SACSCOC (STILL) MATTERS:
An ongoing column addressing compliance issues

Institutional Effectiveness High Impact Practices (IE/HIP):

1. ALIGNMENT OF MISSION

By
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With this column, I initiate a different perspective on SACSCOC matters: whereas prior columns have attempted to exeges the standards themselves, this new perspective will focus on institutional effectiveness High Impact Practices (IE/HIP) coincident to and culturally significant to the implementation of IE standards specifically at the academic/nonacademic programmatic/departmental level. As illustrated below, the focus of this series of articles will be those issues specifically targeted by the PECC’s Targeted Issues Checklist, the first of which is “1. Alignment of Mission:”

Image 1: The PECC’s Targeted Issues Checklist:

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PECC Targeted Issues Checklist – rev 2015, p. 1
MISSION DEVELOPMENT AND ALIGNMENT:

As the SACSCOC Resource Manual notes: “A clearly defined and comprehensive mission statement addressing all aspects of institutional function is absolutely fundamental to the structure of an institution’s effectiveness review” (p. 15). In point of fact, mission relevance underlies most – if not all, SACSCOC standards, particularly those that deal with institutional finance, faculty, and academic program content, such as CR 2.7.2, CR 2.8, CR 2.11.1, CS 3.7.1, and FR 4.2. Institutionwide - as opposed to unitwide - IE is addressed in CR 2.5, which cumulates in the statement “demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission” (Principles, p. 18). Yet, posited that all standards are essentially bright-line prescriptions for compliance, nonetheless, only the following constellation of five CS 3.3.1 IE – AND, likewise, mission relevant - unitwide standards are so incontrovertibly differentiated from other SACSCOC standards by their mandated adherence to an algorithmic, path-based assessment calculus:

**CS 3.3.1:** The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: (Institutional effectiveness)

3.3.1.1. educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
3.3.1.2. administrative support services
3.3.1.3. academic and student support services
3.3.1.4. research within its mission, if appropriate
3.3.1.5. community/public service within its mission, if appropriate

*SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation, p. 27*
In their recent *Harvard Business Review* article, Luca, Kleinberg, and Mullainathan predicate that business- and computer-modeled algorithms are strictly-literal planning tools whose solutions require goal explicitness predicated upon optimal data inputs. Although the SACSCOC algorithm may be better perceived as a data-driven conceptual assessment framework, generally, they note that an algorithm “understands only what is it explicitly told...[and] algorithms focus on the data at hand - and that data often pertains just to short-term outcomes,” which may, however, have long-term implications (2016, pp. 99-101). From a more generic perspective, these assessment elements are what the doyenne of U.S. assessment, Trudy W. Banta, calls “assessment essentials,” which she defines as the “systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development” (2014, pp. 1-2). As is commonly known and as illustrated below, this IE-standards-aligned assessment calculus/algorithm/path is operationalized through the formal agency of the institution’s PECC processes:

**Image 3: Assessment Processflow from SACSCOC Principles to Targeted Issues Checklist (TIC):**

In order to for the institution to identify expected outcomes (i.e.: step one of the assessment algorithm), the department/program needs to predicate a mission which aligns with the institution’s mission. Correspondingly, per SACSCOC, the ultimate responsibility for the governance of the institution rests with an independent, qualified, empowered governing
board, which constitutes the collective entity responsible for determining the mission of the institution. Holding in trust the well-being of the institution, the board is also responsible for ensuring that the institution’s leadership is guided by that mission (SACSCOC Resource Manual, p. 13). As a result, the institutional mission statement — and, by extension, any aligned departmental mission statements — should reflect the institution’s board of director’s operation mandates determinant by the mission.

As SACSCOC defines below, the institution’s mission statement provides the basis and context for evaluating institutional effectiveness, and drives its operational functions as well as foregrounding its follow-on planning and assessment processes:

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

“The mission statement is a comprehensive statement addressing all aspects of institutional function. It is important that the institutional mission statement be formally adopted, published, implemented, and made available to all the constituencies of the institution and to the general public. Because the statement describes what the institution does, it is the foundation for planning and assessment processes. These processes validate that the institution does what it claims and evaluates how well it fulfills its mission statement. The mission statement thus provides the basis and context for evaluating institutional effectiveness.”

*SACSCOC Resource Manual, p. 116*

As further elucidated in the SACSCOC Handbook for Institutions Seeking Reaffirmation, “the [institutional] mission presents a well-articulated statement that outlines institutional philosophy and aspirations, emphasizes unique characteristics of the institution, and appropriately addresses major functions. The components of the mission are operationally defined through strategic goals and corresponding objectives in the strategic plan” (2011, p. 74).

Correspondingly, the SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation constitute member institutions’ quintessential accreditation requirements, obviously, including those for institutional effective, notably CR 2.5 and CS 3.3.1 “that must be met by all applicant, candidate, and member institutions (private for-profit, private not-for-profit, and public).” Most notably, as SACSCOC further elucidates, “…these requirements apply to all institutional programs and services, wherever located or however delivered” (SACSCOC Resource Manual, p. 119). Then, it is with a certain amount of post hoc ergo propter hoc intentionality, that core requirement 2.4, which relates specifically to an institution’s mission, is immediately followed
by core requirement 2.5, which relates to institutional IE. In fact, CR 2.5’s final compliance component reference is “...[that] demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.”

2.4: The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission statement that is specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service. (Institutional mission)

SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation, p. 18

Mission alignment may be viewed as essential to an organization’s performance-directed culture (Dresner, pp 1-20).

Image 4: Dresner’s Performance Culture Maturity Model™ (p. 2)

In his Academy Of Management Executive article, “Aligning organizational processes with mission: The case of service excellence” (2005, p. 56), Crotts uniquely addresses mission alignment from the perspective of an audit process with the following six insightful observations:
In his SACSCOC-consistent article, *Assessment for Excellence*, Astin postulates the paramountcy of an institution’s mission as an all-encompassing driver of assessment: “Any new assessment program should be predicated on a clear and explicitly stated understanding of what the institution’s mission is and should be designed to further that mission. In other words, it should be possible to rationalize the assessment program—in all of its essential details—in terms of how it can facilitate the institution’s basic mission. Existing assessment practices should be scrutinized in terms of that same institutional mission, and those that do not appear to be enhancing that mission should be revised or abandoned” (2012, p. 6)

According to Hull, answering these four essential questions aids in formulation of a comprehensive mission statement:

⇒ What do we do?
⇒ How do we do it?
⇒ Whom do we do it for?
⇒ What value are we bringing?

(Hull, 2013, n. p.)

In a series of PowerPoints developed by Dr. Timothy S. Brophy, the Director of Institutional Assessment at University of Florida, he provides a useful model for producing a programmatic mission statement, e.g.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Mission Alignment Audit Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Define the outcome of the mission in measurable terms (e.g.: customer satisfaction scores).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify key policies, procedures and practices that cue employee behavior (e.g.: job descriptions, annual plans).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Create an audit of whether or not the mission is included in each key policy, procedure, and practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Conduct the audit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Fix and align any item that is out of alignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Compare the audit results against the mission outcome measurement to affirm value of alignment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HIGH IMPACT PRACTICES (HIPs):

a. Predicated on similar desiderata for the institution’s mission as articles in CR2.4, departmental mission statements should be a well-articulated statement that is clearly defined, comprehensively outlines a department’s philosophy and aspirations, and emphasizes its unique characteristics while appropriately addressing major functions.

b. Departmental mission’s should demonstrably align with and cross-validate the institution’s mission. Generally, the institutional mission is broadly written which allows for pedagogical “wiggle room” for development of more specific department-to-institution mission statements.

c. Consequently, departments should demonstrate department-to-institution mission alignment in the most effective and intuitive way possible.

d. Departments subject to secondary accrediting criteria may wish to reflect this
accreditational nexus in their mission statement. Keep in mind, that any mandated secondary accrediting outcomes should likewise be addressed in the departmental mission statement.
e. Do not include mission statement elements over which your department exercises no control and, therefore, for which departmental accountability is not warranted.
f. Since departmental outcomes devolve directly from the department’s mission, they should be specifically articulated in their totality in formulation of departmental missions. NOTE: If outcomes do not align with departmental mission statements, either the derivative outcomes OR the mission statement, itself, should be rewritten in order to achieve the requisite alignment.
g. Any compliance component listed in the mission statement should be measurable. If any quality-based compliance components (confer the examples below) are included in departmental missions statements, they will need to be qualitatively measured.
h. Any compliance component listed in the mission statement should be measurable. If any quality-based compliance components (confer the examples below) are included in departmental missions statements, they will need to qualitatively measured.
i. NOTE: SACSCOC defines “compliance components” as: “Embedded in the wording of the Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, and Federal Requirements (and frequently signaled by numbers, commas, and the use of compound modifiers), the compliance components are the multiple discrete issues that must be addressed for each requirement and standard” (SACSCOC Resource Manual, p. 109).
j. Similarly, any extraneous statements in the mission that are not included as a measurable outcome in the department’s downstream assessment may be perceived as non-compliant.

EXAMPLE:

[Sullivan University Library Mission Statement:]

“The library’s mission is to support the University’s mission in the pursuit of academic, instructional, and institutional excellence by providing curriculum-supportive collections and quality customer service.”

In the nonacademic departmental example above, the library unequivocally articulates its:

1. Alignment with the institution’s mission;
2. Clearly and comprehensively outlines its departmental philosophy and aspirations while appropriately addressing its two major functions.
3. These two functions are later normed as outcomes (i.e.: 1. The library provides curriculum supporting collections; and, 2. The library provides quality customer service) by a major academic library organization, viz.: the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), whose liaison collection development model the library uses.

4. Since the library uses the word “quality” in reference to the “customer service” it hopes to provide, it is incumbent upon the library to metrically demonstrate that it achieves “quality customer service.”

NOTE:

As an example, the library uniquely demonstrates its department-to-institution mission alignment by means of color-coded comparative graphics, e.g.:

Image 6: Mapping the Library Mission Statement to the University Mission Statement

Additionally, the library parses elements of its monthly report into these color-coded sections. As a consequence, department-to-institution mission alignment is acculturated on a monthly basis.
Another example below aligns a program’s mission to the institution’s mission by means of a double-column explanatory narrative.

**Image 7: Double-Column Example of Program-to-Institution Mission Alignment:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs in Fashion and Textiles Mission</th>
<th>Alignment of Program Mission to Institutional Mission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With an emphasis on industry practice, the mission of Programs in Fashion and Textiles at Texas Woman’s University is to prepare undergraduate students for retailing, merchandising, wholesaling, design, or production careers in the global fashion industry through the development of relevant knowledge bases, skills, techniques, and aesthetic judgments. To achieve this mission, the Programs strive to provide students with educational, scholarship, and service opportunities inside and outside of the classroom that will assist them in achieving their professional career goals in fashion merchandising, fashion design, and related industries. Graduates of the fashion merchandising program will be prepared to buy, merchandise, promote, and sell fashion products for retailers and manufacturers. Graduates of the fashion design programs will be prepared to design, develop, and produce fashion products for manufacturers and retailers.</td>
<td>Fashion and Textiles supports the special mission of Texas Woman’s University by providing quality undergraduate education in a learning environment that empowers and affirms the full development of students, primarily women; enrollment in the program is 98% female. In addition, education of minority students is a focus with the percentage of minority students majoring in fashion merchandising ranging from around 50% to 60% from year to year. Students are prepared for leadership and service through the educational and service opportunities provided by this professional program that is focused on industry practice. Finally, for success, graduates seeking careers in the fashion industry must have a pioneering spirit looking for purpose and exploring all avenues of potential, thus, students are taught these concepts through their educational, scholarly, and service opportunities inside and outside of the classroom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Texas Women’s University 2015 SACSCOC compliance certification [http://online.fliphtml5.com/fuba/ziuc/#p=2](http://online.fliphtml5.com/fuba/ziuc/#p=2)

Another useful mission-alignment strategy is to deconstruct the key elements of the mission statement (see the leftmost column below) and use a table to map the alignment. In the example below, programmatic outcomes are mapped to the program mission, but the same technique could be used for department-to-institution mission mapping.

**Image 8: CoP’s Mapping of the Program Outcomes to the Mission:**
## Mapping of the Program Outcomes to the Mission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission Statement</th>
<th>Program-Level Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepare general practitioners and clinical scientists who will be able to:</td>
<td>1.1  1.2  1.3  1.4  1.5  1.6  1.7  1.8  1.9  2.1  2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide outstanding, ethical, and empathetic pharmacy care</td>
<td>X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Serve the health care needs of the community, a diverse population, and the individual patient</td>
<td>X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expand the scope of practice of pharmacy in community settings, hospitals, managed care facilities, and government agencies</td>
<td>X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be compassionate patient advocates and leaders in their communities, professional associations, and scholarly research through:</td>
<td>X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Student-centered pedagogical experiences enriched with services and professional extracurricular activities</td>
<td>X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Cutting edge education with highly qualified faculty in a modern</td>
<td>X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Symbiotic and synergistic inter-professional collaboration in education, practice and research facility</td>
<td>X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Strong commitment to life-long education and participation in professional associations</td>
<td>X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Proficiency in technology and pharmacy informatics</td>
<td>X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Communication with and understanding of diversity and those from other cultures</td>
<td>X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X    X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EXERCISES:

I. Circled in red below are the quintessential keyword phrases - what SACSCOC calls Compliance Components – for the library’s mission statement.

Look at your own department’s mission, or use one of the SU departmental examples listed in **APPENDIX A**, and circle any set of terms, i.e. compliance components, that you feel are important enough to warrant compliance review.
II. International higher education consultant John Carver has written an article (q.v.) focusing on management of campus divisions’ and departments’ mission statements. His article provides this constructive analysis of a university’s original mission:

*State University aspires to free people’s minds from ignorance, prejudice, and provincialism and to stimulate a lasting attitude of inquiry. To meet these aspirations, we are committed to providing excellent academic programs, educational experience, and creative scholarship.*

In evaluating this mission, he states: “If SU were to write the results component of a broad ends statement, it would have to avoid all descriptions of its methods and of itself. The statement would turn an unrelenting spotlight on the students and others whom the institution is serving, not on how the provider would be or would operate. There would be no “try” words (like “aspire,” “encourage,” “support,” “advocate,” and so on). Rewriting someone’s aspirational, or means, statement by “backing into” the results they may have had in mind is tricky. But I will do so to illustrate what SU may be willing to hold itself accountable for. You will see that it is a far more ambitious statement than the original:

*Graduates of State University will be free from ignorance, prejudice, and provincialism and will have a lasting attitude of inquiry.*

(2000, p. 21)

Almost 35 years ago, SMART outcomes were first identified by George T. Doran (in his Management Review article “There’s a S.M.A.R.T. Way to Write Management’s Goals and Objectives.” November 1981, Volume 70, Issue 11). Accordingly, the library defines its expected outcomes in measurable terms using the prevailing paradigms listed in the “SMART” Approach to Generating Expected Outcomes. In addition to Doran’s “SMART” outcomes approach, I also suggest that you review Clifford Adelman’s new (2015) 27-page essay entitled, To Imagine a Verb: The Language and Syntax of Learning Outcome Statements. This occasional paper of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, “provides language-centered principles, guidelines and tools for writing student learning outcome statements. Robert F. Mager has also written a small book entitled Preparing Instructional Objectives, which provides helpful insights into framing SLOs. ”For additional information on useful terms for missions and for outcomes, please see: Dr. Tony Piñá’s List of Measurable and Non-measurable Objectives in the accompanying LibGuide. Additional guides to writings outcomes are:

APPENDIX A:

A-Z SU DEPARTMENTAL (<2016) EXAMPLES aligned to the SU mission):

Sullivan University Mission Statement:
Sullivan University is a private institution of higher learning dedicated to providing educational enrichment opportunities for the intellectual, social and professional development of its students. The institution offers career-focused curricula with increasing rigor from the certificate through diploma, associate, bachelors, masters and doctoral degree levels. Throughout those curricula, Sullivan seeks to promote the development of critical thinking, effective verbal and written communication, computer literacy and teamwork, as well as an appreciation for lifelong learning, cultural diversity and professionalism in all activities. At the graduate level, the university also seeks to promote a culture of research.

Sullivan University faculty, staff and administration believe qualified individuals should have the opportunity to pursue formal academic training at the institution of their choice. We welcome those students who seek such educational challenges. The university provides a student-centered learning environment that facilitates students' identification of their life goals and the means to achieve those goals. The university also promotes a culture of teaching excellence throughout the institution and encourages faculty, students, administration and staff to participate in service activities and projects which enhance the quality of life in the local and surrounding communities. Upon completion of a program, Sullivan provides employment assistance.

Baking & Pastry Arts Mission:

Sullivan University's Baking & Pastry Arts Associates Degree program uses a stair step approach in their curriculum and provides students with a strong and complete foundation of the food service industry through teaching both Practical and knowledge based industry standards as outlined by the American Culinary Federation. The program prepares future employees of the food service industry through concentrating on professionalism, effective verbal and written communication skills and teamwork in addition to focusing on both modern and global trends and techniques within the food service industry. The Faculty remains active, and encourages students, to participate in outside community activities. We
encourage our students to take advantage of our Career Services Employment specialists throughout their career.

**Business Administration (MBA, EMBA) Mission:**

The Mission of the Graduate School at Sullivan University is to prepare adult learners for the demands of an ever-changing global society by promoting critical thinking, effective verbal and written communication, teamwork, research, and an appreciation for lifelong learning, cultural diversity, and the expression of professionalism in all activities. We strive to produce future leaders, practitioner-oriented scholars, and scholarly research that contribute to the effective practice of management in the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors of our society. Through our service, career-oriented education focus, and practitioner-oriented scholarly research, we contribute to the welfare of our main constituents: our students, alumni, and the employers for whom they work.

**Career Services Mission:**

The Sullivan University Career Services department has a mission to provide high-quality employment assistance to any Sullivan University graduate in good standing who requires help in locating employment in his/her field of study. The career services’ mission directly correlates to the overall Sullivan University mission by helping those seeking assistance find employment that relates to their education. At the core of the University’s mission is to provide educational enrichment opportunities that can lead to professional development. Many of the students who attend Sullivan University do so in order to increase their knowledge and better prepare them for a specific career. Once that education is complete, the Career Services department utilizes that skill and knowledge gained over the course of a student’s education to help them locate employment that meets their career goals. The department actively connects with employers from across the nation to build partnerships that will allow Sullivan University graduates with premium employment opportunities. By accomplishing the fruitful employment of Sullivan University graduates, the University is contributing to positive economic development on a national scale. One last tie to the Sullivan University mission, Sullivan University Career Services does not only assist graduates upon completion of a program, the department will assist any graduate wanting assistance throughout their career. This means that any time after graduation, no matter how long ago that completion was, the department will assist that graduate at no cost.
College of Business Administration Mission:

Status: COBA mission statement is aligned with University mission statement
COBA has revised its mission statement in late 2015/early 2016 to more clearly align with the University’s mission statement. The COBA’s revised mission statement reads:
The mission of the Sullivan University College of Business Administration (COBA) is to provide students with student-centered, stair-stepped, career-focused business and administrative degree programs that prepare students for careers within the fields of business administration, finance, healthcare management, human resources, interdisciplinary business studies, justice and public safety administration, logistics/supply chain management, management, and marketing. The COBA maintains close relationships with the business leaders that hire our graduates to ensure that the course materials are current and relevant for careers commensurate with degree programs earned through COBA.

College of Information and Computer Technology (CICT) Mission:

The mission of the College of Information and Computer Technology (CICT) is to prepare technology leaders for today and tomorrow by effectively educating students for a professional career where they will demonstrate the ability to solve problems and provide business solutions using a variety of technology tools.
Alignment: Sullivan University offers career-focused programs with a mission to educate its students in a well-rounded manner for their field of choice. The primary objective of CICT is to provide a high quality IT education for its students. To this end, the college offers certificate, diploma, baccalaureate, masters and doctoral level programs; conducts relevant research to advance discovery and knowledge in IT; and engages the immediate community and society at large. The knowledge and competency acquired provide opportunities to develop and apply technical knowledge and soft-skills, and to understand the impact of IT in the society.

College of Pharmacy’s (COP) Mission:

The College of Pharmacy’s (COP) mission statement was updated during a faculty retreat in October 2015. The COP’s new mission is:
“Our mission is to improve the health and wellness of individuals and communities through:
  Developing dynamic and thoughtful leaders
  Serving the needs of diverse populations
  Innovating to improve the human condition”
Culinary Arts Program Mission:

The focus of Sullivan University's Culinary Arts program is to provide the finest foundational knowledge, skills, and experiential learning to students entering into the hospitality industry. A stair step curricular progression builds a strong and complete foundation of the food service industry through teaching both practical and knowledge based industry standards as outlined by the American Culinary Federation Educational Institute. Sullivan University's Culinary Arts program prepares future employees of the food service industry through focusing on effective verbal and written communication skills, professionalism and teamwork based research projects in addition to concentrating on both classical techniques and modern trends within the food service industry.

Early Childhood Education Mission:

It is the mission of the Department of Early Childhood Education at Sullivan University to prepare students for positions in the child care or professional nanny career fields, where they will create and foster a positive learning environment to meet the language, intellectual, physical, and social/emotional needs of the children in their care.

Evidence that the ECE Department aligns their mission with the University's mission can be found by examining how the program outcomes are career-focused and identify specific skills essential for graduates to apply theories into practice. Students are assessed on their knowledge and comprehension of the course content, required to apply that knowledge during their 300 clock hours of externship, analyze and evaluate their own progress through reflective writing in the exit portfolio and create developmentally age appropriate enriching learning opportunities for young children in multiple settings. Throughout the course work students’ team with peers, educators, parents and child care providers in the field, demonstrate critical thinking and problem based learning through projects, respond to scenarios and case studies, and engage in numerous active learning opportunities as well as hone their writing skills through authentic communication tasks common in the classroom or nanny job description.

Enrollment Services Support Mission:

The Enrollment Services support unit has a good Assessment Plan with a set of functional, process-oriented goals that support the unit’s mission and the mission of the University. The Assessment Plan defines appropriate assessment metrics based on specific process targets and internal audit measures. Assessment data have been collected on a regular schedule, and
processes are now in place to allow for comparisons by campus and division. Existing assessment processes provide the basis for a moderate level of engagement with the Continuous Improvement Circle institutional effectiveness methodology.

**Event Management and Tourism Management Mission:**

Mission: To develop Event Management and Tourism management leaders through course work, innovative learning activities that include active, collaborative, experiential and problem based learning strategies. The program continues to expose students to hospitality organizations, and interactions with industry professionals.

**Financial Planning Mission:**

Mission: To ensure quality assurance, the Sullivan University Planning and Evaluation Coordinating Council (PECC) systematically evaluates and assesses institutional effectiveness processes and their data- and values-driven results as presented by members of the Sullivan University community. Presenting members are primarily responsible for academic programs, academic support functions, student support functions, and administrative support functions.

**General Education Mission:**

The General Education program has an acceptable Assessment Plan with an umbrella mission and objectives that align with the University Mission and provide critical support for the University’s general goals and objectives. Beneath this umbrella level, the General Education program is divided into several departments that have subordinate missions, objectives, and assessment processes. Among these departments, the English department, in particular, has undertaken a commendable program of evaluation and assessment activities that will benchmark the current levels of student achievement in the core English courses and provide substantial material for the evaluation of content in those courses and modification of that content in line with the Continuous Improvement Circle institutional effectiveness methodology.

The Social Sciences department places an important emphasis on critical thinking and communication skills and collects some assessment data on these points, but these efforts need to be implemented more broadly and systematically.

While one of the more important General Education assessment instruments, the Proficiency Profile assessment, shows our students lagging ever so slightly behind the nation-wide comparison group in critical thinking skills, a point of greater concern is our students’ declining...
level of proficiency in mathematics. The Mathematics department employs assessment measures other than the Proficiency Profile, but they are not clearly understandable as presented. The Mathematics department needs to devise and implement assessment processes which can be interpreted meaningfully and serve as a solid and effective basis for the continuous improvement activities which are demonstrably needed in the core mathematics courses and are beginning to take place as described in sections below.

**Graduate School Mission Statement:**

The Mission of the Graduate School at Sullivan University is to prepare adult learners for the demands of an ever-changing global society by promoting critical thinking, effective verbal and written communication, teamwork, research, and an appreciation for lifelong learning, cultural diversity, and the expression of professionalism in all activities. We strive to produce future leaders, practitioner-oriented scholars, and scholarly research that contribute to the effective practice of management in the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors of our society. Through our service, career-oriented education focus, and practitioner-oriented scholarly research, we contribute to the welfare of our main constituents: our students, alumni, and the employers for whom they work.

**Health Information Management (ASHIM) Mission:**

The Mission of the associate degree in Health Information Management (ASHIM) is to prepare students for entry level health information management related occupations. This includes maintaining, collecting, and analyzing data crucial to the delivery of patient care. Students are provided with comprehensive education in using the electronic health record, in health information management including compiling health information data for reimbursement, facility planning, marketing, risk management, utilization management, quality assessment, and research as well as abstracting and coding clinical data using appropriate classification systems. Students learn to maintain the ethical and legal standards of health information management.

**Hospitality Management Mission:**

**Mission:** Sullivan University’s Hospitality Management department is dedicated to providing educational enrichment opportunities for the intellectual, social, and professional development of its students within the areas of lodging and foodservice management. The department offers career-focused curricula for a Bachelor of Science degree in Hospitality Management. The department seeks to promote development of critical thinking, effective
 verbal and written communication, computer literacy, teamwork and research as well as an appreciation for life-long learning, cultural diversity and the expression of professionalism in all activities with the goal of preparing graduates for advanced management careers with hotels, restaurants, commercial and non-commercial food services, club management, cruise lines, commercial travel and the gaming industry and equips them with greater potential for upward mobility.

Hotel Restaurant Management Mission:

**Mission:** Sullivan University’s Hotel Restaurant Management department is dedicated to providing educational enrichment opportunities for the intellectual, social, and professional development of its students within the areas of lodging and restaurant management. The department offers career-focused curricula for an associate of science degree in Hotel-Restaurant Management. The department seeks to promote development of critical thinking, effective verbal and written communication, computer literacy, teamwork and research as well as an appreciation for life-long learning, cultural diversity and the expression of professionalism in all activities with the goal of preparing graduates for entry-level management careers with hotels, restaurants, commercial and non-commercial food services, club management, cruise lines, commercial travel and the gaming industry.

Human Resource Leadership Mission:

Mission: To ensure quality assurance, the Sullivan University Planning and Evaluation Coordinating Council (PECC) systematically evaluates and assesses institutional effectiveness processes and their data- and values-driven results as presented by members of the Sullivan University community. Presenting members are primarily responsible for academic programs, academic support functions, student support functions, and administrative support functions. Institutional effectiveness processes focus on:

(A) Alignment with the Sullivan University mission, goals and outcomes;

(B) consistency with Sullivan University’s seven-step continuous improvement circle (CIC), concerning the following: 1. Through an ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation process, identify outcomes and goals that coincide with the mission; 2. Identify appropriate measurement instrument(s); 3. Through research-based evaluation processes, gather data; 4. Analyze, evaluate and interpret data; 5. Make plans for improvement based on analyses of data; 6. Implement plans for improvement; and, 7. Evaluate and measure implemented plans to “close the circle.”

(C) Achievement or progress toward desired results in accomplishing its mission; and

(D) Satisfaction of various constituencies with our processes and graduates.
Human Resources Mission:

The human resources department is responsible for the overall coordination, administration and evaluation of the human resources function of The Sullivan University System. In this capacity, the department provides strategic HR leadership to the organization. Responsibilities of the department include overseeing the development and implementation of human resources policies, programs and services, including recruitment, legal compliance, employee benefits, employee relations and employment practices and procedures. The efforts of the HR department ensure The Sullivan University System continues to be a compliant organization, as well as ensures a positive and motivational team of employees that thrives upon the success of its students.

This mission of the human resources department ties to the Sullivan University mission statement in the following ways:

- Ensuring the recruitment, retention, and development of a diverse group of faculty who possess educational, experiential and distance learning qualifications for the classes they teach and who emphasize the process of learning as well as the assimilation of knowledge and skills.

- Ensuring the recruitment, retention, and development of staff employees who support the intellectual, social, and professional development of our students.

IT Services Mission:

The mission of the IT Technology and Services department is to provide a secure, cohesive, and functional technical environment used in the dissemination of information, assisting the faculty and students in the learning process, and allow the Sullivan University System to operate as efficiently as possible.

From a student perspective the IT department has a manned help desk that provides on-site technical support services for 75 hours per week at both Louisville and Lexington campuses. The academic software is available to the students in a virtual environment which allows access from any location and is not device dependent.

From a University perspective the IT department help desk can assist users on a virtual basis through a “remote assist” application. This type of support extends assistance to all users regardless of physical location and aids in the promotion of the academic agenda designated by the faculty in the education process of the students.
Online Mission:

The Online mission is to provide online students, regardless of where they reside, equitable services that meet or exceed the services provided on campus. These services include registration, financial planning, advisement, student and career services throughout the students’ educational career. To support the Sullivan University mission by creating an environment where administrative support is transparent to the student allowing the student to concentrate on their academics and not administration processes.

RN Mission:

The mission of the RN to BSN Program emerges from the mission of Sullivan University to provide educational enrichment opportunities for RNs seeking intellectual stimulation, professional development and diverse nurse generalists’ practice opportunities. The RN to BSN program expands basic nursing of an Associate or Diploma level with students' prior knowledge from the liberal arts and the sciences by offering content supportive of the Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice (AACN, 2008). These essentials provide the cornerstone for roles of the baccalaureate nurse generalist to foster personal and professional growth, experience, and professional role identity. The mission of the College of Nursing aligns with the Sullivan University mission statement which seeks to provide educational opportunities to qualified individuals as they strive to identify and achieve their life goals. Furthermore, support is fostered to bring quality education to nurses with diploma or associate degrees and seek forward movement in their careers within the high demand fields for BSN graduates in the healthcare arena.