

Working Group Standard VII Interim Report #2

Part I: Standard Overview

In our assessment of Standard VII, we recognize the important elements of a well-defined system of governance, the value of a visionary and strategic leader, and the critical importance of administrative organization and composition in service of the University mission. The governance structure and administrative leadership of the university ensures that the mission is the inspiration which underpins the execution and planning of our academic enterprises. A Board of Trustees which guides the implementation of the university mission and oversees its fiduciary responsibilities is vital to the success of Mercyhurst in the present and the future. Recognizing the importance of effective leadership, the university regularly evaluates the performance of the President and the senior administrative team.

Part II: Review of Evidence

Standard: VII-1

Evidence Name: *Board Committee Charters*

- **Do we have it?** *The Board Committee Charters clearly outline the mission, responsibilities and membership of each committee of the Board of Trustees governing structure. The committee charters are reviewed and approved annually at the fall board meeting.*
- **Do we use it?** *The charters are included in the electronic committee materials for every committee meeting.*
- **Does it work?** *The Board Committee Charters adequately provide evidence that offers a clearly articulated document that outlines the roles, responsibilities and decision making by each constituency.*

Standard: VII-1

Evidence Name: *Conflict of Interest Policy (Code of Ethics and Conduct), Employee Handbook, 1.3.2, 1.3.3*

- **Do we have it?** *The Code of Ethics in the Employee Handbook describes potential conflicts of interest and how employees should disclose these conflicts.*
- **Do we use it?** *The Employee Handbook is available on our Mercyhurst HUB and is used by all staff and administrators at the university.*
- **Does it work?** *This Code of Ethics and Conduct (1.3.2), as well as the subsequent Whistleblower's Policy (1.3.3), pertains to all employees; it provides a mechanism for reporting ethical concerns in person, in writing, or via a phone message. This addresses the need for accountability and transparency for all employees.*

Standard: VII-1

Evidence Name: *Faculty Senate Bylaws*

- **Do we have it?** *This is found in Faculty Senate Bylaws and on pages 2-6 in the Faculty Handbook.*
- **Do we use it?** *The Faculty Handbook is updated yearly by subcommittees of the faculty senate and by the Provost. It is available to all faculty on Blackboard and our Mercyhurst HUB page. The roles and responsibilities listed are followed and monitored by the senate and the Office of Academic Affairs.*
- **Does it work?** *This document provides a clearly articulated governance structure and outlines the roles and responsibilities for each constituency except staff and students, but both the students and staff have their own handbooks that provided the details for those groups.*

Standard: VII-1

Evidence Name: *President's Cabinet Membership Profile*

- **Do we have it?** *The evidence for Standard VII-1 is the President's Cabinet Membership Profile, which exists as an excel sheet outlining the members of cabinet, their titles, contact information and headshots.*
- **Do we use it?** *While the sheet is readily shared with those who request it and is up-to-date, its use does not appear to be widespread.*
- **Does it work?** *No, the President's Cabinet Membership Profile does not seem to meet the basic charges of Standard VII-1 in that it does not address structure beyond the president's staff, does not outline cabinet members' responsibilities, and says nothing about decision making by any Mercyhurst governing bodies (administration, faculty or staff).*

Standard: VII-1

Evidence Name: *Mercyhurst Student Government (MSG) Constitution 2019-2020, MSG Bylaws and Standing Rules*

- **Do we have it?** *The MSG Constitution, in its entirety, describes the roles of all MSG Executive Board members, MSG Senators, and Multicultural and Student Activities Council programmers. The duties and responsibilities of each are described in depth as well as the qualities for each position, and the removal, resignation, and disciplinary processes that are to be applied when any rules are violated. This document was most recently updated in August of 2019.*
- **Do we use it?** *The MSG Constitution is distributed electronically to all members of the student government each year. Members are expected to know and understand their duties and responsibilities as described in this document.*
- **Does it work?** *The MSG Constitution supplies clear and concise guidelines that properly outline the roles, responsibilities, and accountability for all members of the organization*

Standard: VII-1

Evidence Name: *Staff Senate Bylaws*

- **Do we have it?** *On pages 1-3 of the 2019-2020 Staff Senate Bylaws, Mercyhurst outlines the Membership and Senate Officers' roles, responsibilities, and accountability. This publication is updated on an on-going basis.*
- **Do we use it?** *The Staff Senate Executive Committee reviews and distributes the Staff Senate Bylaws annually.*
- **Does it work?** *The 2019-2020 Staff Senate Bylaws adequately provide evidence that offers a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for members of Staff Senate.*

Standard: VII-1

Evidence Name: *University Bylaws May 2019*

- **Do we have it?** *The university is governed by an active Board of Trustees which is guided by a set of University Bylaws. These Bylaws outline the mission of the university along with the authority and responsibilities of the Board.*
- **Do we use it?** *The University Bylaws are regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees. The most recent review was completed in May 2019.*
- **Does it work?** *The Bylaws both guide and determine the scope of the Board's leadership of the University. The contribution of the Board subcommittee structure ensures that proper oversight and attention is paid to administration, faculty, staff and students.*

Standard: VII-1

Evidence Name: *University Council Bylaws*

- **Do we have it?** *On pages 1-4 of the 2019-2020 University Council Bylaws, Mercyhurst outlines the Authority and the Role in the University Governance Structure, Membership, and the University Council Chair's roles, responsibilities, and accountability. This publication may be amended with a majority vote of the University Council membership.*
- **Do we use it?** *The University Council reviews and distributes the University Council Bylaws annually.*
- **Does it work?** *The 2019-2020 University Council Bylaws adequately provide evidence that offers a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for members of University Council.*

Standard: VII-2a

Evidence Name: *University Bylaws May 2019*

- **Do we have it?** *The University Bylaws guide the decision-making responsibilities of the Board of Trustees. The regular meetings of focused subcommittees maintain the responsibility and accountability for academic and fiscal areas.*
- **Do we use it?** *The Board meets at least three times each year and each full meeting of the Board is preceded by meetings of each subcommittee. At each Board meeting, each subcommittee chair provides a full report of the committee proceedings.*

- **Does it work?** *This process serves to keep the full Board apprised of the information necessary for each Board member to participate in a well-informed manner. Additionally, a Governance Committee ensures that regular oversight of Board composition is maintained for the purpose of assuring that Board members are attuned with the University mission and goals.*

Standard: VII-2b

Evidence Name: *Conflict of Interest Policy (Code of Ethics and Conduct), Employee Handbook, 1.3.2, 1.3.3*

- **Do we have it?** *The Code of Ethics in the Employee Handbook describes potential conflicts of interest and how employees should disclose these conflicts.*
- **Do we use it?** *The Employee Handbook is available on The HUB and is used by all staff and administrators at the university.*
- **Does it work?** *This Code of Ethics and Conduct (1.3.2), as well as the subsequent Whistleblower's Policy (1.3.3), pertains to all employees; it provides a mechanism for reporting ethical concerns in person, in writing, or via a phone message. This policy addresses the need for accountability and transparency for all employees.*

Standard: VII-2c

Evidence Name: *Conflict of Interest Policy (Code of Ethics and Conduct), Employee Handbook, 1.3.2, 1.3.3*

- **Do we have it?** *The Employee Handbook has a Code of Ethics and Conduct, as well as a Whistleblower's Policy, that is reviewed and edited as needed by Human Resources and our legal counsel.*
- **Do we use it?** *The Employee Handbook is available on The HUB and is used by all staff and administrators at the university.*
- **Does it work?** *The Code of Ethics and Conduct (1.3.2), as well as the Whistleblower's Policy (1.3.3), pertains to all employees; it provides a mechanism for reporting ethical concerns in person, in writing, or via a phone message.*

Standard: VII-2c

Evidence Name: *University Bylaws May 2019*

- **Do we have it?** *Article III Section 3.01 of the Bylaws clearly state the Board of Trustees authority and responsibilities.*
- **Do we use it?** *The Board assumes responsibility for oversight and charges the President of the University with the responsibility for executing the mission and goals of the University.*
- **Does it work?** *At each meeting of the Board, the President provides a full report of University proceedings, accomplishments, and challenges.*

Standard: VII-2d

Evidence Name: *No evidence identified*

Standard: VII-2e

Evidence Name: Board Committee Charters

- **Do we have it?** *The Board of Trustees have three committees that play a role in overseeing the financial affairs of the institution. The Audit Committee, Budget & Finance Committee, and Endowment & Investments Committee all share responsibility for ensuring strong financial management.*
- **Do we use it?** *The charters of each committee define the responsibilities of each committee as it relates to the financial management of the institution. The Committee on Audit assists the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities to the University, by assisting in the Board's oversight of the quality and integrity of the University's consolidated financial statements, the financial statements of its 403(b) defined contribution retirement plan and all related audit reporting requirements. The Committee on Budget and Finance provides oversight related to the fiscal stability and long-term financial health of Mercyhurst University to ensure the institution's ability to fulfill its mission and strategic goals. The Committee on Endowment and Investments endeavors to increase the endowment for the future of Mercyhurst University, and grow the 403(b) Plan assets, and number of Plan participants.*
- **Does it work?** *The charters of the Audit, Budget & Finance, and Endowment & Investments committees adequately provides evidence that Board of Trustees ensures strong financial management of the institution including review of the University audited financial statements, budgets, and investments.*

Standard: VII-2e

Evidence Name: University Bylaws May 2019

- **Do we have it?** *Article V Section 5.03 outlines the Standing Committees of the Board which include: Committee on Advancement, Committee on Audit, Committee on Budget and Finance, Committee on Endowment and Investments, Committee on Buildings and Grounds, Committee on Compensation.*
- **Do we use it?** *These committees met at least three times each year and are informed by the President and members of the President's leadership team.*
- **Does it work?** *These committees effectively provide guidance, and where required, determination for procedure.*

Standard: VII-2f

Evidence Name: Board Committee Charters

- **Do we have it?** *The Committee on Compensation assists the board in discharging its responsibilities relating to compensation and employee benefits to ensure alignment with the university's compensation philosophy, regulatory guidelines, and mission. This includes the president of the University.*
- **Do we use it?** *The charter of the Committee on Compensation clearly defines that it is the committee's responsibility to review the president's performance annually in light of the university's goals and objectives and all other relevant factors. This review is then used as the basis for recommendations on the president's compensation. The*

Compensation Committee also negotiates the terms of the (new or renewed) president's contract and increases in compensation level, elements of the compensation package, and structure. The committee then presents a recommendation of the president's contract for approval of the full board.

- **Does it work?** *The charter of the Compensation Committee adequately provides evidence that Board of Trustees regularly oversees and evaluates the performance of the president of the University.*

Standard: VII-2f

Evidence Name: *University Bylaws May 2019*

- **Do we have it?** *The Compensation Committee and the Executive Committee of the Board are charged with the annual performance review of the President.*
- **Do we use it?** *Generally, this review takes place at the spring meeting of the Board.*
- **Does it work?** *While the President's performance review is not made public, the process appears to work effectively.*

Standard: VII-2g

Evidence Name: *Board Committee Charters*

- **Do we have it?** *The Committee on Governance seeks to ensure that the Board of Trustees functions according to best practices and is composed of dedicated and competent trustees who will support the mission of the university and assist it in meeting its strategic goals.*
- **Do we use it?** *The charter of the Committee on Compensation clearly defines that it is the committee's responsibility to establish guidelines and policies for qualifications and criteria for board membership, a rotation plan for board and committee membership and officers, trustee responsibilities and self-assessment mechanisms for board members.*
- **Does it work?** *The charter of the Compensation Committee adequately provides evidence that Board of Trustees has mechanisms in place to ensure that its operations are informed by principles of good practice in board governance.*

Standard: VII-2g

Evidence Name: *University Bylaws May 2019*

- **Do we have it?** *Article VIII section 8.07.c provides for the periodic review of the Bylaws by the Secretary of the Board, the Corporate Secretary and the Executive Committee.*
- **Do we use it?** *Review of the Bylaws and committee charters occurs regularly.*
- **Does it work?** *Any changes to the Bylaws or Committee charters are voted on by the full Board of Trustees.*

Standard: VII-2h

Evidence Name: *Conflict of Interest Policy (Code of Ethics and Conduct), Employee Handbook, 1.3.2, 1.3.3*

- **Do we have it?** *The Employee Handbook has a Code of Ethics and Conduct, as well as a Whistleblower's Policy, that is reviewed and edited as needed by Human Resources and our legal counsel.*
- **Do we use it?** *The Employee Handbook is available on The HUB and is used by all staff and administrators at the university.*
- **Does it work?** *The Code of Ethics and Conduct (1.3.2), as well as the Whistleblower's Policy (1.3.3), pertains to all employees; it provides a mechanism for reporting ethical concerns in person, in writing, or via a phone message.*

Standard: VII-2i

Evidence Name: *University Bylaws May 2019*

- **Do we have it?** *On pages 10-11 of the University Bylaws, Mercyhurst outlines that the President shall be charged with the responsibility and have plenary authority for all acts necessary to implement the decisions of the Trustees.*
- **Do we use it?** *The Board of Trustees reviews and distributes the University Bylaws each May.*
- **Does it work?** *The University Bylaws adequately provides evidence that our Chief Executive Officer (the President) has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position.*

Standard: VII-3a

Evidence Name: *University Bylaws 2019*

- **Do we have it?** *The Board of Trustees is charged with hiring and evaluating the President.*
- **Do we use it?** *The most recent presidential search was conducted in 2014-2015. The president is evaluated annually by the Compensation Committee.*
- **Does it work?** *The presidential search committee is comprised of a widely representative group of Trustees, faculty, administrators and staff. The president's annual evaluation is known only to the Board.*

Standard: VII-3b

Evidence Name: *President's Cabinet Membership Profile*

- **Do we have it?** *The recommended evidence for Standard VII-1 is the President's Cabinet Membership Profile, which exists as an excel sheet outlining the members of cabinet, their titles, contact information and headshots.*
- **Do we use it?** *While the sheet is readily shared with those who request it and is up-to-date, its use does not appear to be widespread.*
- **Does it work?** *No, the President's Cabinet Membership Profile does not seem to meet the basic charges of Standard VII-3b in that it does not include the president's*

professional experience beyond the initials for the degrees he has earned, nor does it make mention of how those earned degrees may align with Mercyhurst's mission.

Standard: VII-3b

Evidence Name: *Presidential Search Documents*

- **Do we have it?** *The President of the University was hired using an outside search firm (R.H. Perry and Associates) working in conjunction with the Chairs of our Presidential Search (Board of Directors members) and a committee of administrators, faculty and trustees. The document thoroughly lists qualifications needed, information about the University Strategic plan, academics and data about the institution to ensure that the individual chosen had the credentials, professional experience that is consistent with our mission and needs.*
- **Do we use it?** *This document was used to guide the hiring process of the current president, and shared regularly with faculty, staff and students.*
- **Does it work?** *The current President of the University has the appropriate credentials and professional experiences to meet our needs and are consistent with our University's mission and strategic plan.*

Standard: VII-3c

Evidence Name: *University Bylaws May 2019*

- **Do we have it?** *On pages 10-11 of the University Bylaws, Mercyhurst outlines that the President shall be charged with the responsibility and have plenary authority for all acts necessary to implement the decisions of the Trustees.*
- **Do we use it?** *The Board of Trustees reviews and distributes the University Bylaws each May.*
- **Does it work?** *The University Bylaws adequately provides evidence that our Chief Executive Officer (the President) has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position.*

Standard: VII-3d

Evidence Name: *President's Cabinet Membership Profile*

- **Do we have it?** *The recommended evidence for Standard VII-3d is the President's Cabinet Membership Profile, which exists as an excel sheet outlining the members of cabinet, their titles, contact information and headshots.*
- **Do we use it?** *While the sheet is readily shared with those who request it and is up-to-date, its use does not appear to be widespread.*
- **Does it work?** *The President's Cabinet Membership Profile shows that the president has surrounded himself with a sufficient number of administrators to help facilitate Mercyhurst's operations, but is lacking in information regarding each cabinet member's qualifications and how those members may assist in assessing Mercyhurst's efficiency and effectiveness.*

Standard: VII-4a

Evidence Name: *Organizational Chart*

- **Do we have it?** An academic organizational chart is available on the Provost's page on the HUB. It was last updated in May 2019. Other organizational charts likely exist but have not been provided.
- **Do we use it?** *The academic organizational chart guides the flow of communication among many academic units*
- **Does it work?** *The relatively newly implemented academic structure which resulted in the appointment of full-time College deans appears to have facilitated planning and communication and recruitment of new students.*

Standard: VII-4b

Evidence Name: *President's Cabinet Membership Profile*

- **Do we have it?** *The recommended evidence for Standard VII-4b is the President's Cabinet Membership Profile, which exists as an excel sheet outlining the members of cabinet, their titles, contact information and headshots.*
- **Do we use it?** *While the sheet is readily shared with those who request it and is up-to-date, its use does not appear to be widespread.*
- **Does it work?** *No, the President's Cabinet Membership Profile does not seem to meet the basic charges of Standard VII-4b in that it does not include the cabinet members' professional experience beyond initials for the degrees they have earned, nor does it make mention of how those credentials will help in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.*

Standard: VII-4c

Evidence Name: *President's Cabinet Membership Profile*

- **Do we have it?** *The recommended evidence for Standard VII-4c is the President's Cabinet Membership Profile, which exists as an excel sheet outlining the members of cabinet, their titles, contact information and headshots.*
- **Do we use it?** *While the sheet is readily shared with those who request it and is up-to-date, its use does not appear to be widespread.*
- **Does it work?** *No, the President's Cabinet Membership Profile does not seem to meet the basic charges of Standard VII-4c in that it does not include the cabinet members' professional experience beyond initials for the degrees they have earned, nor does it make mention of how those earned degrees or any professional experience is consistent with Mercyhurst's mission or the individual cabinet member's functional role.*

Standard: VII-4d

Evidence Name: *Organizational Chart for Academics (Academic Structure of University), 2019-20 Faculty Handbook, Section II, D-F*

- **Do we have it?** *This section of the Faculty Handbook describes the academic structure of the university and the roles and responsibilities of each level from President through faculty.*

- **Do we use it?** *The Faculty Handbook is available on the employee hub and is reviewed and edited as needed by the Handbook Committee of the Faculty Senate.*
- **Does it work?** *This section accurately describes the academic structure of the University and is consistent with the Organizational Chart of the University.*

Standard: VII-4e

Evidence Name: *Mercyhurst Erie Faculty Handbook*

- **Do we have it?** *The faculty handbook is updated yearly by subcommittees of the faculty senate and by the Provost. It is available to all faculty on Blackboard and our Mercyhurst HUB page. Pages 3-5 in the Faculty Handbook describes the roles of administration (President, Provost, Deans and Department Chairs). As part of their responsibilities each administrative branch is responsible for regularly engaging with faculty and students to provide dynamic leadership and promote cooperation (for example as listed on page 5 under Department Chair bulleted list of responsibilities)*
- **Do we use it?** *This document is used by faculty regularly to govern their roles and responsibilities. It is used to mentor new administration and faculty to ensure that all members are engaged with all levels of administration to ensure the University best serves its students.*
- **Does it work?** *Yes, this document is updated yearly with help from faculty senate committees in conjunction with the Office of Academic Affairs to ensure that all are working together to meet the institutions goals and objectives and in line with the strategic plan for the University.*

Standard: VII-4e

Evidence Name: *Mercyhurst Student Government (MSG) Constitution 2019-2020, MSG Bylaws and Standing Rules*

- **Do we have it?** *The MSG Constitution, page 13, states that members of MSG will be appointed to be representatives on All-University Committees which provides the opportunity for consistent engagement between faculty and students across several domains of the Mercyhurst community. This Constitution was most recently updated in August of 2019.*
- **Do we use it?** *The MSG Constitution is distributed electronically to all members of the student government each year. Members are expected to know and understand their duties and responsibilities as described in this document.*
- **Does it work?** *The MSG Constitution plainly states and ensures that members will be appointed to All-University Committees. The Constitution does not fully explain the opportunities that are provided by the All-University Committees for students to engage with faculty in advancing the institution's goals and objectives.*

Standard: VII-4e

Evidence Name: *University Council Bylaws*

- **Do we have it?** *On page 5 of the University Council Bylaws, Mercyhurst outlines all University Standing Committees roles and membership for staff and faculty. The section also outlines how often the committees shall meet.*
- **Do we use it?** *The University Council reviews and distributes the University Council Bylaws annually.*
- **Does it work?** *The University Council Bylaws adequately provide evidence that there is regular engagement with faculty and students on University Standing Committees in regard to advancing the institution's goals and objectives.*

Standard: VII-4f

Evidence Name: *Mercyhurst Erie Faculty Handbook*

- **Do we have it?** *To evaluate administrative units: page 3 in Faculty Handbook, Provost regularly evaluates faculty consistently and systemically. On page 5 in Faculty Handbook, Deans regularly evaluate faculty in their college. On page 5 in Faculty Handbook, Department Chair participates in program faculty. In addition, on page 9 on the Faculty Handbook there is a subcommittee of the Faculty Senate that is responsible for Administrator Evaluation of the "provost, Director of the center for teaching excellence, deans and associate deans".*
- *To evaluate assessment data: On page 3 (Provost) and page 5 (Deans and Department Chairs) the faculty handbook lists evaluating and overseeing assessment as part of the roles and responsibilities of these administrative groups.*
- **Do we use it?** *To evaluate administrative units: All faculty, including those in administrative roles are evaluated regularly. This includes their teaching, scholarship and University service. In addition, the Erie Faculty Senate regularly evaluates the Deans and the Provost in a cyclical basis.*
- *To evaluate assessment: Yearly all faculty and administration have an Assessment Institute before the academic year starts to make sure that all assessment data has been reviewed and submitted. This day is organized and run by our University Assessment Office.*
- **Does it work?** *To evaluate administrators: Administrative evaluations are done by the faculty and are delivered to their supervisor. How they are used is uncertain and whether senior administrators beyond the President are evaluated is unknown.*
- *To evaluate assessment: Yes, this yearly assessment institute is very effective at helping faculty and administration to feel supported in their assessment activities. It allows them to have one on one help through the Assessment Office and provides an environment where departments are able to work together to see how other programs are doing their assessment activities and learn what works and doesn't for them.*

Standard: VII-5

Evidence Name: *Mercyhurst Erie Faculty Handbook*

- **Do we have it?** *On page 3 in Faculty Handbook, Provost regularly evaluates faculty consistently and systemically. On page 5 in Faculty Handbook, Deans regularly evaluate faculty in their college. On page 5 in Faculty Handbook, Department Chair participates in program faculty. In addition, on page 9 on the Faculty Handbook there is a subcommittee of the Faculty Senate that is responsible for Administrator Evaluation of the “provost, Director of the center for teaching excellence, deans and associate deans”.*
- **Do we use it?** *To evaluate administrative units: All faculty, including those in administrative roles are evaluated regularly. This includes their teaching, scholarship and University service. In addition, the Erie Faculty Senate regularly evaluates the Deans and the Provost in a cyclical basis.*
- **Does it work?** *To evaluate administrators: Administrative evaluations are done by the faculty and are delivered to their supervisor. How they are used is uncertain and whether senior administrators beyond the President are evaluated is unknown.*

Standard: VII-5

Evidence Name: *University Bylaws May 2019*

- **Do we have it?** *On pages 3-4 of the University Bylaws, Mercyhurst outlines the Board Authority and Responsibility. The section also outlines that the Board supports the President and annually assesses his or her performance.*
- **Do we use it?** *The Board of Trustees reviews and distributes the University Bylaws each May.*
- **Does it work?** *The University Bylaws adequately provides evidence that offers periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration.*