

**Kutztown University of Pennsylvania**  
**Institutional Effectiveness Report**  
**Academic Year 2020-2021**  
**Submitted by the Institutional Effectiveness Team**

**Overview**

The academic year 2020-2021 opened amid the continuing global COVID-19 crisis. After having moved to remote learning and working in March 2020, the university reopened successfully and welcomed back students for the start of the academic year on August 24, 2020. According to virus mitigation plans, social distancing was instituted in classrooms and a variety of teaching modalities were offered. In Fall 2020, all in-person classes ended the week before Thanksgiving with the remainder of the semester in remote mode to ensure the safety and well-being of students, faculty, and staff.

AY 2020-2021 was also marked by a significant change in university leadership, as the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs retired, with the Vice Provost fulfilling her duties as Interim Provost during the transitional Spring semester.

On November 12 and 13, 2020, the institution's accreditor, the Middle State Commission on Higher Education, conducted a virtual Site Visit as a follow-up to Kutztown University's Second Monitoring Report. As a result, there were no subsequent Monitoring Reports requested from the accreditor; the next regular evaluation visit is scheduled for 2025-2026.

**Executive Summary**

This report stems from the work of the Implementation Team for Institutional Effectiveness, which oversees and monitors institutional effectiveness (IE) at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. The team meets monthly to ensure student success and institutional quality and efficiency in support of the university mission.

Membership during academic year 2020-2021 consisted of the following:

Carole Wells, Chair, Vice Provost (Fall 2020); Acting Provost (Spring 2021)  
Natalie Cartwright, Director of Institutional Research  
Matthew Delaney, Chief Financial Officer and VP of Finance and Facilities  
Warren Hilton, VP of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs  
Jesús Peña, VP of Equity and Compliance  
Krista Prock, Interim Director of Assessment  
Karen Rauch, Associate Provost for Accreditation and Assessment  
Mathew Santos, VP of University Relations and Athletics  
Gregory Shelley, Chair, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Assessment Committee

In this report, the Team responds to the recommendations set forth in the 2019-2020 IE report:

- Closely link assessment data with ongoing planning and resources allocation

- Identify opportunities for collaboration across units and divisions
- Include assessment topics at staff and faculty meetings
- Follow-up on prior assessment efforts to demonstrate “closing the loop.”
- Provide assessment support and professional training opportunities
- Consolidate assessment efforts for units that have subunits

Inasmuch as many of these recommendations are fairly general and considered best practices for all institutions on an iterative basis, we provide the following specific information regarding the planning conducted during AY 20-21, based on institutional effectiveness data collected by Institutional Research, the Office of Assessment, and the principal divisions of Kutztown University.

## **Integrated Planning**

### *State System’s Comprehensive Planning Process*

As part of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, Kutztown University participates in a system-wide “Comprehensive Planning Process,” established by a policy adopted by the Board of Governors in October 2019 (Policy 2019-01). This Board policy implemented annual reporting mechanisms that allow all stakeholders to have a greater awareness of each university’s academic, financial, and operational conditions. These tools (e.g., financial risk assessment, university financial statements) provide data for each university at the local and System levels. The policy includes guiding principles, processes for enhancing university financial sustainability, and criteria for determining university financial status.

Fiscal year 2020-21 was the second year during which universities had very specific deliverables to the State System. Kutztown University completed a 14-page document, referred to as the Comprehensive Planning Narrative, which includes an executive summary, strategic goals, enrollment data with future year projections, workforce data, financial data with future year projections, and academic program strategies. Highlights of the submission include the university’s continued efforts to stabilize student enrollment, efforts to reduce our workforce through the elimination of vacant positions, and to present a balanced budget in future years without the use of cash reserves.

This comprehensive narrative document along with detailed financial support was submitted to the State System on September 4, 2020. As part of the process, Kutztown’s submission was reviewed by CFO’s and CAO’s across the State System, who provided feedback and asked follow-up questions. This larger group of peers then met to discuss the individual submissions and determine each school’s financial status by placing them in one of four potential categories: No Plan (Green), Plan 1 (Yellow), Plan 2 (Orange), or Plan 3 (Red). Based on four financial indicators that consider the past 3 to 5 years, Kutztown remained in Plan 2 (Orange) for the second consecutive year. As a Plan 2 school, Kutztown was required to complete a Mid-Year Sustainability Progress Summary with a due date to the State System of February 22, 2021. This mid-year update showed that Kutztown was in fact making progress and even exceeding initial projections in certain categories. After review and discussion by the peer group, Kutztown was ranked as meeting expectations with no action plan needed.

Both plans submitted for fiscal year 2020-21 are available on the university website [Comprehensive Planning - Kutztown University](#). The Comprehensive Planning Process is ongoing with similar requirements each year, which allows universities to assess their progress and make adjustments along the way to ensure financial sustainability in the future.

### *Kutztown University's Strategic Plan*

Upon Chancellor Greenstein's arrival in 2018, he initiated significant changes regarding system redesign, including what became known as Goal Alignment – a University goal planning process enabling universities to create multi-year student and university success goals. Universities were required by December 2019 to submit a goal planning document, integrating current and new strategies in the course of their own planning processes. The Office of the Chancellor staff would then incorporate these planning documents and create a goal planning workbook. The goal alignment document outlined 4 main goals: New Student Enrollment, Retention, Fundraising, and Financial Sustainability.\* Thus, in early 2019, knowing that there would be changes to planning processes due to system redesign, we chose to extend Kutztown University's 2016-2019 Strategic Plan to 2020.

With this new process in place, and system-wide strategic direction identified, in Spring 2020 the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee of the Kutztown University Senate, known as SPRC, initiated conversation to revise the, now 2016-20 plan. Between the end of fall 2020 and start of spring 2021 semester, the SPRC reignited discussion on a revision to the strategic plan and outlined a process for moving forward. By March a subcommittee was charged with bringing a draft plan back to the committee as a whole. The subcommittee submitted its first draft on April 9, 2021 and its second draft on April 21. At the April 23, 2021 meeting of the full SPRC, the committee voted to endorse the draft plan, which was then made available for review and comment to the trustees, faculty, staff, and students. In addition, the University Senate hosted an open forum on the strategic plan during their April 29 meeting. The feedback was gathered, presented to the President and his Cabinet, and in July 2021 the final Strategic Plan 2021-2024 was approved by Cabinet.

The [Kutztown University Strategic Plan 21-24](#) has five overarching goals. The most notable change from the previous plan is the addition of Goal 2: Student Success, which was added given the importance of our work to improve retention, persistence, and career readiness, as well as to reflect our emphasis on well-being. Breaking out this important goal on student success allows Goal 1: Academic Excellence, to focus on continuous improvements in teaching and learning.

In addition, we have incorporated other foundational plans into the overall strategic plan. For example:

- Goal 2 objectives related to new student enrollment and retention are derived from our ongoing Strategic Enrollment Management plan.

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\* We now know this workbook as the “Comprehensive Planning Process,” as described above.

- Goal 4 objectives related to a “caring campus” incorporate the planning of our Commission on the Status of Minorities on Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI).
- Goal 5 objectives related to our financial planning are aligned with the State System sustainability process and key financial indicators (CCP).
- Fundraising objectives and results are derived from our foundation strategic plan and the foundation’s comprehensive campaign.

### *Strategic Enrollment Management Plan*

The 2020-2021 academic year commenced with the goals along with next steps in the SEM planning process being presented to the campus community via the online Faculty and Staff Convocation. It was noted that the SEM Planning Process included the collaborative efforts of over 50 faculty and staff, and a staff member from one of KU’s community college partners. By means of the strategic planning process, the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee (SPRC) determined that the transfer recruitment and graduate enrollment goals needed to be revisited due to the declining enrollment at community colleges.

Roughly 50 faculty, staff, and students as part of six sub-teams attended a workshop on October 9, 2020. The workshop ‘trained’ the sub-team members on creating the timelines, strategies and action plans. The sub-teams submitted proposed strategies to SPRC, which reviewed them carefully prior to approval. The Transfer Recruitment sub-team revised and added a strategy. All sub-teams worked on developing 3-5 tactics for each strategy with a due date of December 18.

Early in the 2021 calendar year, all tactics were reviewed by the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs and an AACRAO consultant, who provided feedback to the six teams. The teams and members of SPRC met with the AACRAO consultant to review feedback on the tactics and discuss next steps including tactical updates. All updates to tactics were made and submitted to SPRC and the Enrollment Management Committee for review.

Later in the spring 2021 semester, the goals and strategies were approved/affirmed at the April SPRC meeting. It was decided that approval of the SEM Plan tactics should be affirmed by Cabinet. Over the summer of 2021, the SEM Plan tactics were refined to remove items that conflict with the CBA and again approved/affirmed by Cabinet, thus setting the stage for the completed [SEM plan](#) to be distributed to the campus community in the Fall 2021 semester.

### *Justice, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan*

As the university awaited the Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan in the process of being created by Kutztown University’s Commission on the Status of Minorities, all divisions continued their work toward the goal of inclusive excellence. The Chief Diversity Officer tracked the 104 initiatives brought forth by Dr. Hawkinson and Cabinet for the academic year. 94 of the initiatives were either completed or, in the case of multi-year initiatives, in progress to be completed by the end of AY 2021-2022. These initiatives included curriculum changes, professional development, hiring practices, diversifying programs, admissions

practices, among others. Two of the initiatives planned for Health Services were delayed mid-progress due to the demands on the administrative unit from the ongoing public health crisis. Eight of the initiatives included activities that were restricted due to COVID protocols (largely in the area of student recruitment, such as, overnight programs, travel programs, large in-person events), and thus were not completed in AY 20-21. One item was related to procurement, and was moved under PASSHE regional operations, as part of the Chancellor's restructuring. In sum, just over 90% of the of the initiatives planned were completed during the academic year.

## **Academic Program Assessment, Including General Education**

### **I. Five-Year Reviews**

Three programs completed the five-year cycle in AY 2020-2021: History, Marine Science, and Philosophy.

Amid numerous discussions plans were made for a significant revision to the guidelines, including the addition of DEI prompts, in alignment with the University's JEDI plan. The Strategic Planning and Resources Committee reaffirmed that those programs that conduct five-year reviews late should remain on the originally scheduled cycle for the self-study and the subsequent steps in the review.

### **II. Annual Assessments**

In response to data collected by Institutional Research regarding the DFWI rates, as well as the earlier iteration of data collection for General Education program's Student Learning Outcomes 5 and 7, the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) revised its schedule to revisit the SLOs assessed in FYS. In Fall 2020, data on SLO 5 and SLO 7 were collected and analyzed. The report can be found on the [GEAC website](#). In Spring 2021, [GEAC assessed SLO 4](#) for the first time. In an effort to ensure compliance by reducing faculty workload with regard to assessment tasks, the committee decided to pilot a program by which faculty rated their own students.

As General Education assessment is still in its first cycle, GEAC's recommendations for the upcoming academic year focus on process so as to ensure faculty buy-in and sustainability of the assessment infrastructure. To date, the committee has yet to make substantive recommendations that may directly impact student learning.

In its [annual report](#), the Academic Assessment Council (AAC) highlighted the M.A. in Arts Administration for the program's exemplary assessment work during AY 20-21. The committee noted that, while some programs are closing the loop, several other programs continue to face challenges with their assessment methods, alignment or sustainability of processes. As a pilot, the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies minor program implemented their assessment plan, reported their results, and conducted an academic program review. AAC's goal is to begin to work with other stand-alone minors (such as International Studies, PA German, Multicultural Studies, etc.) on the creation and execution of assessment plans.

Additionally, the Office of Assessment and AAC intend to achieve the objective of enhancing professional development in the area of assessment by

- increasing the number of assessment grant proposals submitted for funding;
- increasing the number of collaborative (faculty/staff) assessment grant proposals submitted;
- improving the communication of assessment results and enabling more opportunities for discussion of ways to improve student learning.

Finally, in support of the university's focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, academic assessment plans to implement strategies to infuse equity into our assessment practices.

### **Administrative Assessment**

#### **I. Five-Year Reviews**

As has been the procedure since 2017, the Implementation Team for Institutional Effectiveness assessed the administrative units program reviews and provided feedback to those units. During AY 20-21, five programs completed the cycle including the external review:

- Community Outreach Center
- Distance Education
- Human Resources
- McFarland Student Union
- Student Involvement

Additionally, it was noted that Counseling and Psychological Services and Student Assistance had completed their self-study.

#### **II. Annual Assessments**

The Administrative Units Assessment Committee (AUAC) created a new template for its annual report to highlight certain units and programs rather than recapping activities for each unit, information that is already available in Nuventive. Of particular note in AUAC's 2020-2021 report are excellent recommendations for the upcoming academic year:

- Administrative units should submit their annual assessment reports to their Vice President, who would then create an annual report for each division.
- Data and all annual reporting should be uploaded directly into Nuventive.
- The annual assessment process and reporting should be better aligned to the five-year review process.
- Professional development should be consistent and targeted, including but not limited to presentations/workshops by outside experts and a "how-to" guide on the KU website.

### **Recommendations and Planning for Academic Year 2021-2022**

- Invest in an upgrade to the Nuventive Cloud Platform to ensure sustainability and alignment of assessment and planning processes.
- Revise the academic program review guidelines and procedures.

- Conduct the National Survey in Student Engagement.
- Support academic assessment through the creation of an Academic Assessment Fellows program to replace the outgoing Interim Director of Assessment. This opportunity will allow more faculty to receive significant training and to exercise leadership in assessment.
- Organize and hold an intensive workshop on administrative assessment. Seek an expert from NILOA for the training.
- Complete a cross-walk of graduate program SLOs and Institutional Learning Outcomes.