

Assurance Argument

Rush University - IL

Review date: 5/22/2023

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
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.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

1.A.1.

The [mission documents](#) of Rush University (RU) include the mission, vision, and strategic pillars.

- **Mission:** Rush University champions a learning environment in health and biomedical sciences through collaboration, education, research and equity for our students, faculty, staff and the communities we serve.
- **Vision:** Rush University is a model for improving health through innovative research and transformative education in a culture of excellence and equity.
- **Strategic Pillars:** RU will achieve its vision guided by work in three strategic pillars:
 - **Learn:** *transform health sciences education to improve care and outcomes;*
 - **Discover:** *advance health science and knowledge to improve health;* and
 - **Thrive:** *nurture a sustainable, dynamic, diverse and inclusive university and community.*

RU reviews its mission in concert with its strategic planning process to ensure alignment between mission, programs, services, and strategic goals. Since the 2018 Assurance Argument, the university launched a new [strategic plan](#) initiative in 2020; through this initiative the university mission and vision were revised, and health equity and collaboration were added to RU's commitment to education, research, and community service and well-being. Consistent with its [Charter](#), the Board of Governors (BOG) "Oversees the mission, vision and strategic plan for the University, including ensuring integrated institutional and strategic planning consistent with the University's mission." ([Article IV, Section 4.1](#)). The RU mission and Strategic Plan are included in the [Pre-Meeting](#)

[Booklet](#) that is distributed to BOG members prior to regularly scheduled BOG meetings. New BOG members are briefed on the mission as part of their new member orientation.

Work on updating and revising the mission, vision, and strategic goals began in 2020 as part of the multi-year strategic planning process. Throughout 2020 and 2021, RU's president and provost held forums and meetings with members of the RU community, stakeholders, and BOG. Feedback obtained in these sessions was used to refine the mission documents until a broad consensus was reached. Over 500 internal and external constituents participated in these forums to discuss analysis of university strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and reflect on its mission. Constituents included RU and Rush University Medical Center (RUMC) leaders, faculty, staff, students, and members of the BOG, among others. An external vendor was hired to conduct a thorough market analysis and identify opportunities for RU. Stakeholder feedback was incorporated iteratively into various drafts of RU's mission and strategic plan. The strategic plan was adopted by the BOG on [February 4, 2022](#).

1.A.2

RU's [mission](#) documents are current and emphasize RU's integrated, tripartite mission of education, research, and service: Rush University champions a learning environment in health and biomedical sciences through collaboration, education, research, and equity for our students, faculty, staff, and the communities we serve.

[Strategic Goals](#) emphasize the various aspects of RU's mission described under three pillars: `

- Pillar 1: The **Learn** pillar is dedicated to the transformation of health sciences education.
 - Grow targeted programs based on our mission, community needs, and market trends.
 - Transform health sciences education.
 - Respond to industry informed workforce demands.
- Pillar 2: The **Discover** pillar is dedicated to transforming research, discovery, and innovation at Rush University.
 - Grow research based on current strengths, healthcare needs, and defined areas of focus.
 - Advance and enable novel interdisciplinary biomedical and clinical research.
 - Invest in infrastructure, training, career development, and core services for translational, basic and clinical researchers.
- Pillar 3: The **Thrive** pillar is dedicated to nurturing a sustainable, dynamic, diverse, and inclusive university and community.
 - Advance diversity, equity, and inclusion across all colleges.
 - Promote wellness and resiliency across the university and community.
 - Enhance the physical environment to nurture our culture of collaboration and excellence.

Intrinsic to RU's mission and vision are the ICARE values – Innovation, Collaboration, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence. The ICARE values convey the philosophy expressed by all members of the RU community in their commitment to quality educational programs and experiences.

1.A.3

The [mission](#) emphasizes RU's commitment to championing a learning environment in health and biomedical sciences through collaboration, education, research, and equity for our students, faculty, staff, and the communities we serve. Our scope is reinforced by the Learn and Thrive [strategic](#)

[pillars](#) to lift each college at Rush University with supportive collaboration and comprehensive strategic planning to meet the students' evolving expectations and needs and advance health science and knowledge to improve health. The societal impact of our education and research programs is manifested in our Thrive strategic pillar, dedicated to nurturing a sustainable, dynamic, diverse, and inclusive university and community.

The [mission](#) and new [strategic plan](#) documents identify students as constituents of our educational programs and emphasize collaboration with the communities we serve: *RU champions a learning environment in health and biomedical sciences through collaboration, education, research, and equity for our students, faculty, staff and the communities we serve.* Our commitment to social responsibility is manifested by extending our constituents to our clinical partners and the communities we serve. Emphasized throughout the strategic plan is our dedication to improving the health of our communities through excellence in clinical, research, and educational programs. This commitment encompasses multiple community partnerships, and active engagement in programs to address social determinants that impact access to care and optimal health and well-being.

1.A.4

Academic programs. Consistent with its mission to *champion a learning environment in health and biomedical sciences*, RU offers upper division, baccalaureate, and graduate level education in the health-related and biomedical sciences. [College mission statements](#) are congruent with the [mission](#) of RU. To excel in championing *a learning environment* RU faculty implement innovative learning models including active learning, simulations, team-based, and experiential learning that complement or replace traditional classroom models.

All program options and curricula are listed on the RU website for each college ([CHS](#), [CON](#), [GC](#), and [RMC](#)). Since the last HLC review, Rush University has grown significantly from 2755 students in 2019 to 2870 students in 2023. Essentially all of our graduates find employment or next training positions in their chosen area. All programs are fully accredited and during this time we have also been able to reduce student debt burden.

Research. *Dedicated to the transformation of research, discovery, and innovation* (Strategic Plan's Discover pillar), the faculty and students of RU conduct impactful research that advances the understanding of the bio-behavioral and environmental phenomena that impact the health and well-being of our diverse populations, communities, and healthcare delivery systems. RU develops and sustains transformative programs of discovery that range from elucidating the underlying mechanisms of diseases to developing innovative therapies and establishing interventions in the community to help people live healthier lives. Since the last HLC visit external research awards have increased significantly. In 2019, RU had more than \$114 million in grants, and in 2023 more than \$146 million.

Support Services. Likewise, [Student Support Services](#) are grounded in the mission and goals of RU by dedication to nurturing a sustainable, dynamic, diverse and inclusive university and community (Strategic Plan's Thrive pillar). The [Office of Student Life and Engagement](#) sponsors a wide range of programs including interdisciplinary round table discussions, speakers, and community service initiatives that center on health-related topics and societal issues. The Office also supports student organizations that promote student engagement and build leadership skills.

Since the last assurance argument the university partnered with RUMC to establish a [Center for Clinical Wellness](#) (CCW) that provides a full range of services that aid students in addressing issues

pertinent to their personal and professional lives. RU also partnered with CCW, establishing a balanced program that creates awareness and provides tools and resources to all students, faculty, and employees to help them maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

The [Library](#) continues to contribute to the excellence of the educational programs and learning environments by providing access to resources and services that support the learning, scholarship and research of students and faculty. We are completing a renovation plan of the top floor of the library this academic year to further enhance student study space. The [Center for Academic Excellence](#) (CAE) continues to provide writing assistance, tutoring, and academic workshops designed to optimize students' academic potential and success.

Since the last assurance argument the Office of Student Diversity and Multicultural Affairs changed its name to the [Office of Student Diversity and Community Engagement](#) to better reflect and emphasize the work of the office in promoting diversity, inclusion, and community engagement. The Office continues to provide co-curricular programming that promotes diversity and inclusion awareness and leadership opportunities for students. From providing academic support to hosting healthcare-related activities and events, to implementing health and wellness programs, the support services offered by RU are student-centered, inclusive, and aimed at supporting the overall excellence of the student educational experiences. The [Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) supports students to ensure equal access and provided accommodations to 220 students during 2022. We have also identified new space that will be completed in FY 24 for multi-cultural services at Rush. The [Office of International Student Services](#) supports the transition of international students into the RU community.

Enrollment profile. RU's enrollment profile is consistent with its mission to champion a learning environment in health and biomedical sciences through collaboration, education, research, equity for our students. RU attracts adult learners from diverse backgrounds who aspire to careers in healthcare delivery and biomedical sciences. Onsite and online programs attract students from across the country and the world, representing various and diverse communities from both rural and urban locations.

Since our last assurance argument, the university established the [Office of Institutional Effectiveness](#) (OIE) that includes the previous Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Accreditation (OIRAA). The OIE reports annual data on student demographics in [Enrollment Facts and Figures at a Glance](#) and the [RU Annual Report](#). In addition, OIE serves RU by providing leadership and support in the area of accreditation, academic planning, assessment and regulatory mandates.

Albeit a slight decrease in male students since our last assurance argument, the gender distribution in the student population is consistent with distributions found across most of the healthcare disciplines represented by RU. The CON generally kept its rate of male nursing students from 2018 at 12.3%. Age distribution of the students remains fairly constant at 30 years, on average. The proportion of [under-represented minority](#) (URM) students has increased since 2018, from 17% to 23%.

In our last assurance argument, we described a [five-year plan](#) to increase its proportion of URM students with an influx of over four million dollars in scholarship support, application of holistic admission procedures, and targeted recruitment efforts. We are pleased see an increase of 6% in the past four years. Efforts included the CON affiliation agreements with several Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) across the nation and community outreach events such as the STEM Expo.

The RMC designated a Program Outreach Manager who is charged with the design, development, and execution of an outreach program to target under-represented minority populations. The CHS partners with Malcolm X College, a City College of Chicago, to recruit URM students into its BS in Health Sciences program that serves as a pipeline to upper division health-sciences programs. The attached [Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan](#) outlines the goals and strategies by college for increasing diversity within the university.

Our culture of diversity and inclusion extends beyond gender, race, and ethnicity to students with disabilities, and with diverse religious beliefs, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and country of origin. RU hosts several [student affinity groups](#) that represent the multi-dimensional composition of our student population.

1.A.5

RU's [mission, vision, and values](#), are publicly available through the [RU Website](#), [RU Catalog](#), and [Faculty Handbook](#). The mission is prominently displayed on an entrance wall in the Armour Academic Center and included in the [RU Annual Report](#) and in course [syllabi](#).

RU is currently in search for a chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer. There has been great interest in this position, and we anticipate filling it over the summer. The university is also funding 0.5 FTEs in each college in support of the colleges integrated DEI efforts. All of this funding is new since our last submission and site visit.

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1.B - Core Component 1.B

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

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

Argument

1.B.1

RU and RUMC have a long history of community engagement and an ongoing commitment to the diverse and underserved communities on the Near West Side of Chicago. RU is located in the racially and ethnically diverse Near West Side neighborhood of Chicago in the Illinois Medical District and, as the academic arm of RUMC, is actively involved in the community. RUMC is recognized as a national leader in community engagement having received the American Hospital Association [“Carolyn Boone Lewis Equity of Care”](#) award in 2019 for the fourth time in five years. Also, in 2020 Rush Medical College was awarded the Association of American Medical Colleges [Spencer Foreman Award for Outstanding Community Engagement](#), which noted the college's work to protect Chicago's homeless during COVID-19. This award recognizes a medical school or teaching hospital that “goes well beyond the traditional role of academic medicine and reaches communities whose needs are not being met through the traditional health delivery system.”

The [Office of Student Diversity and Community Engagement](#) coordinates community-based activities which started in the form of the Rush Community Service Initiative Program (RCSIP), and also include the Science and Math Excellence Network (SAME). In the spirit of the practitioner-teacher model of education, the College of Nursing Office of Faculty Practice operates over 25 community clinical practices and academic practice partnerships providing over 70,000 direct patient care hours annually to high-need, hyperlocal populations while also serving as robust clinical training sites for interdisciplinary students. Populations include people experiencing homelessness, families with newborns, formerly incarcerated/returning citizens, and adolescents in school-based health centers and other place-based clinics, all of which have expanded significantly over the last 25 years. RUMC's total community benefit investment in FY2022 was \$553 million, an increase of \$218 million since 2018, with an over \$10 million expenditure on community health improvement, which is an increase of \$9 million since 2018. Our commitment to the community is summarized in the [2022 Year in Review](#) report.

[RCSIP](#) is a community-focused program that provides students, faculty and staff with valuable community experiences and opportunities to address the health needs of people in surrounding communities. Developed over 25 years ago, this all-volunteer interprofessional program serves over 10,000 community members annually providing health education and health promotion programs, patient care programs, and programs that promote careers in health to local students.

The [Chicago Schweitzer Fellows Program](#)® is a one-year, interdisciplinary, mentored fellowship focused on health-related community service and leadership development. Annually, four to five RU students are selected to participate. The program strengthens fellows' resolve to provide health and human services to underserved populations by facilitating opportunities for students to:

- use their skills and knowledge in real-life situations;
- become culturally sensitive and compassionate caregivers;
- understand the impact of social and environmental determinants of health;
- build capacity for and commitment to improving the health status of individuals and communities while contributing to social change;
- work collaboratively and across disciplines in pursuit of common goals; and
- learn to exercise leadership skills and influence community-based organizations, leaders, and academic institutions to embrace holistic service-oriented approaches to health.

In 2013, RUMC conducted its first [Community Health Needs Assessment](#) (CHNA) and based on those results, developed a [Community Health Implementation Plan](#) (CHIP), which identified programs to improve the health of people in the communities we serve. From 2019-2022, students and RUMC staff served more than 747,403 people. In 2022 we served people in our communities through 200 community partnerships and 124 programs, with a total value of nearly \$19 million to the community. The CHIP for 2019-2023 has the following goals with identified strategies and measures: reduce inequities caused by the social, economic, and structural determinants of health; improve access to mental and behavioral health services; prevent and reduce chronic disease by focusing on risk factors; and increase access to care and community services. The [2020](#), [2021](#), and [2022](#) Community Benefit Reports are attached.

RUMC has also developed and published an [Anchor Mission Strategy](#) to formalize our commitment to anchoring community health and economic vitality in the 12 West Side neighborhoods that we serve. This strategy outlines four commitments to our communities: hire locally and develop more local talent; buy and source locally; invest locally; and volunteer locally.

In 2018 two RMC students designed the [West Side Walk to Wellness](#). The event, co-led by RU medical students, was developed to enhance exercise and walking in West Side communities, create a sense of engagement, and help people feel safe being outside in the community. In FY22, the eight-week program engaged 381 community members from RUSH and the communities we serve.

Through our [Health Care Pipeline Programs](#), RU helps build a pipeline of future healthcare workers by introducing young people from diverse backgrounds to the wide range of opportunities for careers in health sciences. Through the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, RU students and faculty volunteer to provide mentorship and activities to facilitate students' efforts to successfully pursue their interest in health careers. In particular, volunteers work with students at Richard T. Crane Medical Preparatory High School and the Instituto Health Sciences Career Academy. RU hosts a mini-medical school for 100 4th and 5th graders enrolled in CPS to expose them to the health sciences. Finally, the [Sankofa Initiative](#) works to advance student progress in math and science and through this initiative, RU student, faculty, and staff volunteers spend two to three days a week tutoring children and teens.

RU is active not only in our local community, but also promotes involvement in several [Global Health](#) initiatives to improve health and well-being through interprofessional service, learning and scholarship. Fourth-year medical students are able to complete an elective rotation (MED 747 Global and Community Medicine) in an underserved community in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, India, or

other country. The [Rush Interdisciplinary Service Experience \(RISE\)](#) is a structured curricular opportunity for students to get involved in a community service project in Haiti. Finally, students can participate in multiple service trips to the Dominican Republic and Haiti to deliver primary care and surgical services every year. Global health awareness culminates in an annual [Global Health Symposium](#) at which faculty and students have an opportunity to share their scholarship efforts in global health.

Individual programs from across RU demonstrate commitment to the public good through program-sponsored health fairs, summer camps for special populations, health mentor programs, and other programs that engage communities in health promotion. The Office of Community Health Equity and Engagement has initiated a variety of outreach programs such as the Coalition of HOPE, a diverse group of agencies and churches throughout Chicago working together to help families address challenges. The group marshals resources to address community needs and to empower its members.

1.B.2

RU is the educational enterprise of RUMC, which operates under a State of Illinois charter as a 501(c)(3) private not-for-profit, upper division health professions institution; thus, there is no financial return for investors. Educational responsibilities of RU take primacy over other purposes. The BOG manages the assets of RU, maintains general oversight over the financial practices, and engages in decision-making that focuses on institutional priorities in the University's best interest. The BOG, RU leadership, faculty, and managerial staff adhere to a [Conflicts of Interest policy](#) and disclose such conflicts for review and action if they occur. RU Strategic Investments align with the strategic priorities: foster highest quality health-sciences education; advance scholarship and discovery; and create a vibrant and dynamic university experience.

1.B.3

RU develops responsive curricula and programs, provides needed services, and engages its external constituencies and communities of interest through formal and informal channels of open communication. With the development of the [West Side United](#) collaborative in 2017, a planning committee comprising eight neighborhood residents and eight representatives from West Side government, nonprofit, education, and healthcare institutions was established to identify gaps in existing programs and services and identify collaborative strategies to make the West Side neighborhoods healthier and more vibrant. The [Rush Community Health Implementation Plan](#) recognizes that to be successful there must be strong guidance from people in the community, so the Plan incorporates community-based organizations and individuals as partners in developing the plans.

Many of the programs in RU retain [advisory boards](#) (examples attached) or engage communities of interest to provide counsel on how faculty and students can best meet the needs of their specific populations and communities. Advisory boards are typically comprised of practitioners in that discipline and often include employers of RU graduates. Depending on the advisory board, members may include program faculty, students, graduates, and a member of the public. Advisory boards give input to program faculty on emerging technologies, challenges in the profession, and/or changes in the scope of practice, which is used to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and appropriate to current practice. Faculty also engage clinical partners in conversations about the effectiveness of our educational programs in preparing healthcare providers who can address the future needs of society. Feedback on the RU experience is solicited from students and faculty through surveys, focus groups and open forums. Employers are asked for evaluative comments on the performance and

preparedness for clinical practice of our graduates. All of this information is used by programs to make changes in the curriculum to ensure that RU graduates are fully prepared to deliver high-quality healthcare services.

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1.C - 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.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Argument

1.C.1

RU's role in a multicultural society is to create a learning community where students and faculty of all backgrounds feel welcome and supported. Our goal is to help students gain an understanding of the many forms of diversity and to develop healthcare professionals who reflect the communities, patients, and region we serve.

The [mission](#) emphasizes RU's broad role in serving a diverse society through education and research: Rush University champions a learning environment in health and biomedical sciences through collaboration, education, research and equity for our students, faculty, staff, and the communities we serve. Our commitment to serving diverse communities is emphasized in our [Thrive strategic goal](#): Nurture a sustainable, dynamic, diverse, and inclusive university and community.

The focus on diversity and inclusion is reflected in the [institutional SLO](#): *Graduates of RU will demonstrate the ability to work effectively in a diverse and global society.* This focus is reinforced by student learning goals across programs. For example, RMC students *recognize and respond to societal factors that impact the health of communities and populations.* GC students are prepared to *conduct impactful research for the well-being of diverse communities.* CON students *use communication techniques that reflect an understanding of the dignity and respect afforded to all persons,* and CHS students in the BS in Health Sciences program *demonstrate the ability to function effectively in a diverse society.* In the Medical Laboratory Science program students *behave in an ethical, culturally-sensitive and professional manner in a diverse environment.* In the Health Systems Management program students develop competencies in *interpersonal understanding, collaboration, and communication.* In the Occupational Therapy Doctorate program students *construct treatment plans that reflect social and cultural factors that influence therapy decisions,* and in the Doctor of Audiology program students *provide culturally appropriate patient education.*

The focus on diversity and inclusion is also reflected in [Strategic pillar #3 \(Thrive\)](#): *RU is dedicated to nurturing a sustainable, dynamic, diverse, and inclusive university and community.* This strategic pillar will be accomplished by three strategic goals: advancing DEI across all colleges, promoting wellness and resiliency across the university and community, and enhancing the physical environment to nurture our culture of collaboration and excellence. In 2019, RU began planning for the formation of the [Rush BMO Health Equity Institute](#). In July of 2022, [Dr. John Rich](#) joined RU as

the inaugural director.

1.C.2

For over 30 years, RU has had a commitment to our diverse community in Chicago and has won the support of the community. In the fall of 2020, RU received the Spencer Foreman Award from the Association of American Medical Colleges, noted above.

In late 2018, RUMC adopted a [D&I Strategic Plan](#) that identified areas of focus, named team members, and committed financial resources to the endeavor (see [dashboard](#)). RU diversity goals include increasing the number of URM students, diversifying faculty and residents, and developing an Office of Women's Empowerment that works toward building an inclusive culture for women, including achieving pay equity and increased representation in leadership positions. The financial commitment for university-related initiatives is over \$20 million, with another \$780,000 committed to the Office of Women's Empowerment.

The pandemic brought many changes with regards to staffing and services for students. With this, diversity and inclusion were combined with community engagement and the Office of Student Diversity and Multicultural Affairs became the [Office of Student Diversity and Community Engagement \(SDCE\)](#). The SDCE creates a welcoming and inclusive environment for all RU students, faculty, and staff. SDCE's vision is to serve as a leader in creating and fostering an inclusive and multicultural campus environment where students, faculty and staff from all backgrounds embody and respect attitudes, values, and diverse perspectives. In 2020, with the rise of the pandemic and increasing social injustices across the nation, students met with leadership to express their concerns. They were heard and an ad hoc committee, titled the Racial Justice Action Committee (RJAC), was formed. Through extensive town hall meetings with students, faculty, and staff, RJAC developed a plan to address the voiced concerns. RJAC's plan led to several initiatives, including the establishment of the University Diversity and Inclusion Officer (UDIO) role. A search for the inaugural officer is currently underway. In addition, each college created an equity and inclusion leadership role to spearhead the DEI work within each college. Furthermore, the Education Subcommittee in the newly established [Rush BMO Institute of Health Equity \(RBIHE\)](#) focused its mission to develop anti-racism training modules for students, faculty, and staff.

Student Professional Development. The SDCE office supports the leadership of student affinity groups (SAG) to plan and execute interprofessional events that celebrate diversity across a wide spectrum of backgrounds and educate peers on DEI and cultural awareness. SAG board leaders meet regularly to discuss DEI issues, collaborate on event planning, and guide each other in leadership development.

New [student affinity groups](#) were formed to capture the diversity of several student groups who felt their voices have not been heard. These new groups include Together We Thrive (students who are first generation college), Student Support Collective (students who identify as housing and food insecure), Black Nursing Student Union, and Men in Nursing (both created to give rise to the voice of the nursing students).

Education. With COVID came change and priority to our campus environment. Groups like White Coats 4 Black Lives aligned to bring attention to social justice on and off campus. We directed attention to creating a nurturing environment for students that addressed their mental health and encouraged their interest in creating a diverse, cohesive campus and daily commitment. The program that once was Rush University Diversity and Inclusion (RUDI) became an institution-wide

commitment to finding ways to learn from noted authors on DEI topical issues. Two book discussions were held during the pandemic. The first was *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson, and the second, *The Sum of Us, The Cost of Racism* by Heather McGhee. A town hall discussion around incarceration and the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was held, where the medical director of the Illinois Prison System discussed the health and well-being of our men and women in the prison system.

The office found ways to unite affinity groups around shared interests. For example, the Jewish Student Association partnered with the Student National Medical Association to take a virtual tour of the Holocaust Museum where the Nelson Mandela Exhibit was touring. In 2021, the [University celebrated Juneteenth](#) with a talk with LGBTQ leaders in the Black community who were making transformative moves in the community.

Supporting Academic Success. Rush University has made a commitment to establish a Multi-Cultural Center (noted earlier) that will be a centrally located, welcoming, safe space where students can gather to share interests and ideas, discuss innovations and concerns, and embrace each other as they celebrate achievements and comfort each other when life happens. To celebrate the planned new Center, the students held a Cultural Festival last fall where they highlighted a variety of groups that centered around four pillars – music, art, dance, and food.

1.C.3

RU fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff, and administration through multiple avenues. Our ICARE values—Innovation, Collaboration, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence—serve as the foundation for the fair and ethical behaviors expected of all RU members. Faculty and staff must address one or more of these values in their annual performance evaluations. In addition, the BOG follows a [Code of Conduct and Ethics](#).

Faculty’s respect to each other is expected and expressed in the RU Rules for Governance, [Article IV, Section I](#):

It is the policy of RU to maintain and encourage full freedom within the law for inquiry, discourse, teaching, research, and scholarly activity and to protect faculty and students against influences that would restrict the exercise of these freedoms. Such freedom requires free expression, intellectual honesty, **respect for the academic rights of others**, and openness to change. Freedom of expression does not include unlawful activity, activity that threatens or endangers the safety of others, or obstruction of the normal operations of the University. It is the responsibility of all members of the University to maintain channels of communication that will foster a climate favorable to freedom of expression.

Students are required to follow the [RU Honor Code](#), which its implementation and enforcement are included in the [RU Catalog](#). All students must complete electronic learning modules that include the Honor Code during their respective program orientations. Signing of the code affirms a student’s commitment *to act with integrity and adhere to the RU values of innovation, collaboration, accountability, respect and excellence*.

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1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

RU's mission was developed through a consensus process involving internal and external stakeholders and was endorsed by the BOG. Update of the mission was in concert with the strategic planning process that culminated in the 2022 RU Strategic Plan that drives the budget planning and budgeting priorities of the university. The mission is articulated publicly through multiple venues and defines the nature, scope, and intended constituencies of RU programs. RU addresses its role in a multicultural society through its curricular and co-curricular programs, strategic planning, and processes and activities through the Office of Student Diversity and Community Engagement. RU has a strong commitment to the public good through its numerous and varied community service and outreach programs, locally and globally. RU fosters climate of respect among all of its constituents by its ICARE values, rules of governance, and RU Honor Code.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - 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.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

2.A.1

As described in Criterion 1.A.1, since the 2018 Assurance Argument, the university launched a new [Strategic Plan](#) initiative in 2020. Through this initiative the university [mission](#) and vision were revised by a multi-year strategic planning process. Throughout 2020 and 2021, RU's president and provost held forums and meetings with Rush University (RU) and Rush University Medical Center (RUMC) leaders, faculty, staff, students, and members of the Board of Governors (BOG), among others. Feedback obtained in these sessions was used to refine the mission documents until a broad consensus was reached. Over 500 internal and external constituents participated in these forums to discuss the university strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and reflect on its mission. Stakeholder feedback was incorporated iteratively into various drafts of RU's mission and strategic plan. The university mission was revised and added equity and collaboration to RU commitment to education, research, and community service and well-being. The [Strategic Plan](#) was adopted by the BOG on [February 4, 2022](#).

2.A.2

Most of Core Component 2.A.2 has not changed since our last assurance argument. Updates are provided as needed throughout the component. Through policies, procedures and practices, RU's Board of Governors,[1] institutional officers, faculty, students, and staff guard against any influences which could compromise their objectivity or integrity. Our ICARE values—Innovation, Collaboration, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence—serve as the foundation for the fair and ethical behaviors expected of all RU members. Faculty and staff must address one or more of these values in their annual performance evaluations.

[1] The Board of Governors is a standing committee of the full Board of Rush University Medical Center, which is an Illinois non-profit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization ("RUMC"). RUMC is established for the purposes of higher education, research, and healthcare delivery and is authorized to confer degrees to graduates of its programs. Rush University is an operating division and an Illinois-registered d/b/a of RUMC. This corporate and governance structure was reviewed and

approved by the HLC, most recently in 2018 and 2019. In 2023, the RUMC Board of Directors undertook certain high-level governance changes; however, the University Governors is remaining the same in terms of size, structure, and composition, with no material changes since the [2018](#) and [2019](#) HLC reviews.

The RU BOG oversees the financial, strategic, and operational integrity of RU. The [Amended and Restated Charter](#) of the BOG provides for its oversight to 1) reflect best practices for boards of higher education and compliance with the HLC Criteria for Accreditation; 2) ensure that RU is operating within the scope of local, state, and federal laws; and 3) ensure that RU operations are fiscally sound. As stated in the BOG Charter, [Article IV, Section 4.1](#):

The Board of Governors is responsible for the governance and management of the affairs and assets of the University ... in the furtherance of the purpose and mission of the University. The Board of Governors shall have and is vested with the powers and authority (except as may be expressly limited by Illinois law or this Charter) to manage the business affairs of the University (in accordance with the University strategy and long-term financial plan) to do or cause to be done any and all lawful things for and on behalf of the University.

Fair and ethical conduct. The university transacts business with transparency, and discharges all duties to its students, faculty, staff, and the general public, avoiding, where possible, bias, favor, preference, or partiality. All members of RU are expected to follow RUMC, RU, and department-specific policies and standards. Professional behavior, ethics, and integrity are reflected in the [Code of Conduct](#) and are expected of all students, faculty, employees, and members of the BOG in their dealings with each other and with all individuals associated with RU. The [Prohibition on Disruptive Conduct in the Workplace Policy](#) is aimed at creating and promoting a safe, cooperative, and professional work and learning environment.

The BOG follows a [Code of Conduct and Ethics](#) that guides behaviors related to conflicts of interest, confidentiality, corporate opportunity, BOG interaction with third parties, and reporting possible illegal or unethical behavior. Every two years the Board conducts a self-assessment that encompasses the BOG's structure and objectives, leadership of the BOG chairperson, freedom of expression, assessment of key BOG responsibilities, and overall effectiveness. The last survey was done in summer of 2021.

The policy regarding [Conflicts of Interest and Commitment](#) applies to the BOG, institutional officers, faculty, researchers, students, and members of RU's professional and technical staff. The policy addresses institutional, clinical, and research conflicts along with RU's relationships with vendors, including referral source guidelines. Annually, the BOG, RU officers, researchers, and faculty complete a Disclosure of Conflicts Form in accordance with the Conflict of Interest and Commitment policy. Faculty and members of the BOG complete a comprehensive [Conflict of Interest survey](#) annually and when conflicts arise. Disclosed conflicts are managed with explicit plans. All RU employees are required by policy to participate in [Compliance Program Activities](#).

[Student Disclosure Information](#), available on the RU website, fulfills requirements of the Higher Education Act of 2008 by providing transparency on key policies, financial assistance, health and safety information, complaint resolution, and RU outcomes statistics. A Student Disclosure task force reviews disclosure information for accuracy prior to its posting on the website. University Notifications include the [Annual Security Report](#), [Drug and Alcohol-Free Campus Policy](#), [Missing Student Notification Policy](#), and [Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Information](#) that includes the [Prohibition against Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct policy](#). There is

also mandatory training on how to recognize, respond to, and prevent sexual harassment and misconduct-related procedures consistent with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Illinois Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act.

The [Website Policy](#) describes how RU handles information from users in the course of visiting the RU website. The [Social Media Policy](#) describes expectations for the responsible use of email and other electronic communications and computer device and media controls that apply to all RU members.

The RU catalog contains [policies and regulations](#) pertaining to a drug- and alcohol-free work force, financial appeals, harassment, privacy, and security pertaining to FERPA and HIPAA, among others. Students, faculty, and staff are required on an annual basis to complete mandatory training related to FERPA to ensure protection of student educational records. RU strongly enforces the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Program-specific policies for admission, progression and graduation requirements, and professional conduct are addressed in [Program Guidebooks](#) and applied equitably. Policies related to ethical use of information and research are discussed in Core Component 2.E.

Academic integrity. The RU Catalog lists academic integrity policies such as [RU Honor Code](#), Implementation and Enforcement; [Academic Honesty and Student Conduct](#); [Inappropriate Degree Usage](#); [Privacy and Confidentiality of Student Records](#); and [Academic Credit](#). Students can formally express concerns and/or complaints through the [Complaint Policy](#). Grade grievance policies are located in [Program Guidebooks](#).

The [RU Policy and Procedure Committee](#) meets at least quarterly to review and approve new and updated policies, assess policies for coverage and conflict with other institutional and programmatic policies, and assist in communicating policies to the RU community. Policies are accessible on the RUMC intranet, [University Catalog](#) and [RU Faculty Handbook](#). Updates on policies are sent electronically through the [University News](#).

The Regulatory Affairs Manager in the OIE ensures that programs offering distance education and clinical placement in states outside of Illinois are compliant with state regulations and mandates. RU is a participant in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement ([SARA](#)). The [Verification of Student Identity in Distance Learning & Online Programs](#) ensures that RU operates in compliance with the provisions of the United States Federal Higher Education Act concerning the verification of student identity in distance and online education. This information remains current other than an updated Verification of Student Identity policy.

Financial integrity. Financial integrity is assured through ongoing oversight and review of budgetary processes and reports, and through internal and external audits. All financial transactions and decisions are processed and guided by generally accepted accounting principles within the framework of accuracy, proper accounting treatment, independence, and objectivity.

The principal business officer (PBO) serves as RU's chief financial business officer. The RU president and provost provide executive oversight to the PBO and staff who have the responsibility for formulating budgetary guidelines, forecasting operating revenues, and developing the operating budget for RU. The BOG Finance Committee receives budget reports and meets regularly throughout the year to review the finances of RU Finance Committee Minutes ([May 17, 2022](#)) and the full BOG reviews and approves the annual budget proposal.

RU requires four levels of management approvals for items to be paid. Signature authority to approve charges is given to appropriate RU leaders who are required to review departmental financial information each month and adhere to the budget assigned to their department. The PBO is responsible for reporting the financial position of RU each month. All billing personnel, including third party billers, are obligated, [by policy, to keep accurate books and records](#) and are prohibited from making false statements on any government or private documents.

[Office of Student Financial Affairs](#) [Bursar] is responsible for charging student tuition and fees, processing tuition payments, enrolling students into the University Health Plan, managing third party student housing contracts and charges, overseeing all university federal grants and loans, university campus-based loan programs, and the accounting for university financials. [The Office of Student Financial Aid](#) constructs student financial aid packages and abides by the Federal Student Aid audit requirements. RU is a member of the National Association of Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), and all financial aid staff receives daily updates regarding the administration of federal aid requirements. As a member organization of NASFAA, RU abides by the NASFAA Statement of Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct.

To ensure proper accounting and financial aid regulations are being followed and adequate controls are in place, RUMC, which encompasses RU as its academic arm, goes through an extensive external annual audit performed by an independent third-party accounting firm. The independent auditor's report of the RUSH [Consolidated Financial Statements](#) (FY2022) affirmed that the financial statements "present fairly, in all materials with respect to the financial position of RUMC and its subsidiaries as of June 30, 2021, and 2022, and the results of their operations and their cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles."

Internal controls ensure the separation of duties and completion of tasks that are required for RU to administer federal financial aid. Loan origination error reports, aid authorization reports, and verification status reports are generated and reviewed to ensure controls are in place. Program reconciliation requirements for the various aid programs and close-out procedures are performed according to federal requirements and reconciliation processes are conducted for all Department of Education funds received and issued to students. The Office of Internal Audit (OIA) performs an annual [Tuition Revenue Audit](#) to determine if tuition revenue is recorded accurately and timely. The 2019 and 2021 audits received an "A-1" rating, which according to RUSH indicated "no finding noted, low risk." Due to the pandemic no audit was done in 2020. The 2022 identified a [single](#) low-risk finding which was not material ("B-2" designation of RUSH's internal audit coding). The Overall Control Rating indicated that "most controls operate effectively, and improvement opportunities identified." An improvement plan including hiring an additional manager within the university business office was developed and is due to be completed on June 30, 2023 (see attached [report](#)).

[Financial Aid student policies and procedures](#) are published and updated on the RU [Office of Student Financial Aid](#) webpage. Financial aid policies and procedures are centralized and apply to all RU students regardless of college/program.

Integrity in personnel functions. RU is an Equal Opportunity Employer that strives for fairness and transparency in its employee practices. The [Equal Employment Opportunity Policy & Affirmative Action](#) delineates the institution's policies on equal opportunity, diversity, and affirmative action.

Faculty grievance procedures are described in the [Faculty Handbook](#) and staff grievance procedures are included in the Human Resource Policies as well.

Auxiliary functions. Auxiliary functions include the [Matthews Bookstore](#), Laurence Armour Day School for childcare, food services, parking, shuttle services, and fitness center. Services, hours of operation, and costs are fully disclosed on the [Student Services](#) website under student resources. All auxiliary departments operate under the same policies and guidelines, including [Signature Authority](#). Services that are shared by RUMC and RU are codified in the [RU Shared Services Agreement](#). All contracts involving RU are reviewed and approved for signature by the Office of Legal Affairs.

Required federal and state policies and procedures are developed in accordance with federal and state laws and are reviewed by the Division of Student Affairs, Security and Regulatory Affairs, and the Office of Legal Affairs. Internal policies and publications are reviewed by college representatives and members of the Division of Student Affairs. Student directory information is reviewed by the Registrar and the Compliance Office on a periodic basis. Enrollment and student data are obtained from the student information system.

Sources

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- 3. Compliance Subcommittee BoG FINAL 5.13.2020 Minutes
- 4. Compliance Subcommittee Minutes 8 3 2020 Final
- 5. November 3 2020 Compliance Meeting Minutes Final
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- Disclosure _ Conflict of Interest Office
- Education Budget Report (FY 2019-FY 2022 and FY 2023 FYTD)
- Financial Aid Policies
- FY2020 Finance Subcom Minutes.A
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- Harassment Prevention _ Health and Safety _ RUSH University
- HR Policies
- Matthews RUSH University Bookstore
- New and Updated University Policies Email

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- Policy. Prohibition against Discrimination_Harrassment and Sexual Misconduct
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- Policy.Student Complaint
- Policy.Verification of Student Identity in Distance Learning and Outline
- Policy_Code of Conduct
- Policy_Compliance Program Activities Participation
- Policy_Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action
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- Policy_Prohibition on Disruptive Conduct
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- RU-strategic-plan-2022-2027
- SARA - RU Participation (2022-2023)
- Shared Services Agreement (1)
- University News_Student Disclosure Information
- University Policy and Procedure Committee (overview)
- University Student Complaint Policy
- University Tuition Revenue Final Report 2021-22 (R-2230)
- University Tuition Revenue Final Report 2021-22 (R-2230) (page number 4)
- University Tuition Revenue Final Report 2021-22 (R-2230) (page number 7)
- Website. Mission Vision and Values
- Website. Office of Research Compliance
- Website. Rush University Home Page
- Website. Student Disclosure Information

- Website. Student Support Services
- Website.Office of Student Financial Affairs
- Website.Office of Student Financial Aid
- Website.Office of the Registrar
- Website.Program GuideBooks
- Website.University Compliance
- Website_Program Guide Books
- Website_Program Specific Policies

2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

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.
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.

Argument

2.B.1

Most of Core Component 2.B.1 has not changed since our last assurance argument. Updates are provided as needed throughout the component. Information about RU is accessed publicly through multiple sections of the [RU website](#) that display RU's [mission and vision](#), programs, curricula, requirements, core faculty, and control. The RU Catalog also gives detailed information about programs ([CHS](#), [CON](#), [RMC](#), and [GC](#)).

The [OIE website](#) displays the [HLC mark of affiliation](#), institutional data, [RU Annual Reports](#) and lists accredited programs by disciplinary specialty.

The [Financial Aid](#) site provides information about tuition and costs for each of the programs, budgeting and student debt, financial literacy, aid eligibility, withdrawing of financial aid, and veterans' education benefits. The [Financial Affairs](#) [Bursar] site includes information about payment due dates and options, student health insurance, student loan repayment, tuition, and tuition refunds and waivers.

Publications and postings are reviewed for accuracy by college representatives and the Division of Student Affairs. Institutional data and accreditation information are validated by the OIE.

The [Advertising and Recruiting Policy](#) stipulates the RU will provide accurate, timely and appropriate information to current and prospective students.

2.B.2

Most of the core component has not changed since our last assurance argument. Updates are provided as needed throughout the component. Many of the co-curricular activities hosted by RU involve community engagement and service learning. In 2020, in spite of the restriction made by the COVID-19 pandemic, students chose to sign a waiver and continue volunteering in the community to serve their constituents. From 2020 to 2021, students began screening for COVID for individuals and families at the various homeless shelters on the West Side of Chicago twice per day. That year, they screened 7,000 different people. Once the vaccine was approved, our students began educating people in the community on the importance of getting vaccinated. For example, our Black Men in Medicine affinity group met with Men of Faith from various churches to educate them on the vaccines and who

was most vulnerable of getting the virus. Students from across the university volunteered to help deliver groceries to the elderly and assisted in the picking up and delivering medications. In addition to these programs, we provided remote educational experiences for high school students, such as learning about the organ system through an interactive virtual experience. In fiscal year 2022, we resumed face-to-face interactions such as the back-to-school health fair where we screened 250 children for missing vaccines and administered the COVID vaccine to those who qualified. Over 100 physical exams were done along with vision and dental exams.

The CON has a 30-year history of providing healthcare services to underserved individuals, families, and communities at a variety of diverse community practice sites through the [Faculty Practice Program](#). Most recipients of these services are uninsured or underinsured. RU nursing students volunteer at various practice sites to deliver healthcare and health education services that enhance the volume of health services provided. In addition, RU nursing, medical, physician assistant, health systems management, clinical nutrition, and respiratory care students volunteer at these sites, developing and delivering health education programs. On average, nearly 2,000 health encounters are provided per year through the program.

Additional examples are in the [Community Benefits Report](#).

Students also have the opportunity to participate in the annual [Trainee Research Day](#), formerly called the RU Forum for Research and Clinical Investigation. Students whose abstracts have been accepted receive faculty support and guidance in preparing their research for presentation. Student presentations are judged by at least three expert faculty. Comments and suggestions from these faculty help students improve their research aptitude and approaches to conducting research. Between 2020 and 2023, 445 students attended the forum as either presenter or participant (the research day was cancelled in 2021 due to the COVID pandemic).

Each year RU graduate students from the CHS, CON, and RMC are encouraged to apply for [Schweitzer Fellowships](#); 18 RU students have secured a fellowship since 2018. [The Chicago Area Fellowship](#), a yearlong service-learning program, empowers aspiring health professionals to design and direct innovative community service projects. In collaboration with existing community organizations, each Schweitzer fellow launches a community-based project, providing 200 hours of service. Taking leadership in community projects aids students in reaching [RU Student Learning Objectives](#) such as *communicating effectively and respectfully in the practice of their profession* and *demonstrating the ability to work in a diverse and global society*.

Sources

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- Website.Trainee Research Day 2023 _ Past Events _ RUSH University

2.C - 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.

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.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
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.

Argument

2.C.1

Upon appointment to the Board of Governors (BOG), all new members participate in an orientation with the university president and provost to acquaint them with RU policies and practices. In addition, most BOG members have current or prior experience in higher education. BOG members also utilize input from its designated subcommittees as well as university leadership to make informed decisions with respect to financial and academic policies and procedures. The governing board is voluntary and is not appointed by management.

The general power of governance over the affairs and assets of RU is vested in the BOG. These powers and responsibilities are delineated in the Rush University BOG [Amended and Restated Charter, Article IV, Section 4.1](#), approved and effective January 13, 2021:[2]

[2] *See supra* n. 1 in 2.A.2

- engaging in decision-making that focuses on institutional priorities in the University's best interest;
- maintaining general oversight over all of the activities of the University, including financial and academic policies and practices;
- overseeing the mission, vision and strategic plan for the University, including ensuring integrated institutional and strategic planning consistent with the University's mission;
- being generally knowledgeable about the University and reviewing the reasonable and relevant interests of University constituencies while delegating day-to-day management of the University-to-University administration;
- ensuring the University offers quality education and research programs with the expectation that faculty have primary responsibility for student learning and shall actively participate in development of academic policies;
- appointing, removing, supporting, setting the salary for, and evaluating the University President;

- approving the University’s tuition and fee structure and the annual operating budget;
- overseeing the University’s compliance with accreditation, state and federal regulatory requirements;
- supporting the philanthropic efforts of the University; and
- all other activities necessary to maintain the University, consistent with the not-for-profit purposes and mission of RUMC, Illinois law, the RUMC Bylaws, and this Charter.

With respect to financial matters, the university chief financial and business officer provides information to the BOG [Finance Subcommittee](#) to assist in their charge to (1) review and make recommendations to the BOG regarding financial performance, budgets, and student tuition rates of the University, (2) provide oversight of financial processes, and (3) monitor internal control processes.

With respect to academic matters, the BOG [Accreditation and Quality Subcommittee](#) provide information to the BOG regarding program evaluation and accreditation and ensures that the university has adequate processes to meet educational quality standards and accreditation requirements.

2.C.2

Per [Article III, section 3.4](#), the BOG meets at least quarterly to discuss and deliberate on matters that reflect priorities of RU and ensure the purpose of the institution is preserved and its mission met. BOG activities are documented in meeting minutes. For example, deliberations include discussions about the revision and endorsement of the [Strategic Plan and Goals \(March 12, 2020; September 17, 2020; December 1, 2020; February 4, 2022\)](#), and FY23 University Budget ([March 22, 2022](#)).

Additionally, BOG minutes ([FY20, FY21, FY22](#)) reflect discussions and deliberations regarding BOG membership, the university business plans, academic policies, college status reports, upgrades to the academic facilities, tuition rates, student housing, programmatic resource needs, initiation and termination of academic programs, appointment of academic deans and university administrators, philanthropic efforts, shared services agreements, diversity and inclusion initiatives, community engagement, and selection of the university president and provost ([September 3, 2019](#)).

2.C.3

The BOG and its standing subcommittees review and consider the interests of university constituencies during decision-making deliberations. Throughout [FY20, FY21, and FY22](#), the BOG engaged in discussions with educational leaders, members of the RUMC community, and experts, to address critical issues such as maintaining educational excellence during a global pandemic; addressing issues of [racial justice](#); and addressing provider, student, and staff [wellness](#).

The BOG considers the interests of the academic programs through “State of the College” [reports](#) regularly presented by college deans at BOG meetings. Deans present on the successes and challenges in their respective colleges and propose changes for BOG approval. For example, the BOG considered projected national nursing shortages and the importance of community practice with the approval of a new [Department of Academic Practice within the College of Nursing \(December 1, 2021\)](#).

The BOG also considers its external constituencies from the surrounding community. As an example, the BOG supported the development of the [Rush BMO Institute for Health Equity](#). The institute is

dedicated to fulfilling the mission to improve the health of Chicago's West Side communities through (1) education and workforce development, (2) community-based clinical practice, (3) community engagement, and (4) health equity research.

The BOG remains informed at its regular meetings that include reports from administrators, faculty members, and students. It participates in educational development programs that include topics such as trends in higher education. Also, members of the BOG participate in dean and presidential searches, make recommendations for commencement speakers, and participate in the commencement ceremony.

Annually, the BOG meets with students and faculty of various programs who share their insights with the BOG at a formal breakfast gathering. The BOG also sponsors an annual golf outing that has secured over one million dollars in student scholarship support.

2.C.4

The BOG preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the university. In response to the university's application to HLC for Change of Control, Structure, or Organization on March 7, 2018, the January 18, 2019, [letter](#) from the HLC's Institutional Actions Council to RU affirmed RU's compliance with Eligibility Requirements #3 and #9 and Core Components 2.C and 5.A (previously 5.B). BOG responsibilities align with those set forth in the HLC Criteria for Accreditation, Assumed Practices and Eligibility Requirements.

By its [charter](#), the BOG "engages in decision-making that focuses on institutional priorities in the University's best interest." To preserve its independence, on an annual basis, members of the BOG complete a Disclosure of Conflicts form in accordance with the [Conflicts of Interest and Commitment policy](#). Under this policy, BOG members are required to regularly disclose any conflicts or potential conflicts as they arise.

Governors are volunteers and are not paid for their service. Governors do not have any ownership or financial interests in RU, RUMC, or any RUSH-affiliated entity. No RU or RUMC employees serve as voting members of the BOG. There are no elected officials on the BOG. In these ways, the BOG maintains independence. BOG [biographies](#) are attached.

2.C.5

The BOG [Charter](#) stipulates that the BOG "delegates day-to-day management of the University-to-University administration." [Article VIII](#) of the Charter describes University Administrative Officers as the University President, Provost, and Chief Financial Officer. The Charter defines roles for each officer and stipulate their responsibilities. Specifically:

- the president is responsible for "the active management, control, and direction of the educational activities and other affairs of the University"; and
- the provost is responsible for "directing the operational and strategic policies and activities of the University."

The Charter further stipulates in [Article IX](#) that the "University shall abide by certain rules and regulations to address matters concerning the administration, organization, powers and responsibilities of the administrative officers, and students of the University." The [RU Rules for](#)

[Governance](#) stipulate that 1) the deans serve as the chief administrative officers of their respective colleges, and 2) faculty: (i) establish requirements and policies for the educational and academic research programs; (ii) participate substantially in the development, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum; (iii) establish expectations of student and program performance; (iv) initiate appropriate action based on assessment of student learning and program outcomes; (v) establish policies for faculty appointments and promotions; and (vi) student life that relates to the educational process. The relationship between the BOG and the RU administrative structures is depicted in the [University Organizational Chart](#).

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

2.D

Most of Core Component 2.D has not changed since our last assurance argument. Updates are provided as needed throughout the component. RU is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in its teaching, research, and scholarship. The RU Rules for Governance, [Article IV, Section I](#) states:

It is the policy of RU to maintain and encourage full freedom within the law for inquiry, discourse, teaching, research, and scholarly activity and to protect faculty and students against influences that would restrict the exercise of these freedoms. Such freedom requires free expression, intellectual honesty, respect for the academic rights of others, and openness to change. Freedom of expression does not include unlawful activity, activity that threatens or endangers the safety of others, or obstruction of the normal operations of the University. It is the responsibility of all members of the University to maintain channels of communication that will foster a climate favorable to freedom of expression.

Freedom of expression is reflected in the core values of the institution: Innovation, Collaboration, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence. During the meetings of the University Council in 2020, faculty and leadership noted that faculty did not have their own representative council. As a result, the University Faculty Council (UFC) was established to support faculty and shared governance. Faculty experience academic freedom in the control of their curricula and teaching practices. Faculty and students are given the opportunity for free expression through the RU governance structure ([Article I, Section 2](#); [Article III, Section 2](#)) and through venues that include but are not limited to participation in standing committees, open forums, and surveys. Members of RU are free to conduct research, publish research findings, disseminate professional commentary and opinions, and speak extramurally. Although members of the RU community are free from institutional censorship or discipline, the policy advises that “faculty and students of the University who express public opinions on public issues must clearly represent themselves, and not the University or RUMC, in whole, or part, unless that opinion has been authorized by the university President or Provost.”

Sources

- RU Rules for Governance
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2.E - 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.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

2.E.1

The [Office of Research Compliance](#) (ORC) provides oversight of the regulatory, ethical and compliance aspects of all research conducted at RU. The ORC works with the Office of the Vice Provost/Vice President for Research to promote a culture of compliance, research integrity, and high-quality research within the RU community.

The ORC conducts mandatory and supplemental education initiatives for faculty, staff, and students, and partners with the [Office of Research Affairs](#) (ORA) on position-specific training, to ensure that all individuals conducting research are informed on how to ethically conduct research in accord with all applicable state and federal regulations. Together the ORC and ORA protect the health, safety, and welfare of animals and human subjects and promote good stewardship of federal awards.

All individuals engaged in research, including students, must complete the initial and continuing education requirements specified in the [Education Policy for Investigators and Research Personnel](#) that includes completion of the basic education program developed by the [Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative \(CITI\)](#), research compliance onboarding, and training on RUMC information systems that support research.

Research proposals involving human subjects must be submitted to the [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB) for consideration as a full, expedited, or exempt review. The IRB is responsible for reviewing all research on human subjects that is conducted at RU to ensure that rights, safety and welfare protections are in place for human participants. [The Office of Research Compliance](#) (ORC) administratively supports the IRB to determine if a proposed project requires IRB review based on the regulations. Student capstone and scholarly projects are also subject to IRB review.

The [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee](#) (IACUC) functions in accordance with the USDA Animal Welfare Act and the Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals regulations. In addition, the IACUC follows the recommendations provided by the National Research Council's Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. The IACUC also performs other activities such as generating and enforcing IACUC policies regarding the care and use of animals used in research and reviewing and approving Standard Operating Procedures that dictate

how husbandry, receipt and other activities involving animals are performed.

Research compliance is also monitored through the EQuIP program and is supported by the [Evaluation Quality Improvement Program Policy](#) used to monitor research compliance in conjunction with governmental agencies and external sponsors to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal requirements, ethical standards and good clinical practices. These include but are not limited to the United States Food and Drug Administration, the United States Department of Health and Human Services Office for Human Research Protection, the United States Department of Justice, the United States Department of Agriculture, and other federal and state agencies. Areas identified for compliance with conducting research include human research protection regulations, financial conflicts of interest in research, clinical trial billing, research misconduct, and financial management associated with funded research.

RUMC is accredited by the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs (AAHRPP) for the conduct of human subjects' research and by the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC) for the conduct of animal subject research. RUMC is also current and compliant with the following research oversight bodies:

- U.S. Food and Drug Administration;
- Office for Human Research Protections;
- Office for Civil Rights;
- U.S. Department of Agriculture; and
- Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare.

Research-related policies are published on the [Rush Research Portal](#) (RRP) and on the [Inside Rush Policy Portal](#) with all other institutional policies along with informational pages and required forms. Individuals planning to conduct research must first attend a research compliance onboarding session, receive training on the use of the RRP prior to obtaining log-in credentials, and take the education appropriate to their type of research via the [CITI program](#).

All individuals engaged in the design, conduct, or reporting of research are required to complete an annual Conflict of Interest Survey, at a minimum. In addition, key leaders and/or executives who have a fiduciary responsibility to RU are required to make annual disclosures to address and mitigate any relationships that are perceived to, potentially affect, or directly affect their institutional responsibilities. The [COI Office](#) supports committees that are charged with managing, reducing, or eliminating COI's in accordance with the [External Relationships and Financial Conflicts of Interest in Research Policy](#). In addition, per transaction (e.g., IRB submission, NIH grant submission) researchers disclose outside professional activities that directly or indirectly relate to the proposed research project.

The [Research Misconduct Policy](#) outlines the process for reviewing and reporting allegations of research misconduct. Allegations are resolved in a fair and objective manner with anti-retaliation protections for all parties involved. The [Research Data—Access, Ownership and Retention policy](#) outlines responsible data management across RU including retention and archiving standards, access, destruction or transfer, maintenance, and revision of ownership of data.

2.E.2/2.E.3

Most of Core Component 2.E.2 has not changed since our last assurance argument. Updates are provided throughout the component. Ethical conduct and behavior are integral to the professional

and research programs of RU and are reflected in the professional standards on which our programs are based. Students are expected to integrate ethical principles in professional activities as stated in the [institutional SLOs](#).

The [Office of Research Affairs](#) delineates guidelines for the fair use and protection of copyrighted materials. Faculty address topics such as copyright infringement, protection of intellectual properties, plagiarism, and the responsible use of patient information acquired during classroom and clinical experiences.

The [Copyright Compliance Policy](#) applies to all members of the RU community. The Center for Academic Excellence and the Library offer workshops on plagiarism, copyright infringement, protection of intellectual properties, and information literacy. With the support of the Office of Research Affairs, library staff develops guides and instructional materials for students on how to ethically use published works in their manuscripts and clinical research. The library staff formed the Copyright Awareness Team to address the copyright questions and concerns of students and others in the RU community. The Copyright Awareness Team organized [Copyright Week](#) with workshops for both faculty and students.

2.E.4

Most of Core Component 2.E.4 has not changed since our last assurance argument. Updates are provided as needed throughout the component. The [RU Honor Code](#), its implementation and enforcement are included in the [RU Catalog](#). All students must complete electronic learning modules that include the Honor Code during their respective program orientations. Signing of the code affirms a student's commitment to act with integrity and adhere to the RU values of innovation, collaboration, accountability, respect and excellence. The [RU Catalog](#) also contains the [Academic Honesty](#) and [Student Conduct policy](#), with examples that constitute academic dishonesty and misconduct. The [standard syllabus template](#) provides a partial list of academic dishonest behaviors that include cheating, fabrication, facilitation, academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and unauthorized examination behavior; it also refers to the Honor Code and Academic Honesty policy with the following statements:

The Rush University Honor Code sets the standards for expected professional behavior within the University and the Medical Center. Commitment to this Code is a shared responsibility of all faculty, staff and students within the Rush University community to ensure the highest standards of behavior — whether in the classroom, the laboratory or in the clinical setting — and to ensure that education obtained at RU provides a sound foundation for each student's future success as an academic, scientific or health care professional.

Policies related to academic integrity are discussed in Core Component 2.A. They are found in the [RU Catalog](#) and [Program Guidebooks](#).

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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

The RU ICARE Values and Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest and Commitment policies ensure that RU conducts its financial, academic, research, personnel, and auxiliary functions fairly and ethically. These policies apply to everyone associated with RU, including members of the BOG, faculty, staff, and students. The RU Honor Code and Academic Honesty and Student Conduct and Copyright Compliance policies emphasize to students that RU is committed to academic integrity.

Oversight and review of budgetary processes and reports ensure the financial integrity of RU and were validated in the most recent independent audit. Federal financial aid disbursement abides by the NAFSAA Statement of Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct. Equal opportunity, diversity, and affirmative action policies are described in the Equal Opportunity & Affirmative Action policy. All policies are widely available through published catalogs, handbooks, and RU websites, as is information about RU's programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation. This information is reviewed regularly for accuracy.

The BOG's general powers of governance grant the BOG sufficient autonomy to make decisions in the best interest of RU. The BOG fulfills its fiduciary and oversight responsibilities through its subcommittee structure and vigilance over the academic, research, and service functions of the University. Administrators, faculty, and students regularly provide updates to the BOG to inform their decisions regarding budget and planning. The BOG Charter stipulates that day-to-day administration of RU is performed by the RU administration, and the RU Rules for Governance describe the responsibilities of the faculty to include oversight of academic matters. Free expression of ideas amongst RU faculty, students, and staff is guaranteed according to the RU Rules for Governance.

The Offices of Research Compliance and Research Affairs ensure that research performed at RU is performed according to all applicable state and federal regulations. RU is accredited by the AAHRPP and AAALAC, and the IRB and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee review all research projects to ensure that all studies are performed ethically and protect the health, safety, and welfare of animal and human subjects. Students are provided with information and workshops on the ethics of research and use information resources and abide by the RU Honor Code.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
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).

Argument

3.A.1

Faculty ensure that programs are current and require appropriate levels of performance through adherence to professional quality standards and accreditation guidelines, curriculum oversight, analysis of performance data, and input from relevant stakeholders.

For example, programs incorporate discipline-specific quality standards to ensure programs are current.

- The CON Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) curricula are guided by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing *Essentials of Masters and Doctoral Education in Nursing*.
- The Nurse Anesthesia program conforms to standards of the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs.
- The RMC adheres to the Liaison Committee on Medical Education curriculum standards.
- Programs offered in CHS adhere to program and curriculum standards of organizations such as:
 - Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology;
 - Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (Specialist in Blood Banking, Cardiovascular Perfusion, and Vascular Ultrasound);
 - Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics;
 - Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Management Education;
 - National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences;
 - Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant;
 - Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care;
 - American Society of Radiologic Technologists; and
 - Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education.

- The biomedical and health-sciences research programs in the GC adhere to principles and best practices required to prepare students in the areas of scientific inquiry and discovery. The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) frequently issues data derived from national studies and surveys that guide benchmarking and best practices in graduate education.

The CON, RMC, and nearly all CHS programs reaffirm their specialty accreditation through full, comprehensive reviews that include an analysis and substantiation of the program's mission, resources, curriculum, teaching-learning and assessment practices, and program outcomes. Accreditation reports demonstrate ongoing currency of programs and full compliance with quality standards. All programs subject to [specialty accreditation](#) are fully accredited by their respective accrediting bodies attesting to their quality.

Faculty define performance expectations that are congruent with program student learning objectives (SLOs) and appropriate to the degree or certificate level awarded. At the graduate levels, for example, students demonstrate higher-order thinking in fulfilling thesis, dissertation, and capstone requirements. Curricula and program specific SLOs are described on each program's website for [CHS](#), [CON](#), [RMC](#), and [GC](#), in the [RU Catalog](#), and in Program Guidebooks.

Curriculum oversight is conducted by college faculty and curriculum committees to ensure alignment between quality standards, SLOs, and curricular content. Committees meet regularly to review and approve learning goals, course content, and learning assessments, and to analyze course evaluation data. These committees report to the governing bodies in their respective colleges and to the [University Curriculum Committee](#) (UCC). The UCC reviews curriculum committee reports, evaluates substantive changes made to courses and programs, and ensures that curriculum proposals are consistent with applicable standards and regulations (UCC minutes, AYs [2019-20](#), [2020-21](#), [2021-22](#)). Sample [curriculum and course approval procedures](#) are attached. All programs updated their curricula during RU's transition from quarters to semesters and have been offering semester curriculum since 2018. All recent substantial curriculum revisions were approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and HLC, as needed.

Faculty also use performance on standardized tests to establish that students are appropriately prepared. RU [licensure and certification rates](#) exceed national rates, with the majority of programs achieving pass rates of 100% on the first attempt. First attempt pass rates on the Step 1 and 2 United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) taken by medical students are 94%-100%, with Step 3 pass rates ranging from 98% to 100% since 2016. The NCLEX for RN (Prelicensure) rates were 97% to 98% since 2016.

In addition, faculty use data derived from [employer](#) and [alumni surveys](#) and feedback from [advisory boards](#) to establish currency and relevancy of program curriculum.

3.A.2

RU articulates learning goals for each program in the form of student learning objectives (SLOs) or discipline-specific competencies that are differentiated by levels of complexity in the synthesis and application of discipline-specific knowledge. This is demonstrated by a [comparison of SLOs](#) between the BS and PhD in Health Sciences program; post-graduate certificate, MSN, DNP, and PhD programs in Nursing; and MS and PhD in Integrated Biomedical Sciences. Program SLOs are articulated in Program Guidebooks. Course SLOs are listed in course syllabi ([sample attached](#)).

The RU institutional SLOs represent the knowledge, behavior, and skills expected of all RU students.

These are articulated on the [RU website](#) and incorporated into program curriculum maps ([sample attached](#)) and [RU Annual Assessment Reports \(AAR\)](#).

3.A.3

Programs offer courses in a mostly singular format, i.e., nearly all students within a program receive the same courses in the same delivery mode. Students in the CON have an option to choose between either online or face-to-face delivery for select didactic courses. RU has no additional campus sites or locations, nor does it offer courses through contractual or consortial arrangements or by dual credit.

Faculty ensure consistency across delivery modes and practice sites with identical course syllabi ([sample attached](#)), SLOs, content, and learning assessments across courses delivered in both online and on-site formats; [performance evaluation forms/clinical checklists across clinical sites](#); [common rubrics across course sections](#); and analysis of outcomes. For example, the RMC Clerkship Phase Subcommittee of the RMC Curriculum Committee monitors consistency across clerkship sites. As part of the course review process, student performance data and student evaluation data are compared between sites. Any significant discrepancies are examined and assessed. The CON and CHS compare student course evaluation data across courses and terms to establish consistencies in responses.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in March 2020, the university quickly transitioned to online all courses that could be taught remotely. Faculty were supported by the [Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation](#) (CTEI) seven days a week. CTEI assisted all faculty, especially faculty who had not taught online before, to transition their courses by keeping the quality and the content of the on-the-ground courses. The [Center for Academic Excellence](#) (CAE) provided assistance to students who did not have experience in remote learning on how to manage courses and use effective techniques in remote learning. Faculty and students completed [surveys](#) about their experience throughout the transition. As a result of the survey feedback the university developed extensive teaching and learning online manuals for [faculty](#) and [students](#), as well as short videos. The university provided the needed equipment to enable faculty to teach remotely. RU had a longstanding expertise in online education before the pandemic as evidenced by the College of Nursing being recognized by *US News* as having a top-rated online instruction program.

In its 2019 Final Report, HLC recommended to RU to have consistent descriptions of credit hour across all programs in its Academic Credit Policy. RU revised its [policy](#) in 2019, by having RMC courses reflect credit hour equivalency of their curriculum to align with the rest of RU programs.

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3.B - 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.

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.
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.
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.
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.

Argument

3.B.1/3.B.2

As a health-sciences university with mostly graduate programs, RU does not offer a general education program. Students admitted to the three upper division baccalaureate programs complete all general education requirements prior to matriculation. The baccalaureate curricula incorporate the general education content across courses to reflect our [Philosophy of General Education](#) and form the basis for lifelong learning and preparation as practitioners with a social conscience. General education admission requirements are posted on the RU website for each baccalaureate program ([CHS](#)).

3.B.3

RU's commitment to recognizing human and cultural diversity in its educational programs is reflected in the [institutional SLO](#): *demonstrate the ability to work effectively in a **diverse** and global society and in RU's mission champions a learning environment in health and biomedical sciences through collaboration, education, research and **equity** for our students, faculty, staff, and the communities we serve.* See also our [Thrive strategic pillar](#): *nurture a sustainable, dynamic, **diverse** and inclusive university and community.*

As part of RU's strategic goal to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion across all colleges RUMC founded the [Rush BMO Institute for Health Equity](#) (RBIHE) in April of 2021, with a generous \$10 million gift from BMO Harris Bank. The mission of the RBIHE is to build, evaluate, and sustain scalable approaches to improving health and eliminating health inequities. The institute seeks to achieve this goal by integrating RU's strengths in education, research, community clinical practice, community partnerships, and policy and advocacy. The institute engages students, faculty, institutional partners, and community partners in achieving its mission. The Education

Subcommittee of RBIHE identified five social justice sensibilities focusing on anti-racism to be integrated in all program curricula and is currently reviewing all university course syllabi to identify areas in which programs can enhance DEI and anti-racism content.

RU's emphasis on human and cultural [diversity](#) is also reflected in program level SLOs. For example, students in the OTD program “construct treatment plans that reflect social and cultural factors that influence therapy decisions.” In the MSN program, students “synthesize evidence-based knowledge and information to assess, plan, implement and evaluate culturally relevant care.” Audiology students “provide culturally appropriate patient education.” In the RMC, students “recognize and respond to societal factors that impact the health of communities and populations.” Advanced practice students in the DNP program “use knowledge of economic, environmental, cultural, and psychosocial determinants of health and illness affecting care when developing, implementing, and evaluating health promotion and disease prevention interventions.” Course and clinical experiences are designed to facilitate achievement of program level SLOs.

Core Components 1.B and 1.C cite examples of how RU exposes students to societal differences through clinical experiences, community engagement, and co-curricular activities. On the 2021 [Survey of Educational Programs](#), students rated favorably (on a 4-point scale) the item: “To what extent is your [coursework helping you to function in a multicultural, global society?](#)” (3.25), which is up from 3.23 in 2018.

3.B.4

Intellectual inquiry, acquiring and applying knowledge, adapting to changing environments and societies, and communicating effectively are requisite skills in the health and biomedical sciences. These skills are reflected in the [institutional SLOs](#), *demonstrate critical inquiry and reasoning required by their respective professional disciplines; communicate in an effective and respectful manner in the practice of their profession; and demonstrate the ability to work effectively in a diverse and global society*; in program-level SLOs; and throughout all curricula.

As novice practitioners, students collect, analyze, and interpret clinical data; make clinical decisions; and create, implement, and communicate treatment plans. They conduct focused assessments; generate diagnoses, problem statements, and SWOT analyses; and create evidence-based management plans whether for a patient, population, community, or organizational system. As budding scholars, students investigate and evaluate scientific evidence that informs diagnostic and management decisions. They acquire skills to critically appraise the credibility of published findings by reading evidence-based literature. In the research laboratories, they generate and test hypotheses and defend their findings through written and oral reports and in peer-reviewed journals. As communicators, they form strong alliances with patients and families to communicate and share information; and as collaborators, they communicate with other professionals in the pursuit of common goals. Most programs include a summative scholarly project such as capstone, thesis, or dissertation through which students demonstrate their acquired knowledge and skills.

On the 2021 Survey of Educational Programs, students gave favorable ratings (on a 4-point scale) to how well the curriculum helped them to [think analytically and critically](#) (3.43), [incorporate evidence into practice research, and scholarship](#) (3.37), and [adapt to a changing healthcare/research environment](#) (3.31). The attached [curriculum maps](#) and [program tables](#) give examples of how programs integrate these competencies. Sample [capstone](#), [thesis, and dissertation](#) titles are attached.

The focus on research is emphasized in the RU mission, to champion a learning environment in

which conducting impactful research is an integral part of the educational process, and in the RU vision, in which RU seeks to improve health through innovative research and transformative education in a culture of excellence and equity.

Research and Discovery. Support for student and faculty research provides student experiential opportunities as part of their learning environment is substantial and takes multiple forms. For example, faculty compete for pilot and equipment grants to provide preliminary data that enables successful federal and foundational research awards. The [Office of Research Affairs](#) partners with faculty and students to facilitate and support their research, and their submission of research service awards and other grants. Research core facilities offer students open hours for resources such as project-related research design, statistics and informatics consultation, and informatics—a voucher program for use of research instrument cores.

Multiple additional research support structures enable research activity and student research participation. The [Research Mentoring Program](#) provides resources, mentorship training, and competitive fellowships to early-career faculty. [The Commercialization Office](#) division manages intellectual property generated by student and faculty research and educational activities at RU. [Trainee Research Day](#) showcases research activities of students as well as postdoctoral fellows and post-graduate medical trainees to promote excitement, trainee networking, and awareness of the wide scope of research activities at RU.

Focused research programs provide students strong and varied opportunities to participate in cutting-edge research in a variety of disciplines: neurosciences; immunology, inflammation, and infection; prevention and health promotion; cancer; cardiology; health equity and social determinants of health; regenerative medicine; and bone and joint research. To this end, between FY19 and FY23, faculty submitted 838 research grant applications and were awarded \$333.2 million in direct grant awards. During this period, NIH awards have increased from \$72.9 million to \$100 million, and faculty have received nearly \$3 million in pilot grant awards. Moreover, from FY19-FY23 faculty have received \$69.2 million in industry-sponsored research. These awards have been impactful and have resulted in 219 patent applications filed and 7273 publications. From FY19-FY23 there has been a 70% increase in students receiving predoctoral National Research Service Awards from NIH.

Examples of significant faculty research awards during FY19-FY23 include:

- \$19.5 million award from CDC for studies on innovative support for patients with SARS-COV2 infection.
- \$8.8 million award from NIH/NIA for studies on the MIND diet intervention for Alzheimer's disease.
- \$16.5 million awards from NIH/NIA for the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center core brain research activities.
- \$9.1 million award from NIH/NINDS for studies on the transition from acute to chronic pain in osteoarthritis.
- \$6.0 million from the City of Chicago for a Regional Innovative Public Health Laboratory.
- \$4.7 million from the NIH/NINDS for research on language learning in children with Fragile X Syndrome.
- \$6.2 million from the NIH/NIA for population research on the impact of COVID-19 on Alzheimer's disease occurrence.
- \$11.9 million from the NIH/NIA for an epidemiological study on risk factors, pathology, and clinical expression of Alzheimer's disease.
- \$2.3 million from the NIH/NIAMS for mapping the joint-nerve interactome of the knee.

- \$3.8 million from the Alzheimer's Association for research on protecting brain health through lifestyle interventions.

RU is an important participant in the [Institute for Translational Medicine](#) (ITM), a partnership with the University of Chicago, and in collaboration with Advocate Health Care, Illinois Tech, Loyola University, and North Shore University Health System. The ITM is supported by a \$50 million grant from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences at the NIH through its Clinical and Translational Sciences Awards Program. The ITM helps institutions create an integrated academic home for clinical and translational science with the resources to support researchers and research teams working to apply new knowledge and techniques to patient care. Additionally, the ITM administers the NIH Career Development Awards (KL2) for RU. These awards provide salary support, travel funds, and 75% protected time for awarded researchers to focus on their research and training.

RU also participates in the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)-funded [Chicago Area Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Network](#) (CAPriCORN). CAPriCORN is a Chicago-wide partnership of eleven local research institutions that have joined together to motivate strategies for improving healthcare while focusing on issues affecting people living in and around Chicago. Two other initiatives provide students integrated opportunities in health equity research. In collaboration with DePaul University, the [Center for Community Health Equity](#) enables students and faculty to participate in a range of projects focused on health equity research, and the recently launched [BMO Institute for Health Equity](#) was formed to coordinate, scale, and sustain RUSH health equity programs in the communities we serve. From preparing health care providers who can understand and address social determinants of health to identifying solutions that make the most significant impact on life expectancy, the Rush BMO Institute is an important educational opportunity for our students.

Websites for [Rush Medical College](#), the [College of Health Sciences](#), the [College of Nursing](#), and the [Graduate College](#) provide overviews of research activities associated with each college. Students work closely with faculty on research and collaborate with faculty on publications. Faculty and students also contribute professional commentary through social media and opinion-editorial works, and they give podium and poster presentations locally, nationally, and internationally. Students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and discovery of knowledge through scholarly research projects that underlie their thesis, dissertation, and capstone projects. Students present their work at the [Trainee Research Day](#), and travel awards are available for presentations at local, national, and international scientific conferences. Students are required to submit a published manuscript as a requirement for most PhD programs.

In the [2022 Alumni Survey](#) (28% response rate, N=847), 36% of the respondents indicated they [engaged in community service](#) since completing the program; 17% [gave a poster or podium presentation](#) at a professional meeting; 12% [had their manuscripts published](#); 7% [assumed a leadership role within a major professional organization](#); and 7% [have been recognized for accomplishments in their field](#).

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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.
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.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
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.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
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.

Argument

3.C.1

The [RU mission](#) affirms the university's commitment to equity and serving our communities while the university Thrive strategic pillar stated goal is to *nurture a sustainable, dynamic, diverse, and inclusive university and community*. Each of the RU colleges ([CHS](#), [CON](#), [RMC](#), [GC](#)) articulates clear and unequivocal statements promoting the importance of human diversity in the composition of its faculty; has undertaken faculty recruitment strategies to ensure the hiring of faculty and staff that reflect human diversity; and has undertaken faculty retention efforts to ensure that once diverse faculty and staff are hired, every effort is made to ensure their long-term retention and success. RU has made strides to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within our mission and for the constituencies we serve. [Female faculty](#) make up 51% of the professorial work force. This percentage is even higher in several of its colleges: CON (90%), CHS (65%), and GC (65%). Between June 2018 and August 2022 RU has also increased the overall percentage of [minority faculty](#) from 8.8% to 10.9%. This reflects an overall increase in the College of Nursing (CON) which increased from 10.6% to 17.6%. Increases in [African American faculty](#) from 2018 to 2022 have been particularly notable at RU. Their percentages increased at RU from 4.52% to 5.7%, as did the percentage of African American faculty in two of its colleges: 8.5% to 13.2% in the CON; 3.1% to 5.4% in the CHS. There was a smaller percentage increase of [Latine faculty](#) overall at RU from 2018 to 2022 (4.3% to 4.4%), largely driven by the CON, which doubled the percentage of its Latine faculty from 2.1% to 4.4%.

3.C.2

RU has sufficient numbers of and continuity of faculty to carry out both the classroom and non-classroom roles of faculty. The [2022 IPEDS Human Resources Report](#) includes 1082 employed and volunteer faculty who support the educational programs of RU through instruction, research, administration, and/or service. Volunteer faculty consist primarily of physicians who are not employed by RU. All physicians have an academic appointment.

Faculty hold primary appointments in one of four colleges: GC, CHS, CON, and RMC. Faculty from other colleges who teach in the GC research programs hold secondary appointments in the college. Faculty provide oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, and assessment of student learning within their own colleges. Faculty participate in non-classroom functions as participants on RU task forces and committees such as the [University Assessment Committee](#), [University Curriculum Committee](#), [University Policy and Procedure Committee](#), University Faculty Council, and numerous college committees and taskforces.

3.C.3

Faculty qualifications and academic functions of faculty are outlined in the [RU Rules for Governance](#), [Faculty Handbook](#), and [Faculty Qualifications Policy](#). Each college has duly appointed members whose assignments are made in one or more faculty roles that include instruction, research, clinical/practice, and/or service. Faculty qualifications are established primarily by credentials that are verified through primary sources. Faculty who teach in clinical programs such as medicine, nursing, and allied health sciences have the educational preparation, licensure, and/or certification required by their respective professional disciplines and accrediting bodies.

Core teaching faculty have either a terminal degree in their field or substantial academic coursework, methodologic training in the discipline, and documented breadth and depth of experience outside of the classroom in discipline-relevant, real-world situations. Equivalence and/or appropriateness regarding any of the degree requirements in relation to qualifications are approved by the dean and department chairs of each college. CHS and CON faculty without a terminal degree are evaluated for experiential equivalence based on college-established criteria. The terms of appointment to rank are established within each college. The terms of appointment are outlined in the [Rules for Governance](#).

Tenure is granted by RU to provide a status of continuing senior faculty rank based on the faculty member's achievements and performance in teaching, service, research, clinical service, and scholarship. Tenure does not apply to faculty salary or position. The rules and standards for promotion and tenure are defined and established at the college level, and specific rules and processes for promotion are developed by the dean and faculty of each college. RU does not offer dual degree credit or programs with consortial or contractual agreements.

3.C.4

The faculty review process is outlined in the [Faculty Handbook](#). Faculty have an annual review that is performed systematically by their immediate supervisor, department chairperson, or college dean.

Faculty submit a self-evaluation through the faculty data management system, along with supplemental materials they believe will be helpful for an adequate assessment of performance. The annual review is expected to be comprehensive, providing faculty an opportunity to discuss their performance, academic standing, career development opportunities, career advancement, and the next year's performance goals. The review includes the faculty self-evaluation and an evaluation conducted by the supervisor followed by a conference. Faculty are given the opportunity to add

comments prior to signing the evaluation. The [annual evaluation](#) form and appropriate supporting materials become part of the faculty member's official file that is retained in the faculty data management system. During the annual review faculty are also expected to update and upload their curriculum vitae to the database. A faculty member may access the annual evaluation form at any stage of the evaluation or thereafter.

In the 2019 Final Report HLC recommended that the university review faculty tenure and promotions across the institution. The university review confirmed that all colleges engage in a similar tenure and promotion process that includes an application, review by the department chair or program director, review by the college's faculty committee and the college dean, and a final approval by the provost. Each discipline may have differences in specific requirements based on nationally agreed upon disciplinary characteristics.

3.C.5

The [Office of Faculty Affairs](#), along with the [Center for Innovation and Lifelong Learning](#) (CILL), provides multiple opportunities for faculty professional development and career advancement. Additional resources that provide faculty with opportunities to grow as educators and explore new technologies and innovative ideas include the [Teaching Academy](#), [Educational Mentoring Program](#), and [Teaching Bootcamp](#). In addition, the [Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation](#) under the Office of Academic Affairs provides rich workshops opportunities related to remote education.

In 2022, 552 faculty participated in the monthly Teaching Academy. The Teaching Bootcamp offers a well-structured curriculum aimed at enhancing faculty teaching skills. It includes pre- and regular post-program assessments, and continuous monitoring to ensure faculty apply knowledge received through these programs. Both programs provide continuing education credits. The [Cohn Research Mentoring Program](#) also offers mentoring support to faculty that conduct educational research projects.

Annually, the Office of Faculty Affairs hosts an [awards ceremony](#) in which faculty are recognized for excellence in education, research, clinical service, community service, and mentoring. The [Faculty Affairs Annual Report](#) is attached.

Early in 2018, RU established the [Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation](#) (CTEI), which provides faculty with opportunities to grow as educators and explore new technologies and innovative ideas. CTEI offers the university [Online Teaching and Course Design](#) (OTCD) class, a fully online class that covers various topics from cognitive theories to the basics of quality online teaching and assessment techniques, using rubrics, using technology tools, and active learning. CTEI also offers faculty members one-on-one consultations with instructional design staff; assistance with the learning management system (Canvas) and other educational technologies, workshops on topics relevant to all teaching modalities; CTEI Skills Labs, which are hands-on learning and application experiences; and much more. CTEI also assists faculty with the application of RU's Online Teaching and Course Design Best Practices.

Faculty development and faculty academic success is ensured through education, mentoring, professional and leadership development, advocacy, communication, and recognition. Academic advancement of RU faculty is facilitated through programs that include process-guided mentorships, career bootcamps, grants writing workshops, annual research fellowships, and more. The [Office of Faculty Affairs](#) oversees the Office of Mentoring Programs, the [Office of Global Health](#), and the [Center for Innovative and Lifelong Learning](#) (CILL). CILL provides innovative and cutting-edge CE

in three key areas: interprofessional clinical CE, faculty, and leadership development programs. Profession-specific or multiple professions in the healthcare team-focused programs offer CE in all of the following professions: medicine, nursing, nutrition, occupational therapy, pharmacy, psychology, respiratory therapy, social work, and speech-audiology. CILL also offers leadership development programs for established and developing professionals.

In addition, the [Employee Assistance Benefits \(EAB\)](#) program provides comprehensive benefits such as tuition reimbursement for employees enrolled in accredited degree-granting programs and enhancement support for attendance at conferences. [EAB](#) also provides development courses and resources such as management development, leadership coaching, and computer applications.

3.C.6

Faculty are accessible to students formally during class times and office hours and informally during RU-sponsored events. Many faculty have posted office hours (in-person or virtual) and offer an “open-door” policy for student inquiry. Faculty contact information, including phone number, email address, and office hours, is included in all [course syllabi](#). Faculty respond to discussion postings and questions in the learning management system and are available through tele-conferencing for distance students.

3.C.7

Student support services are provided through the [Division of Student Affairs](#). The Division is staffed by people who are qualified to provide essential core services such as tutoring, financial aid advising, wellness counseling, and co-curricular activities. Attached is a list of [Division of Student Affairs staff](#), their credentials, job title, years of experience, and organizations to which they belong. Staff qualifications are initially evaluated against relevant job descriptions and requirements, and continued quality of staff is ensured through the annual performance review process. Staff members participate in [professional development programs](#) specific to their areas and are supported by Student Affairs. Staff are also eligible for benefits through the [EAB program](#).

[The Center for Academic Excellence \(CAE\)](#), as part of the Library, provides key academic support services such as tutoring, writing skills, test-taking strategies, statistical assistance, note-taking strategies, and time management. Academic advising is carried out by faculty who are assigned as advisors to students in their respective programs.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

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

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
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.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
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).

Argument

3.D.1

Students who choose RU are highly motivated, self-directed learners with clear academic and professional goals. Staff in the [Division of Student Affairs](#) continues to partner with students and faculty to provide comprehensive programs and services that address a variety of needs including, but not limited to, academic support, career services, wellness and personal counseling, and diversity awareness. Services are available to both online and on-site students. In 2020, the Division partnered with the [Center for Clinical Wellness](#), as part of the [RU Wellness Initiative](#) to increase services for students. The changes aligned with the recommendations from the American College Health Association (ACHA) to enhance student mental health. Now students have access to a state-of-the-art center that maintains confidentiality; distance learners have access to a myriad of services to manage health and wellness.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, student health services were deployed to assist students with testing and immunization. In 2018, the Division initiated structured and cyclical approach to ensure a continuous review of its services. The review includes cross-divisional staff and college representatives and operates on a five-year review cycle. As part of the review, in 2018, the [Office of Student Financial Aid](#) conducted a departmental staffing assessment to benchmark departmental services with those of similar institutions. The National Association of Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) Staffing Benchmarking Model was used for this assessment. To align with the model, additional staff was hired to provide support in a variety of areas, including building financial literacy programming for all students. Given the unique aspects of financial aid processing for medical students, services were reevaluated in 2020 to ensure sufficient support. As a result of this evaluation, an additional senior financial aid counselor was hired to provide specialized support to medical students. In 2020, the [Office of the Registrar](#) enhanced the student information system to include a self-service student planning module for students to review plans of study in real time, and for faculty advisors to advise students on their progress throughout their program. Highlighting the excellent work of the Division of Student Affairs the Division received the [Ellucian 2023 Impact Award](#) for their implementation of a new student planning module that significantly improved the tracking of student data and enhanced the quality of interactions with students.

The Division assesses student satisfaction with its services through the institutional [Survey on Student Services](#), conducted every three years by the OIE. On the 2020 survey, students gave favorable ratings (on a 5-point scale) to [helpfulness of the registrar staff](#) (3.93); [accessibility of financial aid counselors](#) (3.93) and [helpfulness of financial aid staff](#) (4.07); [satisfaction with support for student organizations](#) (4.23), [career services assistance](#) (3.98), and [improving the campus climate regarding diversity](#) (4.04); [accuracy of information received from the Office of Financial Affairs \(OFA\)](#) (3.95) and [helpfulness of OFA staff](#) (4.08); [availability and helpfulness of library staff](#) (4.24) and [adequacy of book and journal collection for research and class assignments](#) (4.16); [benefited from the services provided by Wellness](#) (4.03) and [experienced positive changes as a result of the counseling center](#) (4.28); and [international student services](#).

Attached is a [list of the offices](#) that provide services through the Division of Student Affairs and the RU [Student Services Survey Report](#). Services are also described on the [RU website](#).

Early in 2019, RU went through an organizational restructuring to include the newly created [Office of Academic Affairs](#) (OAA), which oversees several academic support areas including the [Rush Library and Archives](#), the [Center for Academic Excellence](#) (formerly the Center for Student Success), the [Rush Center for Clinical Skills and Simulation](#), [Rush Anatomy Laboratory](#), the [Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation](#), and the [Office of Interprofessional Education](#). In addition, OAA includes the [Office of Institutional Effectiveness](#). The Office leads the educational program management for the University, supporting all of the colleges, and incorporating all of the education offices and divisions that our educators use to create content to transfer knowledge to our students. The Office of Academic Affairs is described on the RU [Office of Academic Affairs website](#).

3.D.2

RU does not accept traditional college freshmen. Rather, students admitted to RU must have completed a minimum of two years of college to attain prerequisites and general education for the undergraduate programs or, for the graduate programs, completed the minimum of a baccalaureate degree that included program-specific prerequisites. Entering students participate in the RU new student welcome and onboarding experience ([sample attached](#)), and program-specific orientations conducted within each of the colleges where they learn about services and program-specific expectations. Distance and on-site students complete a hybrid onboarding module that reviews services provided by RU, orients students to the Canvas learning management system, and provides an overview of RU.

Students in the RMC, CON, and most CHS programs participate in lock-step curricula with structured programs of study. Research programs and some clinical programs require students to complete a set of specified core courses before progressing to discipline-specific tracks. All curricula are structured to provide students with the preparatory knowledge and skills needed for application to more advanced studies. Students start learning in the classroom, often practice skills in a simulated clinical setting, and progress to the clinical site once proficiency has been demonstrated. Programs in clinical fields that require professional licensure or certification for practice are designed to prepare students for licensure/certification examinations.

To support learning, RU faculty are dedicated to the success of every enrolled student and are available to answer questions as they arise. Early in the program or term, faculty identify students in academic jeopardy and initiate or refer them to appropriate support services. For example, the RMC established an Early Intervention Committee to identify students experiencing, or at risk for, academic difficulty. Identified students are offered counseling and remediation services. In the CON,

course directors initiate an [Academic Improvement Success](#) (AISP) Form and in collaboration with the student, develop an action plan with specific measurable goals to facilitate student success. In order to improve student success in the first term, program leaders for the MSN initiated “Building Optimal Opportunities for Successful Transition” (BOOST).

[The BOOST program](#) offers supplemental review sessions and proactive academic advising to all students. Students are identified through a scoring system using criteria listed by the Health Resources and Services Administration, prerequisite GPA, and science GPA. These students are sent regular correspondence reminding them of the available supplemental programming as well as encouraging the student to utilize the additional resources available in the university such as the Center for Academic Excellence and the reference librarians. In Fall 2022, students who complete an attendance form for a BOOST event were sent a survey. The instrument was scored by the student based on a 5-point scale (5=highest), as well as recommendations for improvement. The BOOST programming received (4.85) regarding satisfaction. Faculty in the CHS and GC also monitor students’ performance early every term and provide remediation or referral to the [Center for Academic Excellence](#) as appropriate.

3.D.3

Academic advising is a faculty responsibility and is factored into faculty workload. Academic advising is managed at the college and program levels with advisors assigned based on the students’ interests and discipline-specific tracks. For example, in the RMC, students are assigned to one of five longitudinal advising academies, each with four faculty advisors and six to eight peer advisors. In the CHS and CON, advisors are assigned at the time of matriculation. In the GC, students have the opportunity to select their advisor/mentor based on their exposure to faculty during their laboratory rotations. Advisors/ mentors in the research programs must have a Graduate College appointment.

Among other activities, advisors review the program of study with their advisees, monitor advisees’ academic progress, inform advisees regarding relevant matriculation and progression procedures, and provide career counseling. In some programs, advisors guide scholarly projects such as capstone, thesis and/or dissertation work. Advisors may refer students to services offered by RU such as the [Center for Academic Excellence](#) or [wellness services](#). Advising procedures for distance students are identical to those for on-site students. Advisors make themselves available to their advisees by giving them their contact information and can use video or tele-conferencing for students off-site. On the [2021 Survey of Educational Programs](#), students gave overall favorable ratings (on a 4-point scale) to the process by which advisors are assigned (3.10), advisor's knowledge about the program (3.39), advisor's awareness of campus resources/support services (3.31), and advisor's responsiveness to advising needs (3.29).

3.D.4

Infrastructure and resources are also discussed in Core Component 3.D.1. and 5.B.1.

Physical Infrastructure: RU is housed in the Armour Academic Center (AAC), which contains 26 classrooms; the [Library](#); the [Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation](#) (CTEI); the [McCormick Educational Technology Center](#); a gross [anatomy laboratory](#); scientific learning laboratories; [bookstore](#); cafeteria; offices; conference rooms; student study spaces and student lockers. These spaces occupy approximately 137,000 square feet. Fitness and testing centers are in nearby buildings. Research laboratories and support spaces account for 214,301 square feet. Classrooms upgraded in 2022 are now equipped with in-room PCs, full-room microphones, ceiling speakers, and dual

cameras for either instructor view or student/audience view. Zoom rooms have improved virtual conferencing features, artificial intelligence powered scribe whiteboard, dual podium monitors including a Wacom touch screen, large virtual participant display, scheduling panels, and BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) options for both physical connections and wireless. Additionally, as part of our commitment to inclusion, rooms are equipped with assisted listening devices that will pick up the room audio and provide a high-quality audio stream over our WiFi network for an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing. Faculty offices are equipped with computers, printers, phones, etc. as needed to conduct faculty activities. Conference rooms equipped with audio-visual capabilities are located throughout the AAC.

RU houses nine multidisciplinary, laboratory-based classrooms equipped with microscopes and sinks, and six mock examination rooms also equipped with sinks and hospital beds, examination tables with overhead lighting, and various types of healthcare equipment. There are four skills validation rooms with sinks, hospital beds, and overhead examination lighting. Students have access to teaching mannequins, models, and a variety of specialized equipment. Rooms are divided into practice and testing areas that allow faculty to work with groups of up to eight students at a time. Specially designed laboratories support the acquisition of technical skills specific to cardiovascular perfusion, vascular ultrasound, respiratory care, medical laboratory science, occupational therapy, and biotechnology programs.

In 2019, the shared Biotechnology and Medical Laboratory Science laboratory was collaboratively redesigned by the program directors for both programs in coordination with the architects. The laboratory is outfitted with extra-large laminar flow hoods, a space solely dedicated to sterile tissue culture, surround sound, microphones, two state-of-the-art lateral television screens, and two smartboards that can be synchronized and linked with display projectors. In addition, the classrooms are outfitted with an adjustable workstation to accommodate students who need specialty equipment, a vestibule for a prep room that is used for laboratory experiment preparation, and a customized workspace for faculty with a wet bench camera to allow students to watch experimental demonstrations in real time on the lateral televisions and smartboard screens. The updated software enhances the teaching experience by allowing instructors to selectively choose screens and/or content that is displayed to the class with the option to add annotated information that is displayed in real time. The interactive learning environment for students allows seamless transitions between classroom settings and access to prep room space with dedicated space to a sterile room with negative airflow that was not previously available.

In Fall 2018, RU initiated a major infrastructure upgrade and remodeling that resulted in a reconfiguration of space to accommodate more active learning strategies, support interprofessional programming, and serve as multi-purpose convertible space for students and faculty. Additional renovations were made to improve student study spaces and spaces for instructional design, information services, and multidisciplinary laboratories. All these renovations were completed in summer of 2019. As part of the renovations the newly reconfigured learning spaces include three new cutting-edge collaborative learning classrooms on the fourth and fifth floors that are designed to enhance the learning experience. These Collaborative Learning Hubs, as they are dubbed, feature a suite of design elements, technological additions, and quality support services to facilitate active learning. The Collaborative Learning Hubs were developed to complement those programs that use an active learning instructional method. The Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation (CTEI) hosted a series of [training bootcamps](#) on use of the technology in the space; this training is required for faculty who have active learning curricula and want to use the Collaborative Learning Hubs.

Computing Space. The [McCormick Educational Technology Center](#) (METC) is a full information technology center that serves as technology support center that, along with the Academic Testing Center, has 175 computer workstations. The Testing Center will be expanded to accommodate increased enrollment and use. The METC also has a HELP desk available to students and faculty for IT issues. Students have access to most of these facilities 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Internet access, email for students, course-related e-mail groups, and student e-mail groups by academic major are provided. Laser printers are also available. In addition, students and faculty are able to check out iPads and laptops for personal use. Additional computing areas are found in the Library and in the testing center.

Clinical Sites. RU is fully integrated with RUMC, which serves as one of the clinical sites for student practice and research. RUMC, with its well-known practitioner-teacher model and its tripartite mission of education, practice, and research, has a professional and research staff that understands and supports the mission and educational programs of the University. RUMC is a full-service, nationally recognized academic medical center located on the West Side of Chicago. The state-of-the-art facility provides healthcare services to diverse patient populations from across the life span. The attached [RUMC profile](#) provides a description of the facility's capacity and rich learning environment for RU students. RUSH affiliate hospitals, including Rush Oak Park and Rush Copley, along with a network of satellite clinics and private medical offices throughout the Chicago metropolitan area, are available for clinical placements of students, as well.

In addition, faculty have established a network of off-site clinical facilities throughout the Chicago metropolitan area, the state of Illinois, and across the nation for clinical placements of students. All clinical placements fulfill the regulatory requirements of each state.

Simulation. The [Rush Center for Clinical Skills and Simulation](#) (RCCSS) is a newly built, 20,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility housing pediatric, emergency, and general medicine, and multi-patient procedure rooms along with debriefing rooms and 12 exam rooms for standardized patient encounters. Over 50,000 learner hours of simulation education were provided in RCCSS between July and October, 2022.

Rooms are equipped with a wide array of adult and pediatric high-fidelity and low-fidelity mannequins, communication systems, and audiovisual recorders that capture students' performance for later review and debriefing. The multi-patient procedure room has four patient bays that are connected to a central control center with observation workstations, creating a setting for high-stakes, multiple patient encounter practice and testing. The debriefing rooms contain large video monitors connected to a web-based audiovisual system aid for debriefing. Mannequins are available across the age spectrum, encompassing premature infants to elderly adults. High-fidelity mannequins have heartbeats, breathe, and respond to treatment. All physiologic parameters can be adjusted to accurately portray the scenario in clinical detail. Clinical task trainers allow students to practice various skills such as IV placement, CPR, catheter placements, and others. Physicians, nurses, and technicians trained in simulation as an area of specialty are available to assist in the planning of simulation experiences. In June, 2019, RCCSS was awarded accreditation for five years as a Comprehensive Education Institute by the American College of Surgeons and the Society for Simulation in Healthcare Library.

Library. The [Library](#) serves the education, practice, and research needs of university students, faculty and staff through an extensive collection of print and electronic resources available to all students and university affiliates. A complete overview of all library resources and services is

available on the Library website. Electronic holdings, all of which are available both on-campus and off, 24 hours a day, include over 120 databases such as CINAHL Complete, Clinical Key, AccessMedicine, MEDLINE (via both PubMed and Ovid), RefWorks, UpToDate, Scopus, and an extensive electronic journal collection with access to over 10,000 titles.

In addition, the Library is a member of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries of Illinois (CARLI), whose benefits include an integrated library system (I-Share) that serves 86 institutions, provides electronic resource brokering, and free access to a collection of 27 EBSCOHost databases and over 2,000 Springer health science eBooks. With I-Share, students, faculty, and staff can request materials online directly from the other 85 member libraries or check out materials in person using a Rush ID card. The library also utilizes fully electronic systems for course reserves and inter library loan internet accessible database (ILLIAD).

Library holdings are evaluated annually based on usage and consumer feedback. New resources are added continually due to demand, and through subscription services and state-funded resources gained via CARLI. Reference librarians are available to all RUSH affiliates both on campus and off. In addition to answering questions via telephone and in-person, reference staff members are available via email and live chat to assist faculty, staff, and students. Reference librarians are also available to provide customized classroom support, research support, and other traditional services. The librarians also create and maintain over 50 individual web-based guides on a variety of topics to assist students at their point of need. Guides are created to address specific topics (ex. “an overview of resources for PT students”), teach specific processes (ex. “how to find databases”), and to teach users how to use specific resources (ex. “how to use CINAHL”). All are available through the Library homepage.

In terms of physical space, the Library offers approximately 20,000 sq. ft. of dedicated study space, all of which is available to students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via badge swipe access. The library has multiple learning environments to meet different needs, including both collaborative and quiet study. Computers with printing capabilities are available, as are group study rooms and modern individual study carrels with teaching support. An extensive renovation to the Library commenced in early 2020, removing book stacks and allowing additional study space. In addition, the top floor of the library is currently being renovated to further enhance student study space. Work is scheduled to be complete in June of 2023.

The [Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation](#) (CTEI) is a university resource that provides faculty with opportunities to grow as educators and explore new technologies and innovative ideas through workshops, online tutorials, one-on-one consultations, and resources. All online workshops are recorded and available for later viewing. The CTEI currently employs a staff of instructional designers who consult with and assist faculty in the construction and design of online, blended, and face-to-face courses. In addition, the CTEI instructional technologist, along with designers, provides support for Canvas, the learning management system. RU faculty and CTEI staff developed [teaching](#) and [design standards](#) for online courses consistent with Quality Matters™ and Online Learning Consortium’s (OLC) Online Scorecard Course Quality Review (OSCQR) rubric. Those standards have recently been updated and are going through appropriate approval processes before being available to faculty members. RU faculty members have been heavily involved in CTEI programs since its beginning (2018) and continue to be a driving force in all that CTEI does. The faculty advisory board is called the [Educational Innovation Team](#); it meets once per month to advise CTEI on initiatives and programs.

In addition, CTEI offers an Online Teaching & Course Design (OTCD) class, including topics such

as

- the brain, memory, and how people learn; myths and realities of online teaching; making the shift from face-to-face teaching;
- basic of a quality online course and online course structure; developing content for online delivery;
- learning objectives, how to write them, and alignment of content; active learning and feedback;
- using rubrics & other grading essentials; assessment techniques;
- communication in the online environment; copyright, fair use, and OER; and
- using technology tools.

The course is offered once every term and can be offered more often if necessary. As of November, 2022, 214 faculty members have completed the course and CTEI will begin the process of developing a second version of this course, called OTCD 2.0, this Spring with assistance from faculty.

Learning technologies available to faculty teaching in online courses include but are not limited to the following:

- Examsoft: online (hosted) assessment delivery and analytical tool that is integrated with Canvas®;
- PollEverywhere: allows creation of live polls for students that can be embedded into PowerPoint and other presentations, including online classes;
- Examity: online exam proctoring tool offering various levels of exam proctoring services;
- Screencast-o-matic: software that allows faculty members to record audio and what is on their screen;
- Canvas Studio: a video recording and tool available with Canvas that has a multitude of capabilities; Respondus Monitor and Respondus LockDown Browser: exam integrity tools;
- com: academic plagiarism detection service integrated with Canvas;
- HSP: a software program that allows instructional designers to partner with faculty members to create gamified-type learning content for courses as well as sophisticated learning checks, enhanced learning modules, and more; and
- Coming soon: Pro licenses for Kahoot, an integrative game-like tool and Simple Syllabus, a syllabus creation tool housed in Canvas that makes updating syllabi seamless and easy for faculty members.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

RU provides high-quality education for faculty, staff, and students in the classroom, clinic, community, and research laboratory. Most of the programs offered at RU are accredited by specialty accreditation organizations. To develop a curriculum that is current and relevant, the faculty use discipline-specific content guidelines along with accreditation guidelines, institutional curriculum oversight, analysis of student performance data, and input from relevant stakeholders. More than 90% of RU students pass certification/licensure examinations on the first attempt, which is a testament to our rigorous processes.

As the RU mission includes research, all students enrolled in programs at RU are engaged in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information. Students create evidence-based management plans after collecting and analyzing clinical data. They critically appraise the credibility of published findings and generate and test hypotheses. Students are evaluated on their communication skills during patient care interactions and in their capstone, project, thesis, or dissertation defenses.

RU has sufficient faculty and staff who are rated highly by students as being current, competent, and accessible. Faculty publish on average approximately 1800 manuscripts or book chapters per year and have been awarded over \$220 million in research funds over the last four years. Resources for faculty development include internal programming such as that offered by the CTEI and Office of Faculty Affairs, and access to external programming supported by LEAP and other RU financial resources.

Support for students is available for registration, financial aid, counseling, and learning in the offices of Student Affairs, Student Life and Engagement, the Library, the simulation center, the educational technology center, and Center for Academic Excellence. Students rate all support services highly for accessibility and helpfulness. Research support and training is available from the Offices of Research Compliance and Research Affairs, IRBs, and IACUC.

In response to the 2019 Final Report HLC made two recommendations regarding consistency of our Academic Credit policy and review of promotion and tenure across the colleges. In response to these recommendations, we revised our Academic Credit policy so that all programs align with the policy. A review of the colleges' promotion and tenure processes showed equitable processes across all four colleges.

Sources

There are no sources.

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.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
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.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
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.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
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.

Argument

4.A.1

All programs in the College of Nursing (CON), Rush Medical College (RMC), and nearly all in the College of Health Sciences (CHS) undergo external peer review through specialty accreditation procedures that include a comprehensive self-study, site visit, and mid-cycle reports. The CON, RMC, and CHS each have designated one faculty member who coordinates and oversees the college's accreditation and program review processes. Prior to upcoming reviews, program faculty update the Board of Governors (BOG) [Accreditation, Regulation and Quality Committee](#) and RU leaders on the program's review process and progress, findings, and issues that are addressed during the review.

In addition to accreditation-based program reviews, the [University Assessment Committee](#) (UAC) oversees an institutional [Program Review Process](#). Programs submit a self-study that focuses on strategic thinking and planning to support the program's goals and intellectual and academic endeavors. The review document requires that each program think strategically and present a coherent vision of its short- and long-term plans. Programs with specialty accreditation submit a modified review that includes the self-study's executive summary, outcomes report of the accrediting

body, accreditation criteria/standards, and the program's review/response to the findings. Programs without specialty accreditation submit a more extensive review. As of 2023, all programs without specialty accreditation agreed to pursue external reviews every five years. The UAC [develops a review schedule](#), oversees the review process, and evaluates the quality of materials submitted for review. Examples of a modified review with specialty accreditation ([MSN](#)) and a more extensive external review ([PhD HS](#)) are attached.

The Graduate College (GC) programs do not have external accrediting agencies. In 2019, the college initiated an [external review](#) of the college by a team of deans and experienced faculty and, based on that review, conducted external reviews of the curricula in all programs (aside from the PhD programs in the CON and CHS, which were subsequently moved from the Graduate College into their respective colleges). These curricular reviews included national benchmarking against like programs at universities that are small and large, public and private, geographically close and far from Chicago. The reviewers included current and former students, faculty that do and do not teach in the programs, and in some cases, industry partners. These reviews took place in 2019 and 2020. [Newly revised curricula](#) were reviewed by the Graduate College Curriculum Committee and the University Curriculum Committee and were instituted in Fall 2021. The GC Curriculum committee maintains a schedule of three-year minor, and five-year major course reviews. A five-year GC review that includes curriculum review will occur in 2026. In addition, CON and CHS agreed to also have external reviews for their programs that do not have accrediting agencies every five years. The first program to undergo an external review is the PhD in Nursing, due Spring 2023.

4.A.2

Faculty develop the curriculum and plans of study that are used by the Office of the Registrar to conduct degree audits and ensure that students complete all degree requirements prior to graduation. Third parties are not involved in evaluating the credits students complete at RU. The student management system, Ellucian Colleague, is a fully automated system that allows faculty, students, and program directors to audit students' training progress in real time. [The Office of the Registrar](#) is responsible for evaluating the audit to ensure that students have met all necessary requirements before posting degrees.

The Respiratory Care, Specialist in Blood Bank Technology, and Medical Imaging Sciences programs in the CHS have a well-described process for establishing course equivalence or advanced standing (see [Respiratory Care example](#)) based on experiential learning that includes proficiency by examination and/or documentation of passing an appropriate national certification or registry examination.

4.A.3

RU accepts transfer credits that students have earned from regionally accredited colleges and universities. Degree-seeking students submit official transcripts and course syllabi for non-General Education courses, which are then used by program directors to evaluate transfer credit.

The [Transfer of Credit Petition Policy](#) describes the programs that allow transfer credits and how many credits can be transferred to RU. The policy also describes the role that the student, course director, program director, and registrar have in the process. Program directors, major advisors, or designated college administrators are responsible for judging and approving the quality and equivalence of transfer credits based on the required documentation. Credits obtained at foreign institutions are evaluated by a third party, such as Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE) or World

Education Services (WES).

4.A.4

The faculty have the authority and responsibility to oversee course prerequisites, course rigor, and student learning objectives within each course; access to learning resources; and faculty qualifications for all RU programs. Courses undergo review and approval processes within each college in accordance with the college's curriculum committee (see examples: [CHS](#), [GC](#)) policies and procedures. The [Rush University Curriculum Committee](#), comprising faculty from all four colleges, is also charged with reviewing all substantive course changes proposed by RU academic programs, including the creation or deletion of new or existing courses and programs.

RU does not offer dual credit programs. Students must be enrolled in the university to have access to course content in the learning management system (Canvas), associated materials in the Library or e-reserves, email, and the RU portal. All prospective degree- and certificate-seeking individuals must pay a confirmation fee or enrollment deposit to become a student within the student information system (SIS). Ahead of each term's start date, students who have paid the deposit are eligible for registration. Non-degree seeking students (i.e., students-at-large) are not required to pay a confirmation fee. They are administratively/batch-registered and are notified of their enrollment and financial obligations.

As summarized in Criterion 3, faculty qualifications and academic functions of faculty are outlined in the [RU Rules for Governance](#), [Faculty Handbook](#), and [Faculty Qualifications Policy](#). Faculty hiring is conducted within programs/colleges/departments in compliance with university policy.

4.A.5

Sixteen discipline-specific programs are subject to accreditation by a specialty accrediting body ([attached](#)), and all are fully accredited. RU does not offer non-accredited programs for which accreditation is available.

Three CON degrees (i.e., MSN, DNP, and Post-Graduate Certificate in Nursing) are fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, with reaffirmation reviews scheduled in 2024 and 2029. The pre-licensure Generalist Entry Masters (MSN) program is fully approved by the Illinois Board of Nursing. The Nurse Anesthesia program is accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs through 2025.

RMC is fully accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) through 2028.

Eleven CHS programs are fully accredited by their respective accrediting bodies with reaffirmation reviews scheduled between 2023 and 2029. The CHS programs include Occupational Therapy, Dietetic Internship, Respiratory Care, Specialist in Blood Bank Technology, Health Systems Management, Physician Assistant Studies, Audiology, Speech-Language Pathology, Medical Laboratory Science, Cardiovascular Perfusion, and Vascular Ultrasound.

As reported in 2018, the Cardiovascular Perfusion program was placed on probationary accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) in early 2018. The program submitted a full self-study and hosted a site visit in October 2018. On January 16, 2019, [CAAHEP](#) voted to remove the program from probation and awarded continuing accreditation. The next comprehensive visit is scheduled no later than 2029.

4.A.6

RU evaluates the success of its graduates through multiple sources that include [institutional surveys](#), official certification/licensure notifications, contact by faculty and advisors, and professional social media channels such as LinkedIn.

RU uses two indicators determine effective workforce preparation: certification/licensure and employment rates. Data are posted on program-specific websites and within the RU Annual Report. [Licensure/certification rates](#) across all programs meet or exceed national benchmarks and therefore meet all accreditation standards. Employment rates for RU graduates are high, with 85% (204 of 240) employed within six months in their chosen disciplines and many receiving offers prior to graduation. Fifty-seven percent of GC doctoral alumni remain in research or research-related careers. In 2021 and 2022, 98% and 100% of the RMC graduates, respectively, were matched in 25 specialties at 88 different institutions across the country. CON and CHS graduates are working in health-care fields across the country. Graduates of the PhD and clinical doctorate programs in nursing and health sciences assume positions as educators, administrators, and advanced practice providers in hospitals, clinics, private practice, and public health. Graduates also seek to advance their education. According to the most recent [alumni survey](#), 57% of CON-MSN graduates are either enrolled or plan to enroll in higher degree programs within five years. Of the BS in Health Sciences graduates, from 2015-2020 (N=70), 82% pursue further education, 18% work in health industries with intentions of future education. Of the 82% pursuing further education, 90% were accepted into masters or doctoral programs, and 10% were at the certificate or accelerated bachelor's level (e.g., SBB, ABSN).

Over 95% of respondents (192 of 206) on the AY2122 institutional alumni survey indicated they were [satisfied with their decision to attend RU](#) and their [overall level of preparation](#) (93%). Most (89%; 193 of 216) [found their education either extremely or very valuable](#) in terms of their career development. Thirty-nine percent (80 of 204) [reported receiving an increased salary](#); 14% (28 of 203) [advanced in rank or position](#); and 42% (84 of 200) [assumed greater responsibilities](#). Ten percent (21 of 216) [hold an academic position](#). More than 27% of respondents (58 of 211) [are either currently enrolled in a higher degree program or plan to enroll within five years](#). Of the respondents, 33% (70 of 210) reported that they [engaged in community service](#); 7% (13 of 187) [assumed a leadership role in a major professional organization](#); and 7% (14 of 187) were [recognized or awarded for accomplishments in their field](#). The values from this [AY2122 alumni survey](#) are stable or increasing from [AY2021](#), seeing an improvement as we emerge from the COVID challenge.

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4.B - 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.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
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.

Argument

4.B.1

Most of Core Component 4.B.1 has not changed since our last assurance argument. Updates are provided where needed. All programs have clearly stated student learning goals that are published in the form of student learning objectives (SLOs) or competencies and listed on program-specific websites ([CHS](#), [CON](#), [GC](#), [RMC](#)) and in [Program Guidebooks](#). Course SLOs and learning assessments are stated on course syllabi ([sample attached](#)). The seven [institutional SLOs](#) represent the knowledge, behavior, and skills expected of all RU students. These institutional SLOs were developed through a collaborative process involving faculty from across RU and approved by the [University Curriculum Committee](#) and [University Council in 2017](#). Faculty have aligned program and institutional learning goals in [curriculum maps](#) and in their [Annual Assessment Reports](#) (AARs).

Faculty assess learning through a variety of direct, indirect, formative, and summative methods that include but are not limited to embedded course assignments, authentic assessments, examinations, portfolios, skill performance, self-reflection, and written and oral defense of scholarly projects such as capstones, theses, and dissertations. To analyze aggregate student performance, faculty also use rubrics and test analytics generated by assessment software such as ExamSoft. Some programs use criterion-referenced standardized tests such as the PRAXIS in the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology programs, HESITest in the CON, and USMLE Step exams in the RMC. Further, faculty use disaggregated results of certification and licensure examinations, when available, to determine the extent to which students have learned essential content.

The OIE included several items on 2018 and 2021 Educational Program Surveys as indirect measures of learning. On both surveys (2018; 2021), respondents gave favorable ratings (on a 4-point scale) on the extent to which coursework helped them [apply discipline-specific knowledge](#) (3.33, 3.4, respectively); [analyze issues specific to their discipline](#) (3.32, 3.37); [develop information literacy relevant to their discipline](#) (3.30, 3.36); [adapt to a changing healthcare/research environment](#) (3.27, 3.31); [incorporate evidence into practice](#) (3.41, 3.37); and [think analytically and critically](#) (3.32, 3.43). The OIE also administers program specific End-of-Program Surveys ([sample attached](#)) to obtain student views on the extent to which their programs helped them achieve program specific SLOs. Students give high ratings on these types of items.

4.B.2

Assessment of SLOs. Faculty assess achievement of learning outcomes at the program and course levels using various assessment techniques. Programs summarize their assessment procedures and findings on the AAR, which they submit to the UAC for review ([sample attached](#)). The AAR is a form that includes mapped program and institutional SLOs; a planned five-year assessment cycle, assessment methods and performance targets, analysis and summary of results; actions still in progress from prior assessments; new action plans; and process for disseminating findings. The UAC ([annual assessment reports](#) and [2020](#), [2021](#), [2022](#) minutes attached) develops a [schedule](#) for submission and review of program AARs.

The UAC uses a [rubric](#) to assess the quality of the AARs; learning measures; integrity of design, data collection, and analysis; plans for program improvement; and process for disseminating assessment findings. Program directors receive feedback from the committee's analysis ([sample attached](#)).

Co-Curriculars. RU offers a rich slate of co-curricular programs through its community engagement and service-learning opportunities and programs offered by the [Office of Student Life and Engagement](#) (SLE) and [Student Diversity and Community Engagement](#) (SDCE). Several examples of student co-curricular activities are presented in Criterion 2.B.2.

In the 2021 Survey on Educational Programs, students gave favorable ratings (on a 4-point scale) to the [item](#) "My program allows for enhanced educational opportunities such as community service, professional development, etc." (3.32). In the survey qualitative comments on service learning experience given by students revealed that the vast majority of participants believed these experiences reinforced the learning acquired in both classroom and clinical experiences and improved their clinical and interpersonal skills. Overall, students agreed that they gained a better understanding of healthcare needs in resource-poor environments and a greater awareness of their role as healthcare providers. They also expressed greater comfort in working with diverse populations and developed a better understanding of other healthcare disciplines.

The Library relies heavily on advisory committees. The [Student Library Advisory Committee](#) established this academic year is made up of student representatives from each of RU's four colleges and many of the programs. The committee meets regularly with the Library director, and committee members are provided with updates and encouraged to disseminate information and solicit feedback for the Library. The committee provided feedback about the specific types of chairs they would like and requested powered tables and electricity throughout the space for the current library renovations.

RUSH Wellness has offered 36 psycho-educational workshops since 2020, presenting on a variety of topics ranging from ergonomics, to financial well-being, to stress mitigation and resilience. These virtual workshops are offered twice per month at lunch and evening time and are recorded and saved onto an online library. Workshops topics are selected by students from a menu of options. Normally 50 to 150 participants join these workshops. Ninety-nine percent of anonymous survey respondents would recommend these workshops to their colleagues and have previously shared feedback like "The entire presentation was so informative and beneficial." or "Fantastic topics." In addition, RUSH Wellness has provided over 50 talks on wellness-related topics to student groups and programs by request. Of the anonymous survey respondents, 94% would recommend these talks to their colleagues and 93% attested that they learned helpful tools, information, or resources from those talks.

Pre- and post-ratings given by students who participated in the [Diversity & Inclusion Certificate](#) increased markedly on several items related to unconscious bias and community style. From 2018-2023, IPE 502: Interprofessional Patient Centered Teams has taught over 3,500 first-year students

how to work in interprofessional teams and effectively collaborate with each other and with adults from the community. The objectives are based on the students' attainment of the IPEC domains (roles and responsibilities, interprofessional communication, teams and teamwork, and ethics and values). Faculty engage in formative assessment by providing feedback to student teams on weekly team discussions and after viewing five synchronous meetings (three of which include telehealth sessions conducted with community health mentors and adult volunteers living with one or more chronic conditions).

As for summative assessment, students complete Interprofessional Collaborative Care Assessment survey as a [pre-](#) and [post-survey](#) of the course. Faculty evaluate student teams' growth in telehealth competencies using the Interprofessional Process of Care survey after each telehealth session. Upon completion of IPE 502, students evaluate if learning objectives were met, and they complete knowledge checks and didactic content quizzes throughout the course. Survey ratings on the [item](#) "There are adequate opportunities for interprofessional learning experiences." (3.13) indicated a slight increase in team-based learning experiences after integrating interprofessional education (IPE) across academic programs. Students from non-clinical programs provided feedback about one of the IPE learning activities, stating that it was too clinical-specific. One of the students offered possible ways to make the activity more inclusive. IPE faculty closely worked with her to develop an evolving case study in which clinical and non-clinical students used their future role and responsibilities to treat the case study patient with their team. The original activity was replaced with this evolving case study.

The [Office of Student Financial Aid](#) uses student feedback from different student feedback surveys to identify improvements in financial literacy programming. Each financial literacy programming opportunity has a post-session, optional feedback survey to obtain participant feedback. As a result of this feedback, the OSFA partnered with RUSH Wellness to offer a presentation focused on financial wellness through the Wellness series. Attendance at this presentation increased from 50 attendees in 2021 to 75 attendees in 2022. Additional feedback from students focuses on programming focused on specific financial topics. Segmented topical presentations have been developed and offered to students. Each session has a post-session, optional feedback survey to identify areas of additional improvements in the session content or new areas to develop programming.

RU uses data from students, programs, published research, and trends in educational programs and practice to inform decisions on how best to improve student learning. For example, in 2019, the [RU Center for Academic Excellence](#) (CAE) was established to provide key academic support services such as tutoring, writing skills, test-taking strategies, statistical assistance, note-taking strategies, and time management. The attached [CAE report](#) summarizes the Center's activity since its inauguration. Results of the 2021 Survey on Educational Programs revealed a five percent increase of the respondents who [felt they were adequately prepared for scholarly writing](#). The CAE continues to provide more coordinated, centralized academic support to improve student learning.

Individual programs also use assessment data to inform decisions about program improvements. For example:

- **Biotechnology MS program:** Students in the program had difficulty mastering the content of a two-semester, very detail-oriented pharmacology/ physiology course. In response, faculty aligned the pharmacology course content with the organ-based tissue biology course, which resulted in balancing the content of the two courses and easing the comprehension of material.
- **Integrated Biomedical Sciences program (MS and PhD):** The program was revised for several reasons. The newly designed set of core courses provided students a formal venue for

peer-to-peer scholarly discourse, which was lacking in the prior configuration of the curriculum. Further, performing translational research requires interdisciplinary knowledge of disease, including basic sciences and clinical considerations, which needs to be applied in an integrated fashion. Postdoctoral positions require more complex experiences than those provided by the prior discipline-based programs.

- **Nursing DNP program:** Students struggled to apply project planning, implementation, and evaluation without learning content first. In a nursing didactic course, students used their own DNP project focus to complete the assignments that were submitted to the course faculty rather than to their advisors. In response to the student feedback, the DNP Curriculum Taskforce developed two didactic courses (NSG 608/610), DNP practica and nursing seminar courses that were first taught in Fall 2018. Review of students' qualitative comments on evaluations for NSG 610 in Summer 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021, indicated that a curricular change was needed. Adverse consequences on student learning and faculty workload in Fall 2022 prompted a change in course sequencing, flipping the first didactic course in the sequence to NSG 610 and moving the first project practicum course to the second term. Evaluative data on the results of the change will not be available until after the end of the Spring 2023 term.
- **Health Sciences, BS:** During formative assessments, students indicated that having a core faculty member as their advisor was an issue when they were struggling in a class. As a result, although core faculty remain the academic advisor, an advisor was hired to work with students around personal, learning, and other issues. In addition, surveys were conducted after each seminar, at the end of the term, and post-graduation regarding students' implementation of strategies acquired through the voluntary professional development seminars. Based on student response, participation in at least 70% of the professional development seminars became a program requirement.
- **Doctor of Medicine, MD:** The RMC continues to enhance the integrated curriculum and established an assistant dean of Inclusive Excellence, Equity, and Learning position to facilitate dialogues that promote open and respectful dialogue between students, trainees, staff, and faculty. Additionally, the assistant dean is creating a faculty development series on how faculty (i.e., basic science, clinical, and role) can create curricular content that is inclusive and bias-free.

4.B.3

University Assessment Committee (UAC) self-assessment. The UAC continuously evaluates its own procedures for improving learning assessments and AARs. Assessment practices and responsiveness of programs to UAC requests have steadily improved, as has the focus on student vs. program outcomes, and the alignment between assessments and SLOs.

Since the last assurance argument, UAC reviewed assessment processes, templates, timetables, and rubrics, and made revisions as needed. Two online sessions were presented to program directors and interested faculty for the student learning assessment and program review processes. These sessions were recorded and are available as resources. A [webpage](#) specific to the University Assessment Committee is now available with all needed forms and resources. The student learning assessment reports and program reviews were transitioned to an electronic process.

Processes used to assess learning reflect good assessment practices. Faculty use rubrics along with direct and indirect, formative and summative, normative, and criterion-referenced assessments to evaluate the extent to which students learn what is expected of them. Faculty align SLOs with

assessments through curriculum mapping, inform students of the learning that needs to occur and the assessments that are made, and examine trends in performance relative to the SLOs. In the 2018 and 2021 Educational Program Survey students gave favorable ratings (on a 4-point scale) to the item “[Faculty communicate course expectations through syllabi.](#)” (3.39, 3.40, respectively); and students indicated they [understood what they need to learn to be successful in the program](#) (3.19. 3.24), [how they need to demonstrate their learning](#) (3.13, 3.21), and [how learning is evaluated and graded](#) (3.19. 3.25).

Faculty participates substantially in the development of assessment measures and the analysis of learning outcomes and participates on curriculum/evaluation and assessment committees. Staff involved in co-curricular programming administer surveys and assessments to determine program impact. The instructional design staff from the [Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation](#) (CTEI) assists faculty with curriculum and assessment alignment. Staff from the [Office of Faculty Affairs](#) also provide programming to support assessments practices.

RU supports faculty in their assessment efforts by funding attendance at the HLC-sponsored Assessment Training, engaging outside consultants, and sponsoring the joint [UAC/UCC retreat](#) on assessment.

While assessments methodologies used by faculty are appropriate for determining that students meet learning expectations, the UAC recognizes opportunities for continued improvements in this area and has recommended that RU participate in the HLC Assessment Academy. RU leaders accepted the recommendation and incorporated participation in the Academy into the budget process. Rush University was invited to participate in the four-year HLC Assessment Academy Fall 2019-2023. The goals were to establish greater alignment between institutional student learning outcomes and programmatic assessments, foster increased participation in the assessment process by program faculty, review the established assessment practices, and elevate the SLO to the greater university community. Several key actions were taken to address these goals, including a survey of [program directors](#) to establish an inventory of current assessment practices; [presentation](#) to the BOG Assessment and Quality Subcommittee on RU assessment practices; [faculty survey](#) of knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward assessment practices using the Faculty Self-Reported Assessment Survey; and [review of FRAS survey results](#) to identify gaps. An [Assessment Bootcamp](#) consisting of five workshops was developed to address gaps. The five sessions were presented virtually and recorded in Fall 2022 and Spring 2023, with faculty to be resurveyed after completion. University SLOs were redistributed through the Rush University News and also on the video monitors on campus.

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4.C - 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.

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.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
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.)

Argument

4.C.1

RU offers primarily graduate and professional-level programs along with three upper division baccalaureate programs. Students' success in these programs is contingent not only on their academic performance, but also on their ability to perform safely and competently in clinical and laboratory areas.

RU monitors and tracks persistence and completion rates. For several of the programs, minimum persistence and completion targets are prescribed by specialty accreditation bodies, and RU programs exceed these levels. Student attrition follows industry standards; RU establishes cohorts at official census captures and tracks all cohorts the same number of years going forward. Over the past five years, overall attrition by cohort has remained stable at approximately 10%.

4.C.2/4.C.4

Persistence, retention, and completion data are obtained from enrollment and official census data and tracked by the OIE. Data are reported on the [OIE website](#) and in the [RU Annual Report](#) that is distributed to RU leaders and the BOG.

Retention is calculated as the first academic year to second Fall for newly enrolled students, excluding students who take a leave of absence during this period. A student is retained if they are still enrolled in the second Fall term or if they have completed their degree by then. The five-year average retention across programs is baccalaureate 94%, masters 96%, professional doctorate 97%, and research doctorate 98%.

OIE modified how persistence, graduation, and attrition rates are calculated starting with the Fall 2022 reporting cycle. Prior to that cycle, these rates were based on compiling five academic years of

data as of the same Fall term. As such, each AY cohort was at a different stage of their program in terms of the number of years completed.

The methodology was revised to be consistent with industry standards for reporting persistence and graduation rates. The new methodology now establishes cohorts at official census captures and tracks all cohorts the same number of years going forward. Thus, each cohort is at the same stage of their program in terms of number of years completed.

Comparing AY2016-2017 and AY2017-2018 cohorts, overall five-year withdrawal/attrition rates have remained fairly stable. Overall attrition improved from 11% for AY2016-2017 cohort to 10% for AY2017-2018 cohort. **Table 4.1** compares fifth-year completion and withdrawal data for AY2016-2017 and AY2017-2018 cohorts.

Degree Program	AY Cohort	Percent Completed	Percent Still Enrolled	Percent Attrition	Avg, Years to Complete
Baccalaureate	AY2016-2017	75%	4%	21%	2.13
	AY2017-2018	86%	0%	14%	2.07
Masters	AY2016-2017	89%	0%	11%	1.83
	AY2017-2018	92%	0%	8%	1.87
Professional Doctorate	AY2016-2017	89%	2%	9%	3.54
	AY2017-2018	88%	2%	10%	3.42
Research Doctorate	AY2016-2017	25%	71%	4%	4.54
	AY2017-2018	39%	42%	19%	4.62
Certificate	AY2016-2017	85%	0%	15%	1.38
	AY2017-2018	79%	0%	21%	1.26
Total Rush University	AY2016-2017	86%	3%	11%	
	AY2017-2018	88%	2%	10%	

Persistence rate is calculated as Percent Completed plus Percent Still Enrolled. Baccalaureate had the largest persistence rate increase (79% to 86%), followed by Masters (89% to 92%) and then Professional Doctorate (91% to 92%). Research Doctorate persistence rate dropped from 96% to 81% with an attrition of 19% (5 out of 26 students). Of note, due to small cohort numbers in the PhD programs, attrition percentages appear unusually high when even one student leaves the program. Of the three PhD programs two (the Nursing and IBS programs) lost one student and the Health Sciences program lost 3 students (21% attrition for that program). According to the Association of Doctoral Programs in Health Sciences the national attrition rate for Health Sciences PhD programs is between 20% and 30%.

Relevant, also, is the time to completion. In compliance with the federal definition used by IPEDS, successful completion of the educational program is defined as finishing within 150% of the published length of the program. Depending on the program, this time might be as little as nine months to as long as six years. Given the cohort nature and curriculum plans of our programs it is rare that students exceed the published program length, let alone the 150% extension. Students who delay or extend completion dates do so because of leaves of absences taken while enrolled, part-time status, or moving into a later cohort.

4.C.3

The majority of students who discontinue or interrupt their professional education indicate personal and/or socio-economic reasons. RU makes a consistent and concerted effort to listen to students through focus groups, surveys, and organizational meetings to determine the types of support services needed, as well as providing early intervention to students at risk of academic difficulties.

For those students experiencing personal challenges, RU's [Division of Student Affairs](#) provides services through the Wellness Center. The Center offers free, confidential, and supportive counseling including but not limited to the following areas: depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, relationship issues, eating disorders, binge drinking, etc. Additionally, the [Rush Wellness Assistance Program](#) is a comprehensive resource for all RU students and their families. The program serves the RU community through offerings in three areas:

- **Work:** Professional and personal development through “Skillbuilders”: Free 30–45-minute online tutorials that address numerous topics including emotional wellbeing, achieving personal goals, managing stress, time management, the power of resilience, and much more.
- **Life:** 24/7 confidential, short-term counseling services, including videoconferencing available on mobile devices.
- **Home:** Connecting RU community members to pre-screened services for child and elder care, legal support, and financial planning.

The Rush Wellness Assistance Program addresses several important university-specific needs including:

- **After-Hours Counseling:** This program provides 24/7, mobile-accessible videoconferencing counseling support.
- **Distance Learner Support:** This program is available to all members of our community, including distance learners who are unable to access the [Center for Clinical Wellness](#).

A major initiative undertaken by RU to support student academic success is the creation of the [Center for Academic Excellence](#) (CAE). CAE provides key [academic support services](#) such as tutoring,

writing skills, test-taking strategies, statistical assistance, note-taking strategies, and time management.

Although overall RU attrition remains low, disaggregation of attrition data reveals differential rates for URM and non-URM student groups, 13% and 9%, respectively. Given that one of RU's goals is to increase diversity in its student population, RU is currently in the search process for its inaugural University Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer (CDEIO). The Office of the CDEIO will centralize efforts aimed at nurturing and supporting student success.

Further, RU received an influx of over \$4.4 million in scholarship support aimed at reducing the financial burden that contributes to student attrition in the URM group. Students who receive these scholarships are also assigned a mentor for academic support.

Over the last five years, RU has made significant inroads and investment in its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), which are central to our mission. Through intentional admission processes (Holistic Admission) to offering outstanding community service opportunities, RU strives to educate a diverse health care workforce that looks like the populations they will serve. Consequently, we have garnered several awards in this area. Rush University's BS in Health Sciences programs was honored as a 2022 finalist in the baccalaureate category of the [Excelencia in Education](#) recognition; this honor celebrates programs that accelerate success for Latine students. For the second consecutive year, RU received the [Diversity \(HEED\) Award](#) from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education. The College of Nursing created an associate deanship for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and CHS established a directorship of DEI. Both the RCM and the GC have established DEI leaderships as well.

In addition to institutional initiatives, colleges and programs have processes for early recognition of students at risk and strategies to optimize their success. For example, in the CON, program leaders for the MSN initiated "[Building Optimal Opportunities for Successful Transition](#)" (BOOST). The BOOST program offers to all students' supplemental review sessions and targeted peer tutoring, as well as proactive academic advising. Students are identified through a scoring system using criteria listed by the Health Resources and Services Administration, prerequisite GPA, and science GPA. These students are sent regular correspondence reminding them of the available supplemental programming as well as encouraging the student to utilize the additional resources available in the university, such as the [Center for Academic Excellence](#) and the reference librarian. The BOOST program was started in academic year 2018-2019 continues to evolve each year, growing larger and providing more intentional support. Since the inception of the BOOST program, the results have been very positive. The attrition average prior to BOOST was 8.6%. For the following three academic years after the initiation of the BOOST program, attrition increased to 16% for AY2018-2019, and then decreased to 8.5% and 7.6% for the AY2019-2020 and AY2020-2021 years, respectively.

The CHS also conducts early testing of its BS in Health Sciences students and introduces early intervention through tutoring, study modules, and faculty mentoring. The undergraduate programs provide early educational intervention through tutoring, seminars on academic skills, study modules, and faculty mentoring. Any student who scores less than 70% on a test or assignment is asked to meet with an advisor to develop strategies for success. Most CHS graduate programs provide some subject matter tutoring.

The Graduate College monitors student progression through milestone tracking, cohort meetings, and required thesis/ dissertation committee meetings for the Integrated Biomedical Sciences and Clinical Research Programs. Students in the Biotechnology program are monitored by the program

director in regular one-to-one meetings. Any concerns regarding at-risk students are brought to the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) by the program director, faculty, or course directors.

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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.

Summary

RU is committed to providing quality programs, as evidenced by multiple measures. These include external review by a specialty accreditation body or expert panel and internally by UAC program review procedures. Deans regularly communicate with program directors about the successes and challenges in their programs and this information is delivered to the UEMC and BOG to inform strategy and change, as necessary.

Academic credit attained by students from other institutions or previous experience is evaluated by faculty and program directors for equivalence to RU academic credit according to existing policy and procedures. RU faculty ensure that students have the educational background necessary to be successful in their courses by setting admission requirements and course prerequisites. Course rigor and SLOs are appropriate to the course level and set and assessed by the faculty. Only students enrolled in RU have access to learning materials.

Most programs offered at RU have specialty accreditation and all are fully accredited in good standing. Both externally accredited and non-accredited programs are regularly reviewed by the UAC. The success of RU graduates is evaluated routinely at the program and institutional levels and demonstrates that RU is meeting its mission of providing outstanding health sciences education: 100% of graduates of many of the RU programs pass certification/licensure examinations on their first attempt; 85% of graduates seeking employment are employed within three to six months of graduation; greater than 90% of MS in IBS graduates enter professional or doctoral degree programs or are employed in research careers; greater than 85% of PhD students remain in research careers or in education; and 100% of RMC graduates were matched to residency programs in 2022.

Student learning objectives are established and assessed at the institutional and program levels. Students state that they know what they are supposed to learn, how to demonstrate their learning, and how their learning is evaluated and graded. The focus of the co-curricular programs is to enhance the mission of RU with regards to community engagement and diversity, equity and inclusion, and students consistently rate these activities highly and state that they reinforced their classroom learning.

The UAC collects and provides feedback on programs' annual assessment reports and assists programs in completing these reports through faculty development training (during the two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, program assessment continued but some of the centralized support function was provided less consistently due to staffing and/or isolation requirements). All these services have been fully reconstituted. Similarly, on an annual basis, select programs submit a comprehensive program review to UAC who evaluates the program and provides feedback through action items prior to a program's next specialty accreditation visit, if applicable. RU's institutional culture of assessment has led to changes, such as those related to the Center for Academic Excellence.

RU promotes student retention with increased scholarship monies, additional counselors in the Counseling Center, and creation of the Center for Academic Excellence.

Sources

There are no sources.

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.

5.A - 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.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
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.

Argument

5.A.1/5.A.3

The governance and management structure of Rush University (RU) is described here. Mr. Robert Wislow chairs the 16-member Board of Governors (BOG). Larry Goodman, MD, who served as CEO for Rush University System for Health (RUSH) and Rush University president from 2002-2019, is the interim university president of RU and chief academic officer for RUSH. A search for a permanent president is currently underway. Omar Lateef, DO, is the CEO of RUSH. Christine Kennedy, PhD, RN, FAAN, is the dean of the College of Nursing and interim provost of RU. Andrew Bean, PhD, is the dean of the Graduate College. Cynthia Brincat, MD, PhD, is the acting dean of Rush Medical College (RMC), and Charlotte Royeen, PhD, is the dean of the College of Health Sciences. Once a permanent president is installed a search for provost and RMC dean will commence.

The RU president serves as CEO of the university. The president is appointed by and serves at the discretion of the BOG. In consultation with the CEO of Rush University Medical Center (RUMC), the BOG is empowered to appoint, evaluate, and terminate the president. The president is the chief academic officer of RUSH and oversees research and the deans on strategic matters, while the provost is the university CAO and oversees the deans on operational affairs. The president interprets and carries out BOG policies. The provost oversees the academic affairs operations of RU and oversees the offices of academic, student, and faculty affairs. The president and provost partner in overseeing the academic affairs of the university. The chief financial and business officer oversees university finances. The deans are the chief administrative and academic officers of their respective colleges. The president and provost convene the University Executive Management Committee (UEMC) that includes key university administrators. The topics that are discussed at these [meetings](#) include budget, management issues, and strategy, among others. In addition to meeting with the UEMC, the

president meets with the deans regularly to address college plans and needs, and the provost meets with the vice provosts to address university-specific operational needs. Both groups meet together as UEMC once a semester and more frequently as needed.

The BOG is responsible for the strategic and operational integrity of RU, as outlined in the [Amended and Restated Charter](#). Among its responsibilities, the BOG “ensure the University offers quality education and research programs with the expectation that faculty have primary responsibility for student learning and shall actively participate in developing academic policies.” Members of the BOG are expected to be knowledgeable about the University, provide oversight of the fiscal and academic policies and practices of the university, and meet its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

The Rush University Rules for Governance address matters concerning the administration, organization, powers, and responsibilities of the officers, faculty, and students of each college. All colleges have a senior representative body that advises the dean on issues pertaining to the college, organizes standing committees, and establishes committee charges and delineated procedures for election or appointment of members of college and university standing committees. The senior representative body develops governance policies and procedures for their college that are consistent with the Rules for Governance. Once the governance policies and procedures for each college have been developed, they are submitted for review and approval by the University Council, provost, president, and the BOG. Students serve on college and university committees consistent with the Rules for Governance.

The [University Council](#), described in the Rules for Governance, is the senior representative body of the university. The council has representation from faculty, students, staff, and leadership, and advises the president, provost, and deans on areas including

- the organization, function, and coordination of educational and research resources, services, and activities across the various units of the university;
- the adequacy of university facilities and infrastructure;
- the effectiveness of university support services, e.g., student services, technology and information services;
- the faculty grievance process; and
- amendments to the Rules for Governance.

Specific [faculty responsibilities](#) are outlined in the Rules for Governance and include

- establishing requirements and policies for the educational and research programs of each college;
- participating substantially in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum;
- establishing expectations of students and program outcomes;
- creating policies for faculty appointments and promotions; and
- overseeing student life as it relates to the educational process.

During the meetings of the council in 2021, faculty and leadership noted that faculty and staff did not have their own representative councils. As a result, a University Faculty Council (UFC) and a separate University Staff Council (USC) were formed. Together with the already established University Student Senate, all university constituents have their own representative bodies that meet regularly with the president and university leadership. The university council continues to meet annually to address university-wide matters. During the height of the pandemic the university council

became the University Command Center, to address the immediate needs of the university to cope with the changes brought by the pandemic. The university's constituent bodies have opportunity to work together on university matters through several university committees, as described next. The UFC has two standing committees: the [University Curriculum Committee](#) (UCC), and the [University Assessment Committee](#) (UAC). The UCC advocates to the UFC for policies related to curricular and programmatic issues that impact the University. The UAC establishes policies related to learning assessment and program reviews. The [University Policy and Procedures Committee](#) (P&P) is a university-wide committee that approves the administrative, operational, and academic policies of the university. The UCC, UAC, and P&P committees have faculty, student, and staff representatives from across the university, while the UFC is mainly comprised of faculty. University leadership is frequently invited to the UFC meetings to provide updates, solicit faculty feedback, and address issues brought by the faculty.

5.A.2

Rush University uses multiple data sources to evaluate its educational programs, services, and operations. These sources include surveys, focus groups, town hall meetings, committee reports, and analysis of outcomes data. Students complete one of three surveys annually, including satisfaction with the [university services](#), [educational experience](#), and [university climate](#). Survey results are presented to the relevant university constituents to explore improvements and accomplishments. For example, during academic year 2019-2020, the Office of Student Disabilities Services was renamed to the [Office of Student Accessibility Services](#), based on recommendations from students and other university stakeholders. In addition, Student Accessibility Services redesigned and expanded its space in Summer 2019, to meet the increasing numbers of students requiring accessibility services. As a result, the accommodated testing space increased from four to 18 testing stations. The space was upgraded with adaptive hardware and software equipment, a private testing room, and a testing coordinator and proctor's station. After gathering student feedback from surveys and evaluations, the offices of Student Life and Engagement and the Registrar reimaged the student orientation experience by implementing a hybrid (online and in-person) format. The in-person [New Student Onboarding Resource Fair](#) began in Fall of 2022; positive results included an increase in welcoming experiences for new students and more engagement with other incoming students, and with university resources and services. In addition to the in-person resource fair, an [Onboarding Resource Guide](#) was developed in 2021 to provide an alternative and flexible modality for students to access important university and student services remotely at their own pace.

Student feedback for the [student services survey in 2019](#) indicated a need for more study space in the Library. As a result, an extensive renovation to the Library commenced in early 2020, removing book stacks and allowing additional study space. In addition, three large, active learning spaces opened in the fall of 2019. A subsequent [survey in 2021](#) showed improved student satisfaction with group and individual study space, from 51% and 56% to 78% and 80%, respectively. Additional renovations in the Library were halted as a result of the pandemic. Work has now been resumed and is scheduled for completion in June 2023.

Faculty and staff are surveyed annually. When the university considered a new learning management system (LMS) the faculty was surveyed about their experience with the then-LMS and what they wanted to see in a new system. The results of the survey led the university to establish an LMS working group of faculty from the four colleges as well as students and staff. The faculty was surveyed regarding the options of systems they wanted to test. The faculty selected two systems and were provided the opportunity to test both. After testing both systems, the faculty was surveyed again

and unanimously chose Canvas. The same working group led the implementation and migration of all online courses to the new system. The close collaboration between faculty, RU Information Systems (IS), students, and staff resulted in a smooth migration to the Canvas system that was completed in the summer of 2022. The [Office of Institutional Effectiveness](#) (OIE) provides annual reports about enrollment, retention, graduation, and employment.

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5.B - 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.

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Argument

5.B.1

Senior medical center leadership—the university president and provost—provide executive oversight to the RU Chief Financial Business Officer (CFBO) and staff, who develop budget guidelines, forecast operating revenues, and create an operating budget for the university and its four colleges. The provost, vice-provosts, deans, and CFBO further refine budgetary allocations for their respective areas, and reconcile university-wide annual resource needs after collaboration with senior RUMC financial leaders and the [BOG Finance Subcommittee](#). The full BOG reviews and approves the university budget in the spring of each year. Furthermore, the BOG in concert with RUMC annually determine the capital budget for the university, a process that is driven by the missions of the RU and the Medical Center.

The annual process for review and approval of the proposed university budget is clear and follows a consistent timeline that supports university operations. Deans, department chairs, and program directors align budget requests with the strategic operating priorities of each college. Senior leaders review proposed budgets for the upcoming fiscal year and request further information as needed.

Fiscal performance is monitored monthly for each accounting unit in the University, through review of profit and loss statements by the managers and college leadership. The BOG Finance Subcommittee meets throughout the year to review the ongoing financial performance of the university. Monitoring of fiscal data for the university and its research enterprise helps to ensure appropriate and ongoing oversight of resource allocations for all education and research programs.

For FY23, Rush University is projecting to exceed its budgetary targets and additionally make significant investments in its people and programs. Budget planning for FY24 has been completed and includes historic investments in our people and our mission.

Human resources. The university has the faculty and staff needed to operate programs and student services. In the [IPEDS HR Survey](#) (2022), the University includes 1,082 employed and volunteer faculty, and 1,441 staff members who support the academic and non-academic operations of the University. The [University Rules for Governance](#), along with the governance policies for each college, delineate faculty qualifications and responsibilities. External search firms may be engaged to

conduct searches for qualified administrative applicants. Deans, chairs, and program directors ensure there are sufficient faculty and staff members to meet or exceed specialty accreditation requirements and deliver curricula consistent with the mission and goals of the university. Job descriptions for staff positions are determined by the hiring manager or administrator in consultation with the Human Resources Business Partner, providing linkage between Human Resources and university leadership. A [Shared Services Agreement](#) delineates the services shared by the university and the Medical Center, including Human Resources, the Office of Legal Affairs, and Payroll.

Physical infrastructure. The university's four colleges are housed in the Armour Academic Center (AAC). The AAC includes these resources:

- 26 classrooms and a collaborative learning hub;
- Rush University Medical Center (RUMC) Library;
- Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation (CTEI);
- McCormick Education and Technology Center (METC);
- a gross anatomy laboratory;
- learning laboratories;
- the university bookstore;
- a cafeteria;
- faculty and staff offices;
- student support services;
- conference rooms; and
- study spaces

These educational spaces occupy some 137,000 square feet. The 20,000-square-foot [Rush Center for Clinical Skills and Simulation](#) is located in the adjacent Kellogg Pavilion of RUMC. The Medical Center encompasses 5,500,000 square feet and the campus is connected by walkways and tunnels so that students, faculty, and staff can transit from clinical to academic areas without going outdoors, especially in extreme weather conditions.

The [Office of the Registrar](#) ensures equitable access to classrooms, conference rooms, and simulation center resources across the colleges. A proprietary software platform, AdAstra®, facilitates scheduling requests for classrooms, conference, and simulation center resources. Fitness and testing centers are in nearby buildings. Research laboratories and support spaces account for 214,301 square feet. Student survey data show that students are satisfied with classrooms and facilities. The RUMC has 660 licensed beds and provides tertiary-level clinical services across medical specialties. The Rush System includes Rush Oak Park Hospital, Rush Copley Medical Center, two outpatient surgery centers, and numerous ambulatory care facilities that provide a wide array of clinical experiences for RU students and trainees.

Rush University houses nine multidisciplinary, laboratory-based classrooms equipped with microscopes and sinks, and six mock examination rooms that are also equipped with sinks and hospital beds, examination tables with overhead lighting, and various types of clinical practice equipment. There are four skills validation rooms that include sinks, hospital beds, and overhead examination lighting. Students have access to teaching mannequins, models and a variety of specialized equipment for clinical education. Rooms are divided into practice and testing areas that allow faculty to work with groups of up to eight students at a time.

During the two years of the height of the pandemic facilities improvements were halted. Since the 2018 assurance argument, the following facilities improvements were completed or are in process:

- expansion of the simulation lab by 1000 square feet to accommodate a dedicated skull- base lab;
- build-out of a state-of-the-art collaborative learning center on the fourth and fifth floor of the academic building;
- renovation and upgrade of 10 multidisciplinary labs;
- replacement of the entire university roof (90% complete);
- facility-wide LED lighting upgrade (in process);
- upgrade of all classrooms to ADA compliance; and
- opening of Starbucks in the main academic building to provide additional social gathering place for students, faculty, and staff.

Technological infrastructure. The university has technological resources to support its programs, students, and faculty. There are ongoing processes to assess, evaluate, and update technological resources as needed. [Information Services](#) (IS) provides application software and technology support for university faculty, students, and staff. Classrooms are equipped with computers, whiteboards, and audiovisual capabilities. IS supports online education, which RU has provided for over 20 years. Faculty offices have printers and computers with capabilities that allow faculty to work remotely. The university has WiFi access throughout the institution. IS resources are dedicated to support the main university applications, including student information and learning management systems. Designated IS staff members support all University technology needs including classroom audio/visual resources, desktop computers, and printers. A walk-up IS service window in the university is staffed Monday through Friday to help with technical requests and technology support. There are eight total resources dedicated to the support of all university applications/systems utilized by faculty, students, and staff, as well as an additional two individuals responsible for their oversight. An additional eight resources are responsible for the support of all university end user and A/V devices, with an additional person responsible for their oversight.

IS processes to ensure that its services are meeting university needs include

- monthly meetings with RU operational leaders to review the status of all IS efforts;
- obtaining evaluation feedback from students and faculty on IS resources and services through surveys and open forum discussion; and
- weekly or bi-weekly meetings with RU operational leaders to review pain points and seek resolution (added since 2018)

IS initiatives completed over the past five years to improve technical services include

- technology upgrades, including implementation of Canvas as the learning management system (LMS);
- upgrades of instructional technology in classrooms, including multiple artificial intelligence (AI) cameras, microphones, touch screens, assistant learning, and integrated Zoom meeting functionality. Four A/V technicians support this equipment;
- integration of enrollment and course data from Datatel Colleague to the Canvas LMS.
- access to 24/7/365 functional Canvas support;
- adding a Student Planning feature to the Student Self-Service Application; and
- integrating and enabling all student photos within Datatel Colleague.

Since the 2018 assurance argument IS completed the following additional initiatives:

- automated push of enrollment and course data from Colleague SIS to the Canvas LMS;

- automated push of student grades from Canvas LMS to Colleague SIS;
- automation of student account provisioning, with continual refinements to the process;
- ongoing updates and customizations to Entrada LMS based on regular user feedback;
- continual review, refinement, and updates to upgrade/testing processes for Colleague SIS;
- development of a “classroom status dashboard” to notify faculty of classrooms with equipment issues; and
- development of a mobile app for students with links to important sites.

[The Rush Center for Clinical Skills and Simulation](#) (RCCSS) occupies 20,000 square feet of space, including four debriefing/conference rooms, three high-fidelity simulation procedure rooms, and 12 examination rooms for training programs with standardized patients. Additional simulation space is available for task training, debriefing, and lectures. The Learning Space® audio-visual data capture system includes numerous cameras with pan/tilt/zoom capability and audio kits that provide live transmission, plus digital recordings of simulation scenarios that can be annotated for grading or research purposes. In 2022, RCCSS added a wet lab that provides training to residents and fellows across multiple medical specialties.

5.B.2

Rush University is the educational enterprise of RUMC, which operates under a State of Illinois charter as a 501(c) (3) private, not-for-profit, upper division health professions institution. All tuition revenue and philanthropic funds dedicated to education are retained by the university. The BOG is responsible for maintaining oversight for all university activities including financial policies and practices, and allocation of resources.

The strategic planning, resource allocation, and implementation process is a continual improvement cycle of plan-do-study-act. This includes assessment of the impact of the budget for the current fiscal year. To plan for the upcoming fiscal year, each college is asked to provide recommendations for strategic actions that would advance the goals of the university. The University Executive Management Committee, which includes senior university administrators, identifies fiscal priorities for the upcoming academic years that are reviewed and ultimately approved by the BOG.

5.B.3

Fiscal resources. The [BOG Finance Subcommittee Report](#) and RU’s financial performance over the past three years demonstrate the continuing financial stability of the university (improved operating margins for three consecutive years). The financial strength of RU is enhanced by its consistent enrollment, strong reserves of philanthropic resources, and increased research funding.

The projected university revenue for FY23 is \$107.23 million. The primary revenue source is tuition (89%) which typically increases by approximately 2%-3% annually, determined after analysis of market conditions and internal factors such as debt load of the students (indebtedness for the medical school students has been materially reduced by a reduction in pricing since 2022). Additional revenue sources include Medicare “pass through” dollars (which have been consistent year over year, and are projected to increase by \$1.6 million in FY24) for services provided by some university students on the RU campus, College of Nursing Faculty Practice, and the Center for Innovative and Lifelong Learning (CILL). CILL provides an array of interprofessional continuing education learning opportunities developed by university faculty members and marketed to health care professionals through the university website, social media, and other targeted marketing strategies. Other revenue sources include a very significant endowment portfolio (above \$784 million).

University expenses consist primarily of labor costs, which comprise about 65% of operating expenses. Other expenses in recent years include those associated with the development of new programs (Doctor of Physical Therapy) and infrastructure enhancements (improvements to the Library Space, Cohn research building, and a full technology upgrade to all classrooms in 2022). Additional material, non-labor costs include stipends for Graduate College PhD students, tuition assistance to offset the cost of attendance in all colleges, diversity scholarships, and electronic media in the library.

Annual capital investments are made for both education and research in the categories of technology, renovations and space projects, faculty recruitment, and equipment. **See Table 5.1.** FY24 capital budget is currently \$3.4 M.

Table 5.1. Summary of expenditures (in millions).			
Education/Research	FY20	FY21	FY22
Total Education/Research	8.7	1.2	2.5

Examples of university capital projects include

- infrastructure upgrades for the Armour Academic Center (new roof in 2023) and Cohn Research Building;
- technology upgrades and improvements, including the transition of learning management systems from Blackboard to Canvas and a full upgrade to all classrooms to ensure distance learning is state-of-the-art;
- equipment replacements for College of Health Sciences programs;
- machinery and lab buildouts for our research faculty; and
- library improvements.

Research budget. The FY23 projected revenue for research activity is \$184.57 million; sources include federal \$93.89 million, foundations \$46.47 million, industry \$12.32 million, philanthropy \$25.45 million, other \$6.44 million, and medical center funds flow \$40.31 million. Rush University returns 50% of all indirect revenue to the individual principal investigator.

Rush University has experienced material growth in awards from 2018-2022, and is projected to finish close to this pace for 2023. This trendline is beginning to achieve a new level of annual awards for RU, and has led to financial stability for research (research is currently break-even on a contribution margin basis). As of February, 2023, 81% of RU's over 1100 research FTE are fully funded via external funding (awards and philanthropy). This is a 4% increase from 2022 results (see [Rush University Financial Dashboard FY23](#) to date).

Reserves to support operational investments. Cash reserves are approximately 175 days of cash on hand (these reserves are at the RUMC level, which includes the university). In the event of a budget shortfall, the president has discretion over \$6.7 million in restricted funding that could be utilized, action plans for expenses management, and other philanthropic accounts for individual research labs (totaling \$72 million in surplus in 2023). Importantly, because Rush University is an integrated

component of Rush University Medical Center, it is supported by that nearly \$3 billion enterprise. Additionally, the university has access to endowments valued at over \$750 Million.

Philanthropic support. From FY18 through FY22, charitable funds received for university allocations totaled \$95.7 million from more than 20,000 gift transactions. A total of \$66.5 million was devoted to research and research infrastructure, and student scholarship aid; giving accounted for \$15.8 million; and \$13.3 million in gifts were made to other restricted purposes connected with the university, such as student programs and faculty development.

All gifts to the university are considered restricted, as the donor designates them for the use of the university and not to support the institution's general operating budget. Reduction of student debt is a key strategic priority, and philanthropy is a critical source of scholarship aid. Research is also a core priority, and philanthropy is an important source of seed and bridge funding for both investigators and students. Support of student programs, such as [Rush BMO Harris Institute for Health Equity](#), and cancer research, directly support the efforts of the university to increase access to health care in surrounding underserved communities and provide meaningful learning/ research opportunities for students.

In 2018, RUSH began a comprehensive philanthropic campaign with a goal of \$650 million. Earlier this year, after raising \$500M campaign to date, the board approved raising the campaign goal to \$750M. The majority of the campaign goals are in the areas of research, equity, education and workforce development.

The outcomes of charitable investment in university initiatives include the following:

- Advances in research that increase early detection of disease, improve treatment options, and enhance understanding of underlying disease processes in an array of clinical and population health categories.
- Approximately \$15.8 million in scholarship aid from private donors from FY18 through FY22, with approximately 30 percent of the student body receiving institutional grants and scholarships.
- Support for more than 2,000 students annually who participate in community service programs that enhance student learning and enrich the student experience. During this period, philanthropic support also established an endowment to help sustain these students service programs in perpetuity.
- Establishment of seven new endowed professorships between FY18 and FY22, including a directorship that supports the work of a national health equity expert, [Dr. John Rich](#), who leads the endowed Rush BMO Institute for Health Equity. This brings our total of endowed chairs and professors to 102.
- Establishment of the RUSH Wellness Center in 2020, which provides confidential counseling and wellness support to any university student or faculty or staff member, free of charge. A wellness pilot program, Advocating for Struggling Students, is funded with philanthropic support and has provided 18 university faculty with training to better support the mental health and well-being of students ([University Philanthropic Report.9.26.22](#)).

5.B.4

From recruitment to professional development activities, the university ensures that faculty and staff members are appropriately qualified to fulfill their job functions. Staff members who provide support services to students and faculty are supported in their professional development. Staff qualifications

are initially evaluated against relevant job descriptions and requirements, and continued quality of staff is ensured through an annual performance review process.

The Division of Student Affairs supports the ongoing [professional development of staff](#) to ensure that members are well qualified to perform their job functions and provide optimal support for students. Financial resources are allocated annually as a part of the budgetary process, to allow staff to maintain or join professional organizational memberships and attend developmental conferences. Student Affairs staff actively participates in professional organizations such as the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD).

The Rush University Staff Council was convened in 2019. Through this body, staff members participate in governance activities that impact their roles and responsibilities ([see USC meeting minutes](#)).

A Human Resources Business Partner collaborates with all university entities on issues ranging from creation of job descriptions to organizational structure for specific university units. Qualified applicants are scheduled for interviews with the hiring manager. References and academic transcripts are examined. Newly hired staff have a three-month probationary period, during which time the hiring manager determines the fit between the employee and their position. The [Shared Services Agreement](#) between RUMC and RU describes services that are shared by these entities.

Administrative leaders for each academic unit and support area determine the qualifications necessary for their staff. Job descriptions for staff positions are determined by the hiring manager in consultation with the Human Resources Business Partner.

RU and RUMC provide faculty and staff development through multiple services:

- The Enhancement Program provides 90% reimbursement for eligible non-degree classes, workshops, seminars, and conferences.
- The Rush University Internal Degree Program provides prepaid tuition for Rush University undergraduate and graduate programs (excluding medical school).
- The External Degree Program provides partial tuition reimbursement for employees pursuing a degree at an accredited college or university.
- The Internal Degree Program for Dependents reimburses spouses or dependents of full-time employees for up to nine credit hours per term at RU for at least six months after a dependent has obtained a graduate degree.
- Many departments and divisions in colleges have faculty development funds to offset costs for travel, lodging, and other professional development costs not covered by the Employee Enhancement Program.
- The [University Office of Faculty Affairs](#) supports faculty development by providing [mentoring programs](#) for research and teaching, along with sponsoring enhancement programs through the [Rush Teaching Academy](#). This office also gives recognition to faculty through [awards for excellence](#) in the areas of education, research, clinical service, community service, and mentoring. The [Center for Innovative and Lifelong Learning](#) (CILL) is an accredited provider of continuing education for health care professionals including physicians, physician assistants, nurses, social workers, physical therapists, physical therapy assistants, occupational therapists, respiratory therapists, and clinicians for psychology, nutrition, speech pathology, and audiology.

- RUMC [Library](#) staff members participate in the design, support, planning, and delivery of many educational activities; for example, online searches and bibliographic management programs as well as the use of PowerPoint, Excel, RefWorks, and other applications.
- [The Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation](#) (CTEI) provides faculty with opportunities to grow as educators and explore new technologies and innovative instructional ideas. CTEI offers the University [Online Teaching and Course Design](#) (OTCD) class, a fully online class that covers various topics from cognitive theories to the basics of quality online teaching, assessment techniques, using rubrics, using technology tools, and active learning.

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

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.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
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.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

5.C.1

All university planning processes align with its [mission](#). The University [Strategic Plan](#) encompasses initiatives that embrace new models of program delivery, the use of enhanced instructional technologies, and improved university facilities. This plan strengthens research endeavors, collaborative efforts, institutional climate, and diversity initiatives. The strategic goals and initiatives guide the development of capital and operating budgets.

The mission of Rush University is to champion a learning environment in health and biomedical sciences through collaboration, education, research, and equity for students, faculty, staff, and the communities served by the university. The university [vision](#) is to be a model for improving health through innovative research and transformative education in a culture of excellence and equality. The university Strategic Plan's framework comprises three interrelated pillars:

- **Learn:** *transform health sciences education to improve care and outcomes.*
- **Discover:** *advance science and knowledge to improve health.*
- **Thrive:** *nurture a sustainable, dynamic, diverse and inclusive university and community.*

The [Strategic Plan](#) aligns with the mission and vision of the university and guides business decisions. The university operates with an annual budget that is assembled in response to a regular assessment of opportunities and risks, financial targets, and our long term strategic goals. The specific elements of the Strategic Plan are used in each budget cycle to guide allocation of resources for strategic investments and establish priorities for operational improvements. Decisions regarding resource allocation must align with one of the three strategic pillars. **Table 5.2** shows the alignment between strategic pillars, strategic goals, and strategic tactics.

[Agendas](#) for BOG meetings are driven by the [Strategic Plan](#), so that BOG members observe both the planning and the results of strategic investments. Deans and their department chairs determine the

programmatic initiatives for each academic year. Leadership from each college, in consultation with the University Council and the provost, determines whether changes in degree or certificate offerings will be made. University planning is based on data gathered by senior leaders, deans, chairs, and program directors through environmental scanning and comparative market analyses. For example, the College of Health Sciences (CHS) developed a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program based on the market demand for physical therapists. The program is currently under review by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE).

Table 5.2. Alignment between Strategic Pillars, Strategic Goals, and Strategic Tactics

Strategic Initiative	Strategic Goals	Strategic Tactics
<p>Learn: <i>transform health sciences education to improve care and outcomes.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grow targeted programs based on our mission, community needs and market trends. 2. Transform health sciences education. 3. Respond to industry informed workforce demands. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Support the creation of comprehensive strategic plans for each college. B. Enhance inter-college collaboration. C. Transform RU by adding new programs and expanding targeted programs. D. Create new strategic alliances. E. Create more non-degree credentials.
<p>Discover: <i>advance science and knowledge to improve health.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grow research based on current strengths, healthcare needs and defined areas of focus. 2. Advance and enable novel interdisciplinary biomedical and clinical research. 3. Invest in infrastructure, training, career development, and core services for translational, basic and clinical researchers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Expand targeted research programs supported by NIH-funded research. B. Define focused areas for targeted recruited of senior researchers. C. Create the Institute for Research, Discovery, and Innovation. D. Invest in infrastructure and core research services. E. Align, upgrade, and expand research space.

Table 5.2. Alignment between Strategic Pillars, Strategic Goals, and Strategic Tactics		
Strategic Initiative	Strategic Goals	Strategic Tactics
<p>Thrive: <i>nurture a sustainable, dynamic, diverse and inclusive university and community.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advance diversity, equity and inclusion across all colleges. 2. Promote wellness and resiliency across university and community. 3. Enhance the physical environment to nurture our culture of collaboration and excellence. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Leverage the Rush BMO Institute for Health Equity to make an impact on the health of our communities. B. Create interventions to address stressors and promote wellness across the university community. C. Create university spaces for multicultural activities, innovation, design and social interactions.

To provide critical infrastructure to the pillars, goals, and tactics, the Strategic Plan includes fundamental operational elements of core university services, financial sustainability, strategic alliances and growth, and health system integration.

5.C.2

The [Five-Year Strategic Plan](#) links the university processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting. It describes core university services, financial sustainability, strategic alliances, and the growth and integration of the RU with RUSH.

The university has a longstanding culture of assessment that extends from the program to the institution level. Faculty members in each program take ownership for meeting program goals and reflecting the [mission](#) of the university. In addition, there is considerable interaction between the university and the student body, which allows for students to provide information on how well the university is meeting its stated mission and to provide suggestions for improvement.

The university uses multiple data sources to evaluate its educational programs, services, and operations. These sources include surveys, focus groups, town hall meetings, committee reports, and analysis of outcomes data.

The University [Office of Institutional Effectiveness](#) (OIE) and the [University Assessment Committee](#) (UAC) support quality assessment and quality improvement activities. The OIE provides leadership and support in the areas of institutional research, accreditation, academic planning, assessment, and regulatory activities. Institutional effectiveness is examined from the perspective of inputs, processes, products, and the context within which these components interact. The UAC oversight areas include program review, assessment and the process of assessment student learning outcomes, and accountability.

For example, assessment of the academic performance of university students led to development of the Center for Academic Excellence, which provides holistic, targeted, learning support for RU students, focusing on writing, math and statistical data, and academic coaching. A desire to create a more interactive teaching model led to upgrades of RU facilities that facilitate the “flipped classroom” and promote interactive learning spaces. Evaluation of online teaching practices led to development of the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation, with a team of instructional designers who assist faculty with online course structure and course delivery.

The university is part of the HLC Assessment Academy, which seeks to enhance the assessment of student learning outcomes. One group goal of the RU HLC Assessment Academy is to strengthen and standardize university-level assessment practices by

- increasing the number of faculty who are knowledgeable about assessment;
- improving the quality of assessment, which will lead to improved course development and educational quality; and
- creating a standardized assessment process across colleges.

To increase faculty knowledge about the assessment academy, five workshops related to student learning outcome assessment are offered to faculty. The topics of these workshops include

- writing observable, measurable, achievable, and result- and time-focused learning outcomes;
- aligning learning outcomes to the curriculum by creating a [curriculum map](#);
- engaging in diverse assessment methods to assess student learning outcomes;
- analyzing the results of student learning outcome assessments; and
- making evidence-based changes as a result of the analysis of the student learning outcome assessment.

5.C.3

The most recent university strategic planning process began in 2020 with input from university stakeholders. We conducted analysis of university strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats through surveys, focus groups, town hall meetings, committee reports, and analysis of outcomes data. These processes incorporated feedback that was obtained through interview sessions, group facilitated workshops, and surveys with participation from university faculty, students, trainees, staff, and leadership. The university president and provost presented the [Strategic Plan](#) to each of the colleges, select alumni associations, and other groups, to solicit feedback that was incorporated into subsequent drafts.

The strategic planning process resulted in revision of the university [mission and vision statements](#). These statements reflect university values related to interprofessional education and practice, people and the environment, program excellence, and research.

5.C.4

The strategic direction of the university reflects operational experience and market dynamics. Curricular offerings reflect changes in health care delivery and evolving roles of health care professionals. The deans, provost, president, and chief financial business officer participate in university business planning to ensure the sustainability of scholarship, research, and education. Metric-driven enrollment management plans provide accurate projections for enrollment and the resources needed to support learning across the colleges.

The commitment of the university and of each college to quality assessment and quality improvement is evidenced through ongoing collaboration with institutional and programmatic accreditation agencies, including the following:

- Higher Learning Commission;
- Liaison Committee on Medical Education;
- Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education;
- Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs;
- Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology;
- Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs;
- Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics;
- Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Management Education;
- National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences;
- Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education of the American Occupational Therapy Association;
- Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs;
- Accreditation Committee – Perfusion Education;
- Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc.;
- Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care; and
- Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc.

Following the most recent accreditation surveys completed by institutional and programmatic accreditation agencies, RU and its accredited programs were granted continued full accreditation. The schedule for upcoming accreditation surveys is shown in **Table 5.3**.

Table 5.3. Future accreditation reviews.	
Accrediting Body	Next Review
Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs	2023
Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education–Nursing DNP & post-graduate certificate programs	2024
Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics	2024
Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc.	2024
Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs	2025
Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs	2025
Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy	2026

Table 5.3. Future accreditation reviews.	
Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care	2027
Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education	2027
Higher Learning Commission	2028
Liaison Committee on Medical Education	2028-2029
Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs	2029
Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology	2029
Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education – Nursing, MSN	2029
National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences	2032

The [University Office of Faculty Affairs](#) provides mentorship programs that facilitate investigator efforts to attain extramural funding. In 2021, 35 mentees received extramural funding for a total of 96 grants. Of those grants, 59 were funded from federal sources, including 57 from the National Institutes of Health and two from other federal agencies. The total extramural funding received by mentees in 2021 was \$20,974,662. Mentees published 191 papers in peer-reviewed journals, provided 178 podium presentations, and presented 110 posters.

Every year the Cohn Family Foundation provides grant support to junior university faculty who are mentees in the [Rush Research Mentoring Program](#). The [Cohn Fellowship](#) allows mentees to gather preliminary data for research proposals and continued engagement in research activities.

The [Center for Innovative and Lifelong Learning](#), a division of the [Office of Faculty Affairs](#) provided 5,227 continuing education programs across professions for internal and external learners. The fees paid by attendees of these programs provided \$805,672 in non-tuition revenue for the university in 2021. Commercial grant support received for continuing medical education in 2021 totaled \$3,573,240.

5.C.5

[The Five-Year Strategic Plan](#) represents a multi-year strategy, implemented in 2022—the fiftieth anniversary of the university—and culminating in 2027. Through thoughtful oversight of university resources and commitment to the strategic goals outlined in this plan, the university is well positioned to achieve its vision of becoming the premier institution for integrated health sciences education and discovery in the nation.

Rush University previously submitted its Master Facility Plan and planning process during the

2018/2019 full review period. Since that time, there have been leadership changes in a number of key areas, including Dale Grandlic becoming the new Vice President for Facilities Management in 2021, and Dan Ratko becoming the Director of Facilities Management in 2023. In addition, Dr. Omar Lateef became the new RUSH CEO in 2022. The organization continues to invest in facilities to support all aspects of our mission, including clinical growth, both in-patient and ambulatory, which is critical to the educational needs of our students.

Rush University is fully integrated with Rush University Medical Center. Because we are a health science university, clinical sites for training are critical for our students. The most recent addition is the nearly \$500 million Rubschlager Building, which opened this academic year. It is the center for our ambulatory cancer and neuroscience programs; both are areas of clinical strength and research growth. Additionally, projects this year include the repair of the roof of the Amour Academic Facility, which houses the bulk of our didactic and group instruction; the roof of the Cohn Research Building, a key wet lab research complex; a refreshment of common elements, the labs and the main conference room of that building; and the build-out of the 7th floor of our Library. We will also complete a multi-cultural center for university students this summer and increase funding for research-related machinery. Each of these are provided as examples of ongoing planned investment in Rush University. To make sure university issues are correctly identified and prioritized, the provost and president meet regularly with the leads of the facilities efforts.

The university continues to implement a learning model that

- Fosters innovative curricula, programs, and degrees that meet the present and future needs through
 - testing and implementing new learning models such as self-directed learning, informal learning, simulation-based education, team-based learning, and experiential learning;
 - enhancing the use of contemporary educational technology for instructional delivery; and
 - ensuring every educational experience is led by a professional.
- Has state-of-the-art learning environments that include redesigned, adaptable learning spaces.
- Provides resources and opportunities for collaborative learning and discovery by
 - expanding interprofessional education opportunities and team-based learning across the university;
 - leveraging the university website to promote faculty and student collaboration internally and externally; and
 - stimulating collaboration among faculty, staff, students and health care professionals through educational space design, open forums, and other events.

Reimagining Clinical Experiences. Hands-on clinical experiences are a cornerstone of the RU educational experience. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic the Standardized Patient Program (SP) in the [Rush Center for Clinical Skills and Simulation](#) (RCCSS) rapidly pivoted to web-based (tele-sim) SP programs. Tele-sim programs, reflecting the increased implementation of telehealth encounters, continue to represent the majority of SP programs provided by RCCSS.

Each of the three colleges with clinical programs manages the clinical experiences for their students. Rush Medical College (RMC) faculty are expected to teach and host students on rotations, and the vast majority of medical student rotations take place at RUMC with full-time RMC faculty. RMC actively recruits additional sites through Rush University Medical Group (RUMG), other clinical affiliations, and personal relationships with faculty at distant clinical sites. Medical student enrollment is kept steady, with no increases, in order to assure our students get the clinical sites they

need. Designated clinical coordinators in the College of Health Sciences (CHS) secure training rotations to meet their programs' specific educational needs and specialty accreditation requirements. Rotations are internal and external to RUSH but remain largely local. To meet the specific training desires of students, national and international placement occurs at the discretion of the relevant clinical coordinator. The College of Nursing (CON) employs clinical site coordinators who work with the program directors and students to ensure appropriate and timely clinical placements. For the MSN program, the CON makes clinical placements primarily at RUMC and local Chicago institutions. The DNP program clinical placements are local and national depending on students' locations and preferences.

The university is moving toward its goal of becoming a national leader in health sciences scholarship and discovery by investing in the infrastructure necessary to support its education and research efforts. These efforts include the following:

- The [Rush Institute for Translational Medicine](#) (ITM), a partnership between the University of Chicago and RU in collaboration with Advocate Health Care, the Illinois Institute of Technology, Loyola University Chicago, and the NorthShore University Health System. Funded by some \$35 million in NIH grants, this network of NIH-supported sites across the country is working to decrease the time required to develop and share new treatments and approaches to health care. This project is supported by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) of NIH through Grant Numbers UL1TR002389, KL2TR002387, and TL1TR00238.
- Enhancing communications to make investigators more aware of research activities and opportunities. For example the [Clinical and Translational Science Awards](#) (CTSA) program in which the university participates is designed to develop innovative solutions that will improve the efficiency, quality, and impact of the process for turning observations in the laboratory, clinic, and community into interventions that improve the health of individuals and the public. The ITM works with communities to hear which disease areas they care about most and how best they think we can work together to tackle them. These partnerships cover everything from working with the public to designing a clinical trial, to collaborating to spread the news of discoveries to those who need it the most. This core works with the Chicago Department of Public Health and other industry, nonprofit, and government stakeholders.
- RU has increased its competitiveness in securing new research funding through pilot grants. For example, the [University President's Collaborative Research Awards](#) provide funding for innovative projects that demonstrate collaboration across colleges. This award supports new ideas and pilot projects that may lead to expanded efforts and additional grant funding, launch new education programs, or foster new areas of research excellence. Awards of up \$100,000 have been made.

5.C.6

Evidence of the university's performance is documented in the [RUSH Consolidated Financial Report](#). The [2021 Rush University Annual Report](#) demonstrated a \$145,195,000 (40%) increase in consolidated research awards between FY20 and FY21. Between FY18 and FY21, NIH funding increased by 26.9% year over year, with FY21 awards totaling \$98,246,111.

The [Rush Community Services Initiatives Program](#) provides volunteer services to more than 10,000 community members annually through programming that does the following:

- provides healthcare to people in underserved communities;

- educates the community about healthy living and disease prevention and management; and
- trains and educates young people about the wide range of career opportunities in health sciences.

In 2021, the [Rush BMO Institute for Health Equity](#) was launched with a \$10 million donation from the BMO Financial Group and supported by numerous other gifts and grants. This institute advances the work of RUSH to eliminate Chicago's life expectancy gap with solutions spanning education and workforce development, community clinical practice, community engagement, and health equity research. In FY21, RUSH raised more than \$26 million in philanthropic support for health equity initiatives within the Institute.

RUMC and RU have strong commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The diversity of RU students increases each year. Diversity and inclusion scholarship dollars awarded in FY21 amounted to \$6.4 million, a 21.7% increase over FY20.

The University Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) surveyed students on satisfaction with their [educational experience](#) during COVID-19. When comparing the results from 2020 just before the pandemic to during COVID in 2021 the level of overall satisfaction was stable at above 80% satisfaction on most items with slight increase in 2021.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, university enrollment and research programs have grown. With over 2,800 students, education operating revenues are projected to be \$107.3 million (on budget). Research operating revenue is projected to be \$184.57 million (9.6% better than budget) in FY23. The recent market value of institutional endowment funds was \$784,281,487 (the majority of which is restricted to university utilization, and the revenue generated from the endowment is included in the research revenue projections).

Institutional improvements are grounded within a continuous quality improvement (CQI) framework. The drivers of the infrastructure and technological advances incorporated into the [Strategic Plan](#) were derived from data obtained through university assessments, multiple data analyses and SWOT analyses. Ongoing monitoring of institutional data and the RU budget provide a sound foundation for assessing institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability.

Various components of the university have made improvements based on operational experiences. The [Division of Student Affairs](#) and other academic support units have made improvements following analyses of their operations and services, including adopting a new learning management system, improving student information systems, and upgrading the university intranet portal. Analysis of the processes for managing faculty data led to the acquisition of a faculty database management system. Examination of budget reporting practices led to more transparent communication about budgetary information. Technology and facilities improvements are based on student survey data, infrastructure analysis and faculty feedback.

Analysis of trends in student demographics and learning needs led to development of the [Center for Academic Excellence](#) and the RU Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer position. Evaluation of committee effectiveness led to an examination of committee structures and processes.

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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.

Summary

The university has sufficient resources to support its operations and deliver quality educational programs for its onsite and distance students. Through environmental scanning, trend analysis, fiscal stewardship, and attention to constituent needs, the university continues to invest in its physical and technological infrastructure and supports and enhances its capacity and capability to provide programs and services that meet the needs of the university community.

The BOG is engaged and knowledgeable about the university and fulfills its responsibilities as described in the Charter. The university supports faculty and staff governance models which operate under the University Rules for Governance and promote participation from an array of university stakeholders.

The university participates in systematic and integrated planning that is evident in the Strategic Plan and Business Plan, and consistent with the mission and goals of the university. These plans direct the transformation of the physical and technological infrastructure in support of program delivery innovations and improvements in the student experience.

The university engages in extensive assessment practices, from assessing educational effectiveness to evaluating its operations, planning, and budgeting processes. Through use of continuous quality improvement processes, the university has incorporated assessment data to make improvements in its program delivery, physical and technological infrastructure, and institutional operations.

Sources

There are no sources.