment Council). The university also provides opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to participate in decision-making processes that set academic requirements, policy, and processes at the unit level. For example, colleges have committees that address curriculum, governance, program review, and other topics of specific interest to the college. These committees serve to ensure that decisions about local academic matters are made by the people closest to the issue.

In addition to standing committees, the administration regularly invites the faculty and staff to serve on ad hoc and special initiative committees and task forces. For example, in spring 2022, several faculty working groups were convened to investigate and make recommendations regarding new academic degree programs (Computer Science B.S. and Statistics B.S.), revisions to UNC's curriculum process, and academic program review. Another example can be found in a 2023 review of the administrative services model that UNC adopted in 2020. A committee conducted an evaluation that resulted in several recommendations that have since been adopted.

Core Component 5.B. The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

Subcomponent 5.B.1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

UNC has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered. As of fall 2023, UNC employs 1,507 individuals, with 1,188 full-time and 319 part-time employees. Forty-five percent of UNC's employees are instructional staff, a 2% decrease since UNC's last HLC comprehensive review in 2015. Faculty and student services staff qualifications were addressed in Criteria 3.C and 3.D. Staffing plans consider how proposed staffing advances the university's goals, evidence of need, scope of impact, and other relevant information. Vacated positions are not automatically filled; instead, they are reviewed to determine whether the position should be filled, restructured, eliminated, or reallocated to a different area in light of current needs and planning priorities. New positions may be approved when necessary to ensure sufficient human resources for critical operations and strategic priorities. These strategies have allowed UNC to be nimble in responding to changing enrollment trends. As part of ongoing reorganization efforts, new positions including professional advisors, admissions personnel, and institutional research staff have been approved since fiscal year 2020 to ensure sufficient human resources for critical operations. The university's overall approach focuses on achieving operational success in a manner that uses human resources and funding most efficiently. This means investing in certain areas, such as enrollment management, and leveraging vacancies in less critical areas to best meet the needs of the institution.

The university ensures that all employees are appropriately qualified and trained by processes that can be divided into three distinct phases: (1) hiring documentation and procedures, (2) professional development, and (3) employee evaluation. Hiring processes are clearly delineated for the three different employee classifications: faculty, classified staff, and professional administrative staff, who hold a variety of administrative roles. Qualifications for faculty and professional administrative positions are determined by the hiring unit and search committee in consultation with a human resources specialist, whereas qualifications for classified staff are defined by the State of Colorado. All classified and professional administrative positions are documented in an individual Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ), which is maintained by Human Resources. New employee orientations are scheduled regularly throughout the year, and a webpage provides additional information for onboarding. New faculty members are required to participate in New Faculty Orientation, a program designed to ensure a successful transition to the university.

A number of resources are available to support ongoing employee training and professional development. Between fiscal years 2020 and 2023, UNC invested $1.2 million on average each year to support employee professional development. This represents ~0.5% of total annual revenues. This amount includes items such as tuition waivers, dues/memberships, and conference registration fees. Related expenses such as travel are not included. The university also provides opportunities through LinkedIn Learning, the UNITE initiative, and Human Resources at no additional cost to participants. Each year, UNC employees complete a series of online compliance courses covering topics such as FERPA, implicit bias, and cybersecurity, among others. UNC has adopted a human resources learning management system, Cornerstone, which is used for delivering virtual professional development workshops, a calendar of on-campus professional development opportunities, and staff evaluations. Tuition remission agreements are also in place for UNC employees to take courses at UNC, Colorado State University (CSU), and Aims Community College. In fiscal year 2024, UNC granted 81 tuition waivers

to employees, with approximately 21 employees taking advantage of the partnership agreements with CSU and Aims. Professional development for faculty members is described in Criterion 3.C.5.

UNC staff receive annual evaluations to provide feedback for improvement and identify opportunities for professional development. The State of Colorado defines the process for classified staff evaluation, and evaluation procedures for professional administrative personnel are outlined in University Regulations. Faculty evaluation (discussed in detail in Criterion 3.C) is defined in the Board Policy Manual.

Facilities and Technology
As of June 30, 2024, UNC held capital assets with a book value of $273 million, or 75% of its $365 million total assets. The current replacement value of buildings and infrastructure is $998.7 million, with furniture and equipment (personal property/fine art/library collection) insured at a value of $109.6 million. In spring 2019, UNC completed construction of its newest facility, the Campus Commons. Every year, UNC invests millions in facility and technology infrastructure, supported through institutional resources, student capital fees, and the State of Colorado. In fiscal year 2023, UNC invested $5.8 million in capital improvement projects related to critical infrastructure and technology. As UNC continues to make progress towards establishing the proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM), additional capital, technology, and human resource investments will be supported through philanthropic giving and funding from the state. UNC has secured over $31 million in philanthropic funding to cover initial operational expenses for the COM until enrollment of the third cohort of students in 2028, at which point the COM will become self-sustaining. Recently approved legislation, HB24-1231, allocates $168,750,000 in state funding, including $127.5 million for construction and furnishing the new college building and $41,250,000 for deposit into an escrowed account to meet the COM's professional accrediting body's escrow requirements. Decisions about facilities and technology planning are informed by recommendations from the Information Technology Committee, the Academic Technology Advisory Group, and the UNC Facilities Comprehensive Plan. Information about technology and facilities planning will be described in greater detail in Criterion 5.C.

Criterion 5.B.2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.

The goals incorporated into UNC's mission and strategic planning are realistic in light of the university's organization, resources, and opportunities. Goals described in the university's mission documents include providing a student-centered educational experience characterized by effective teaching and support, the promotion of lifelong learning, the advancement of knowledge through research and scholarship, and a commitment to engaged service. These goals are realistic based on UNC's status as a public regional comprehensive university, the low faculty to student ratio it continues to maintain, the liberal arts foundation of the education it provides, its commitment to supporting student and faculty research, scholarship, and creative works, and its engagement with the larger community. Each of these components has been previously discussed in detail in other Criteria.

Through all of the institution's planning activities, the underlying goals as articulated in its mission remain constant. Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 articulates UNC's vision for what it means to be a students' first university, its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and support for innovation and engaged learning. These goals are consistent with UNC's history, mission, and identity. The plan establishes student success goals for fall-to-fall retention and 4- and 6-year graduation rates for students. UNC's current Strategic Enrollment Management Plan focuses on growing enrollment and increasing degree completion, with strategies designed to support progress in each area. Planning and resource

allocation decisions are grounded in a realistic and evidence-based understanding of the students who choose UNC, with recruitment, financial aid, and academic and student support strategies carefully calibrated to meet the needs of the university's students.

Subcomponent 5.B.3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.

UNC has a well-developed process in place for budgeting that is tied to strategic planning and enrollment goals. The university monitors revenues and expenditures and reports quarterly to the Board of Trustees. These reports, along with annual budgets, financial statements, and budget data books, are published on the university website. The budget and general accounting offices provide training on financial responsibilities, including internal controls and financial risk management. UNC abides by fiscal rules established by the Board of Trustees. UNC's fiscal rules are regularly reviewed and revised, informed by changes to the State of Colorado Fiscal Rules, federal regulations, or other relevant guidelines for procurement and finance.

Accounting specialists are assigned to each university unit, and budget managers are employed within each division and college to assist in budget oversight. A variety of financial reports are available through the university's Insight reporting portal and a PowerBI dashboard platform to provide business managers and unit leaders financial information about their areas of responsibility. These reports are available on demand and allow for timely monitoring of revenues, expenses, and transfers across all areas of the institution. The close monitoring of resources throughout the fiscal year affords the university the opportunity to redirect resources as necessary to meet the mission of the institution. For example, the fiscal year 2024 first quarter forecast projected a $4-$6 million operating loss by fiscal year end without increased revenue or adjustments in spending. University leadership identified strategies for reducing expenditures while also being mindful of strategic investments. These strategies included a reduction in non-essential travel, limitations on discretionary pay increases, and a cabinet-level review before filling any vacant positions. In addition, a newly created budget advisory committee with representation from divisions across the university was convened with regularly scheduled meetings to provide input and recommendations for the fiscal year 2025 budget. Based on these and other fiscally responsible decision-making, UNC will enter fiscal year 2025 with a balanced budget and a healthy cash balance.

Subcomponent 5.B.4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Fiscal allocations at UNC ensure that its educational purposes are achieved. UNC's Board has established funding priority guidelines that clearly align fiscal allocations to the university's educational purposes. Variations may be approved by the Board, as outlined in Board Policy. In fiscal year 2023, UNC allocated 70% of its annual budget, excluding auxiliary operating expenses, depreciation, and amortization, to supporting functions related to its educational purposes, including instruction (36%), research (5%), academic support (16%), and student services (12%, excluding athletics) as defined by IPEDS functional expense descriptions. The comparative Board Policy guidelines, which were established in 2004, indicate a goal for annual expenditures in the same functions of 77% collectively, or 55%, 1%, 15%, and 7%, respectively. Plans are in place for fiscal year 2025 to include a review and update of the Board Policy spending guidelines for each of these functions.

Resource allocation at UNC is driven by the university's strategic planning processes, which place the academic mission and student success as central priorities. For example, recognizing the vital importance

of recruiting and retaining well-qualified and committed faculty and staff, UNC's strategic plan prioritizes increasing employee compensation to ensure effective academic programs and support services. Toward this end, the fiscal year 2025 budget includes a 3% compensation pool, a minimum parity adjustment to increase compensation for faculty members who have had the lowest parity comparisons to peer compensation levels, and the implementation of state mandated raises for classified staff. These compensation increases collectively represent the sixth increase in a three-year period, reflecting UNC's commitment to achieve parity with peer median compensation levels as quickly as possible, in keeping with the Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 strategic vision element to Enhance and Invest in UNC's faculty and staff.

The annual budget (June Book) and annual financial report (including independent auditor's report) further demonstrate how UNC's fiscal allocations ensure its educational purposes are achieved. Reports from the most recent three years are provided in the Evidence File as follows:

June Book
- FY25 Annual Budget
- FY24 Annual Budget
- FY23 Annual Budget

Annual Financial Report
- FY23 Annual Report
- FY22 Annual Report
- FY21 Annual Report

Component 5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

Subcomponent 5.C.1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.

UNC allocates its resources in alignment with the university's mission and priorities. In developing the budget, UNC aims to achieve two primary goals: (1) present a balanced budget and (2) align resources with needs wherever possible, especially those priorities and key actions necessary to support Rowing, Not Drifting 2030. For example, the UNC Tuition Promise, announced in January 2024, supports UNC's long-standing commitment to providing access and support to underserved students. The UNC Tuition Promise will cover the full cost of tuition and fees for students who meet eligibility requirements, assuring that a UNC education remains possible for low-income students. The UNC Tuition Promise is an extension of UNC's overall financial aid optimization strategy implemented for the fall 2023 incoming class, which resulted in an average additional $5,000 per Pell-eligible student compared to the prior year.

Since 2019, UNC has made critical investments aligned with its Students' First priorities. For example, as discussed in Criterion 3.D, UNC allocated funds to support hiring professional advisors to staff college advising/student success centers. In addition, UNC has aligned its resources to support the university's comprehensive research enterprise. Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 includes a goal of achieving $6.9 million in total research expenditures by 2030, which UNC exceeded in fiscal year 2023 with $8.7 million in total research expenditures. UNC continues to invest in supporting research, scholarship, and creative works (described in greater detail in Criteria 2.E and 3.B) and has also allocated funds to strengthen the university's research support infrastructure by adding new positions to the Office of Research. UNC expects that when the new College of Osteopathic Medicine is established, it will also contribute to helping UNC maintain its research expenditures goals.

Subcomponent 5.C.2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.

UNC links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting. UNC's strategic planning processes, including the development and implementation of Rowing, Not Drifting 2030, the Strategic Enrollment Plan, and the Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Plan all provide examples of using student data to establish goals and priorities. For example, Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 includes strategic metrics for improving student retention and graduation rates and reducing equity gaps. Improving student sense of belonging, as measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement, is another performance metric UNC has identified to measure success in achieving its strategic goals. The Strategic Enrollment Plan includes strategies for increasing enrollment and relies on assessment of outcomes and operations to evaluate promising practices for continued investment in the coming years. The HSI plan includes using survey data from the 2022-2023 Climate Study and EAB Institutional Strategy Index for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice to determine future actions and critical areas of emphasis and support competitive HSI grant funding opportunities.

Academic program review provides an example of how UNC connects assessment of student learning and evaluation of operations to planning and budgeting (program review is discussed in greater detail in Criterion 4.A). Through the program review process, programs evaluate the quality of the curriculum, using learning outcomes assessment as one measure, and also evaluate how effectively and efficiently the academic unit uses its resources. Based on the program's self-assessment and internal and external review, program faculty and academic leaders make decisions about future actions, including strategies for improving student outcomes. To further enhance the link between program review, planning, and budgeting, in 2023-2024 UNC piloted an annual health check for its academic programs. The health checks rely on institutional data such as enrollment trends, student credit hour production, and student outcomes to assess the relative health of a program in a given year. Academic leaders will use the health checks to identify programs that may require additional investments (e.g., faculty retooling, resources supporting significant curriculum revisions, etc.), and in rare cases, to consider program restructuring or closure.

Subcomponent 5.C.3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

UNC's planning processes encompass the university as a whole and consider the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups. Planning at UNC is designed to be systematic, organic, and integrated. Institutional-level planning typically involves committees comprised of faculty, staff, and students. For example, Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 was developed with input from students, faculty, staff, alumni, the UNC Foundation Board, and the Board of Trustees. Internal and external constituents contributed to the plan's development by participating in listening sessions, budget workshops, task force meetings, planning sessions, town halls, and surveys. In a similar vein, the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan is led by a steering committee consisting of faculty, staff, and administrators. Recruitment and retention committees provide additional opportunities for participation, and town halls further involve the campus in learning about the plan's development and implementation.

Planning for UNC's proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM) provides another example of how UNC involves internal and external constituents. UNC appointed an advisory board consisting of community stakeholders, members of the local healthcare community, and university representatives.

The COM Research Steering Committee also includes UNC faculty and administrators and local healthcare provider representatives. In 2024, UNC worked with three other Colorado institutions and state legislators to introduce House Bill 24-1231, which provides state funding for projects related to four health sciences education programs, including UNC's College of Osteopathic Medicine. HB 24-1231 was signed into law on May 1, 2024.

During the budget planning process for fiscal year 2024-25, which was launched in December 2023, UNC formed a budget advisory committee with 15 members, co-chaired by the president and the CFO, including representatives from each shared governance group and each operating division. The committee convened nine times during the budget process, culminating in a review of the fiscal year 2025 budget recommendation to the Board of Trustees, and included in-depth reviews of topics such as state-funding, tuition and fee rates, compensation, enrollment, and other financial performance metrics.

UNC also considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups in program-level planning activities. For example, in 2022, an interdisciplinary faculty working group was convened to develop recommendations for a new Computer Science B.S. degree. The group reviewed computer-related programs from UNC's top feeder community colleges and competitor institutions, ABET accreditation requirements, existing articulation agreements, and consultations with faculty from other institutions and former UNC students. The working group's recommendations were used as the basis for developing the new degree program, which was added to UNC's academic portfolio in academic year 2023-2024. A second faculty working group in 2022 used a similar process to develop recommendations for a new Statistics B.S. degree, which was also added to the academic portfolio in 2023-2024.

Subcomponent 5.C.4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.

UNC plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in sources of revenue and enrollment. Recent and ongoing planning efforts, including Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 and the plans associated with it (Strategic Enrollment Management, Hispanic Serving Institution, etc.) provide compelling evidence. Prior to developing Rowing, Not Drifting 2030, UNC involved stakeholders in an in-depth analysis of regional and national trends affecting higher education, enrollment, retention and graduation data, UNC budget data, sponsored research activity, and UNC's market position. This deeper understanding was revelatory for many stakeholders, and it served as the foundation for making decisions about planning priorities.

Similar to most higher education institutions, UNC has not been immune from the impact of the global COVID pandemic. Federal HEERF funds helped to offset the immediate financial impact resulting from enrollment declines and reduced revenue from sources such as room and board, athletic events, performances, and facility rentals from external groups and organizations. As federal funding ended, UNC was able to offset some of the lingering impact of COVID with salary vacancy savings; however, employee attrition rates have nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels. UNC continues to focus on stabilizing enrollment, even as the university recognizes that smaller entering classes in the last few years are translating to smaller continuing student populations. Budget planning considers these enrollment trends, and ongoing financial monitoring processes enable UNC to remain nimble in the face of further volatility that can affect the institution's financial resources. Despite the continuing impact of COVID, UNC is experiencing the highest student retention rates in its history.

Subcomponent 5.C.5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.

Institutional planning at UNC anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, and state support. Technology planning anticipates external factors that may impact UNC's technology infrastructure. For example, UNC is working with Ellucian on an ERP modernization and cloud migration of Banner. UNC began planning for this change in 2022, which, when completed, will allow the university to take advantage of technological advancements by modernizing the user interface, enhancing cyber security, and introducing new efficiencies. Recent and exponentially expanding advances in generative artificial intelligence (AI) represent another technology factor UNC is considering in its planning processes.

Current and recent planning at UNC considers predicted and actual demographic shifts affecting college enrollment. As noted above, planning for Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 included analysis of enrollment trends. Although Colorado is one of a handful of states where growth in college-going students is predicted, this growth is not distributed equally across demographic groups. The Colorado Department of Higher Education reports that students from low-income households are less likely to enroll in college. On average, approximately 30% of UNC undergraduate degree-seeking students are from low-income households; however, as the cost of a college education continues to rise, enrollment planning at UNC has resulted in specific strategies to reduce barriers for low-income students. For example, UNC implemented the First-Year Admissions Guarantee beginning fall 2022, which simplifies the admissions process and provides more transparent information about admissions criteria. Beginning in fall 2023, UNC updated its financial aid awarding model to provide additional financial support for the most income-limited families. This change increased financial aid awards by approximately $5,000 per student for those that identified as Pell-eligible. Because of this, UNC saw 57 more Pell-eligible students enroll in fall 2023 compared to fall 2022. Finally, as described above, the UNC Tuition Promise covers standard tuition and mandatory fees for eligible Colorado residents or ASSET-eligible students. The focus of this program is to provide access and affordability to those students with the greatest financial need by refocusing financial aid dollars in a more meaningful way and allowing the university to meet a greater share of a student and family's financial need.

UNC uses multi-year financial scenarios as one component of budget planning. These scenarios include external factors such as anticipated state funding changes, increases in fringe benefits, and non-personnel increases resulting from factors such as inflation. Scenario planning also considers state and federal actions that could impact UNC, such as increases in Pell grant funding or state-supported incentives for students to enroll in community colleges or pursue certificates or other credentials as alternatives to four-year degree programs.

Subcomponent 5.C.6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

UNC implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes. Foundational planning that informed the development of Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 offers several examples. For instance, recommendations from the 2018 Task Force Initiative have been implemented, including establishing a new Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (discussed in Criterion 4.C), implementing a centralized professional advising model (discussed in Criterion 3.D), and revising UNC's general education curriculum (discussed in Criterion 3.B). The implementation of Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 provides even more compelling evidence. As previously noted, Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 is being

implemented over ten years in two-year phases. Key actions and tactics are developed for each phase that build on previous accomplishments, address gaps and emerging opportunities, and ensure that the plan's implementation has sufficient flexibility to remain viable as internal and external conditions change. For example, during Phase I, UNC adopted a Students First Framework to advance strategies for improving enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. Accomplishments included improving new student orientation and developing plans for a Transfer and Transition Center. UNC's HLC Quality Initiative was a component of the Students First Framework, with a specific focus on students' academic experiences. As UNC moved into Phase II, the Students First Framework evolved into the current Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. Phase II ended June 30, 2024, with key accomplishments including completing the university's ten-year comprehensive facilities plan, implementing new student support programs and resources, implementing the UNITE professional development initiative, and achieving designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution. Phase III planning began in spring 2024, with university leadership meeting with constituent groups to review progress to date and identify critical priorities related to each of the vision elements.

To ensure that UNC continues making progress toward achieving the outcomes identified in Rowing, Not Drifting 2030, UNC has developed strategic metrics associated with each vision element included in the plan. These metrics are tracked on a public dashboard, along with a second dashboard that represents the extent to which the key actions UNC has identified are being implemented as planned. An Institutional Planning Group, appointed by and advisory to the president, assists with coordinating and advancing work across all institutional-level planning efforts. The Institutional Planning Group maintains a campus planning implementation timeline, and members regularly provide progress reports on various planning initiatives.