



Lincoln University

LEARN. LIBERATE. LEAD.

Self-Study Summary



Message from the President

Dear Community,

This booklet, “The Middle States Commission on Higher Education: A Review of Achievements at Lincoln University,” summarizes the self-study report created as part of our decennial review.



The strategic planning process, coupled with the self-study process, provided an opportunity to inventory our progress and set goals for addressing continued challenges.

Overall, internal and external members of the community learned that Lincoln University’s history and legacy of producing world leaders, its global engagement, and its commitment to social justice represent strengths upon which the University continues to build. The University’s historical liberal arts curriculum and its strength in the sciences and pre-professional programs remains its niche for preparing socially responsible, culturally competent leaders and professionals. The University attracts bright and motivated students, both graduate and undergraduate, who are nurtured and guided by a dedicated faculty. The institution also has been very diligent in ensuring that its financial resources are stewarded with the highest level of integrity.

The institution’s strategic goals have been defined to support the mission of the University. The strategic planning process also assured the University that its charge is strong, relevant for the success of today’s graduates, and integrated in the institution’s daily work.

Lincoln has revised many of its policies and practices to maintain their adaptability to the changing environment in which institutions of higher education operate today.

Our mission, as a liberal arts institution with select graduate programs, is being advanced through a coherent curriculum and qualified faculty. Undergraduates have the opportunity to explore the academy while taking a deeper dive into a major field of study. Their classroom experiences are greatly complemented by co-curricular opportunities that allow them to explore careers and hone important skills. Graduate programs offer flexible hours to support working adults and provide opportunities for mentoring and research.

To ensure student success, the University is providing seamless guidance and support for students and better coordinating high-impact student engagement opportunities. Students have great

opportunities to explore leadership while working to develop and hone essential skills such as speaking and writing.

Investing greatly in developing a solid and sustainable assessment culture, the University is now facilitating the collection and sharing of data; standardizing policies, practices, and reporting processes; and providing sustenance to assessment efforts.

Lincoln's strategic plans and budget planning over the past 10 years have helped to propel the University forward and keep it stable during turbulent economic times. The institution has committed itself to periodic assessment of the strategic goals and identification of any adjustments needed to meet the evolving needs of the University. Academic planning processes afford the University the vehicles needed to make recommendations on general education, majors, and assessment needs.

The Board of Trustees recently conducted a review of its bylaws which resulted in several changes to language and structure that clarify the board's overall policy and governance roles. In addition, a fresh restructuring of administrative areas has created a better division of labor among those with oversight of curricular and co-curricular units. Finally, the addition of a Faculty Council, as a liaison committee between the administration and the faculty committees, is improving the ease of shared governance on the campus.

Sincerely,



Brenda A. Allen '81
President

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Standard I: Mission and Vision

Overview

At the founding of Lincoln University (originally Ashmun Institute), the charter indicated it would be “an institution of learning for the scientific, classical and theological education of colored youth of the male sex.” Today, the core mission remains to educate and prepare Lincoln’s students for success in a global environment. The mission statement was revised and ratified by the Board of Trustees on April 21, 2018 to reiterated the liberal arts as foundational to the institution’s educational goals. The revised mission states that:

“Lincoln University, the nation’s first degree-granting Historically Black College and University (HBCU), educates and empowers students to lead their communities and change the world.

It does so by:

- Providing a rigorous liberal arts education featuring active and collaborative learning;
- Integrating academic and co-curricular programs with the University’s distinctive legacy of global engagement, social responsibility and leadership development; and
- Cultivating the character, values and standards of excellence needed to enable students to become responsible citizens of a global community.”

Lincoln’s mission encompasses the belief that the best method for preparing graduates is to develop their intellectual prowess by using curricular and co-curricular opportunities for practicing and honing important skills. Lincoln University’s curriculum challenges students to broadly explore the academy through general education and to use that basic knowledge to inform their deeper dive within their major. Students are encouraged to seek co-curricular opportunities that provide further avenues to develop intellectually. In addition, Lincoln’s rich historical legacy focused on social justice provides a basis from which students are challenged to confront and engage current problems facing society.

Analysis

The mission serves as the core guiding principle to engage different constituents. The strategic plan will act as the guiding document in each element of the University's work.

Continuous Improvement

- The institution will continue to engage all through multiple levels of engagement throughout the University.
- The strategic plan will guide the work of each individual unit, aligning their specific goals with the institution's overall goals and breathing life into the mission.

Conclusion

The priorities outlined during the strategic planning process support the mission and goals of the University. The institution conducted a thorough, highly consultative, evidence-based review of its purpose, needs, overall aims, and priorities. Members of the community, including faculty, staff, and alumni, helped to guide the planning process and shaped both the general directions and specific recommendations. Through this process, the University assured itself that the mission is strong, relevant for the success of today's graduates, and integrated in the daily work of the institution.

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Overview

Lincoln University has demonstrated its commitment to ethics and integrity in the management of its academic mission through policies and practices which apply to faculty, students, and staff, its governing board, and its connections with local and federal governmental agencies and with other external organizations. The University, through its officers and appropriate divisions/departments, provides openness and honesty in its connections with the community at large. Over time, the policies and practices and the rules and regulations, both internal to the institution and externally mandated, have changed. In the face of such change, Lincoln strives to maintain: academic freedom; fair treatment of faculty, students, and staff; and diversity and non-discrimination in its policies regarding admissions and employment practices.

Analysis

A review of policies, practices, and processes shows that a commitment to core standards of ethics and integrity is indispensable and defining of an effective higher educational institution.

In 2013, the Office of Internal Audit and Compliance was disbanded in response to financial constraints. Since that time, the general approach to audit and compliance has evolved to an enterprise risk management framework. The Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees approved a motion to contract with an outside firm to provide an overall risk assessment and to recommend the best approach to risk management going forward.

The director of institutional equity, a recently expanded role for the Title IX coordinator, is responsible for updating all policies related to non-discrimination and harassment as needed, conducting training, and raising awareness. The director will also assume responsibility for other policies related to diversity and inclusion, including the notice of non-discrimination and equal opportunity.

Continuous Improvement

Two areas of policies and practices that will continue to undergo review and revision are public relations and public safety. In May 2018, the University hired a new vice president for advancement who assumed responsibility for the Office of Communications and Public Relations. Since her arrival, the University has initiated a complete overhaul of the website and all print materials to ensure that the information is consistent with the brand and that messages are related to the current strategic priorities. Additionally, in March 2018, an external review of the Department of Public Safety was commissioned in response to several complaints from faculty, staff, and students. The review will result in recommendations to better integrate policies and procedures within Public Safety with the University's core mission.

Conclusion

During the last decade, the University has conducted comprehensive reviews or has commissioned external assessments of many of its policies and practices. In response, Lincoln revised many of its policies and practices to maintain their adaptability to the changing environment in which an institution of higher education operates today. The University acknowledges that change happens rapidly, and that to protect against errors in judgment or breaches in trust, it must remain vigilant. Senior administrators, faculty, and staff are well aware of the potential consequences if the University ceases its constant reviews to ensure that the University remains honest and fair in everything it does for its students and employees.

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

Overview

Student learning is at the heart of Lincoln University's mission. Students are offered abundant learning opportunities in both general education and their major curricula, as well as through co-curricular activities.

Analysis

- The faculty plays an important role in setting the curriculum and assessing its impact. Through design and delivery, students at Lincoln University are afforded educational experiences that prepare them for success beyond graduation.
- The faculty's work is complemented by administrative offices charged with coordinating and delivering co-curricular options which further provide opportunities to develop and hone important skills. The ultimate goals of the curriculum are to create intellectually flexible citizens who are capable of responding to a rapidly changing economy, are at home in the world, and are dedicated to social change.
- Lincoln University defines co-curricular activities as all opportunities offered outside of the classroom that can be structured to further facilitate the development of essential skills such as critical thinking, communication, and leadership. To this end, students participate in high-impact activities such as service learning, research, community projects, and study abroad, as well as career development through workshops, lectures, and internships.
- Hiring and maintaining excellent faculty is critical to the delivery of the student learning experience.
- The adult completion and graduate programs offer students the opportunity to acquire degrees within programs designed to help working adults earn the credentials needed to advance in the workplace, retool toward new careers, or simply broaden professional skills and perspectives.

Through its curricular and co-curricular opportunities, Lincoln strives to educate students for success in the 21st century by emphasizing transferable skills such as writing, critical thinking, teamwork, cultural competence, and leadership. The faculty body is the core that ensures that students are well served and the mission is fulfilled.

Students are well supported by the full-time faculty with a full-time equivalent ratio of undergraduate students to faculty of 15:1. The distribution of full professors, associate professors, and assistant professors is fairly even.

Continuous Improvement

- Increase resources in the areas of student support so that the University can provide the type of guidance needed to help students negotiate the many options and pathways available in a liberal arts environment.
- Make the Lincoln University School of Adult and Continuing Education a national model for innovative adult completion, graduate, and certificate programs. Toward these ends, over the next several years the University will work to increase the number of full-time faculty members in order to reduce the faculty workload.

Conclusion

At the heart of student learning is the Lincoln University mission. Students are offered multiple opportunities to engage in learning from general education courses of study, major courses of study, and co-curricular activities.



Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Overview

Lincoln University is committed to supporting student success. Support for the student experience begins with the admissions process, where students receive guidance from their applications to financial aid packages and acceptance to the University. Efforts to support student success are evidenced by improving graduation rates. Restructuring of the student success units is providing seamless guidance and support for students, as well as offering better coordination of high-impact student engagement opportunities, academic support, and campus life. Finally, expansion of recreational options is providing much needed outlets, especially toward promoting wellness.

As evidenced by the improved recruitment, retention, persistence and completion rates, current efforts continue to be refined to support students. In order to offer a supportive environment that positively impacts student success, Lincoln has:

- Expanded academic support services consisting of targeted advising, professional and peer tutoring, placement testing and assessment;
- Implemented a class deans' model;
- Overhauled student life units to enhance campus life;
- Increased offerings in high-impact practices, including co-curricular programs and student engagement; and
- Restructured the department of athletics to include recreation services in order to create a more robust and pervasive approach toward student health, wellness, and recreation services.

Analysis

Lincoln University supports the student experience through its programs and services. The University is committed to continuously improving its services that help maximize student success.

A few service areas are engaged in reviewing processes to improve access and delivery. Conversations have begun relative to the use of standardized tests as a criterion for admissions. Over the next academic year, the University will engage its constituents in a conversation about the best admission criteria so that false indicators do not block access to Lincoln. The admission office is also looking to increase transfer opportunities with local community colleges in Pennsylvania. The office has begun to develop relationships with more local colleges in order to ease the transfer process for such students.

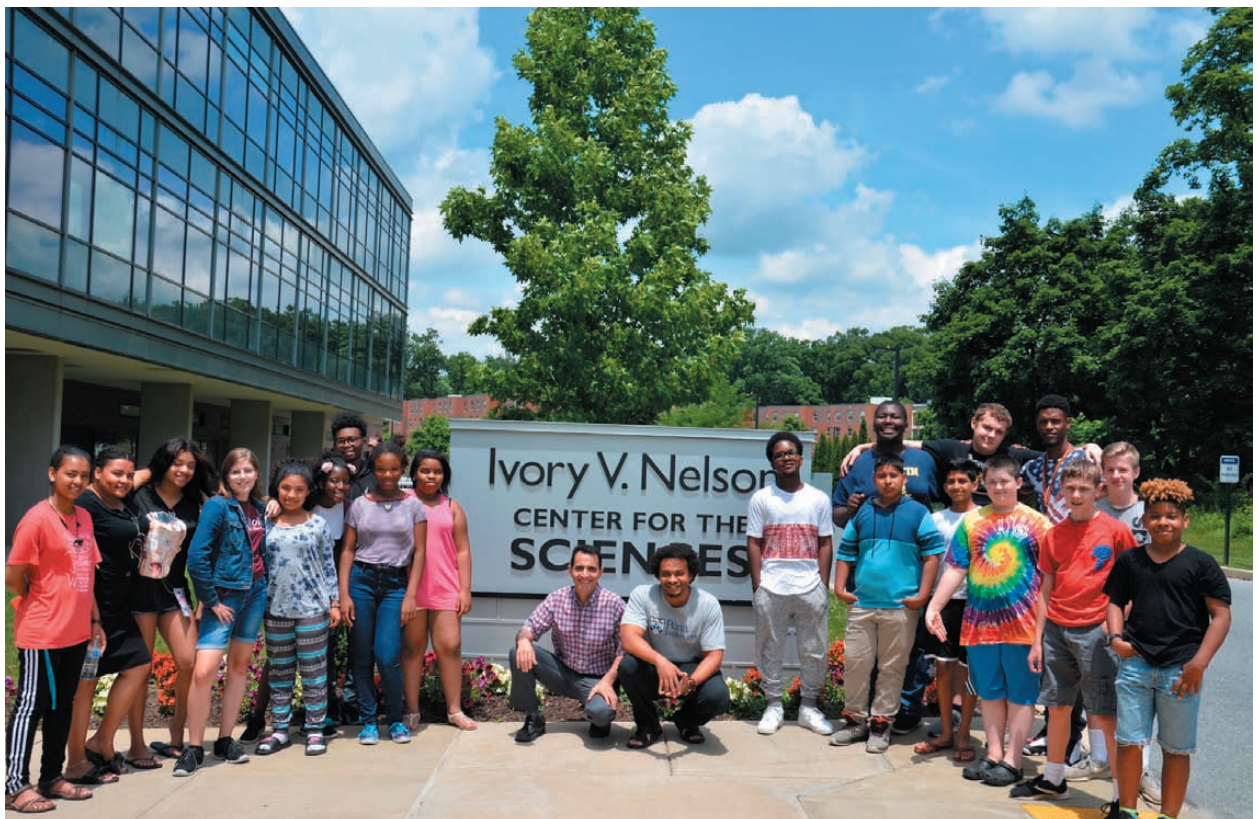
As part of the University's strategic plan for operational efficiency, Lincoln provides information on tuition and fees, and room and board as established by University policy. Communication to students regarding direct and indirect institutional costs is also available, but it lacks clear and accessible information and details about payment options, grants, scholarships, loans, and loan counseling. This concern is being addressed by several working groups. Also, the University plans to expand and provide clearer information for affinity groups, specifically students with disabilities, veterans, international students, student-athletes, transfer students, and undocumented students, on its financial aid website.

Continuous Improvement

- Improve the process for matriculating transfer students.
- Establish baseline data on newly implemented areas for overall program effectiveness and improvement.

Conclusion

At Lincoln University, students are placed in the center from the admissions process through commencement. Restructuring the student success division and expanding recreational services provides seamless guidance and support so students can succeed.



Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Overview

Lincoln University has made enormous strides over the past 10 years in developing a solid and sustainable assessment culture among faculty, staff, and administration. The self-study provided clear indications that the institutional commitment to assessing educational effectiveness and student learning is evidenced by the implementation of an assessment infrastructure. The resources allocated to assessing educational effectiveness have been instrumental in facilitating data collection and sharing; and standardizing policies, practices, and reporting processes. To successfully support these assessments, the University has:

- Developed the Office of Assessment & Accreditation and enhanced it to become the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning;
- Hired a director of assessment and an assistant provost/director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning;
- Developed the General Education Committee and conducted a four-year comprehensive review and assessment of all institutional learning outcomes and the general education program;
- Implemented an institution-wide assessment schedule and assessment platform used by each department to conduct assessment and access assessment resources;
- Created the Institutional Planning and Assessment Council and, after an institution-wide restructure, transformed the council into the Strategic Planning Council and Strategic Budgeting Committee to ensure integration of assessment, planning, and budgeting;
- Expanded the role of the Faculty Committee on Assessment and Evaluation, and assessment-targeted faculty development grants; and
- Produced reports, using survey data, on student engagement, experience, satisfaction, and outcomes for faculty, staff, and administration, to use in their assessment process.

Analysis

Assessment at the institutional level has evolved to include the assessment of, but is not limited to, strategic goals, institutional learning outcomes as delivered through the general education curriculum, co-curricular programs and experiences, First-Year Program, extracurricular activities, student success programs, and support units.

Continuous Improvement

- Improve the assessment of academic programs, student support units, and administrative offices to ensure that students are offered integrative services and functioning with educational effectiveness.
- Focus on assessment of student learning, student experience, and student satisfaction in all areas of the institution by hiring a director of assessment.
- Use the newly created assistant provost and director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) position to offer professional development resources to faculty and staff of co-curricular programs related to assessment efforts.

Conclusion

Lincoln University continues to make significant strides in developing a solid and sustainable assessment culture among faculty, staff, and administration. The allocation of resources towards assessing educational effectiveness has been and continues to be key for data facilitation, collection, and distribution.



Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement Summary

Overview

Lincoln University's commitment to planning and evaluation is comprehensive. The latest of these efforts is the plan entitled "Reimagining the Legacy: Learn. Liberate. Lead," which was adopted by the Board of Trustees in April 2018. This comprehensive, integrated plan defines University goals and communicates priorities. The plan contains five themes that focus on developing a culture to support student success and to identify and re-align resources.

Lincoln's financial assets and revenue streams are used to support the strategic imperatives. The institution's revenue from tuition, fees, and state appropriations is carefully managed toward funding the highest priorities. The endowment has grown over the past five years, adding much needed revenue to the operating budget. The current strategic plan places even greater focus on using assets to support the University's mission and calls for a concerted effort to diversify revenues in order to maintain future financial stability.

Analysis

The self-study review revealed that Lincoln University has made great strides in the areas of assessment and the use of data to improve effectiveness. The institution has provided resources and infrastructures to support these goals. Nonetheless, there is continued focus in some areas.

Continuous Improvement

- Commit to meaningful and productive planning and budgeting efforts.
- Create a new dashboard to monitor and evaluate progress toward the University's goals.
- Find better ways to develop and incorporate institutional data in the University's evaluation processes and seek more external perspectives in planning and evaluation efforts.

Conclusion

Lincoln's strategic plans and budget processes over the past 10 years have helped to propel the University forward and keep it stable during turbulent economic times. The most recent planning processes were designed to provide maximum input from the University community, especially in generating discussions about our effectiveness as an institution, what the University should do differently, and what plans and resources are needed to accomplish the most important goals. The priority placed on planning in the approach to managing the University's finances has guided the decision-making through turbulent times. The processes have withstood the test and the University will continue to focus on improving the approach as the University moves forward with the strategic goals.

Standard VII: Governance

Overview

As a part of the strategic planning process coupled with self-study activities, Lincoln University underwent a major administrative restructuring during the 2017-2018 academic year. The primary outcomes were the realignment of the academic administration and a better division of labor among those with oversight of curricular and co-curricular units.

- Lincoln University's comprehensive review of its administrative structure fueled governance reviews by the Board of Trustees and the faculty. The resulting changes have streamlined operations, improved cross-unit functioning, and strengthened accountability.
- Lincoln University is governed by a diverse Board of Trustees that includes representation from key constituents, including the University president, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania delegates, alumni, faculty, and student representatives. Each member signs a conflict-of-interest statement that places them under a continuing obligation to disclose any real or potential conflicts that may exist or may arise.
- In Lincoln's view, faculty governance includes not only the management of matters affecting the faculty, such as faculty appointments, promotion, tenure, creation of academic programs, and evaluation of faculty, but also faculty participation in setting Lincoln's academic priorities.
- Administrators regularly engage with faculty and students.

Analysis

The University's review and analysis of its structure, in conjunction with the recent strategic planning processes, has resulted in the restructuring of important administrative areas and in better oversight of curricular and co-curricular units. In addition, overall institutional governance has been improved.

Continuous Improvement

- Assessment of recent restructuring and reviews of institutional policies and procedures should continue.

Conclusion

Several activities that were simultaneously conducted or conducted in close continuum allowed for enhanced reflection of the necessary activities focused towards student success. Consequently, Lincoln University underwent significant administrative restructuring during the 2017-2018 academic year. This resulted in a major realignment of the academic administration, a University-wide division of labor, and enhanced oversight of curricular and co-curricular units.

Self-Study Summary and Conclusion

The preparation of this document was greatly enhanced by parallel self-study and strategic planning activities. Through these joint efforts, the University community joined in an extensive review and analysis of the past plans, fact books, survey data, history books, practices, policies, and other documentation toward understanding the historical course of the University. Additionally, the University held several focus group discussions with broad sections of the student body to ascertain a more in-depth understanding and gather evidence of their insights and concerns. Overall, the staff learned that Lincoln University meets the standards and criteria as set forth by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The institution's mission drives every aspect of its operations and serves as the foundation by which it allocates its resources. Lincoln uses data to assess its effectiveness in reaching its goals and to initiate any improvements where needed.





Self-Study Leadership Team

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As of 3/19.

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MISSION

Lincoln University, the nation's first degree-granting Historically Black College and University (HBCU), educates and empowers students to lead their communities and change the world.

It does so by:

- Providing a rigorous liberal arts education featuring active and collaborative learning;
- Integrating academic and co-curricular programs with the University's distinctive legacy of global engagement, social responsibility, and leadership development; and
- Cultivating the character, values, and standards of excellence needed to enable students to become responsible citizens of a global community.

VISION

Lincoln University will be a national model for both 21st century liberal arts undergraduate education and innovative graduate and professional programs.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 et seq., and its implementing regulations, 34 C.F.R. Part 106, prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in the University's programs or activities. It is the expressed policy of Lincoln University to comply with Title IX. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Gerard Garlic, Title IX Coordinator, Room 126B, Lincoln University, 1570 Baltimore Pike, Lincoln University, PA 19352, phone 484-746-0000 or Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, The Wanamaker Building, 100 Penn Square East, Suite 515, Philadelphia, PA 19107-3323, phone 215-656-8541, fax 215-656-8605, email: ocr.philadelphia@ed.gov.

Lincoln University is regionally accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

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As of 3/19.



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