

STANDARD SIX: TEACHING, LEARNING, and SCHOLARSHIP

The institution supports teaching and learning through a well-qualified faculty and academic staff, who, in structures and processes appropriate to the institution, collectively ensure the quality of instruction and support for student learning. Scholarship, research, and creative activities receive support appropriate to the institution's mission. The institution's faculty has primary responsibility for advancing the institution's academic purposes through teaching, learning, and scholarship.

Faculty and Academic Staff

6.1 Faculty categories (e.g., full-time, part-time, clinical, research, adjunct) are clearly defined by the institution as is the role of each category in fulfilling the institution's mission. All faculty are appropriately integrated into the department and institution and have appropriate opportunities for professional development. Where teaching assistants are employed, the institution carefully selects, trains, supervises, and evaluates them. The composition of the faculty reflects the institution's mission, programs, and student body and is periodically reviewed. The institution's use of all categories of faculty and teaching assistants to conduct instruction is regularly assessed, properly overseen, and consistent with its mission.

6.2 There are an adequate number of faculty and academic staff, including librarians, advisors, and instructional designers, whose time commitment to the institution is sufficient to assure the accomplishment of class and out-of-class responsibilities essential for the fulfillment of institutional mission and purposes. Responsibilities include instruction, accessibility to students, and the systematic understanding of effective teaching/learning processes and outcomes in courses and programs for which they share responsibility; additional duties may include, e.g., student advisement, academic planning, and participation in policy-making, course and curricular development, research, and institutional governance. (See also [3.15](#))

6.3 The preparation and qualifications of all faculty and academic staff are appropriate to the nature of their assignments. Qualifications are measured by advanced degrees held, evidence of scholarship, advanced study, creative activities, and teaching abilities, as well as relevant professional experience, training, and credentials.

6.4 The institution employs an open and orderly process for recruiting and appointing its faculty. Faculty participate in the search process for continuing members of the instructional staff.

6.5 The institution ensures equal employment opportunity consistent with legal requirements and any other dimensions of its choosing; compatible with its mission and purposes, it addresses its own goals for the achievement of diversity among its faculty and academic staff. Hiring reflects the effectiveness of this process and results in a variety of academic and professional backgrounds, training, and experience. Each prospective hire is provided with a written agreement that states explicitly the nature and term of the initial

appointment and, when applicable, institutional considerations that might preclude or limit future appointments.

6.6 Salaries and benefits are set at levels that ensure the institution's continued ability to attract and retain appropriately qualified faculty and academic staff whose profiles are consistent with the institution's mission and purposes. Faculty and academic staff are provided with substantial opportunities for continued professional development throughout their careers.

6.7 Faculty assignments are consistent with the institution's mission and purposes. They are equitably determined to allow faculty adequate time to provide effective instruction, advise and evaluate students, contribute to program and institutional assessment and improvement, continue professional growth, and participate in scholarship, research, creative activities, and service compatible with the mission and purposes of the institution. Faculty assignments and workloads are reappraised periodically and adjusted as institutional conditions change.

6.8 In a handbook or in other written documents that are current and readily available, the institution defines the responsibilities of faculty and other members of the instructional team; the criteria for their recruitment, appointment, retention, evaluation, promotion, and, if applicable, tenure; and policies for resolving grievances.

6.9 The institution has a statement of expectations and processes to ensure that faculty act responsibly and ethically, observe the established conditions of their employment, and otherwise function in a manner consistent with the mission and purposes of the institution.

6.10 Faculty are demonstrably effective in carrying out their assigned responsibilities. The institution employs effective procedures for the regular evaluation of appointments, performance, and retention. The evaluative criteria reflect the mission and purposes of the institution and the importance it attaches to the various responsibilities of, e.g., teaching, advising, assessment, scholarship, creative activities, research, and professional and community service. The institution has equitable and broad-based procedures for such evaluation in which its expectations are stated clearly and weighted appropriately for use in the evaluative process.

6.11 The institution defines the scholarly expectations for faculty consistent with its mission and purposes and the level of degrees offered. Through their scholarly pursuits, all faculty are current in the theory, knowledge, skills, and pedagogy of their discipline or profession. Scholarship and instruction are mutually supportive.

6.12 The institution protects and fosters academic freedom for all faculty regardless of rank or term of appointment.

6.13 When instruction, advising, and support for students are carried out by a variety of faculty and academic and other professionals, the institution ensures that personnel in each category have the academic and professional qualifications appropriate to their roles. The

governance system ensures that the experiences and data gathered by each group are coordinated, shared, and reviewed collectively for purposes of improving the academic program and services for students.

6.14 The institution periodically evaluates the sufficiency of and support for academic staff and their effectiveness in teaching and advising, scholarship, service, and as appropriate to institutional mission, research and creative activity. The results of these evaluations are used to enhance fulfillment of the institution's mission.

Teaching and Learning

6.15 The content and methods of instruction meet generally accepted academic and professional standards and expectations, and considerations of educational improvement are informed by a shared understanding of what and how students are learning in their academic program.

6.16 Instructional techniques and delivery systems are compatible with and serve to further the mission and purposes of the institution as well as the learning goals of academic programs and objectives of individual courses. Methods of instruction are appropriate to the students' capabilities and learning needs.

6.17 The institution endeavors to enhance the quality of teaching and learning wherever and however courses and programs are offered. It encourages experimentation to improve instruction. The effectiveness of instruction is periodically and systematically assessed using valid procedures; the results are used to improve instruction. Faculty and academic staff accept their responsibility to improve instructional effectiveness. Adequate support is provided to accomplish this task.

6.18 Students in each major are taught by a variety of faculty to ensure their exposure to different academic strengths and viewpoints. The institution offering multiple sections of the same course ensures an appropriate balance between consistency in learning outcomes and flexibility, allowing students to benefit from individual faculty members' expertise and teaching style.

6.19 The institution's system of academic advising meets student needs for information and advice compatible with its educational objectives. The quality of advising is assured regardless of the location of instruction or the mode of delivery.

6.20 Consistent with its mission and purposes, the institution provides support for scholarship, research, and creative activities. Faculty and students undertake research to an extent reflective of the level and nature of the degrees awarded. Policies and procedures related to research are communicated throughout the institution.