



**Middle States Commission on Higher Education**  
**3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680**  
**Phone: 267-284-5000 Fax: 215-662-5501 www.msche.org**

**Team Report to the Commission on Higher Education**

**NAME OF INSTITUTION**

**Lincoln University**

**Dates of Evaluation: *March 17-20, 2019***

**The Evaluation Team Representing the  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

***Section A: Team Members, Titles, and Institutional Affiliation***

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## ***Section B: Institutional Representatives at the Time of Visit***

### **Officers of the Institution at the time of the visit:**

#### **President/CEO**

Dr. Brenda A. Allen, Ph.D.

President

1570 Baltimore Pike Lincoln University, PA 19352 (484) 365-8000 [www.Lincoln.edu](http://www.Lincoln.edu)

#### **Chief Academic Officer**

Dr. Patricia Pierce Ramsey, Ph.D.

Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs

1570 Baltimore Pike Lincoln University, PA 19352 (484) 365-8000 [www.Lincoln.edu](http://www.Lincoln.edu)

#### **Chair of the Board of Trustees**

Ms. Theresa R. Braswell – Chairlady

International Cultural Center

1570 Baltimore Pike Lincoln University, PA 19352 (484) 365-8000 [www.Lincoln.edu](http://www.Lincoln.edu)

## ***Section C: Team Findings***

### **I. Institutional Overview: Context and Nature of the Visit**

Lincoln University is a small four-year liberal arts institution with a rich history dating back to 1853 when the Presbytery of New Castle approved the plan for the establishment of the Ashmun Institute, now known as Lincoln University. It is recognized as the first Historically Black College & University (HBCU) degree granting institution in the country. While founded to serve young men of African descent, today it is a coeducational diverse institution with women making up more than 60% of the total population of the student-body.

Lincoln University is a public state-related institution with approximately 21% of its revenues deriving from state funds. It offers bachelors and masters level programs and has a total enrollment (headcount) of 2,266 as of Fall 2017 (2,002 undergraduates and 264 graduate students. It is also approved to offer Post-baccalaureate certifications.

In addition to the main campus located in Oxford, Pennsylvania, the university offers programs in The School of Adult and Continuing Education at the Philadelphia campus. The programs provided at the Philadelphia campus include:

Master of Arts in Human Services (MAHS)  
Master of Business Administration (MBA)  
Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Early Childhood Education  
Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Educational Leadership

### **Philadelphia – Additional Site Location**

The Middle States Evaluation Team visited Lincoln University’s “additional site” location at 3020 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The site is known as, and is frequently referred to by students and faculty as “Lincoln - University City.” Visiting evaluation team members included the team chair, Aminta Hawkins Breaux, President of Bowie State University, Bowie, Maryland, Michael W. Bowden, Assistant Vice President for Planning and Assessment, Coppin State University, Baltimore, Maryland.

The team reviewed the additional site location for adequacy of the following:

- Adequacy of facilities and appropriateness for existing academic programs;
- Resources, including sufficient faculty, staff, and equipment;
- Student access to campus resources – access to information, student services, etc.);
- Marketing and Communications; and
- Oversight, support, and management from the main campus.

#### Adequacy of facilities

The location known as Lincoln-University City has adequate space for advising, student services, instruction and collaborative spaces suitable for student interactions. The classrooms possess innovative technology that support in-person and online learning, and when necessary, live streaming to deliver simultaneous instruction.

#### Resources

The Lincoln - University City location has adequate faculty to support learning at the site and online. There are undergraduate and graduate programs taught at the location. In sum, there are over 9 full-time faculty, and approximately 25 adjuncts that deliver instruction to the students.

The location is fully supported by the main campus. The location uses the same software such as Moodle to deliver instruction and *Xitrac*s to manage its assessment functions.

Adequate financial resources are in place to support an academic environment that is measurable and aligned with the mission.

### Student Access

Students have access to services on the main campus as well as the location in the City. Interviews conducted with students revealed that they are treated as individuals, and given individualized treatment that ranged from intrusive advisement by dedicated staff and faculty onsite. One such example includes the financial aid process. Students are able to complete the entire financial aid packet at the University City location. However, the processing of the application occurs online through processors located at the main campus. Students found this to be convenient and indicated that the adequacy of the support services make them feel like people and not like individuals defined by student identification numbers.

### Marketing and Communications

The students are on the same e-mail platform as the main campus making communication between the main campus and the Philadelphia site seamless. For events, security concerns, or other less complex issues such as reminders for advisement of class registration, students are notified by text or e-mail.

The team noted that marketing efforts can be enhanced by the main campus so that students are more aware of programs located in the City. Additionally, signage in front of the Philadelphia campus building's property could be enhanced so that the public is aware of Lincoln University's presence at the Market street location.

### Oversight, Support, and Management from the Main Campus

The location is effectively managed by the administration located on the main campus. The leadership at the site that includes deans and other staff, and students, noted that there is a consistent presence of the President as well as the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The administrators from the main campus are readily accessible, and when necessary can participate by Skype sessions. The site hosts regular meetings with faculty over curricular issues as well as governance issues. In fact, meetings at the main campus are rotated frequently to the City location to ensure collective participation and engagement among faculty and staff at the location. As a result, budgetary requests are regularly communicated and resources are adequate to support activities that support student success and overall effectiveness.

### Other Considerations Communicated by Students

Students indicated that the additional location has had an impact on their successful matriculation through their academic career. Such examples include:

- Assistance from Career Services which consistently helps with interview and resume preparation, access to internships and job opportunities with fortune 500 companies;

- Students are advised in their area of their specialty, especially for the counseling program; and
- They feel as if they are a part of a family or cohort, noting that each student knows one another.

The students indicated that they would like to see a doctorate program offered at the site, and more face-to-face rather than online courses. In summary, the programs are user-friendly for the large adult population served at the site and they indicate faculty strongly support academic achievement.

### **Approach to self-study**

The title of the Self-Study is *Lincoln University: Honoring the past...Charting the future*. It is a self-described comprehensive examination of the university's compliance with the accreditation standards and alignment with the updated strategic plan. There were 6 designated outcomes for the Self-Study:

- To demonstrate to MSCHE that Lincoln University meets the standards of accreditation and continually strives towards achievement of its mission and vision.
  - To examine the alignment of institutional efforts and imperatives with best practices in higher education while conforming to MSCHE standards of accreditation.
  - To analyze the quality and effectiveness of the institution's processes for planning and assessment in order to make necessary adjustments to methods and measurements and ensure that the use of assessment data leads to meaningful programmatic and institutional renewal.
  - To provide a thorough and transparent assessment of all aspects of the institution in order to identify those areas in need of improvement so they may be strengthened.
  - To engage all University stakeholders in the process and foster communication and collaboration across units and disciplines of the University in order to garner increased internal respect and support for continued growth and development of the institutional community.
  - To develop recommendations that will lead to continuous institutional improvement that informs the University's next strategic plan.
- The 7 Institutional Imperatives are cited in the updated 2013-2018 University Strategic Plan:
    - Academic Excellence
    - Student Success

- Research and Scholarship
- Sustainability
- Institutional and Operational Effectiveness
- Community Engagement
- Globalization and Diversity

The Self-Study process began in 2016 under the leadership of the former Interim President, Dr. Richard Green. Dr. Green appointed the Co-chairs, Dr. Yvonne Hilton, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Health Science, and Dr. Anna Hull, Associate Professor of Biology and Director, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, to oversee the process.

The Steering Committee has a membership of 18 individuals, 14 of whom also serve, in pairs, as co-chairs for 7 taskforces that address each of the 7 accreditation standards. The taskforce co-chairs mostly derive from the membership of the faculty, with the exception of one co-chair for Standard 4—the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management. Over 50 individuals in total participated on the various taskforces; and each taskforce was given a charge based upon the accreditation standards as outlined in the MSCHE Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation, 13<sup>th</sup> edition.

The Self-Study Design called for a proposed profile for the Visiting Evaluation Team and Chair to include knowledge of the following:

- Small to medium sized institutions (2,000-4,000 student enrollment)
- A unionized institutional environment
- Liberal arts and professional programs for both undergraduate and graduate students
- Non-traditional programs (Human Services or Social Work Administration) comprised of re-entry adults
- Admissions opportunities for academically capable as well as under-prepared students, any of whom would have had no chance to attend college.

## **II. Evaluation Overview**

The evaluation conducted at Lincoln University took place from March 17-20, 2019. During the on-site visit, the evaluation team acquired certain insights in addition to the material presented in the Self-study, and the documents made available prior to the on-site evaluation visit.

Lincoln University has undergone significant changes in programs, growth, and leadership since the last review. Dr. Brenda Allen was appointed president of the university in July 2017 and since then has introduced a new vision. Subsequently, a new strategic planning was developed via a campus-wide effort.

The new strategic plan entitled *Reimagining the Legacy: Learn, Liberate, Lead*, was launched in July 2018. Additional initiatives such as departmental reorganizations, staff recruitment and program development have also added to the transformation and synergy across the campus as individuals and shared governance groups have become more engaged in the various committees and initiatives.

The mission of the institution has recently been reviewed and edited to encompass the long standing commitment to the liberal arts. Documentation and interviews with members of the institution indicate the liberal education goals for the university include: acquiring content knowledge, development of essential skills/soft skills, and co-curricular and active learning.

Additionally, the Board of Trustees (BOT) has taken steps and voted to approve a new structure for BOT and to clarify roles and responsibilities in alignment with the Middle States standards. The BOT is to be commended for their efforts to work with the Association of Governing Boards to ensure the utilization of best practices for governing boards.

### **III. Compliance with Accreditation Standards**

#### **STANDARD I: MISSION AND GOALS**

**The institution’s mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution’s stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.**

##### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The University appears to have adequately engaged its community in the mission statement development and review processes. A clear constituency of students, faculty, staff, and administrators, including the President, and members of the Board of Trustees were involved in the development of the mission statement, and the review. As a result, the institution’s legacy, referred to as the “Lincoln Legacy,” of learning, liberating, and leading, is reflected throughout the mission and strategic goals. The University measures progress towards its mission by the type of graduates it produces, as evidenced by student curricular and co-curricular success data located within respective departments and units in the institution’s assessment system. By the time a student graduates, he/she becomes a part of the Lincoln legacy, possessing qualities and attributes provided through a wealth of student experiences and academic content and



instruction which include an emphasis on areas such as global education, interdisciplinary studies, and community engagement.

The mission statement is appropriately measured against the University's Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

- The University has ensured that strategic priorities derive from the mission and goals. Strategic priorities such as course development and academic program proposal processes are linked to annual budgeting efforts. Furthermore, faculty and staff members believe the mission statement as well as strategic planning processes were inclusive since they were included in focus groups and town hall meetings where members of the campus community were able to provide feedback and input. As evidenced by the work of the campus community, the Strategic Plan 2018-2023 provides a foundation that supports achievement towards educational effectiveness goals and allows the University to achieve its mission. It was noted that while the mission statement review process was already in progress when the president arrived, it was enhanced by the addition of her supportive vision and guidance provided to the campus and members of the Board of Trustees.
- The University's mission is supported by a robust evaluative process of assessing institutional effectiveness. Assessment of the institution is conducted by reviewing the University's progress towards key performance indicators established within Lincoln's strategic plan, as well as in areas such as student support services and academic programs. The institutional learning goals in conjunction with the co-curricular goals are used to measure progress toward mission accomplishment. The goals help the university to tell the story of the "Lincoln Legacy," sustain a culture of assessment, and ultimately support student success. There appears to be a compelling and an evidence-based agenda for advancing liberal arts throughout the institution.

## **STANDARD I**

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

### **Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

- The institution provided evidence of a collaborative effort for mission statement and strategic planning development. This effort united the community and led to the collective ideal of strengthening the institution's liberal arts core. In partnership with internal and external committees that included students, alumni, faculty, staff and administrators, the University concluded that the mission must possess a thematic emphasis and ensure students have a strong liberal arts foundation. Upon graduation,

students are expected to have garnered an educational experience that would allow them to be a more holistic person with measurable qualities such as critical thinking, analytical reasoning, public speaking, and strengths within the arts that place students on lifelong journeys of success.

**Suggestions:**

- The University should take measures to ensure that there is a greater emphasis and infusion of core values within the mission statement.
- Continue to assess new structures and strategic planning efforts to support the overall realization of the University’s mission.

**Recommendations:**

None

**Requirements:**

None

**REQUIREMENTS OF AFFILIATION**

In the team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliation, specifically 7, 10 and 14:

7. The institution has a statement of mission and goals, approved by its governing body that defines its purpose within the context of higher education.

10. Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.

14. The institution and its governing body/bodies make freely available to the Commission accurate, fair, and complete information on all aspects of the institution and its operations. The governing body/bodies ensure that the institution describes itself in comparable and consistent terms to all of its accrediting and regulatory agencies, communicates any changes in accredited status, and agrees to disclose information (including levels of governing body compensation, if any) required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.

## STANDARD II – ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

**Ethics and Integrity are center, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful in its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.**

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Lincoln University is committed to the full expression of thoughts, support of freedom of speech, academic freedom, etc., in line with its Code of Conduct policies, Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement, Employee Handbook, Student Handbook, Sexual Misconduct Policy, Title IX Guidelines, among other documents. This expression is throughout the University's website and documented policies and procedures. The Faculty has assurance of their freedom of speech as specified in the Faculty By-Laws Article XII. In addition, the Board of Trustees' By-Laws demonstrates support for freedom of speech and the rights of individuals to act in the best interest of the University within the confines of the sanctioned policies and procedures.

Grievance procedures are outlined and articulated in the following materials and publications: Student Handbook, Academic Grievance Procedures, Collective Bargaining Agreement between Lincoln University of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education, the Lincoln University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, and in the Faculty By-Laws. Grievances from the Department of Public Safety are controlled differently from the faculty and staff, through the Lincoln University Police Officers Union Association and the Lincoln University Police Supervisors Union Association.

The University appears to take the issue of conflict of interest very seriously by having the Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff disclose any conflicts of interest on a regular basis, at a minimum annually. Faculty must submit a conflict of interest form annually. In fact, at each Board of Trustees meeting, the conflict of interest policy is read to ensure that trustee voting is not in conflict with any action item. The conflict of interest policies are also included in the Board of Trustees' By-Laws and cited in collective bargaining agreements where appropriate.

The institution's Human Resources Department manages compliance with the Employee Handbook dated 2012. The handbook is currently under review by the President's Cabinet to ensure that current laws and regulations are incorporated. The University has detailed guidelines for the fair operation of evaluations, promotions, disciplines and terminations. The Employee Handbook covers union and non-union employee policies as negotiated by the various collective bargaining agreements. The faculty has clarity on the procedures for hiring, tenure and

promotion protocols as presented in the Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement, especially Articles X, XI, XII.

The University hired a Vice President of Advancement and elevated the position to sit on the President's Cabinet. The University provided the funding to purchase a full suite of Blackbaud products to support the Advancement operations to increase fundraising and gift management. The Office of Advancement includes the Office of Communications & Public Relations. This office ensures the integrity and accuracy of all communications from the University. This includes all information on the website, oversight of Admissions materials used for recruitment, and reporting to government entities and regulatory authorities. The office staff oversees the Internet and Social Media Policy to check for compliance with Title IX requirements for respect for all. According to the self-study, this office carefully monitors and removes content deemed inappropriate when profanity, false information about the University or inciting violence is present and ensures that transparency, privacy, and confidentiality policies are followed. This office is critical to maintaining a campus environment that is welcoming and respectful to all.

The University appears to strive to ensure that the Admissions webpage has accurate, trustworthy information about all aspects of the University. The University has posted on its website information promoting affordability and accessibility, as well as the cost of education, value and the procedures to apply, obtain funding and payment methods. All materials regarding Admissions is provided on the webpage and in written form. The webpage is user friendly to locate information usually within three clicks of accessing the site.

The University has a well-documented Student Right to Know section on its website that is updated and monitored. The website provides facts about the University, such as enrollment level, finances, retention and other statistical data. The website needs to be continually updated with information about the University's accreditation standing, strategic plan, admissions news, links to new University policies and procedures, etc. The website provides an inward look at the University in the spirit of transparency.

The University has conducted periodic policy reviews, however not on a predetermined schedule. Human Resources policies dated 2012 were recently updated and are under review by the President's Cabinet. The Board of Trustees has conducted reviews of its By-Laws and as a result, have made appropriate changes. The newly adopted Strategic Plan is envisioned to improve administrative systems, policies, procedures, and communication channels to be more effective in achieving the University's mission and vision. The Title IX Coordinator's role was expanded to have a broader scope in updating all policies related to non-discrimination and harassment, conducting training, and raising awareness. Furthermore, in 2018, an internal review of the Department of Public Safety was conducted by an external company, leading to suggestions for staffing structure, compensation levels, technology user, and training models.

The new Office of Institutional Equity is the principal office to ensure the University's compliance with Title IX. The new Director's role exemplifies a University focus to ensure the

criteria of this Standard are upheld at every level. In addition, an additional staff person was hired as the ADA Coordinator, and for the first time the office was given a budget.

## **STANDARD II**

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

### **Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

- The University should be commended for its administrative reorganization and elevating the Vice President of Human Resources and Director of Public Safety to cabinet level positions.
- The strategic plan entitled *Reimagining the Legacy: Learn, Liberate, Lead* was developed in line with the launch of the self-study process. The alignment of these two processes has resulted in the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the University.
- The University expanded the Office of Institutional Advancement and funded a comprehensive technology suite of products to build the foundation for fundraising and fund management.
- The University established the Office of Institutional Effectiveness Research, and Planning (formerly the Office of Assessment and Accreditation) with a focus on the collection and sharing of data; standardizing policies, practices, and reporting processes, and providing sustenance to assessment efforts.

### **Suggestions:**

- The University should consider improving the internal communications of employees throughout the University.
- The University's website is four years old and requires updating to incorporate the new branding and initiatives launched under the new Strategic Plan to include new offices and positions.
- The University should complete the updates of its employee handbook and make it available to the entire campus community.

### **Recommendations:**

None

### **Requirements:**

None

## **REQUIREMENTS OF AFFILIATION**

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliation for 14:

14. The institution and its governing body/bodies make freely available to the Commission accurate, fair, and complete information on all aspects of the institution and its operations. The governing body/bodies ensure that the institution describes itself in comparable and consistent terms to all of its accrediting and regulatory agencies, communicates any changes in accredited status, and agrees to disclose information (including levels of governing body compensation, if any) required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.

### **STANDARD III: DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

**An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.**

#### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard;

#### Mission

Lincoln University has a clear mission statement based on: rigorous liberal arts education; integrating academic and co-curricular programs; and cultivating the character... of a responsible citizen of a global community. It's supported by a long tradition of strategic planning cycles that emphasized in the five strategic themes of the 2018 plan: Reimagining the Legacy: Learn. Liberate. Lead. A review of the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan Outcomes Summary evidence the achievements in Academic Excellence through goals related to periodic assessment of all academic programs; and achievements in student success based on goals related to attracting a diverse student population. Ensuring student retention and timely degree attainment; preparation of student to complete in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; and creating and sustaining a culturally rich, engaging on campus student experience. Fundamental to the mission of Lincoln University is the curriculum emphasis on social responsibility, civic engagement and advancing the Lincoln Legacy.

#### Academic Programs

Lincoln University offers 33 undergraduate majors programs and requires 120 credit hours to complete a bachelor degree; students can select from 33 different minor areas of study. Aligned with the mission the programs are divided in three components: general education (revised in 2006), majors, and co-curricular requirements. These components have clearly defined institutional learning outcomes, program student learning outcomes, and a variety of opportunities outside the classroom. The 2018 Institute on General Education and Assessment minute states that the University will strengthen the General Education component to be a national model for both 21st century liberal arts undergraduate education and innovative graduate and professional programs, particularly among Historically Black College and

Universities (HBCU), empowering our students to lead their communities and change the world.

Two significant accomplishments of the programs are: the student engagement emphasis; a mandatory capstone course requirement and research opportunities for independent study or research courses. Also the Center for Undergraduate Research, mission is to promote research among the students. This action is aligned with the institution's investment in more database resources for the library. Secondly, the institution has developed an organization culture of student success to support students to perform well academically; develop holistically; and advance to graduate school, service or employment. The new student success unit's main goal is to create greater functional synergy between academic support and co-curricular activities.

Along with the aforementioned programs are the Adult Completion Programs offered at the Philadelphia facility. The purpose of the three baccalaureate programs is to provide adult learners an attractive option to accelerate or advance their academic goals based on professional experiences and formal education.

In addition, Lincoln University offers six master degree programs in three different fields of study: business, counseling and education. This degree requires 60 credit hours and a mandatory research project. Three years ago, the University conducted a comprehensive curriculum review to the Master Degree program in Science and Business; as a result, the program changed to a Master in Business Administration (MBA). All graduate programs are offered through the Lincoln University School of Adults and Continuing Education (LUSACE).

Presently, Lincoln University has two academic programs with specialized accreditations. The Baccalaureate degree in Chemistry program is accredited by the American Chemistry Society, and the Baccalaureate degree in Nursing program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. Both specialized accreditations exemplify adequate and appropriate review on student learning assessed by a third-party reviewer.

### Students and faculty

The Fact Book 2017-2018 of Lincoln University reported an enrollment of 2,266 student distributed in the undergraduate and graduate programs. Provost Dr. Patricia Ramsey provided the team updated information regarding the faculty teaching during the Spring 2019 academic term: 103 full-time and 114 adjunct professors. A Full-time Faculty Member is responsible for teaching 12 credit hours at the undergraduate level and 9 credit hours at the graduate level. Presently, 84 percent hold terminal degrees and 90 percent are tenure or on tenure track which is a good profile to ensure excellence in the student learning experiences. Faculty are governed by the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).



The ratio of full-time faculty to student is 1:15. As stated in the self-study report the University understands the need to recruit and retain more faculty full-time to ensure the long-term quality of the curriculum. The operational budget of the institution has a provision to authorize searches and identify candidates at least one year prior to the appointment of faculty in the following academic year budget. This shows the commitment that Lincoln University has to increase and assure the qualifications of the faculty. The faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) establishes a maximum of six new hiring faculty per year.

### Faculty Development and Assessment

The main focus of the faculty development program at Lincoln University is to strengthen professional growth and stimulate innovation in the faculty's teaching and research approach. Annually, the Institution allocates \$250,000 for faculty development, plus travel expenses and for the operation of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). These initiatives ensure that professors can update the specific knowledge of new content in their discipline. A new Assistant Provost and Director for the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning was hired on March 1, 2018. He is also the coordinator of the Activity 3 (Integrating the Curriculum with Co-curricular activities) of the Title III grant awarded to the University. The grant funds constitute 50% of the CETL director's salary.

Assessment is a major responsibility of the faculty and procedures for assessment are detailed on course syllabi. Additionally, and to assist faculty in this role, the institution enhanced an existing unit and converted it to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning (OIERP), which is under the purview of the Faculty Committee.

### **STANDARD III**

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

#### **Suggestions:**

##### **I. Faculty Review and Evaluation**

The institution documented with the self-study report and its exhibits a comprehensive faculty review and its evidence a comprehensive faculty review and evaluation process. As stated in the report, the institution transitioned from a faculty paper assessment to an online process; however, the student's response rate dropped from 60% to 20% in Spring 2017. The team suggests that the institution continue to encourage students to participate in the online assessment process in order to obtain more input that will eventually contribute to strengthen the teaching and learning process.

## II. Faculty Participation

Lincoln University stated in the Self-Study Report the need to increase faculty participation in standing committees. Amendments to the Board of Trustees bylaws were made to improve the participation rate of the faculty in committees. There has been conversation among the faculty to recommend that the CBA adopt a policy of requiring the faculty to participate in at least one standing committee. President Allen charged the Faculty Council and the faculty to work on the realignment of committees and are expected to prepare a report by 2018-2019 academic year. The team suggests the Institution evaluate this report and implement the actions that will improve faculty participation in an equitable fashion.

## III. High-Impact Practices (HIP)

Lincoln University addresses, in the Strategic Plan 2018 and the Self-Study reports, the importance of the assessment conducted in the General Education Curriculum and how it has evolved extensively over the last five years. The University goal is to integrate student success with existing academic services. HIP are defined by six co-curriculum initiatives: undergraduate research, career development, internships, service learning, community engagement and international programs. Particularly, the institution is seeking to infuse high-impact pedagogies into general educational offerings, expand the program to better support students in their majors, and make the content more relevant to Generation Z students and adult learners. The administration and the Faculty Committee on General Education has been creating and developing an action plan toward establishing an integrative model for general education and assessment of student learning.

The team suggest that the Institution continue to follow-up on this important aspect that will benefit faculty and students. This strategic action may contribute to strengthen the institutional goal of becoming a national model for innovative education.

## IV. Continue Improvement

The Strategic Plan 2018 and the Self-Study Report states as a goal to strengthen Lincoln's ability to offer a high quality liberal arts education. This strategic action will allow LUSACE to become a national model for innovative adult completion, graduation and certificate programs. In addition, the institution delineates several strategic actions required to achieve this goal.

The team suggests that the Institution develop a timeframe to reach this important goal and identify peer institutions that will best guide them through the different stages.

### **Recommendations:**

None

**Requirements:**

None

**REQUIREMENTS OF AFFILIATION**

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliations for 8, 9, 10 & 15:

8. The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.
9. The institution's student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.
10. Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.
15. The institution has a core of faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals with sufficient responsibility to the institution to assure the continuity and coherence of the institution's educational programs.

## **STANDARD IV: SUPPORT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

**Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.**

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The institutional self-study documents, supporting materials and discussions with various constituent groups indicate that the student support services at Lincoln University are in a period of significant transition. In recent months, there has been a considerable amount of administrative restructuring in order to realign institutional resources its renewed commitment to student support.

The creation of the Student Success unit and the positions of Class Deans are expected to promote a more holistic, collaborative approach to student support. These new initiatives should enhance the Lincoln student experience, particularly if they are linked to common learning outcomes and informed by a thoughtfully conceived program of assessment.

The team sensed genuine enthusiasm for this emphasis on student success across the institution, and for the structural changes that have been put in place to support the student success initiative.

- The opportunity for every Lincoln student to participate in a high impact educational experience has been identified as an institutional goal.

## **STANDARD IV**

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

### **Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

- The self-study reported significant increases in admitted first-year student SAT scores and high school GPA, and a trend of a decreasing student loan default rate and a decrease in student borrowing. These are all noted as significant accomplishments.

- A Class Dean structure and a voluntary Sophomore Class Experience program were instituted to promote student success. The Sophomore Class Experience program seems to have had a positive impact on the graduation rate. These new initiatives are also accomplishments of note.
  - The Academic Success Rate of Lincoln student-athletes is relatively impressive (66%), and exceeds that of non-student athletes.
  - The institution is to be commended for aiming to make high impact practices a signature of the Lincoln experience for all students.
- The institution has utilized information technology and automated processes to improve the method of processing student applications.
- Lincoln’s male achievement office was awarded the Outstanding Men’s Program Award from the American College Personnel Association at their annual convention in Boston in March 2019. The Outstanding Men’s Program Award is given to programs at higher education institutions that provide a positive impact on men's social, academic and professional development. Lincoln is to be commended for the development of its male achievement initiative.

**Suggestions:**

- The availability of active learning experiences to every Lincoln student is an ambitious goal, and it is unclear if the institution has fully analyzed the costs of achieving this goal. It has articulated the realization that “it behooves the Universe (sic) to identify resources that can provide such opportunities.” The institution might consider developing a comprehensive financial plan for the implementation of its aims related to active and cocurricular learning.
- The “student success initiative” implemented in the fall of 2018 has been touted as the centerpiece of the University’s enriched commitment to student support. During the team visit the team heard great enthusiasm for the vision of a seamless approach to student success. However, the team, in its limited time on campus, was not able to discern a uniform understanding of the theoretical basis for the initiative, or the research findings that inform the initiative, other than the expectation for improved student persistence and graduation rates. Good practice in student affairs work includes grounding student support activities in relevant developmental theories and practices to guide this work; identifying the assessment findings on which student support activities are based; and establishing the specific anticipated student learning and achievement outcomes that will be measured through a systematic assessment process. The visiting

team encourages the University to foster a common, clear, and, to the extent possible, measurable understanding of what “student success” means at Lincoln to guide the future development of the student success initiative.

- The University is also encouraged to facilitate improved student access to psychiatric services as needed to supplement its mental health support services for students.
- The self-study indicates that the University has separate articulation agreements with ten different institutions, and it was learned during the site visit that many of these enrollment articulation agreements have not been reviewed in several years. It is suggested that this opportunity be integrated into the University’s strategic enrollment plan.
- Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience is a critical element in ensuring effective support of the student experience. Lincoln University is encouraged to develop, implement, and routinely act upon a comprehensive and robust assessment process for student support programs based upon mutually agreed upon student success goals and metrics.
- The Sophomore Class Experience program has had a positive impact on Lincoln students. Lincoln is encouraged to explore how aspects of that program might be applied to students in other class years to promote student success.
- The Lincoln student-athlete experience seems to promote student academic success. Lincoln is encouraged to seek to identify the characteristics of the athletic program that contribute to student success, and explore how they might be applied to other student cohorts.
- During the course of the team visit, student and family financial challenges, including housing and food insecurity, were frequently cited as common reasons for student attrition. These concerns merit the focused attention of the institution in the context of its student success initiative, its retention efforts, and its strategic enrollment planning.

### **Recommendations:**

As stated in the University’s strategic plan, it is in the process of developing a strategic enrollment plan for both its main campus and its Philadelphia site. The establishment of a realistic strategic enrollment plan is critical to the ability of the University’s planning and budgeting efforts. The visiting team endorses the timely completion and implementation of this plan.

**Requirements:**

None

**REQUIREMENTS OF AFFILIATION**

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation for 8 and 10:

8. The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.

10. Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.

## STANDARD V: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT

**Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their programs of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.**

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

1. The University acquired a software platform, named Xitracs, to support institution-wide assessment efforts. Since its introduction on campus, and implementation, it has proven to have had longevity, and has contributed to sustaining routine assessment functions, with several automated reminders and tools that create business efficiencies. The software package continues to be upgraded and evolve into a system that faculty, staff, and administrators find to be “user-friendly” and support the functions of evaluating for effectiveness. Among the functions included is the scheduled upload and maintenance of assessment data and collection within a prescribed cycle. As it relates to overall institutional assessment, there is appropriate participation among constituent groups and end-users, which include all instructional faculty, institutional research and office of assessment staff members, directors and unit-level staff members in curricular and co-curricular areas. The software platform combined with broad constituent participation, continue to be effective in engaging faculty and staff across the disciplines and contributing to a culture of assessment. Furthermore, software platform contributes to the operational efficiency of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning (OIERP), and other units with a heavy reliance on data.
2. The University demonstrates that educational effectiveness is supported by the planning and budgeting efforts of Lincoln University. Evidence provided shows that faculty and staff participate in development activities that are directly related to supporting improvements to the curriculum driven by data. Assessment is a collaborative effort as exemplified by the various cross-unit functions between faculty, staff and administrative units. Examples include the training activities arranged by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), the Assessment and Evaluation Committee, the Faculty

Development Committee, Academic Technology and Support (ATS), and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning (OIERP). All of these committees and groups work in concert to assess needs across the institution, inform administration and the Board of Trustees, and design a range of development opportunities to facilitate improved educational



effectiveness. Additional activities include support for revising unit-level goals and objectives, travel for the presentation of research finding, and participation in local, national, and international conferences, all of which support an enriched curriculum.

3. The University appears to be using a balanced mix of direct and indirect assessment measures to impact institutional improvement. One such example is the University's initiative to create the Transforming Developmental Studies Review Task Force. This group's effort is highlighted by the University community, and noted within the Self-Study as being a collaborative process that brought several constituent groups from across the campus to achieve a common goal of using data for educational effectiveness. Members from units such as Education, Languages and Literature, Mathematics, and the Center for Student Advisement (CASA) collaborated to make improvements to curricular and co-curricular programs using assessment data, marrying elements such as learning outcomes with retention and graduation rates. This collaborative is one of many institutional examples of closing the loop. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning is a leader in facilitating such efforts. As result, the developmental studies programs at Lincoln were overhauled, and the report led to multiple Title III activities that support retention and graduation at Lincoln University.
4. There appears to be evidence of sustained assessment of student learning, routine collection of assessment data, and evidence to show impacts on continuous improvements throughout the curriculum. As evidenced in Xitracs, the University provided student work samples, standardized course syllabi, rubrics, and curriculum maps, all of which demonstrate assessment successes and program effectiveness when reviewed longitudinally. Evidence was also presented to show a continuum of newly-created cocurricular experiences being assessed (as demonstrated in Xitracs) in tandem with academic programs. Lincoln University has invested greatly in developing a solid and sustainable assessment culture and closing the loop.
5. Lincoln University's processes for evaluating and assessing the impact of overall institutional effectiveness promote a sustained culture of assessment. There is widespread participation from the campus community, and a collective desire to utilize assessment results for continuous improvement. Members of the University are thriving in an environment that supports innovation among the faculty and promulgates student success.

Appropriate representatives from the campus community, e.g., alumni, president, and Board of Trustees, regularly meet to review a wealth of assessment and data including, but not limited to the following: NSSE survey results, academic program review reports, departmental budgets and

outcomes, General Education Committee reports, annual assessment reports, annual Institutional Effectiveness reports, and the strategic plan key performance indicators.

## **STANDARD V**

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

### **Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

- The institution should be applauded for its early acquisition of Xitracs, which occurred well over 10 years ago. Since the acquisition, the institution has nurtured the growth of an exceptional assessment framework, and has invested in an appropriate amount of training, personnel within the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning (OIERP), and the Office of Assessment. Just recently in 2018, the University hired a director of assessment. The campus has also made significant investments in appropriate software to innovate and support faculty with assessment practices and encourage course and program-level effectiveness. The investments encourage a culture of assessment and support the campus' efforts to close the loop on assessment activities. The establishment of the General Education Faculty Committee and the expansion of the role of the Faculty Committee on Assessment and Evaluation further promulgate Lincoln's assessment culture. Investments in development resources, including financial and human capital, have aided the University in maintaining assessment efforts, allowing them to evolve into useful tools such as the future development of data dashboards.
- The Committee on Assessment and Evaluation and the General Education Faculty Committee are exemplars of faculty members' roles in assessment. Currently, members of both committees are working with key faculty and staff to continually enhance and innovate General Education. The University is using consulting services and following guidelines developed internally, and those of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). There is also guidance from data collected internally through surveys and focus groups to derive a set of General Education innovation initiatives. In conjunction with the director of assessment, the Committee participates in Assessment Day activities (hosted annually in the month of May) and conduct training and workshops for faculty considering enhancing their courses after having conducted appropriate levels of assessment. Those faculty members are encouraged to seek any budgetary support toward the proposed outcomes for course increases. The budget request for courses and academic programs are submitted to the department chairperson and are included in the University's planning process.

**Suggestions:**

- As noted as a finding within the self-study, the institution should invest in a central location that is electronic or digital, which provides access for appropriate stakeholders to all pertinent University data, reports and supporting documents. Although *Xitracs* exists to support assessment efforts, there are other repositories on campus where critical data exists, which may compliment evaluative efforts. The expansion and access to other data through *Xitracs*, *Moodle*, and other similar systems will provide a greater understanding of the University and its effectiveness. Additionally, access to data and reports will strengthen and create more opportunities to impact strategic objectives in the 2018-2023 strategic plan.
- The University should consider expanding additional training and professional development opportunities by utilizing the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning CETL. The Center possesses a wealth of best practices and opportunities to improve teaching and learning throughout the community. Additional staffing and fiscal support for the Center's initiatives would further support the advancement of innovation initiatives across all programs, including General Education.

**Recommendations:**

None

**Requirements:**

None

**REQUIREMENTS OF AFFILIATION**

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation for 8, 9, & 10:

8. The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.
9. The institution's student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.

10. Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.

## STANDARD VI: PLANNING, RESOURCES, AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

**The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.**

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The University has undergone significant transition in its executive leadership during the past five years, however, it remained focused, guided by its strategic plan that articulated institutional objectives clearly linked to its mission and goals. Lincoln recently adopted a new strategic plan “*Reimagining the Legacy: Learn. Liberate. Lead*” that was the result of a broadly inclusive, evidence-based process that began with the formation of a Strategic Planning Council with broad representation from across the University. The current strategic plan contains five themes with specific objectives, focusing on the development of a culture to support student success and identification and re-alignment of resources.
- Lincoln University's ability to fulfill its mission is heavily influenced by its financial health, which is driven primarily by student tuition and fees and to a lesser degree by appropriations from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. According to the self-study and other documentation provided, the University has taken steps to ensure the financial stability, as evidenced by consecutive years of balanced budgets and unqualified auditor's opinions on its annual audits. In-addition, the steady growth in enrollment (with the current student population being the largest in the institution's history), is another indicator of fiscal stability. Since fiscal year 2014 the University's endowment market value has appreciated over 22% or \$7.9 million to \$41.5 million as of June 30, 2018 due to strong investment performance and donor generosity. The current strategic plan places even greater focus on efforts to diversify Lincoln's revenues and to maintaining its long term financial stability.
- With the adoption of Lincoln's recent strategic plan, a new budgeting process was implemented in which department chairpersons and key unit managers were required to develop budgets based on departmental needs. This process was instituted to afford a greater level of transparency and to ensure that resources are allocated to the highest priorities as defined by the strategic plan. This process was utilized to prepare the 20182019 budget.

- According to the self-study and interviews conducted, the University's fiscal and human resources seemed adequate to support its operations. The increases in the operating budget over the years have supported several key initiatives, such as new faculty positions, faculty development, undergraduate research, internships, study abroad programs, need-based aid and several newly restructured academic and student support staff.
- Lincoln uses its universal campus master plan to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of its physical resources (buildings and information technology). The master plan provides an inventory of the buildings and their physical conditions, assesses classrooms, technology, and housing needs based on projected enrollment growth. In addition, the plan provides a foundation from which the University assess and invest in deferred maintenance. The primary sources of capital funding are \$10 million in annual appropriation from the State of Pennsylvania coupled with the University's \$4 million annual capital allocation funded by the operating budget. According to the self-study and interviews conducted, a new campus master planning process is currently underway with the goal of identifying the next set of requests for capital funding.
- A review of the independent audited financial statements (FY15 through FY18) has demonstrated that the University has a record of responsible fiscal management with no material deficiencies cited and unmodified (clean) audit opinions. Lincoln derives a portion of its revenues from Title IV funding received by its students under programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education. To continue to participate in these programs, the University must comply with the regulations promulgated by the federal government. With clean audit opinions and continued compliance with Title IV regulations, there were no indication of any going-concern issues from the independent auditor's perspective.
- Lincoln conducts periodic assessments of the effectiveness of its planning and resource allocation. According to the self-study, during spring 2017, an assessment of information technology identified several areas where the University was falling short of the technology needed to support teaching and learning. The implementation of a plan to improve information technology included investments of over \$2 million during fiscal year 2018, with several projects completed and a budgeted allocation of \$1.5 million in fiscal year 2019 to continue these improvements.
- Lincoln assesses its strategic planning process every five years, which is guided by an evaluation of the state of the University relative to its mission. Lincoln evaluates its position in the context of: (1) trends in higher education and (2) University-specific data relative to its major indicators, including financial status, enrollment trends, and

graduation and retention rates. According to the self-study and interviews conducted, the most recent assessment identified areas in need of specific focus, mainly the state of the curriculum relative to marketplace trends, student support structures as they relate to retention and graduation, and revenue projections in light of declining trends in state and federal support of higher education. As a result, current strategic goals are designed to address curriculum renewal, increase staffing in the area of academic support, and focus on diversifying revenue streams.

## **STANDARD VI**

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

### **Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

- The university should be commended for the implementation of a strategic budgeting process during Academic Year 2017-2018, bringing greater transparency to the resource allocation process and to help ensure greater attention to the alignment of resources with strategic priorities.
- The president should be commended for embracing shared governance with the appointment of a Strategic Budgeting Committee with broad representation from across the campus.

### **Suggestions:**

- Lincoln should continue to implement its strategic budgeting process of aligning resource allocation with strategic priorities and provide for transparent communication to the campus constituents as to which priorities are to be funded.
- Continue to develop prudent financial planning and strategic budgeting that allows for campus-wide input, linking requests to strategic priorities and multi-year budget planning.

### **Recommendations:**

- The team concurs with Lincoln's plan to implement performance measurement tools such as dashboards to track progress of its strategic plan.
- As recommended in its strategic plan, Lincoln should develop an enrollment management plan that identifies enrollment targets to achieve its academic and financial goals.

**Requirements:**

None

**REQUIREMENTS OF AFFILIATION**

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliation for 8, 10 and 11:

8. The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.
  
10. Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.
  
11. The institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development, including those from any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership) adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to ensure financial stability. The institution demonstrates a record of responsible fiscal management, has a prepared budget for the current year, and undergoes an external financial audit on an annual basis.



## **STANDARD VII: GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION**

**The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituents it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.**

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team reached the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Lincoln University has a well-defined governance structure to advance its mission statement as “the nation’s first degree granting Historically Black College and University to educate and empower students to lead their communities and change the world”. The Board of Trustees plays the most important oversight role to meet this challenge with a rigorous liberal arts education. In doing so, the BOT appoints, evaluates and supports the President; approves, and ensures the implementation of the strategic plan, establishes relevant policies for the adequate functioning of the institution; ratifies approval of relevant programs as recommended by the University community and strives to assure the fiscal and financial health of the institution.

The 39 voting members of the Board of Trustees include the governor, Secretary of Education and president of the University. The other categories are the 12 Commonwealth Trustees, six alumni trustees elected by the board, an additional 18 University trustees elected by members of the Board and the president of the Student Government Association. The BOT has 10 standing committees, reduced from the initial 12, to eliminate subject matter overlap.

The board is committed to ethical behavior and developed a Code of Conduct for each member to sign. It closely monitors the academic environment in accordance with principles of good practice in governance.

The Strategic Plan demonstrates that the institution is preparing students with a strong liberal arts education to compete in a local and global society. The trustees have reflected on their responsibility during this review period, and have reviewed and aligned its Bylaws and administrative structure to the current strategic plan.

Most of the committees of the BOT have the flexibility to meet “from time to time”; are open to the university community to engage their attendance. Some of the board meetings are dedicated to the approval and continuous review of policies and they regularly evaluate the performance of

the CEO. Different committees are required to work directly with other university committees and different officers.

Lincoln University has endorsed a strong proposal to actively encourage faculty participation within the governance structure. As a result, the Faculty Council was established in 2017 as the official voice of the faculty. They were charged to realign their committees to ensure faculty representation on the board's subcommittees. This Council works together with the president and the Provost and VPAA.

The president is the Chief Executive Officer and was appointed in 2017. Her academic credentials and particular interest in pursuing the value of a liberal arts education is a good match for Lincoln University. Her bachelor's degree in Psychology is from Lincoln University. This experience can provide excellent insight of the institutional and student needs. Based on the information presented in the self-study the Board of Trustees considers that the president has the administrative experience to meet the challenges of Lincoln University. The president has the authority and autonomy to complete the responsibilities of her position. Continuous communication with the president ensures that the board is updated and knows how the institution is progressing; yet they do not work directly with the day-to-day operations of the institution.

The information presented in the Self-study and conversations during the team visit confirm that the administrative leadership team is comprised of qualified individuals, appropriately sized to manage the institution. They have a closely monitored communication system regulated by the strategic plan which guarantees a continuous flow of information and ideas to assist the decision making process.

According to the organizational chart approved in 2018 the president works directly with five vice presidents. The office of Athletics and Recreation also reports to the president. She has a Chief of Staff and Manager to facilitate communication and discussion of academic issues. This group is considered the *President's Cabinet*. The president supervises the *Cabinet*, and the board supports their work and is attentive to their recommendations.

The institution was founded in 1854 and throughout the years has contributed to the development of knowledge in higher education. Lincoln is fiercely proud of its history, and have shown this commitment by outlining unique contributions of their many distinguished graduates. Also as part of this the primary mission to be the nation's first-degree granting *Historically Black College and University* (HBCU) is an important lifetime achievement for Lincoln University.

The process to approve the new strategic plan has generated a wealth of information about the best priorities that the institution should pursue. One of these areas is closely related to the quality of academic programs. The institution, with a strong interest by the Board has endorsed

the consolidation of academic programs and co-curricular support. One of the priorities in this area is to consider the professional accreditation of their programs. This is already required as part of the process for approval of new programs. The institution is already accredited by the American Chemical Society (ACS) and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN).

The Board of Trustees together with the president has taken a leadership role in planning and establishing the view and direction of the institution. The board has completed an internal review of their governance structure and demonstrated commitment to listen and actively and work with the University community.

The Team Visit is an excellent opportunity for the institution to review all the information gathered to meet their mission and strategic plan. The self-study process comes at a pivotal moment for them to also work with this information and data for effective planning and institutional renewal.

The board has shown great enthusiasm with their periodic assessment. They have attended American Governing Board (AGB) workshops, participated in conversations with other institutions; and recruited AGB for their retreat. This exposure has helped them change the narrative and establish a more precise academic agenda for the institution. They should continue to pursue an annual evaluation process.

## **STANDARD VII**

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

### **Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

- The institution should be commended for establishing the Faculty Council as a venue to increase their role in academic decisions such as evaluation and promotion, tenure and sabbatical processes, among others.
- Their interest in pursuing other professional accreditations could very well improve the academic profile of the institution by showing that they have the basic qualities needed to compare with other accredited programs. It is suggested that they continue with this Initiative. It will go hand-in-hand with their vision of being "a national model" for liberal arts undergraduate programs as well as graduate and professional programs. They might also look into the possibility of accrediting those services that are susceptible to this initiative, for example, counseling programs.

### **Suggestions:**

- Continue to strengthen academic programs by exploring required accreditation for those programs and services that are susceptible to this action.
- Continue to encourage the active participation of the faculty in issues pertaining to faculty matters.

### **Recommendations:**

- Last May in a daylong retreat the BOT discussed the long-range strategic planning process and set the priorities for the president and staff to assess the best practices of the strategic plan. They should continue to evaluate the plan each year.
- The process that they have initially developed with Association of Governing Boards assistance should continue. They should implement a yearly evaluation of the effectiveness and leadership of the board.

### **Requirements:**

None

### **REQUIREMENTS OF AFFILIATION**

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliations for 12 and 13:

12. The institution fully discloses its legally constituted governance structure(s) including any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership). The institution's governing body is responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution and for ensuring that the institution's mission is being accomplished.
13. A majority of the institution's governing body's members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. The governing body adheres to a conflict of interest policy that assures that those interests are disclosed and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution. The institution's district/system or other chief executive officer shall not serve as the chair of the governing body.

## ***Section D: Verification of Compliance***

### **I. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation**

Based on a review of the self-study and accompanying materials, interviews, and the Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations, the team affirms that the institution continues to meet all of the *Requirements of Affiliation*.

### **II. Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations**

The team affirms the institution meets all accreditation-relevant federal regulations, which is based upon the review of the self-study report, accompanying materials, and the Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations and the evaluation visit.

## ***Section E: Verification of Data and Student Achievement***

### **I. Verification of Data and Self-Study Information**

*Addressed in Standard VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement).*

### **II. Student Achievement**

*Addressed in Standard VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement).*

## ***Section F: Third-Party Comments (if applicable)***

*Not applicable.*

## ***Section G: Conclusion***

On behalf of the members of the Middle States evaluation team, we wish to express our sincere appreciation for the hospitality and the welcome we received by the members of the campus community during our time at Lincoln University. It was our honor to have the opportunity to

learn about the unique history and achievements that have sustained Lincoln University for over 150 years.

The team again thanks the institution, and hopes that the institution will be open to the ideas contained in this report, all of which are offered in the spirit of collegiality and constructive peer review.

As a reminder, the next steps in the evaluation process are as follows:

1. The institution replies to the team report in a formal written Institutional Response addressed to the Commission.
2. The team Chair submits a Confidential Brief to the Commission, summarizing the team report and conveying the team's proposal for accreditation action.
3. The Commission's Committee on Evaluation Reports carefully reviews the institutional self-study document, the evaluation team report, the institution's formal response, and the Chair's Confidential Brief to formulate a proposed action to the Commission.
4. The full Commission, after considering information gained in the preceding steps, takes formal accreditation action and notifies the institution.