Executive Summary
of the University's
Higher Learning Commission
Assurance Argument
Submitted October 10, 2021

INTRODUCTION

A team of consultant-evaluators from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) will be on campus to conduct a Comprehensive Evaluation of the University of Toledo November 8-9, 2021.

In preparation for the visit, the University has submitted an assurance argument and corresponding evidence that the team will review before its arrival. This document summarizes the assurance argument and is organized to correspond with the five criteria for accreditation as established by the HLC.

The complete document is available at *www.utoledo.edu/hlc*.

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

1A. The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.
The UToledo mission statement, corresponding vision and core values were revised as part of the 2016-2017 strategic planning process. The strategic plan and revised mission, vision and values statements were approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT) in June, 2017.

UToledo's Mission Statement: The University of Toledo is a national, public research university where students obtain a world-class education and become part of a diverse community of leaders committed to improving the human condition in the region and the world.

Vision: The University of Toledo will be a nationally ranked, public, research university with internationally recognized expertise and exceptional strength in discovery, teaching, clinical practice and service.

Values: Excellence, student-centeredness, research and scholarship, professionalism and leadership, diversity.

UToledo recognizes that its mission is to provide students with a world-class education, as supported by the breadth of academic programs offered, many of which are ranked, and through the institution's nationally recognized scholarship as an R2 Doctoral Research University. Students are part of a diverse community of leaders whose commitment is to improve the human condition at a regional and global level.

The mission statement is routinely used as part of the faculty/staff recruiting and onboarding process. After the strategic plan and accompanying mission statement were approved by the BOT, each college and administrative office developed unit-based strategic plans to align with the broader institutional plan. A strategic plan dashboard identifies goals, objectives, key performance indicators and responsible parties for implementation.

1B. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.
UToledo can point to a broad range of activities demonstrating that its educational role is to serve the public. UToledo has developed strong academic and experiential learning programs. The University also provides support to the community in addressing challenges and supporting new initiatives where the expertise of University faculty and students are an asset to the community.

UToledo's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes. UToledo is a public research university governed by a BOT and the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE). Any financial investment in commercialization efforts is primarily done to expand educational and research opportunities for our students and faculty.

As the only research university in metropolitan Toledo, UToledo has a special role in responding to community needs across a wide spectrum of topics. Community service also includes student-run events; even with COVID-19 stopping events at the end of the 2019-2020 academic year, the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership

reported that UToledo students recorded over 19,000 hours of community service and raised over $180,000 for philanthropic causes.

1C. 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.
One of UToledo's institutional student learning outcomes is Civic and Global Learning: graduates will demonstrate the knowledge required for responsible citizenship, both from their formal studies and from community-based learning. Civic learning may be demonstrated through research, community outreach, collaborative projects and/or field-based assignments.

The Division of Student Affairs seeks to build community and is committed to providing students with co-curricular opportunities for involvement that will enhance and complement their curricular experience. The Office of Student Involvement and Leadership supports student organizations, fraternities and sororities, leadership programs, service programs, event planning and the online Involvement Network (InvoNet). UToledo provides a rich, diverse and inclusive experience for students as is evidenced by over 350 registered undergraduate and graduate student clubs and organizations. UToledo also maintains a comprehensive array of centers, offices and initiatives that address societal diversity, inclusion and global awareness.

A Strategic Plan for Diversity, Inclusion and Equity has also been created. It provides baseline data on demographic characteristics of the UToledo student population and compares those demographics to Ohio's population with a focus on African American and Latino communities as well as other minority communities, including individuals with disabilities. The plan cites the goal of increasing the numbers of diverse students who enroll, are retained and graduate from UToledo.

Criterion One Summary
UToledo is a mission-driven institution that understands that the education it offers to its students is its primary purpose, which is best realized through the deep engagement of its students, faculty, staff and administrators in its community. The inclusion of its broad constituency in decision-making, strategic planning and execution assures that its decisions include the insights afforded by diverse perspectives, its plans consider the needs of everyone while admitting the limits of its abilities to meet them all, and its strategies arise from purposeful commitment to improving the human condition.

CRITERION TWO. INTEGRITY: ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT
The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2A. 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.
The BOT operates under a code of ethics and members undergo ethics training every two years. Under BOT bylaws, the Board's Finance and Audit Committee is charged with oversight and continuous financial soundness of internal and external audits. The Trusteeship and Governance Committee ensures the integrity of the Board.

Conflicts of interest are addressed through Board bylaw, through Article 6 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (AAUP unionized faculty) and the Rules and Regulations for faculty not bound by a collective bargaining agreement.

UToledo maintains a robust internal audit function, as evidenced by regular updates to the BOT. Financial and operational integrity is assured through the annual audit conducted by external auditors.
A commitment to academic integrity and responsible conduct is evidenced by UToledo's academic operations. Faculty maintain intellectual ownership of the curriculum, while the Office of the Provost oversees curriculum-tracking and development processes. UToledo complies with required curriculum directives initiated by the ODHE. The University has published Standards of Ethical Conduct and policies related to research integrity as well

as academic and student policies, which evidence a commitment to the academic integrity of the university. Human resources policies for faculty and staff require ethical behavior.

As a state institution, UToledo abides by Ohio open records and public meeting laws. Polices are developed transparently and the process utilizes an open 30-day comment period on new/modified policies on the University Policy website. BOT agendas and minutes are available on the BOT website. Faculty Senate and Graduate Council websites post agendas/minutes and meetings are open to the public.

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

The UToledo website is the primary source of all University information. The Office of Admissions ensures that admissions requirements are clearly articulated online for students. Academic information and program requirements are clearly articulated through the University catalog.

The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) is the official source of institutional reports and data. The website provides clear, easily accessible and accurate information. Additionally, a Student Outcomes website is directly linked from "About UToledo" on the University's homepage.

Information regarding tuition, fees and financial aid can be found in the undergraduate catalog and through a finance brochure available on the Treasurer's website. This information has been enhanced to provide more consistent information across more categories of students.

The Office of the Registrar website has important registration dates; the office communicates with students about their accounts and bills prior to each semester. Transfer credit information and processes are in one place on the Registrar's website.

Accreditation information is prominently displayed on the website of the Office of Assessment, Accreditation and Program Review. This includes HLC accreditation as well as external accreditation of over 80 UToledo programs, colleges and centers by over 40 different accrediting bodies.

2C. 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.

Under Ohio Revised Code, UToledo is governed by a Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor and composed of voting members and two non-voting student members, who serve nine-year and two-year terms, respectively. The BOT Preamble sets forth the expectation that the Board will "serve and govern the University in an effective way and to ensure a culture of constructive inquiry, open discussion and academic excellence."

Board resolution 09-08-18 recognizes faculty as a key stakeholder and states explicitly that the Board will consider its input on University matters. A Faculty Senate representative serves on the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board.

Board bylaw 3364-1-01 outlines the authority of the Board to approve or initiate the administrative structure of UToledo, its educational programs and requirements, appointment, compensation and removal of all UToledo personnel, fiscal policies and University policies. Board bylaw 3364-1-07 delegates authority to the President as executive head of the University.

Board bylaw 3364-1-06 sets the expectation that the Board will abide by the strictest ethical guidelines. Code of ethics statements are signed by each member annually.

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

UToledo is committed to freedom of expression directly through the UToledo policy on "Expression on Campus." In 2019, Faculty Senate adopted a statement on freedom of expression that affirms UToledo's commitment to free and open inquiry. Faculty Senate is the designated voice of the faculty per Article II of the Faculty Senate

Constitution. Article 5 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement articulates faculty rights and defines academic freedom. Similarly, the rules and regulations for faculty not in a collective bargaining agreement express a similar commitment to the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. Graduate Council embeds a commitment to truth in learning in Article I of the Graduate Faculty Constitution.

2E. The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.
The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (RSP) provides research administration and support to faculty, staff and students involved in sponsored research and scholarly activities. The office covers research compliance related to animal care in research, human subjects in research, research safety, controlled substances and dangerous drugs in research and export control. A Research Integrity Program ensures that researchers, staff and students are provided with the tools necessary to conduct research ethically and responsibly and to ensure that allegations and investigations of research misconduct are conducted in accordance with policies and applicable regulations. Faculty, staff and student researchers are required to complete Responsible Conduct of Research training as required by their program sponsors or university committees.

The Academic Dishonesty Policy provides guidance to students and faculty in how information should be presented and appropriately attributed. The Student Code of Conduct codifies acceptable behavior of students. The graduate policy on academic dishonesty has an appeal process at the level of the dean/Graduate Council after college-level processes have been exhausted. The undergraduate policy on academic dishonesty informs students of ethical use of information and provides a process for handing charges of academic dishonesty. The undergraduate Student Grievance Council adjudicates grievances or challenges to accusations of academic dishonesty not resolved at the faculty or college level.

Criterion Two Summary
UToledo is an R2 research institution guided in its mission by ethical policies, procedures and processes that ensure academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students. They require fair and ethical behavior of administration, faculty and staff under the strategic leadership of the BOT. As an institution, UToledo strives to be transparent in its service to its students and the community at large. Decisions are made in the best interest of the institution in compliance with state, federal and university policies to ensure the institution's integrity.

CRITERION THREE. TEACHING AND LEARNING: QUALITY, RESOURCES AND SUPPORT
The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3A. The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.
The rigor and content of degree programs are ensured by faculty and curriculum committees who develop and review course and program content and requirements. The Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee (undergraduate) and the Graduate Council Curriculum Committee (graduate) review and approve all new/modified course and program proposals in a rigorous peer-review process.

After internal approval, new programs undergo external review and approval at the state level through the Ohio Department of Higher Education (undergraduate) and Chancellor's Council on Graduate Studies (graduate).

All programs participate in an institutional process of program review that includes internal review (self-study) and external review. More than 80 programs, colleges and centers maintain external accreditation awarded by over 40 different accrediting bodies.

Over 50 UToledo programs and certificates are available 100% online. For programs of study offered in both online and face-to-face modalities, a review for consistency in student learning outcomes is part of the internal program review process. Quality Matters (QM) training for online program faculty supports enhanced quality for

these programs. UToledo ranks first out of all Ohio institutions and 7th globally in that number of courses that are QM certified. Additionally, UToledo has 29 certified QM peer reviewers.

UToledo is approved to offer programs at two additional locations: Lorain County Community College (LCCC) University Partnership Ridge Campus in North Ridgeville, OH and PSG Institute of Management in Coimbatore, India. Programs at these locations are also offered on-campus.

UToledo's dual credit program, College Credit Plus (CCP), has partnerships with approximately 250 Ohio high schools with more than 50 high school teachers credentialed. The ODHE establishes guidelines for the credentialing of high school teachers who choose to participate in the CCP program.

3B. 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.
The UToledo core curriculum consists of two components:
1. General education courses of broad interest and distributed across the categories of composition, humanities/fine arts, mathematics, natural sciences and social sciences, and
2. Multicultural courses that foster an understanding of and respect for diverse cultures and peoples, both within and outside of the United States.

The Faculty Senate Committee on the Core Curriculum reviews and recommends guidelines for implementation of the core curriculum. In April 2017, Faculty Senate approved modifications to the Core Curriculum. In 2020-2021, the Faculty Senate Committee on Core Curriculum requested an external review of the Core Curriculum, which was conducted in conjunction with the Office of the Provost. University stakeholders are working to develop and implement a plan that will meet the needs of the faculty, students and institution based on the recommendations of that review, while also considering general education requirements specified by ODHE, including recently approved Diversity, Equity and Inclusion learning outcomes.

The institution's recognition of diversity is evidenced by the fact that the core/general educational program for all students, regardless of college or focus of study, requires completion of course work aimed at fostering understanding and respect for different cultures and peoples, through the study of their beliefs, customs, histories, values and interrelationships.

All undergraduate students have an opportunity to take part in research sponsored by various departments at UToledo. The Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR-UT) is a central resource for undergraduate research and it sponsors a Summer Research Symposium. All graduate students must show evidence of contributions to scholarship either through their theses, dissertations or some form of culminating project. As a research institution, faculty research and scholarly work are expected. Annual reviews and reports from faculty enumerate professional activity and service.

UToledo also offers a wide array of creative works, artistic endeavors and performances.

3C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.
UToledo is dedicated to the recruitment and hiring of diverse faculty and staff. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion's strategic plan articulates goals to increase the recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty and staff and college-level plans to increase the diversity of faculty applicant pools.

Faculty are appropriately credentialed under the direction of the Office of the Provost according to the Policy on University Evaluation of Faculty Qualifications. Faculty and staff are also provided various professional development opportunities.

High school instructors in College Credit Plus courses are certified by the University in accordance with Ohio Code. The state's credentialing requirements align with the HLC.

Instructors are annually evaluated through the use of the Annual Report of Professional Activity (ARPA) or through annual reviews and effort reports for faculty in the College of Medicine and Life Sciences. Tenured faculty are evaluated every five years to further their professional growth; tenure-track faculty and lecturers are evaluated annually.

Faculty are required to hold office hours and be available to students. The Student Centeredness Survey found that the majority of students are satisfied or very satisfied with faculty willingness to discuss ideas and concepts outside of classes, or to discuss career plans.

Staff are qualified for their positions per the Human Resources and Talent Development Office's hiring practices, which ensure that only candidates with appropriate qualifications are interviewed and hired.

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

UToledo provides a variety of student support services to enhance the learning of our diverse student population. New student orientation programs are customized based on the needs of each student population; i.e., new student, transfer student or re-admitted student.

All enrolled students are afforded support services that include academic advising, Career Services, accessibility and disability services, tutoring and co-curricular engagement, the Pre-Health Advising Center, which was established in 2019, the Military Service Center and a new Transfer Center established in 2021.

UToledo uses selective admissions standards for colleges and/or programs requiring higher levels of preparation for success in first-year courses. University College is the educational and service destination for personalized support of adult, military, online, transitional and undecided students. The College guides undecided students in exploring majors and careers and directs major-ineligible students into appropriate preparation for reaching their goals. University College launched two new programs for at-risk students to increase the overall retention and graduation rates at the University: (1) *Rocket Reboot* is for any student placed on academic probation in University College and (2) *Rocket Recharge* is an opt-in program for students facing their first suspension.

Starfish Early Alert™ assists success coaches to keep track of undergraduate student performance and to alert them when students are in academic difficulty. Each student is assigned an academic advisor to help them stay on track to complete requirements for graduation.

TRIO support services provide support for special populations of students. Student-Athlete Academic Services are available to all student athletes.

Information Technology (IT) supports many administrative applications and oversees software and hardware for students and faculty. UToledo provides robust wired and wireless network coverage across 100% of the enterprise locations. The UToledo Virtual Lab environment can be accessed anywhere.

General purpose classrooms have basic media configurations, including one-instructor workstations, internet, projectors and screens. In response to COVID and an increased demand for remote teaching, Classroom Support Services, in conjunction with UToledo Online, ensured that all classrooms had updated computers to handle the higher demand for synchronous teaching while also capturing each class.

The University Libraries consist of three service locations: William S. Carlson Library, which includes the Ward M. Canaday Center for Special Collections, the Raymond H. Mulford Health Science Library and, administered separately, is the LaValley Law Library.

Innovative learning environments on and off campus include the Lake Erie Center, Stranahan Arboretum, Plant Science Research Center, Plastination Laboratory, Ruth M. Hillebrand Clinical Skills Center, Center for Performing

Arts, Center for Visual Arts, Toledo Museum of Art's Reference Library and the Interprofessional Immersive Simulation Center on the Health Science Campus.

Criterion Three Summary
The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered. The appropriateness of all degree programs, including general education, are supported by the broad engagement of faculty in the development, review and approval process for programs and courses as well as the teaching and assessment of students' learning and a continuous improvement process. Student learning outcomes are articulated for the institution. Courses and programs address the depth and breadth of the knowledge acquisition and skills appropriate for a comprehensive research university. UToledo has highly qualified faculty and staff and offers ongoing support through training, mentoring and professional development opportunities. Our faculty have received commendations, both on and off the campuses, for their outstanding research, teaching and service.

CRITERION FOUR. 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.

4A. The institution ensures the quality of its educational programs.
UToledo maintains a practice of regular program review. A self-study template and corresponding questions for external reviewers include specific references to HLC criteria as well as opportunities for programs to explain how program review results link to strategic planning. A faculty-led University Academic Program Review Committee facilitates and follows up on action items agreed upon by program leadership, the college and the Provost.

UToledo evaluates all undergraduate and graduate credit that it transcripts as governed by University policy, directed by ODHE or outlined in the Ohio Administrative Code.

UToledo follows the Transfer and Articulation policies set forth by the state of Ohio. Transfer of general education courses follow the guidelines of the newly revised Ohio Transfer 36.

UToledo exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, including dual-credit courses. Faculty determine courses and prerequisites. Faculty Senate and Graduate Council have final approval of curriculum.

Faculty must possess the credentials required by the ODHE guidelines for instructors of higher education, as well as UToledo policy.

In accordance with federal regulation, the OIR created a dashboard to track a variety of metrics, including student success. Career Services administers the First Destination Survey to graduating students to track students' employment or other plans post-graduation. A snapshot of this data is on the UToledo Student Outcomes website, in addition to other relevant data points. As outlined in the Alumni Engagement Policy, the UToledo Alumni Association serves as the official organization for alumni.

4B. The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.
UToledo establishes the assessment of student learning as an integral component of teaching and learning through the Assessment of Student Learning policy and corresponding procedure manual.

Institution- and program-level learning outcomes are publicly displayed on websites, which have clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for the assessment of student learning.

In 2017, the university collaboratively developed clearly stated institutional student learning outcomes (ISLOs): (1) Specified Knowledge, (2) Broad and Integrative Knowledge, (3) Intellectual Skills, (4) Civic and Global Learning and (5) Applied Learning.

The University Assessment Committee (UAC) consists of liaisons from each college and service unit that maintain responsibility for academic program and co-curricular program student learning. The group is charged by the Provost to design and maintain the assessment process and to provide feedback to individual programs on their assessment initiatives. Each academic program and co-curricular service unit publishes an assessment plan and completes an annual assessment report. Beginning in January 2020, academic programs were required to develop a curriculum map if they did not already have one in place. These plans, annual reports and curriculum maps (academic programs only) reflect the assessment practices in all academic and co-curricular programs at UToledo.

4C. The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.
The current University Strategic Plan lays out goals for retention and completion, which include closing equity gaps for historically underserved students (i.e., underrepresented students of color [URM] and lower-income students [Pell-awarded]). Each goal was developed using trend analyses of UToledo historical student data and benchmark comparisons with peer institutions.

UToledo closely tracks student retention, persistence and graduation and disaggregates these data for URM and Pell-awarded students to monitor progress on the strategic goal of improving equity of outcomes for students. Over the past four years, the Office of Institutional Research has developed a series of institutional data dashboards that allow for the tracking of key metrics including student enrollment, retention and graduation rates, trackable across the institution and by college and program.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) and internal student needs assessment surveys provide data that can enhance the student experience and provide recommendations to faculty, staff and administrators on how to support student success.

Standing College Retention Committees (CRC) and a University Retention Committee (URC) were created in 2019 as part of the efforts to create institutional structures to support and sustain data-informed retention and equity efforts.

UToledo uses Banner as its primary student information system. Baseline reporting for first-year retention and six-year graduation rates is based on IPEDS definitions, as is standard across most institutions.

Criterion Four Summary
UToledo is fortunate to have qualified and committed faculty and staff devoted to the implementation of best practices suited to meet the unique needs of our student population. We understand that incremental improvements in student learning can only occur through ongoing evaluation, measurement and data-driven judgments to improve learning. It is clear from the evidence presented that while progress is being made in many areas, institutional methodologies and the processes themselves must remain under constant examination to ensure continuous quality improvement. Only through ongoing assessment and evaluation will we know if our educational programs are meeting the learning, retention and graduation needs of our students.

CRITERION FIVE. 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.

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

UToledo is part of the University System of Ohio. UToledo has worked diligently to ensure that current strategic planning processes engage stakeholders from across the institution to accurately reflect the needs of the entire institution. Strategic plans since 2016 include: (1) an institutional strategic plan, *Path to Excellence*, (2) a facilities master plan and (3) a diversity strategic plan. These planning processes required feedback from a range of internal and external constituents, including Faculty Senate and Graduate Council. Once plans are created, vetted and approved by all internal stakeholders, they are presented to the Board of Trustees for final approval and shared campus-wide.

UToledo engages internal constituencies including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students in the institution's governance through the development of policies and procedures. The policy development and vetting process ensures that policies are publicly posted and includes a 30-day solicitation of feedback from all stakeholders.

UToledo utilizes numerous internal and external data sources to make informed decisions in the best interest of the institution and its constituents. One challenge the institution has with using the large amount of data collected and available is identifying a systematic and coordinated approach to using it in decision-making processes. Work in this area is evolving as we continue to work toward a centralized process of institutional effectiveness.

The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) serves as the official source of institutional information for the University and provides institutional-level research to support planning and decision-making. The OIR annually creates standard reports to summarize or provide more detailed information about the institution to internal and external constituents. In spring 2019, the Business Insights team was established within Finance and Administration, ensuring that real-time dashboards are made available to stakeholders. Additionally, implementation of the new RCM (Responsibility Center Management) budget model will inherently provide a conduit for more data-informed decision-making.

The institution's administration has created effective administrative structures to ensure that faculty are involved in setting academic requirements, policies and processes.

5B. The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.
UToledo has appropriate numbers of faculty and staff to successfully deliver a breadth of programs. The institution also has the infrastructure required to deliver its educational programs. The University of Toledo is located on ~900 acres, comprised of the Main and Health Science campuses, Lake Erie Center, Stranahan Arboretum, Toledo Museum of Art, UTPD/Ohio State Highway Patrol station and Center for Alumni and Donor Engagement. Educational, research and service facilities at the Scott Park campus have been relocated to decommission this site and to reduce maintenance costs as described in the Facilities Master Plan.

The mission and strategic plan goals are realistic for an institution of higher education with the depth and breadth of degree-granting colleges. Evidence of this, given our resources and opportunities, is supported by our progress toward achieving them as outlined in the strategic plan. President Postel has identified several short-term key initiatives focusing on increasing efficiencies, addressing operational challenges and embracing innovative ideas to prepare UToledo for the future. The work is not intended to be a replacement for the existing Strategic Plan, but rather an attempt to build the infrastructure necessary for future success.

Responsibility for budget planning and approval is provided by the Budget Authority and Control policy. The BOT annually approves operating budgets for unrestricted funds, auxiliary units and clinical enterprises. The Office of Financial Planning, Budgets and Strategic Analysis (OFPBSA) facilitates the budget development process and provides controls to help individual units monitor their expenditures.

One of President Postel's key initiatives is to develop and implement a new incentive-based budget model to directly link student success outcomes to strategic academic investments. Huron Consulting and an internal working group developed a responsibility center management (RCM) budget model at the University.

The university continues to face fiscal challenges resulting from declining enrollment, increased tuition discounting and state-imposed limits on tuition increases. The variance between net tuition revenues and labor cost increases has put tremendous pressure the university's ability to strategically invest in infrastructure, deferred maintenance and new initiatives. Despite these economic challenges, the university has attempted to maintain the depth and breadth of academic offerings and student-centered opportunities.

Concerns regarding the impact of COVID-19 on University finances moving forward, including the loss of revenue from enrollment and auxiliary services, have led to numerous steps to reduce expenditures. Decisions regarding academic unit expenditure reductions were being made at the college level, in consultation with the Office of Academic Finance, to minimize the impact on educational endeavors. The combination of these expenditure reductions with higher-than-expected revenue from the State, auxiliary services and UTMC resulted in a budgetary surplus that was reinvested in the academic enterprise. President Postel convened a working group for reinvestment strategy.

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

UToledo's Path to Excellence: Strategic Plan 2017-2022 outlines five overarching goals based on the university's commitment to prioritize student success, promote research, scholarship and creative activities, enhance faculty and staff success, promote financial stability and strengthen UToledo's brand and reputation. Progress toward these goals is reported via a dashboard on UToledo's website.

The key initiatives presented by Dr. Postel after his arrival in July, 2020 also address critical systemic challenges within the institution to prioritize strategic planning efforts while also managing the impact of the pandemic. These key initiatives will serve as a starting point for the next strategic plan, the development of which is beginning Fall, 2021.

UToledo is making progress in integrating assessment, program review, college annual reports and data provided by the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) and linking these to budgetary decisions.

The university's planning processes encompass the entire institution and consider the perspectives of internal and external constituents. The current budget planning process includes various constituents. The new RCM budget model includes a governance structure that comprises various committees including advisory committees, operational support teams and decision-makers.

UToledo's strategic plans and fiscal resources account for the capacity of the institution and current environment and are developed to account for fluctuations in revenue, enrollment and expenditures. Although budgets are approved for an entire fiscal year, periodic mid-year adjustments are required due to unexpected changes in enrollment, revenue sources or expenditures.

Criterion Five Summary

UToledo is a mission-driven research university guided by a realistic strategic plan that considers the institutions current state and projected growth as well as local, regional and national trends. The institution has been intentional in its planning to meet current fiscal challenges and anticipated future obligations. Leveraging a continuous improvement process, strategic plans have progressed to meet the evolving needs of the campus constituents and the community in an effort to ensure that we are poised for a better path forward.