

## Assurance Argument

Youngstown State University - OH

### **2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct**

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

#### **2.A - Core Component 2.A**

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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.

UPDATE: Since 2018, the university community has continued working toward our campus climate being one of collaboration. In addition to providing a student-centered education, our vision is for the behaviors of all on campus to be rooted in integrity, mutual respect, collegiality, equity and inclusion. The strategic planning process started in 2018 is one example of our commitment to live our vision. The planning initiated with gaining widespread input from all university constituents via thought provokers and leaders. Feedback seeking continued throughout the planning process resulting in a collaboratively developed new university mission, value statements and development of strategic actions. The recently completed university wide program review highlights another example of our lived vision. The program review involved many opportunities for input by all on campus, resulting in collaboratively informed decision-making about program continuation, growth or sun-setting. The policies and processes cited below for each component of Criterion 2 provide additional examples of living our vision, an important component of integrity.

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

UPDATE: As noted above, the Board of Trustees (BOT) resolved in December 2018 to support President Tressel's recommendation to develop a new strategic plan. During the BOT meeting in December 2019, the board received a report about progress for developing the University's new mission, vision and values, as well as the development of strategic goals and actions to fulfill the mission. At this meeting, the BOT passed a resolution to "Take Charge of Our Future" in support of the activities. This resolution included support for faculty, students and staff to "continue to be engaged so as to inform and enhance the mission, vision, and values statements of the University as it continually adapts to changing times for the benefit of academic excellence, student success, and mutually beneficial community engagement". During the BOT meeting in June 2020, the BOT recognized the collaborative efforts of the campus community and adopted the "Plan for Strategic Actions to Take Charge of our Future" which states the new Mission.

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

### **Financial Integrity**

YSU operates its financial matters with integrity, as demonstrated below:

#### **Ethics Training and Reporting Financial Matters**

- Administrators in the Division of Finance and Business Operations undergo annual ethics training.
- Each BOT member files a Financial Disclosure Statement annually with the Ohio Ethics Commission.
- Procurement Services oversees campus purchasing and provides a purchasing guide to ensure compliance with YSU policies and federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
- Financial managers sign a Conflict of Interest Certification Form that requires disclosure of vendors with whom the employee, his or her family, or business associates do business.
- Faculty and staff are required to report outside consulting and employment annually.
- YSU employees are mandated by Ohio's Governor Executive Order to complete Ohio ethics training annually.

#### **Budget Planning and Oversight**

Budget planning and oversight are covered in detail in Criterion 5, but below are highlights:

- University Policies 3356 3 01-16 guide budget and finance procedures.
- The BOT annually reviews YSU's long-term investment strategy.
- UPDATE: During the Covid-19 pandemic YSU provided institutional funds and HEERF funds to assist students in need and to augment teaching & learning abilities. Documentation of dollar amount and allocation of funds are reported and available on the website for public review.
- All annual budget audits have resulted in no findings of budget issues. Anyone at YSU can report conduct of fraud, fiscal abuse or non-compliance via the YSU Anonymous Ethics Reporting Hotline operated by an independent company. University policy prohibits retaliation for reporting.

## Academic Integrity

YSU performs its academic functions with integrity and safeguards academic integrity.

University Policies, the *YSU-OEA Agreement*, Academic Senate, and Graduate Council play important roles in facilitating fair and ethical behavior:

- UPDATE: University Policies 3356 10 01-24 guide procedures for teaching and academic research. These policies cover admission, retention, and graduation standards; hiring and selection of full- and part-time faculty; graduate-faculty membership; faculty workload; establishment or abolishment of academic departments, schools, and colleges; and integrity in research. When the BOT conducts a policy's scheduled review (every 5 years), changes are now communicated to faculty and staff via email and as before, the university website.
- YSU's full-time faculty members are unionized through the Ohio Education Association. The *YSU-OEA Agreement* ensures their rights and responsibilities:
  - Article 9 of the faculty contract establishes that the academic department has prerogative and responsibilities for program development, curriculum revision, requirements for majors and minors, and program assessment.
  - Article 28 of the faculty contract establishes requirements for course-related responsibilities, such as syllabi content, textbook and materials selection, and office hours. Article 28 also covers outside employment, conflict of commitment, and conflict of interest.
- The Academic Senate plays an essential role in developing policies for undergraduate academic functions. The Bylaws of the Academic Senate specify the committee structure, which includes faculty and administration representation (see 5.B.3)
- UPDATE: In response to moving quickly online due to Covid-19 restrictions, YSU quickly established the Academic Continuity Team to assist students and faculty with successful online coursework. A positive outcome of this was that after classes returned to campus, there was continued interest of faculty for professional development in providing creative course delivery. In response, the Institute for Teaching and Learning continues to augment their presence to provide online and in person workshops, as does Information technology Services (ITS). ITS continues to seek and provide software and technology for classroom learning and other university work. ITS also provides workshops for use of new technology.
- UPDATE: The Division of Student Affairs has been re-structured into three offices dedicated to ensuring the success of each student.
  - The Office of the Dean of Students formed in 2021 provides support, education, guidance and advocacy to all members of the campus community. A key initiative of this office is the YSU CARE (concern, assessment, referral and education) Team that addresses issues of a serious nature that pose a threat to anyone on campus. Anyone, including the surrounding community, can make a

referral to report problematic, disruptive or anti-social behavior. A safe learning environment is imperative for student learning. Other support services for students include provision of basic needs such as emergency food and clothes, assistance programs for finding housing, and safety resources such as the campus rape, crisis and counseling center. The Penguin to Penguin Fund, while initiated because of Covid-19 will continue to be available via funds from the YSU Foundation. This fund covers emergency housing, utilities, medication, fuel and car repairs.

- The Office of Student Experience works to create a sense of belonging, develop a campus community that fosters and celebrates differences, and encourages cultural awareness. The Office of Student Activities, housed within Student Experience, promotes inclusiveness by encourage engagement with Student Government and offers programming such as the Emerging Leaders Program. This program mentors collaborative relationships and empowers community and leadership abilities.
- Office of Student Enrollment and Business Services provides a portal of scholarships and financial aide resources for students. The Penguin Service Center is housed in this office. It serves as a single place to receive essential information, find guidance, and resolve enrollment-related concerns
- UPDATE: The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion housed within the Office of Academic Affairs is our re-imagined multicultural initiative. This office is a single place where students, faculty and staff find educational resources and programming that supports our culture of community. An example is the AIM (Achieve, Impact Motivate) program for mentoring first-year first-generation underrepresented and/or marginalized students. Another initiative through this office promoting student academic success is YSU's participation in the National Equity and Retention Academy. This involves an 8 week seminar course to develop strategies for recruiting and retaining students from at risk populations. Examples of events showcasing our commitment to providing opportunities related to DEI include:
  - Future of Black Media panel discussion, 2/6/2022.
  - Depression screening day 10/5/2021
  - Language, equity and student success: an opportunity and responsibility, faculty symposium, 4/14/2021
- Protection and support of student rights are integral to academic integrity. The Office of the Registrar guides faculty and staff regarding FERPA regulations for student privacy and educates students on their privacy rights. Faculty and staff are reminded of FERPA regulations via email reminders each semester and training workshops.
- The Student Academic Grievance Procedure provides a formal channel for undergraduate and graduate students that ensures academic grievances are heard and resolved (see 3.E.1). Students are notified of their rights via The Student Code of Conduct. Article IV of this Code outlines general hearing and sanction procedures for alleged misconduct.

Article VI outlines procedures and sanctions specific to alleged violations of the academic integrity policy.

- **UPDATE:** The Student Complaint System is now a web-based method for students to file a complaint about anything from dining services to instructor or course procedures. Once a complaint is received, the Office of the Dean of Students notifies the appropriate academic department, dean or campus office to investigate the complaint. That entity is assisted by the Office of the Dean of Students to find a mutually acceptable resolution and to analyze for the need for policy or procedure change.

## **Human Resources Integrity**

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) strives to foster an appreciation of, and respect for differences. YSU is an equal-opportunity employer. The OHR provides guidance on strategic and operational activities that pertain to recruiting, selecting, appraising, compensating, recognizing, developing employees, and administering benefits and labor relations. Through OHR and Equal Opportunity and Policy Development (EOPD) offices, YSU ensures that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, disability, age, religion, or veteran and military status in programs and activities.

- University Policies 3356 7 01-54 provide guidance and procedures for HR activities, including providing a supportive work and learning environment that is safe, secure, and free from threats, intimidation, and violence.
- University Policies 3356 2 02-04 are related to equal opportunity in hiring and non-discrimination in programs and activities. OHR and EOPD provide mandatory training for employees on discrimination, harassment, sexual violence, and workplace violence. They also manage mandatory training for employment search committees.
- University Policies 3356 9 01-11 govern administrative and personnel procedures, including hiring, evaluation, and professional conduct of faculty, chairs, and administrative/professional personnel.
- **UPDATE:** A change related to Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action at YSU has been the moving of these responsibilities to within the OHR. The Office of EOPD and Title IX supports YSU's promotion of human and intellectual diversity. This office administers the university's policy against discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct and retaliation.  
Hiring processes are revised as needed to comply with external regulations:
  - In its oversight role in employment searches, the EOPD scrutinizes applicant selections for qualifications and submissions. In areas of underutilized job groups, the office expands applicant pools for interview to include qualified underutilized applicants not initially selected by the search committee (the search committee does not have access to race, gender, disability, and veteran status that applicants share through self-identification data).

- EOPD reviews and develops policies, and ensures compliance with state and federal equal opportunity laws and regulations, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The EOPD director also serves as the YSU's Title IX coordinator and is the primary investigator for internal complaints of discrimination and harassment.
- The four labor contracts between administration and unions specify rules for non-curricular issues: Classified Civil Service Staff, Professional/Administrative Staff, Police (FOP), and Faculty.
- YSU's formal grievance processes provide due process for resolving disputes among personnel and students. For unionized personnel, each labor unit agreement has a section explaining grievance procedures (YSU-ACE, Article 9, YSU-APAS, Article 9, YSU-FOP, Article 6, YSU-OEA, Article 8). Exempt employees are covered under BOT policy that holds to the same standard of ethics and fairness (University Policy 3356-7-37)
- The original Culture of Community Initiative from 2017 has expanded into a campus wide support for students, faculty and staff via the Office of DEI described above.

### **Auxiliary Integrity**

YSU's auxiliary functions are included in its commitment to operating with integrity. Auxiliaries include Intercollegiate Athletics, Housing and Residence Life, Parking Services, Kilcawley Center, and the Andrews Student Recreation and Wellness Center. Auxiliaries enhance campus life for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and guests. They generate revenue through sales and services, which support their operation. The budget for each auxiliary is included in the university's annual budget report, and financial audits include the auxiliaries (see 5.A).

- The Intercollegiate Athletics program is administered as defined in the Intercollegiate Athletics Operations Manual. University Policies 3356 6 01-03 establish responsibility for administering athletics programs and establishes accountability for adhering to ethical standards and compliance with YSU, conference, and NCAA regulations.
- The Compliance Office housed within the Intercollegiate Athletics Division ensures compliance with NCAA, Horizon League, Missouri Valley Football Conference, and institutional rules. This office educates student athletes, coaches, administrators, and supporters so they act with integrity and comply with regulations. Each student athlete is provided a Student Athlete's Handbook that explains rules, regulations, policies, and services.
- UPDATE: The Athletic Compliance Office's webpage provides resources such as summary sheets of regulations and the booster pamphlet. In addition to integrity related to compliance, the athletic dept has committees and services to promote academic and

social well being of student athletes. Such initiatives include a DEI committee and student athlete advisory council which collaborates with student government to increase athlete engagement on campus and surrounding community.

- Since 1994, YSU has supported the Title IX Gender Equity Plan, which funds scholarships, staffing, operating budgets, and physical facilities to enhance women's intercollegiate athletic programs.
- YSU provides housing accommodations for students without regard to race, religion, color, age, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin. The Office of Housing and Residence Life informs residents of housing regulations via the Housing and Residence Life Resident Handbook. YSU has procedures to prevent housing discrimination.
- Rules to provide parking facilities during athletic events, for students, faculty, staff, and visitors are displayed on the Parking Services webpage.
- UPDATE: Kilcawley Center is YSU's student union and conference building. It includes study lounges, computer labs, ATM, copy services, dining choices, 16 seminar rooms, and two computer training rooms. New student activity, student government, and lounge spaces are available in Kilcawley. Given the centrality of this building to student life, many student services are physically located in Kilcawley: Accessibility Services, The Resch Academic Success Center, Student Outreach and Support, Student Counseling Services and Student Advocacy and Support to name a few.
- The Department of Campus Recreation provides wellness and recreational programming to meet the diverse needs of students and the YSU community. Users of recreation facilities are reminded to value the diversity of YSU's community and to respect all participants. Policies outlined in the Penguin Student Handbook prohibit harassing patrons of the facilities and explain appropriate activities for club sports organizations.

## Sources

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## **2.B - Core Component 2.B**

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

### **Argument**

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

The Office of Marketing and Communications, part of University Relations, oversees YSU's website and other communications to ensure accuracy. Representatives from EOPD, the Office of Accessibility Services, and the Title II/Section 504 Coordinator serve to ensure communication channels are accessible for people with disabilities.

#### **UPDATE:**

- Accurate information about academic areas of study is ensured by scheduled updating of the course catalog. The Office of Academic Affairs sets requirements for the course catalog content. The registrar's office notifies college deans and department chairpersons of the annual deadline for course catalog updates. Program chairpersons are reminded at the college level during dean's meetings to annually update curriculum sheets used by academic advisors and posted on program websites. Each academic program has an informative webpage dedicated to providing information about the degree and any minor or certificate programs available. Website accuracy reminders are prompted at the college level.
- The Office of Academic Affairs academic programs and planning webpage posts program status updates. The types of information included are report of Board of Trustee action or Ohio Department of Higher Education approval of a program, programs in development and programs being discontinued or admissions suspended.
- YSU stands behind its claim that students receive a quality education provided by highly qualified faculty. Full and part time faculty credentials are confirmed by human resources at the time of hire via official transcript review. The Office of the Provost utilizes the form titled Highest Degree Level for Part Time Teaching Faculty, to have chairpersons attest to the specific courses part time faculty are qualified to teach. Department chairpersons complete reviews of each faculty performance in teaching, scholarship and service on a scheduled basis, either annually or biennially.
- Staff and governance structure is provided for administrative personnel via office organizational charts or staff lists with position responsibilities, posted on office websites to ensure students and the public can access the accurate person for their needs.
- Current in state and out of state tuition, and graduate school tuition is updated on the tuition and financial aid website. The tuition estimator asks specific details such as

cohort year, tuition type, academic term, college, state residency to ensure the estimator provides accurate tuition, fees and housing costs.

- YSU announces its institutional accreditation status from HLC on the Office of Academic Affairs webpage and from YSU's website via the Student Consumer Information link at the footer of each webpage. Accreditation information is verified as accurate via a link to the HLC website confirming accreditation status. Academic program webpages and college webpages provide professional program accreditation status and other information, such as program licensure pass rates.

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

UPDATE: YSU's website serves as the primary source of evidence of its claims of a quality education through research, community engagement and experiential learning. YSU insures its website and other information is accessible to students, perspective students, employees, guests and visitors with disability, particularly those with hearing, visual and manual impairments. University Policy 3356-5-14 (Electronic Information Technology (EIT) Accessibility defines EIT and procedures for monitoring adherence to EIT standards. This policy states that all software purchases on campus must be accessible for use by persons with disability. The YSU website publishes the digital accessibility policies and standards, and grievance processes. ITS offers consultation for review of material to be placed in our learning management system (Blackboard) or the website, and remediation for non-accessible material. The Instructional Design and Development Center provides the Digital Accessibility Lab to assist faculty make their teaching and learning resources ADA accessible. The Associate Director for Accessibility Services sits on the Academic Senate technology committee and the previously described Penguin CARE Team.

UPDATE: Quest is the main evidence we have to support our claim of enhancing student experience through research. Undergraduate and graduate students present their scholarship at this annual forum. Student scholarship ranges from scientific findings and engineering designs to musical scores and poetry readings. Each student presentation is judged and awards are provided for "Best" oral presentation or poster for each college. The event is open to the public.

UPDATE: Community engaged student learning that also serves to enhance the community around YSU is a goal established in our initiative to "Take Charge of our Future". Evidence related to community engaged learning include programs like Penguin PT – a faculty supervised but student provided physical therapy services to community residents without adequate medical insurance. Other evidences for our commitment to community engaged learning include:

- YSU business students complete more than 30 hours of training and pass IRS certifications to provide free income tax preparation services to the public.
- Students in the Sociology Program implemented the Opening Minds Through Art program by working with community residents with dementia to create artwork that

enabled residents to focus on new skills rather than on limitations due to memory loss.

- Three Geology Program students provided a community revitalization plan to the City of Wellsville as their capstone project. The plan was based on a 16 week study of the Wellsville community to develop recommended policy actions, infrastructure recommendations and long term climate change adaptation.

UPDATE: Internships, externships, service learning, clinical and field observations, co-op activities, practicums, student teaching and research for credit are all ways academic programs provide experiential student learning to augment classroom learning. Students learn about these learning activities from program information provided on academic program webpages and also from the Experiential Learning Opportunity webpage. This webpage is dedicated to notifying students of program specific required and voluntary opportunities. Handshake is the tool provided by the Office of Career Exploration and Development to alert students about internship postings by employers. Students can submit resumes for employers to view when offering experiential learning activities.

The following are other methods of communicating clearly and completely to students and the public.

### **Communication Channels**

The *Principles and Practice of Shared Governance*, posted on the Office of Academic Affairs webpage identifies communication as one of 6 principles. Particularly, the principle states communication should be consistent, trustworthy and multidirectional. In addition to the website, YSU communicates to students and the public with the following:

- YSU's campus-wide email system is the major mechanism for communicating with specific populations.
- UPDATE: Information related to the Covid-19 has been regularly provided to students, staff and faculty via email notifications but also via the Covid-19 Information Webpage. This webpage houses information about classroom protocols, vaccination clinics on campus, testing and contact tracing procedures, and provides a dashboard tracking the number of positive cases by week.
- Penguin Alert communicates emergency, safety, or time-sensitive information as both email and text alerts.
- YSU provides an app for smart phones that provides campus information, portal access, and student events.
- UPDATE: YSU maintains accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TicTok and Snapchat to engage prospective and current students, parents, alumni, and community members, and to communicate achievements and campus news. The impact and reach of

social media platforms are reported annually in the social media report. YSU provides an accessibility guide for complying with ADA standards on social media accounts.

- These student-media organizations communicate news, opinions, and information about YSU internally and to the public. These organizations include the *Jambar*, thejambar.com, *YO magazine*, *Penguin Review*, *Jenny*, and Rookery Radio.
- UPDATE: Employees and students receive a weekly electronic newsletter, the YSU News Center that includes material about various campus activities and accomplishments. President Tressel sends “From the Desk of the President” emails informing on topics such as giving challenges and opportunities for sustainability (2/2/2022), changes to campus Covid-19 protocols (5/18/2021) and the 3 part State of the University videos informing about initiatives geared toward “Take Charge of our Future”. Provost Smith provides regular “Provost Perspectives” communicating topics such as Advising and student success (2/14/2022), community engagement (1/10/2022), Covid-19 procedures upon return to campus (1/5/2022).
- College deans are invited to attend senior leadership meetings allowing increased communication among colleges and senior leadership (see 5.B.2).
- The annual Security and Fire Safety report is distributed via email to all YSU constituents and linked from the safety webpage for community viewing.

## **Programs**

The academics webpage, available one click from YSU’s homepage, presents an alphabetical list organized by type of degree program (associate, bachelor, or graduate). When a program is accessed, the following information is provided (see Communication Studies as an example):

- Links to the electronic catalog containing a program’s curriculum sheet and four-year plan.
- List of internships and jobs of students and graduates.
- Accreditation status of the program.
- Available majors, minors, and certificate programs within the program.
- Links to faculty and staff directory information.

YSU’s catalog in addition to providing the year’s academic calendar provides additional information for each academic program:

- Department and program overviews.

- Curriculum sheets.
- Four-year plans (or equivalent for two-year and graduate programs).
- Faculty rosters.
- Learning outcomes.

UPDATE: YSU's degree-audit system originally established as uAchieve helped current students and advisors keep track of completed, current and needed courses to complete a degree. A new system called Penguin Pass replaced uAchieve in 2021 as a means to facilitate communication and understanding by students and their families about their progress toward earning their degree. The new system assists potential transfer students in knowing direct course application to YSU courses for planning their degree options.

### **University Requirements and Policies**

- Undergraduate and graduate student catalogs explain college-wide policies, admission procedures and deadlines, tuition and fees, financial aid, and academic programs and their requirements.
- The Student Code of Conduct informs students of their rights and responsibilities, explains hearing and appeal processes, defines student conduct record keeping, and identifies situations that require parent or guardian notification.
- The Office of Admission's webpage information is organized by type of student to be admitted (such as new freshman or transfer). Non-traditional students are provided information specific to them, such as the alternate-credit program and information for veterans. The admissions area of the website serves additional constituents, such as high-school guidance counselors, providing links to information about college readiness for students with special needs and NCAA eligibility for college-bound athletes.
- The Penguin Student Handbook provides a single-source document for general information for students. It includes the Code, Campus Rec Policies, and academic policies and procedures.
- The undergraduate catalog includes information for international students related to English language and health-insurance requirements, and other academic credentials needed for admission.
- The International Programs Office webpage provides additional information for students from abroad, divided into information for future, newly admitted and current students.
- Information for students (and their families) living in campus housing is on the Housing and Residence Life webpage. It provides students with a calendar of events, the Resident Handbook, and information on safety.

- The Student Right to Know and other student consumer information are available from the [Student Consumer Information](#) link in the footer of each webpage on YSU's website.

### **Faculty and Staff Information**

- Faculty and staff contact information is accessible through the online directory located on YSU's homepage. Faculty listings are available on college, department, or program webpages and the academic catalogs.
- Staff members who provide student support services are identified on associated webpages, and their contact information is listed.
- Faculty members provide contact information and office hours on course syllabi by the seventh day of each term, per the *YSU-OEA Agreement* ([article 28.3](#)).

### **Costs**

- The [Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships](#) and the [Tuition and Financial Aid webpages](#) display tuition, fees, room and board, a financial-aid estimator, and other costs. Both webpages provide information about FAFSA, financial aid, the federal Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for continuation of loans, and other financial-related topics.
- The academic catalog includes a [breakdown](#) of tuition, fees, and other charges.

### **Governance/Control**

- Information about the Board of Trustees (BOT) is available through its [webpage](#). The BOT receives authority from Ohio Revised Code and provides governing control. Profiles of each trustee, BOT bylaws, meeting schedule, minutes, and policies are regularly uploaded and updated.
- General information is presented on the “[about YSU](#)” page of the website, including the governance structure and YSU's Mission, Vision, and Core Values.
- Bargaining-unit agreements are downloadable from the [HR webpage](#).
- Minutes and recordings of Academic Senate meetings and meeting dates are on the [Academic Senate webpage](#). Minutes reflect the Senate's responsibility for developing or modifying academic policies.

### **Sources**

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## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

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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.

### Argument

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

The Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) is a cabinet-level agency that oversees public higher education. YSU's Board of Trustees (BOT) consists of 11 trustees appointed by the governor. Chapter 3356 of the Ohio Revised Code authorizes the BOT to employ, fix the compensation of, and remove the president and such professors, teachers, and other employees as may be deemed necessary.

The BOT follows best practices recommended by the Association of Governing Boards (AGB). Detailed BOT expectations and activities beyond those declared in Chapter 3356 of the Ohio Revised Code are recorded in the BOT Bylaws.

UPDATE: In 2019, the YSU BOT was selected over 40 other boards to receive the John W. Nason award for Board Leadership from the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. The ABG represents 1,300 member boards representing 2000 institutions. The Nason Board Leadership award is the nation's top honor for governing boards. This award recognizes exceptional leadership and initiative. In December 2021, Trustee James (Ted) Roberts was appointed to the same association's Council for Student Success. The Council is an advisory group from member institutions, systems and foundations with a purpose to shape strategic thinking, priorities and actions of BOT to elevate student success outcomes across Higher Education.

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

UPDATE: As noted previously a priority action of the BOT was to pass the resolution in 2018 to support YSU's development of a new strategic plan and adoption in 2019 of the "Take Charge of Our Future" focus for guiding university decisions and prioritizing resource allocation. Other examples of priority deliberations of the BOT include these important activities:

- October 2021: Resolution YSU Future State: Crafting A Sustainable Future in Consideration of the Fall 2021 14th-Day Enrollment Report, Enrollment Trends, and Other Pertinent Factors.
- April 2021: Resolution to support faculty voluntary separation/retirement program to enhance the financial situation of the university.

- December 2020: Resolution to endorse the 2020 State of Ohio Completion Plan that also aligns with the Plan for Strategic Actions to Take Charge of Our Future.
- April 2020: Special meeting to review academic initiatives and efforts for continued education of students during the Covid-19 pandemic. This meeting also addressed medical safety procedures such as testing, social distancing and contact tracing.
- December 1019: Resolution to amend and align tuition and fees for online programs.

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

As per the Bylaws, BOT meetings are held quarterly and are open to the public. Agendas are prepared with input from multiple internal and external constituents. Business to be presented to the BOT by anyone other than a trustee or YSU's president is submitted in writing to the chair, who refers it to the appropriate committee.

The BOT includes student representation and faculty representation on its Academic and Student Affairs Committee to gain diverse perspective about YSU interests. BOT members attend Academic Senate meetings to keep abreast of the Senate's work and hear faculty's academic concerns.

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

The BOT Bylaws state the importance of freedom from undue influence. University policy 3356 3 10 on investments states individual trustees must annually submit a statement disclosing the nature of any relationship with financial institutions involved with YSU's non-endowment and endowment funds to the BOT chair. Trustees undergo yearly Ohio Ethics training, which includes undue influence and conflict of interest issues, and they file a yearly Financial Disclosure Statement with the Ohio Ethics Commission.

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

YSU policies delineate the roles of BOT members, president, and faculty in management of institutional and academic matters:

- University Policy 3356 9 08 (Selection and evaluation of the president) states the president, as CEO, is responsible for the overall operation of the institution, and the president executes the power and authority of the BOT in leadership, institutional strategic planning, and development of the institution.

- University Policy 3356 10 10 (Academic Senate) states the Academic Senate has primary responsibility for developing new policies or making changes in existing policies integral and essential to YSU's academic functions and activities.

## **Sources**

## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

### Argument

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YSU believes that freedom of inquiry is essential to scholarly development and application of knowledge. Protecting and encouraging academic freedom, freedom of expression, and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning are woven throughout the university.

YSU's value for academic freedoms are emphasized in many guidance documents and policies:

- UPDATE: YSU's mission statement embraces personal development and empowerment through knowledge. We root behaviors, decisions and actions in the achievement of integrity mutual respect collegiality, equity and inclusion. This stated university value directly fosters a climate of academic freedom on campus. YSU joined other public institutions via a letter from the Inter-university Council of Ohio to express our concern that the state's house bill 327 could infer censorship in the classroom.
- UPDATE: We also believe in our role to develop intellectual and personal qualities by following guidelines for free and orderly exchange of ideas. These are outlined in our 2021 report submitted in accordance with state law ORC 3345.0211-3345.0213 known as the "Forming Open and Robust University Minds Act (FORUM)".
- The *YSU-OEA Agreement* (Article 17) outlines academic freedom and responsibilities for full-time faculty members.
- UPDATE: *The Student Code of Conduct* Article 1, Section A.1, identifies the "right of free inquiry, expression, and/or assembly" as a basic right. The Code is approved each year by the BOT. The new student complaint portal lists "Unlawful, unreasonable, or arbitrary limitations on expressive activity" as one of the categories of complaint a student can choose when filing a concern with the Office of Dean of Students. The student's academic program, assisted by the Office of Dean of Students investigates and resolves student complaint.
- UPDATE: Student Media Policy (University policy 3356-8-02) states that YSU "recognizes and supports the establishment and operation of student media organizations as important media for communication to the university and as training laboratories for students." In 2021 the student media committee updated the Student Media Governing Document.
- Acceptable Use of University Technology Policy (University policy 3356-4-09) notes the importance of academic freedom and establishes rules to govern use of university technology.

- Persona non Grata Policy does not “limit or restrict the constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech and peaceful assembly even as it seeks to maintain an effective and safe learning, living, and working environment for all employees, students, and visitors.”
- Research Misconduct Policy establishes that “Among the basic principles of YSU are the pursuit of truth and the responsible exercise of academic freedom. From these principles derive such ideals and values as the freedom and openness of inquiry, academic honesty, and integrity in scholarship and teaching.”

Although these documents specify the protection of academic freedom and freedom of expression, each notes students’ or faculty members’ responsibilities when exercising their freedom, which includes refraining from speaking for YSU unless officially designated as a spokesperson and presenting ideas respectfully.

UPDATE: As the following examples demonstrate, YSU provides opportunities for community members, faculty, students, and staff to experience and express diverse viewpoints through campus events and ongoing speaker series:

- 2021 Thomas Colloquium of Free Enterprise speaker Bozama Saint John spoke on her experience as a female of color at Uber and Netflix
- The Tunnel of Oppression is an annual interactive event to promote the understanding of the experiences of others. During the 2021 event, Carmella Hill, Dir of Power to Hope services discussed how mental health is impacted by oppression and trauma.
- The Dr. Ray Energy and Environmental Speaker Series focuses on sometimes controversial conservation and environmental issues
- The Cliff Guest Artist Series continues a forum for artistic expression with more than 400 events in art, music and theater show-casing a wide range of artistic expression.

## **Sources**

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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.

### Argument

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

UPDATE: YSU is committed to fostering high-quality research in support of its mission while providing compliance, oversight, and support services to ensure integrity in scholarly pursuits. Our mission emphasizes research that benefits our local community. YSU is a founding member of the Excellence Training Center, a community consortium serving to facilitate research and innovation opportunities in the Youngstown and nearby communities. This consortium links YSU compliance resources such as grant oversight and research protocol reviews to community involved research.

YSU ensures research integrity through policies and agreements:

- YSU policies related to integrity in research are reviewed by the BOT regularly. These policies cover the following:
  - research misconduct
  - intellectual property rights
  - objectivity in research
  - avoidance of conflicts of interest
  - commitment in sponsored research
  - integrity in research with human subjects and animals
  - integrity in research performed by affiliated scholars.
- The *YSU-OEA Agreement* (Article 26) covers criteria for external funding, research professorships, intellectual property rights, and publication costs.
- The Academic Senate Research Committee recommends policy about internally and externally funded research to the full Senate.

Researchers working with human or animal subjects complete ethics-in-research training via CITI before their research is approved by the Human Subject Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC):

- The YSU IRB is registered with the US Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP). The IRB Handbook, available on the IRB webpage, explains regulations and procedures for protecting human subjects.

- The YSU IACUC provides oversight of animal laboratories and reviews animal-use research protocols. YSU applies policies and regulations set forth by the Public Health Service's Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) to ensure humane treatment of vertebrate animals used in research.
- YSU complies with the National Research Council's Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, USDA Animal Welfare Act, and the NIH Public Health Service Policy on the Humane Care and Use of Animals.

YSU complies with safety regulations and ethical mandates in managing biological substances and chemicals through the following plans and resources:

- The YSU Occupational Health Exposure Plan is available to researchers from the Biosafety in Research area on the Office of Research webpage.
- The Office of Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety provides compliance oversight for the Occupational Health Exposure program.
- The Chemical Management Center assists the campus community with adhering to the Occupational Health Exposure Plan.

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

UPDATE: The Office of Research supports grant application and award processes and campus-wide research integrity functions. This office specifically supports undergraduate and graduate-student research opportunities via QUEST, the annual forum show-casing student scholarship. The ORS has implemented the Cayuse System to efficiently review and track for compliance all research related to human subjects. This system, now in use for 2 years provides communications among Institutional Review Board (IRB) members, communicates any ethics in research concerns from the IRB to the investigator/s, and provides a means for investigator feedback or revision to address concerns. The system also provides tracking for compliance with human subject research regulations by both the IRB reviewer and investigator/s.

In addition, ORS services include training and guidance for grant-funded and non-funded research to ensure compliance with federal, state, and YSU research standards:

- The Office of Research Services (ORS) website provides the Uniform Guidance policy and regulation documents for faculty and staff engaged in funded research activities. During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic the ORS guided researchers through a safe continuation or cessation of projects involving human subjects.
- ORS provides resources on such topics as Student Intellectual Property Agreement, the Handbook on Ownership of Intellectual Property, and Patenting and Commercialization, which help students and faculty understand their roles and responsibilities during research.

- ORS provides agreement forms and tracking for activities such as agreements for mutual non-disclosure of valuable information, export control, and transfer of research animals.
- The University Research Council (URC) reviews patent applications and research protocol applications for the URC fund awards.
- Faculty, staff, and students working on funded research are required to complete Responsible Conduct of Research training provided by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), an internet-based provider of research education.

Faculty members, department chairs, and professional administrative employees must demonstrate professional conduct that exhibits honesty, integrity, competence, respect, and responsibility:

- University Policy 3356 9 06 governs professional misconduct related to sponsored programs, use of human subjects in research, use and care of animals in research, research misconduct, conflicts of interest and/or commitment in sponsored programs, nondiscrimination and equal opportunity, sexual harassment, and computer use.
- The Professional Conduct Committee of the Academic Senate investigates allegations of faculty or staff professional misconduct in accordance with this policy. If a person accused of professional misconduct is a member of a bargaining unit, the hearing process and sanctions are administered consistent with the contract for that member. If the person is not a member of a bargaining unit, sanctions imposed are administered according to applicable YSU policies.

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

YSU supports and guides students in ethical research and use of resources via university policy, guidebooks, the Tech Desk, courses, and Maag Library:

- University Policy 3356 4 09 (Acceptable Use of University Technology Resources) governs how students, faculty, and staff may use technical resources to obtain and communicate information.
- The Information Technology webpage provides the Security Manual detailing requirements for users of campus technology to protect private information and ensure security of IT systems.
- The Tech Desk provides students technical assistance for hardware and software and provides security information via downloads and an FAQ section on its webpage.

Ethical use of information goes beyond security and protecting privacy:

- All students are required to take English 1551: Writing 2, a course focused on research-based argumentation and citation of academic sources.
- Maag Library provides an Information Literacy program that acquaints students with the scope and organization of scholarly information. This program includes online presentations required for freshman composition classes.
- Maag Library provides students with learning opportunities about issues associated with intellectual property, copyright, and fair use of information as well as how to avoid plagiarism.
- YSU's Writing Center offers additional opportunity for students to learn how to access and apply valid information.
- UPDATE: The First-Year Experience course, required for all incoming freshman students has been replaced with the 1550 Success Seminar which includes learning about information literacy.

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

YSU has standards and ensures compliance for academic honesty and integrity by students in the following ways:

- The Student Code of Conduct, established by university policy, governs when an episode of academic dishonesty occurs. Article III, Student Conduct Standards, defines academic dishonesty, and Article V, Academic Dishonesty, outlines the process for investigating and resolving allegations of academic misconduct.
- UPDATE: In 2021, restructuring within the Office of Student Affairs assigned the oversight of academic integrity to the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct. Academic dishonesty procedures are now centralized for reporting and imposing sanctions. This restructure ensures each student receives due process and there is follow up for repeat offenders.
- The Student Academic Grievance Subcommittee of the Academic Senate investigates student grievances about dishonesty occurrences, enforces implementation of sanctions, and recommends policy related to student academic grievances.
- Since 2016, graduate faculty advisors have been required to use iThenticate software to help students writing theses or dissertations to recognize plagiarism and ensure originality.

**Sources**

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## 2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

### Summary

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YSU's administrative structure provides guidance for ethical management of financial and personnel resources but allows administration, faculty, and staff to create the learning environment needed to meet the strategic plan.

YSU offers training and support services to facilitate integrity in academic conduct and scholarly practice of faculty and staff. It supports work performed by staff in all divisions with oversight provided by the BOT. YSU enforces policies related to honesty and integrity in all areas and by all people on campus.

YSU offers many opportunities for the campus community to experience diversity of viewpoints, including faculty- and student-led activities, and guest presentations. Freedom of expression and a culture of community are foundations for institutional policies and are promoted throughout the university.

YSU meets the requirements of this criterion by carrying out its daily operations within the university and the surrounding community with integrity and responsible conduct. It recognizes the need to improve communication and shared governance and is undertaking actions to improve.

UPDATE: While data is used to inform important decisions as we implement "Take Charge of Our Future" initiatives, this data is shared and opportunity for constituents to provide input is routinely provided. Feedback and guidance from students, faculty, staff and when appropriate, the community, are considered. Decisions are communicated to those affected by them, as exemplified during the recent program review and program determination action. Through the evidence described in this criterion, we have shown where implementing the actions developed from our strategic planning is resulting in:

- proactive student interventions and resources for academic and non-academic student challenges
- diversity, equity and inclusion programming occurring across campus communities.
- processes and human resources dedicated to enrolling and increasing success by underrepresented students and employees.

The evidence we have provided shows policy, guidance and compliance monitoring to ensure YSU acts with integrity in all aspects of our functions. We have also shown that caring and responsibility toward others are the hallmarks that shows what integrity at YSU is rooted in.

### Sources

*There are no sources.*

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